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Staff Endorsement

It is with great pleasure – and no little sense of admiration – that I write this endorsement for the third issue of *LUX*, Lancaster's journal of literature and culture. The editorial team have created a space for critical writing by students that is both inventive and carefully structured. This is a home for serious and sharp thinking by writers who are ready to approach complex texts in a spirit of intellectual curiosity.

The five essays and three reviews show a commitment to engaging with our cultural past through a distinctive set of twenty-first-century lenses. This issue, teeming with ideas and arguments, is also a reminder that criticism is a creative act, one that pays attention to the vivid possibilities of language. The editors have collected a truly impressive range of essays and reviews: an inventive re-writing of a graphic novel as a monologue sits next to work on eighteenth – and nineteenth-century vampires, war in metafiction, the Wordsworthian sublime and Giorgio Agamben's critique of biopolitics. In a bold reflective piece on her 'reimagining' of Alison Bechdel's memoir, *Fun Home* (2006), Kirsty Fitzpatrick addresses the problematic nature of 'the act of translation, or literary re-writing' as a process that might lead to 'undesired consequences'. Both the monologue and the essay point to the ways in which all acts of storytelling bump into the limits of memory and our need to make sense of complicated histories. Authors (including critics) never have the final word. That is one of the reasons why the study of literature persists. It is a long conversation or set of arguments that always needs new voices who are ready to query and challenge past perceptions.

LUX Issue 3 is a particularly vivid snapshot in the life of a department that is defined not just by retrospection but also by anticipation. The reviews, for example, focus on new work by current and past colleagues. This journal tells a story about the ethos of Lancaster students: a narrative that says that they are asking, for example, questions about justice, memory and belonging. Congratulations to the team for producing such ambitious, vital and distinctive work.

—Dr Andrew Tate, Department of English Literature and Creative Writing

Editors' Introduction

The editorial team are pleased to introduce the third issue of *LUX*. We were all excited to continue the journal's aim of showcasing the academic work of Lancaster University Undergraduate students, and we are thoroughly proud of the result. With this issue, we have built on the efforts of previous editors by including works that explore a wide range of topics. We are therefore delighted to introduce this issue, which contains articles and book reviews that span a variety of interests.

The editorial process was thoroughly enjoyable, as we had the privilege of reading the excellent work of the undergraduates who contributed to this project. It was with great care and pleasure that we received, selected, and prepared these academic articles for the public. This was all achieved through our collaboration as a team. Our efforts to publicise the journal on social media, to correspond with both the contributors and the peer reviewers, and to organise the layout of the journal, were all achieved through our close co-ordination as a group. Our primary intention for the project was to present to the public a selection of engaging, high quality academic articles, and through our efforts as a team, we feel that we have done our best to achieve this.

We are especially pleased with the selection of articles that we have included in this issue. The issue begins with a creative rewriting of Kirsty Fitzpatrick's *Fun Home*, followed by an examination of the consequences that come with translating a graphic novel into a monologue. The next article is an intriguing exploration of the vampire myth as it develops throughout the 18th and 19th century. Following this is an article that examines the significance of metafiction concerning the subject of war, using Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement* to achieve this. Next in the journal is an analysis of the sublime in Wordsworth's work, focusing on his sublime as an act of transcendence. To conclude the articles, we have an exploration of Giorgio Agamben's theory of inoperativity, which is applied to Herman Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener* in a thought-provoking analysis.

This edition also includes a selection of book reviews, commenting on some of the incredible work published by our own Lancaster University staff. We have included reviews of Yvonne Battle-Felton's *Remembered*, M. J. Ryder's *The Darkest Hour*, and Michael Greaney's *Sleep and the Novel: Fictions of Somnolence from Jane Austen to the Present*.

Finally, we would like to thank Rebecca Gibson and Luke Turley. Without their help, this edition would not have been possible. They have always been there to support us and answer our questions, enabling us to hone our skills as editors. We are extremely grateful for their guidance which has made this edition possible.

We hope you enjoy the third issue of *LUX Journal*.

—Lauren Brooke, Amalia Mills, Lucy O'Hagan, Hope Meredith, Amrit Bhullar.

<h1 align="center">Transitioning Genres from Graphic Novel to Monologue</h1>
<p align="center">Kirsty Fitzpatrick</p>

Abstract

In this piece, I have reimagined a graphic novel written by Alison Bechdel. Inspired by her memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006), I wrote a monologue, imagining a scene based on my perception of events within the novel. In the critical essay that follows, I explore the process of transcending genres and what it means to fabricate someone's memories by recreating a memoir. I called my monologue 'Fun Home: Curating Taste'.

<p align="center">*</p>

Fun Home: Curating Taste

A whole lifetime of Bechdel-ness - the syndrome that I have self-diagnosed to be hereditary - can be summarised by just one afternoon in the state of Pennsylvania.

We walked into our local diner. It is a fairly mundane place, the kind that looks inviting from the outside, brimming with ambience and jovial smiles of middle-aged men drinking endless cups of arbitrary coffee. That is until you step inside and realise that every table is complimented with a film of grease, the peeling floor tiles are littered with yesterday's fries and if it was not for the mildly threatening waitress with bulging eyes staring you down, you would have left already. Every time we came, I wondered why my father, being as obsessed with aesthetics and the decadence of antiques that he was, would ever dream of stepping foot into this stagnant place.

A creature of habit, I suppose.

We sat down at our usual table, number 13. I sat near the window and father sat opposite me facing the door, my little brothers joined me on the bench - our correct positions. The conversation ran like clockwork.

I say conversation, it's perhaps too one-sided to be called that.

"Would you just look at that," he remarked at the quality of the leather-bound menu, "the quality of this so-called leather binding is just pitiful." We all mouthed the word "pitiful" in unison, given that none of us were strangers to this kind of déjà vu. The usual quip about my clothing followed suit.

"If you remember anything that I have taught you, you will remember that the way things are presented, the way we present ourselves in this life, is intrinsically linked to our longevity."

Quite telling for someone who committed suicide.

He continued: "Christian, that's why your sister should wear more feminine clothes."

Here we go.

"You see, Alison, you may think that people will take you more seriously in masculine dress when in reality, your insecurities will be mistaken for arrogance, or worse even. One must tread carefully in this age. Anyway, some food for thought?"

In my innocent youth, I had no idea what he meant by that.

On cue the waitress arrived, beaming, "Hey kiddos, what are we having then?" with a forced twang in her accent. Father's response came at a rapid speed as if he had been mentally rehearsing all this time.

"The boys will have the burgers, no chips but extra salad if you have any. Do you have any? The omelette looks intriguing, who wants the omelette, Alison? Alison will take the omelette but make sure it's not overdone. I for one am famished so I'll take two rare steaks, bacon, a portion

of eggs. Hands up who wants pie? Pie for everyone but it needs to be piping hot so it's warm when we get around to eating it. And finally, write this in capitals, when I say rare, I mean rare in the French sense of the term, *comprendez-vous?*"

Gutted, I wanted steak too.

The waitress looked exhausted just trying to keep up with the rapidity at which his order was vocalised. She took a deep breath "Awesome… I think I've got that all down. Any drinks for yous?" she asked, pen ready.

"A milkshake?" Christian desperately plucked up the courage to whisper. "A round of water from the tap. In glasses, NOT plastic," father interjected. "Milkshake" was crossed out. She hastily retreated to the safety of the counter, ready to tell all her fellow waitresses about the pompous family on table 13.

Oscar Wilde once said, "Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast". What about lunch?

I sometimes use the way father ordered lunch for us as an analogy for his fatherly presence. In between stitching the curtains he found in a garbage dump and stitching bodies after their post-mortem, I suppose all along he was working at a larger project, curating our tastes. Not just for food in a declining American Diner on Route 534, but for life. We were the dolls in his Victorian dolls house. It was his job to preserve this Victorian decadence, to refine our perspectives, the lenses through which we see the world. Perhaps I didn't want his legacy. But then again…

…We all turn into our parents sooner or later.

<div align="center">*</div>

What is the quality of the act of translation between a graphic novel and memoir to a monologue? What is gained and what is lost?

I have explored the transitionary process from a memoir in the form of a graphic novel to a monologue. After this exploration, I argue that in this case the act of translation, or literary re-writing, does not transition smoothly, leaving undesired consequences. On reimagining Alison Bechdel's graphic novel and memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic,* I influenced someone else's memoir, fabricating the notions of truth that are traditionally associated with someone's life story. Therefore, translation and re-writing of a non-fiction literary piece is a kind of regression. The authenticity of the memoir is eroded as I have reimagined a scene from Bechdel's childhood based upon my own personal judgement of her life as presented to me in *Fun Home.*

I have reimagined the graphic novel as if it were a monologue. Experimenting with the idea of *ekphrasis* – "a literary description of or commentary on a visual work of art" (Mirriam-Webster). I focused on a few panels in particular to write a fictitious scene in the style of a memoir. However, throughout the process, I began to question whether this notion of creating words from pictures was really a "telling in full", as the true origin of *ekphrasis* commands (Heffernan 191). I hyperbolised what I thought was intriguing about the panels and created my own narrative to coincide with Bechdel's. But who is to say that my re-creation is a telling in full? Were the panels alone not sufficient in conveying Bechdel's emotional nuances? Surely, one only has to look at the colour grading, the angle of her father's eyebrows and the flash of longing and despondency in her caricature's eyes to receive this "telling in full". This move away from the graphic novel in such a translation of form seems to be more damaging than rewarding, for the loss of Bechdel's visual memory limits the authenticity of my memoir.

Nevertheless, the process has exposed new ways to analyse significant moments in Bechdel's life, allowing me to explore possible reasons as to why she wrote the memoir in the first place. Given that I was extremely perplexed by the psychological makeup of Alison's father and how that impacted their relationship, I wanted to explore his mannerisms in an everyday setting. The first panel for example on page 50 features Alison claiming, "I'm starving" with her father's natural response, "Let's go eat". On the surface, this is basic dialogue. However, what lends Bechdel's memoir its unique nature is her tendency to inject harsh reality into these somewhat romanticised

and seemingly overly vivid images of her childhood. For example, the text directly above the panel in the gutter reads as follows, "You would also think that a childhood spent in such close proximity to the workaday incidentals of death would be good preparation" (50). Bechdel is of course alluding to her father's death when she mentions "preparation". However, what I wanted to explore within my re-writing was this juxtaposition between the ordinary – her father suggesting they go out to eat – and the extraordinary – "the workaday incidentals of death" and how death manifests itself in their everyday. In conjunction with this panel, I also looked at the panels from page 117-119 where on sight of an extremely androgynous woman, her father asks, "Is *that* what you want to look like?". The panels that convey Alison and her father getting lunch in a diner are complex for multiple reasons. Not only is the reader subject to a sort of dramatic irony, for they know that Alison idolises these women through her teenage years, thus ignoring her father's stern warning, but the reader is also projected into another level of her father's psyche. As a closeted homosexual himself, it remains an exemplary study of repression for a psychoanalyst. It is this subtle notion of repression that I attempted to convey within my re-writing as for me, this painful repression was the memoir's most nuanced and timeless theme.

Freud's theory of repression states that "[p]eople repress, or drive from their conscious minds, shameful thoughts that, then, become unconscious" (Billig 1). Bechdel's father's obsession with antiques and decadence clearly serves as a distraction from his "shameful thoughts". It is however, confusing for a young Alison Bechdel who often sees a paradox within her father, one who ensures the perfection of life in the home, and of death within the fun-home. This confusion, and duality of her father, is something I wanted to recreate through the setting. Thus, I had the scene placed in a "declining American Diner on Route 534". It is not a pretentious coffee house where one might imagine her father reading high-culture modernist classics, but a business in decline, symbolising the slight loop hole within her father's façade and a possibility for his influence to be lost on his children.

Once I had chosen the most detrimental messages of Bechdel's memoir, I thought about the physical layout of a graphic novel, and how I could transform its unique formatting into another form. For example, whilst reading the graphic novel, it becomes apparent that there are three main narratives to follow: the main narrative which is in the gutter, the dialogue placed in the speech marks and lastly, the text boxes that appear in the panels. In order to preserve this multiple narrative (one that segregates Bechdel's overarching story, her feelings at the time, and her modern-day reflections), I replicated the three-way narrative. My monologue features a main narrative, speech from the moment she is re-telling and later reflections which are written in italics. These interjections act as comprehensive comments, words from an older and wiser version of the speaker, thus, remaining the source of that dramatic irony that can be created in the original graphic novel due to the non-linear chronology.

An example of how I re-created this is when I juxtaposed a moment of the past with dialogue and then a modern-day reflection, musing upon this triple narrative that Bechdel plays with. I imagined her father to be a man of principle, or to appear this way even if he believed the opposite. In order to make his case convincing, he would craft his morals into broader life lessons, to curate his children into perfected versions of himself. Thus, the comment he makes to Alison about her clothes is part of a larger didactic message; the way things are presented, "the way we present ourselves in this life, is intrinsically linked to our longevity". It is no surprise that someone who was pre-occupied with aesthetics would think like this. However, from what we know about his homosexuality in the memoir and his premature death, this comment does not make much sense and it would not for Alison later in her life when she also unravelled her father's secrets. Thus, juxtaposed with this memory of her father's speech is the modern-day reflection from a wiser and more experienced speaker: *"Quite telling for someone who committed suicide".* Bechdel's memoir is a piecing-together of the jigsaw her father left behind, and the Alison in my re-creation does the same. Bechdel's ability to weave together space and time within her memoir replicates the very nature of memory recall. The narrative is not linear, it is fragmented and therefore suggests a

unique thread of writing that cannot be replicated with success, for the fragments of Bechdel's nuances are too personal and to impeach on these seems unjust.

Thus, the reoccurring question that I asked myself during this creative process was "Is this true to the father figure that Bechdel saw growing up?". It is disconcerting to think how easily one can project their own influence onto another's work. In this case, the process of literary re-writing has not worked successfully. I have not just translated the form from graphic novel to monologue, but from non-fiction to fiction. Not only did I fabricate events within Bechdel's life, but I also exploited the notions of memory in the memoir, creating a three-way narrative to enhance the supposed similarity of my work to Bechdel's. The process has, however, led me to new conclusions of the paternal relationship. I am not convinced that my re-writing into a different form sheds new light on Bechdel's emotional trauma or offers any new kind of denouement, but it does however prove the problem of influence in literary re-writing. Perhaps one can identify a convergence with the strains of influence, both within the re-writing process and within Bechdel's paternal relationship. In the same way that I have injected inauthenticity into Bechdel's memoir, it seems her father's digression from authenticity through his obsession to craft and curate was lost on his children, offering them a lacking paternal relationship.

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Becoming Dracula: Translating the Transforming Vampire Myth in 18th and 19th Century Literature

Chloe Adshead

Abstract

This article intends to chronicle the representation of the vampire prior to 1897, and to analyse how its representation may have developed from its early appearance in literary fiction in the eighteenth century up until the time of *Dracula* (1897). To do this, the article will examine Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's 1718 traveller's tale "A Voyage into the Levant", the more recognisably traditional vampire narrative of Aleksey Tolstoy's 1839 "The Family of the Vourdalak", and the psychological horror of "The Horla" written in 1887 by Guy de Maupassant. These choices demonstrate the variety of literary styles used across the time span and are all written far enough apart that clear differences in the texts' presentations of vampires should be evident. By analysing how vampires were represented in these three short stories, focusing on the physical and characteristic presentation of the monster, and on the responses that vampires evoke from their audiences, I hope to track the evolution of the vampire from its early identity in literature as a figure of superstition to its cemented role as a fictional character and literary villain. Additionally, I will apply the context of historic vampire beliefs and superstitions in order to translate the vampire and attempt to explain how and why its representation has transformed.

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Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is often credited as the introduction of the vampire of popular culture, as the dark, mysterious and aristocratic figure of Count Dracula has become the archetypal vampire of fiction. However, the vampire myth itself predates Stoker's novel by centuries, as versions of the vampire can be identified as far back as the classical era in ancient Greece and Rome, and across cultures from Norse mythology to the plagues and witch allegations of the British Middle Ages (Beresford, *From Demons to Dracula* 8). The vampire of superstition, therefore, existed long before *Dracula*, but more significantly Stoker was not the first to introduce the monster to literature. Rather, Matthew Beresford argues that a notable obsession with the creature can be witnessed from the eighteenth century, when the term "vampire" entered the common vernacular in 1734 and the influx of vampire fiction began (Beresford 12; Condado de Haza 14). Though *Dracula* is perhaps the most famous vampire text and the subject of much literary criticism, these earlier works are much less frequently explored, and many know little about the vampire before Stoker's seductive patrician.

This article intends to chronicle how the representation of the vampire has developed from its early appearance in literary fiction in the eighteenth century up until the time of *Dracula*. To do this, the article will examine Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's 1718 traveller's tale "A Voyage into the Levant", the more recognisably traditional vampire narrative of Aleksey Tolstoy's 1839 "The Family of the Vourdalak", and the psychological horror "The Horla" written in 1887 by Guy de Maupassant. These choices demonstrate the variety of literary styles used across the time span and are all written far enough apart that clear differences in the texts' presentations of vampires are evident. By analysing how vampires were represented in these three short stories, focusing on the physical and characteristic presentation of the monster, and on the responses that vampires evoke from their audiences, I hope to track the evolution of the vampire from its early identity as a figure of superstition to its cemented role as a fictional character and literary villain. Additionally, I will apply the context of historic vampire beliefs in order to translate the vampire's symbolism and attempt to explain how and why its representation has transformed.

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's "A Voyage into the Levant", published in 1718 but originally written in 1702, was one of the first presentations of vampires in eighteenth century literature,

detailing the story of a French traveller's findings on the Greek island of Mykonos and the events of a specific case of vampirism witnessed there. The work complies with what Heide Crawford defines as one of the two most common kinds of vampire folklore, as it presents a person "who dies violently, either by murder or suicide, and returns to haunt others in the community" (5), as Pitton de Tournefort describes a peasant who "was murdered in the fields" (132) and returned two days later to play "roguish monkey tricks" (132). The man described is more akin to a vengeful spirit or poltergeist, as he lacks the fangs and creaturely description deemed quintessentially vampiric today, despite his identification as a Vrykolakas, the Greek equivalent for vampire. He evokes fear through nuisance and violence rather than blood and death, as amongst many accusations from "tearing clothes", "beating folks in the night, breaking down doors" (134) to having "tumbled about people's goods" and "put out their lamps" (132), Beresford distinguishes "no suggestion he was drinking blood" ('For the blood is the life' 3). Whilst the vampire is still a figure who presents a level of physical threat, here in the form of beating rather than biting, the absence of blood-drinking, now an integral fact of the vampire identity, raises the question of what constituted a vampire in the early 1700s. Within the text, the narrator explains that a vampire epidemic was simply the result of "a few vagabonds" (135) committing crimes and the superstitious population interpreting this as a supernatural threat, as the narrative mocks the inhabitants for their inability to see the very human and natural causes of their alarm. As such, there is no blood-drinking as there is no real monster, and all the listed offences are within human capability, as Pitton de Tournefort uses his Vrykolakas not as an antagonistic character but as a device to ridicule superstition.

"A Voyage into the Levant" is ultimately not about vampires, but rather about those who believe in them, as the text entails a man of science writing to belittle those who lack scientific reasoning and fear the creature. Thus, there is no physical description of the Vrykolakas, instead excessive mocking of the responses of the "poor people" (133), as the vampire exists only in their imaginations, to explain what they don't understand. In taking amusement in the people's anxieties, calling their actions "as good as comedy to us every morning" (134), the narrator reveals he regards the "poor people" with disdain rather than sympathy: they are deemed lesser, both in class and intelligence, as they are also poor in lacking a wealth of knowledge. The narrator's superiority is expressed continuously, in his shocked revelation that the people didn't understand that the warmth and fumes of the corpse were natural, and in the regard for "their notion of the dead's being re-animated" (133) as merely a "notion" and not a "fact". The vampire is born from their lack of knowledge, and a clear distinction between the facts of the educated West and "their" beliefs in the superstitious East gains significance through Crawford's suggestion that the author is the "unsuspecting witness to a supposed case of vampirism" (6). It is difficult to confidently state that the account is one of fiction, as Pitton de Tournefort wrote his manuscript upon travelling around Eastern Europe, and as the botanist to French King Louis XIV, he was a man of science himself (Crawford, 6). If we are to consider the work a memoir then the text's movement towards disbelief in the supernatural becomes a context for situating the rise in vampire literature, as perhaps the rise of vampires in fiction was a direct result of the understanding of vampires as fictional characters. Furthermore, we may understand the vampire's original purpose: to explain occurrences that people could not otherwise understand.

By 1839, Aleksey Tolstoy's "The Family of the Vourdalak" can present the vampire as a very real threat in a very fictional story, as the vampire as literary villain emerges and we see a transformation in the monster being used to excite fear purposefully in the Gothic tradition. The novella, set in eighteenth-century Serbia, features a recounting of the experiences of an aristocrat, and is told like a ghost story to a group of "European intellectuals" (Tolstoy 281) under the premise that it is a tale "so strange, so horrible and so *authentic* that it will suffice to strike even the most jaded of imaginations with terror" (282). Whilst the emphasis of "*authentic*" may appear mocking, like Pitton de Tournefort's regard for vampiric belief as "comedy", Tolstoy's tale adopts the idea that vampires are a very real threat, stressing this through even the "intellectuals" being fearful.

The narrator furthers this by listing factual evidence for vampires, referring to "many eyewitness accounts", "commissions... appointed many times by German emperors to study alleged epidemics of vampirism" (285) and claims that "entire villages in Bosnia and Hungary have been transformed" (284). These claims are technically accurate, as, for example, Hungary did see huge epidemics: the biggest epidemic of rabies was recorded in Hungary in the eighteenth century, and Dr Juan Gómez Alonso did argue a link between human rabies and vampirism myths (Santos 512). This kind of fear of infection does feature in the story, as in summary the protagonist stays with a family whose father becomes a Vourdalak, the Russian name for vampire, and who returns to the house to spread the infection, resulting in terror and them eventually becoming the titular family of vampires. Rather than mocking superstition and fears of supernatural epidemics, Tolstoy uses it to ground his villain and to make the threat feel more real, as the authenticity of the vampire beliefs creates a more frightening and effective Gothic story, where intelligence does not save people from fear.

Tolstoy's short story is more instantly recognisable as a work of vampire fiction, as it has the "dark forest" (287) Gothic setting, "sharpened stake" (298) and "dead bodies who rise from their graves to suck the blood of the living" (284) that can be now recognised as "traditional" elements of vampire stories. Unlike in "A Voyage into the Levant", Tolstoy's vampires are frequently described, and are often associated with death. Gorcha, the first member of the family to become a Vourdalak, has "pale, emaciated features" (297), "colourless lips" (297), a "waxen face" (299) and "sunken eyes" (299), and thus is presented to look at least ill, if not deathly. Tolstoy is progressively less subtle in these descriptions as the text continues, as Gorcha is later said to have "corpselike breath" (299) and a "corpse-like face" (302), before his son, Georges, ultimately calls him "Corpse!" and "creature of the grave!" (306). This excessive emphasis and increasingly close resemblance of Gorcha to death suggests increasing risk to the family's lives, made more intense by the revelation that the Vourdalak "prefer to suck the blood of their closest relatives" (284). As Gorcha is surrounded by his family an undercurrent of tension is created within the novella, and not only is there added horror in the monster threatening them being their beloved father, but they are more at risk given the close emotional connection, as love for Gorcha prevents them from killing him, and in turn love for his grandchild after infection causes his mother to be infected, and then her husband. The vampire becomes a symbol for vulnerability and human fallibility, as the eventual epidemic stems from their trust, or else is the result of inevitability and weakness.

The extent of the Vourdalak's destruction demonstrates how much the vampire has become a threatening figure, as the reference to entire villages being transformed appears as foreshadowing when it is revealed towards the novella's climax that the town has been overrun, not just by hysteria but with actual vampirism. This again can be likened to reports of true events, as the case of an initial man being infected and spreading vampirism to a town is incredibly like the story of Arnold Paole (Dalton 19), and the vampire epidemic of 1731, which also took place in modern-day Serbia. This account allegedly involved the return of former soldier Paole to his betrothed as he fled home after contracting vampirism. Despite attempts to dispel the curse, Paole went on to cause others to become vampires, just like Gorcha who, despite his son's suspicions and attempts to convince the family to be wary, eventually infects the entire village. Vampires are thus transformed in Tolstoy's text as they are presented as a much more serious threat than in Pitton de Tournefort's account: they are monsters who bring about a genuine threat of death, at least within this fictional context. The most terrifying aspect is that despite a complete comprehension of the familiar situation of vampire fears, unlike in "A Voyage" this does not make one safe, and in fact only the more unfamiliar outsider of the diplomat narrating the story escapes with his life. As such, the vampire comes to defy reason and prevent safety, in a huge contrast from the Vrykolakas belief which supplied sense and comfort.

Whilst the Count may not start an epidemic as such, the pale, blood-sucking monster who can infect others is a familiar character, and accordingly it is in Tolstoy's writing that we begin to recognise the vampire of *Dracula:* the vampire who poses a real threat. The increasing danger of

the vampire is a direct result of its shift from superstition to literary monster, through which the vampire becomes a metaphor and a means of exploring humanity. Though superstition still features in "The Family of the Vourdalak", arguably the real existence of vampires within the story transforms this from superstition into knowledge, as it does not serve superstition's purpose of solving the problem of the unknown and filling the gaps of knowledge not yet explained by science. This is what Pitton de Tournefort's vampire does, but in the transformation to literary the vampire instead serves to create fear, due in part to the genre of Gothic fiction, as monsters come to expose what humans find most terrifying. Ironically, this could still be the unknown, as there is an increasing element of mystery across the texts, and a huge contrast from the total awareness of vampire myths in "A Voyage" to *Dracula* where Lucy is only explicitly revealed to have been bitten by a "vampire" on page 167 (Stoker 167). This may be a result of the rising influence of detective fiction and mystery stories in the nineteenth century, and the focus on arousing intrigue by omitting details until later, or alternatively the transformation may be a result of the ever-increasing number of scientific developments at this time creating an age of information and knowledge where the most terrifying concept for a Gothic story would be the fear of the unknown.

Before *Dracula,* a sense of the unknown is presented in "The Horla" by Guy de Maupassant, a short horror story written in 1887 also in the style of journal entries, which documents a man's descent into madness as he is plagued by an invisible presence known as a Horla, a different kind of vampire which drains energy rather than blood. The man's fate is perhaps what could have happened to Jonathan Harker had he remained trapped in Dracula's castle, both men unable to escape an evil which they cannot fully comprehend and feel powerless against. Whilst the Horla cannot be seen and thus again lacks visual descriptions, it is more akin to the Count in holding a stronger and more powerful position than the vampires of previous texts. As in *Dracula* the presence remains unidentified for a significant portion of the beginning of the story, but it is not so much the lack of knowledge which is terrifying, but rather the lack of control.

A significant difference to the Horla is that while the Vrykolakas and the Vourdalak were viewed as threatening, they did not harm the narrators of their respective texts. The actual risk from these vampires, particularly in "A Voyage into the Levant", was minimal, as there was an escape, and the humans still had power against these figures. This is not the case in "The Horla". The story presents an intense power dynamic between the human narrator and the vampire, as it epitomises both the eighteenth-century Gothic novel and the vampire novel, in accordance to Robert Tracy's definitions: it is about "psychological terror", and "physical, specifically sexual, fear" (33). The representation of the vampire in de Maupassant's work is predominately evident in the responses of the narrator to this figure, as he is as terrified as Gorcha is corpselike. There is excessive description of the physical symptoms of the narrator's terror, including a "quickened pulse, dilated pupils, and jangling nerves"(de Maupassant 324), "unaccountable restlessness" (324) and "beating heart and trembling limbs" (325), all of which serve to emphasise just how intensely the Horla is feared, with many areas of the narrator's body affected. The physicality of these descriptions is paralleled by the physicality of the Horla, who is described "eyeing me, pervading me, dominating me" (329) and "feeling me, getting up on my bed, kneeling on my chest, taking my neck between his hands and squeezing" (325). These short clauses mirror the shortness of the narrator's breath due to fear, and to be on the narrator's bed, and to touch them so intimately, undoubtedly presents an extremely "physical, specifically sexual" (Tracy 33) view of the Horla, which is only intensified by the excessive number of actions it undertakes. That the vampire can exert so much physical strength and control over the human presents a transformed image of the vampire as highly powerful and perhaps even superior, as the vampire is not just a problem to be solved or a figure to be killed, as in the previous texts, but rather it is an unstoppable force against which the narrator is powerless. It is this powerlessness, perhaps, that humans most fear.

These kinds of images are akin to those later found in *Dracula,* as there are multiple instances of sexual domination in the novel. The act of blood-drinking is highly intimate to begin with, but that this often occurs with Lucy and Mina while the women are partially undressed in night-gowns

adds a more sexual element, and again there is an increased human vulnerability in being attacked in the private space of the bed and while sleeping. We see the physical domination over Mina in the discovery of the Count in her room, as "he held both Mrs Harker's hands, keeping them away" and "his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom" (234). As in "The Horla", the vampire possesses a more physical control and holds the human captive, evoking a stronger sense of powerlessness than in earlier vampire tales and suggesting a transformation towards a vampire which comes to embody a fear of being helpless and vulnerable.

It is the domination and power of the Horla that forms the basis for its representation, as this is stressed through numerous altercations in which the narrator is powerless to do anything but submit to the Horla's will. He cannot leave the house, as "He does not wish it" (329), and he is compelled to follow orders, like when he "must, simply must" (330) go and eat strawberries. This establishes a relationship almost of ownership, as the narrator describes his status as "slave-like" (329), and in the extreme response to eating strawberries of almost a dozen exclamative sentences, he calls to God to "save me! Help me! Deliver me!" (330). As with the incident in bed, the narrator is the subject and not the one taking action, as de Maupassant intensifies the notion that this character has no power and cannot save himself. This reaction may seem dramatic as "what agony! What torture! What terror!" (330) under ordinary circumstances would not be applied to eating strawberries, but this is not mocking, as it perhaps would be in "A Voyage"; instead it highlights the panic of the man who cannot control something as mundane as when he eats. The idea of an invisible presence which drains energy, can confine a man to his bed, and controls when he can eat, may be metaphoric of a physical or mental illness, as the vampire could symbolise the ailment, struggles and frustrations of being trapped and isolated by it. The dramatic ending may exaggerate just how painful and desperate this situation can be, as whilst on the surface we may question how damaging the Horla really is – it seems relatively unharmful in just feeding the character, picking a rose, and drinking a lot of water and milk throughout the story's course – this impacts the narrator to the extent that in the end he burns down his house with his servants inside in a wretched attempt to be free. Whether symbolic of illness or otherwise, the Horla represents a sense of power which threatens the human condition.

Notions of power being what makes the vampire so threatening are not just evident within "The Horla", as Tolstoy's work explores "the underlying theme of power dynamics between the sexes" that Niamh McShane states is common in the "relationship between victim and vampire" (5). It is significant that it is Sdenka, Gorcha's daughter and the main character's love interest, who is represented as the most physically horrific of the vampires, as where her father is simply shown as dead, she has a smile like "the distorted grimace of a decaying skull" (313). This more graphic image of decomposition and twisted beauty may be read through a feminist lens to represent that it is more horrifying for a woman to be an undead monster because she is supposed to be fair and delicate. Moreover, for a woman to possess the "savage strength" and "strange wantonness of manner" (311) of a vampire is especially horrific as women were not supposed to be powerful, making the transformation of Sdenka the most tragic and terrifying of her family.

These connections to power and forwardness may be associated with the same sexual fear of the Horla, but furthermore with the tales of vampires which predate eighteenth century literature, as the earliest representations of vampires were women. From the Greek and Roman *Lamia* and *Striges* to Portugese *Bruxsa* and Malaysian *Langsuir,* a variety of female demons who seduced men and drank the blood of children (Heldreth 200), specifically female vampires have been a universal and long-lasting fear. This continues into *Dracula* with the "three young women" who make "thrilling and repulsive" (33) advances on Jonathan, and who, alongside Lucy, all feed on children in the novel. Vampires in this instance are metaphoric of women who don't conform to their positions, not just as mothers or pure and virtuous figures, but also as secondary to men, as Lilith, known in Jewish legends as Adam's first wife (Heldreth 200), was demonised and had her name translated to mean "vampire" because she refused to submit to Adam's will (Groom 11). Vampires were therefore scary as they represented an unacceptable level of power, not just in relation to a

female uprising which has persisted as a threat, but more broadly in their existence as a being which was stronger than humans and defied the natural order. Again, we see evidence of the vampire representing a threat to the established position and understanding of humanity.

The likening of vampires to demons, or even Devils, has also remained a constant in vampire literature, perhaps as a result of this. Pitton de Tournefort's describes "carcasses re-animated by the Devil" (136) and calls to "drive out the demon" (132) and "hinder the Devil" (135). This is similar to Tolstoy's "satanic" (313) and "devil Gorcha" (308), the depiction of the Horla as "he who was exorcised by uneasy priests" (332), and Stoker's vampires as "devils of the Pit" (46). Throughout, the vampire is likened to these monstrous figures because it is seen as evil, and thus vampires are explained using the figure of the Devil as this was an evil that could be recognised and understood. Similar to the use of vampire superstition as an explanation for harm, the categorisation was a method of re-establishing control, as if the vampire could be represented as the work of the Devil then God could be a saviour, and people were not helpless against the threat. Calls to religion are also frequent throughout the four texts, chronologically from "they knew not now which Saint to call upon" (135) to "the whole family made a sign of the cross" (287) to "ah God, God, God! Is there a God? If God there be, save me!" (330) and "God help me!" (72). Whilst the increased desperation from "The Horla" accentuates the more dramatic nature of this text and again the transformation of the vampire over time to become a more dangerous and serious threat, overall these constants suggest that the vampire was predominantly represented as a terrifying figure of evil from which the people sought to be free. Escaping this often seemed helpless, hence they turned to God for aid. However, this division of good and evil is not so black and white: God is a passive rather than a heroic presence in the stories who does not answer calls to help, and religion is not a saviour. Not only does God prove unjust in allowing even the "wonderful Madam Mina" (195) to be bitten and risk becoming a vampire, blurring the lines of evil, but moreover, concerning the Horla, the exceptional power and authority of an invisible and superior presence known often as "He" is remarkably like the position of God. This struggle to identify and justify right and wrong demonstrates how much the vampire can shake human understanding, as it represents a threat to all that is known. Whilst in *Dracula* there may be parallels between Lucifer's tempting of Eve to fall and the Count's corruption of women, with feasting on blood rather than fruit, the vampire is not about a threat of corruption or making humans sin but rather a realisation that humans are not what they believe they are, and are weaker and more vulnerable than they admit.

Perhaps the vampire becomes more threatening as the contrast between the familiar and the unfamiliar widens throughout the stories, as the vampire was so terrifying because it could only be understood as a demonic presence, and thus there was this fear of the unknown: the more familiar the vampire could be made, the less terrifying it was. In "A Voyage", though the traveller is in foreign lands, the situation is entirely familiar, as they are comfortable and even amused because they are aware of the superstition of "those corpses, which they fancy come to life again" (132). In Tolstoy's tale, fear is increased as although the vampire is familiar in that the family already know of the need for a stake and about the threat of the "cursed *vourdalak,* come to suck your blood" (284), this presence is unfamiliar within their familiar family home, and within the figure of their elderly father. This may be connected to Freud's definition of the uncanny, the unease felt when something familiar becomes suddenly strange and unfamiliar (Masschelein 1), as Gorcha's recognisable but unrecognisable appearance is particularly terrifying in being not just the introduction of evil but the loss of a familiar and comforting figure. Furthermore, the vampire of "The Horla", as in *Dracula,* begins as an entirely unfamiliar creature, as the narrator struggles to identify it as a vampire and even as something that exists beyond their own suspected madness, and this juxtaposition of the unknown to the familiarity of their home and all the components that comprise life here is extreme, and thus evermore terrifying, as again this may be related to both the uncanny and a loss of control.

The vampire transforms to evoke more fear the more unfamiliar it becomes and the more it disrupts what is known, as Nick Groom suggests that it "questions the very being of what it is to be human" (23). In Pitton de Tournefort's story, to be human is to be knowledgeable, as, true to the time, the traveller believes themselves to be superior to those of foreign lands and is unafraid because they know vampires are myths. In this work and Tolstoy's, humans are capable of control, able to dispel the threat of vampires as their knowledge affords them power. It is in "The Horla" that this is most strongly disrupted, as the control the Horla exerts shakes all that the narrator is, as to be powerless is not to be human. This is prominent within Stoker's novel, as the trapped Jonathan's realisations that "there is no escape" (30) and "I was doomed" (39) leads him to the response "I sat down and simply cried" (39), and at another point he "sank down unconscious" (35) when overcome by horror. The inducing of such helpless expressions of fear are particularly shocking in a man, the vampire thereby symbolising a threat to established ideologies and a disruption of order, as ultimately the vampire challenged the accepted understanding of humans.

This ties to the very nature of the vampire myth, as its invention as a superstition arguably arose from the need to understand humanity. Many have tried to explain why myths of vampirism first occurred, with one of the most common ideas being porphyria. This was an illness of the blood which caused pale skin, a sensitivity to sunlight, and the appearance of larger teeth due to receding gums (Etingoff 11), thus creating the appearance of fangs, and of the vampire which has come to be recognised in popular culture. However, though this may match Stoker's vampire and could be the basis for his appearance, the vampire myth far predates this stereotypical image, and perhaps a more fitting idea, as raised previously, is that vampires were simply utilised to explain things that could not otherwise be understood. Sheila Stewart writes that a belief in evil creatures helped to "explain why and how people got sick or why natural disasters and freak accidents sometimes happened" and "gave people a better feeling of control", as if they had something to blame for the cause of these instances then they could take action to prevent them (Stewart 10). As such, the attempt in "The Horla" to lock the creature inside the house, the possession of a stake in "The Family of the Vourdalak", and the great many measures undertaken in "A Voyage" including obliging the Papas to fast, sticking naked swords over the grave, and burning the body, were all comforting, logical steps to take to eradicate the threat of vampires, and ways of coping with and understanding the human experience.

The vampire is transformed across the three short stories from the work of the overactive imagination, believed in only by the uneducated "others" in foreign lands, to a threatening revenant capable of bringing death to entire villages, to an incredibly powerful and inescapable presence made more terrifying because it didn't simply bring the threat of death, but rather it could control a person's life. Distinct differences in representation are thus prominent across the three texts, and into *Dracula*, but at its core they are unified through fear, which Beresford states is "the one common element to almost all cases of vampirism" (10). Fear of the vampire remains constant, and explains the universality of the creature, as the vampire is an ageless and international phenomenon, which has transformed across time and through literature to answer to the fears of its society. As proved by the existence of words for "vampire" in countless languages, including Vrykolakas, Vourdalak and Horla, it was not one singular identity, but rather was a concept that evolved to suit the needs of humanity. In the early 1700s, it may have been used as a scapegoat or explanation for ill-events, but this then transformed in literature as the Enlightenment took place and the vampire grew to become more of a metaphor. It expressed a fear that humanity could fall back to its humble origins as creatures relying on superstitions to interpret the world, and it may not always be the intelligent, powerful and dominating species it believed it to be.

The vampire grew from a figure of superstition as the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement beginning in the eighteenth century, placed prominence on the importance of logic and reason. Grave-dwelling monsters could no longer be regarded as real, hence the mocking from Pitton de Tournefort of those who believed in them, and instead the vampire of literature rose to prominence as a kind of ghost story, as it appears in "The Family of the Vourdalak", in a time

when Gothic tales and horror became popular. The vampire transformed with its society, as by "The Horla" it is arguably less of a monster, as it was not the supernatural that was feared by the later Victorian age, but rather what this represented. Instead, the Horla is represented as a creature less obviously evil, as it is more complex than the Vrykolakas, for instance, that just causes mischief, but instead is an intelligent being of great power. Perhaps this is because the most terrifying idea, at a time where human intelligence was valued and people believed themselves to be superior, was that something could possess greater power than humans.

In brief, the vampire myth developed from its first introduction in eighteenth century literature from a monster of superstition used to explain what was not understood, to a complex literary villain used to explore the fears of the time, and to provide entertainment in an age where Gothic tales were becoming increasingly common. Motifs of fear, control, and power, or the lack thereof, are prominent throughout the vampire myth, as at its core the vampire story is about the relationship between humans and monsters, a relationship which began far before the publication of Stoker's *Dracula*.

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"We are fighting a war against a story": Metafiction's Declaration of War, its Objectives, and the Tactics it Deploys

Dominic Thompson

Abstract

Through etymological study and an exploration into metafiction's most notable emergence following World War Two, I will expose how metafiction is intrinsically linked to war. However, the main threads will concern themselves with why, and how, war continues to be contained within a metafictional style of writing. In particular, I illuminate an objective of metafiction as being one which - in retaliation to traditional realist fiction's previous attempts - aims to prove that war history can be respectfully fictionalised, using *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Atonement*. Through the blurring of fact and fiction present in *mise en abyme*, instances of narrative unreliability which project the structural inconsistencies of trauma, and self-reflections on fiction as an ill-equipped framework for containing war, my researched metafiction proves that it can respectfully fictionalise war, because it never presumes to be in contact with a concrete narrative for war history. Secondly, by focusing on what I call the "meta-textual war", I propose that the textual space of every metafictional text internally represents a war between two styles of writing: metafiction and traditional realist fiction. Through close attention to Salvador Plascencia's *The People of Paper* and the added support of metafiction theorists, I deduce that the meta-textual war is waged with complete, textual territory in mind but that it is a war with no winners, because the textual space suffers considerable deconstruction comparable to that of a physical battlefield's destruction. My "Investigation into Metafiction's Declaration of War" instigates and necessitates a study on metafiction-war relations which, otherwise, would have remained largely neglected by literary theorists.

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Introduction

The term "war" has its roots in the Old High German term *werra*, meaning "strife" or "confusion" (Weekley 1613). Over time, this definition has maintained some of its initial meaning but has suffered from being pigeonholed as a term. In the fragile period of the 1930s, which followed World War One and preceded the onslaught of World War Two, courts of law were in need of a definition for their statutes, with British and American courtrooms equating war to the identifiable start and end point at which two parties breach their peace with one another by engaging in violence (Jelf 104; Ronan 642). In later years, however, this model for understanding war has been pitched as outdated. Christine Sylvester reminds us in *Experiencing War (War, Politics and Experience)* that "there are pieces of war in peacetime and pieces of peace in war" (1). Drawing on the Cold War as an example, she disputes the necessitation of wars having an identifiable beginning and end (3). Further, Sylvester challenges the notion that wars can only materialise as a dispute between states, just as military historian Jeremy Black points out that "[t]here are now a whole host of "non-traditional conflicts" to which the term "war" is applied" (Black 42). Former US President Nixon declared a war on drugs in 1971, for example, and cancer, terror and poverty have since materialised as valid, oppositional forces to wage war with, despite being forces of a different make-up to the traditionalised war between bodies (Nixon par. 51 of 70). Whilst these arguments against previous definitions of war prove useful as a means of opening up the term to discussion, it also hinders the possibility of defining what "war" is. Jeremy Black makes the effort to close in on the term, rather than to open it up to further polysemy. He separates war into two definitions; one pertaining to its function, which is "organized large-scale violence" and the other to its cultural and ideological significance, which is it being the "[…] consequence of bellicosity" (42). To close

in on both Black's terms whilst simultaneously taking his antecedents into account, war emerges as *a state of time in which two forces oppose one another, to an extent where substantial instances of violence ensue*, and war will be discussed as such in the following sections.

In a similar vein, metafiction as a term has been the subject of critical debate since it was coined by William H. Gass at the turn of the 1970s (Currie 1). Metafiction's etymology is limited due to its arrival into critical discussion being under half a century old. However, it strikes me as important to consider the prefix *meta-* before I arrive at a conclusive definition for metafiction in my investigation. The prefix descends from the Proto-Indo-European term *me*, meaning to be "in the middle" (Harper n.p.). This was the precursor to the Greek preposition *meta* which, in a similar vein, meant to be "in the midst of" (Harper n.p.). The Greeks built upon the term though, likening *meta-* to qualities of self-awareness, such as being participatory, or to be "in common with" (Harper n.p.). Towards the end of the twentieth century, critics fused the notion of self-awareness rooted in *meta-* with fictional works which, equally, emerged as self-aware, birthing the term *metafiction*. However, this has caused its own debate regarding how to define *metafiction*. In "The Reader in Contemporary Metafiction", Wenche Ommundsen counter-productively remarks that, due to the blurred boundaries which separate metafiction from its other, "all fiction carries within itself the potential for a metafictional reading" (171-172). By comparison, other metafiction theorists attempt to define metafiction through its etymological roots, drawing attention to how it is fiction which expresses a self-awareness of its own construction (Neuman 2-3; Waugh 2). As an example, "Any text that draws the reader's attention to its process of construction by frustrating his or her conventional expectations of meaning and closure and problematises more or less explicitly the ways in which narrative codes [is metafiction]", according to Patricia Waugh (22). Critics seem to be sourcing their own definitions of metafiction from the "[…] direct and immediate concern with fiction-making" which Gass famously defined the term as (qtd. in McCaffery 181). The thread which links all previous definitions though is metafiction's *self-awareness and exploitation of fiction's artifice through an elaborate writing of the parts which make up fiction in its most conventional form*. Now that both war and metafiction can be understood, I will introduce my reasonings for investigating their relationship.

Metafiction's links to war are undeniable. World War Two, and the subsequent arrival of postmodernism, is widely cited as metafiction's point of notable conception (Ommundsen 172; Currie 181; Waugh 21). Amy J. Elias, for example, speculates that "after World War Two mass media is the dominant mode of mimesis, and the novel reacts by relinquishing representation of the real to that media and turning to [metafiction]" (16). If metafiction is to be regarded as fully emerging in the face of war, then it does not seem too irrational a hypothesis to make that, now, a theme of metafiction involves it reflecting on its roots within war. After all, a war of sorts is already resonant between critics as they contrarily seek a definition for the term *metafiction*. Throughout her critically pertinent book *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, Waugh continually draws attention to the oppositional forces – or paradoxes – intrinsic to metafiction, such as its creation and deconstruction of the text; its ability to look outwards and inwards simultaneously; its portrayal of fiction versus reality; its frame-making and frame-breaking (2). By extension, metafiction can be seen to assume a war-torn writing style in the sense of it being constantly at odds with itself. At this point, war and metafiction have been identified as intrinsically linked, but the aims of this investigation are to explore the objectives of metafiction when it sets upon representing war, and the tactics it deploys in order to achieve said objective.

By *objective*, my title means to make a play on the word's usage in war as a target for military advantage, but mainly in reference to my investigation, wherein I will explore what metafiction's *objectives* are, namely what it hopes to achieve when it places war within a narrative framework. Just as military *tactics* are characterised by their actions which are geared towards achieving a desired end, what I mean by the term in my title are the actions which metafiction takes within the writing process in order to achieve its own objectives. Whilst there is a whole host of metafiction texts available to my investigation of metafiction's declaration of war, I have limited myself to three key

texts for the purposes of performing close analysis.

In my first section, I will present an objective of metafiction as one which aims to prove that actual, pre-existing wars can be respectfully approached, sourcing Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement* for my discussion. My second section will look inwards at the process of writing metafiction in Salvador Plascencia's *The People of Paper*, wherein a war presents itself between elements of traditional fiction and metafiction, with complete textual territory appearing as an objective.

1. "All this happened, more or less": Metafiction and the Representation of War History

It seems only appropriate to begin by investigating actual wars which have occurred within reality as we perceive it, and how they are deployed within narratives of metafiction with an entirely different objective in mind. This section will place Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement* into a discussion regarding why they frame war, namely World War Two in this case, within a metafictional style of writing.

One argument is that fiction, in its most popular, traditional realist form, is not equipped with the properties to represent actual wars respectfully because there are aspects of realism, such as war trauma, which traditional realist fiction cannot even come close to ethically discussing. In "The Reader in Contemporary Metafiction", Wenche Ommundsen writes that traditional realist fiction "[…] will situate the reader in time and place by assuming familiarity with historical and geographical conditions" (170). The issue here is with what Ommundsen calls "familiarity". Fiction, in its efforts to create verisimilitude, will often assume a state of familiarity with historical events, such as war, which the author might not have experienced themselves (Sauerberg 49). A lack of respect can then be interpreted from fiction's sense of entitlement to the representation of lived experiences, especially where events as colossal as war are concerned. Taking a more recent historical event as an example, Martin Randall writes in his chapter on metafiction and 9/11 about the lives and experiences of those trapped in the Twin Towers as sacred and "unimaginable" to a point where the act of assuming to know them within the writing process can only be perceived as a lack of respect towards those who were actually affected and traumatised by the war on terror (70). Before moving on, it seems only appropriate that trauma be defined so that traditional realist fiction can be exposed as an unsuitable medium for portraying the traumas of war, and metafiction's own suitability, by comparison, as a medium for portraying it.

Freud, one of the earliest pioneers of trauma studies, proposes that the "[…] operative cause of the illness is not the trifling physical injury but the effect of fright – the physical trauma", ergo trauma is a momentary experience with detrimental, lasting effects (Freud, "Freud – Complete Works" 8). From this, it can be derived that trauma is only available to those who experience it; it cannot be imagined by external parties because it is tied to the individual and their exclusive experience of a physically or psychologically damaging event. Just as trauma cannot be imagined, it is also not easily extractable in the eyes of Freud because it exists as a "foreign body" in the unconscious (Freud, "Freud – Complete Works" 9, 14). As a consequence, traditional realist fiction's attempts to portray the traumas of war are, in theory, presuming to be in contact with trauma's manifestations in the unconscious of various subjects. In this section I aim to argue that, in the face of this debate, metafiction writes actual war into its narrative to prove that the traumatic experiences which characterise the historicised war experience can be respectfully represented.

Through the writer-critic paradox which so often accompanies its writing style, metafiction creates realism whilst simultaneously distancing itself from it. For this reason, most metafiction theorists will argue in unison that metafiction can serve an empathetic function, because it is tentative in its approach and constantly reflecting upon itself (Neuman 6; Randall 68). Both Kurt Vonnegut and Ian McEwan employ a similar structural model for their novels, wherein they represent the narrative which we see as a writing process, as much as it is a reading process. *Slaughterhouse Five* criticises its own right to portray war from beginning to end, writing in the

opening sentence that "[a]ll this happened, more or less. The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true" (Vonnegut 1). Here, Vonnegut imbues his text with a sense of narrative unreliability which trauma itself possesses. Among others in the professional field of trauma studies, James Berger notes how "[t]he traumatic event is not remembered. It disrupts previous ways of thinking and feeling. [...] Thus, the language used in relation to trauma – as narrative, descriptive, evaluative – is necessarily metaphoric" (181). Acknowledging this, it becomes safe to assume that the most respectful way of representing a trauma narrative is through metaphorical tools which project the condition itself, and Vonnegut actions this through his narrative's structure being similar to that of a trauma structure.

Vonnegut declares that his narrative will be fragmented into "parts", just as those experiencing war trauma, likewise, would be unable to recall their experiences in a clear, chronological manner. Vonnegut's allusion to his own narration being "more or less" accurate mirrors the hallucinatory effects of trauma, but also the sufferer's own unreliability as a narrator, due to their experiences being rooted in the unconscious.[1] From the outset of *Slaughterhouse Five*, it becomes apparent that Vonnegut is challenging fiction's prior attempts at framing war's history through metafiction's natural exploitation of the fictional form.

He targets the typically adopted chronological telling of war events when he imbues Billy Pilgrim, the main character and prescribed writer of the narrative, with the disposition of being able to travel in time without warning. In the space of ten pages, for example, Pilgrim is transported from his kidnapping in adulthood by aliens known as Tralfamadores, back in time to a family trip to the Grand Canyon, to ten days later on the same family trip, and then forwards to his imprisonment by Nazis in the Second World War (Vonnegut 70-80). In a sense, there is a constant digression from the war narrative by Vonnegut, which respectfully interprets what is now called the post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms of World War Two veterans, who are known to digress from talking about their war experiences and how, when they do, they discuss them in a non-linear, nonsensical fashion (Gregg par. 7-11). Vonnegut parodies traditional fiction through an instance in which a war movie's events are reversed by Billy Pilgrim's time-travelling:

> American planes, full of holes and wounded men and corpses took off backwards from an airfield in England. Over France, a few German fighter planes flew at them backwards, sucked bullets and shell fragments from some of the planes and crewmen. They did the same for wrecked American bombers on the ground, and those planes flew up backwards to join the formation. (60)

Vonnegut trivialises the entertainment value present in war cinema, exploiting how – when fictional portrayals are reversed – the interpretation of events changes entirely, and traditional fiction is exposed as an ill-fitting framework for war history. War memory, according to Vonnegut, cannot emerge in an organised fashion, and so he never once represents it as such; "[s]peaking of people from Poland: Billy Pilgrim accidentally saw a Pole hanged in public, about three days after Billy got to Dresden" (128). Pilgrim's transition of thought from a Polish song to the memory of a Pole's execution uses the guise of the Freudian slip within narrated speech to inform on how, even when tales of war history do emerge within the traumatised, the manner in which memory arises is unpredictable (Freud, "Psychopathology of Everyday Life" 73-76). In the process of embodying the characteristics of war trauma and criticising his own right to write about war history, an air of respectability can be interpreted from *Slaughterhouse Five*, one of which traditional realist fiction lacks. However, Ian McEwan allows a much larger presence for traditional fiction in *Atonement* when he sets upon respectfully framing war within metafiction.

McEwan sections his novel into three parts as he frames the love affair of Celia Tallis and Robbie Turner, which suffers at the jealousy of Celia's sister, Briony. Part one begins prior to the war, the second part during, and the third part after the war, when Celia and Robbie are finally reunited again. The majority of the novel is thus indicatory of traditional fiction, in that it follows a chronologically sequential telling of events and a methodical segmentation of parts. However, it

is deduced that, from an early age when "[s]he could see the simple sentences, the accumulating telepathic symbols, unfurling at the nib's end" (McEwan 40), Briony did in fact become a successful author, and is even presented as fictitiously authoring the narrative's three parts up until the postscript (366). Early inklings into Briony as the omniscient narrator, and subsequent inklings into the novel's metafictional capacities, manifest themselves in the book's main narrative as well.

For example, attention towards the process of writing the main narrative's tripartite structure materialises from the perspective of Briony. Even as Celia and Robbie are allowed their own perspectives throughout the book, it is also noted through Briony's eyes that "scene[s] could be recast, through Celia's eyes, and then Robbie's" (McEwan 41), casting attention towards the novel's frequented approach of retelling events from different characters' perspectives. Equally, Briony's character spends considerable amounts of time toiling over the meanings of specific words in the dictionary, and the main narrative unfolds in conjunction with her creation of a play called "The Trials of Arabella", attributing a creative craft to her character which her fellow characters lack by comparison (6, 12). Her fellow characters are pitted against visual imagery which prompts thought into them being contained in a constructed reality, thus drawing attention to their imprisonment within the fictional construct. Robbie's gaze is limited to a "framed rectangle of sky" (76) as he gazes out of a skylight, highlighting his existence within the physical novel's four walls. Likewise, "[t]here was a story he was plotting with himself as the hero" (91), which links to his own lack of agency as the character within a story which is doomed to criminalise him. Even during *Atonement*'s main narrative, which is more indicatory of traditional fiction, metafiction emerges through these minor instances. When these instances are viewed in light of the novel's postscript, however, McEwan shoos the reader away from traditional fiction, instead encouraging the reader to revaluate his novel as a metafictional portrayal of World War Two.

In the postscript, which he titles "London 1999", McEwan presents Briony's character writing a diary entry in the first person (351). However, McEwan most poignantly exposes traditional realist fiction as a redundant means of framing her sister's love affair through the war when it is realised that Briony changed the main narrative's ending. During part three when Briony meets Celia and Robbie in London, she agrees to change her statement regarding a rape which she accused Robbie of as a child, except these events are learned to be a lie. Instead, Briony writes in the postscript that:

> Lovers and their happy endings have been on my mind all night long. As into the sunset we sail. An unhappy inversion. It occurs to me that I have not travelled very far after all, since I wrote my little play. Or rather, I've made a huge digression and doubled back to my starting place. It is only in this last version that my lovers end well, standing side by side on a South London pavement as I walk away. All the preceding drafts were pitiless. But now I can no longer think what purpose would be served if, say, I tried to persuade my reader, by direct or indirect means, that Robbie Turner died of septicaemia at Bray Dunes on 1 June 1940, or that Celia was killed in September of the same year by the bomb that destroyed Balham Underground station. (370)

McEwan's tactic of having Briony change Celia and Robbie's ending serves to implicate traditional fiction's core function of satisfying the needs of entertainment, at the cost of disrespecting what actually occurred: Robbie's and Celia's separate deaths. Upon reflection on whether to include the truthful death of Celia and Robbie in her published copy, Briony asks, "[w]ho would want to believe that, except in the service of the bleakest realism?" (371). McEwan's rhetorical questioning of the process of writing about war history cause him to, in the process, respectfully fictionalise war, as he imbues his central character with the self-criticism which traditional fiction lacks when it objectively portrays war. Likewise, *Slaughterhouse Five* expresses a concern with the writing process when one sets upon authoring actual war experiences.

After hearing that he planned on writing of his experiences in the war, Mary, the wife of one of Billy Pilgrim's war friends, makes a critical point:

> "But you're not going to write it that way, are you." […] "You'll pretend you were men instead of babies, and you'll be played in the movies by Frank Sinatra and John Wayne or some of those other glamorous, war-loving dirty old men. And war will look just wonderful, so we'll have a lot more of them." So then I understood. It was war that made her so angry. She didn't want her babies or anyone else's babies killed in wars. And she thought wars were partly encouraged by books and movies. (12)

In conjunction with Briony's self-reflection on the fictionalisation of war events, Vonnegut targets the entertainment value present in war's previous representations in fiction. He draws upon the pop culture icons Frank Sinatra and John Wayne to challenge how traumatic historical events in the past have been disrespected through fictional pursuits, such as the spaghetti western. Just as the cowboy is glamourised in spaghetti westerns, Mary fears that the soldier will be glorified into an archetype through Pilgrim's conversion of war into something of entertainment value through the novel form. From this stems her fears that more wars will follow, causing danger to her children and, ultimately, guaranteeing their deaths. What can be extracted from Mary's anxieties is post-traumatic stress disorder, which only the passive mentioning of war's inclusion in a creative pursuit triggers. Vonnegut imbues his text with a self-critical moment here which takes into account how the traumas of war are not limited to the event itself, but how they are in fact transgenerational, and must be respected accordingly. He even acknowledges the book as an anti-war novel. In making arguments such as these, Vonnegut and McEwan set their texts up internally and structurally with an attention to war trauma which respects the lives affected in World War Two and thereafter. By comparison, traditional realist fiction disrespects with its "pointillist approach to verisimilitude, the correction of detail that cumulatively gives such satisfaction" (McEwan 359). By extension, both texts can be viewed under the umbrella term historiographic metafiction through their portrayal of war, and they will now be explored as working through this term as a tactic towards respectfully weaving war into their narratives.

According to Linda Hutcheon, who coined the term, historiographic metafiction emerges in the face of the problem that both realist fiction and narrative history attempt to create self-sufficient, non-changeable narrative worlds (76). "Fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames […], frames which historiographic metafiction first establishes and then crosses" (76-77). Just as Hutcheon confirms reality, both in its past and present portrayals, to be subject to interpretation, Patricia Waugh writes in relation to metafiction that "[…] reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures" (7). Much of the respect present in *Atonement* and *Slaughterhouse Five*'s portrayals of war lie in how they, equally, never presume a concrete narrative for the war experience. Throughout Vonnegut's novel, the phrase "so it goes" is repeated after someone's death as a brief source of comic relief. The phrase is inferred really as "so *the story* goes" to signal that Vonnegut is presenting us with a storyteller telling his version of events, and whenever this phrase appears it reminds the reader that Vonnegut's narrative is just one story among many for interpreting the war. "So it goes" is just how it *goes* for Billy Pilgrim, not for other lives affected by the war, and Vonnegut includes this phrase to remind the reader, through metafiction, that history is a complex construction and so cannot be fixed to one narrative exclusively. During the Dresden fire-bombings, "[t]he girls that Billy had seen naked were all being killed […] in a much shallower shelter in another part of the stockyards. So it goes" (Vonnegut 146). This could be traced as fact, but Vonnegut moves from grounding in factual events to an elaborate description of how:

> [w]hen the Americans and their guards did come out, the sky was black with smoke. The sun was an angry little pinhead. Dresden was like the moon now, nothing but

minerals. The stones were hot. Everybody else in the neighbourhood was dead. So it goes. (146)

Here, Vonnegut deploys the simile to liken the destroyed Dresden to the moon's equal absence of construction. He channels his emotions into a personification of the sun as an "angry little pinhead". Vonnegut's blurring of fact and fiction works through historiographic metafiction's intermingling of factual and fictional frames, which is for the purpose of problematising the point at which fact ends and fiction begins, thus disrupting the fixed, archival view of history.[2] Likewise, *Atonement*'s historiography emerges when it "foregrounds 'framing' as a problem, examining frame procedures in the construction of the real world and of novels" (Waugh 28). The novel's third part ends with Robbie Turner going to sleep, but what Bryony neglects to narrate is that he is actually dying until McEwan places this information in her postscript. However, this blurring of fact and fiction is all contained within the finished product: the book itself. When Robbie is fighting the war in France, he reflects upon his time with Celia; "[t]he story could resume, the one that he had been planning on that evening walk" (McEwan 227). Here, McEwan frames a recollected story between Robbie and Celia within Robbie's narrative as it unfolds in France, which falls within the narrative which Bryony puppeteers, all of which fall under the umbrella of McEwan's novel itself. Through overt usage of *mise en abyme*, McEwan frames fact and fiction together by confusing them within a muddle of narrative layers, exposing how fact and fiction can be perceived as one and the same. By exposing historical events as historiography, it would be easy to assume that what McEwan and Vonnegut are arguing is that war can never be respectfully represented, not even within metafiction. But in the process of surfacing this debate within their own writings, they protect their own texts from scrutiny because they have interrogated their own process of writing war history before a critic, in any capacity, can. Whilst the friction between elements of traditional fiction and metafiction have been briefly explored in this section, they are still yet to be explored in their capacities as a war in and of themselves. This will shape the discussion in my next section.

2. 'Wreck this Journal': Metafiction's War for Textual Territory

In my previous section, war was easily exposed as a theme in metafiction because it drew upon wars which are framed within our own perceptions of the "real". In this next section, however, my attention will be concerned with a war which is intrinsic to the contents of metafiction itself. Metafiction is embodied by a traditional realist fiction writing style, just as much as it writes from its preferred, metafictional angle. However, because criticism of the writing process is at the core of metafiction, a war is waged with elements of traditional realist fiction in the process. Patricia Waugh quite aptly remarks that the "[…] well-made plot, chronological sequence, the authoritative omniscient author, the rational connection between what characters 'do' and what they 'are', the causal connection between 'surface' details and the 'deep', 'scientific laws of existence'" all find themselves within metafiction's line of fire because they support traditional fiction and its world-view that reality can be ordered, and this has already been proven in my previous section (Waugh 7; McCaffery 183). Consequently, two opposing sides become viewable in this war: traditional fiction versus metafiction. Waugh writes that this occurs "through typographic experiment and manipulation of white space" (96), just as Peter Stoicheff, in "The Chaos of Metafiction", claims that "the [metafiction] text ceases to transmit the exterior world, and interrogates its own medium of expression" instead (87). Both Stoicheff and Waugh conjunctively remark on how metafiction takes an introvertive approach, ergo the war between metafiction and traditional fiction occurs with the textual space in mind. To build on this, Robert Scholes, in "Metafiction", highlights how "[m]etafiction assimilates all the perspectives of criticism into the fictional process itself", illuminating the war as in-text and, at the risk of creating a tongue-twister, due to a friction with fiction which is instigated by metafiction (101). It goes without saying then that the textual space, or the territory of the novel itself, is metafiction's battleground, crafting a battle which likens itself to the civil war, and concurrently asserts critical explorations into the book as a metaphor for the

world (Waugh 3). In this section I will argue that, using the textual space as a battleground, metafiction wages a war with traditional fiction, using elements of its own writing style to assert its territory within the book. Salvador Plascencia embodies this war which I have just proposed in *The People of Paper*.

The inhabitants of his novel are led by Frederico de la Fe into a war against the omniscient narrator Saturn, which is later learned to be a pseudonym for Salvador Plascencia himself (Plascencia 102). The inhabitants of Saturn's world will be investigated in their metafictional capacities, due to the fact that they are self-aware of their own fictional status. Salvador Plascencia, despite embodying metafiction in the sense that he writes himself into the novel, will be explored as an embodiment of traditional fiction; he seeks to maintain omniscience over the grand narrative and all the characters within it.

For the purposes of investigating this war whilst simultaneously making the most sense, I will adopt the term "intratextual war" to refer to the conflict between both these elements of writing in *The People of Paper*. The objective of this intratextual war very quickly materialises as a dispute over who deserves the undisturbed territory of the space of the novel itself. Among other characters in the novel, Frederico de la Fe, "sensed that he was being constantly watched from above; at times eyes stared down at him from three different angles" (Plascencia 26). De la Fe's movements being surveilled from multiple directions and constantly being available to the narrator's eyesight emphasises the territorial advantage of Saturn. This description of de la Fe's character takes place from the perspective of Saturn as well, which accentuates the power of the omniscient narrator and his textual territory over the novel. In addition to lacking a spatial territory, some characters lack the territory of their own identities as well. For example, Merced de Papel is made from paper, but is never granted a name by the author; "[s]he went on to christen me 'Merced de Papel'. After feeling my arms, she said that I was warm and not a soggy roll of Sunday news as she had expected" (Plascencia 25). This emphasises the control of traditional fiction at this point in the narrative; it has been able to craft lives on the page whilst simultaneously taking any hopes of them gaining power, by making them devoid of a name by which to call them. As a consequence, it becomes apparent that territory within the text is the objective of the metafictional elements in *The People of Paper*. Frederico de la Fe preaches to his community that, "[r]ight now, as I say this, we are part of Saturn's story. Saturn owns it. We are being listened to and watched, our lives sold as entertainment. But if we fight we might be able to gain control, to shield ourselves and live our lives for ourselves" (Plascencia 53). Much like in *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Atonement*, the objectives of traditional fiction are portrayed here as having the entertainment incentive, wherein the narrative is coded to appeal to the hypothetical reader. Wenche Ommundsen writes about metafiction's capabilities of being the freedom-inducing text because it "[…] would be that which does not attempt to encode the reader" (173). By comparison, this implicates traditional fiction as possessing a writing style which encodes the grand narrative to the extent of engineering a specific readerly response, thus informing the freedom which the characters of Plascencia's novel hope to achieve through war. There are three key tactics deployed by Frederico de la Fe and his followers, in order to achieve uninterrupted territory within the text. Firstly, I will discuss their tactic of fighting fiction's control over the voices of characters.

It is learned that Saturn cannot penetrate the material lead, and that it can be utilised to protect the thoughts and voices of the characters; "Frederico de la Fe crawled into the lead shell, safely sheltered under the density of a metal that not even the most powerful x-ray in the universe could penetrate" (Plascencia 26). By utilising the war tactic of camouflage, de la Fe is able to protect his character from surveillance under the eye of Saturn, and Saturn's passage has no choice but to end because it is unable to propel de la Fe's plot along. Soon, "[e]verybody was encased by lead, every thought protected, nothing left to hear or see" (96). As the omniscient narrator, Saturn's inability to actually narrate encapsulates the strength of the metafictional war effort and the weakness of traditional fiction by comparison. In terms of content, Saturn's passages in the narrative become miniscule in comparison to that of his rebelling characters. Paper is what frames

the characters of this world on the page, so their deployment of lead becomes viewable as a weapon of retaliation, characterised in terms of metafictional technique *mise en abyme* (Zocco 3; Levinson 162). "Pressed against the two slabs of lead were Frederico de la Fe's schematics for a war of eventual emancipation" (Plascencia 86); de la Fe's war effort is concerned with fighting the current frame which they are contained within by creating a new frame. Another of de la Fe's tactics involves the division of his squad into two sub-units.

"The plan was to split the army and force Saturn to choose between the two battalions" (Plascencia 56). This ploy by the forces of metafiction criticises and opposes realist fiction's notion of the "Author-God" which Roland Barthes famously introduced, wherein the author imbues themselves with the Godly status of managing the "message" and textual experience (146). De la Fe combats this by dividing Saturn's attention between two subplots which, in terms of my war analogy, reminisces the long-standing tactic of dividing one's military forces. Both the army's sub-units manifest on the page itself, so it becomes apparent to the reader that Saturn is able to watch them unanimously, however the confusion of this act materialises through the sub-units' plots being split into two separate passages (Plascencia 56-60). This offensive manoeuvre on the part of de la Fe disrupts the process under which traditional fiction is read: line-by-line. By dividing the page into two passages, metafiction asserts its presence on the page as a force to be reckoned with in its war against traditional fiction's methods. A final tactic intrinsic to the intratextual war involves the characters' action of breaking the fourth wall into Saturn's world which, by extension, deploys the offensive war tactics of infiltration and assassination.

> As instructed by the numbered text of the map, I raised my hand, feeling for a rough spot. Once I found it, I began peeling at the deteriorating glaze of blue, collapsing part of the sky and exposing a layer of papier-mâché. Flakes slipped into the pockets of my guayabera, while the rest of the scraps floated down until they caught on chaparral or landed on the soil. I stood directly under the spot where the monk had once patched the sky. I began sawing through the layers of newspaper and glue, hiding my carnation knife once the manhole in the California sky was complete. I grabbed at the edges of the hole and pulled myself into the house of Saturn. (Plascencia 103)

The traditional separation of the author from the contents of his or her story grows disturbed in this tactic which is actioned by Smiley as he breaks the fourth wall. In its depiction above, the textual space's outer layer – through its representations as a papier-mâché material – is torn open by the character so that he can climb through into the realm of the "real" with his knife, assassinate Salvador Plascencia, and return to the territory of the novel without an overseeing narrator. The war tactics of "[Smiley] found him [Plascencia] asleep, sprawled and naked, laying on his stomach, pillowcases beneath him but the pillows tossed against the wall" (Plascencia 103). Plascencia's description of his own fictitiously included character makes him appear weak, pathetic and implicit of the Author-God on his deathbed.[3] When paired with the weak, papier-mâché material which shapes the exterior frame of the textual space, traditional fiction becomes increasingly represented through its redundancy as a writing force.[4] By comparison, the metafictional inhabitants of Plascencia's textual space showcase metafiction as a much stronger force, which is enhanced by their ability to break the fourth wall and defy their imprisonment within a frame. Despite the fact that, in this moment, Saturn "surrender[s] the story and his power as a narrator" (103), his agency over the grand narrative returns for the most part by the end of the plot. His narration returns to the usual heft which it had at the beginning of the narrative; "through the Baby Nostradamus Saturn saw his future and knew that he would remain" (243). However, de la Fe is taught by his daughter how to rid himself of Saturn completely, and "[t]hey walked south and off the page, leaving no footprints that Saturn could track" (244). Although traditional fiction regains its omniscience at the end of the intratextual war, metafiction is imprinted in the finished plot, a lot of metafictional elements still reside in the narrative and some characters experience minor

victories over Saturn, raising questions as to which mode of writing is victorious in *The People of Paper*'s intratextual war.

Throughout Plascencia's narrative, words are scribbled out, blocked out by black shapes, sometimes with entire passages rendered illegible; references to the book's dedication page and afterword are made, and the fourth wall is torn open, among other examples of metafictional forces at work.[5] By the end of the physical book itself, the textual space has been deconstructed structurally, formally and textually to such an extent that something of a stalemate can be interpreted from the intratextual war.[6] Just as a battlefield is often worthless, infertile land once the war has finished, the war between traditional fiction and metafiction has no winners here because they fought for the territory of textual space, and the textual space's deconstruction is comparable to that of destruction. Salvador Plascencia's motivations towards deconstructing his novel in such a way come at a time when postmodernism confronts the novel in all its physicality.[7] Keri Smith's infamous *Wreck This Journal* series draws attention to the book in all its physicality, calling for its deconstruction to a point where she dictates that the reader – to name a few examples – composts pages and watches them deteriorate, "chew on this [page]" and even poke holes in pages (Smith n.p.).[8] Whilst Smith's popular interactive meta-text cannot be categorised as metafiction because it has no essence of plot, her acknowledgement, invasion and deconstruction of the textual space practises postmodernism's urgent reminder that we reconsider what we perceive to be real. As previously mentioned, Plascencia implements unconventional uses of his novel's physical space, and this is a final offensive manoeuvre, which takes a formal approach, against traditional fiction; Plascencia aims to prevent the reader from being encoded by the verisimilitude of traditional fiction, by forcing them to confront what they perceive as real when they read a book and be critical of it. Metafiction has now been investigated through its framing of actual, pre-existing wars and through the intratextual war it instigates through the writing process.

Conclusion

Admittedly, war is one lens among many through which metafiction can be examined. One could revisit Ian McEwan's *Atonement* in its capacity for a feminist critique, for example, or make an enquiry into the theme of migration in *Slaughterhouse Five* and *The People of Paper*. However, as this investigation has proven, metafiction's relationship with war runs deeply. It has emerged into critical discussion from the ashes of our own battlefields, and waged wars with objectives and tactics of its own. It has redeclared the historicised war to prove that war can be respectfully contained within a narrative construct, but also with an objective of exposing history itself as a construct. It has declared a textual war between elements of its own writing and elements of traditional fiction, in its territorial pursuit of the novel's infrastructure. Upon analysing the creative and critical works in this investigation, it seems all too apparent that metafiction's main objective of declaring war is simply because it does so the most effectively. In the seemingly infinite world available to metafiction though, only more questions than answers can arise, such as: which wars will metafiction declare next, and what will their objectives be?

Notes

1. Vonnegut emphasizes his own unreliability as a narrator through conflicting self-commentary on his own penis size. On page 102, "Billy took his pecker out", whilst on page 108 "[h]e had a tremendous wang, incidentally".

2. For more insight into framing, see Patricia Waugh, who claims "[c]ontemporary metafiction draws attention to the fact that life, as well as novels, is constructed through frames, and that it is finally impossible to know where one frame ends and another begins" (29). In a similar vein, Slaughterhouse-Five "[…] provides readers with a new insight about the artificial nature of archival

history", according to Abdolrazagh Babaei, in her "Portrayal of the American Culture through Metafiction" (10). Amy J. Elias also makes the argument that "[historiography] questions the notion of individualism and the stable self/subject that form our notions of historical agency, it is ironic, it is self-reflexive about language and suspicious of political power, it shows all values as context-dependent and ideological, and it highlights the artificiality of historical explanations of reality" (24).

3. Both Roland Barthes (148) and John Barth (170) prophesize and go as far as necessitating the death of the author.

4. For more metafictional allusions to the fourth wall, see *Slaughterhouse Five*: "You ever put a full-length mirror on the floor, and then have a dog stand on it? […] The dog will look down, and all of a sudden he'll realize there's nothing under him" (144).

5. For *The People of Paper*'s deconstruction of page contents, see p. 218, 235, 238, 240, 244. For references to the book's dedication page and afterword, see p. 107, and for its breaking of the fourth wall, see p. 103.

6. More recently, the stalemate concept in warfare can be understood through the lens of America's war in Afghanistan, which Alexander Salt marks through the Taliban's inability to topple Afghanistan's government, and the United States' inability to completely eradicate the Taliban (110-111, 118).

7. Amy J. Elias points to how "metafiction surfaces in the postmodern period because this is when critical and cultural theories arise that radically question traditional systems of meaning […]" (16).

8. Pages 54, 37, 9. These page numbers assume that the reader will have undertaken the task of adding their own page numbers, the first task on the 9th physical page of the book.

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The Sublime as Romantic Transcendence: Awe and *Sehnsucht* in Wordsworth's Poetry

Andrius Dilnikas

Abstract

This article is primarily concerned with William Wordsworth's natural sublime, and, specifically, the idea that it is not a uniform type of experience. The aim is to contrast the overwhelming awe or terror-based experience that is usually associated with Wordsworth's sublime to his often-overlooked version of the Romantic *Sehnsucht*, closely analysing and describing both types in the process. By using a broad unifying definition of the sublime as a transcendence of the mind or spirit, I present Wordsworth's conventional sublime and *Sehnsucht* as two distinct variants of the same type of experience, arguing with reference to different writers in aesthetic philosophy for the inclusion of the latter type as a form of the sublime. I conclude that although they both qualify as this kind of transcendent experience, they simultaneously differ wildly in their emotional quality – where the conventional sublime is based on awe and terror and *Sehnsucht* on longing and wistfulness – and their ultimate effects – where the former leads to violent and overwhelming religious revelations and the latter to gentle healing of the mind and spirit. In this way, I endeavour to show some of the breadth of variation possible in the natural sublime in Wordsworth's poetry.

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The sublime has been modelled in aesthetic philosophy in different ways, such as Edmund Burke's definition of it as a terror-based sibling feeling of beauty that is caused by specific physical qualities of objects (13, 53) or Immanuel Kant's more abstract concept that distances itself from objects and focuses instead on the alternately pleasant and painful internal experience of something immense and overwhelming (119-20). However, while these models are useful in their specifics, a better starting point would be a broad definition. One such broad definition is Timothy Bahti's, who defines the sublime in more fundamental terms as "an experience that elevates the mind above a certain limit" (180). In this article, I will be thinking of the sublime in these general terms of internal transcendence, which I will apply to the poetry of William Wordsworth in an analysis of his natural sublime. Although this is a relatively recent definition, my interest in the sublime is a rather more retrospective than historically synchronic one, and, following Bahti's own use of this definition in relation to Wordsworth, it will be appropriate for my purposes here as well. Moreover, this broad definition, unlike the specific models of Burke or Kant, although useful, will allow a less generic analysis through covering multiple forms of the sublime. My intent is to show that Wordsworth's natural sublime is not a uniform concept but a grouping of the aforementioned distinct forms of the sublime that differ in fundamental emotional nature or the exact feeling that they are based on, and the ultimate purpose of the experience, which is the effect they have on the experiencer. Specifically, I will attempt to do this by looking at two distinct types of transcendence: firstly in the form of Wordsworth's traditional natural sublime characterised by terror, and, in the second half of the article, in that of the noticeably different but often glossed over Romantic *Sehnsucht*, an indeterminate and interminable spiritual longing.

In Wordsworth's depiction of nature – the source of the natural sublime – there appear to be patterns pointing to the more familiar type of sublime experience being triggered by a specific kind of landscape. Here, Burke's ideas of the sublime will offer a useful structure for analysis, as this part of the essay will establish a more traditional reading of Wordsworth's awe-based sublime, which will serve as a point of comparison in the discussion of *Sehnsucht* later in the essay. Burke defined the sublime object as "whatever is fitted . . . to excite the ideas of pain, and danger" or "whatever is in any sort terrible" (36). In his *Enquiry* (1757), Burke then goes on to describe the

sensuous (and often specifically visual) characteristics of these objects that may contribute to a sublime experience, which can be a useful framework where the visual sublime of the Romantic landscape is concerned. In Wordsworth's descriptions of transcendent experience in the "Simplon Pass" sequence of the *Prelude* (1850), the landscape fits well with Burke's visual model of sublime nature. There is an abundance of adjectives that emphasise great size – both in the dimension of width, such as "rivers broad and vast", and that of height, such as "the immeasurable height of woods decaying" (Wordsworth, "Simplon Pass" lines 460, 556-7). These neatly fulfil Burke's criterion of "vastness", with the "immeasurable height" of the forest matching Burke's emphasis on height as the second most impactful dimension of size (66). This is especially relevant, as this height is intensified beyond any standard greatness, alluding through its immeasurability to a potential for infinity, which is another quality of sublime nature in Burke's *Enquiry* (67). In a move beyond sheer size, the image of "black drizzling crags" (Wordsworth, "Simplon Pass" 563) not only continues this feeling of height, with its sense of verticality viewed from the bottom of the chasm, but also aligns with Burke's claim of "rugged and broken [surfaces]" and "dark and gloomy" colour as two more visual features of the sublime (66, 75). Burke's criterion of power (59) finds several more examples in Wordsworth's work. Wordsworth's landscape is a kind of tremendous force in great agitation; this is evident in the highly violent active language like "torrents shooting" and "blasts of waterfall" or the explicit struggle of "winds thwarting winds" (Wordsworth, "Simplon Pass" 558, 560, 561). The latter is particularly salient here as, being an image of nature struggling against itself, it suggests a sense of transcendence to the very landscape – there is, I would argue, a hint of infinity inherent in the idea of producing an ever greater force to "thwart" that which came before. Overall, the landscape of Wordsworth's traditional natural sublime corresponds to Burke's ideas of the sublime object as one of terror. Put together, these images could easily "excite the ideas of pain, and danger" and therefore a fearfulness lest the violence of the wilderness, supported by great looming size and darkness, with its traditional associations of threat, turn against the observer.

Where Wordsworth's sublime begins to diverge from Burke's model is the transcendent experience itself. If a sublime feeling is one "that elevates the mind above a certain limit" (Bahti, "Strange Utterance" 180), then the limit transcended in the sublime of "Simplon Pass" is that of real sensuous experience. The language used here is infused with paradox and oxymoron – noisy "cataracts" become "dumb", solid "ice" flows in "streams", the "mighty waves" are frozen in "a motionless array" (Wordsworth, "Simplon Pass" 458-9). This type of paradox, by definition something unnatural that cannot exist, points to a state of mind in the lyrical subject that is similarly unreal in its construal of the world. It transcends physical reality and moves the experience from sense into the imagination, augmenting the sensuous image of the landscape with fantastical qualities. The result of this augmentation, and a difference between Wordsworth's sublime and Burke's fixation on the external object is, according to Bahti, that "fulfilling Kant . . . the sublime is not nature, but the mind" (192); the mind has now transcended the physical world and in its sublime representation of the scene, surreal images have replaced the real ones. In other words, sublimity has been transferred from nature to the imagination. This transfer occurs more explicitly in the Mount Snowdon passage. Here, the lyrical subject is moved by a grand natural landscape, but the intensity of the sublime experience then shifts to his "meditation" on "higher minds" (Wordsworth, "Mount Snowdon" 66, 90). This signals that the sublimity experienced belongs no longer to the landscape but to the greatness of the mind, which is glorified as divine – "truly from the Deity" (106) – and therefore transcendent. As Bahti alludes, this directly echoes Kant's idea that the sublime reveals to the mind its own sublimity and superiority to the external world (Kant 128, 129). Essentially, this experience of the natural sublime, as it transcends its original object of physical reality, becomes the mind's realisation of its own transcendence.

Having shifted inwards from nature to the mind however, the experience does not stop there, and instead "elevates the mind" up to another "limit". The experience in "Simplon Pass" culminates in a final transcendence from the sublimity of the mind to an awareness of an absolute

totality in which the entire world, including the sublime mind itself, is contained. Even extreme opposites like "tumult and peace" become part of one whole as the lyrical subject glimpses a kind of unity in the world (Wordsworth, "Simplon Pass" 567). They become "symbols of eternity" (571), indicating an intuition of some abstract infinity beyond sense. Moreover, this infinite whole is conscious – it is referred to as "one mind" in which the elements of reality are all "workings" (568). This suggests that the final sublimity is that of some deity, further reinforced by the allusion to the Bible as well as to Milton's God (Greenblatt et al. 387) in "Of first, and last, and midst, and without end" (Wordsworth, "Simplon Pass" 572). James P. Helfers argues to some extent against this, pointing out that the use of "like" in "like workings of one mind" (Wordsworth, "Simplon Pass" 568) indicates a symbolic allusion – a likeness, so to speak – and implies the experience is abstractly spiritual rather than explicitly religious; Wordsworth sees not a literal "great Other", but "analogues" (Helfers 16). I argue that this is not as clear cut as Helfers claims, considering that other evidence suggests that the final form of this sublime experience is a religious one. Aside from the explicit biblical reference, the sublime episode of Mount Snowdon directly names "God" and "Deity" (72, 106), which, in conjunction with the idea of a conscious infinity discussed above, makes this religious interpretation a definite possibility. In a way, this entire experience would seem to mirror the principles of affect theory. Affect, as Ruth Leys explains, is understood to be "'triggered' by various objects, but the latter are nothing more than tripwires" (438). Here, the physical triggers of the experience could be Burke's sensory features of the sublime landscape, but there is no direct rational connection between them and this eventual realisation of divinity that they lead to. The link between these two points of the experience is based on "noncognitive", intuitive affect or feeling rather than rational and cognitive knowledge (437); the sensory features of the landscape do not carry the meaning of this final realisation as far as reason is concerned, but they trigger the instinctive "unconscious 'intensity'" of affect that is then transferred into a more conscious, culturally mediated religious awe and terror (441). Ultimately, this more familiar form of Wordsworth's natural sublime appears to be a threefold spiritual experience of mental transcendence intertwined with a sense of terror and awe – originating with certain grand and threatening physical features of the natural landscape, then shifting to the imagination and the sublimity of the mind in which sublimity is experienced, and then finally shifting to a religious revelation of the world as an infinite and sublime unity.

The other type of the sublime I will be looking at is *Sehnsucht*, which, I argue, is transcendence of a more subtle kind. Kienne Brillenburg Wurth describes it as a "longing for the infinite that can repeat itself infinitely" (47). Even though infinity, as both a quality and the object of this longing, alludes to the sublime in the general sense of transcending a limit, with infinity being the lack of limits, Wurth quotes Johann Georg Sulzer's inclusion of "powerful longing", under the feelings that the sublime can take the form of, while *Sehnsucht* seems to have been "obstructed . . . from view" by more familiar forms of the sublime (47). The differences between these more familiar forms, such as the traditional natural sublime of William Wordsworth that I have analysed, and *Sehnsucht* as a distinct form are made clear in the words of C. S. Lewis, who describes *Sehnsucht* as a yearning for:

> that unnameable something, desire for which pierces us like a rapier at the smell of a bonfire, the sound of wild ducks flying overhead, the title of *The Well at the World's End*, the opening lines of *Kubla Khan*, the morning cobwebs in late summer, or the noise of falling waves (214).

Sehnsucht is not altogether dissimilar from the traditional awe-based sublime – it is still a powerful and intense feeling that "pierces . . . like a rapier" – but one key difference is the fundamental emotional nature of the experience. If the traditional sublime is based on terror or awe in the face of something overwhelming, *Sehnsucht* differs in that its foundation is longing or "desire". The causes of these feelings in Lewis' examples have little to do with threatening landscapes or Burke's theories of awe-inducing sensuous qualities, with, perhaps, the exception of "falling waves", which has the potential to satisfy Burke's criteria of colour and power. Some of Lewis' examples, such as

"the title of *The Well at the World's End*, the opening lines of *Kubla Khan*", are even outside of nature entirely.

Nevertheless, these are merely triggers of the experience that are later abandoned, as in Wordsworth's conventional awe-based sublime, in favour of its true object – "that unnameable something" – and this object certainly qualifies as a sublime one. "Unnameable" may as well be defined as "infinite"; this fundamental indeterminacy of something that is not unnamed but cannot be named suggests an infinite object or infinite variety of possible objects. Triggered by something as concrete as "morning cobwebs in late summer", the feeling satisfies Coleridge's ideas of the sublime, summed up by W. P. Albrecht as a "[comprehension of] the infinite through . . . the finite" (188). Kant's ideas are also represented here: a parallel could be drawn between the failure in naming or defining this object and Kant's failure of the imagination in grasping things of great scale, one of his features of sublime experience (112). This indeterminacy would also seem to be strongly related to Jean-François Lyotard's thoughts on the sublime in his reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790). Lyotard writes that "the absolute", that ultimate undefinable object of the sublime experience, is fundamentally unrepresentable – it is "ungraspable" and can "never [be] given in a presentation" (150). This is because any kind of "form is limitation" and "divides space and time into an 'inside' . . . and an 'outside'" (123). These notions are directly incompatible with a sublime object that is infinite, since an infinite object is fundamentally limitless and all encompassing, making division between what is "inside" of it and "outside" of it impossible. This "form" could be read as physical form, in which case the idea of a lack of physical presence aligns well with Lewis' description of *Sehnsucht* as a longing for an abstract "something" that can never be glimpsed in itself and instead only through trigger sensations like "the smell of a bonfire". However, language could also be argued to be a kind of "presentation", albeit communicative rather than physical or visual. A name defines the object it refers to, delineating and limiting its concept and thus giving it a communicative form. In this sense, the unnameability of Lewis' sublime object is also in keeping with Lyotard's unrepresentability. This clear correspondence of Lewis' description to ideas from Coleridge, Kant, and Lyotard would seem to indicate that *Sehnsucht* can be taken as a form of the sublime, as it retains the core structure of transcendence in the perception of the infinite through finite triggers of the sublime experience, but it differs from more conventional varieties in its emotional quality and potentially its origins.

In Wordsworth's poetry, *Sehnsucht* takes a somewhat more specific form of this model of the sublime. As Anne Lundin suggests in drawing a connection between *Sehnsucht* and the spots of time from Wordsworth's *Prelude*, which she terms transcendent "epiphanies" in the form of "shadowy recollections" (55, 58), Wordsworth inserts into the general structure an element of memory. In "Tintern Abbey" (1798), an experience of a kind of transcendence begins in the lyrical subject via a memory of a "landscape with the quiet of the sky" and "pastoral farms, green to the very door" (Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" 8, 16-7). This, too, is clearly a kind of natural sublime in that it begins with nature, but a noticeably different variant that contrasts with the more conventional natural sublime of "Simplon Pass" and "Mount Snowdon". The trigger is "quiet" imagery that is nothing like the dark and overwhelming episodes of the *Prelude*, and the feelings that arise with this form of the sublime are also gentler. From this recollection comes an experience – a "gift, of aspect more sublime" (36-7) – in which the lyrical subject is "laid asleep in body, and [becomes] a living soul" (45-6). Between the ascension from a sensuous bodily state to one of "soul" and the explicit reference to the sublime, there is a clear indication of transcendence here. Unlike the traditional natural sublime, however, this kind of transcendence carries a sense of tranquillity, its peacefulness signalled in the framing of this transcendent change as specifically sleep-like, in which the former physical state is "laid asleep" as the new spiritual one implicitly awakens.

In keeping with the general structure of *Sehnsucht*, this transcendence, beginning with concrete finite elements of the landscape, grants the lyrical subject a glimpse of unity and infinity in the world; he is able to "see into the life of things" (49), into something very essential. This spiritual

dimension of the experience as a kind of unveiling of what is at the core of the world – "the life of things", with "life" being the fundamental force that powers those that possess it – is emphasised explicitly in "Intimations of Immortality", which could be argued to be thematically related to "Tintern Abbey". The transcendent experience dealt with in "Intimations" is, of course, rather different or at least more specific than in "Tintern Abbey": it is a kind of spiritual and otherworldly existence before human life. Compared to this existence, "birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" (Wordsworth, "Intimations" 58) – something secondary and, like sleep or a dream, fleeting – and the soul comes from it into the material world as "from God, who is our home" (65). Nevertheless, there are significant similarities to be drawn. The framing of this transcendent pre-existence in terms of "home" is particularly interesting, as, from the perspective of a lyrical subject in the physical world, it implies homesickness, and therefore a kind of longing for something intangible but fundamental, in which the roots of the soul lie. This bears considerable resemblance to the longing of *Sehnsucht* and the transcendent glimpses into "the life of things" that it provides. The lyrical subject experiences this nostalgia for the original spiritual existence, mourning the fully grown person, who, with age, "daily farther from the east must travel" (71-2) – where "east", through its association with sunrise, is likely referring to these origins of human existence – and eventually let their awareness of the original state "die away" (75). The parallel to or coreference with *Sehnsucht* is strengthened even further by the idea that Earth's "pleasures" (77) and "yearnings" (78) are alternatives offered to humankind so that they "forget . . . that imperial palace from whence [they] came" (83-4), thus framing this pre-existence, appropriately for the wistful *Sehnsucht,* as something related to yearning and pleasure in itself. The object of Wordsworth's *Sehnsucht*, though clearly spiritual, need not be so specific. "Tintern Abbey" is not explicitly concerned with childhood or this life before life. In it the object is a "something" – perhaps an unnameable something – that is "deeply interfused" (Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" 96) into the world. Its "dwelling" is in the entirety of nature – in the "light of setting suns" (97) and the "round ocean" (98). It is also in the entirety of human experience – in "the mind of man" (99) and "all objects of all thought" (101). This awareness of a truly universal "spirit" (100), stressed by the repetition of the word "all" (101, 102, 104, 105, 111), is, crucially, not experienced with terror as in the *Prelude.* This is fundamentally a "serene and blessed mood" (41), perhaps acquiring the soft yearning quality of nostalgia precisely because it passes to the lyrical subject through a memory.

Ultimately, this is the same feeling that Lewis described. The recurrence of "joy" (48, 84, 94, 125, 145) throughout the poem is unlikely a coincidence. Lewis, who used the word "joy" as his English-language equivalent for the untranslatable German "*Sehnsucht*" (Lundin 58), borrowed it from Wordsworth's poetry (Helfers 10, 17). A second notable difference between Wordsworth and Lewis' respective versions of *Sehnsucht*, however, aside from Wordsworth's more specific framing of it as related to memory, is the final purpose of the experience. Whereas Lewis' interest in this sublime longing was theological (Lundin 57), to Wordsworth this kind of transcendence has a utilitarian purpose. As Helfers points out, in "Tintern Abbey" the transcendent experience has a "restorative" function (13): the mental healing of "sensations sweet" in "hours of weariness" (Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" 27). This function is emphasised particularly towards the end of the poem in the lyrical subject's explicit recommendation of this mnemonic experience as a healing one. In the fifth stanza, the lyrical subject endeavours to impress upon his sister the idea of memory as a healing power, claiming that in "after years" (137), when the "wild ecstasies" of youth have passed (138), her "memory [will] be as a dwelling-place for all sweet sounds and harmonies" (141-2). As time passes, these "wild ecstasies" will "[mature] into a sober pleasure" (138-9) and become "healing thoughts" (144). This situates Wordsworth's *Sehnsucht* as a kind of delayed mental rejuvenation, which distinguishes it further from the immediate shock of the awe-based sublime. Ultimately, Wordsworth's *Sehnsucht* in "Tintern Abbey", tinged with the longing of nostalgia, is a distinct form of the natural sublime that stems from similar sources as the more traditional

concepts of the sublime, but is distinguished by its peacefulness, taking on an explicit healing quality alongside that of spiritual transcendence.

Defining the sublime as a kind of Romantic transcendence, I have endeavoured to show that Wordsworth's natural sublime is not a homogenous type of experience by examining two types of the sublime in his poetry. In this two-part analysis I explained how significantly the more conventional type of Wordsworth's sublime can differ from *Sehnsucht* – which I have argued, with reference to Kant, Lyotard, and Coleridge's criteria, is also a variant of the sublime, albeit an often overlooked one. Both of these qualify as a type of the natural sublime in the sense that, in Wordsworth's poetry, they are transcendent experiences that arise from elements of the natural landscape – although the specific types of landscapes that each is associated with can be drastically different, as I have demonstrated – but then move beyond these physical origins and into a less tangible spiritual realm of experience. The conventional natural sublime of the *Prelude*, in keeping with Burke's ideas, is a feeling of fearful awe associated with threatening landscapes that then transcends sensuous perception of physical reality as it undergoes several transformations in its focus – from sublime nature to the sublime mind, and then to religious revelation of the sublime totality of the universe. Wordsworth's *Sehnsucht*, conversely, even though it also comes from nature, is a distinct type of mnemonic sublime associated with gentler landscapes and characterised by wistful serenity and longing – perhaps for a kind of original spiritual existence or universal oneness – whose transcendent glimpses into the infinite bring not terror and violent revelations, but a soothing sense of spiritual healing.

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An Exploration into Giorgio Agamben's Idea of Inoperativity

Leah Bennett

Abstract

This essay explores Giorgio Agamben's idea of inoperativity and how he theorised, but never clarified, how rendering oneself inoperative is a way to stop the workings of biopolitics. Agamben theorised that biopolitics reduces the citizen from a position of trust to that of a suspect. One of his most outstanding statements, concerning this degradation, regards the American airport system taking fingerprints and photos upon a foreign tourist's arrival. Agamben claims that by taking the citizen's personal details, an assumption has been made that the citizen is dangerous, a threat, and that by taking their biological details is branding them as such and therefore reduces the citizen to a position of a suspect. By accepting the rules which biopolitical poses upon us, by allowing our fingerprints to be taken, Agamben claims that, as citizens, we are enforcing the branding of a suspect upon ourselves, therefore, to free ourselves from the implications of biopolitics, we must render its practices and assumptions as "inoperative". The ways in which "inoperativity" can act as a solution to biopolitical issues is something which Agamben has not directly explained. It is therefore a concept which is widely debated upon, as, in the absence of a definitive conclusion, a reader of Agamben's work has no choice but to come up with their own ideas.

I wanted to create and explore a comparison between Agamben's theory of inoperativity and Herman Melville's short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" (1853) in an attempt to show the issues which inoperativity poses. The protagonist of Melville's story, Bartleby, practices inoperativity upon himself by rendering himself completely impartial to whatever is expected of him. Whenever a human function such as work, socialisation, eating or sleeping presents itself, he confronts it with his apathetical phrase "I'd prefer not to". The fact that Bartleby neither accepts or denies his need or want to exercise this specific function displays perfectly what inoperativity is, it is the act of rendering oneself as a being of potentiality, not of certainty. Bartleby is an extreme example of inoperativity as he displays the main problem of Agamben's theory; to what extent does one have to render themselves inoperative in order for the results to be effective?

There is no answer to inoperativity, no final thought or solution given by Agamben, but through Bartleby, Melville demonstrates how inoperativity, when applied, can alter a person's life entirely. However, although Bartleby didn't make a drastic change to the world of biopolitics, he certainly made a change to his own life and perhaps this is how biopolitics will be rendered inoperative, through a collective effort of individuals realising that they have the option to reject the enforcement of biopolitics, if they chose to do so.

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Michel Foucault classified biopolitics as the means to "ensure, sustain, and multiply life" (138). He claimed that biopolitics did this through the "control of life and the biological processes of man as species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined but regularized" (Binkley 314). In contrast, Giorgio Agamben in his work *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995), claimed that Foucault's idea of biopolitics was "the growing inclusion of man's natural life in the mechanisms and calculations of power" (119). Agamben theorised that biopolitics was a "power [which] penetrates subjects' very bodies and forms of life" (5). Agamben conjectured that the only way to stop biopolitics from working in such an intrusive way is to render it inoperative. This essay will first discuss Agamben's personal experience of the invasive nature of biopolitics before moving onto examples of inoperativity and exploring the implications which surround Agamben's theory as a solution to biopolitics. The meaning and practice of inoperativity is something which is

notoriously ambiguous, nevertheless, I will offer my own interpretation of Agamben's theory by means of analysis at the end of the essay.

In 2004, Agamben cancelled classes which he was to teach at New York University on the grounds that he felt his rights had been violated by the US airport system. He wrote in "No to Biopolitical Tattooing" (2004) that upon his arrival in America, he found that, "visitors who enter the United States on a visa will have their fingerprints and photograph filed by immigration authorities" (201). He deemed this outrageous, as this was a "procedure that has long been imposed on criminals and political dissidents" and was now being applied to the citizen (201). Agamben also claimed that this process was indicative of Foucault's biopolitical idea of the "animalization of man" (201). Foucault's "animalization of man" is understood in terms of reducing humans to the status of an animal through subjecting them to conditions in which animals are treated, in this case, branding. Vernon W. Cisney and Nicolae Morar state, "we have incorporated the beast into the contemporary biopolitical definition of man" (152). In "Tattooing", Agamben claims that through these means, the state "has made the citizen into the suspect par excellence – to the point that humanity itself has become a dangerous class" (202). Agamben theorised that using biopolitical measures to monitor and document citizens is a practice which he sees as a movement "from Athens to Auschwitz" (202). Needless to say, this statement proposes challenges. Not only is this an over-dramatic comparison but it is also a somewhat ill-applied as this statement cannot be taken literally. However, the fact that you must have your fingerprints taken to enter the country and the fact that without accepting this you will not be allowed admittance, resembles the force and submission with which these rules are applied; by giving your fingerprints, you are admitting to the assumption that you may commit a crime and therefore defining yourself as a criminal, as someone who is intending to commit a wrongdoing. Agamben theorises that it is this which we must oppose as only by doing so will we render the practice and force of biopolitics as inoperative and defect its means of monitorisation.

When exploring Agamben's theory of inoperativity, the first question to answer is what does it mean to be inoperative? In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* Agamben explains that by this term he means neither saying yes or no but existing in a pure state of potentiality:

> it can be neither the simple absence of work nor […] a sovereign and useless form of negativity. The only coherent way to understand inoperativeness is to think of it as a generic mode of potentiality that is not exhausted […] in a transitus de potential ad actum. (61-62)

However, in order to exist in a pure state of potentiality, the terms and boundaries which define inoperativity must be understood in order to know what we are reacting to. This is no easy task as the meaning of Agamben's inoperativity becomes ambiguous due to the ideas that the word "inoperative" connotes. If a car was said to be "inoperative" by a mechanic, it means that the car can no longer function as a car, in the sense that it can no longer drive for example. Agamben's idea of inoperativity would however determine that the car is not broken or without use, rather, it has the potential to be something else other than what it has originally been used for; it has the potential to find a new meaning, as the above quote explains. Inoperativity can therefore be understood as a state of potentiality, a state where something finds a function that is alternative to how it has been used before. In *Nudists* (2009), Agamben uses the idea of a broken hammer to display this point. He claims that the wooden handle of this broken hammer is "always ready for a possible use, and to enter the sphere of a *Vorhandenheit,* of mere availability with no aim" (98-99). The hammer now has the potential to function as something other than a hammer, it has been rendered inoperative through its potentiality to now be something other than what it was. Another example that Agamben gives is the time a young man "transformed a broken motorcycle engine into a device that makes whipped cream" (99). The potential the motorcycle engine has to change purpose defines its inoperativity; the potentiality for it to be a machine to whip cream was actualised and made into a reality.

In *Nudists,* Agamben offers another way to think about inoperativity through the change of an items' purpose, not because it has failed to actualise what it was intended for but because its purpose has been changed in a certain way for the sake of tradition. Agamben explains this with his claim that, "presents, gifts, and toys are objects with no use and exchange value, that are rendered inoperative, wrestled from their economy" (111). Agamben's statement can be explained through the tradition of Halloween. For one night a year, sweets and treats are given to strangers who knock on your door in a scary costume. The economic value of a sweet on this night is not actualised, as the children who trick or treat are not paying for the sweets and therefore the sweets have been rendered inoperative in their purpose to be sold; nevertheless, they are still a sweet. Similarly, the fact that people dress up in scary costumes renders the figures of ghouls and werewolves inoperative, as the idea that a monster is scary is counteracted by the fact that the tradition of Halloween is to be scary. If someone was dressed as a blood covered werewolf and knocking on people's doors any other night of the year, there would be extreme cause for concern as the figure of a werewolf is only inoperative on Halloween.

Agamben claims that inoperativity can not only be applied to objects, such as a hammer or a motorcycle engine, or traditions, such as Halloween. Rather, it can be applied to ourselves. In *Nudists,* Agamben theorises that humans can become free from expectation and convention once we render ourselves inoperative:

> the glorious body is not some other body, more agile and beautiful, more luminous and spiritual; it is the body itself, at the moment when inoperativity removes the spell from it and opens up to a new possible common use (103).

When we forget what we think our purpose is, we become inoperative, we become free to be or do anything. This idea sounds incredibly appealing but Agamben claims that it is not easily attained, he asks, "why is inoperativity so difficult and so inaccessible for us?" (106). Perhaps humans struggle to be inoperative because of the way in which we are defined and the purpose which these definitions carry with them. The term "*homo economicus*" was first used to describe man in the late nineteenth century by critics reacting to the political ideas of John Stuart Mill's theories on political economy. Mill claims that the intention of his work was to create definition of Man as an entity which strives for all he/she wants without exhausting themselves in the achievement of this desire:

> an arbitrary definition of man, as a being who inevitably does that by which he may obtain the greatest amount of necessaries, conveniences, and luxuries, with the smallest quantity of labour and physical self-denial with which they can be obtained (116).

From this definition, Mill theorises that the function of *homo economicus,* the modern human, is to aspire to be wealthy. If this is the true definition of man, then the aim of a human is defined to be to work towards the goal of becoming wealthy whilst doing the least amount of work possible. People are therefore taught to think that this is their function, as it is their definition.

In 1979, Michel Foucault proposed a different kind of *homo economicus,* one that has been born out of neoliberalism. Foucault claimed that *homo economicus* was a "man of exchange": "one of the two partners in the process of exchange" (225, 223). To Foucault, *homo economicus* is someone who gives something in exchange for something else, for example, gives economic currency for an object. Foucault's definition establishes a change from Mills because the exchange Foucault describes is not always predominately economic, rather, he claims that *homo economicus* is controlled by "analysis of internal rationality, the strategic programming of an individual's activity" (223). Foucault sees *homo economicus* as a form of investment, an investment which includes and surpasses the economic. For example, the term investment can be applied to a range of scenarios, to say you are invested in a relationship implies that you are morally occupied and tied to this commitment, economics does not come into play here, yet an investment of time has still been made.

In Herman Melville's tale "Bartleby the Scrivener, A Tale of Wall Street" (1853), his protagonist Bartleby embodies perfectly Foucault's idea of *homo economicus*, as not only does he not oblige to any economic desires but also rejects any need to conform to anything of exchange value; he rejects friendship, companionship, work, money, attention and even the needs of his very own body as he rejects the want for food. Through this, Bartleby renders his very existence as what it typically means to be human as inoperative.

Melville's tale is narrated by a lawyer who tells the reader of his encounter with a copyist who he employs named, Bartleby. At the beginning of the short story, the lawyer is impressed with the work which Bartleby produces, he claims, "at first Bartleby did an extraordinary quantity of writing […] he seems to gorge himself on my documents" (8). This attitude was not to last. The narrator tells of how one day he sat at his desk with his head bent over his work with a document in his hand extended for Bartleby to take and copy. He expected Bartleby to take the document almost immediately from him, however this was not the case. Once asked to do so, Bartleby replied, "I would prefer not to" (9). Through his response, Bartleby renders his work inoperative. He has done this by neither claiming that he will or will not copy the document but by stating that he would simply "prefer" not to do so. The lawyer, Bartleby's boss and the narrator, asks him, "*Why* do you refuse?" but refusal is not what Bartleby has done (10). The word "prefer" reflects potentiality as it implies neither the will to do work nor the will not to do work, it simply displays Bartleby's preference. Therefore, by Bartleby claiming that he would "prefer" not to copy the document, he is neither saying that he will or won't do it; he has simultaneously refused to work whilst also not refusing to work and the potential for him to do either is what defines him as inoperative. This phrase therefore holds Bartleby in a constant state of suspension as whilst he never implies that he will take any action, he also never implies that he will not either. He only speaks of the potential to either copy the paper or not copy the paper. It could be said that he is trying to move to a position that is beyond either yes or no. But why would he do this? In *Potentialities* (1999), Agamben offers an answer. He explains, "all potential to be or to do something is always also potential not to be or to do […] without which potentiality would always already have passed into actuality" (245). Therefore, through losing his inoperativity, Bartleby will lose his freedom and to avoid this, Bartleby exists in a pure state of potentiality to avoid action and therefore avoid definition.

As the story progresses, Bartleby applies his attributable, "I would prefer not to" to every possible situation, whether this be to run to the post office or to tell his boss any personal information about himself. The narrator discovers that Bartleby has been living in the office and assumes automatically that this is not a thing done by choice. He claims, "what miserable friendlessness and loneliness are here revealed! His poverty is great; but his solitude, how horrible!" (17). Due to the fact that the narrator cannot fathom why anybody would choose to live this way, he assumes Bartleby is in poverty, lonely and starving. The lawyer's reaction is indicative of the enforcement of the societal norm that people should strive to live in a house, want to eat and desire company. This, Agamben would claim, is a restriction because if a person does not desire these things, as Bartleby does not, he/she is seen as "demented" by those who do, as Bartleby is by the lawyer (22). Bartleby also announces that he has given up copying, however he stays in the office. This perplexes the narrator as he asks, "he would do nothing in the office: why should he stay here?" (23). Agamben's theory offers a reason as to why Bartleby has stopped copying by comparing the mind to the blank sheet of paper. Agamben, in *Potentialities,* describes the mind as "not a thing of being but a thing of pure potentiality, and the image of the writing tablet on which nothing is written functions precisely to represent the mode in which pure potentiality exists" (245). Agamben is claiming that Bartleby is akin to his writing tablet, his mind, like the blank sheet of paper represents endless possibilities. The paper, and the mind, is therefore inoperative so long as it stays blank because it has potential to be anything. A letter on this blank page can be likened to a human action or decisive thought. Both are completely and entirely permanent, once something is written it can only ever be what was written, an "a" can never be a "b", just like once

something has been acted out there is no way to change that action. Therefore, to avoid the actualisation of becoming something, Bartleby refuses to copy anymore lawful documents, as if by imprinting the letters onto the page, he is imprinting permanence onto his mind.

Despite the lawyer instructing Bartleby to leave his premises, Bartleby remains in the office, and so he becomes a "fixture" (23). Bartleby's persistence in being inoperative renders him to somewhat lose his human form and to be seen as something more akin to a whacky piece of furniture. Because the lawyer is so perplexed by Bartleby's behaviour, he determines that Bartleby must have come into his life to teach him something. He concludes that Bartleby had been assigned to him "for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence" (p.28). Agamben in *Potentialities* also claimed that Bartleby represents a teacher of some sort. He called Bartleby a "new Messiah" as "he comes not, like Jesus, to redeem what was, but to save what was not" (270). Similarly, Gilles Deleuze claimed, "Bartleby is not the patient, but the doctor of a sick America, the Medicine-Man, the new Christ or the brother to us all" (Cooke p.84). Both theorists determine that Bartleby's purpose is to teach the reader, to cure them, of this thought that humans are to be defined as a singular thing with one shared purpose. Although it may seem strange to assume that a man who has rejected all purpose in life, even the care of himself, should in turn teach the reader something, the impact that the figure of Bartleby had on the real world is undeniable. An example of this occurred in May 2012, when the figure of Bartleby was invoked as a political icon. The political group, "Occupy Wall Street Movement" are activists who campaign for a more equal distribution of wealth, quality of job and equal distribution of income. The group were campaigning to raise awareness that "Wall Street these days is increasingly encroaching upon the classroom" (Greenburg). Describing students and teachers as "mere copyists" (Greenburg), it seems fitting then that they should choose Melville's scrivener Bartleby as the figure to convey their protests. They created posters with a hamster standing off its wheel under the slogan, "I would prefer not to" (Greenburg). In his article, Greenburg claims that, "Bartleby is among the first modern bureaucrats to serve as a literary hero" (Greenburg).

However, Bartleby's co-workers and boss do not see Bartleby's actions as a liberation, rather, he fills them with "uneasiness" and Nippers especially thinks that Bartleby's unwillingness to work is a sign of laziness as he frequently calls him a "stubborn oaf" (16, 11). Nevertheless, his co-workers and his boss, begin to use the term "prefer". The narrator claims, "somehow, of late, I had got into the way of involuntarily using this word "prefer" […] I trembled to think that my contact with the scrivener had already and seriously affected me in a mental way" (21). Turkey, another one of Bartleby's co-workers, used the word in complete obliviousness, "Oh, *prefer*? Oh yes – queer word. I never use it myself. But, sir, as I was saying, if he would but prefer […]" (23). The narrator's concern demonstrates how Bartleby's exercise of inoperativeness is seen as something dangerous, some kind of threat, both to himself and to others. This is because he disrupts the flow of society, he does not abide by Mill's definition of *homo economicus*; he never takes any payment for the work he has done, nor when his boss attempts to offer him money as a kind gesture. Nor Foucault's, as he offers no want or need to exchange a part of himself for gain of any kind, besides and including the economic. Nevertheless, through Turkey's complete obliviousness to saying the term, we can see how the potentiality which Bartleby demonstrates is desired. There is something undeniably alluring about the way in which Bartleby chooses to be.

The most prominent question the reader most likely has upon finishing this short story is, what Bartleby is trying to achieve through his actions. Agamben states in *Potentialities* that Bartleby is conducting a "scientific experiment", one in which the question he is attempting to answer is, "under what conditions can something occur or not occur, be true or false?" (260). Bartleby is attempting to answer this question through suspending his entire being in the state of potentiality, in other words, rendering his body entirely inoperative. He suspends what is true and what is false through never giving an indication to either one and therefore rendering them both simultaneously existing and not, as the potential for each is there because he never definitively says that he will do one or the other, and therefore the chance he might or might not is always there. It is this existence

through inoperativeness that renders Bartleby to exist in something akin to a liminal space as he is living, he is physically being but his mental being remains in a complete state of potentiality, he is both being and non-being simultaneously. The obvious flaw in Agamben's statement is the fact that in the end, Bartleby's inoperativity kills him, as he neglects to abide to the very basic laws of humanity, the need to eat. By rendering his entire body in a state of potentiality, the question arises as to whether inoperativity is a successful method in freeing humans from the characterizations which define us as a certain thing. Bartleby raises the question as to whether humans can function at all as inoperative beings. Inoperativity renders every aspect of your body and self with an alternative, but how do we know when doing so becomes self-detrimental?

My main criticism of Agamben's theory of inoperativity is the fact that he cannot seem to provide an explanation as to how inoperativity can be affective as a solution to biopolitics. As readers of his work, the closest we come to discovering a solution is his claim afore mentioned that we should "oppose" biopolitics, but how to do this is never explained. To conclude this essay, I would therefore like to offer my own interpretation of how biopolitics can be rendered inoperative by drawing on the character of Melville's Bartleby. In order to render biopolitics inoperative we have to realise that there can be no definition of us, there can be no definition of humans at all as we all have the potential to do, think, or become anything. For Agamben, restricting our mindsets to thinking that we have any purpose, any function, or any job to do is the most detrimental thing a person can do to themselves. We have the power to not be defined, it is our own choice, we must do as Bartleby has done and realise the potential in ourselves as until our potentiality is realised, we will live in the restrictions which we ultimately have put upon ourselves.

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Yvonne Battle-Felton. *Remembered*. Dialogue Books, 2019.

By Katie Kingsman

Remembered (2019) is a new book by Yvonne Battle-Felton that follows the stories of protagonist, Spring, from the bedside of her critically injured son, Edward. Going backwards in time, the book centres on the stories that came before them and everything that brought them to where they are in the present moment, in a Philadelphia hospital bed while riots rage outside in protest for and against Edwards life. However, while the story does begin in the present tense, the emphasis is always on the past and how, even decades later, their lives are affected by the remaining oppression post slavery. The cruelty of this time is thoroughly explored through the narrator, Ella, whose tale begins much earlier than when the book is set.

The real beginning of the story starts in 1843, when Ella is kidnapped whilst taking a shortcut home from church. After being ripped from her family, Ella is taken to the Walker farm in the hopes of using her for "breeding" purposes to replenish the slave population and lift the supposed curse that prohibits crops from being grown and babies from being born.

The main message of the book is about acknowledging the past and the importance of not forgetting what has come before us. Tempe is the twin sister of Spring, who appears as a smouldering ghost and repeatedly brings with her the motifs of fire and rage. She is Spring's first indicator that something is wrong with Edward and is the motivation for Spring to reveal the truth about their past to her son, who won't be able to be led home (where home is their afterlife and the resting place of their other deceased relatives) by Tempe until he knows who his family is and the history of his life.

Through Tempe, memories become the pivotal plot centre of *Remembered*, however Yvonne also employs several other original techniques to link the idea of personal memory to the collection of stories that make up the whole novel. Despite Spring beginning her story by saying "What I know comes straight from my sister's lips to my heart and to this book", the novel itself begins with a newspaper clipping, as do many of the chapters of the book. This is one of the most sobering parts of the book, continuously reminding the reader that while the stories written are indeed fictious in their creation and characters, the book itself is very much based on historical events, that, I believe, are often forgotten or glossed over. The newspaper clippings remind us as well of the difference between real life and media, as Spring says, "Most of what I am about to tell you ain't in no history book, no newspaper article, no encyclopaedia" (32). The story she tells goes past any data sourced recount in a history book, as there is bias, truth and emotion in Springs history that, I believe, could never be replicated in an academic generalisation of slave history.

At some points in the story, Spring is written almost as the original author of the book, creating what seems to be an origin for *Remembered*. Spring holds onto a scrapbook of stories and newspaper clippings that she has collected herself to help her document the world that is changing around her, which she later uses to tell her story to Edward. In some way it makes me view *Remembered* as a pastiche of the book Spring creates, with *Remembered* acting as an honourable preservation, over a century later, that can spread the stories that were so vital to the community back then. By referencing the origins of the book inside of the story the reader is again reminded that the poignant stories they are reading are more than just a fantasy or fictitious imagining. While the characters and some scenarios are of course fabricated the book is rooted in real history, something we are reminded of throughout.

Felton's constant undercurrent of real events, such as the Civil War, the abolishment of slavery and the constant prejudice from those in power, such as the sheriffs misuse of power, mean that these real life events can lean into and influence her characters stories, just as there would have been an influence at the time. It also allows the reader to keep in mind how the book is concerned with being accurate, while still being able to tell the story of her original characters from their unique viewpoint. This amalgamation of personal story, perspective and the real world of the time creates an individual perspective that most people wouldn't necessarily have thought about, and only reinforces the authenticity of the novel.

Other important aspects of the novel include the wavering role of religion, from the Pastor who damns every black person on the farm as heathens, to the traditions labelled superstitious by Walker, who condemns the curse while still believing in it himself. By involving several different narrations, different aspects of religion can be explored, allowing for more than just generalisations of ideas people would normally have. It also allows for questions to be raised regarding morality and the justification of actions. In particular, the main maternal figure Mother Skins' actions can be brought to the reader's attention from Ella's viewpoint, encouraging a questioning of events and the treatment of other slaves within the slave community while just as importantly showing the extremes to which people were pushed to during slavery. In this way, actions can be explored, questioned and explained through the understandings and the interactions of characters, making for a very engaging read. Similarly, by never showing the perspective of Walker, and instead introducing him through the protagonist's eyes, Walker is kept mostly out of the story, and instead of becoming a morally grey or fleshed out character, he is always kept as a villain, and it is never brought into dispute that he could be redeemable or forgivable.

Remembered, while written as a piece of fiction, is a very human piece of work, addressing the issue of racism and discrimination that can still be felt today in society, especially in America, where black people are unjustly punished by police every day. From my point of view, there should be more works like *Remembered*, and they should be studied over more than just English based subjects, in various establishments of learning. The book brings sympathy to history, understanding to the past and an awareness to the future that should be studied and made crucial to people today, if not totally in replace of classics such as *Of Mice and Men* (1937). Books like this one should still be taught or acknowledged alongside older books, and maybe it should be explained why many of the books written around the time in which *Remembered* is set are authored by white men instead of black women.

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M.J. Ryder. *The Darkest Hour.* I_AM Self-Publishing, 2018.
By Amy Cavanagh

The Darkest Hour (2008) is a refreshing take on the fantasy genre, subverting tired tropes whilst still paying homage to more well-loved elements. Through the combination of relevant, modern issues and a thrilling plot, M. J. Ryder explores the importance of friendship, community and establishing your own identity, encouraging the reader to delve into his enticing world.

Firstly, it is Ryder's use of shifting perspectives that exposes readers to the rich and colourful Magical Isle as well as its myriad of inhabitants. These range from powerful images to more atypical perspectives. For instance, one viewpoint is from Edwin, a young soldier caught up in a war he does not fully understand. Through Edwin's story, Ryder explores the consequences of war and doesn't shy away from depicting darker themes as a result. Divisions such as these also split the novel's rising action into readable, bite-sized chunks, maintaining a fast pace as well as the reader's attention. Through Ryder exploring a differing viewpoint, the reader also sees the main antagonist,

Varrus, struggle with subservience to a higher being. This adds a subtle, ironic dimension to Varrus' exploitation of the young mage Phae and his desire to control others, rather than his story being one of mere revenge.

However, it is Ryder's vivid and authentic writing style that sets the novel apart from others in the fantasy genre, as although the dialogue echoes the grand, elegant language of magical characters, it remains realistic and light-hearted when necessary. In particular, the humorous dialogue between Phae's father and his lifelong friends Aaron and Lena, breaks up the tension that gradually escalates throughout the novel, appealing to younger audiences. This can be difficult to do in situations so dire and rarely is it done well, but Ryder maintains this interesting fusion expertly through a well-developed and believable friendship. The backbone of this friendship is the presence of a solid backstory, one that underlines the entire novel. However, it can be said that the detail of the backstory does slightly detract from the main plot. For instance, when Callum reminisces about meeting his wife, he refers to the conspiracy that they had uncovered, and presumably resolved, together. Although this establishes Varrus' need for revenge, it does bring a slight hint of desperation to the reader, who is placed back into the current plot with no further elaboration on the past.

Despite this, the novel still contains many commendable aspects, including a wonderful mix of well-written female characters. The characters of Kiera, Lena and Freya are a diverse group of female characters with their own strengths that each form a vital component of the story. This is a refreshing addition to the often male-dominated fantasy genre. Moreover, Phae's journey from immaturity and fear to finding her own strength and identity is vital for young women to experience through the character. Ryder's subversion of stereotypical female archetypes is also noteworthy: Instead of conforming to a motherly, domestic role, Keira chooses to leave the family home to pursue her career as a warrior. However, this is not at the loss of a relationship with her husband or daughter, demonstrating to young readers that success and a career is not at the sacrifice of a family.

This is not the only inclusion of modern issues within *The Darkest Hour*, as Ryder also turns his focus to nature conservation. For example, the Magical Isle's reliance on nature to function mirrors our own dependence on the natural world. Moreover, the consequences that arise from its destruction reflects on modern issues such as climate change and deforestation. Phae's ultimate fusion with nature at the end of the novel acknowledges the need for society to recognise its connection to nature and thus act as stewards to protect it. This is a rare theme within the fantasy genre, and it is interesting to see Ryder's success at combining modern issues with a genre that tends to focus on humanitarian issues. This also demonstrates Ryder's ability to incorporate fantasy with issues that are relevant to a younger audience, as climate change remains an issue that will directly impact future generations.

A central theme within the novel is identity, in particular the importance of establishing your own identity aside from negative influences. This is something that is mirrored by Phae's journey throughout the novel, as she finds herself forced to commit atrocities on behalf of Varrus. However, with her own willpower, Phae manages to escape and defeat Varrus. This is something through which a young audience can gain positive influence from and apply to their own lives, regardless of the fictional setting. Therefore, the novel would be an excellent addition to the creative writing course at Lancaster, aiding the challenging prospect of writing for younger audiences as well as the difficulties that come with trying to convey a positive message.

The Darkest Hour, however, is accessible to all generations. Not afraid to handle darker themes such as death or the struggles of parenthood, Ryder appeals to a wide age-range. Though short in length, the novel is action-packed, perfect for younger readers whilst maintaining all the depth of an engaging and eloquent story that older fans will value.

In particular, fantasy enthusiasts will revel in the final battle, which evokes the grandiose of classic fantasy series such as *The Lord of the Rings* (1954). The inclusion of Varrus' hellish army adds

a terrifying aspect to his assault, depicted by Ryder as a swarm of creatures that descend upon the city. By creating his own mythical beasts, Ryder distinguishes himself from the vast array of fantasy novels inspired by writers such as Tolkien, J.K Rowling and George R.R Martin, establishing his own distinct and enriching world.

The Darkest Hour is a must-read for any fans of fantasy and those who desire a short but sweet delve into another world. Readers will inevitably find themselves unable to part from the exciting, yet warm company of Ryder's characters and, most of all, the unique and thrilling world he has created.

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Michael Greaney. *Sleep and the Novel: Fictions of Somnolence from Jane Austen to the Present*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
By Lexi Burgess

You would be forgiven for thinking Michael Greaney's *Sleep and the Novel: Fictions of Somnolence from Jane Austen to the Present* (2018) is bedtime reading. Greaney takes the reader through the "representation history" (113) of sleep from Austen to Dickens to Ballard and explores the previously unplumbed depths of the character at rest. With his easy-to-read, analytical style, Greaney's novel is ideal for any reader who wants to peel another layer away from their literature and explore a niche within the literary sphere that has not yet received the rigorous analysis it deserves.

Submerged into the uncharted territory of sleep, the reader is relieved to have Greaney's hand to guide them along the way. Greaney make sense of a world of darkness with a plethora of jargon: Bildungsroman becomes "Schlafroman" (113), modernism becomes "bedroom modernism" (147). *Sleep and the Novel* is clearly backed by a great deal of research, and the way in which Greaney explores and justifies these terms through studies and other related literature serves to reinforce the significance of sleep studies.

So, what is at stake when Fat Boy sleeps across the first dozen pages of *The Pickwick Papers* (1836)? In *Sleep and the Novel* there are several reasons for creating the character at rest. The mere presence of a character who is, as Greaney argues, the "non-looker" instead of the "on-looker" (40) justifies an analysis of the possible connotations, symbols, and allusions. Although, he is quick to point out that some authors favour the functionality of sleeping, such as Austen, who is identified as a writer for whom sleep is, more often than not, simply sleep.

Slumber becomes political in Dickens' chapter, which proves to be one of the more interesting explorations of sleep in the novel. In this section the reader discovers that sleep can equal subversion: whilst the sleeping character can provoke connotations of vulnerability, Greaney points out that the power dynamic between paupers and their boss' offers a different perspective. Whereas overt revolt could mean disaster for the unfortunates in Dickens' work, under the film of sleep the lower classes could ignore and dismiss the powers that be.

From power to passivity: the centrality of the "non-looker" is nowhere more important than in Goncharov's *Oblomov* (1859), and this chapter is a refreshing take on a book and writer I have never heard of. Thus far, sleep has existed as a niche in the books Greaney analyses. In *Oblomov*, however, the eponymous narrator is so enamoured by slumber that he favours it over his peers, his career, and his relationships. The traditional Bildungsroman becomes the "Schlafroman", and Greaney's depth of analysis, research, and sheer interest in sleep studies come to the foreground in this chapter.

Amid Greaney's discussions about political sleep, subversive sleep, and sleep as an escape, it would have been interesting to read his thoughts on sleep within feminist texts, and how sleep works within a gender power imbalance. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) is an interesting text to study when considering the significance of sleep within feminist discourse. However, approaches to this text would have to consider the importance of daydreaming, and whether or not it is a form of sleep, because Jane has a strong spiritual sense for the unknown which manifests itself in her waking hours.

Greaney emphasises the contrast between technology and human nature: while the former cannot, and will never sleep, a person's need to sleep renders them vulnerable. In a world where artificial intelligence is growing steadily stronger and more intelligent, Greaney casts his gaze into the not so distant future and wonders whether sleep can be eradicated entirely. In analysing Ballard's *Manhole 69* (1957), Greaney probes at the idea that sleep is a disorder, a glitch in the matrix, something unidentifiable and therefore something to be feared. A lot of the later, more contemporary texts he explores are in crisis over man's natural "ontological vulnerability" (216), and these chapters provoke an interesting question – what is the essential nature of sleep?

Greaney is not shy about including critics, and scatters the likes of Chevok, Foucault, and Barthes throughout *Sleep and the Novel*, both to admonish their rejection of sleep analysis, and to provide insight into ways in which the keen reader might further explore a strand of theory or a tentative idea. This book would work well on the suggested reading list for The Theory and Practice of Criticism (ENG201) course at Lancaster University. With Greaney's mix of well-researched analysis and occasional broad-stroke approach to issues which offer the reader something to think about, this book is perfect for promoting introspection about how we read literature, and the ways in which contemporary critics' focus on overt symbols and meanings can sometimes blind the critical reader to unconventional means of symbolism, metaphor, and depiction.

Furthermore, *Sleep and the Novel* would pair well with Francine Prose's *Reading Like a Writer* (2006) because, as with the latter book, all of the writer's research and hard work would be for nothing if their prose was not so clean, easily digestible, and thoroughly interesting to read. In both cases, Greaney and Prose add to the newly developing critical sphere of easy to read analysis. I, for one, am extremely grateful for it, and I know that I will take *Sleep and the Novel* down from my bookshelf again and again.

Ultimately, Greaney's novel leaves the reader wondering why they have paid so little attention to the significance of the subconscious. *Sleep and the Novel* demands to be read in one sitting, and the reader is all too happy to oblige. Greaney ties enough loose ends together to keep the reader wanting to learn more about the subversive nature of somnolence. At the end of the final chapter, the reader is thoroughly rested and having read enough to provoke some weird and wonderful dreams, they fall into a slumber with Greaney's book on their lap.

Afterword

This issue of *LUX Journal* marks a change from the usual order of business: we have a new cover, with an illustration provided by an undergraduate artist. I would like to thank Katherine Riley for providing such beautiful artwork, tailoring the illustration to the texts included in this year's edition of the journal. Hopefully the journal will give many flourishing young Lancaster artists the opportunity to display their work in years to come.

I am immeasurably proud of the work we have accomplished this year. I want to thank each member of our undergraduate editorial board for their commitment to producing an excellent issue of the journal. I have been consistently heartened by their hard work and enthusiasm, and feel sure that whatever field they find themselves working in will be lucky to have them. Of course, we would be nothing without our contributors, who have been impressively professional and hardworking during the process of review and editing, and who I am proud to have included in the journal. I learned something new from every one of your articles and reviews, and the Lancaster undergraduate community is enriched by your presence.

Taking over the helm of *LUX Journal* this year proved challenging at times, but seeing the issue finally published is immensely satisfying and reminds me that we have a uniquely supportive and encouraging English department at Lancaster, without which this would not have been possible. My time as executive editor would also not have been anywhere near as successful or enjoyable if I had not had such a good teacher. Rachel Fox founded the journal in 2016 and handed it over to me after two years tenure as executive editor. During the year I shadowed Rachel, I learned the important practical parts of how to organise and run the journal, but I also saw how much it meant to her. Above all, Rachel approached the running of *LUX* with kindness, empathy, and a genuine enthusiasm for undergraduate work, which I hope to have carried over this year.

I have no doubt that both my successors Luke Turley and Sarah Hughes are well-suited to leading the journal; having worked together for the last six months, I know I will be leaving *LUX* in good hands. I look forward to reading future issues which cover ever more expansive and fascinating ground.

—Rebecca Gibson, Executive Editor of *LUX Journal*

Postscript

I was slightly worried joining the *LUX* editorial team halfway through the year, given how much amazing work the team had already put in, I was worried I would be left behind. But in fact, my experience has been the very opposite as the editorial team's enthusiasm for this project means that I have felt included right from the outset and what a project it has been. The work that our contributors have produced has been outstanding. They responded so well to our editors' comments which has allowed the editorial process to run both professionally and efficiently; all this has resulted in an incredibly stimulating and refined journal for this academic year. The effort and time our Editorial Board have dedicated to this work despite the stresses and demand of a full undergraduate timetable is a testament to their diligence and skill and they should be so proud of what they have produced.

I cannot wait to begin work with the new Editorial Board in the upcoming months in preparation for the 2019-20 issue, as well as being delighted to be working with my fellow PhD student, Sarah Robinson Hughes, who joins the *LUX* team as our new executive editor.

Finally, I am so grateful for Rebecca for inviting me to be a part of this team. I cannot thank her enough for the time she has spent working with me so that I can make the best contribution possible during my time on the Editorial Board. I look forward to taking up this mantle and continuing Rebecca's (and Rachel before her) amazing work.

—Luke Turley, Executive Editor