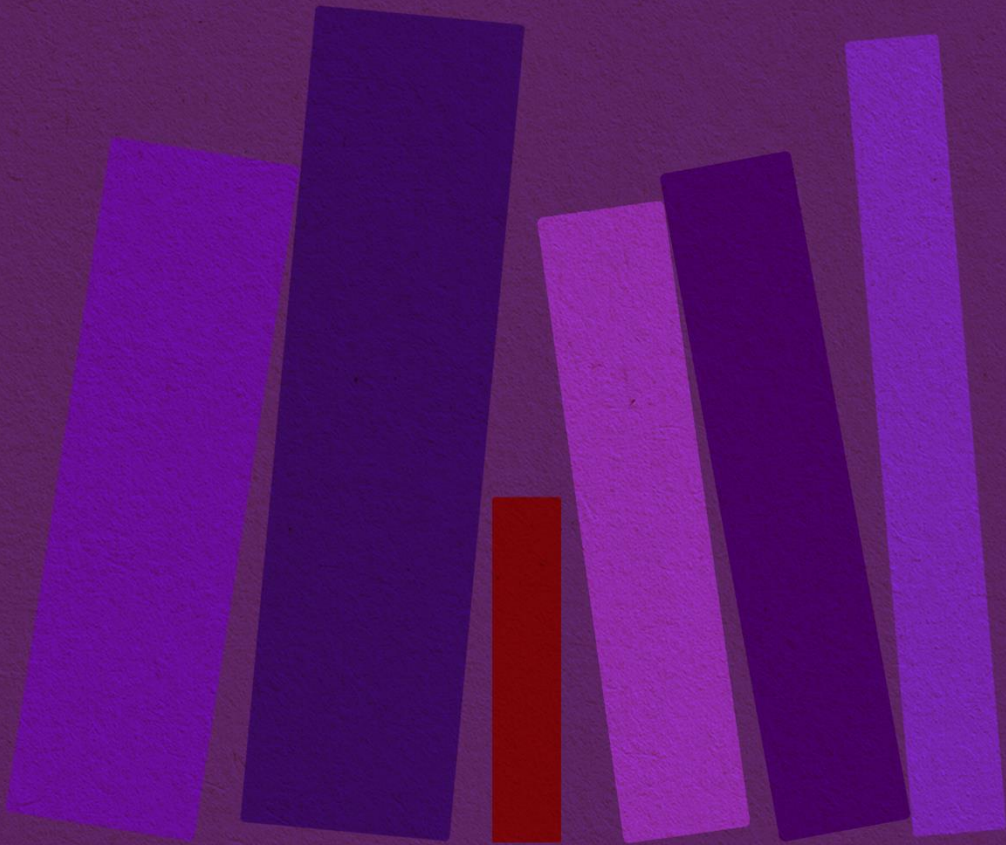


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Names and Bios

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Stan Wierzbicki was born in Warsaw, Poland and is currently finishing his degree in English Literature, Creative Writing & Practice. Both creatively and academically, he is interested in postcolonial studies and the postcolonial dimensions of the Polish perspective, as well as gender studies in relation to literature and toxic masculinity. He is currently working on redrafting his first novel which is a magical-realist mystery about reclaiming the body and sexuality, set in Athens.

Abby Lewis studies Philosophy, and is particularly interested in Feminist and Political philosophy as well as the Philosophy of Fiction, completing her dissertation on this topic. She is a strong believer in the value of education, especially surrounding other cultures, and she loves to travel and explore.

Contents

Staff Endorsement	1
Editors' Introduction	2
'The Application of the 'Jewish Science' to Anti-Semitic Victorian Fairy Tales' Freya Coombes	3
'Resistance in Rebecca Harding Davis' "Life in the Iron Mills" and Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" Meg Roser	12
'Reading <i>Heart of Darkness</i> as a Polishman in Sub-Saharan Africa' Stan Wierzbicki	16
'Khaled Hosseini, <i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i> . Riverhead Books, 2007' Review by Abby Lewis	26
Afterword	28
Postscript	29

Staff Endorsement

When I last had the pleasure of endorsing LUX 4 in June 2020, I had no idea that the global pandemic would have such an extended grip on our personal and professional lives. At that time, I expressed ‘my immeasurable admiration for the undergraduate and postgraduate students who worked so very hard during the early months of England’s Covid19 lockdown to complete’ that edition (<http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/luxjournal/files/2020/07/LUX-Issue-4-July-2020.pdf>). Two years later, and even though I’m a person of letters by trade, I don’t have enough superlatives to articulate my ongoing and ever-increasing esteem for English Literature and Creative Writing’s student community. You are extraordinary. Your contributions to LUX 6 demonstrate your passion and talent for thinking critically, creatively and independently about the worlds we inhabit.

The Editors’ Introduction to LUX 6 provides excellent overviews of the journal’s individual essays and book review. I would like to add that collectively, the contributing authors show how important it is to understand how words are not transparent windows on the worlds we live in. Via the writings of Giorgio Agamben, Sigmund Freud and Primo Levi, Freya Coombes’ essay considers the ideological manipulations of Victorian fairy tales in twentieth-century Europe. Hannah Arendt’s and Michel Foucault’s theories of ‘spectatorship and suffering’ inform Meg Roser’s discussion of two nineteenth-century American texts, Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay “Self-Reliance” and Rebecca Harding Davis’ short story “Life in the Iron Mills”. ‘Poland’, says Stan Wierzbicki, ‘is a postcolonial country. Polish perspective is postcolonial’. Taking a critical-creative approach, Wierzbicki engages with a range of thinkers including Chinua Achebe, Ngūgī Wā Thiong’o, Ania Loomba and Walter Dignolo’ to explore ‘Joseph Conrad, or – as he was really called – Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski’, Heart of Darkness the webbed nature of Polish and English perspectives. With its subtitle ‘A Continuing Piece of Political and Educational Relevance’, Abby Lewis’s review of Khaled Hosseini’s 2007 novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* simultaneously speaks to 2021.

In our Part One core course English Literature (ENGL100), students are introduced to Roland Barthes’ 1967 essay ‘The Death of the Author’ which famously ends by announcing ‘the birth of the reader’. Over half a century after the publication of Barthes’ influential thesis everyone involved in the production of LUX 6 shows how reading — along with writing and analytical thinking — are crucial components for self-reflexive cultures and societies. Thank you.

— Liz Oakley-Brown, English and Creative Writing

Editors' Introduction

Our editorial team are pleased to present with excitement the sixth issue of *LUX Journal*. Our team has been incredibly fortunate to be working with truly exceptional authors, whose writing covers a vast range of themes. As a team, we have identified the articles and review in this journal to be linked in their ability to open conversations surrounding social justice, inequality and violence – regarding wealth, class, gender, race and religion. We welcome you to question the social dynamics that are explored critically through the use of literature as well as creative writing considering key themes in our issue of resistance and autonomy.

The process of assembling this issue, in collaboration with our contributors and peer reviewers, has been one that has allowed us to think creatively in many aspects. From the selection and shaping of our articles through to the decisions we make in presenting our issue in its final form. We have consciously chosen to open our issue with our more academically standard critical pieces, using our creative-critical piece to transition into our book review at the end of our issue, allowing our readers to gradually interact with a more personal reading of literature as they move through our issue. This has truly been a team effort in which every single member has impacted our efforts and success along the way, from our outreach on social media, our diligent work in communicating with our contributors and peer reviewers and our efforts in editing our final selection of pieces to be published. All our members are truly invaluable to the success of this issue.

The following articles, creative-critical piece and book review come from undergraduate students from a number of departments in FASS. **Freya Coombes** focuses her article on antisemitism within Victorian Fairy Tales, particularly those by the Grimm Brothers, discussing the isolation and marginalisation of the Jewish community through the application of psychoanalysis in a literary study of these original tales. It is through this religious marginalisation that we begin to see how our issue revolves around social injustice, in this instance particularly through the study of how the Jewish individual is portrayed as ‘an other’ — to the point that it is present even within Nazi propaganda that circulated Germany. **Meg Roser** approaches social injustice through her study of ‘Resistance’ in her exploration of Rebecca Harding Davis’ short story ‘Life in the Iron Mills’. In this piece, Roser explores the short story using an essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson called ‘Self-Reliance’, focusing on the wealth disparity amongst citizens of differing social standing and how this can manifest into violence. Our next piece by **Stan Wierzbicki** takes the creative-critical form. Titled ‘Reading *Heart of Darkness* as a Polishman in Sub-Saharan Africa’, this piece explores conflicting dynamics within postcolonial identities on a personal level. Our last piece is a book review of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by **Abby Lewis**. This book review focuses on the struggle of women in particular within this acclaimed novel, identifying with characters on a personal level in acknowledgement of the suffering they face.

The last ten months spent working on this issue could not have been possible without all of the hard work of our incredible executive editor, Kathryn Poole. Kathryn has not only led our team in organising and arranging our meetings, overseeing decisions and generally being present to offer her help and support, but she has also worked with our shadow executive editor Sarah Wagstaffe to help create a foundation for the next issue of *LUX Journal*. Our team are excited to see what Sarah and her future team of editors will publish a year from now and we wish them all the best of luck as they step into their roles in the coming months.

The Application of the 'Jewish Science' to Anti-Semitic Victorian Fairy Tales

Freya Coombes

Abstract

Within Victorian fairy tales, the Jewish figure is portrayed as other, evil, and inhuman, anti-Semitic stereotypes prevailing from prejudiced tales to modern perceptions of Jewish characters. With particular focus on the tales of the Grimm Brothers, the application of psychoanalysis places anti-Semitic tales under a philo-semitic lens, the extreme prejudices being revealed as products of manipulated ideology rather than well-founded hatred. Freud brings this into question through his psychoanalytic theories on repression, dreams, and the unconscious.

Germanic fairy tales created a stereotyped image of the Jewish figure, animalising and dehumanising them, thus placing them in a lowered position within society. Through the promotion of a system of thought, and through the distribution of these fairy tales, political control is exerted in an almost Orwellian fashion of thought management and manipulation.

This application of the labelled 'Jewish sciences' is ironic, as anti-Semitic tales are viewed through a sympathetic and philo-semitic lens, the two being in direct conflict, yet the correlations between theories are evident as fairy tales are often looked at in terms of psychoanalysis and dream theory. These psychoanalytical theories are created through the influence of Jewish Scripture, the founding father and pioneer, Sigmund Freud, being Jewish himself.

*

Within Victorian fairy tales, Jewish figures are portrayed as other, sub-human, and consequently evil; anti-Semitic stereotypes prevail from prejudiced tales to modern perceptions of Jewish characters. The application of psychoanalytic theories to the anti-Semitic tales of those such as the Grimm Brothers, reveals the prejudicial views as a product of anti-Semitic ideology, peddled as propaganda, as opposed to grounded hatred.

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, formed the basis for multiple theories from his secular Jewish identity, using Jewish scripture to influence many of his discourses. Psychoanalysis was thus labelled a 'Jewish Science', this label containing strong negative connotations within Nazi Germany and presenting danger associated with the field as, "the 'Jewish' science came to mean something corrupt and corrupting, a lying ideology directed at poisoning the health of the Aryan nations" ("Freud and Jewish Identity" 168). The associative link between Freud and his identity resulted in scrutiny against the emerging field, particularly within an increasingly anti-Semitic Germany. However, Freud never accepted this label for psychoanalysis as a whole or indeed himself, his Jewish identity presenting a split consciousness between distance and acceptance. "Freud worked hard to present himself as someone alienated from even vestigial relationships with a Jewish religious identity", creating a strained relationship with Judaism as he attempted to remove himself from the Jewish labels and accompanying prejudices associated with his cultural heritage ("Freud and Jewish Identity" 171). Despite this rejection of his religious heritage, "Freud claimed that his Jewish identity freed him from intellectual constraints", allowing for free thought and the development of original concepts through his knowledge and association with Judaism ("Freud and Jewish Identity" 175). In his book *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud comments on his perception of the origin of anti-Semitism, rejecting the perceived notion and embracing a deeper explanation. On the surface, anti-Semitism stems from differences, both physically and culturally, however the deeper, unconscious meaning is "the jealousy which the Jews evoked in the other peoples by maintaining that they were the first-born, favourite child of God"

(147). This controversial claim, argued by Freud, focuses less on the physical attributes of the Jewish people, and places the hatred of the religion on the historical context associated with the origin of Judaism, their seniority posing a threat to current inhabitants. Building on Freud's perception, the prevailing anti-Semitic views descend from differentiation, jealousy extending from a lack of knowledge and rejection of societal positionality, as they stand outside of this. The Jewish figure acts as the other, the foreigner and the minority. To this notion Freud says, "the numerical weakness of the minority invites suppression", stating that the minority are suppressed because they are weaker than the majority, the majority excreting power simply because they have the ability to do so (146). Anti-Semitism, for Freud, is thus rooted predominantly and unconsciously in jealousy, this leading to suppression of the minority.

This jealousy is evident in "The Good Bargain", story seven within the *Grimm Brother's Fairy Tales*, in which a "Jew" is swindled out of his coat (29). Wilhelm Grimm edited earlier editions of this from moneylender to Jew, promoting anti-Semitic views, "systematically making the Jew into a worse and worse character" (Helfer 33). Initially, within the narrative, the Jew is portrayed as selfless, saying "I will out of pure friendship lend you a coat for a short time" (30). The Jew possesses a nice coat, one that is deemed good enough for an audience with the King, the depiction of the Jew here being a positive one of trust and generosity. This coat is wanted by the peasant out of greed and jealousy for what he doesn't own; the peasant "feels himself to be absolutely right in cheating the Jew", as analysed by Arnold Zweig in relation to other tales, purely based on his religious identity and thus lower status (Fenichel 37). Playing on the stereotypes of the Jew as a thief and a liar, to which Mondschein commented that "'Jew' is synonymous with 'thief'" (xxii), the peasant states "what the Jew says is false- no true word ever comes out of his mouth! That rascal there is capable of maintaining that I have his coat on" (30). The peasant plays on the King's insecurities of inferiority and foolishness, bringing into question the power knowledge dichotomy hypothesised by Michel Foucault. Knowledge is power, "through the specific vocabulary of knowledge that circulate in society... [Foucault's] work explores the institutional effects of discourse and the ways in which it operates to produce and govern individual subjects" ("Subjectivity" 73). The application of this discourse to Grimm's "The Good Bargain" places the King as positionally inferior to a foreign figure through his lack of knowledge. Their interaction acts as a microcosm for the power imbalance this is seen to represent, the peasant holding governing power over the institutional body and sovereign, inverting the power structure. This consequently transposes the hierarchy of power as the peasant moves to a position of superiority through his knowledge and influence. "The Jew has assuredly deceived one or the other of us, either myself or the peasant" (30). The peasant brings a threat to the sovereign's reign, inverting the power structure and presenting the Jew as dishonest to the King. Trust of the Jew is impossible due to the King's lack of knowledge and thus power. Through this, anti-Semitism is a result of the Jew posing a threat to the established body of power; this confirms Freud's hypothesis as the threat creates jealousy of the Jew's supposed ability to redistribute power as he sees fit, removing illusions of sovereign superiority.

The use of Jewish scripture in the creation of psychoanalytic theories is evident through the figure of Joseph, a biblical figure utilised by Freud when looking at the interpretation of dreams. For Freud, Joseph was a prophetic dream walker, allowing for in depth analysis of his own dreams and the dreams of others, "draw[ing] characteristically on the image of Joseph... and thereby setting in motion great events- much as did Freud himself in founding psychoanalysis" ("Fragments of Jewish Identity" 182). Joseph thus becomes an analytical tool through which the semiotic and symbolic importance of dreams are interpreted. Freud states:

[i]t will have been obvious that the name Josef plays a great part in my dream... It is particularly easy for me to hide my ego in my dreams behind a person of this name, since Joseph was the name of the dream-interpreter in the Bible. (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 160)

Building on the work of Freud, Carl Jung believes the unconscious to be the creative source of dreams, literature, and artistic expression, this being the origin for all creative forms. For Jung “fantasy, in particular mythological fantasy, is symbolic and considered it an expression of psyche’s potential to anticipate meaning” (Hill 111). Dreams occur when the repressed unconscious returns, this being a culmination of our lost agency over the suppressed desires which are held within the id. Freud comments that dreams are “the royal road to the unconscious”, the latent meaning of the dream revealing the hidden connotations within the unconscious (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 604). Through this, Mallet points out that “fairy tales contain hidden messages that are related to our unconscious drives and needs and should be interpreted as Freud interpreted dreams for us to grasp their psychological significance” (Zipes 162). Speaking through images and semiotics, fairy tales are akin to the unconscious in their psychic content and should be treated similarly when interpreting the meaning of them. Within “Cinderella”, the application of Freud’s psychoanalytic lens shows a sexual rivalry and use of the Oedipal complex. There is a point of rivalry created between the stepmother and Cinderella as they compete for the love of the father. “With the aid of defensive mechanisms of regression, projection, and magical thinking in order to satisfy super-ego demands, she becomes the poor little servant” (Rubenstein 202). Through close analysis, the prominent inclusion of phallic symbols, such as the twig given by the father and the wand of the godmother, the unconscious agenda within child development is revealed, the unconscious Oedipal desire becoming clear. The biblical figure of Joseph becomes applicable to fairy tale interpretation as well as interpretation of dreams, Freud being inspired by the figure within his creation of dream-analytic discourse. The analysis of dreams within fairy tales shows the application of another of the ‘Jewish sciences’ to anti-Semitic texts, there being a direct correlation between the two discourses and Freud’s notions on dream inform further analysis on the matter.

The tales of the Grimm Brothers were utilised within Nazi Germany as propaganda, promoting racial purity and prejudiced views, the tales being praised by Adolf Hitler for the anti-Semitic undertones. The tales became politicized as, “[f]or the Nazis the fairy tales became the prime vehicle in supporting their Aryan policies” (Arnds 422-423). Through the manipulation of tales such as “Cinderella”, encouraging racial instincts of purity, the tales were used to indoctrinate others into the regime of the Nazi party. The Third Reich used the tales to foster nationalism, the Nazi party decreeing that each household must, by law, have a copy of the Grimm Fairy Tales. “By the 1870s the Grimm’s tales had been incorporated into the teaching curriculum”, the extreme ideologies of Hitler being reinforced by the tales as a way to indoctrinate children into the regime, creating a nationalist mentality in the younger generations (Zipes 48). For Althusser, “[i]deology represent[s] the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (44). Through the promotion of a system of thought, political control is exerted in an almost Orwellian fashion of thought management and manipulation. Eagleton focuses on this more, stating that ideology is a formal belief system, something of a political manifesto that becomes internalised by the individual. Through the early indoctrination of children, via the manipulation of childhood tales, the Nazi party shaped the mindset of those under their control, this ideology operating within the unconscious and shaping their belief system. Slavoj Žižek, in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, utilised the example of anti-Semitism, stating that “the anti-Semitic idea of Jew has nothing to do with Jews; the ideological figure of a Jew is a way to stitch up the inconsistency of our ideological system” (71). The application of this to the Germanic state was upheld using Repressive State Apparatus, a state that “functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology” (Althusser 43). Žižek’s statement is evident within the story “The Bright Sun Brings It to Light”, the persecution of the Jewish figure being not out of any actions of the Jew but simply because of the manipulated ideology instilled in the servant that the Jew is a liar and thus deserves acts of violence against him.

Throughout Victorian fairy tales, Jews are presented as the other and inferior beings, becoming the subject of victimisation through the application of derogatory stereotypes. Ken Mondschein, in his introduction to *Grimm’s Complete Fairy Tales*, states that “[t]he Jews served as a

convenient 'other' so that people could find a common ground" (xxii). By creating an other, there is a unification of the known in an attempt to eradicate the unknown and different. "People of one's own kind, and the ruling powers, one does not suspect of evil, but people who look different and speak and behave differently- they may be capable of anything" (Fenichel 38). This uncertainty and unfamiliarity is the source of overarching fear and the resulting prejudices. However, this war of fear created a split society in which the eradication and persecution of the unknown culminated in ethnic cleansing, in 1941, with the Holocaust. Associations with Judaism and linked affiliations led to "times when the denigration of psychoanalysis as 'Jewish science' ha[d] been murderously dangerous" ("Fragments of Jewish Identity" 180). This othering, which was influential on the thoughts of the Nazi movement and the Third Reich, can be seen in many fairy tales, particularly in those by the Brothers Grimm such as "The Bright Sun Will Bring It to Light". In this, a Jew is mercilessly beaten and robbed when "the tailor thrust God out of his heart, fell on the Jew, and said, 'Give me your money, or I will strike you dead.'... used violence and beat him until he was near death" (415). This tale elicits contradictory interpretations amongst critics, many like Bottigheimer believing this to be "the only one of Grimm's tales in which the Jew is depicted in a positive light" (Helfer 35). The tale ends with reconciliation and retribution as the tailor is condemned for his actions. However, in an essay by Martha B. Helfer this becomes inverted, the tailor's behaviour creating an inversion of stereotypes as "it is the tailor, not the Jew, who proves to be the Jew" (36). Through this, Helfer creates the notion of 'Jewishness' as a separate entity from a Jewish body, the name merely holding negative connotations of the word. The word Jew thus becomes synonymous with antagonist, allowing for the application of this to any tale, the antagonist presenting 'Jewish' traits through their deceit and immorality. Helfer reinforces this by stating "[t]his is the true function of the Jew in the text- to define what is unchristian as 'Jewish'" (36). In this way, anti-Semitism becomes transferable between figures who display negative behaviour, this hatred not being linked to the religion but the immoral connotations the figures embody. In "The Emperor's New Clothes", a tale by Hans Christian Andersen, the weavers can be seen as 'Jewish', despite never being named as such, due to their traits. They are described as "cheats" (par. 13), deceiving the Emperor and officials through the manipulation of power as they question "[a]m I not fit to be emperor" and "I am not fit for my good office" (par. 19, par. 16). Through this, the weavers are shown to adhere to the negative stereotype, showing 'Jewish' traits of greed and deceit as they fulfil the antagonistic role within the tale. Furthermore, they are foreigners, the other in the kingdom. This promotes the other as being unknown and thus untrustworthy, the mysterious encouraging fear. In addition, "The unconscious is also referenced, that 'other place' which is both known and eternally foreign. Thinking this through in relation to the issues of the Jew as stranger and outsider, the importance of 'Jewish textuality' is apparent" ("Fragments of Jewish Identity" 181). Through this, the unconscious becomes a place of fear and the unknown, held in a similar status to that of the Jew, being condemned and feared for differentiation. The unconscious and Judaism thus share this othered label through which fear is ignited and maintained through condemnation, whether socially or scientifically. The unconscious or id is the manifestation of unmanaged morals and desires, this being akin to the stereotyped depiction of the Jewish figure as "rabid... different, diseased" ("Freud and Jewish Identity" 169). Through the animalistic comparison made in Victorian fairy tales, such as to the dog and frogs within "The Good Bargain" or the derogatory names of "Shortribs... Sheepshanks, or Laceleg" within "Rumpelstiltskin" (201), the antagonistic other becomes the 'Jewish' figure through these traits, according to Helfer's transferable Jewish label.

The Jewish figure is feminized and thus dehumanized through a societal rejection of inverted gender. Building on the theories of Freud, Gilman believed Freud to be universalising anti-Semitic tropes into his theories. Gilman describes how, throughout the 19th century, there was a fascination both in popular and in medical culture with the body and 'difference' of the Jew, and that this particular manifestation of 'othering' focused on sexuality. The Jew was seen as having a kind of rabid yet damaged sexuality, manifested in the male Jew's circumcised state and through

modes of insanity which were basically hysterical in form and were caused by incest and early seduction ("Freud and Jewish Identity" 169).

Through the circumcision, the Jewish man becomes an embodiment of feminized masculinity, this leading to hysteria similar to that which Freud treated in Vienna amongst women in the 1890s. This hysteria occurred due to a return of the repressed, leading to his theory on the Oedipus Complex, the unwitting feeling of desire towards the mother and jealousy of the father. The circumcised state leads to an inversion of gendered unconsciousness, the male Jew associating with the hysteria of the female through this. "In the popular and medical fantasy, circumcision was equivalent to castration, provoking fear and abhorrence", leading to Freud's universal theory of the castration complex; everyone has a penis, and every female has been castrated ("Freud, Psychoanalysis, and Anti-Semitism" 311). Through the application of the castration complex, the Jewish figure becomes akin to the female, their physical circumcision matching the metaphorical one that females undergo. For Laura Mulvey, the "lack of a penis, impl[ies] a threat of castration and hence unpleasure" (174). Castration, and thus circumcision, form an association with a lack of pleasure and the feminine, distorting the view of the male body as there is a merging of gender within the unconscious. "Even today, we find deep in the unconscious of man the fear that his penis may be cut off if he sins, a fear which acts as the chief motor for the instinct-suppression desired by the patriarchal society" (Fenichel 42). This feminization of the Jewish body further others the Jew, the other and different being a source of hatred through fear and thus promoting eradication. This differentiation differs from Freud's theory that anti-Semitism is a source of jealousy, promoting prejudice based on physical or mental differences. The repressed and unconscious once again appears, Freud's theory of the unconscious and sexual repression applying here, creating further anti-Semitic sentiment through hatred of that which is different and other.

Victorian fairy tales depict the Jewish body as monstrous through anti-Semitic stereotypes and bestial references. For Otto Fenichel:

Jews have also been reviled by anti-Semites because of their cultural or physical 'racial' peculiarities. Their hair frequently is black even if their skin is not; moreover, they are foreign in their customs and habits, in their language, in their divine service, and in their everyday life, which is so interwoven into their divine service. This foreignness they share with the Armenians, the Negroes, and the Gypsies; and herein is to be found the secret that has made others believe them to be wicked evil-doers. (38)

The Jewish body becomes victimised due to physical differences, comparative with the ostracising racism enslaved persons faced. These identifying features become exaggerated, leading to extreme stereotypes which emphasise demonic qualities, the Jew becoming "the devil, the anti-Christ, the wicked principle directed against God" as they adopt animalistic qualities (Fenichel 41). Within "The Good Bargain", the servant comes across frogs "crying, 'Aik, aik, aik, aik.'" (27). The servant believes the frog to be mocking him so abuses the frog, saying "[y]ou water-splasher, you thick-heads, you goggle-eyes, you have great mouths and can screech till you hurt one's ears" (27). The image produced is one of deformity and difference, Fenichel stating the derogatory characteristics used to describe the Jewish stereotype are "namely animal qualities- goats' feet, horns, tails, and ugliness" (41). This creates a bestial comparison that is maintained through the attributes of the dog and later the Jew in the tale, all three being portrayed as antagonistic figures and having the 'Jewishness' that Helfer mentioned. Helfer comments that "the peasant implicitly characterizes the frogs as 'Jews'" utilising the "stock antisemitic stereotype" through the comparison of beast to sub-human (36). This animalistic stereotype is maintained through many antagonist figures such as the witch within "Hansel and Gretel", witches being described as "hav[ing] red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen scent like the beasts, and are aware when human beings draw near" (58). The devilish connotations associated with the red eyes maintain the antagonist as evil, the bestial qualities being suggestive of satanic descent. In this way,

Helfer's 'Jewishness' shows the Jewish figure as satanic and evil, becoming more sub-human through physical deformities and thus, further othered through their labelling as antagonistic.

Within Victorian fairy tales, the figure of the Jew is "Der Muselmann" meaning an "anonymous mass... of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty to suffer". "One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death death" (Levi 90). Adopted from the memoirs of Primo Levi, Giorgio Agamben uses the figure of the Muselmann to present bare life, a status of near inhumanity due to their insignificance. Agamben presents the historical example of Jews within Nazi Germany to illustrate the concept "[t]he Nazis created the legal and medical category of the 'sub-human' to justify the extermination of socially undesirable people: Jews, homosexuals... in the eyes of the state, they were all deemed 'life unworthy of being lived', which meant they could be killed with impunity" (Bradley). This Nazi-Germanic attitude is reflected in the Grimm fairy tale "The Jew Among Thorns"; the Jewish figure suffering for the amusement of the servant:

[T]he good servant's humour so tempted him that he took up his fiddle and began to play... But the thorns tore his shabby coat from him, combed his beard, and pricked and plucked him all over the body... 'Leave the fiddle alone, master; I do not want to dance.' But the servant did not listen to him. (396)

Despite his actions against the Jew, the servant is still described as being justified, the physical harm of the Jew being deemed an acceptable sacrifice for this enjoyment. The servant justifies this by stating "[y]ou have fleeced people often enough, now the thornbushes shall do the same to you", this being an act of retribution against all Jewish 'good', people who have deceived others (396). "[T]he 'good servant' remarks that this is fair treatment because the Jew has gruesomely tortured 'the people' and now must be tortured in return" (Helfer 40). Through this, the Jew fully embodies the figure of the Muselmann as he represents all Jews, past and present, his life being unworthy due to his status as a non or sub-human. When brought to justice, the blame moves from the servant to the Jew, the assumption of his guilt, due to his Jewish status, once again resuming. There is thus a move from the Muselmann to a scapegoat and antagonistic figure. As seen also in "The Good Bargain", the Jew becomes the figure on which crime is laid to blame as their life is held in lower regard than that of the other citizens, even of lower socio-economic status such as a peasant or servant. This is commented on by Fenichel in 1946 in what he calls "'scapegoat theory'" (37). He states:

[a]s it is well known, the Jews used to load all their sins onto a goat and then drive it out into the desert in order to purify them. In the same way the ruling classes laid their sins onto the Jews... this conception of the Jews as scapegoats is anchored in the souls of the German people. (37)

There is a shift from the Jew as a human figure to a sacrificial animal, adhering to Agamben's statement that the Jew has become 'sub-human' and thus unworthy. Through the removal of their human status to that akin to a sacrificial goat, the life of the Jew is deemed unworthy of human identification, the sacrifice of the Jew acting as a cleansing of sin and is thus justified.

In conclusion, Victorian fairy tales, particularly those of a German origin, portray Jews as antagonistic and evil, this figure becoming the symbol through which the negative stereotypes are reinforced. Even if the antagonist is not directly referred to as Jewish, 'Jewish' traits are applied, the tales thus being interpreted so the antagonist is in fact Jewish. Little Red Riding Hood, for example, was interpreted as a symbol of the innocent German people, terrorized by the evil 'Jewish' wolf and liberated by Hitler, the huntsman. Similarly, Cinderella was seen as the embodiment of racial purity, while her evil stepmother and stepsisters were condemned as 'rassenfremd', racially foreign (Helfer 32).

Freud's psychoanalytic models, such as discourse on the unconscious and dream theories, are utilised to reveal "deep personal truths and how they illuminate stages of childhood development" as well as build on our understanding of the unconscious through application (Mondschein xii-xiv). This application of the labelled 'Jewish sciences' is ironic, as anti-Semitic tales are viewed through a Semitic lens, the two being in direct conflict, yet the correlations between theories are evident. Anti-Semitism stems from a manipulated ideological mindset, fairy tales being used to reinforce this within children and thus indoctrinate them into prejudiced belief systems. Freud's hypothesis that anti-Semitism unconsciously derives from jealousy is reinforced through the unjustified hatred of the Jewish people, as shown above through the transference of the 'Jewish' title between antagonistic figures, maintaining that it is the stereotype and not the actual Jew who is hated.

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Resistance in Rebecca Harding Davis' "Life in the Iron Mills" and Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance"

Meg Roser

Abstract

This article explores the representations of resistance in two 19th-century texts: Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance" and Rebecca Harding Davis' short story "Life in the Iron Mills". By engaging with theories of spectatorship and suffering, this article analyses the representation of individual, collective, creative, and criminal resistance within the texts. It reveals that both texts demonstrate the difficulty of non-conformism and primarily engage with the concept of individual, isolated resistance – but also allude to the potential power of the masses.

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Rebecca Harding Davis' short story "Life in the Iron Mills", set in an unnamed American town, primarily focuses on Hugh Wolfe and his work as a furnace tender in Kirby & John's iron mill. Davis' text ultimately discourages individual resistance, as Wolfe is sentenced to nineteen years in prison for accepting stolen money from his friend Deborah and eventually commits suicide in his cell. Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance" provides a useful framework for exploring resistance in Davis' text, as it engages with the ideas of both individual and collective resistance. Emerson posits that the only effective form of resistance is individual nonconformity, arguing that "society never advances" — and yet also contradictorily alludes to the potential power of collective resistance (251).

"Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist" (238). In "Self-Reliance", Emerson encourages the individual to resist the pressure to conform. Emerson's nonconformity and individual resistance ultimately leads to isolation — but this isolation is intended, as he states that "We must go alone. Isolation must precede true society" (246). He does acknowledge, however, that nonconformity often leads to suffering, observing that "for non-conformity the world whips you with its displeasure" (240). The explicitly violent term "whips" reflects the physical effect on bodies as a result of nonconformity, which also occurs in "Life in the Iron Mills" as Wolfe cuts his wrists with a piece of tin in his cell at the end of the short story.

Davis establishes the town in "Life in the Iron Mills" as a space of intense suffering, which her unnamed narrator emphasises the importance of observing by utilising confrontational language: "hide your disgust" in order to "see [...] clearly" (1699). Despite the seeming hopelessness of the setting, however, resistance appears to be possible, as Davis refers to the potential power of both collective and individual resistance. The mass of workers is described as being "full of unawakened power" (1699), and Wolfe contains "unused powers" and "strength within him" (1715). Davis uses similar language to present the power of Wolfe and the workers, but also sets Wolfe apart from them by presenting his individual resistance, of which he displays two types. The first is creative resistance; the second is what will be referred to in this essay as 'criminal resistance' — resistance manifesting in criminal behaviour.

Wolfe is described as having "a fierce thirst for beauty", and undertakes a form of creative resistance through his habit of "chipping and moulding figures" (1705, 1704). This is an example of what Lauri Siisiäinen calls "aesthetic counter-conduct", as she connects Michel Foucault's discussions of contemporary visual art with his explorations of governmentality, biopolitics and resistance. This form of resistance "tactically reverses use of power against itself, discovering its own potentials and elaborating its own resources and instruments from the materials provided to it by use of power itself" (Siisiäinen). This is exactly what Wolfe does in the mill — he utilises krol, a waste product from the iron mills to create pieces of art. The dirty, hostile space of the iron mills

“[smothers]” his soul and damages his body, but also provides him with ‘materials’ for his sculpture (1715). The sculpture of the hungry woman, too, “reverses use of power against itself”, as it briefly destabilises and unsettles the wealthy mill visitors, evidenced through Mitchell, who initially “[starts] back, half-frightened”, and upon closer inspection the sculpture “[touches] him strangely”; Kirby cries out for it to be illuminated by fire as they both think that it is “alive” (1708). The statues that Wolfe makes are creative representations of his nonconformity, and his acts of creative resistance set him apart, further isolating him from the other workers, who view him as strange and feminized, describing him as “one of the girl-men” (1704). Therefore, as Emerson argues, isolation and individual resistance are inextricably connected.

Ultimately, however, it is his act of ‘criminal resistance’ that leads to Wolfe’s death, which occurs when he takes the stolen money from Deborah, believing that it can be “used to raise him out of the pit” – in which, again, Davis utilises hellish imagery in her presentation of the town (1715). This criminal resistance results in Wolfe’s imprisonment, which further isolates him from his peers and the rest of society. David Aberle defines a social movement as “an organised effort by a group of human beings to affect change in the face of resistance by other human beings” — showing that resistance also comes from the opponents to social change (315). In Davis’ short story, resistance arises from both the worker (Wolfe) and the employer (Kirby) — but it is the resistance of the employer (the opponent to social change), supported by the legal system, that is ultimately successful. Therefore, any kind of social movement, the potentiality of which is alluded to with the narrator’s use of the phrase “unawakened power”, becomes almost impossible within the town — where a single act of individual resistance is punished with “nineteen years hard labour in penitentiary” (1717). The punishment of Wolfe and Deborah acts as a deterrent against the individual resistance of the other workers, thus presenting a ‘social movement’, composed of these individuals, as practically impossible. In his discussion of the function of the prison in *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault states that the first principle of the prison is isolation: “The isolation of the convict from the external world, from everything that motivated the offence, from the complicities that facilitated it” (236). Whereas Emerson positions isolation as a necessary, desired aspect of individual resistance, Davis’ text shows the suffering and isolation caused by imprisonment, which acts as a punishment for resistance.

Sympathy and pity are crucial issues in both Emerson and Davis’ texts. Emerson pushes the idea of “sit[ting] at home with the cause” (246), and is also keen to put distance between himself and others, with the “black folk a thousand miles off” functioning as what Lillie Chouliaraki calls “distant sufferers” (239, Chouliaraki 19). Emerson discourages abolitionists from focusing on people outside of their own communities, leading John Stauffer and Steven Brown to highlight Emerson’s self-inflicted “distance from the plight of [black people], reformers and women” (xvi). For Emerson, therefore, pity and sympathy is only extended to certain people. His essay shows that acts of individual resistance can lead to the exclusion of other suffering bodies, as well as the discouragement of resistance on a larger scale.

The narrative voice of “Life in the Iron Mills” forces the reader to act as a spectator of Wolfe’s suffering as a mill worker, but ultimately presents resistance to this suffering as futile by showing that Wolfe’s resistance leads to his isolation and death. Chouliaraki discusses a type of resistance that is present when spectators observe suffering on television — commenting that such spectators often “resist the truths and certainties of systems of power and social control” (52). When this quotation is applied to Davis’ short story, the reader becomes the spectator; the workers become the observed, and the systems of ‘power and social control’ are embodied by the mill visitors. Davis’ narrator strongly encourages the reader of “Life in the Iron Mills” to look at and feel pity for the mill workers, and yet also presents any form of resistance as dangerous – which allows the reader to feel sympathy for the workers without viewing resistance to the ‘systems of power and control’ as viable.

The role of pity and sympathy in affecting resistance and social movements is therefore dubious. Mitchell argues in the story that “reform is born of need, not pity” (1711), a sentiment

echoed in political theorist Hannah Arendt's claim that pity is "to be sorry without being touched in the flesh" (Arendt 85). A character in the short story who appears to feel pity for Wolfe (a "distant [sufferer]") is the Doctor, but he ultimately does not act to help Wolfe, thus rendering his pity useless. "God help them!", the Doctor exclaims, seemingly washing his hands of any responsibility (1709).

In the setting of "Life in the Iron Mills", even a little "figure of an angel pointing upward from [the narrator's] mantel-shelf" is broken and covered with smoke (1698). The description of the figure sets the tone for the rest of the short story: the town is a place where goodness and morality, represented by the broken figure of the angel, struggle to exist. Even the Doctor, who is described as a "kind-hearted" man, is quick to abandon his pity for Wolfe after he steals from Mitchell (1708). He and his wife briefly discuss Wolfe's sentence, before "[beginning] to talk of something else" (1717). Wolfe is essentially the personification of this angel figure — his moral nature is corrupted by his living in the town, resulting in his theft, and his body is destroyed — 'broken' — as he kills himself in prison — an isolating space that he is forced into as a result of his resistance.

Emerson utilises similar language to Davis when describing poor citizens — "when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow" (240). The use of "aroused" is akin to Davis' descriptions: "full of unawakened power"; "the bottom of society", which has similarities with Davis' recurring imagery of the town as a hellish "pit" (1715). Despite his assertion that society cannot advance and the implication that only the individual can resist, Emerson also appears to admit to the power of a group of individuals — and by extension their capacity for resistance. Conversely, despite Davis' references to the "unawakened power" of both Wolfe and the other workers, "Life in the Iron Mills" discourages resistance by making an example of the characters who resist: Deborah and Wolfe; showing that their nonconformity results in isolation, punishment (specifically imprisonment) and death. The reader is encouraged to feel pity but is also distanced due to their role as a spectator. Perhaps, therefore, they become like the Doctor, and are quick to discard their pity when they think of "something else" (1717).

Kristina E. Thalhammer et al. discuss the concept of 'collective resistance', defining it as occurring "when people choose to challenge injustice together", where individual resisters "work against injustice [...] and interact and share risks with other people" (91). In "Self-Reliance", Emerson alludes to 'injustice', arguing that "society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members" (238). Crucially, he refers to the individual — "one" — but also to the collective — "members". Though Emerson focuses heavily on self-reliance (indeed, it is the title of the text), he also cannot avoid referring to the power of the collective, and by extension to the potential resistance of the organised masses, if they were to "share risks with other people". At the end of the essay, he comments that a 'cultivated man' only has what he has "because no revolution or no robber takes it away" ... admitting, therefore, that both the individual (the "robber") and the collective (the resistance of "the revolution") can force social change (253). Contrastively, Davis merely *alludes* to the power of collective resistance as a response to the 'injustice' of the conditions that the mill workers face. "Life in the Iron Mills" only presents individual resistance, which is ultimately discouraged.

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Reading *Heart of Darkness* as a Polishman in Sub-Saharan Africa

Stan Wierzbicki

Abstract

Poland is a postcolonial country. Polish perspective is postcolonial. Because of 123 years of being partitioned between Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Russian Empire, followed by the Nazi occupation and the neo-colonial communist Soviet-controlled puppet rule, Poland and Polish people inhabit a unique perspective that is both European and postcolonial. What influence did this have on Joseph Conrad, who, having left a country occupied by Russia, adopted the identity of another Empire – Colonial Britain? How does it relate to the Polish minority in the UK and how does it contribute to the Polish-African critical and cultural relationships?

This creative critical essay explores the venues of postcolonial theory and writings by thinkers like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ Wā Thiong’o, Walter Mignolo and others in order to examine Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* as a unique text that possibly came from a ‘homo duplex’ who was both colonially oppressed and an oppressor, someone who had to choose between ‘the lesser evils of one imperial power and greater evils of another,’ someone who possibly used racism in his text because of inferiority complex and identity crisis. Through describing the narrator’s modern travel to Africa, and his renegotiations with the Polish and English identity and Polish and English kinds of racism and other ways of discrimination, the essay explores the post-coloniality in all its unlikely renditions and asks the question about whether or not the Polish mind can be decolonised.

*

1.

In 1890 Joseph Conrad, or – as he was really called – Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, sailed a steamboat up the Congo River, in Sub-Saharan Africa. Travelling to this part of the world 129 years later, as another *Polishman* entangled in the English perspective, I was bound to experience an inevitable crisis of identity.



My first encounter with Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* dates around summer 2018, when I read it as a set text for my Polish literature class in high-school (or Polish sixth-form equivalent).

‘I’m relieved we don’t have any black people in our class’, said my teacher after reading a passage from the novel, containing some insulting language, ‘I’d have to do some linguistic gymnastics if we did.’ This remark caused the more conservative, less politically correct part of our

class to laugh, and the rest of us remained quiet. The teacher continued talking about Conrad's novel using the word *Murzyn* (*Cambridge Dictionary*), a Polish equivalent of the English word *Negro* (*Oxford Dictionary*). I sat there, half-listening, wondering if it even made sense to discuss *Heart of Darkness* in school when the teacher herself represented such undiscussable stands and behaviours, that would probably make her unable to present the novel in the wider context of colonialism, and also the postcolonial discourse.

I was fascinated by Africa, its politics, literature and culture way before I read *Heart of Darkness*. If anything, Conrad's novel seemed to me, at the time as a dull, unspecific portrait of what I knew from dozens of films, travel programmes, classic novels of Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and those of contemporary writers like Alain Mabanckou, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and others.

In the opening passages of Conrad's novel, Marlowe elaborates: "Now when I was a little chap, I had a passion for maps. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map [...] I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there" (8). In *Postcolonial Poland*, Clare Cavanagh analyses: "He [Marlowe] echoes his creator's own childhood dream of exploring 'the blank space then representing the unsolved mystery' of Africa. The critics and theorists we know as postcolonialists have done much to fill in these blank spaces—or, rather, to show how the lacunae are already, and have long since been, filled. We in the West, [...] have been wilfully blind to what lies before our eyes" (92).

As opposed to Marlowe, when I was growing up, there were no blank spaces on maps. Thanks to the internet, I could transport myself into any place on Planet Earth – granted, majority of Sub-Saharan Africa is still not as easily accessible on Google Maps Street View as other continents – however, hundreds of photos of densely populated, colourful, fascinating metropolises can be reached just by one click.



I could immerse myself in the unknown landscapes of Yaoundé, Harare, Ouagadougou, Lagos, Nairobi and, among others – Kinshasa, which in Conrad's times, consisting only of small wooden fortification and a transit village, was named Leopoldville after King Leopold II, one of the cruellest rulers in history, and now, with 15 million inhabitants, is the largest city on the continent (Likaka). Despite access to all that information, it seemed that people around me still were (as Cavanagh wrote) "wilfully blind to what lies before [their] eyes" (92). Africa and African issues still seemed to be marginalised and not talked about by anyone around me (Konarski). Some Conradian fascination remained in place; in my, Polish, non-postcolonial environment, Africa still seemed forgotten, there was still some quality of a 'blank spot on a map' to it.

I wondered if my environment could really be non-postcolonial; if a country located in the literal centre of Europe could be free of imperialism? Without too much research, we can quickly

comprehend, that Polish history does have its own relationship with the ideas of colonialism and postcolonialism – however – in a wholly different way...

Not only was Poland's territory split between three Empires – Russian, Prussian and Austro-Hungarian – since 1772 until 1918, spanning over a hundred years, but its inhabitants of that time were subjected to the colonial procedures of Russification and Germanisation almost identical to the ones that Africans were victims of under the rule of the British Empire (Kamusella). To give an example, Polish language was banned from schools and public spheres of society, which resulted in many strikes, like the Wrzesnia children strike against Germanisation which resulted in severe corporal punishments and detention (Blejwas). On the other hand, several expeditions to Africa were made by Polish explorers, including the 1882 Cameroon expedition of Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński, who wanted to establish a Polish community there (Bederman). After Poland regained its independence in 1918 (six years before Joseph Conrad's death), it even made its own colonial attempts (Hunczak). Throughout the 20s and 30s Madagascar and Mozambique among other countries were discussed in Europe as potential Polish colonies (Hunczak). It was Poland's authoritarian *Sanation* government that first came up with the idea to send all of its Jewish inhabitants to Madagascar, as opposed to the common believe that it was the Nazi Germany who introduced it... (Jennings)

“What [...] are we to make of the *postcolonial*?”, writes Derek Gregory in *The Colonial Present*, “How are we to make sense of that precocious prefix? My preference is to trace the curve of the postcolonial from the inaugural moment of the colonial encounter” (6). According to research, the colonial encounter manifested in many forms in the history of Poland, although, being a country which Norman Davies calls ‘the Heart of Europe’, I have never experienced it being labelled as postcolonial.

Meandering through all that information, I came to an unlikely conclusion, that the partitioned Poland in which Joseph Conrad grew-up in, was a community that was someone else's colony while simultaneously holding a colonist viewpoint itself. I also discovered that the Poland that I grew up in, nearly 150 years later, was undoubtedly a postcolonial country.

2.

How then, stuck somewhere in between all those different and somewhat contradictory postcolonial identities, was I to think about *Heart of Darkness* while travelling across Kenya in July and August 2019, and then, starting education at Lancaster University, only to find myself reading Conrad's novel once again (this time, in the English original, not the authorised translation by Conrad's niece, Aniela Zagórska [*Joseph Conrad: A Life*])? How was I supposed to find myself in all the bizarre, detached lands previously conquered by Mr. Korzeniowski? What does *Polish*, *English* or *African* even mean? – I was asking myself, awaiting my departure to Kenya, which took place exactly 3 months before I was about to move to the UK and start speaking and writing mostly in English.

Answers did not come easily. My decision to invest all my savings into a journey to volunteer in Kenya for a month was met with concern and worry by some friends and members of my family. In mostly monoethnic Poland, racist behaviour gets unnoticed and is let to slide easier than perhaps in some other, more multi-ethnic parts of Europe (Balogun). “Racism is a classification, and classification is an epistemic manoeuvre rather than an ontological entity that carries with it the essence of the classification”, writes Walter Mignolo, and if that was the case, my hypothesis was that Polish people sometimes used racism to – in a twisted, horrible way – put themselves in the shoes of a Western, ‘civilised’ country (xi). What was even more noticeable than the racist remarks, however, was my environment's condescending view of the modern-day African countries. “The stereotype [...] is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated”, writes Homi K. Bhabha

(18). Were Polish people around me ‘anxiously repeating’ the stereotypes about Africa to convince themselves that their homeland is not a postcolonial country?

Wasn't it possible, then, that Polish people, as a nation *oppressed* for ages despite being geographically placed in the centre of Europe (the biggest *oppressor*) found themselves in a complex of trying to prove themselves that Poland is somehow better than the other, un-European postcolonial countries, and by racism classify itself higher than the so-called the Third World (Cavanagh)? Wasn't it possible that the same superiority complex accompanied Joseph Conrad whilst writing *Heart of Darkness*?



3.

In his essay *An Image of Africa: Racism in Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'* Chinua Achebe argues that the novel “projects the image of Africa as ‘the other world’, the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilisation, a place where man’s vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality” (*An Image of Africa* 3). Researching Conrad’s writing, it soon enough becomes quite clear, that despite his semi-autobiographical attachment to the piece, in his post-romantic, proto-modernist style (*Conrad in Perspective*), Africa becomes (as Achebe remarks): “a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril” (*An Image of Africa* 13). It’s not hard to recognise, that the facts and accurate representation of the Congo’s culture and people is far less important for Conrad than creating a fictional setting for the duel between humanity and titular ‘darkness’ – savagery and brutality that consumes the character of Mr. Kurtz, but the real question is: can this really be done with a real place that has real culture and real people (Levenson)?

The novel is built on further binaries (*An Image of Africa*). The atmosphere which sets the Congo as this “metaphysical battlefield” is built from clashing the primal, untouched tranquillity with the ‘alien’, anthropologically unprecise customs of the Congolese. The former manifests by fragments like “It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day” and “We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet”, and the latter is achieved using descriptions such as “[S]uddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy.” (43). This method is slammed in Achebe’s essay, and called “a preposterous and perverse arrogance in [...] reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind”, and it’s hard to disagree with the fact the novel is racist and full of stereotypes (*An Image of Africa* 13).

What's interesting for me, however, is how this binary artistic strategy corresponds to the modern-day European view on Sub-Saharan Africa. Before I went to Kenya, the only two things I gathered about Africa from my Polish environment were, on the one hand, an utter fascination with the nature sights and Safaris I was going to see, and on the other – the worry and concern with political uproars of the continent, and stereotypes around theft, kidnapping and overall lack of safety. By that, I noticed how Conrad's stereotypical hurtful binaries between what's primal, silent and untouched and what's savage, chaotic and dangerous still remained in place in the Polish mind before I set my foot on the continent 129 years after he did.

In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o writes about the childhood bedtime stories he got told when growing up in Kenya (where my own African experience took place). "There were two types of characters in such [...] narratives", he remarks, "The species of truly human beings with qualities of courage, kindness, mercy, hatred of evil, concern for others; and a man-eat-man two-mouthed species with qualities of greed, selfishness [...] and hatred of what was good for the larger co-operative community" (10). Ironically enough, those are almost the exact characteristics that rule my compatriot's novel. Unfortunately, enough though, in *Heart of Darkness*, those binary qualities are all attached to races, and its main structural twist is that 'greed, selfishness and hatred' are now also qualities of Mr. Kurtz, a coloniser and missionary, who is supposed to be the other way around. Look – Conrad points out – the colonizer is no better than the colonized! And however obvious this message seems nowadays, in a lot more enlightened environment, the controversy and wrongness of it doesn't come from the fact that it was pinpointed by Conrad that the colonizer and the colonized are (in some regard) no different, but by the fact that they are – according to his novel – no different, *because* every side of this binary is primitive and, after Ngũgĩ, "a man-eat-man two-mouthed species" (10).

The wrongness of that message, however, hadn't been that obvious for my Polish environment. Calling me during my month-long stay in Kenya, my friends and family pulled many racist jokes about where I was – even ones about cannibalism. Before I went to Kenya, I had to even ensure my parents – who are university-educated, upper-middle-class people from the capital city of a European country (!) – that there is no cannibalism in Kenya. Seeing pictures of Nairobi city centre – which looks in parts as modern as the one of Warsaw where they live – my friends and family expressed surprise. 'How modern!', they would say, and find it overwhelmingly weird that the city has bookshops, cafés and theatres. When I talked to my family and friends about the African authors I liked, they would laugh at their 'funny-sounding names' and dismiss their place in the world literary canon...

Perhaps the prejudice of postcolonial Poland was still not ready to accept that the Conradian binaries were simply wrong. The message of Africa being the heart of darkness that can consume and corrupt the human mind – even *white* mind, still remained in its place...

4.

On my Polish literature classes in school, I was still taught the message of *Heart of Darkness* as if it was revolutionary and somehow relevant today. What I wasn't taught in neither my Polish literature classes in school or later at the University, was what Mr. Korzeniowski himself had to do with this problem and what kinds of clashes of concepts and crises of identity were going on in his own life. After all – he himself escaped from the colonial Empire of Russia, which treated many Polish people with some of the same methods that the Western Empires orchestrated their African rule with – enforcing languages, oppression, using the conquered nations as workforce etc (Kamusella). As many parts of Africa were Marlowe's "blank spaces on the earth", Poland, because of imperialism similar to Britain's, was also non-existent on any map for over a hundred years (8). Was it possible that the man who created Marlowe, ironically enough, came from the blank spot on the map himself? And was it possible that Mr. Korzeniowski escaped from role of *the oppressed* in one empire to the role of the *oppressor* in another?

“No man or woman can choose their biological nationality” (1), wrote Ngūgī in 1986, exactly 70 years after Conrad wrote: “My own point of view is English. From which the conclusion should not be drawn that I have become an Englishman. That is not the case. Homo duplex has in my case more than one meaning” (quoted in Cavanagh 86). Reading Conrad’s *The Congo Diary* attached to many editions of *Heart of Darkness*, we can notice how his private, unliterary notes from the 1890 journey were written in English, not Polish. Interestingly enough, preparing for my trip to Kenya, I decided to write a diary too. And it was too composed fully in English, not Polish – I was living in a weird linguistical limbo between graduating from high-school (or Polish sixth form equivalent) and the start of my degree: English Literature and Creative Writing at Lancaster University. I know for sure I was writing my private diary in English to assume some sort of new identity before moving to the UK, but was writing those private notes in a language of the Empire also a way to assume its identity for Mr. Korzeniowski?

“The choice face by Conrad”, explains Clare Cavanagh, “Was not between empire and autonomy, but between what were, for a Pole at any rate, the lesser evils of one imperial power and the greater evils of another: ‘Empire giveth; empire taketh away’, as his compatriot Ryszard Kapuściński would later write” (86).

Although Mr. Korzeniowski, the *Polishman* claimed that he had not become an Englishman, he admitted to having had an English perspective – a perspective that so many African writers tried so heavily to free their art from. “I no be gentleman at all o!/I be Africa man original”, sung Fela Kuti, one of the most influential musicians of the continent. Another interesting notion arises when we look deeper at the colonial implication of the very word *Englishman*, the word that Mr. Korzeniowski, the *Polishman*, seems to like so much. “At the age of sixteen Conrad encountered his first Englishman in Europe”, writes Achebe, “He calls him ‘my unforgettable Englishman’” (*An Image of Africa* 15).

In reality, there’s no such word in English as *Polishman*. Englishman is somewhat old fashioned but still commonly used expression; however, not many other nations have the luxury of having a noun formulated of the adjective naming it and a suffix *men* (*Cambridge Dictionary*). There’s *Frenchman*. And *Dutchman*... Both countries had lots of colonies around the world... *Scotsman*, *Irishman* and *Welshman* are all existing words. There’s no *Americanman*. There’s no *Polishman* – there’s just a short, simple and somewhat impersonal *Pole*. There’s no Nigerianman, no Kenyanman and no Congoleseman, there are only adjectives that can in some exceptions be used as nouns, and sound very impersonal. So, is anybody from outside the Anglo-Saxon world and anybody who didn’t colonize less of a *man*?



5.

Taking all of that into account I started to ask myself some more puzzling questions. My question about whether or not Joseph Conrad’s ‘borrowed Englishness’ was a way to overcome some

deeply rooted traumas of Russian Empire's colonial oppression is probably never to be answered. However, I had more questions. First one was – was Joseph Conrad an *English* writer? The knowledge of the fact that he was Polish seems to be forgotten by many, even students that I know, however, when simply Googling his name – as I googled all the non-blank spaces of the vivid, sub-Saharan postcolonial metropolises – he comes out not as an 'English writer', but – as a 'Polish-English' writer.

"What is African Literature?", Ngūgī asks, "Was it literature about Africa or about the African experience? Was it literature written by Africans? What about non-African who wrote about Africa: did his work qualify as African literature? What if an African set his work in Greenland: did that qualify as African literature?" (6). Delving deeper and deeper into meanders of the self-contradicting information, theories, and questions about Joseph Conrad, postcolonialism, England, Poland, and *Heart of Darkness*, I might ask: What is English literature? And what is Polish literature? Is it literature about Poland/England or about Polish/English experience? Is it literature written by Polish/English people?

What about a non-Englishman who wrote about England: did his work qualify as English literature? Looking at Conrad, we can say: yes... (*Conrad in Perspective*). Could literature set in colonial Congo, written by a Polishman in English, and not about Poland qualify as *Polish* literature?

Polishness might be erased from *Heart of Darkness*, but there is still no definite answer to that – after all, Conrad referred to himself as "homo duplex" and said that he hadn't become an "Englishman" (quoted in Cavanagh 86). So, was he a Polish writer? In *English and the African Writer*, Chinua Achebe asks, "Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing? [...] Certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask: Can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker? I should say, I hope not... The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience" ("English and the African Writer" 29). Was something similar puzzling Joseph Conrad when he stated he had not become an 'Englishman' (Cavanagh)? And – more importantly – what are the answers to these questions when we switch the 'African' for the 'Polish'? Is the fact that, as opposed to African writers, no-one forced Mr. Korzeniowski to learn English enough of a satisfactory explanation for all these mind-boggling questions?

And, at last – considering the fact that its author came from a heavily colonized country, is *Heart of Darkness*, despite being an obviously racist and colonialist novel, also a piece of postcolonial literature?

6.

How then does my own experience of travelling in Sub-Saharan Africa as a *Polishman* who had not yet become an Englishman correspond to the questions concerning *Heart of Darkness*?

'Mzungu', a man said to me somewhere between Kisumu and Kakamega in Mid-Western Kenya, 'You colonised us! Where are you from?'

'Poland', I said to him, 'We didn't colonize you; British people did.'

'You're from Portugal? You colonized Mozambique! And Angola...'

'No, I'm from Poland not Portugal. We also got colonized – by Russia, Germany...'

The man looked at me with suspicion. There was some glare in his eyes, a glare that I came to know very well through my month in Kenya – a sort of a postcolonial, untrusting glare, that despite my good intentions, the fact that my country hadn't established any colonies in Africa, all the knowledge I gained from reading and watching content about Africa, and all the research I made to prepare myself for this trip, still made me feel at wrong, as an unfitting element of the puzzle, as the *white other* – Mzungu (Mugane). Was my mind (after Ngūgī), not *decolonised*? Does the

Polish mind also – as African and English one – need *decolonising*? And if so, how was the decolonization of the mind to be conducted?

“How we view ourselves [...] is very much dependent on where we stand in relationship to imperialism and its colonial and neo-colonial stages”, writes Ngūgī, “If we are to do anything about our individual and collective being today, then we have to coldly and consciously look at what imperialism has been doing to us and to our view of ourselves in the universe” (88).



Taking a journey to Kenya to volunteer – not for some NGO, and not in the neo-colonial fashion of ‘teaching English’ as many people I later met in England did, but independently, simply by helping an elderly Mrs. Nambovi in her house and garden, shopping for her and washing her dishes, was a humbling experience. It was not humbling because of the fact that I saw poverty, or anything like that. Much to the opposite. It was humbling because the kind of help that I offered as a volunteer was exactly the kind of help that I would have offered to any European elderly person looking for care. Again, I don’t know if this form of questioning my relationship to imperialism was right or effective. And I still don’t know how to think about *Heart of Darkness*, my compatriot’s Mr. Korzeniowski’s novel. What I know is that the fact that it may be read as a postcolonial work when looked at from the Polish perspective doesn’t compromise the fact that it is disappointing how its author, even though experienced by one Empire’s colonialism, assigned himself to the dominant culture of another. “Unfortunately, his heart of darkness plagues us still”, writes Achebe (*An Image of Africa* 16). This statement is not only true for the English and African people. *Heart of Darkness* also leaves its mark in the Polish environment. The Polish mind also needs to be *decolonised*.

All the photographs were made by the author of this essay and are shared here thanks to the courtesy of the ones portrayed.

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Book Review

Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Riverhead Books, 2007

Abby Lewis

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini: A Continuing Piece of Political and Educational Relevance

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a fictional novel devoted to the women of Afghanistan. Even though the book was initially published in 2007, it continues to have both political and educational relevance in 2022, considering the Taliban's recent return to power. The novel provides readers with a 3D insight into what women in Afghanistan are most likely experiencing as an effect of this; lack of education, censorship of their bodies, lack of justice, arranged marriage – the list goes on. When I use the term '3D insight', I am referring to the nature of the characters Hosseini writes, as well as the truth behind his story. For instance, Hosseini comments on the lack of education women are granted as an effect of the Taliban's rule, "a society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated" (114). Hosseini forces his reader to acknowledge the fact that the story he is telling could well be true. In an interview conducted in 2007, Hosseini says that he combined stories from women he spoke to on the streets of Kabul to form the storyline of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

The story follows two women, Mariam and Laila – both lost, with nowhere to call home, they are forced to retreat into the not-so-safe-haven of Rasheed's home in Kabul. The reader follows them through the pain of being reliant on Rasheed. They are conned into marriage, living as almost slaves to their husband. This theme plays into the wider political context. The Taliban is male dominated, having control over the way women live. For example, women in Afghanistan are not allowed to leave the house if they are not dressed in a full burka. Nor are they allowed to attend university with men. The Taliban achieve this level of power by playing into the emotion of fear. Rasheed runs a traditional household: the husband goes to work to earn money for the family whilst the wives handle the housework and childcare. He gets angry if these expectations are not met and reacts with physical violence. He is the Taliban within the home. This dynamic of home meets political shows how the women of Afghanistan can be subject to struggle in all aspects of their lives. The horrible ideology of the Taliban is evidently not just political – it transcends boundaries and Hosseini shows this by carrying it over into the home, "A man's heart is a wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed, it won't stretch to make room for you" (27). This device creates a powerful message, regarding the entrenched nature of the Taliban's ideology.

Whilst reading *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, I became attached to the characters and adopted feelings towards them as if they were real people. This is undoubtedly Hosseini's aim, and he achieves it in a remarkable way. He describes people who are unbelievably kind, yet they suffer so immensely, "Though there had been moments of beauty in it, Mariam knew for the most part that life had been unkind to her" (370). Mariam and Laila remind me of people I know in my own life, however they show bravery beyond what I have ever known. You could argue that the bravery and resilience Laila and Mariam show is unbelievable, making them unrealistic characters. In this sense, maybe the readers attachment to them is based on an idealistic vision. This risks taking the aspect of truth away from Hosseini's novel. However, this criticism is based on something I cannot

know and only imagine, as I do not personally know anyone who has experienced what Laila and Mariam experienced. Furthermore, no matter whether their characteristics are real or not, the reader feels an inclination to want to know them. This aspect of Hosseini's writing had a lasting impact on me after I had read the book. To experience this through such an immersive story is, as a woman especially, excruciating.

To summarise, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a politically and educationally valuable novel. It grants deeper insight into the struggles of Afghan women than any article I have ever read. Although, we must acknowledge that it is a piece of fiction and cannot be altogether factual, as it is largely produced to entertain. Despite this, it provides a connection that is valuable and consequently politically educational.

Afterword

This has been a demanding academic year, as it is the first in-person year since the pandemic. Within LUX, two of the principal areas that have been impacted are postponements to our expected publishing timeline and having to adjust how we would meet to discuss the Issue, from in-person to a blended or completely virtual approach. It has been such a gift to be able to witness how well our editorial team has risen to the huge challenge of producing an issue in the shadow of a global pandemic. Their professionalism, management of duties and most of all, their kindness and enthusiasm, has been a testament to just how brilliant and incredibly skilled they are in their academic studies, work ethic, and demeanour. I want to thank Meg for providing such powerful and aesthetic artwork for the Issue 6 cover. Her skill and dedication as a contributor to LUX is clear in the image, in addition to her exceptional article. I hope in years to come that this journal will continue to display pieces of artwork by Lancaster artists. As a final note to our wonderful editorial team – Vallika, Annabel, Jessica, Kathryn, and Sarah – Thank you all so much for your hard work and commitment in producing an excellent Issue this year, and once your studies are over any future employer will be incredibly lucky to have you. You have made me one immensely proud Executive Editor, who has been confident to leave the running and production of the issue in your very capable hands.

Next, I would also like to thank all our contributors for submitting their work to LUX. Your incredible articles represent the epitome of undergraduate student talent at Lancaster University. In this Issue, we display three vastly different articles, varying from the exploration of antisemitic imagery in fairy tales, to a contemporary creative-critical reimagining of *Heart of Darkness*. I envision that all the contributors' work could easily make the jump to a non-department founded journal, showing the strength and validity of their academic debates. This is a true demonstration of the inclusivity of LUX as a journal, and the wide interdisciplinary interests of the ELCW department's undergraduate cohort and the departmental teaching staff.

Taking over the helm of LUX journal when returning to face-to-face teachings and meetings has certainly proved challenging at times but seeing all our work coming to fruition has reminded me just how hardworking and supportive my team has been. I further would like to thank the PhD community and my supervisors for their continuing support and kindness, this last academic year. When I first was interviewed for LUX, Sarah Hughes was the outgoing executive editor I was set to replace, and I shadowed her and her team over her academic year with LUX. Watching her interactions with the team was an invaluable experience and her mentorship in the handover period made me feel much relaxed about taking over the reins of LUX. I have the utmost faith that Sarah Wagstaffe, my successor for the executive editor role, will do a fantastic job in producing the next issue. Sarah has acted as my shadow executive editor for this past year, and it has been wonderful to hear her suggestions to the current team and see her willingness and excitement in preparing for the next team and Issue 7. Sarah has some wonderful plans in how the journal will progress, and which audiences it will continue to reach. While I am sad to leave the journal and to say goodbye to my team, I know I am leaving LUX in good hands.

— Kathryn Poole, Executive Editor

Postscript

Over the last academic year, I have witnessed the 2021-22 issue of LUX taking shape, from the early meetings at the beginning of the year to its final production. I've been privileged to see the team come together and dedicate their skills and passion to creating an issue to be proud of, overcoming the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic while also maintaining their academic and other commitments with positive attitudes and devotion. I thank the students for their work and passion. It truly makes me grateful to be a part of the team going forward.

I look forward to beginning to work with the new Editorial Board for the 2022-23 issue of LUX, inspired by what I have seen achieved in 2021-2022. Our incoming team will no doubt create an issue as exciting and thought-provoking as its predecessors. Finally, I would like to thank Kathryn Poole for inviting me into the LUX team as a shadow executive, introducing me to this fantastic opportunity and providing me with the knowledge and skills I will bring forward into the 2022-23 issue as Executive Editor. With her support, and the fantastic team I will be working with, I look forward to continuing LUX's success.

— Sarah Wagstaffe, Executive Editor