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Editorial Committee 2019-2020

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Contents

SPARK Reviews

TV and Film

Book

Theatre and Exhibitions

Letter from the Editor

Alexander Kither

As has been the case with much else this year, the production of issue ten of the St Anne's Academic Review (STAAR) was confronted with numerous unforeseen challenges, both for myself, the editorial team and our writers. Not long after the editorial team was assembled, the country went into lockdown, college halls were evacuated and all plans were indefinitely postponed. The consequences of these global events profoundly affected the editorial process of the journal, and this is reflected in a due diligence report included on the following page.

I am enormously appreciative of the continued efforts and perseverance of this year's editorial team, who have successfully managed to organise their respective sections despite being displaced across different time zones and with only email threads and zoom calls to keep in contact with writers and reviewers. Organising reviewers for articles has proven to be exceptionally difficult this year, as the personal and professional consequences of the pandemic left many academics without the usual time to spare for peer-review. Not least was this an issue with some of our science articles, which required review from (extremely busy) medical professionals. Despite all this, our peer-review process was a success, and we managed to source at least two reviews for each of the articles published in this volume.

Despite common adversity, I am pleased to present here twelve pieces from current or recent members of St Anne's College, University of Oxford. Following the success of last year, we have chosen to continue without a theme, and have welcomed written work on all topics from members of the college. Consequently, this edition of STAAR includes a broad variety of research and opinion articles from the humanities, sciences, and social sciences as well as reviews of films, books, theatre and exhibitions.

We are also pleased to include a travel report in this edition, which details the author's journey to an academic colloquium in Lisbon, funded by the college. It is by some coincidence that this report deals primarily with the concept of 'loneliness'; something we have become all too familiar with over the course of the last year. The very idea of travelling to and from international colloquiums now seems like a fond memory of yesteryear.

We have been fortunate to keep hold of St Anne's alumna Daniel Mercieca, who has continued in his role as editor of the SPARKS reviews, which he introduced last year. This year, we have seen a marvellous response, with a wide variety of submissions covering theatre, film, poetry and exhibitions. Like the rest of this year's journal, these reviews reflect the unconventional year within which they were composed.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the editor-in-chief.
I hope you enjoy reading this, our tenth issue of STAAR.

Sincerely,

Alexander Kither

Due Diligence Report

STAAR Editorial Team, 2020

Social Sciences

The past academic year was quite 'bumpy' with the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic spreading throughout the world. Millions of people were either influenced by, infected with or even died of such an ongoing global pandemic. Both the writing and editorial process for STAAR 2020 were affected by the unexpected pandemic as we worked from home virtually. For writers, they worked hard at home, composing their articles and making numerous revisions in response to peer-reviewers' and editorial feedback. A few of them have been struggling with mental health because of the lockdown; however, they overcame and survived those hard days. For the editorial committee, several meetings were organised online to discuss the issues and progress of each writer. I felt very proud of being a member of such a cooperative, energetic and committed editorial board. The editors, such as myself, tried our best to maintain a frequent line of communication between writers, editorial board and peer-reviewers. Although it took more time and was more demanding to contact people and handle issues than anticipated, each of us were devoted to overcoming these difficulties.

All of us had to give up planned events and adapt the way we live, adjust to a different level of social contact and different practical and psychological challenges to achieve our common goal: make the STAAR 2020 a reality in time. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone on this year's STAAR issue, as well as all academic and administrative staff at St. Anne's College. It was our joint efforts that made this year's issue possible. I, personally, felt very proud of working throughout this academic year for STAAR journal and very much look forward to the publication version soon.

Sciences

The past academic year has been a roller-coaster ride for most of us, but it should be a matter of pride that we have so cooperatively adapted how we live and work such that we may continue to learn, create, and collaborate in different ways. Our authors, who have slaved over their work through its inception, creation, and the endless cycles of editing and peer-review thereafter, truly deserve all the praise we can offer them. They have been rigorous, diligent, and an absolute pleasure to work with throughout the process, in spite of the many commitments they have had to juggle and the various pressures that the present pandemic laid upon them. The situation affected not only their personal plans but also the editing and review timelines, which indeed turned somewhat chaotic as the Science section had particular difficulty in finding reviewers who had time to offer comments on the articles during these busy months. We were, however, somewhat lucky to work with articles and reviews that contribute to the current healthcare crisis conversation. On that note, we must express our deepest gratitude to the academics who were kind enough to offer valuable input to the authors – their contributions have unquestionably refined the work presented in this section.

For us, the editors, this has been a novel and challenging experience as well – one that we are grateful to have had the chance to undertake. It was strenuous and long, but thoroughly

satisfying; we have indeed learnt a lot along the way and done many things for the first time. In consideration of the circumstances, we did our best this year to be flexible with deadlines for the authors, communicate regularly with them, and offer timely edits and updates. We did struggle at times, as with the difficulties in ensuring that the articles have sufficient reviews or with the overlap of the extended timeline with our dissertations, but we were able to work together effectively and ensure that the process ends on a positive note. We thank everyone that we worked with for being understanding and helpful through our journey, and are thrilled for those who will see the fruits of their labour in print very soon.

Humanities

For this edition of STAAR, the Humanities section comprises an article on Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese and a travel report describing one Stanner's experience of the International Colloquium on Loneliness at the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa. Since initial write-up of both pieces took place largely during Hilary term and editing and review was carried out during Trinity term and the summer holiday, the timeline for work done on these contributions to the journal aligned squarely with the Covid-19 outbreak and related developments. As our editing team, authors, and reviewers have been spread across numerous countries (and even continents) during the pandemic, we've been affected in unique ways and to varying degrees by our regions' respective lockdown restrictions and other circumstances impacting daily life and work routines. Despite this, we're proud to say that everyone who participated in this project did so with great dedication. It's a testament to the commitment of all involved that we're publishing this edition of the journal on schedule, particularly as in recent months several contributors had challenging family and personal matters to which they needed to attend above and beyond their usual workload.

We're grateful to STAAR leadership and to the rest of the journal's staff, too, for flexibility displayed in adjusting to inevitable delays to the writing and editing process. Covid's most significant impact on this edition's compilation took the form of obstacles to the meeting of original deadlines and more difficulty in tracking down available peer reviewers than might have been expected under other circumstances. We're very grateful to the six people who stepped in to review the Humanities pieces in this issue even while dealing with various 2020-specific disruptions to their schedules, and we thank both them and our two authors for the hard work they put in to meet the non-negotiable deadline for final drafts. Our contributors were quick to respond to input and inquiries and maintained a positive attitude throughout the drafting and editing stages, which made the process a pleasure to manage as editors. It's been encouraging to witness our peers' perseverance throughout the pandemic, and we consider it a privilege to have participated in a truly international effort in bringing this year's edition of STAAR to print.

SPARK Reviews

Established in STAAR Volume 9 (2019), SPARK Reviews are short 1500-3000-word reviews of any art form or critical text. One Editor of SPARK Reviews is appointed annually to manage the SPARK Review section of the Journal. This Editor is not beholden to the University, College or STAAR Editorial Board in the outcome of decisions made concerning publication or prize-giving. The SPARK Review section of STAAR is managed in accordance with the Privacy

Policy, and Equalities Report stated on the St. Anne's College website, which address concerns including GDPR, data protection, equal representation and inclusivity. SPARK Reviews follow a rolling-publication model and are not subject to peer-review. This in order to maximise opportunities for students to publish reviews alongside their studies on an accessible, online platform in addition to the Journal's annual printed editions. The Editor of SPARK Reviews is solely responsible for sourcing, editing and publishing SPARK Reviews. Authors are given at least one month to compose their piece and receive guidance and feedback from the Editor via email. As with the rest of the journal, the SPARK Review section of STAAR is completely open access and is licensed under a Creative Commons CC-BY licence, which is detailed in the Intellectual Property and Plagiarism section of the St. Anne's MCR website.

The purpose of SPARK Reviews is to enable students to creatively and critically engage with artforms which ignite inspiration. SPARK Reviews are designed to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and intersectional writing opportunities which enable students to explore the work of artists from all backgrounds, many of whom may not traditionally feature on academic syllabi. Whilst being critical and evaluative, SPARK Reviews should not employ discriminatory or offensive language. We welcome submissions from the JCR, MCR and Alumni of St. Anne's College and encourage writers of all backgrounds to review artforms which are of greatest interest and importance to them. The 6 SPARK Reviews which feature in STAAR Volume 10 engage with a diverse range of artforms, topics and communities, including the scars of slavery, African American LGBTQ+ experience and the effects of covid-19 upon theatre and ballet. A Firework Competition with a £50 prize for the most original SPARK Review has also been introduced in STAAR Volume 10. The Firework Competition is judged by the SPARK Reviews Editor in corroboration with the Editor-in-chief and one of the Humanities Editors. To ensure an unbiased and impartial decision, the Editor of SPARK Reviews ultimately selects the winner of the Firework Competition based upon the following criteria: creative thinking, stylistic flare, penetrating and personal engagement with an art form/critical text, originality, sharp analysis, strong argumentation, and sound research.

How Does a Poem Mean?
Modes of Expression in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

Gregor Bauer

Abstract. *How does a poem mean? A formalist approach to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese (1850) may provide a partial answer by demonstrating a poetry-specific potential of meaning-creation. To this end, this essay offers new perspectives on Barrett Browning's playful interventions against a one-dimensional love discourse through poly-dimensional semiotics and explores how her sonnets expand the scope of linguistic expressability by transcending central axiomata of Saussurian structuralism avant la lettre.*
Numerous acrostics permeating the sonnets subvert their putative senses, but for a lack of formalist analysis, these have not previously been discovered and negotiated in scholarly works. This essay demonstrates how throughout Sonnets from the Portuguese, the fictional order is unhinged and the diegesis shifts to the reader's material reality as language becomes indexical. Thus, space for a simultaneousness of contradictory discourses is melded in the tension between poetic form and explicit meaning, within which the woman poet creates and asserts her voice.

* * *

A poem is a peculiar composition. At first glance, the reader recognizes the traditionally 'poetic' text as such by its line breaks, stanzas, and perhaps rhymes. But is form all that separates poetry from prose? If we were to squeeze the latest article from *The Guardian* into this spatial template, would that be a poem? The playful intricacies of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* suggest that there is, perhaps, a domain-specificity to the linguistics of poetry as a function for expanding the scope of semantic creation.

Barrett Browning was already a celebrated poet when she published this sonnet sequence in 1850. Alongside Tennyson, she was one of England's most highly acclaimed poets and was recognized as an influential voice by readers, critics, and peers. Half a century later, however, her poetry did not meet with the same level of appreciation from the public. John William Cunliffe, for instance, claimed in 1908 that her 'most enduring contributions to literature' came in the form of her roles as Robert Browning's wife and as auxiliary to his oeuvre. Another fifty years later, popular familiarity with her work was limited to a selective canonisation of her poetry in anthologies and literary histories, with *Sonnets from the Portuguese* usually introduced as a testimony to her status as Robert's loving muse. It was not until the 1970s that feminist critics such as Ellen Moers, Cora Kaplan, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar rediscovered other aspects of Barret Browning's work, mostly concentrating on Aurora Leigh's (1856) female voice. From this point onwards, scholars have produced valuable analyses of her poetry from socio-political and historicising viewpoints, but rarely from a formalist perspective (cf. Stone and Taylor, pp. 392ff.).

It is unsurprising that formalist and structuralist schools of criticism have largely ignored Barrett Browning's work, as the resurgence of critical interest in her oeuvre came at a time when these approaches had already, to some extent, fallen out of vogue. Notably, in Victorian Poetry and the Culture of Evaluation (2020) Clara Dawson comprehensively attends to Barret Browning's form in regard to her Drama of Exile (1845), acknowledging the semiotic depth of her formal structures, especially rhymes. This exploratory essay seeks to initiate a further closure of this gap in research pertaining to the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and offers a new perspective on the poetics of form and the linguistic playfulness of Barrett Browning's sonnet sequence. Looking beyond the contextualising, thematic, and political approaches typical to analyses of her work, it focuses on the techniques that facilitate new forms of expression within the sonnets.

The implicit discourse on poetics and intricate compositions permeating Barrett Browning's So*nnets from the Portuguese* as they subversively negotiate the notion of text as a chain of words, the arbitrariness of the sign, and the primacy of the sound image avant la lettre demonstrate that there is an inherent semiotic potential specific to poetry which transcends Saussurian structuralism. Caroline Levine, commenting on Barrett Browning's political poetry, states that these 'metrically experimental and overtly political meditations [...] frustrate the reflective, expressive, and ideological models of reading'. She suggests that Barrett Browning's rhythms function as means of disruptive expression within a persuasive alignment of content and form, both expressing and performing disruption (p. 238). The Sonnets also make use of expressive form. The following analysis, however, suggests that 'content and form' create semiotic counter-spheres rather than indicating alignments. Thereby, the sonnets subvert and recreate concepts of reality, selfhood, and love beyond that which mere syntactical logic is able to express. A discourse of love emerges in *Sonnets from the Portuguese* which resists expressing itself and subverts regular narrative strategies.

Put simply, this formalist proposal focuses on exploring how the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* achieve meaning rather than on what their meaning is. Specifically, it will explain how Barrett Browning manufactures implicit poetics with striking semiotic focal points. She does so by means of the subversion of the diegetic framework as well as the referential function of speech on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by transferring the diegesis into the materiality of its text, rendering words indexical, and creating meaning through poetic form. By means of these structures, personhood, agency, and voice can be renegotiated in a dialectic composition between poeticity and face value meaning, as the latter fails to encompass a more ambitious love discourse and an independent agency of the woman poet within a romantic partnership.

1. Diegetic subversion

The Sonnets from the Portuguese decisively problematise the creation of voice and meaning. Absence, fissuring and uncertainty are hallmarks of Barrett Browning's language. The diegetic world is deconstructed as its order collapses and its inhabitants – somewhat – cease to exist.

Barrett Browning's use of metonymic tropes, formations of negatives, and imagery relating to absence destabilises the objects of the poetic world. Precise definition of

selfhood or of the I-you dyad is generally avoided. As the reader encounters characterisations of the personae within the sonnet sequence, they appear indirect, imprecise, and blurry: the Belovëd, for instance, is never a prince, but only 'princely' (III, 1; VIII, 2) and never a king, but 'like a king' (XVI, 2). Physical selves are regularly portrayed within metonymies of peripheral headspace. To this end, both personae give their locks of hair as representations of their whole self (cf. XVIII; XIX) and love received transforms into crowns (XII, 3; XXI, 11; XXXVIII, 10).

Besides metonymy, there are generally two main strategies used to subvert the totality of personae in the *Sonnets*. The first involves skewed allocations of personhood: whilst the persona of the speaker in XXVII, for instance, restricts herself to a role of passivity, i.e that of witness, the abstract concepts of Love and Death attain agency. The capitalisations of the nouns referring to these concepts suggest their role as quasi-personae[1]:

> [I m]ake witness, here, between the good and bad,
> That Love, as strong as Death, retrieves as well.
> (13f)

The second is a disassembling of conceptual boundaries. The diegetic world systematically appears personified, blurring the boundaries of the personae as it transitions to a meta-persona itself. For instance:

> The face of all the world […]
> (VII, 1)

Additionally, systematically placed linguistic and figurative negatives throughout the sequence subvert a meaningful description of the personae's selfhoods. Sonnet VIII, for instance, describes them as 'unstained', 'untold' (3), 'unexpected' (6), '[u]ngrateful' (8) and 'not cold' (9); XIII proceeds with 'unwon' (11), 'dauntless' and 'voiceless' (13), and so forth.

Inverted physical appearances also substitute the personae's physicality within the diegetic world:

> For thine and thee, an image only so
> Formed of the sand, and fit to shift and break.
> (XXXVII, 3f)

> Thy purity of likeness and distort
> Thy worthiest love to a worthless counterfeit.
> (XXXVII, 9f)

The self-image in the sand – whether drawn (negative) or sculptured (positive) – represents the self as form, not matter, either as a photographic negative or as similar to a mask. The 'counterfeit' mirrors a similar – shape-reduced – conception. Furthermore,

[1] All references to the sonnet sequence follow the first edition: Barrett Browing, Elizabeth: *Poems*, London 1850.

the counterpart cannot be held within the notion of purity, as it is immediately undermined by its distortion.

An additional concept of shape-reduced negatives may be found in the recurring shadow theme. The very first contact between the lovers in sonnet I is sub-physical (via a shadow) and then peripheral (via the hair). The Belovëd does not appear as a personal essence or physical whole, but as a shape. And even as such he is impalpable and unspecific (mystic). However, only this encapsulation of nothingness and indefiniteness is capitalised and thus appears as a persona or, rather, as an empty vessel within which a person should be.

> A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware
> So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
> Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
> (I, 9-11)

In sonnet VI, the imagined romantic unification is diluted to a barely physical togetherness, as the shadow is a mere representation of shape (2). The physicality of the encounter is thus non-existent, as the shadow represents the absence of matter. The end of the sonnet resumes this trope; the shade is placed both within the memory (as a 'Before') and the grave (as one's 'After'). Hence, the shade here appears as a chronological negative of self, as between one's before and after is all there is of one, but this formulation suggests the persona's existence as a 'gap'.

> My poet, thou canst touch on all the notes
> God set between His After and Before,
> […]
> Sad memory, […]
> A shade, in which to sing – […]
> A grave, on which to rest from singing? […]
> (XVII, 1f; 12f)

The inhabitants and objects of the diegetic world are unsettled and undermined in their physical existence. It therefore comes as no surprise that many sonnets in the first half of the sequence (e.g. III; V; VII; IX; XV; XVI, 14) also end in tropes of movement.

Clara Dawson posits that Barret Browning's style indicates 'excess, complication, and mist.' (Dawson 91) In the early reception of her work in the 1830s and 1840s, this has caused criticism: she was 'condemned for obscurity, ungainliness, mysticism, preposterous rhyme and metre.' (cf. ibid) The broad spectrum of the aforementioned strategies circumnavigating definition and subverting any fixation within the diegetic world, however, suggests a wilful deconstruction rather than negligence (or even lack of expertise). Rather than allowing the reader to be drawn into the diegetic world and, for a short moment, believe its reality, the sonnets foreground the fictionality of the diegesis by perpetually undermining any template within which it may be clearly imagined. Fiction seems exposed as an insufficient container of a personhood sought, of love in freedom, of independent agency, and of a powerful poetic voice. But the *Sonnets* go further, indicating implicit mistrust and subversion of its linguistic medium itself, as will be shown below.

2. Semiotic subversion

On a meta-level, the negation and unsettling of definition is also a semiotic issue, as language and speech cannot hold their diegetic world. Take for instance sonnet VII:

> 'The names of country, heaven, are changed away'
> (10)

Stone and Taylor remark that Barrett Browning intersperses a wide array of 'dialogically engaged voices' throughout her oeuvre, from desire to grief and beyond (p. 392f). It may be argued that on one side of a dialectic composition, the voice of this sonnet sequence is one that proves powerless. Verbal utterances fail, as does their linguistic medium more generally. Three related utterances in sonnet XXIII can serve as examples:

> 'Yes, call me by my pet-name!'
> (1)
>
> 'While I call God – call God! – […]'
> (9)
>
> 'Yes, call me by that name, – […]'
> (13)

Through the allocation of a pet-name, the speaker emphatically allows its counterpart, the Belovëd, to affirm an indirect definition of selfhood and relationship by means of language. However, the breadth of registers employed throughout the sonnet subverts this very effect. First, the speech-based dyad of you and I is triangulated by its members' relationship with God (a recurring theme). Second, not only the call to God but also the Belovëd calling the prime persona by her name is followed by a silent dash. Third, the wording of the second appeal to the Belovëd renders the requested action more distant: 'my' becomes 'that', the 'pet-name' becomes a more neutral 'name', and the silent dash and comma replace the demanding exclamation mark[2].

From sonnet XXIII onward, each step of the romantic approach is accompanied by the interjection 'o/oh' (idealisation in XXXVII; the first kisses in XXXVIII; affirmation and acceptance of the other's affection in XL):

> Pardon, oh, pardon, that my soul should make
> Of all that strong divineness which I know
> For thine and thee […]
> (XXXVII, 1-3)
>
> […]
> Than that first kiss. The second passed in height

[2] Pauline Simonsen ties the broken syntax to the persona's loss of identity and social integration: 'The speaker has been left forlorn of unconditional love and affirmation of identity.' (Simonsen, p. 71).

> The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,
> Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!
> (XXXVIII, 7-9)

> Oh, yes! they love through all this world of ours!
> (XL, 1)

Both speech and language thus fail in moments of supposed definition. This system of semiotic subversion is established as early as sonnet II. In this poem, the persona hears 'this word' (II, 2) spoken by her counterpart. A conversation might ensue, but the stanza's syntax immediately disintegrates:

> One of us…that was God…and laid the course (II, 4)

Time and again in the sequence, when the lovers approach each other, emotionally or physically, sentences dissolve into elliptic debris:

> Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow
> The grey dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,
> (V, 10f)

> For where thou art, or shall be, there or here;
> And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved yesterday,
> (VII, 11f)

> I love thee . . . mark! . . . I love thee --- in thy sight
> I stand transfigured […]
> (X, 6f)

> To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,
> Yet I wept for it!—this, . . . the paper's light . . .
> (XXVIII, 7f)

At other points in the sequence, the reader is confronted with a plethora of modes of speech that fail to communicate. In sonnet XXI, for instance, lines 2-3 read:

> […] Though the word repeated
> Should seem a 'cuckoo-song', as though dost treat it,

The word as bird song is a word beyond clear comprehension, to the human ear more ornamental than comprehensible. The rhyme employed in these lines, a rare female cadence, adds an unstressed syllable to the end of each verse, thereby suggesting a sense of quietness. In line 8, the reader finds a destabilised relationship between reality and the spoken in the 'doubtful spirit-voice,' while line 9 demands:

> Cry, "Speak once more—thou lovest!"

Crying poses an expression of emotions rather than a transfer of concrete elaborated meaning. This is followed by a remarkably expressive structure of repetition:

> Say thou dost love me, love me, love me – toll
> The silver iterance! –
> (12f)

The repetition of the affirmation of love in lines 12f ties into the ambiguity of toll. On the one hand, one may understand this in the sense of paying a toll, but on the other it implies a sound – that of a bell tolling, for example. If the reader assumes the latter meaning, the mantra-like repetition chimes with the structure of tolling. Either version transfers the utterance to a lifeless sphere. As the colour of silver is already tied to an ambiguous topos between love and death in sonnet I (cf. 13f), the toll as payment invokes the ferry toll across the Acheron. The toll as the repetitive affirmation of love equates these avowals to the sound of an inanimate object such as a bell. Thus, the 'love-me' is pushed away from the sphere of meaningful human communication. Finally, in line 14, the persona demands:

> To love me also in silence with thy soul.

However, the expression of love in 'silence' naturally suggests the absence of its expression. The poetic romance appears as a negative abstractum: it is the textual expression of inexpressibility, and its discourse is simultaneously the rejection of its discourse.

While negative imagery and its grammatical expressions, as shown above, undermine the validity of diegetic constructions as appropriate space and means for the love sought, the Sonnets here further suggest the insufficiency of its language as a container for a perhaps more ambitious concept of love and poetic existence. Personhood and, with the loss of language, poetic agency dissolve where diegetic love seems to be achieved. However, the *Sonnets* offer an alternative dimension for both the authorial agent and the personae's romantic discourse: text as diegesis rather than its medium.

3. Text as diegesis, not its medium

Collapsing speech is only one side of the dialectic equation seen in the sonnet sequence; the other introduces an empowered mode of speech and expressive functions of text, as the sonnets' diegetic world fuses materially with its medium. An intricate network of references dissolves the boundary between the text and its inhabitants, including inanimate objects. On a discursive level, the boundary between poetry and person becomes increasingly blurred. 'Instruments defaced' (XXXII, 13), for instance, personify the symbol of poetry evoked in XXXII, while the persona is equated to an instrument herself. Simonsen posits that the speaker 'has become the instrument for the master musician to play upon' (Simonsen, p. 68); she is thus rendered a medium rather than a person:

> […] For perfect strains may float
> 'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced,–
> And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.
> (12-14)

> Sonnet XXXVIII explicates the unity of romantic physicality and poetry. First, the Belovëd's kiss on her hands triggers the meta-poetic trope of her writing:
>
> […] he but only kissed
> The fingers of this hand wherewith I write;
> (1f)

Second, his kiss on her hair evokes key imagery of the sonnet sequence (hair, chrism, crown, 9f). The final tercet then comprises one of his kisses on her lips (cf. 12), leading to her ability to verbally express her affirmation of love:

> I have been proud and said, "My love, my own."
> (14)

Physical affection, while having been regularly subverted and avoided thus far, now reaches a space in which it may exist: in poetry and speech. Letters, on the other hand, are positioned within the conditio humana of life and death:

> My letters! All dead paper, mute and white!
> And yet they seem alive and quivering
> (XXVIII, 1f)

The subsequent line then equates the quivering letters to her hands via the parallelism of matching movements ('tremulous'). In XLII, the persona has gained control over her life, as the latter is dependent on her writing:

> I seek no copy now of life's first half:
> Leave here the pages with long musing curled,
> And write my new future's epigraph,
> (11-13)

With the image of the 'copy', life is drawn into the materiality of texts, and the persona's future appears simply as a performance of written instructions. Moreover, the pages are 'curled' and thereby equated to the persona's hair, the key metonymic figure of selfhood.

Another pars-pro-toto metonymy as prevalent as that of the hair represents the foot/feet, with nine mentions throughout the sequence. In its ambiguity, this motif playfully alludes to a tension between form and content; the poetic ambivalence of feet as the body part and the metrical unit blurs the boundary between human physicality and poetry. In XX for instance, the persona describes a visual impression of the other's absence:

> And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink
> No moment in thy voice, […]
> (4f)

However, the image transcends its visuality by juxtaposing the absence of noise. The foot may also be read as ambiguous, as the print alludes to material texts and the sinking and silence may evoke the notion of a sinking within a metrical foot. This theme

is recurring. In IV, the dancers' footing is juxtaposed with high poems, thereby commingling the physical footing with a second poetic meaning.

> Most gracious singer of high poems! where
> The dancers will break footing, […]
> (2f)

In V, the foot is tied to scorn, shifting the body part towards the realm of language.

> thy foot in scorn
> (7)

While being linked to the poetic symbol of the musical instrument, the stressed and unstressed nature of metrical feet is also repeatedly alluded to in XLI.

> But though, who, in my voice's sink and fall
> […]
> Own instrument didst drop down at thy foot
> (7-9)

One particularly remarkable example of the fusion of textuality with diegesis and a poetry-specific interplay of form and narrative is the disruption of the regular rhyming pattern in sonnet XXIX. Firstly, the B-rhyme ('tree', 'see', 'thee', 'instantly', 2; 3; 6; 7) expands to the sestet's D-rhyme ('thee', 10; 12; 14). Secondly, the D-rhyme consists solely of 'thee' as the rhyming word. Thirdly, this rhyming pattern further expands to the interior of the lines. The 'Belovëd thee' eventually literally replaces the poetic form by substituting the rhymes with mere repetition, ending climactically with a doubled 'thee' within the last line's internal rhyme. Diegetic physicality and its linguistic medium seem to fuse into one meta-concept; body, selfhood, and words become a unified thematic node. This fusion is then performed and amplified in the indexicality of the sonnets' words which transfers the diegetic world into the 'real' materiality of text, as will be discussed further.

4. The word as index

The Sonnets from the Portuguese materialise the symbolic property of language into indexical representations[3], bestowing a physical existence within the reader's reality upon the diegetic world and thus rendering its language non-symbolic. Take, for instance, sonnet II: it begins to count 'only three' (1) who know of their romantic love (the two personae and God). At this point, the textual formatting, syntax, and punctuation dissolves into patterns of three as well. The following three lines are segregated into three clauses respectively. Furthermore, the ellipses also represent a treble design.

[3] Although seminal in detail and impact, Saussure was not the first to argue for a concept of arbitrariness in linguistic semiotics. Importantly, Charles Sanders Peirce's sign theory posed a seismic shift in the understanding of material semiotics. Peirce categorises signs as icons, indices, and symbols; which differ according to the relationship between signifier and signified. Symbols, such as linguistic notations, bear no tie between the two; their relation is arbitrary in the sense suggested by Saussure. Indices connect signifier and signified by means of a factual connection. Icons show visual similarities (Turquette, p. 97).

> Have heard this word thou hast said,—Himself, beside
> Thee speaking, and me listening! and replied
> One of us . . . that was God . . . and laid the curse
> (2-4)

In sonnet X, the integration of God into the relationship recurs (cf. 3, 11) and again the punctuation turns into three-element punctuation marks.

> I love thee . . . mark! . . . I love thee --- in thy sight
> (6)

The reader also encounters further indexical expressions, as objects or tropes regarding lengthy shapes are systematically hyphenised: The 'cedar-plank' (X, 4), 'palm-tree' (XXIX, 5), 'altar-stair' (XXX, 7), and the 'prison-wall' (XLI, 3) all represent lengthy objects and are written and sketched simultaneously. Here, the sonnets' textuality shifts the medial use of language to a physical representation, and the diegetic world is immersed into the reader's physical reality. Material text substitutes the syntactically narrated fiction.

In XIII, 'me' is separated from 'myself' with long dashes when the persona explicitly tells of her separation from her 'spirits'. In XV, the insurmountable emotional distance, symbolised by the speaker's unfeeling gaze, segregates the personae emotionally; and in XXVII, his 'upper life' isolates her from him and so does a dash. While describing a physical unification, sonnet XXIX simultaneously expresses an inner rebellion against the personae's closeness – and puts a dash between them.

> I love thee . . . mark! . . . I love thee --- in thy sight
> (X, 6)

> My hand to hold my spirits so far off
> From myself –me– […]
> (XIII, 7)

> […] But I look on thee–on thee–
> (XV, 10)

> […] the tedious time he had
> In the upper life,–so I, […]
> (XXVII, 11f)

> I do not think of thee–I am too near thee.
> (XXIX, 14)

Further examples physically depict movements, such as casting a ray of light in XIII or the possibility of the Belovëd striking the persona's inner chains in XX, the fall of greenery in XXIX or of tears in XXX.

> Between our faces, to cast a light on each?–
> (XIII, 4)

> Struck by thy possible hand,– […]
> (XX, 8)
>
> Drop heavily down,–
> (XXIX, 11)
>
> As now these tears come–falling […]
> (XXX, 14)

The traditional sonnet shape further facilitates a textual organisation of diegetic space, as the division into stanzas creates opportunities for meaningful positioning. Sonnet XXV, for instance, evokes a spherical segregation of 'above' and 'beneath'. While the second quartet ends in 'above the world forlorn' (cf. 8), the first tercet incorporates a semantic field of a 'beneath', with 'drop', 'adown', 'Deep', and 'sinketh' (10f). The stanza break between lines eight and nine then positions the 'heavy heart' within the textual space into the 'beneath' and separates it from the upper sphere. This resonates with the figurative trope of the heavy heart, which seems bound to sink:

> Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn
>
> My heavy heart. […]
> (8f)

Saussure posits:

> 'Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first. The linguistic object is not both the written and the spoken forms of words; the spoken forms alone constitute the object.' (Saussure, p. 23f)

The signification via the sign's visual materiality in the *Sonnets*, however, shows the potential of the sign's textuality to constitute the object beyond the reach of arbitrary signification and the spoken form. The boundaries between textuality and meaning, and therefore the reality of script and the poetic fiction, are blurred. Barrett Browning creates a love discourse and a discourse of selfhood as language; the love expressed is poetry, not told by it. The resistance against the making of meaning within the syntactical order facilitates a transcended love discourse, defying the imposition inherent in the medium of language to define and therefore to restrict. While physicality and personhood in the diegetic system seem ephemeral, they are stabilised in an intermediary dimension between the reader's reality and the diegesis.

Notably, Clara Dawson attests that voice in Victorian poetry:

> 'conveys sound and meaning to a reader across or through a printed text. Embedded in material forms, yet nonmaterial in its evocation of a presence beyond the page, voice is caught between its ancient oral past and its contemporary fixity in print. (Dawson 18)

Barrett Browning breaches the gap of diegetic orality and textual fixation by fusing these spheres. The demonstrated indexicality foregrounds text and form as crafted; while the passive, silent (Petrarchan) persona-object is deconstructed, an alternative forceful female creator – the author – seems to take her place.

The last example given in this chapter already crosses the threshold between signifying words and the creation of meaning by means of form. Within this poeticity, new trajectories of expression are facilitated. In playful variants the authorial voice showcases her power of creation by not only asserting her role, but also by expanding the scope of expressibility, eventually allowing for a simultaneousness of traditional love discourses as well as the renegotiation of female authorial space, as will be further discussed in regard to two specific concepts: purified absence and dialectic compositions.

5. Meaning through poeticity (metrics)

Long lines and treble patterns visibly underscore the diegetic imagery of Barrett Browning's sonnets. Admittedly, however, beyond the assertion of language foregrounding and giving shelter to an innovatively negotiated love discourse, they are little more than amplifying features. However, the *Sonnets* significantly expand the semantic scope on the basis of the expanded semantic medium, utilising metric structures to express purified absence.

A series of studies in the field of phonosemantics suggests that there is a link between specific sound elements of languages and their meanings – irrespective of the word's syntactical integration. Adelman, Estes, and Cossu found in 2018, for instance, that English, Spanish, Dutch, German, and Polish operate with phonemes at the beginning of their words signalling its valence (i.e. positivity or negativity). Considering that phonemes that are uttered fastest signal negativity in all languages investigated, they propose that it functions as 'an early warning system in human languages, analogous to other species' alarm calls' (p. 122). Famously, the bouba/kiki effect is a widely corroborated tendency of humans across languages, cultures, genders, and age groups to relate roundness and sharpness to the nonsense words bouba and kiki respectively, even including a preference for people whose faces match the roundness or sharpness of the phonemes in their names (i.e. Bob and Lou as 'round' names) (Barton and Halberstadt, 2018)[4]. These studies suggest that there may be auditory and visual dimensions of text that hold meaning beyond the signification of the word sign, and that this meaning is perceived across languages and cultures. Non-arbitrary linguistic elements should therefore be considered.

In *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, the device of poetic form takes this a step further: not just sound, but the lack thereof is rendered expressive, creating a purified articulation of absence. The first interaction of the I-you dyad, for instance, accommodates several markers: while most of the sonnets remain within the metrical standard of 5-feet iambs,

[4] Since Köhler's introduction in 1929, the phenomenon has been observed in a large variety of age groups (cf. Ozturk et al.; Maurer et al.; Davis) and across cultures and languages (Davis; Bremner et al.; Sučević et al.; Markovic and Jankovic; Ramachandran and Hubbard), thus providing considerable support to the theory of 'universal sensory underpinnings' of the effect (Styles and Gawne, p. 1).

the 'shadow' carries a dactylic disruption; two unstressed syllables substitute one, and thus create a moment of relative quietness:

> A shadow across me. […] (I, 9)

This strategy of signification recurs. In XXI, the shift to a dactylus within an iambic structure creates silence where silence is meant. A trochaic inversion at the opening of XXIV 5 creates a silent suspension of two unstressed syllables before the 'click', where a stressed syllable strikes. In XXVI, a dactylus creates an additional unstressed syllable where vanishing is expressed. Sonnet XXXIII incorporates an anapaestic foot speaking of dead (thus absent) people. Finally, a trochaic inversion at the opening of XXXIX 13 creates two unstressed syllables where the line speaks of 'nothing'.

> To love me also in silence with thy soul
> (XXI, 14)

> After the click […]
> (XXIV, 5)

> Their vanishing eyes. […]
> (XXVI, 8)

> Be heir to those who are now exanimate.
> (XXXIII, 10)

> Nothing repels thee, […]
> (XXXIX, 13)

The sonnet sequence thus radicalises the expression of absence. While tropes such as the shadow may allude to this, their linguistic medium still follows a supplemental or oppositional structure: the shadow is the absence of light or an allusion to the absence of a person. The reader may only understand the absence as against the image of something specific that is potentially present. The metrically induced silence, on the other hand, is simply the absence of an emphasis; and, unlike a word that would automatically signify something, an emphasis does not, by itself, hold meaning. Therefore, the lack of emphasis represents unadulterated, purified semantic absence. Poetic form thus facilitates the expansion of meaning.

6. Meaning through poeticity (verses)

Saussure posits that one fundamental attribute of language is its character as a chain of words. One syntactically organised element follows the other, hence text creates meaning along one dimension (the syntagmatic axis):

> 'In contrast to visual signifiers (nautical signals, etc.) which can offer simultaneous groupings in several dimensions, auditory signifiers have at their command only the dimension of time. Their elements are presented in succession; they form a chain.' (Saussure, p. 70)

Barrett Browning's sonnets show, however, that this linguistic axiom may be re-negotiated in the context of poetic form. More intricately than through amplified absence, dialectic compositions find shelter in juxtaposed dimensions of the sonnets' words. Angela Leighton rightly determines that the speaker, for instance, consciously 'plays at being both subject and object' (Leighton, p. 102). Indeed, the sonnet sequence implements a dialectic love discourse through at least two features of its poeticity, as the poetic form and regular linguistic creation of meaning both unify as well as separate opposing notions.

Firstly, opposing notions of line and syntactical meaning are implemented. The reader has two options: to delimitate units of meaning either within syntactical logics or within the boundaries of poetical form, namely line and stanza breaks. Depending on the structural container of meaning on which they base their reading, the conveyed discourse of love proves to be diametrically positioned against the other. Sonnet V, for instance, redirects the reader's gaze depending on the line or the syntactical structure. The hierarchical order between the personae thereby switches between two opposing notions: line 4 ('And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn') suggests that the persona surrenders to the Belovëd. The sentence as a whole ('And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn [t]he ashes at thy feet'), however, implies an invading action of manipulating his personal space literally, or his grief figuratively. Line 5 ('[I overturn t]he ashes at thy feet. Behold and see') then demands his attention to her agency, which would imply a self-asserting act, while the full sentence ('Behold and see [w]hat a great heap of grief lay hid in me,') signifies a request for him to look into her inner grief, rendering herself a weaker object of his gaze. The syntactical meaning shows an assertive male gaze, which is subverted by poetic form. Thus, rather than overturning the given discourse, the sonnet creates an alternative poetic subspace, wherein the speaker can assert her own romantic concept. The diegetic partnership is not saturated with a concept of an objectified gazed-at woman, but she also becomes subject and creative force within a dimension of poetic form. This is then repeated in sonnet VI:

> Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
>
> Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
>
> Alone upon the threshold of my door
>
> Of individual life I shall command
> (1-4)

The syntactical logic suggests a doomed future in which the Belovëd asserts control and absorbs attention, as he casts a shadow upon her. The line breaks, on the other hand, delimitate units which assume independence (cf. 1, 3), liberation from his shadow (cf. 2), and finally command over her own life (cf. 4). The concept of sonnet V is thus expanded towards the future. Again, the envisioned partnership is not saturated within a singular concept of hierarchy or relation, but conserves a dialectic synchrony of opposing notions. In sonnet XXIV, oscillation between separation and mergence is evident between the couple and their environment rather than within the relationship. Lines 11 and 12 suggest an accessible pair, while the whole sentence limits the accessibility to a heavenly sphere after the line and stanza break. Later in the sequence, the couple acts as a unit and negotiates their relation to the diegetic world. The result is similar to the concept within the relationship: they are part of the world and they are

not part of the world. Their relationship transcends the regular parameters of reality and attains a dialectically organised relation by poetic means.

> The lilies of our lives may reassure
>
> Their blossoms from their root, accessible
> Alone to heavenly dews that drop not fewer;
> (11-13)

The dialectic reformation of the love discourses between syntactical and line units facilitates a fundamental re-creation rather than a reactive alternative. The examples show that the dimension of independence (as opposed to commitment) is positioned within the poetic form. Freedom is to be found in poetry, while a societal commitment has to be made otherwise.

The syntagmatic axis is thus not simply one linear chain of words, but rather multiple overlain, intertwined word chains organised by more than just syntax. Meaning is created not only by the linguistic sign, but also by poetic form, empowering the reader to take their decision. By means of this semantic undercurrent, the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* create the dialectic of an asserted existence of both personae as poets within their respective poetic realm. Their togetherness is thus created as poeticity, while the syllogistic textual order struggles to express the simultaneous existence of conflicting states or events.

7. Meaning through poeticity (acrostics)

Secondly, acrostics implement dialectic structures, juxtaposing the meaning within the explicit imagery or syntax with a counter motif at the beginning of the lines. The acrostics, without exception, comprise these specific oppositional concepts, and within a sonnet they are found aligned to its beginning, its end, or to one of its stanzas. Roughly a fifth of the sonnets contain acrostics, which suggests a deliberate construction. Sonnet XVI, for instance, portrays the persona as finally surrendering to the Belovëd's courting. Just at this moment of surrender, the acrostic reads 'I ate him', subverting the established hierarchy:

> **I**n lifting upward, as in crushing low!
> **A**nd as a vanquished soldier yields his sword
> **T**o one who lifts him from the bloody earth,
> **E**ven so, Belovëd, I at last record,
> **H**ere ends my strife. If thou invite me forth,
> **I** rise above abasement at the word.
> **M**ake thy love larger to enlarge my worth!
> (8-14)

While the face value meaning incorporates the persona into the Belovëd's romantic fiefdom, this act of consumption encases him in the persona's physicality. The superficial perpetuation of knightly sonnet imagery lets the male counterpart prevail, but the transcendence beyond the linguistic semantic means establishes space for the female persona to prevail alongside the male, thereby accomplishing a dialectic doubly asymmetrical relationship.

Sonnet XIX, then, perpetuates the oscillation between female poetic subordination and its conceptual subversion. This time, the female persona receives her Belovëd's lock of hair, (cf. 4), counteracting the theme introduced in XVIII. However, this inversion of romantic gender imagery is immediately overthrown by the allocation of a metaphorical crown to the male's headspace ('bay crown shade', 8). Yet again, this subversion of the image finds its own subversion within the acrostic 'tiara':

> **T**he soul's Rialto hath its merchandize;
> **I** barter curl for curl upon that mart,
> **A**nd from my poet's forehead to my heart
> **R**eceive this lock which outweighs argosies,—
> **A**s purply black, as erst to Pindar's eyes
> (1-5)

The authority of the male crown is balanced out by the tiara, traditionally worn since the late 18th century by powerful women (cf. Munn). The gender hierarchies do not dissolve, but are maintained in a dialectic oscillation between two hierarchical concepts. Both lovers rule and surrender. Once again, the poetic transgression of form and imagery facilitates a female 'counter-reign'. Simonsen posits that the speaker was 'drowned in his [the Belovëd's] being and selfhood' (p. 59), but the more complex double structure challenges this assumption.

The subsequent sonnet XXVI continues this double-edged pattern within the aquatic imagery of 'river-water' for the poetic sphere (cf. 11) and 'dust' for the sphere of societal reality (cf. 6), as well as the fonts as a merging ambiguous metaphor ('As river-water hallowed into fonts', 11). The prime persona inhabits her aquatic visions when the Belovëd comes into play in the second quartet. This stanza creates the acrostic 'boat'.

> **B**ut soon their trailing purple was not free
> **O**f this world's dust, their lutes did silent grow,
> **A**nd I myself grew faint and blind below
> **T**heir vanishing eyes. Then thou didst come—to be,
> (5-8)

Here, the boat represents a worldly device conquering the water. In similar fashion to the fonts, it is both an object of the world and a symbol of civilisation as well as part of the aquatic sphere (hence of her visions). In fact, none of the personae are swallowed by their respective other, but a synthesising concept is created in which they are both fused and separated; they are cohabitants of the same aquatic space, but also each within their own respective realm.

Then, mirroring the transgression of the diegesis and its personae into the sonnets' poeticity and materiality as shown above, the boundaries between letters and living beings are transgressed through an acrostic in XXVIII. The role of language and speech within the lovers' relationship is negotiated. The sonnet's mantra-like repetition of 'said' is especially striking. Considering this pattern, the homophone acrostic 'sat' seems to be a deliberate construction.

> **S**aid, Dear I love thee; and I sank and quailed
> **A**s if God's future thundered on my past.
> **T**his said, I am thine–and so its ink has paled
> (9-11)

It indicates a physical counteract to the speech within the speech and resonates with the verbs of lowering action ('sank', 'thundered on', 'lying'; 9, 10, 12), which dominate the sestet. The acrostic thus functions as a hinge between the two trajectories of the sonnet: self-assertion via speech and then physically marked gestures of surrender. Rather than simply transferring the diegetic phenomena into the materiality of text, the acrostics further expand the semantic spectrum by holding up a dialectic tension and simultaneousness between two oppositional concepts.

While the explicit syntactically narrated diegesis defies a synthetic love discourse comprising both personae's contradictory expectations of self-assertion, the sonnets' use of their poetic form creates dialectics which facilitate a relationship beyond syllogistic logic, and therefore beyond societal restraints. The destabilisation of significance by means of a defied or contradictory love discourse simultaneously affects a stabilisation within this structure. It simplifies the discourse to a meta-concept of a refusal to define. The transcendence of diegesis, selfhood, and relationship into textuality shifts the lovers' relationship and world into text. The dialectic structures, on the other hand, show the necessity of this shift, as contradictory concepts may be synthesised within the potency of poetic language. The expanded authorial voice makes use of her power by creating a sphere of alternative logic, thereby facilitating the lovers' togetherness. Here, voice as poeticity equals the dialectic love discourse, and the love discourse immerses and is saturated both in and as poetic form.

8. Conclusion

The voice of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* is an empowered one that refuses to be specific. It is a voice both within and as poetic form and textuality. While the framework of the diegetic world disassembles, the existence of its inhabitants as well as objects is implicitly questioned. Speech as a descriptor of the diegesis collapses. Moreover, the sonnets subvert the boundary between fictional content and the material medium of text by rendering its words indexical. The strategic utilisation of metrical disruptions creates a signification of purified absence, going beyond the scope of regular semiotics. Furthermore, dialectic simultaneousness emerges in the juxtapositions of line and sentence as well as sentence and acrostic.

The sonnets go beyond simply representing a literary diffusion of significance. By utilising this destabilisation to transcend and stretch the capabilities of linguistic signification, the sequence also goes beyond foregrounding the linguistic medium. Its poeticity renders the syntactical chain a multidimensional network of signification: the word is not merely a signifier of the signified, but also a semiotic node facilitating adhesion of its material textual representation, framework of poetic form, and syntactical logic.

The devices of *Sonnets from the Portuguese* thus negotiate the most central axiomata of structural linguistics: the arbitrariness of the sign in the context of poetry is obfuscated and the chain character of linguistic expression is challenged. Remarkably, by force of their indexical character, even punctuation marks and textual spatiality hold meaning in their own right. For the hermeneutics of poetry, structuralist linguistics may thus function as a referential system against which semiotics through poeticity can be

defined; the interpres may use linguistic paradigms while re-negotiating their interrelation and inner logic.

So, how does a poem mean? Naturally, this analysis can only provide an answer with regard to the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Many of the devices Barrett Browning utilises, however, are specifically poetic, and it may thus be argued that the specific poetic form (and the reader's expectation thereof, including imagery, metrics, line breaks, and rhymes) activate an expanded semiotic potential. This is, then, how a poem can mean.

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Protecting People from Climate Change Harm

Lise Cazzoli

Abstract. *This paper outlines the key concepts and issues in approaching climate change through the lens of protection, focusing on the harm inflicted on coastal populations due to sea-level rise. I begin by explaining how and why climate change can be seen as a protection challenge through an examination of the impacts of sea-level rise in Guyana. I then summarize the main elements and developments of "protection" approaches in the study of humanitarianism and argue that they are rooted in changing ideas of suffering. I then consider, first, what are the key issues in defining what adequate protection from climate change harm means? Second, who should have the responsibility to provide such protection? Third, what factors can explain states' failure to protect their citizens from climate change harm? In doing so, I propose that conceptualizing climate change through the lens of protection can offer a deeper understanding of the conditions under which vulnerability develops over time while asking pragmatic questions about who should be granted aid and how.*

* * *

Introduction

In its Fifth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated that sea-levels might rise by one meter by the end of this century, as a result of anthropogenic climate change. In low-lying coastal zones, this is expected to compound other development challenges and environmental risks, with negative implications for human health, access to basic services, food security, and the pursuit of traditional livelihoods.

Because of the uneven distribution of risks, affecting primarily those living in poverty, a large body of interdisciplinary academic research has focused on the structural conditions that compound their vulnerability and how governments and international agencies can foster adaptation (e.g. Adger, 2000; Oliver-Smith, 2009; Pelling, 2003; Vaughn, 2012). While these studies acknowledge that these disruptions are rooted in an unequal provision of social protection, they have largely ignored the question of state responsibility and ability to protect their citizens from climate change harm. Furthermore, by focusing on physical suffering, these studies often fail to appreciate the biographical impact of climate change on affected people, and the conditions in which climate change adaptation policies are enacted or their rationale.

This paper seeks to conceptualize climate change through the lens of protection, with a specific focus on the harm inflicted against coastal populations. Protection, here, will be understood as the mechanisms designed to mitigate or respond to levels of suffering

that are deemed unacceptable in a given polity. In particular, the present approach conceptualizes suffering as deprivation, and posits that "climate change deprivation" should be seen as the product of both biological or physical factors, and broader gaps in accessing basic capabilities. From that perspective, a capabilities approach to protection asks how environmental change affects people's freedom to live the way they choose, which is rooted in instrumental freedoms such as political freedom, access to social opportunities, economic facilities, transparency guarantees and protective security (Sen, 1999: 38-40). From a methodological perspective, the paper is based on an extensive review of the existing literature, both theoretical and empirical, and complemented by field observations. Because it intends to offer an overview of this theoretical approach to a non-specialist public, its scope will be restricted to offering an up-to-date understanding of some core issues in current climate change and development research. I will begin by explaining why climate change harms can be seen as rooted in broader gaps in (social) protection, which will be illustrated by a short account of the impact of sea-level rise in Guyana. I will then outline the specificities of this approach, before considering three questions: first, what are the key issues in defining what adequate protection from climate change harm means? Second, who should have the responsibility to provide such protection? Third, what factors can explain states' failure to protect their citizens from climate change harm?

In doing so, I propose that conceptualizing climate change through the lens of protection can offer a deeper understanding of the conditions under which vulnerability develops over time, while asking pragmatic questions about who should be granted aid and how.

1. Defining 'protection'

Conway, de Haan and Norton defined social protection as "public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation, which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society" (in Barrientos and Hulme, 2008: 3). In that perspective, social protection is rooted in both moral and legal arguments: to design protection policies is, fundamentally, to render a judgment on the levels of deprivation or suffering that are considered acceptable. In other terms, social protection mechanisms are rooted in a set of morals.

These morals of suffering are often, though not always, stated in legal terms (natural law, constitutional and international law, human rights) (Barrientos and Hulme, 2008), which is why "protection" is generally understood as legal protection, and is associated with entitlements provided under law, and that individuals can claim through specific mechanisms. Therefore, "an inquiry into whether a population has 'protection' is an examination of the fashion in which the pertinent authorities comply with the entitlements of individuals under […] law, and the manner in which these legal precepts are implemented and respected" (Helton, 2003). Providing "protection" can,

therefore, mean two different but interrelated things: providing insurance (protecting citizens against contingencies) and assistance (providing support to those in poverty) (Barrientos and Hulme, 2008), or establishing legal mechanisms to provide redress and maintain physical security (Helton, 2003).

According to Fassin (2012), both these legal and non-legal instruments have been developed in response to changing ideas about suffering in the early 1990s. While governmental action was previously motivated by a focus on public order and justice, the author argues, the end of the 20th century marked the rise of compassion as a valid precept of intervention. In particular, social problems started to be articulated in the vocabulary of mental health; policy was motivated by a universalist desire of protecting and assisting others on the basis of belonging to a single human community (see e.g. Rosanvallon and Harshav, 2000). In practice, these changing conceptions of suffering and the new emphasis on protection have given rise to what Fassin (2012: 1) calls the "humanitarian government", which is defined as "the deployment of moral sentiments (the emotions that direct our attention to the suffering of others) in contemporary politics". In particular, Fassin highlights that the study of any humanitarian government should entail exploring two overlapping fields of inquiry. First, humanitarianism encompasses the idea of humankind (sharing one human condition) and humanness (being drawn to other humans), from which follow the obligation of assistance. Second, it entails the study of government as a "set of procedures established and actions conducted in order to manage, regulate and support the existence of human beings" (Fassin, 2012: 1).

In development studies, Amartya Sen's capabilities approach has gained prominence in analyzing gaps in social protection and rectifying suffering. Suffering, in Sen's perspective, is understood as (relative) deprivation, which entails that "being poor has clearly much to do with being deprived, and it is natural that, for a social animal, the concept of deprivation will be a relative one" (Sen, 1999: 15). Poverty, from that perspective, is seen as a deprivation of basic capabilities, that is "the substantive freedoms [one] enjoys to lead[ing] the kind of life he or she has reason to value […], rather than merely a lowness of income, which is the standard criterion of identification of poverty" (Sen, 1999: 87). In his earlier works on famines and starvation, Sen has developed an "entitlement approach" that concentrates on the ability of people to command food through the legal means available in the society (1981: 45), which he later labelled as "capabilities". From that perspective, a multidimensional approach to poverty considers both legal and non-legal entitlements.

In particular, deprivation is conceptualized as relative, which means that one can only be poor in relation to certain standards defined by society (hence, some deprivations can be considered absolute), and to other human beings. Social justice is at the core of this approach because it follows that inequality is a cause of suffering. One could argue, however, that deprivation (and suffering) is also relative in time. Suffering occurs in

relation to events of the past (nostalgia), and to a sense of longing (for the future). For that reason, suffering is not only situated in relation to space (changes in the environment), but also as a reaction to interruptions in "normal times": humans suffer in relation to something, and things are connected in ways that go beyond the physicality of things. This is very apparent in literature (e.g. Philip Pullman, The Secret Commonwealth) and has been explored in anthropology (e.g. Appadurai, 1989,; McLean, 2009; Hastrup, 2009, 2014). Suffering is related to imagination and immaterial connections. The loss of the farmer faced by a great flood, for instance, goes beyond a loss of income. It is also the loss of meaning associated with the practice of his activity as a farmer, which might be vocational, or gifted to him by his father, or the activity that allows his children to go to school, or the practice that connects him to his ancestors, and the very way that time subjectively unfolds. Humans live this world in a way that reflects their understanding of their position in history. For that reason, any conceptualization of suffering should entail a historical (or biographical) dimension.

Overall, "protection" has been conceptualized in different but complementary ways; on one hand, Fassin outlines the role of morals in allocating aid and designing humanitarian or social assistance programmes, and the procedures or rules under which they are enacted. Barrientos and Hulme, on the other hand, focus on these rules and mechanisms through which individuals gain access to entitlements, an issue that has been further investigated by Sen in his capabilities approach. In the perspective of this paper, analyzing climate change through the lens of protection thus entails considering the ways in which climate change impacts can be attributed to gaps in social protection mechanisms. In particular, the present approach focuses on mechanisms that ensure access to basic entitlements (or capabilities). Fundamentally, it dedicates special attention to conceptualizations of suffering, which is seen as both a historical (or biographical) and biological process. The next sections will aim at illustrating the need for such an approach (section 2) and exploring how the ideas developed in this section can be conceptualized in the study of climate change (section 3).

2. Sea-level rise as a protection challenge: the case of Guyana

According to the IPCC (2014), sea-levels could rise by one meter globally by the end of this century, as a result of thermal expansion, glacial melt and changes in terrestrial water storage (Oliver-Smith, 2009). In Guyana, projections indicate a predicted rise in sea levels of one (1) meter by the end of this century (IPCC, 2014), with a related increase in storm surges of about five (5) meters, expected to affect more than 22,000 hectares of coastal zone through further inundation and erosion (GoG, 2018). The threat is considered imminent given the country's low-lying coastline, at two (2) meters below sea levels in some areas, and is home to 90% of its population and their main livelihoods, economic activities and infrastructure. Moreover, existing sea defence structures are not considered adequate to tackle these risks (GoG, 2018), as the coastal

landscape also faces other pressures - e.g. erosion, coastline transgression, beach and shell removal for economic profit, inadequate maintenance of drainage infrastructure, and unimpeded land use development alongside the sea defence structures (GoG, 2018). In addition, sea-level rise is suspected of causing flooding further inland, as "the combined effects of low wave energy and the inland tidal effects" reduce the capacity and rate of flow of the drainage systems, especially in periods of heavy rainfall (GoG, 2018).

Indigenous people have occupied the northwest of Guyana for around 7,000 years. In particular, archeological evidence indicates the arrival of the Arawak (Lokono), Carib and Warao people around 3,000 years ago (Atkinson, Wilson, Silva et al., 2016). According to a study conducted by Williams and Kalamandeen (2013), recurring flooding has disrupted local indigenous livelihoods over the past few years, and in particular in Region 1 and 9, which are deemed the country's poorest regions. According to the GBPI (2017), rural coastal areas host 60% of the country's population, among which 4 in 10 people live in poverty. In addition, a report by Atkinson, Wilson, Silva et al. (2016) reveals that indigenous communities' adaptive capability is further limited when they do not own title to their lands, restricting their autonomy in sustaining their livelihoods.

This section aims to illustrate how and why climate change can be seen as a protection challenge, as conceptualized above. It is based on a field visit conducted in Guyana over the summer of 2019, which aimed to investigate how sea-level rise or coastal environmental change is experienced in indigenous communities living along the coast, and in particular in Region 1 (Barima-Waini). Informal interviews with governmental officials, international agencies and local leaders were conducted in order to explore what was their perception of these changes, and what the current policy landscape around sea-level rise looked like. Three communities were selected (Warapoka, Moruca, Almond Beach). The location of these communities was determined under the recommendation of local partners, who have worked in the field of marine conversation for many years in the region. The three communities exhibit different characteristics in terms of location (Warapoka and Moruca are not located directly on the coast but along rivers, while Almond Beach is directly adjacent to the sea; Warapoka and Moruca are titled communities while the Almond Beach community does not hold title to their land). Furthermore, all three communities are said to have experienced direct and indirect effects of sea-level rise and coastal erosion, and are located in or adjacent to the Shell Beach Protected Area (SBPA).

In terms of methods, this field visit was most of all informal and had the initial aim of determining the suitability of the field sites. The following observations should thus be seen as reflections informed by the visit and informal interviews conducted with village councils, a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies, including

Conservation International (CI), the UNICEF country office, the European Commission and the Guyana Marine Conservation Society (GMCS).

2.1 *Preliminary observations*

All communities could be affected by sea-level rise in a similar fashion. The two main impacts of sea-level rise in these villages would be population displacement due to flooding and coastal erosion, and food and water security issues or a loss of traditional livelihoods, through a loss or alterations in marine biodiversity. The specific threat posed by these factors differs from a community to another. Warapoka, for instance, is less vulnerable to flooding due to its location further inland. Sea-level rise, however, could still have important implications for the community because sea-level rise provokes erosion, which affects the sedimentation process. Therefore, as the community is connected to the ocean through a network of rivers, it would affect the composition of the water, and thus could hypothetically affect both fauna and flora further inland. As the community is remote with limited access to markets, its inhabitants still rely on farming and fishing as subsistence activities, which could be disrupted by a change in local biodiversity.

A similar argument could be made about Moruca, though with different implications. Moruca is the main town of the region, and that is where its inhabitants go to access all basic services (hospital, secondary school, supermarket, police station). Many Morucans are small business owners, whether they are boat services, guesthouses or catering services. All these businesses would be affected by a change in the environment of some sort. Boat services would be affected by a rise in sea levels by affecting river levels, and thus possibly river routes. Catering services often rely on local farmers, and both would be affected by sea-level rise in the same fashion as in Warapoka, through alterations in hydrology and potential loss of habitat for local species.

Of the three communities under study, Almond Beach has possibly experienced the most direct effects of sea-level rise and climate change. The community has already been displaced by a storm surge in 2017 and had to move all its installations about a few hundred yards away. Its inhabitants depend on fishing and coconut harvesting, both of which could be affected by sea-level rise. Sometimes these activities are not directly aimed at subsistence; instead, fishermen and farmers sell their catch or products at the local market in Mabaruma. Their business could thus be affected in the same fashion.

2.2. *Interpretation*

As shown in the previous section, the communities under study are mainly composed of indigenous peoples, some of which sustain their livelihoods through traditional practices and subsistence activities. For that reason, all these potential effects of sea-live

rise are tainted by an extra dimension: the potential loss of traditional livelihoods and meaning. These losses should be apprehended in the light of a broader history of indigenous exclusion in Guyana and the historical loss of their lands (see e.g. Colchester, 1997). They could be said to be compounded by the establishment of the protected area, which limits their access to hunting grounds and other natural resources previously used for survival or religious purposes (see e.g. Atkinson, Wilson, Silva et al., 2016).

Though the local leaders and villagers have expressed concern for the impacts of climate change, they usually associate them with unsustainable patterns of resource use that are not directly related to the state of the global climate (e.g. deforestation, over-harvesting of forest resources, logging, mining – see Whitaker, 2019). After spending time with the communities and observing their daily activities, I developed a very different perception of these impacts than what is usually reported in the news. The slow-onset nature of the threat makes it barely visible. Though it exists and should be taken into account in preparedness policies and planning, it seemed to me that most of the problems associated with climate change were, in fact, pre-existing the potential threats mentioned above. This is consistent with the discussions I had with the community and their emphasis on resource use or issues related to infrastructure. Indeed, these communities have less access to basic services such as healthcare or formal education, or to markets, in comparison to the rest of the Guyanese society. In the communities under study, I would argue that these are the determining factors of projected "vulnerability". Indeed, one could argue that the environment has never been static and has changed continuously throughout history. The suffering that is expected "as a result of climate change", seems instead to reflect broader issues in protecting these livelihoods in general, whether they are threatened by sea-level rise, climate change or something else. Before international attention turned to climate change, these communities perhaps were not even on the radar at all, while they were still suffering from similar problems.

3. Key issues

This section sets out to highlight key issues in approaching climate change through existing literature on the protection of civilians. I will first highlight a few issues in defining what "adequate" protection means, and in particular in defining harm and identifying the victims. Second, I ask who should be responsible for providing such protection and whether states and the international community have a responsibility to protect people from "climate change harm". Finally, I will apply the theoretical approach developed in section 1 to the specific case of climate change, in order to offer an understanding of why states and international agencies might fail to provide protection in the context of climate change.

3.1. What does "protection" mean in the context of climate change?

The first challenge in developing a "protection approach" to climate change would be to define the nature of the harm, and describe whether this harm is specific to climate change, i.e. is "climate change harm" a distinct category. According to Humphreys (2010: 1), "[c]limate change will undermine the realization of a broad range of internationally protected human rights. Populations whose rights are poorly protected are likely to be less-equipped to understand or prepare for the effects of climate change". The author highlights some issues in attributing and defining harm caused or compounded by climate change. From a rights-based perspective, the first issue lies in the difficulty to enforce the rights at stake (social and economic rights, the rights of migrants, rights protection during conflicts) due to the notion of indirect harm. Climate change impacts are often mediated by a variety of agents, which makes it difficult to establish causation (Quirico, 2018). This is problematic because if the source of the harm cannot be identified, it means that what one would label as "climate change harm" could well have nothing to do with climate change. This is why Betts (2013: 196), in his examination of the phenomenon of "survival migration", argues that one "should not make the mistake of focusing on particular causes of displacement such as climate change or environmental migration because it would risk replicating the arbitrariness and exclusions of the status quo". In other words, the author argues that it would be more desirable to focus on specific types of harm (for instance, forced migration or starvation), rather than attributing aid based on the causes of this harm. This is consistent with the overwhelming evidence pointing towards the need to look at the root causes of climate change vulnerability, rather than focusing solely on how environmental change impacts specific populations (e.g. Pelling, 2001, 2003; Adger et al., 2011; Wisner, 2001, 2012). Furthermore, and precisely because such a task requires a longer-term outlook, this statement would apply not only to aid attribution, but more generally, to the allocation of international and governmental funds for development or social assistance projects.

Following that logic, it may be useful to explore how specific kinds of harm (or what we could qualify as 'social problems') are compounded (if not created) by changes in the environment. A capabilities approach to protection, for instance, would ask how environmental change affects people's freedom to live the way they choose; this freedom, according to Sen, is based on the achievement of instrumental freedoms such as political freedom, access to social opportunities, economic facilities, transparency guarantees and protective security (Sen, 1999: 38-40). From that perspective, identifying and defining climate change harm means assessing how environmental change affects this set of freedoms.

The second challenge in approaching climate change through the lens of protection lies in defining who are the subjects of this harm. One key issue here would be to assess whether the "victims" who would receive aid for climate change impacts are individuals or collectives. Indeed, and as suggested by Buxton (2019), there are two

options in identifying the "victims": the individuals affected by climate change at a t time, or the continuous group affected by injustice. It is important to note that, from a policy perspective, identifying the victim is inherently political; by choosing aid recipients, one makes a judgment on whose suffering deserves alleviation. Following Fassin (2012), defining "legitimate" victims thus entails a historical element. It further illustrates that time and our perceptions of it are a cross-cutting theme in analyzing climate change as protection challenge, because one can only distinguish victims of harm when (1) causation is established between a specific group or individual experiencing harm of climate change, and (2) when the circumstances in which the harm occurs are clear to the observer.

In other words, conceptualizing the victim as collective entails looking at patterns of historical injustice, for instance considering how racism, (neo)colonialism or inequality have prompted an unequal distribution of "adaptive capacity" or has created situations in which specific groups did not enjoy the same levels of protection as other groups. These historical patterns are transnational. Climate change, for instance, is considered to be anthropogenic, which means that it has been caused by human activity. It is, for example, widely acknowledged that Europe and North America are responsible for most of the greenhouse gases emissions that contribute to climate change (Buxton, 2019; Caney, 2009), which has allowed it to create wealth at a much greater pace. This is without considering colonial history and the responsibility of colonizers in degrading local environments in their colonies, which now compounds the vulnerability of these former colonies to climate change. By contrast, conceptualizing the victim as an individual raises questions about how one can determine the "vulnerability" of singular units (e.g. households), which entails looking at issues of measurement and thresholds. In particular, it means asking questions about vulnerability assessments, their methods, the indicators they use; in other words, it raises both ethical and epistemological questions.

3.2. Do States have a responsibility to protect their citizens against climate change impacts?

Once we establish what adequate "climate change protection" means, the next logical question to ask would be to determine who should be responsible for providing such protection. One way in which protection is related to questions of justice is through the idea that the existence of harm and victims derive from the existence of a perpetrator. Though it could be argued that natural hazards such as earthquakes or floods may induce harm without the existence of a perpetrator, such view is not consistent with the existing literature on the structural causes of vulnerability which emphasize the co-creation of risk (see e.g. Pelling, 2003). For that reason, this section intends to both review classic conceptualizations of the responsibility to protect, and criticize their content in order to unveil how this question could be explored in the context of climate change, and potential issues in doing so.

3.2.1. *State responsibility*

States have a primary duty to protect their citizens from harm. Since climate change is widely acknowledged to be a threat to human security, it logically follows that states should do everything in their power to protect their citizens from its impacts. Moreover, climate change is also considered to be anthropogenic, which means it has been caused by human activity including, presumably, that of the state itself. It logically follows that states have the responsibility to fulfil that duty to protect, both based on morals (states should protect citizens from harm) and justice (they should be held accountable since they can be considered as perpetrators of this harm).

There are, however, a number of problems with enforcing state responsibility for climate change harm, which are both objective and subjective (Humphreys, 2010; Quirico, 2018). First, and as mentioned in the previous section relative to the definition of harm, "the plurality of agents contributing to GHG emissions and intervening factors aggravating environmental phenomena" makes it difficult to establish clear causation between local changes in the environment and the action of specific actors. In other words, it is extremely difficult to assess whether these changes are caused by human activity or by other phenomena (Quirico, 2018: 186). Second, and because of this same plurality of agents, it is difficult to single out specific actors and hold them accountable. In particular, Humphreys (2010) argues that there is a problem of extraterritorial responsibility (local changes in the environment can be caused by activity pursued elsewhere) and local accountability (how can we determine the impact of local actions on the state of the global climate, and link them to observed changes in the environment?). For that reason, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has stated that "the physical impacts of global warming cannot easily be classified as human rights violations, not least because climate change-related harm often cannot clearly be attributed to acts or omissions of specific States" (OHCHR, 2009, paras. 16 et seq.). Therefore, it is complicated to hold states accountable for situations they have not created.

These issues illustrate fundamental hurdles in using existing literature on protection to conceptualize the responsibility to protect. An important issue with these conceptualizations lies in the multidimensionality of policy spaces. One implication of this multidimensionality is that not only is it extremely difficult to locate responsibility for climate change because it is diffuse, but because of the polycentric nature of environmental governance, it would not make much sense to require from states to fulfill such a responsibility. According to advocates of polycentricity as a model of environmental governance, it would not be desirable either (Oström, 1990, 2007). From that perspective, one major issue in conceptualizing climate change responsibility at state level involves defining the extent of such responsibility. This would, in practice, require a more comprehensive conceptualization of the state itself, exploring its duties

and to whom these duties are due. This enterprise is highly contextual, because states have different structures, histories and political ethos. It is important to note, indeed, that the idea of the nation-state itself should be looked at with some scrutiny, as it is a central feature of modernity and coloniality (Escobar, 2004). Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002), for instance, has argued that ideals of democracy and the human rights system have historically served the European imperialist project, which is why modernity should not be dissociated from coloniality. Following Nkrumah (1964), contemporary nation-states should thus be seen as "creolized" entities; they draw "on multiple strands of different spatiotemporal origins in the context of asymmetric power structures" (Uimonen, 2020: 93).

Though these are serious obstacles to attributing and conceptualizing state responsibility to protect from climate change harm, this reasoning mostly revolves around legal considerations, which is to say that it relies on a responsibility to protect that stems from the existence of a perpetrator. One could argue, however, that redress from harm does not necessarily need to come from the perpetrator of harm. There are moral arguments behind this responsibility since the state is widely acknowledged to be an instrument at the service of people (Roff, 2013). Fassin (2012), for instance, highlighted that the existence of suffering has increasingly motivated policy choices, which is why he developed the idea of humanitarian government in the first place. In other terms, compassion has increasingly been seen as a valid precept guiding governmental action. For that reason, one could doubt the necessity to establish the existence of a perpetrator in order to enforce state responsibility. Moreover, these studies on state responsibility to protect people from climate change mostly focus on a responsibility that stems from historical co-production of greenhouse gases emissions and climate change. However, the theoretical lens outlined in this paper takes a quite different approach to this question, as it considers the interaction between environmental change and freedom. While states might not be held entirely responsible for climate change as a global phenomenon, they can certainly be held responsible for ensuring and protecting the freedoms at stake. An extensive literature has been developed to argue that "natural disasters should be seen as a failure to ensure the right to life, personal security and livelihood on the part of the sovereign state and other actors" (Mutter and Barnard, 2010: 274). The case of Hurricane Katrina, in particular, has received extensive scholarly attention, as it highlights that the disaster was rooted in patterns of inequality, including a history of racism in New Orleans, and the inability of the US healthcare system to provide appropriate standards of living to its entire population (e.g. Adeola and Picou, 2017; Cowen and Cowen, 2010; Shrum, 2014). Rodriguez and Aguirre (2017), for instance, have argued that "health resources and services were insufficient to cope with the needs of the current population" at the time of the disaster, "not to mention pre-Katrina's". For that reason, it could be argued that the state can be held responsible for "climate change harm", as it can be said to have co-produced such harm.

3.2.2. *International responsibility*

One major counterargument to enforcing state responsibility lies in the transnational nature of climate change. Europe and North America have a historical responsibility both in creating climate change and in establishing patterns of inequality in developing countries, through the process of colonization (Caney, 2009). Moreover, because of the transnational nature of the threat, individual states might be unable to fulfill their duty to protect due to a lack of resources. In these circumstances, one might ask whether the international community should be held responsible for helping these countries to fulfill their duties.

This international responsibility has been conceptualized under the doctrine of the responsibility to protect (R2P), which purports that "[e]very state has a responsibility to protect its inhabitants from mass atrocities […] and this responsibility may fall to the broader international community 'should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity'" (UN, 2005 in Paris, 2014: 563). According to Roff (2013), the notion has been developed following a major turning point in the way state sovereignty is conceptualized, in the early 2000s. With the ICISS report and Kofi Annan's declaration establishing the R2P principle, "[s]tate sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined" (Roff, 2013: 34), as states are now understood as instruments at the service of the people; sovereignty, in that perspective, is conditioned to the protection of human rights (Roff, 2013). At the same time, the same decade saw further developments in the humanitarian doctrine, which placed human security at the core of international intervention. What it means is that while states are traditionally conceived as self-interested, and thus little concerned about "saving strangers", the humanitarian doctrine and its morals (see section 1) has prompted the emergence of new ideas of justice that is seen as universal. Universal justice, as conceptualized by Kant, entails three levels of juridical action: the individual, the state and the cosmopolitan (see Roff, 2013). This view is rooted in the belief that citizens are "right-bearing members of a larger community", that is, humanity (Skillington, 2015: 291).

It is important to note that there are a number of issues with the philosophical underpinnings of the R2P principle, and claims of universality should be looked at with some scrutiny. Kant's cosmopolitanism, in particular, has been heavily criticized for its Eurocentricity, legitimizing European expansion and warfare, and conveying racist ontologies (e.g. Mignolo, 2000; Kleingeld, 2009). From that perspective, any inquiry into the nature and extent of international responsibility should thus investigate claims of universality upon which such responsibility is based, and consider alternative political philosophies. Uimonen (2020: 93), for instance, argues that Nkrumah's consciencism, which draws from European philosophy and ideology and African tradition, "offered a blueprint for decolonization that embraced modernity, while denouncing colonial and

neocolonial power structures". The need for such work is not particular to the study of international responsibility for climate change impacts, but applies to the R2P principle in general.

There is another problem with approaching climate change through the R2P principle as it is currently defined. The definition emphasizes that the state has a primary responsibility to protect their populations from the threats outlined, and should it fail, this responsibility would fall on the international community as a last resort. One could argue that this is incompatible with the problems outlined in section 3.2.1. relative to state responsibility – why should the international community act as a last resort when states cannot be seen as entirely responsible for creating climate change in the first place? In other terms, is there a justification for this ordering of action?

Here, it would be necessary to emphasize that the R2P principle has been developed as a guiding principle for foreign military intervention. When considering whether this principle could extend to climate change impacts, or inspire another set of related principles, one should thus ask what kind of action such principle would prompt the international community to take. Following the R2P logic, this responsibility would take the form of military intervention in response to natural disasters as a visible symptom of failure of states to protect their populations. One crucial difference between classical foreign intervention prompted by R2P, and the kind of intervention that would be required in response to climate change, is that the enemy would not be located in the human realm. Therefore, the intervention such principle would prompt would be humanitarian in nature rather than military. The R2P principle is, indeed, inherently intended as a response mechanism; as such, it suffers from the same shortcomings as short-term solutions to climate change. For that reason, it is incompatible with the present approach to protection, which is meant to understand long-term patterns and what kind of responsibility of the international community to produce them.

For that reason, one might ask whether the R2P principle would be a suitable instrument upon which a responsibility to protect from climate change impacts, in particular, would be enacted. I would argue that a reason why investigating the R2P principle in this context is beneficial is because more than an instrument, the R2P principle is also a moral precept, based on a claim of universality. This universality alone does justify the need for an international responsibility; in fact, the R2P principle does not rely on causation as justification for intervention. The reason why the international community has such responsibility does not lie in the fact that it has caused any of the afflictions outlined in its definition (though this view could be defended), but because it assumes that we form one same human community. Without passing judgment on either of these two models, the current emphasis on attribution and causation in determining international responsibility for climate change, from that perspective, is rather curious and would deserve some investigation.

Assuming that such international responsibility would not stem from universalist claims but from causation, four justice claims can be made about how the international community could fulfill it (Humphreys, 2010): corrective justice (international funding for the adaptation needs of vulnerable countries), substantive justice (technology transfer), procedural and distributional justice (fidelity to the process of negotiation on matters relative to the environment) and formal justice (e.g. Kyoto protocol: entitlements derived from prior usage – for carbon polluters). Again, there are a number of problems with enforcing responsibility to fulfill these claims. These obstacles are similar to the ones that impede the enforcement of responsibility at state level; in other words, they have to do with the difficulties in identifying the wrong-doer and establishing causation. There is a possibility, however, to think about international responsibility based on claims of reparative justice. When conceptualizing justice for climate refugees, Buxton (2019), for instance, compares compensation (which aims to remedy accidental damage), with reparations (which aim to rectify injustice). The author argues that this second option is more closely aligned with the experience of climate refugees because it is historically oriented and takes stock of the complexities of their experience. From that perspective, one could argue that reparations take a more holistic view to suffering than one that focuses solely on biological suffering, by examining the impact of climate change on the refugees' biographical lives (see Fassin, 2012). Souter (2013), for instance, conceptualizes asylum as a form of reparative justice because refugees sometimes flee conflicts that have historically been created or compounded by foreign intervention. From that perspective, providing aid for climate change impacts can be seen as an act of reparative justice.

Of course, basing international responsibility for climate change on claims of reparative justice makes a lot of sense given the diffuse nature of responsibility for causing climate change in the first place; however, it also makes sense from the perspective of the present approach to protection, which outlines that harm should be seen as the relationship between environmental change and its impact on a set of freedoms. There is indeed a strong historical component to the analysis of such impact in the developing world, through a history of colonization and resource exploitation; for that reason, it can be argued that not only Europe and North America hold responsibility in creating environmental risk (through greenhouse gases emissions), they can also be seen as responsible for having co-created the conditions under which Sen's instrumental freedoms are achieved.

3.3. How can we explain states' failure to protect their citizens from climate change?

Having outlined the basic elements of a protection-based approach to climate change, the next section considers the theories that can be used to understand failure to protect. It starts with Fassin's argument that any study of humanitarian government should consider the interplay between morals and procedure; the present section thus aims at

appraising how this interplay can be investigated in a study of climate change protection mechanisms. Doing so, I am building on previous literature on state failure, which shows that such failure cannot be solely explained by a lack of resources (e.g. Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012).

3.3.1. *Morals: imagined geographies of suffering*

Morals are dictating which levels of suffering are deemed acceptable. One could argue that this moral judgment is rooted in specific representations of reality itself. Morals, therefore, emerge in relation to representations of the world that are socially constructed. In the case of climate change, this suffering is located in space, which is also socially constructed. In particular, according to Said (1978: 55):

Space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here. The same process occurs when we deal with time. Much of what we associate with or even know about such periods as "long ago" or "the beginning" or "at the end of time" is poetic – made up.

It does not necessarily mean that there is no such thing as "objective" history and geography, but rather that one cannot know all there is to know, which is why humans use their imaginations to enrich their understanding of reality. For that reason, Said (1978) developed the idea of "imagined geographies", which has been defined by Gregory (2004) as representations of places, peoples and their environment, articulated to ideas and fantasies about their nature and their position in world power struggles. These representations create a distinction between us and the 'others'. However, not only is reality continually constructed and reinterpreted, it could also be argued that it is plural. As such, ontology refers to the study of "reality" (Kohn, 2015), "being" (Heidegger), and "becoming" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The "ontological turn" in anthropology examines the historical construction of nature, landscapes and forests (e.g. Balée, 1989; Raffles, 2002) and argues that there is meaning to be found beyond the physicality of things (e.g. Appadurai, 1989). While social constructivism posits that there is one reality that is constructed and perceived in different ways depending on the observer, ontology emphasizes that different observers can be immersed in different realities. From that last perspective, the world as an all-encompassing entity is made of multiple universes - of "pluriverses".

The reason why such theories are useful to the analysis of protection mechanisms is that, by contrast to humanitarian action as it is conceptualized by Fassin (2012), which is guided by a set of morals in response to social problems, the study of climate change has an important spatial component. Not only are these mechanisms designed and enacted in relation to morals, which are rooted in representations of what is happening in the world, but also in perceptions of past, present, and future environments. These

perceptions can be seen as constructions, or as the product of the experience of different realities. In other words, climate change does not only alter the physical composition of the world but also its subjective composition; moreover, the way it affects reality is not uniform, because reality itself is not uniform. To understand this impact is to acknowledge that two people living on the same geographic coordinates, when being subjected to the same physical change in their environment, can see their reality being affected in different ways depending on their own ontologies. If one of these two people were to be a policy-maker who intends to protect other people from that physical change and from its impact on several aspects of their realities, but does not know that they live in different worlds than their own, the policy that would be produced would be likely to fail or would create different outcomes. The reason for that failure would be that this policy reflects one specific ontology.

This account is not incompatible with previous conceptualizations of the social construction of space, which also have implications for policy-making. The reason why constructivism can also be used in analyzing protection mechanisms is because of the importance of uncertainty and the unknown associated with climate change. From that perspective, one could argue that policymakers, who do not have access to the full information they would need to define the nature of the harm, will inevitably rely on their own subjective experience and representation of climate change in order to design and implement climate change adaptation or protection policies. Climate change, from that perspective, can be seen as a highly abstract concept; not only can it be something different to different people, it can also be constructed in different ways through imagination, to fill information gaps. The way this construction is enacted in turn depends on specific ontologies. This is not only true of climate change as a phenomenon, but also of the idea of protection itself, as it is loosely defined (Scott-Smith, 2019).

Taking stock of these theoretical considerations, I would argue that there are two main issues in the way suffering is conceptualized in the context of climate change.
First, there is a tendency in climate change or disaster risk research to focus on biological, visible suffering, a tendency that was already outlined by Fassin (2012) when examining humanitarian programmes. According to Fassin (2012: 254), "humanitarian reason pays more attention to the biological life of the destitute and unfortunate, the life in the name of which they are given aid, than to their biographical life, the life through which they could, independently, give a meaning to their own existence". For that reason, the author argues that humanitarian government "fails to recognize the Other as a 'face'" – a subject beyond subjection (Fassin, 2012: 255). In climate change research, this emphasis on "biological" suffering stems from a long history of environmental research and in the idea of "biolegitimacy" that has permeated much of the environmental discourse and practice, for instance in the field of environmental conservation. The reason why an emphasis on biological suffering is detrimental to achieving climate change protection can be explained by our definition of climate

change harm as based on both physical risks and the achievement of instrumental freedoms. This "face" mentioned by Fassin is the agency that these freedoms ensure – in other terms, a focus on biological suffering compounds loss of agency through subjectivization, which means that in the long run, protection mechanisms based on such conceptions make people more vulnerable.

Second, and in a similar perspective, a focus on biological suffering can not only lead policy-makers to ignore or compound suffering, but also to misdiagnose the specific ways in which such suffering can be alleviated or remedied. The reasons underpinning this claim are to be found in the above discussion on social construction and ontology. Suffering is, indeed, socially constructed. A good example of such construction has been given by Narang (2015: 268), who investigated population displacements in Tuvalu, generally considered as one of the world's most "endangered nation", and argued that population displacement and migrations on the island "are likely to be caused by government policy response anchored in the imagined geographies of fear rather than by material transformations in the environment". Migration has been used by Tuvaluans as a strategy of adaptation in the past, but as shown by Shen and Gemenne (2009), hardly any Tuvaluan respondent reported being affected by climate change. According to Farbotko (2010: 56), inhabitants of these islands, "long marginalized, are denied their own agency in the climate change crisis. They are fictionalized into victim populations".

Moreover, there is a tendency in the current discourse to label certain kinds of suffering as caused explicitly by climate change thereby creating "climate change suffering" as a distinct category. From the perspective adopted in this paper, this categorization is incorrect. Recalling previous literature on famines (e.g. de Waal, 1997; Sen, 1981), one might wonder how climate change is any different from other kinds of risks, and why it would require such a specific approach, as such suffering is not only compounded by pre-existed structures of inequality, but co-created by them. People face all kinds of risk every day, and framing climate change as "abstract acts of god" to be solved by changing the state of the global climate through mitigation policies misses the point that there are actually things governments could do now to fulfil their duty to protect. More specifically, and while it is true that climate change causes suffering by itself, it could be argued that most of this suffering pre-existed the "Anthropocene" (see Steffen et al., 2007; Rockström et al., 2014), rooted in an unequal provision of human rights. The real question that climate change poses, from this perspective, is that of the scale of human rights violations and their historical dimension.

3.3.2. *Procedures: norms institutionalization and implementation*

Climate change is associated with specific representations of the world, that are then enacted through discourse and consequently institutionalized. In other terms, discourse

is performative and can create new realities (see Foucault, 1972). In the context of climate change, this has two implications.

First, these representations can be translated into norms that are then institutionalized. Sets of norms that are set to govern a similar issue can be institutionalized into frameworks; at the international level, these are called "regimes" (Betts, 2013: 30). These norms can change over time, which means that regimes can then adapt or be replaced by a new one. For instance, Betts (2013) asked under what conditions the old refugee regime could adapt to address the new challenge of "survival migration" and stretch to meet new circumstances. In this context, a refugee protection regime pre-existed the advent of "survival migration". By contrast, the Paris Agreement, which could be seen as the embodiment of a potential "climate change regime", is often described as new and emerging (e.g. Stern, 2018), not because it is the first international agreement taking climate change as its object, but because it is the first to be legally binding (Saveresi, 2015). This means that though language has been developed over the years, in particular with the International Decade for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) in 1990, the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) in 1992, and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, these agreements had never acknowledged formal responsibility to take action (Saveresi, 2015; Zeiderman, 2012). Though the Paris Agreement was the first of its kind, it is important to recognize the process through which the norms underpinning this emerging regime has taken place, adopting a more historical perspective. In particular, one could argue that these norms started emerging prior to the IDDRR, as the idea of disaster risk reduction itself is rooted in broader concerns for human security (see Hannigan, 2012), which were already developed in other documents, perhaps even based on similar arguments as those underpinning the R2P doctrine.

Second, these regimes rise and develop at multiple levels. According to Betts (2013), regime adaptation takes place at three levels: international bargaining, institutionalization and implementation. Implementation, he argues, has been historically neglected by international studies, which is why he investigates why the implementation of international norms varies between different national contexts. Doing so, he criticizes Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) norm life cycle model, which purports that norms are created and disseminated in five phases in which they emerge, cascade and then are internalized by states. The problem with this conceptualization, according to Betts, is that it assumes that norms are conceived as pre-defined and static, and then implemented by an ontologically coherent state. As a consequence, international institutions have national and local manifestations that potentially diverge and deviate from the global context, which means that "politics rather than principles determine the conditions under which millions of people get access to protection" (Betts, 2013: 195). In particular, one could argue that, through their programmes, agencies enact what Fassin called the "politics of life", defined as "the evaluation of human beings and the meaning of their existence" (Fassin, 2007: 500-501). From that

perspective, in designing and implementing aid programmes, humanitarians decide "which existences it is possible or legitimate to save" (Fassin, 2007: 501).

There is, indeed, a tension in the vocabulary that is used in climate change and development research to talk about these policies and the recipients of aid or assistance in the context of climate change. Depending on the approach adopted by these studies, the authors would talk about "climate change adaptation", "preparedness" or "disaster risk reduction" alternatively (Kelman, 2018). While there are some semantic differences between these terms, differences in the language used to talk about these issues can make it difficult for policymakers to assess what should be done and who should receive aid. There is no specific term to designate "people affected by climate change", in the same fashion as there is an internationally agreed term to talk about "refugees", however, flawed that definition is. This is a problem because, from a legal perspective, these groups need to be named to be entitled to a set of specific rights. In other words, we lack a conceptual language to clearly identify people who would be in need of "climate change protection". Following that logic, the current government response is thus partly dictated by politics. In practice, this means that governments now decide who is entitled to aid, what are the rights that should be protected and for whom. It means that policies aimed at "reducing climate risks" might well reproduce historical patterns of inequality through the way government select "legitimate recipients" of their social protection or climate change adaptation programmes. For that reason, examining the interplay between morals and procedures not only entails scrutinizing specific policies or mechanisms and their rationale, but also replacing them into the broader institutional, historical and normative context in which they were developed.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the main issues and challenges in conceptualizing climate change through the lens of protection.

First, I have argued that "climate change harm" is rooted in broader gaps in social protection and that protecting people from such harm should entail protecting them from other kinds of harm that compound or co-create vulnerability.

Second, I have outlined the main elements of protection approaches, and have explained that humanitarianism enacts a set of morals, that are themselves rooted in specific ontologies. Given that climate change is an abstract phenomenon, I have argued that climate change adaptation policies are based on "imagined geographies of suffering", which are performative through discourse. In particular, I have proposed that any analysis of the way in which protection policies are designed and implemented should ask ontological questions about time and suffering in order to offer a more holistic understanding of suffering that is not only perceived as physical but also biographical. Doing so, I have proposed that suffering is relative in time and relational,

which is why Sen's conceptualization of suffering as deprivation can be seen as a more recent development in protection approaches. I have also proposed that the capabilities and entitlement approach could be used as a way to define climate change harm by focusing on its impact on a range of freedoms, and because it focuses on both legal and non-legal aspects of protection.

Third, I have asked three questions to understand the main problems and issues that could arise from the application of protection approaches to climate change. I have first explained that any attempt at defining what "adequate" protection would mean should define the nature of climate change "harm" and "victims" and have argued that there are objective obstacles in achieving that goal, because of the transnational nature of climate change and the difficulty to establish causation. I have then explored whether the principle of the responsibility to protect could be enforced at state and international level, and have argued that, though they are subjective and objective obstacles in establishing responsibility, the state has a moral duty to protect because climate change harm is often co-created by other patterns of inequality. By contrast, the international community should have a moral duty to provide aid for climate change impacts as a form of reparative justice. Finally, I have asked what could explain states' failure to protect their citizens from climate change harm, and have argued that because there are discrepancies in the way climate change and protection are defined, politics rather than principles currently dictate who receives aid for climate change impacts and what this aid should look like. Such decisions, I have argued, are rooted in a plurality of ontologies that make assumptions about people's place in time and history, and about the state of past, present and future environments. These ontologies are then enacted through discourses, norms and procedures, to give rise to new realities that might not match people's experiences.

Overall, this paper has made the argument that approaching climate change through the lens of protection offers a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which it creates suffering, in a way that goes beyond biological suffering. Further empirical research, from that perspective, should be dedicated to understanding what kind of ontologies are enacted by states and international agencies, and how they determine the "legitimate" recipients of aid for climate change impacts. Though it has not offered a straightway forward in building a "protection approach to climate change", I hope this paper has outlined a preliminary account of what such an approach could look like and why it would be useful. There are, of course, many problems with the approach I have outlined, in particular because it bridges theories and concepts that have been developed in very different contexts. For instance, it is unclear whether climate change harm should be conceptualized as a distinct category. However, I hope I have been able to capture a few key issues and concepts to examine more pragmatic questions about who should be granted aid, and how.

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What is the potential for the use of Complexity Science in the Management of the National Health Service?

Daniel O'Callaghan

Abstract. *The United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) is being progressively subjected to greater stress, with pressures caused by changing population dynamics, shifting disease burdens, and economic uncertainty. This has led to a narrative of a 'NHS in crisis', with a senior figure in the Care Quality Commission labelling it as a 'burning platform' (Wijesuriya et al. 2017). Within this context, complexity theory has been advocated as being able to improve the NHS's management. There has been a rapid growth in articles exploring the potential of using complexity science in healthcare systems since the turn of the millennium. However, outside epidemiology, complexity theory has not yet been substantively used in NHS management strategies (Galea et al. 2010). Resultantly, this article explores the possible uses of complexity science in the management of the NHS. It outlines significant possible benefits, while also noting the need for further research to redress current theoretical issues in proposals for its use and to build a more extensive evidence base that would enable complexity science to be incorporated into the management of the NHS.*

* * *

Introduction

The NHS is a point of national pride in the UK, aptly demonstrated by the tribute paid towards it in the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony. Recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed huge pressure on the NHS. Yet, even prior to Covid-19, there was a narrative of the NHS in distress, with the Red Cross describing aspects of its care provision as a 'humanitarian crisis' (Wijesuriya et al. 2017). Additionally, the NHS is becoming increasingly politicised, featuring heavily in general election campaigns, the EU referendum and Brexit negotiations (Hervey and Peers 2016). This narrative of crisis and politicisation has intensified the scrutiny upon the management of the NHS. Whilst the frontline workers are revered, NHS managers have been critiqued and associated with waste and inefficiency (Rimmer 2017). In the face of a growing need to look for new management approaches for the NHS, approaches drawing on complexity science have been advocated as a possible solution. There has been a rapid growth in articles exploring the potential of using complexity science in healthcare systems since the turn of the millennium. However, outside epidemiology, complexity theory has not been substantively used in NHS management strategies (Galea et al. 2010). Indeed, critics state that there is no evidence that complexity science is either needed or would work in health care management (Martin 2018).

This article explores the potential beneficial uses of complexity science in the management of the NHS. Building on this, it identifies the need for further research to redress current theoretical issues in proposals for its use and to build an evidence base that would enable it to be incorporated into the management of the NHS (The Health Foundation 2010). To present this narrative, this article firstly introduces the key features of the NHS as a complex system. It subsequently uses these features to explain current phenomena in the NHS, focusing upon the difficulty of implementing successful, long-term change in the system's functioning. Following this, it critically analyses current proposals for using complexity science, outlining that whilst promising, they contain a number of theoretical and practical flaws. Finally, it discusses the potential for use of agent-based models in the NHS.

1. The NHS as a Complex System

Complex systems have been identified in diverse domains, from the NHS to shoals of fish (Mitchell 2009). Complex systems are typically identified as those with dynamic interacting components that produce emergent, often self-organising, behaviour (Mitchell 2009). The interactions of complex systems often see them represented as networks, whose topology, type of connections, and node characteristics are crucial to the functioning of the system (Mitchell 2006). Though the NHS is undoubtedly a complex system, the use of complexity science in healthcare systems has been critiqued due to laxity in applying key terms that are defined below (Cairney and Geyer 2017).

2.1. *Emergence*

Emergence is fundamentally difficult to define precisely (Damper 2000). As Damper (2000) identifies, a 'neutral' definition is that large-scale patterns, properties, structures or processes that emerge from interactions within a lower level and with the world that are counter-intuitive or behave in a manner that could not be predicted (Helbing et al. 2011; Krugman 1996; Steels 1991). Therefore, emergence fundamentally relates to new, qualitatively different behaviours at higher levels. Emergence can occur at multiple levels in a complex system such as the NHS, and emergent behaviour at one level can produce emergent behaviour at a higher level (Walloth 2016). For instance, the trends of use of a particular Accident & Emergency (A&E) department is an emergent property of many different individuals' decisions to visit it whilst nation-wide trends of use for A&E departments is an emergent property of the trends of use of the 181 A&E departments in England (Dattee and Burnham 2010).

2.2. *Self-Organisation*

Self-organisation refers to the tendency of complex systems to spontaneously order themselves through local interactions without external influence or top-down control, such as the murmuration of starlings in flight (Rickles et al. 2007). A&E departments' waiting times often exhibit emergent self-organisation (Smethurst and Williams 2002). Self-organised criticality refers to a system that endogenously organises itself close to a critical point (Scheffer et al. 2009). A critical point refers to a point in one or more of the system's variables beyond which the system's properties rapidly change as positive feedback loops propel it into a new mode of functioning (Scheffer et al. 2012). Self-organised criticality sees outputs of the system exhibit a power-law distribution. Thus, an input to the system will usually produce a small-scale output; however, it can occasionally lead to a large change in output and change in the system's functioning (D'Souza 2017). Self-organised criticality has been identified in a number of areas in the NHS system, for instance in waiting times at some hospital departments, and is a crucial factor to appreciate in attempting to change the functioning of the system (Tao and Liu 2015).

2.3. *Non-Linearity and Feedback Loops*

Integral to both self-organisation and emergent behaviour are non-linear dynamics and feedback loops. Feedback loops refers to an output of an aspect of the system resulting in a new input to the system (Rickles et al. 2007). Feedback loops can act both within and between different scales in the system. Positive feedback loops accelerate change within the system, through a stimulus causing additional change in the same direction. Conversely, negative feedback loops dampen change within the system, where the system reacts to a stimulus by stabilising the systems functioning. It is pertinent to note that both positive and negative feedback loops can be beneficial or detrimental to the system and neither are inherently desirable. Non-linear dynamics simplistically describe a system whose outputs are not proportional to the input, such as in systems that exhibit self-organised criticality (Liu 2007).

2. Complexity as an Explanatory Concept

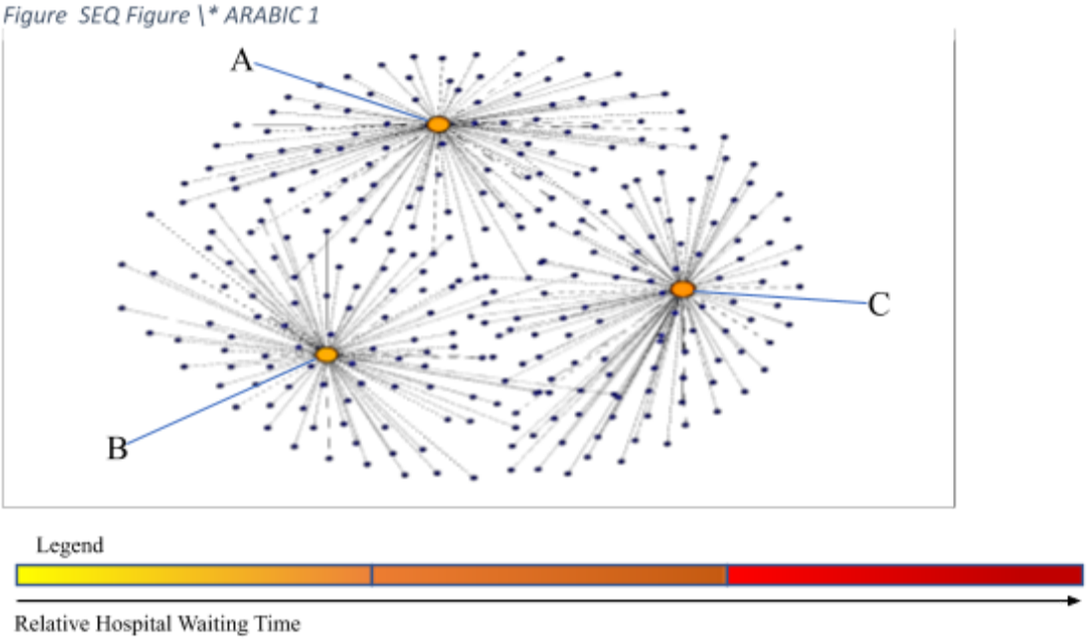
The dominant reductionist approach to NHS management overlooks the importance of its functioning as a complex system. Reductionist management approaches demarcate the system into 'manageable' sub-systems that are perceived to have limited interaction with each other (Plsek and Wilson 2001). For instance, separate budgets and performance targets are set for primary care, secondary care, and social services, with further divisions within these broad units. This division occurs at multiple levels in the NHS, from NHS England to Clinical Commissioning Groups in charge of local areas. Performance targets are set alongside top-down declarations which provide the 'best' way to achieve them, often being implemented uniformly despite differing local processes (Chrysanthaki et al. 2013). The logic for this is clear, as it produces 'simpler' problems to solve. This reductionist approach builds on the

rational planning framework that uses principles of Newtonian science which has guided western management thinking and practice for over a century (Paarlberg and Bielfeld 2009). This approach fundamentally revolves around maintaining organisational stability through developing more rules and adopting more in-depth planning techniques (Paarlberg and Bielfeld 2009). However, this approach creates a bounded rationality and fails to account for the actual functioning of the system (Atun 2012). This inhibits the collaboration advocated for by the principles of the NHS (2017) and fails to consider the importance of emergence in complex systems.

Recognising the possibility for emergent behaviour is crucial in the management of the NHS. Though emergent behaviour is by its nature difficult to predict, failing to consider its occurrence leads to significant issues. Emergent behaviours can be desirable; however, they often lead to policy interventions having significantly different impacts than their stated aims, for instance in hospital waiting times. Hospital waiting times in the NHS exhibit emergent self-organisation, with certain departments displaying self-organised criticality (Love and Burton 2005). Thus, though hospitals with long waiting times often receive focused investment, particularly in A&E departments, they rarely exhibit large scale reductions over the long-term (Smethurst and Williams 2002). Complexity theory is useful in explaining this phenomenon and suggesting more effective strategies to enact systemic change. It is key to note two aspects: firstly, that the trends of a hospitals use are an emergent phenomenon based on the decisions of many individuals: and secondly, that hospitals do not exist in isolation, but are part of a wider network of care provision (Dattee and Burnham 2010). Therefore, this emergent property is an outcome of both internal interactions in the care provision system and this system's interaction with the world.

Hospital waiting times can be affected by various factors and have complex feedback loops. There are multiple influences upon an individual's hospital choice. For instance, the agent-based model developed by Tao and Liu (2015) found that a feedback loop exists between hospital performance and the individual's selection. A high performing hospital is more likely to have individuals choose to visit it, based upon their own experience and the knowledge gained from the number of networks they interact with (Tao and Liu 2015). This finding has important implications as a hospital is part of a wider system. For instance, consider 3 hospitals, A, B, and C in Figure 1 that serve a spatially bounded area. These hospitals all have similar waiting times and performance measures, and thus individuals when deciding which hospital to visit usually make their decisions based on proximity.

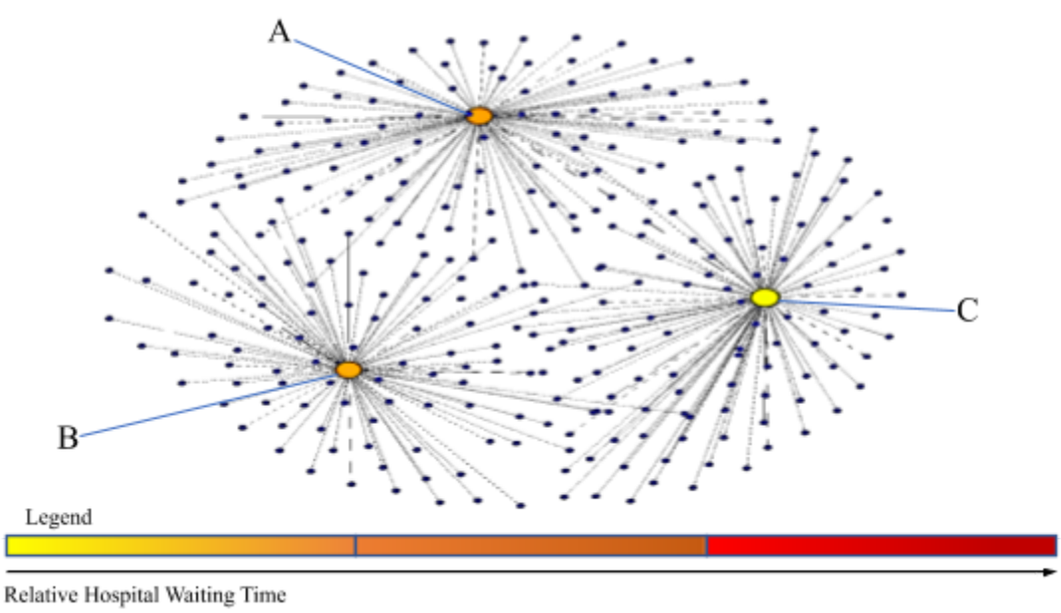
*Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1*



Author produced using Gephi (2009): an open source software for exploring and manipulating networks.

The reductionist management strategy considers hospitals as isolated, and concentrates resources on a single hospital, for instance hospital C. Hospital C receives increased investment, resulting in a reduction in its waiting times (Figure 2). This often results in the initial investment being seen as successful, causing investment to be decreased and the focus to shift to elsewhere in the system (Love and Burton 2005).

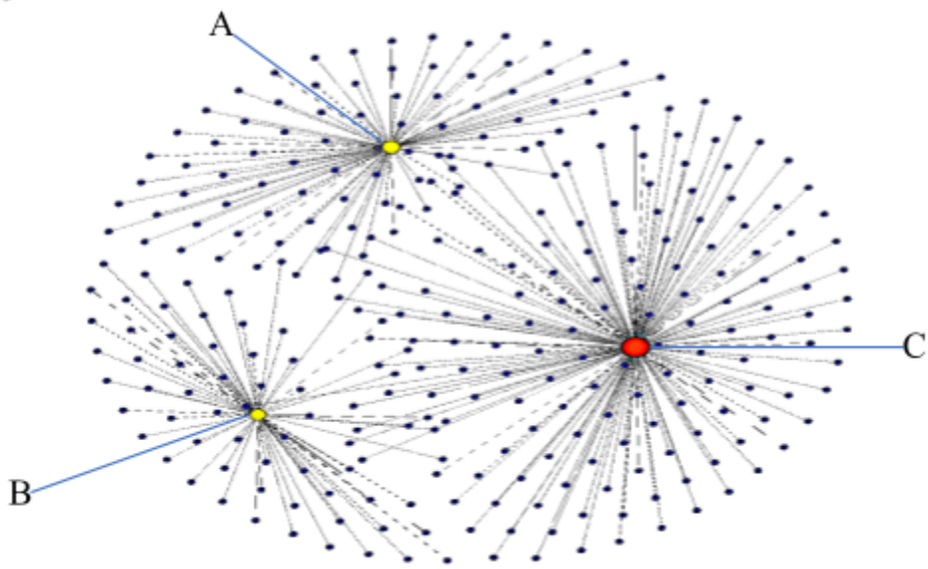
Figure 2



A negative feedback loop emerges, whereby due to personal experience and the knowledge gained from a number of networks, individuals begin to change their

decision-making process and are more likely to travel to hospital C than to hospitals A or B due to the reduction in its waiting time. Therefore, hospital C experiences a spike in visitors and can see its waiting times increase above the level they were at prior to the investment as displayed in Figure 3 (Smethurst and Williams 2002).

Figure 3



This eventually leads to a further negative feedback loop whereby individuals begin to choose to travel to hospitals A and B again, thus restoring the distribution of patients to a similar level as prior to the investment (Figure 1). Thus, there is a limited reduction in waiting times as the effects of the investment are dissipated throughout the whole system as it self-organises. This is compounded through interactions with other levels in the NHS. For instance, general practitioners (GP) are more likely to refer individuals to hospital if the waiting times are lower (Love and Burton 2005). Thus, when a hospital's waiting time decreases, there is an increase in the number of referrals from the GPs and creating another feedback loop. This example demonstrates micro and meso-level interactions producing self-organising emergent behaviour that negates the effect of the investment which is dissipated into the wider network (Smethurst and Williams 2001).

This simple conceptual example demonstrates the necessity of considering the NHS as a complex system due to the effect of feedback loops, interactions and emergence on its functioning. Further, it is crucial to note the importance of temporal scale in the system's functioning following the investment. The NHS is a complex adaptive system whose structure and behaviour changes over time (Anderson et al. 2003). The inherent inertia and intricate connections across the network inevitably lead to delays in changes in the functioning of the NHS following interventions (Dattee and Barlow 2010). The system's adaptation over time can lead to policies being implemented, deemed successful after initial positive measures, and then ignored. This is evident in hospital waiting times that are temporarily reduced following investment,

before eventually returning to a level similar to where they stood prior to the investment (Smethurst and Williams 2002). Moreover, overlooking temporal lags in the system's behaviour following policy interjections can lead to corrective actions being taken that can undermine ongoing processes (Dattee and Barlow 2010). This is particularly problematic given the political pressure on governments to produce measurable, quantitative, and rapid success rather than considering the long-term evolution of the system (Sturmberg et al. 2014). Complexity science is a valuable tool to identify the existence of these issues and analyse their effects. Recognising the difficulty in attempting to control a complex system is key to complexity scientists' proposals for changes in the NHS management structure.

4. Approaching the NHS as a Complex System

The early proposals for the use of complexity sciences in the NHS directly challenge reductionist management strategies and were arguably designed to incite debate rather than to be implemented (e.g. Plsek et al. 2001). Recognising the issues with restrictive top-down control, propositions advocated for control to be reduced to 'minimum specifications', arguing that policymakers 'must give up notions of control over processes of change' (Best et al. 2012 pp. 423). Minimum specifications involve goals and resources being pooled for each level of the NHS rather than allocated to different subsections. This would facilitate local interactions which can produce innovative emergent behaviours that result in more efficient system functioning (Greenhalgh et al. 2010).

The logic behind 'minimum specifications' is clear, as whole system targets could feasibly facilitate interactions that were previously constrained. Indeed, such approaches have dominated in small entrepreneurial organisations, though they have been critiqued for their unpredictability which raises considerable issues for large organisations such as the NHS that require stability (Paarlberg and Biefeld 2009). These radical proposals overlook important aspects of complex systems. Complexity science emphasises that the learnt behaviour of agents has developed over multiple iterations and is resistant to change (Chrysanthaki et al. 2013). Indeed, the competition over performance targets and funding over successive years has led to a 'blame culture' between different areas of the NHS (Dattee and Burnham 2010) but to propose that pooling budgets will quickly see the emergence of desirable system-wide behaviour ignores the learnt behaviour of individuals and institutions in the NHS. The proposals assume individuals and institutions in the NHS to be perfectly rational in their behaviour, which is contrary to intuitive understandings of human behaviour and has been robustly rejected by complexity scientists (Beinhocker 2010).

The temporal lag in delivering positive behaviours makes proposals such as that of minimum specifications unsuitable for governments to implement. Furthermore, these proposals tend to conflate the levels of analysis in the NHS (Dattee and Burnham

2010). Desirable emergent behaviours at the scale being observed may be undermining processes at different levels due to interactions between levels that are ignored by focusing upon a particular level of analysis (Lanham et al. 2013). For instance, in minimum specifications, the flexibility may allow GPs to improve their functioning by streamlining the process of referring individuals to hospital. Thus, focusing upon the local level of the GPs indicates a more effective system. However, this fails to consider that this process can change the trends of hospital use, undermining the care provided by hospitals. The issues in such proposals illustrate that the potential of complexity science is not realised through radical approaches. However, complexity science has significant potential in shifting away from reductionist approaches to flexible forms of top-down control.

Complexity science can aid top-down control through providing managers and policymakers at all levels of the NHS with an awareness of its behaviours as a complex system. Lack of appreciation of complex interconnections in the NHS leads to dysfunctional behaviours from policymakers regardless of their intentions (Rouse 2008). Managers with an understanding of complexity theory are more able to recognise and appreciate the interplay between different scales, non-linearity, feedback loops and emergence within the NHS (Rusoja et al. 2018). Further, they are more likely to embrace flexibility by not planning based on the assumptions of predictability and to accept that there is a range of possible outcomes to interventions that can change over time (Lanham et al. 2013). Education is crucial to enabling flexibility in NHS management without reverting to impractical and theoretically questionable minimum specifications. Though the use of this complexity science has been limited in healthcare systems, Brainard and Hunter (2016) found that the majority of interventions using it have achieved positive results. However, their sample size was limited to 29 interventions restricting the ability to draw generalisations. Thus, it is crucial for further research to identify the potential of complexity science in NHS management, similarly to Dattee and Barlow's (2010) investigation into the 2004 Unscheduled Care Collaborative Program.

The Unscheduled Care Collaborative Program (UCCP) deployed in 2004 exemplifies the benefits of taking an approach that uses complexity science at all levels (Dattee and Barlow 2010). The UCCP successfully reduced the waiting times for access to emergency care in Scotland. Managers worked alongside complexity scientists to identify that waiting times in hospitals across Scotland were in a state of self-organised criticality, with attempts to reduce waiting times resulting in changes that followed a power-law distribution (ibid). Therefore, small changes to key variables can lead to a critical transition in the system's functioning. This approach led managers to focus on identifying leverage points throughout the system, rather than solely focusing upon individual 'problem' hospitals or departments within hospitals. For instance, they produced flow models of patients throughout the system to identify the key points of delay. This allowed them to effectuate change that can be enhanced through positive

feedback as the system passes through a critical transition, rather than being dampened by negative feedback (Hawe 2015). However, managers at local levels found it difficult to identify key leverage points in the system and discern the individual causation of the changes in waiting times (Dattee and Barlow 2010).

The success of UCCP demonstrates the value of incorporating complex systems thinking into all levels of management. It identifies the importance of having knowledge of the entire functioning of the system, rather than of a particular level or section. Local managers' struggle to identify the system's leverage points indicates the need for methods to establish different complex, non-linear interactions and feedback loops (Dattee and Barlow 2010). This issue is compounded by the linear models currently employed by NHS managers that rule out these factors. Thus, this indicates the need for models better suited to exploring the mechanisms of the NHS and considering how they may develop over time. In this role, the development of agent-based models could be integral for the use of complexity science in the NHS.

3. Modelling the NHS: Agent-Based Models

The NHS has been extensively modelled throughout its existence, predominantly using linear approaches such as decision trees and Markov models (Marshall et al. 2015). Linear models are limited; they do not consider the possibility of emergence, non-linear dynamics, multiple feedback loops or multiple states of equilibrium that occur in the NHS (Sarriot and Koutletio 2015). Agent-base models (hereafter ABMs) provide the ability to model these attributes of the NHS. Though their use in healthcare systems has been limited, they have been used widely to model social systems, from academic collaboration networks to economic trends (Tomasello et al. 2017). ABMs consist of a number of agents, ranging from individuals to large institutions, that interact with each other. These agents are affected by and can affect the environment of the model. Each agent in these models acts based on a set of internalised rules which can be heterogeneously distributed to agents in the model. Agents can either have fixed rules, or they may be able to adapt their rules and their behaviour over time, thus resulting in adaptation in agents' interactions, the environment of the model and its output (Bruch and Atwell 2013).

The local interactions between heterogeneous agents in ABMs enable them to model emergent phenomena and the model's dynamism also allows it to explore changes in the system's functioning over time (Turrell 2016). The heterogeneity of the agents, alongside the potential for non-linearity and feedback loops, allows ABMs to model more realistic behaviour than traditional linear models (Bruch and Atwell 2013). This ability can allow ABMs to be used as 'low-risk and low-cost laboratories' in order to develop a greater understanding of the system and its mechanisms (Marshall et al. 2015). This is crucial, as knowledge of the system's intrinsic structure is vital in attempting to direct its change (Dattee and Barlow 2010). Managers and policymakers

can use ABMs to explore multiple possible outcomes of a prospective policy and develop an awareness of the potential emergent behaviours that can arise from interventions. The value of this has already been demonstrated in healthcare systems. For instance, Megiddo et al. (2016) developed an ABM to test three different initiatives to treat epilepsy in India. This ABM identified that emergent processes that developed over time in one initiative would entail a much higher ongoing financial investment. Thus, policymakers were able to dismiss one of the initiatives based upon the ABM's results (Megiddo et al. 2016). Further, by running ABMs with a number of different combinations of rules and behaviours, key variables and leverage points for enacting systemic change can be determined (Peters 2014). Thus, an ABM could have proved valuable for managers in the aforementioned UCCP, who were struggling to identify the system's leverage points. Despite the substantial potential of ABMs, there is resistance to their usage in the management of the NHS.

ABMs are an advance upon existing linear approaches to modelling the NHS: however, they do not have the ability to reliably and accurately predict the outcome of management decisions on the system's functioning. For instance, whilst the ABM developed by Megiddo et al. (2016) allowed the rejection of one initiative, it was unable to identify which of the other two initiatives would be most effective. The ability to model heterogeneous agents provides modellers with significant freedom in choice (Bruch and Atwell 2013). Though this allows them to model a wide array of phenomena, modellers face difficulty in selecting the correct variables to classify their agents and their behaviour. This can significantly affect the results of the model. For instance, two ABMs of a particular phenomenon can differ markedly based upon the modeller's choices. Further, regardless of the assumptions made, the non-linearity in the model can lead to the same ABM producing different outcomes in concurrent runs (Turrell 2016). This causes issues in interpreting and using their outputs, which is compounded by the inaccessibility of the models' underlying code for policymakers leading to criticisms of a lack of transparency (Marshall et al. 2015).

These issues can be partially alleviated by engaging managers throughout the modelling process and educating managers in complexity science to make them more accepting of the multiple potential outputs in the models. The value of ABMs does not lie in their ability to accurately and precisely model all aspects of the system and predict its future functioning. Rather, ABMs' value is their potential to allow policymakers and managers to experiment with management decisions, explore their potential results and acquire a greater knowledge of the system's functions. In the context of the NHS, this has the potential to support more accurate, efficient and flexible management (Marshall et al. 2015).

Conclusion

The management of the NHS is being increasingly scrutinised with fears of a collapse and a shift towards a privatized healthcare system (Campbell 2016). It is vital that privatisation is not the solution to the management problems faced by the NHS. Though the NHS has substantive shortcomings, its provision of universal healthcare that is free at the point of access is invaluable. It is important to note that whilst complexity science has significant, compelling value, it is not a panacea for the issues in the NHS. However, it is clear that its potential should not be ignored. Though critics argue that there is little evidence of its benefits, it provides a valuable analytical lens that can be utilised to explain phenomena and structures in the NHS that defy conventional approaches (Martin 2018). Moreover, its use can be extended beyond that of an explanatory concept. Engaging with and educating managers at all levels of the NHS can produce individuals that are adept at grasping the inherent unpredictability of policies, as well as the non-linearity, feedback loops, and emergent phenomena that characterise the system. Thus, they are better equipped to attempt to enact change within the NHS. Moreover, the use of ABMs can provide managers with better knowledge of its underlying mechanisms (Marshall et al. 2015). To realise its potential, complexity scientists need to engage more substantively with practical management proposals, and their proposals and insights should be encouraged and considered by policymakers.

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Statistical Illiteracy Among Clinicians:
A review of the evidence and the ethical problems it generates

Dr Adrian Soto-Mota

Abstract. *To become a medical doctor, it is necessary to acquire knowledge in many different subjects such as Biochemistry, Public Health and Clinical Examination. Statistical reasoning is a crucial skill for clinicians not only because it is necessary to critically analyse emerging evidence from biomedical sciences but also because it is essential for risk assessments at bedside and for advising patients. Despite this, evidence suggests that even experienced clinicians struggle with assimilating the differences and implications of fundamental statistical concepts such as odds ratio versus absolute risk and sensitivity versus positive post-test probability. On the other hand, useful concepts such as number needed to treat/screen, intention to treat analysis, and Bayesian probability are often overlooked or ignored when making clinical decisions. Even further, some studies report that there are discrepancies between the interventions or treatments which clinicians prescribe and the ones that they undergo when they are patients. This review intends to illustrate how statistical illiteracy generates ethical problems in the patient clinician relationship, summarise existing evidence about this problem and the concerns raised by experts on this matter, and analyse the potential solutions that have been put forward. Finally, a set of recommendations for patients is provided, to help them assess risk more efficiently and make informed decisions.*

* * *

Breast cancer screening reduces mortality by 20%. Therefore, we will save 1 out of every 5 women we screen. Right?

WRONG.

Do not worry if you got that wrong, it is very likely your doctor got it wrong too (and **that** is something we should all worry about).

Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic increased the already high demand for evidence-based healthcare (Djulbegovic and Guyatt, 2020). Evidence-Based Medicine (making clinical decisions based on the best scientific evidence available and not on "common sense" or on your mentor's opinion) has revolutionised and improved medical practice (Sackett et al., 2007). However, it brought a challenge we have not been able to conquer successfully. That challenge is: medical doctors need to learn how to interpret probabilities and statistics because, of course, it is not possible to practise

Evidence-Based Medicine if clinicians cannot understand or at least interpret scientific evidence.

To become a medical doctor, it is necessary to acquire knowledge and skills in many different subjects such as Physiology, Pharmacology, Public Health, and Clinical Examination. Among these skills, statistical reasoning is critical not only because it is essential to analyse emerging evidence from all other biomedical sciences, but also because it is required for risk assessments at bedside and for advising patients.

Although most medical schools recognise the importance of these skills and include Statistics in their curricula, evidence shows that even top and experienced clinicians struggle with assimilating the differences and implications of fundamental statistical concepts such as odds ratio versus absolute risk and sensitivity versus positive post-test probability (Jenny, Keller and Gigerenzer, 2018). Moreover, useful concepts such as absolute risk changes, number needed to treat/screen, intention-to-treat analysis and Bayesian probability are often overlooked when making clinical decisions and when explaining the implications of tests and treatments to patients (Naylor, Chen and Strauss, 1992; Whiting et al., 2015).

As a result, the ethical principles of autonomy and beneficence are threatened because patients are frequently exposed to unnecessary risks (which they frequently ignore), taxpayers' money is wasted, and misinformation is widely spread. Even further, some studies report discrepancies between the interventions and treatments that clinicians prescribe and the ones that they undergo when they face the same diseases (Slevin et al., 1990; Smith et al., 1998; Gallo et al., 2003).

This review intends to illustrate how statistical illiteracy generates ethical problems in the patient-clinician relationship or in public health decision-making, and to summarise existing evidence about this problem. Finally, a set of recommendations for patients is provided to help them assess risk more efficiently and make informed decisions.

1. The Origins and Size of the Problem

First, we should highlight that most clinicians want to help their patients. This problem does not originate in them although they are, in many ways, victims of its consequences. Gigerenzer and Gray (2011) proposed "seven sins" in modern medical practice: biased funding; reporting in medical journals, patient pamphlets, and the media; conflicts of interest; defensive medicine; and medical curricula that fail to teach doctors how to interpret health statistics.

Evidence-Based Medicine has evolved and become increasingly complex in the last two decades (Djulbegovic and Guyatt, 2017). The rules and conventions for carrying out and reporting different types of medical studies (The EQUATOR Network | Enhancing the QUAlity and Transparency Of Health Research) or for evaluating their quality (Higgins et al., 2011) have been updated many times in the last two decades. Nowadays, the critical assessment of a study requires sound methodological knowledge, practice, and time. Even when most clinicians can correctly identify different types of studies, different risk outcomes or different hypothesis tests, studies indicate that many do not

understand key concepts and can be manipulated by misleading statistical formats (Jenny, Keller and Gigerenzer, 2018).

Of course, Science faces its own crisis today (Ioannidis, 2005; Baker and Penny, 2016) and the lack of good quality evidence on many clinical questions has direct implications in medical practice. However, elaborating on these biomedical-research-specific problems is outside the scope of this review.

Even if we naively assume that a certain research has been flawless, many problems arise when we report its results. Let's say that a treatment reduces the probability of getting disease "A" from 10 to 5 in 1,000, while it increases the risk of disease "B" from 5 to 10 in 1,000. Very frequently, a journal article reports the benefit as a 50% risk reduction and the harm as an increase of 5 in 1,000, that is, 0.5%. According to Sedrakyan and Shih (2007), this kind of mismatch (reporting some things as relative risks while reporting others as absolute risks) is present in 33% of papers in top medical journals and influences the way clinicians assimilate these data.

One may think that a smart clinician would not miss these differences. However, most final-year students from a top medical school failed an exam evaluating their competence when applying these concepts in practical scenarios (Jenny, Keller and Gigerenzer, 2018). Or, one may think that experience will eventually teach clinicians how to interpret data correctly. However, senior gynaecologists also fail to interpret the real risk meaning that a mammogram result implies (Anderson et al., 2014).

Alternatively, one may think that these problems concern exclusively new or infrequent diseases and treatments. However, evidence of risk misunderstanding by clinicians has been found in scenarios as frequent in everyday medical practice as cancer screening (Wegwarth and Gigerenzer, 2018).
Analogous to the difference between strict illiteracy and functional illiteracy (Tóth, 2001), the problem is not that clinicians lack statistical training or that they ignore the concepts required to read a scientific study. Most clinicians are familiar with the theory behind the statistical methods that the studies in their field use. The problem is that many clinicians struggle with efficiently incorporating the emerging evidence they read into their every-day practice. Clinicians need to learn not only the necessary statistical concepts and lexicon to read a study, but they also need to learn how to apply what they read when advising their patients.

2. Clinicians' statistical illiteracy exposes patients to unnecessary risks (which they frequently ignore)

Unarguably, it would be unethical to hide potential adverse effects when obtaining informed consent for a medical procedure (Braschi et al., 2020). The ethical principle of autonomy protects a patient's right to make all decisions concerning their health. Clinicians are supposed to facilitate information about the potential risks and benefits of available interventions to their patients so they can make an informed decision (Entwistle et al., 2010). In practice, this is involuntarily hampered if clinicians ignore or do not understand the risks involved in the interventions they offer.

Cancer screening is an illustrative scenario to continue developing the previous example about the interpretation of different risk markers. Now, let's say – and this has already been argued in scientific publications – that performing breast cancer screening using mammograms has been reported to reduce breast cancer mortality by 20% (Elmore et al., 2005).

Does this imply that we will save 1 out of every 5 women who undergo the test? Well, many clinicians think so (Anderson et al., 2014). However, this is another example where reporting relative and not absolute risk reduction is misleading. It is indeed true that 20% is the relative risk reduction that corresponds to an absolute risk reduction from 5 to 4 out of every 1,000 women. However, saying the former sounds more impactful than the latter. In reality, we need to test 1,000 women to save 1 and some studies have estimated this number to be as high as 2,000 tests for every woman saved (Gøtzsche and Jørgensen, 2013).

Saving 1 woman in every 2,000 tests could still be considered a success because breast cancer is the most common cancer in women (Torre et al., 2017). However, mammograms also have risks, of which the most important is overdiagnosis (Nelson et al., 2016). Surprising as it may seem, it is almost 10 times more likely that a positive (abnormal) mammogram is a false positive than a true positive.

How is this possible? For women in their 40s, the sensitivity of a mammogram is 75% and their false positive rate is 10% (Medical Advisory Secretariat, 2007). Does this mean that if the test is positive, the probability of having cancer is 75%? No. How likely you are to have a disease if you had a positive result in a test is known as the "positive predictive value", which is not the same as how likely you are to test positive in a test if you have a disease. Positive predictive value is heavily influenced by how prevalent a disease is, in this case, 1.4% for women in their 40s, and is very often mistaken by clinicians as the sensitivity of a test (Whiting et al., 2015).
In other words, in a group of 1,000,000 women, 14,000 have breast cancer. Therefore, 986,000 of them do not have breast cancer. Of the 14,000 women who have breast cancer, 75% (10,500) will be detected by the mammogram. However, of the 986,000 women without breast cancer, 10% (98,600) will be told that they have breast cancer when they do not. Thus, after performing 1,000,000 tests, there will be 10,500 true positive and 98,600 false positive tests. Therefore, a positive result is almost 10 times more likely to belong to the 98,600 group rather than to the 10,500 group.

Apart from stress and anxiety, a false positive test also entails biopsies, potential surgery, and even more false positive results. According to Elmore et al. (2015), pathologists (medical doctors who are experts in analysing biopsies and the current gold standard for diagnosing breast cancer) disagree 25% of the time when they analyse the same breast biopsies.

Prostate cancer screening is a similar scenario. The number needed to screen to save 1 man is 1,254 (Loeb et al., 2011), and 7-10 out of 100 men who undergo a biopsy will require to be hospitalised due to complications of the procedure (Brewster et al., 2017).

Does this mean that breast and prostate cancer screenings are useless and that we should stop them? No, because if your mother and your aunts had breast cancer or if your father and your uncles had prostate cancer, getting screened could save your life

(Mitra et al., 2011; Bae et al., 2020). This just means that even seemingly harmless procedures need to be individually assessed in terms of benefit/risk ratio; which, of course, is impossible if clinicians do not understand them. Additionally, and as discussed in the next section, risk misunderstanding results in unnecessary risks and expenses at the population level as well.

3. **Clinicians become (or are relied upon by) decision makers**

> "I had prostate cancer five, six years ago. My chance of surviving prostate cancer — and, thank God, I was cured of it — in the United States? Eighty-two percent. My chance of surviving prostate cancer in England? Only 44 percent under socialized medicine." (Bosman, 2007).

The difference between a five-year survival rate, mortality, lethality, and overall survival is very frequently misunderstood by decision makers (as in the example above) and by primary care physicians (Wegwarth et al., 2012).

Yes, all these concepts and indicators are related to death and cancer, but they are not equivalent or even correlated because you can be diagnosed with cancer but die of something else. Additionally, tumours have very different rates of prognosis. For example, you can falsely inflate five-year survival rates just by diagnosing earlier and without raising the number of people not dying of cancer.

The problems that arise from confusions like these go beyond the misuse of technical language. These indicators have confused decision makers about the net benefits of screening, and there are well documented examples of taxpayers' money being misspent (Iacobucci, 2018). Of course, this money could have been spent in more effective practices to prevent cancer-related deaths.

4. **Statistical illiteracy makes clinicians break 'the Golden Rule': *'Treat others as you would like to be treated'***

Studies show that clinicians often choose to be treated differently to the way they treat patients with the same diseases or under the same circumstances (Smith et al., 1998; Gallo et al., 2003). Interestingly, clinicians who undergo the diseases that they typically treat change their practice significantly after they recover (Cen, 2015).

As most medical doctors genuinely want to help their patients, it is unlikely that they willingly mislead them when explaining treatments. At the core of these discrepancies in the treatments that are chosen, we find a different form of statistical illiteracy. In this case, clinicians are not confused by statistical jargon, they simply cannot assess the risk/benefit ratio adequately due to the lack of patient-oriented evidence.

When designing clinical trials, we usually choose hard clinical outcomes as the primary objective of our study. We opt to look at survival rate, hospitalisation rate, and years in clinical remission, while often ignoring softer outcomes such as patient satisfaction. Therefore, we tend to base our recommendations on evidence including clinically oriented outcomes and not patient-oriented outcomes.

An example of this is the very high regret rate of patients undergoing dialysis (Davison, 2010). We tend to recommend it based on the real and well-documented clinical benefits without mentioning the also real and well-documented high proportion of patients who regret undergoing dialysis.

In other words, healthcare workers are treated differently because, when choosing treatments for themselves, they can (at least subjectively) weigh in these patient-oriented outcomes based on what they see in their practice (Slevin et al., 1990). On the other hand, when advising their patients, clinicians cannot incorporate these factors in their risk assessments. They need to adhere to the available evidence, and patient-oriented outcomes are understudied or underreported.

5. Clinicians can learn when taught properly

After documenting that most final-year students fail a "translating evidence into practice" test, researchers showed that the same students can ace a similar test after a short course (Jenny, Keller and Gigerenzer, 2018). Additionally, evidence suggests that graphic aids improve the way surgeons communicate procedures' risks and benefits (Garcia-Retamero et al., 2016).

Thus, since clinicians are usually meticulous students and well-intended people, there is fertile ground to improve this situation. Again, Gigerenzer and Gray (2011), when launching "The century of the patient", proposed seven goals: funding for research relevant for patients; transparent and complete reporting in medical journals, health pamphlets, and the media; incentive structures that minimise conflicts of interest; promoting better practice instead of defensive medicine; and doctors who understand health statistics.

Patients have little influence on the way research funds are allocated or on the way the media displays scientific news. However, they can overcome most of the problems mentioned above by improving communication with their clinicians and by seeking critical information that is often overlooked.

Statistical illiteracy among clinicians is frequent and has widespread repercussions. It threatens the autonomy principle in shared decision-making and the beneficence principle when allocating tax expenditure for healthcare or when funding medical research that looks into the patients' best interests with patient-oriented outcomes. Medical schools, medical journals, patients, and the clinicians themselves should acknowledge this problem and do their part in solving it.

6. Advice for patients

1. Be an active patient, do not be afraid to do your own research on whatever illness or health question you may have. Ask your clinician about reliable patient-education resources. If your doctor is not open to questions or cannot admit that they do not know something, get a different one.

2. Ask your clinician to disclose risks and benefits as "the number needed to" (i.e. number needed to treat, to help (or to harm) one person). When

undergoing any diagnostic test, ask about positive and negative predictive values, not about sensitivity or specificity.

3. Ask if there is available evidence about regret rate or would-do-it-again rate and studies including patient-oriented outcomes.

4. Accept the fact that, even in Evidence-Based Medicine, uncertainty is very common and sometimes, the best we have is "an educated guess".

5. Be patient with your doctor, they do not have every piece of evidence at the top of their head and they might struggle with counter-intuitive statistical concepts.

6. Be patient with scientists, you will find that many questions relevant to your specific case have not been answered yet. Volunteer for research whenever you can!

7. Be patient with yourself, being ill or being unsure about medical decisions is perfectly normal. Keeping a record of your questions and feelings can be very useful for you and your doctor when facing a difficult decision.

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Is that Authentic? Towards an Understanding of the Authenticity of Digital Replicas

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Abstract. *Digital technologies hold exciting prospects for heritage studies through changing the ways in which heritage is accessed, understood and experienced. However, digital technologies pose issues for conventional understandings of heritage. It is evident that an interaction with a digital object is fundamentally different from one with a physical object. Digital heritage objects are often experienced as 'sanitised and alienating' (Jeffrey 2015 pp. 145) and hold an uncertain place in understandings of authenticity that are underpinned by materialist perspectives. This is particularly the case for digital replicas, as they conflate the contested nature of physical replicas' authenticity and the awkward position of digital objects in heritage studies. That an understanding of the authenticity of digital replicas is lacking is particularly concerning, as the importance of authenticity is intensifying in the contemporary era (Jones 2010). Thus, this essay explores an understanding of the authenticity of digital replicas in a manner appropriate for contemporary values-based approaches to the heritage, negotiating both materialist and constructivist perspectives.*

Though accepting the prevailing importance of materialist approaches to authenticity, this essay recognises that digital replicas can acquire a degree of the original object's authenticity during their production (Latour and Lowe 2011). Further, this essay uses the examples of producing 3D replicas of Plaster Cast Statues in the Karl Franzen University, and the Mobile Museum project of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea to outline the need to recognise digital replicas as objects in their own right. This recognition allows a consideration of the creativity and energy involved in producing digital replicas, and the construction of authenticity through 'networks of relationships between people, places and things' (Jones et al. 2018 pp. 334).

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Introduction: It is a 'Weird' Digital World

It is indisputable that the rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed our interactions with the world. Directly or indirectly, everyone has been affected by the advance of digital technologies, particularly in accessing and consuming information. The transformative effect of digital technologies is critical to heritage studies (Diaz-Andreu 2017), leading to an explosion of research on digital heritage over the past two decades. Its importance is exemplified by UNESCO's (2003) production of a Charter on the Provision of Digital Heritage, which denotes digital heritage as digital material that has a value to be preserved, often consisting of 'unique resources of human knowledge and expression'. This recognition of the importance of digital

heritage is crucial due to the digital universe's already incomprehensible size being predicted to grow by 40% per year into the next decade (Rogers 2015). Therefore, the necessity for heritage studies to engage with and adapt to digital technologies is becoming even more pressing.

Digital heritage is an evocative field that has espoused wide-ranging debates. The production of digital replicas from physical objects creates a fundamentally different interactive experience as it involves the loss of a perceivable materiality (Jeffrey 2015). Digital replicas are celebrated for their ability to open up access to and democratise heritage by lessening its reliance upon traditional, elitist centres of knowledge (e.g. Bachi et al. 2014; Diaz-Andreu 2017). Yet, digital replicas are often depicted negatively by authors who decry digital technology's reinforcement of non-democratic structures. This is particularly due to the technological divide between museums, source communities and heritage consumers in different areas in the world, which may produce new forms of exclusion from heritage (e.g. Taylor and Gibson 2017). Underpinning these debates is the issue of digital replicas' authenticity.

Though broadly understood as the quality of a thing being what it purports to be, authenticity has long been a source of contention in heritage studies (Rogers 2015; Smith 2003). Replicas have traditionally held a contested, uncertain place in understandings of authenticity. This is compounded for digital replicas due to the 'weirdness' of digital objects (Jeffrey 2015 pp. 1). Digital objects lack a perceivable materiality, substance, location and degradation that heritage consumers are used to in physical objects (Garstki 2017; Jeffrey 2015). Resultantly, digital objects are often 'sanitised and alienating' which heritage consumers can struggle to engage with (Jeffrey 2015 pp. 1). For instance, Maxwell et al. (2015) recently produced a 3D digital replica of a Pictish drinking horn. However, they decided that its lack of perceivable materiality caused it to be inauthentic, unable to transmit heritage values as 'the digital, as yet, cannot satisfactorily replicate this necessary physical and idiosyncratic relationship with material' (Maxwell et al. 2015 pp. 39). In 2003, Abby Smith prophetically identified that discussions of authenticity would be the hardest challenge to grapple within digital heritage. Though 'hardest challenge' may be contentious, 15 years later, the authenticity of digital objects is still a complex and unresolved issue (Manžuch 2017).

Technological advances and changes in institutional practices are causing an exponential rise in the numbers of digital replicas (Bachi et al. 2014). Thus, it is troubling that the prevailing approaches to authenticity in heritage studies can obscure the wider effect of digital replicas in heritage. For instance, digital replicas are often involved in 'cultural politics of ownership, attachment, place-making, and regeneration' (Jones et al. 2018 pp. 252). Materialist perspectives that have traditionally dominated heritage discourses consider authenticity to result from the originality of tangible objects, landscapes, and monuments, which can be tested through scientific means (Smith 2013; Jones 2010). This perspective is inherently Euro-centric, emerging from the development of western modernity (Jones 2010). The critical turn in heritage studies holds that these materialist perceptions of authenticity are inadequate for contemporary dynamic approaches to heritage (Winter 2013), suggesting that we need a renewed understanding of authenticity.

Indeed, 'each generation views authenticity in a new guise, reflecting its new needs for truth, new standards of evidence, and new faiths in the uses of heritage' (Lowenthal

1999 pp. 8). Therefore, this essay explores an understanding of authenticity that negotiates both materialist and constructivist perspectives. Constructivist approaches conceptualise authenticity as culturally constructed, rejecting the binary objectivist measurements of authenticity (Belhassen et al. 2008; Jones 2010). This essay recognises that completely abandoning the materialist approach to authenticity would impoverish understandings of authenticity in practice (Jones 2010). However, it challenges materialist perspectives that dismiss digital replicas as inauthentic. It recognises the migration of authenticity from the original object to the digital replica during its reproduction and the potential for replicas to diminish the authenticity of the original object (Baudrillard 1994; Latour and Lowe 2011); and discusses the generation of authenticity through networks of relationships and the subjective experiences of digital replicas (Jones et al. 2018; Cohen and Cohen 2012). To present this narrative, this essay firstly discusses the prevailing concern with authenticity, given its contested, ambivalent and confusing nature. It further traces debates of authenticity, with a particular focus on physical replicas, and builds upon these debates to discuss the authenticity of digital replicas.

Why Authenticity?

Authenticity broadly refers to an object's quality of being real, truthful and genuine; essentially the quality of a thing being what it purports to be (Rogers 2015; Manžuch 2017). Despite this relatively simple broad definition, authenticity's meaning, function, and criteria are ever-changing (Lowenthal 1999). Indeed, the use of the term varies over time, across disciplines, and even within the same article (e.g. Cohen and Cohen 2012). Further, there are contentions that the prevailing understandings of authenticity are obscuring the wider effect of digital objects in heritage (Jones et al. 2018). Considering these factors makes it logical to question its use as a concept. Indeed, some scholars have called for it to be abandoned (Reisinger and Steiner 2006). Yet, understandings of authenticity are still significant for heritage studies: for instance, they are pivotal in choosing conservation strategies for buildings, places and artefacts (Jones and Yarrow 2013). Additionally, authenticity is crucial for critical heritage scholars, who attempt to disentangle the underlying power relations that shape understandings of heritage and authenticity. Authenticity has long been associated with power dynamics, often being used by hegemonic groups to push political and economic agendas; from the European Middle Ages to demonstrate political authority to the contemporary era where materialist understandings of authenticity serve as an instrument to advance European ideologies across the world (Winter 2013).

Authenticity has taken a heightened significance in the modern era, due in part to the changing relationships between individuals and society (Jones 2010). Trilling (1972) traces this back to the breakdown of feudalism and of a rigidly defined social order which left people in a state of ontological insecurity. Modernisation has destabilised and redefined relationships between the past and present (Winter 2013). This is being intensified as neoliberal forms of governance place an increased emphasis on the person as an individual unit that serves to erode senses of stability and identity (Butler 2011). Consequently, heritage objects are seen as increasingly important in providing both individual and collective identities (Apaydin 2018). Indeed, the Nara Document of Authenticity (1994) that formalised constructivist and relativist approaches to authenticity devotes three articles to authenticity's importance. This includes stating in article 9 that 'our ability to understand these values [referring to heritage values]

depends…on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful'. Thus, authenticity is vital to heritage as a provider of both individual and collective identities, by allowing the values understood to be trusted. Further, due to fears of digital objects being adapted and manipulated, it is crucial for digital objects to establish their authenticity to ensure their preservation (Rogers 2015). Consequently, despite its complex, ambiguous nature, authenticity cannot be dismissed. However, it is crucial to challenge and adapt understandings of authenticity for contemporary approaches to heritage studies.

Materialist Perspectives of Authenticity.

Materialist perspectives of authenticity have traditionally dominated heritage discourses concerning the reproduction of heritage objects. The production of digital replicas is considered to be the second break in reproduction technologies, following mechanical reproduction (Müller 2017). Therefore, the authenticity of digital replicas can be cautiously compared to those of physical replicas. Discussions of physical replication invariably return to Walter Benjamin's (1936) celebrated essay, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. Benjamin (1936) holds that the authenticity of an original object is an attribute which even 'the most perfect reproduction….is lacking' (pp. 220). For Benjamin (1936 pp. 222), the authenticity of an object is 'the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced', which is 'outside…. reproducibility'. This sees each object as having its own unique history that provides the original object with its authenticity, enabling it to transmit its 'aura' and values. Benjamin refers to aura as an object's ability to provide an invigorating sensation of being close to the past and to all those involved in the object's production or who have interacted with it over its history.

Benjamin's fundamental premise underpinned by Marxist and materialist perspectives is that authenticity is lost in reproduction. He holds that reproductions are inauthentic as they only entail a 'time-slice' of the original's history, and therefore do not possess the 'history which [the original] object has experienced' (Barker 2014). Further, Benjamin holds that replication can diminish and destroy the authenticity and aura of the original (Cameron and Kenderdine 2007). Benjamin's theorising has dominated authorised heritage discourses. However, the emergence of postmodernist thought has seen this perspective challenged. Though the challenges have predominantly been penned in relation to physical replicas, their underlying tenets can be applied to digital replicas.

The Migration of Authenticity through Reproduction

In contradiction to Benjamin's materialist theorising, Latour and Lowe (2011) argue that aura is not destroyed in replication. They propose that with advanced technologies, replicas can acquire a degree of the aura and authenticity of an original object. For them, the issue is the quality of the replica, particularly the accuracy of the final object that allows it to be understood and respected. Indeed, they argue that replication can even enhance the aura of the original, challenging the concept of authenticity as being intrinsic to the original object. Baudrillard's (1994) discussion, particularly the 'orders' of representation and reproduction, contradicts Latour and Lowe's (2011) contention.

Baudrillard contends that mass-reproduction and consumption, particularly in the postmodern era, can lead to the distinction between the original and replications being diminished thus resulting in the original object losing its value. Therefore, both physical and digital reproductions can result in the original objects losing their authenticity. Thus, taking an integrated materialist-constructivist perspective illuminates the processes that creates authenticity for digital replicas, but further how the process of replication can begin to change the authenticity of the objects being replicated. These perspectives both transcend binary static materialist assumptions of authenticity in positioning the replica as part of the original object's ongoing 'trajectory'.

There has recently been an overwhelming focus on digital replicas' authenticity in terms of their accuracy, resolution and aesthetics (Jones et al. 2018; Nwabueze 2017). It is important to produce accurate replicas, however the sole focus upon accurate reproduction can lead to technological fetishism, which situates the claim to authenticity in the technology used to produce and present the digital replica (Jones et al. 2018). This overlooks the construction of authenticity through interactions with heritage consumers and obscures the replicas' wider role in heritage. The issues with appraising the authenticity of digital replicas solely in terms of their accuracy and realism can be illustrated by analysing Havemann's (2012) Plaster Cast Museum project.

The Plaster Cast Museum project involved producing 3D replicas of classical statues in the Karl Franzen University. The collaborators in this project focused solely on producing accurate, realistic digital replicas without much concern for the actual consumption and use of the replicas. This overarching focus saw workers identify that they should only store data that allows the user to assess the accuracy of the replica (Havemann 2012). For instance, the 3D replica of the head of Medusa allows the user to query different parts on its surface to see what source images were used in order to verify its accuracy. They considered accuracy of replication to be the sole factor in determining its authenticity. Indeed Havemann (2012 pp. 160) summarises the project by stating that 'the aim here is to assess the authenticity of the data which we believe is the most valuable asset of IT in cultural heritage'.

Ensuring the accuracy of digital replicas is crucial but to take it as the sole defining feature of their authenticity is a 'misplaced venture' (Jones et al. 2018 pp. 352). It represents a binary approach to authenticity that characterises materialist approaches. Havemann's project exhibits the dangers of succumbing to a 'technological fetishism' (Jeffrey 2015 pp.144). Though accurate realistic 3D replicas have been produced, there is limited public engagement with them, suggesting that heritage consumers do not attribute values to them or consider them as authentic (Jeffrey 2015). However, the digital replication of the plaster cast museum can offer new insights into classical statues. Taking a constructivist approach, these new insights can create new understandings and networks of relations with heritage consumers, thus producing new forms of authenticity for the 3D replicas that were not present in the original physical statues. 3D digital replicas should focus on the creation of networks of relations through their design and consumption, so as to elicit the production and negotiation of authenticity (Jeffrey 2015).

Constructing Authenticity

The challenges to materialist and technocratic perspectives of authenticity are associated with the shift to postmodernity, which challenges modernity's essentialist ideas of a singular truth (Berman 1983). Constructivists argue that authenticity is a construct of the present day, a 'product of particular cultural contexts and specific regimes of meaning' (Jones and Yarrow 2013 pp. 9). Constructivist accounts particularly contest the binary, static, approaches that consider authenticity to be a fixed property of tangible heritage (Su 2018). They emphasize pluralistic means by which authenticity can be produced and recognised, involving an inherently dynamic, relational approach to authenticity (Belhassen et al. 2008; Jones et al. 2018). Therefore, they consider replicas as being part of complex networks, formed as they are produced and used, in which authenticity is generated by the performance of a wide range of actors (Cohen and Cohen 2012; Foster and Curtis 2016). This destabilises the idea of authenticity being inherent in an object, instead positing authenticity to be a projection of beliefs and perceptions by heritage users (Zhu 2015).

Taking a constructivist approach to the authenticity of a digital replica requires recognising it as a 'creative work in its own right with a history and provenance' (Cameron and Kenderdine 2007 pp. 67). This is crucial, as until we 'acknowledge our own creativity as digital crafts-people, the digital will remain in the realm of the weird' (Jeffrey 2015 pp. 150). As creative objects, replicas embed stories and past human endeavour; behind their creation lies a series of specific social networks and relationships that determine their values (Foster and Curtis 2016). Thus, rather than linking the authenticity of digital replicas solely to their accuracy and realism as Havemann (2012) suggests, these replicas ought to be understood as being bound up in complex dynamic networks within which authenticity is not fixed as inauthentic, or authentic, but rather is dynamically being made and remade (Rogers 2015; Jones et al. 2018). This aligns with critical perspectives that heritage is being dynamically produced, existing in a state of flux.

The value in recognising the dynamism in authenticity can be demonstrated by the Mobile Museum Project, which aimed to produce digital replicas for the Nalik people, a 5000-person community residing in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea (Were 2014; 2015). As a collaborative project, it involved individuals from the Nalik community, the Queensland Museum, and the University of Queensland. The project aimed to produce digital replicas of Malangans currently held in the Queensland Museum: intricately carved wooden sculptures used in funeral rituals which are understood to arrest, contain, and release the souls of the deceased (Were 2015). They are traditionally carved for funerals by skilled sculptors, and then are either burnt or left to rot to symbolise their death (ibid). Yet, this aspect of the funeral rituals has been in decline in Nalik communities, and there are fears amongst Naliks that this part of their cultural identity could be lost. In this context, the interactions and use of the digital replicas of Malangans demonstrate the value of an integrated approach to authenticity that negotiates both materialist and constructivist perspectives.

Nalik individuals describe the production of 3D replicas as akin to returning the physical originals, as interacting with them brought back stories, traditions, and values of the past (Were 2015). Further, individuals described 3D replicas as providing a 'sense of completeness' that had been lost due to the decline of traditional rituals (Were 2015). Thus, the digital replicas are transmitting similar heritage values as the original Malangans. Indeed, the digital replicas were providing authentic connections to the

past, an emotive sensation of being close to their ancestors who created and interacted with the physical Malangans. This is markedly similar to Benjamin's (1936) description of the aura and authenticity of physical objects, demonstrating a migration of some degree of the original's authenticity to the digital replica (Latour and Lower 2011). The context of declining traditional rituals and a loss of cultural identity gives the production of 3D replicas of Malangans particular importance in transmitting authentic values. Thus, the 3D replicas acquire new forms of authenticity, additional to those acquired from the physical originals (Foster and Curtis 2016).

The digital replicas of Malangans are objects in their own right, rather than just extensions of the physical original (Were 2015). They produce and embed themselves in complex relationships in which their authenticity is constantly made and remade (Jones et al. 2018). These relationships connect heritage consumers and original objects, but also involve novel interactions with the digital replicas. The community collaboration in their production is particularly important in creating networks through the communal ownership, participation and energy in their production (Jeffrey 2015). For instance, for Nalik individuals, their role in producing and interacting with 3D replicas is a sign of their development and engagement with processes of modernisation (Were 2015). Thus, alongside providing a connection to the past, these models are valued as signifiers of progress. In Walter Benjamin's terms this sees them creating a 'new historical testimony'.

Furthermore, the 3D replicas have played a crucial role in both community and individual identity building for Nalik communities (Were 2015). By renewing and co-creating cultural identity, the 3D replicas produce their own authentic values for Nalik individuals as they construct their own meanings and knowledge (Bachi et al. 2014; Mazel 2017). The ability of digital replicas to provide ways of seeing, interacting with and experiencing Malangans is at the forefront of their role in co-constructing cultural identity. For instance, the models incorporate 'hot spots' which can be selected to launch detailed photographs of different parts of the replica (Were 2015). These were valued in their ability to educate modern sculptors, allowing them to reproduce replicas of the physical originals from the digital replicas (Were 2014).

The authenticity of 3D replicas is constructed by Nalik individuals through values being attributed to the replicas during their production and use. Thus, their authenticity is not merely fixed in the technology due to a migration of a degree of the original object's authenticity. Rather, new forms of authenticity are being dynamically generated as the 3D replicas are used and valued in different ways by Nalik individuals. In conjunction with being valued for providing an authentic connection to the past, they are valued for their role in (re)constructing cultural identity, their representation of technological advancement, the new experiences they provide and their ability to impart knowledge to sculptors.

The dynamism of the 3D replicas' authenticity exemplifies the limitations of materialist approaches to authenticity. The binary approach to authenticity that they entail overlooks the role of these 3D replicas as authentic heritage objects and bearers of significant value for their consumers. However, it is important to identify the prevailing influence of materiality and originality in the transmission of values and authenticity. The value of 3D replicas in enabling Nalik sculptors to relearn past patterns is accentuated as Naliks were unwilling to handle original Malangans due to the fear of

the ancestral powers they possessed (Were 2015). Resultantly, although they were unable to replicate the designs of the originals, they were willing to replicate and interact with the 3D replicas (Were 2014). It is important to note that this varies across cultures. For instance, digital replicas of Maori artefacts are perceived by Maori communities to have the same ancestral spirits as their physical originals (Brown 2007).

The loss of ancestral powers in the digital reproduction of Malangans indicates that part of the aura and authenticity of the original has not been reproduced. Indeed, that the 3D digital replicas did not transmit ancestral powers evidently represents that they have lost part of the original objects' 'essence of all that is transmissible' (Benjamin 1936 pp. 222), which can be used to support Benjamin's (1936 pp. 221) contention that 'the whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical…reproducibility'. Further, it indicates that as Baudrillard (1994) suggests, replication may affect the aura and authenticity of the original physical Malangans. This indicates that materialist approaches to authenticity are still necessary. To take a fully constructivist approach would involve ignoring the importance of materiality, thereby failing to fully comprehend the experience of authenticity in practice (Belhassen et al. 2008). Materiality is undoubtedly still important, even research challenging materialist approaches to authenticity recognise its importance in experiencing and negotiating authenticity (Jones et al. 2018). Thus, it is necessary to negotiate both constructivist and materialist perspectives which involves conceptualising authenticity as a product of the interactions between people, places, and objects (Jones 2010; Jones et al. 2018). Such an approach identifies the role of digital replicas in wider heritage processes, for instance in identity building, education' and providing novel experiences. Further, it provides a dynamic understanding of authenticity that recognises that heritage is not static, but rather is being constantly made and unmade.

Conclusion

Digital replicas are being produced at an increasing rate (Rogers 2015). This essay has demonstrated that taking a dichotomous materialist approach ignores the wider work of digital objects in heritage, for instance in identity building, repatriation, restoring traditional customs and transmitting heritage values (Jones et al. 2018). Thus, it is vital to move beyond the binary, materialist perceptions that classify digital objects as inauthentic. Indeed, the Mobile Museum Project illustrated that digital replicas can acquire a degree of authenticity and aura from the physical originals during their production as Latour and Lowe (2011) suggest. However, constructivist approaches go beyond this migration, demonstrating that digital replicas are a part of complex 'dynamic networks of relationships between people, places, and things' that generate new forms of authenticity (Jones et al. 2018 pp. 334). These networks are partially extensions of the original object's networks; however, recognising digital replicas as creative objects demonstrates that they produce and embed themselves within new networks.

The constructivist approach allows a recognition of the wider work of digital objects and is more appropriate for contemporary approaches to heritage studies. However, materiality remains significant as demonstrated by the differences between Naliks' perceptions of interacting with the original Malangans and with their digital replicas. Thus, materialist perspectives cannot be completely dismissed (Jones and Yarrow 2013). An integrated approach that recognises the dynamic construction of digital replicas'

authenticity whilst appreciating the importance of materiality is required. However, in developing this understanding, it is important to continually question its appropriateness. With the digital world expanding, new approaches to heritage will undoubtedly emerge, and our interactions with digital replicas will continue to change. Accordingly, conventions of authenticity must be continually questioned to ascertain whether they reflect the contemporary approaches to heritage.

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Travel Report

Loneliness on Valentine's Day
My journey to the Lisbon Colloquium on Loneliness

Dr Benjamin Schaper

St Anne's supported my trip to the International Colloquium on Loneliness at the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa with an Early Career Research Grant. I set out for Portugal to get some inspiration for my post-doctoral research project on loneliness and human-machine interaction from Romanticism to the Digital Age. In line with recent historical approaches to loneliness such as Fay Bound Alberti's *A Biography of Loneliness* (2019), the conference followed a cultural historical approach in order to comparatively grasp fictional representations of loneliness across various media and in various cultural contexts, providing a background to contemporary debates on loneliness as a potential modern pandemic (see e.g. George Monbiot: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/14/age-of-loneliness-killing-us; or Manfred Spitzer's 2018 monograph *Einsamkeit: Die Unerkannte Krankheit / Loneliness: The Undetected Disease*).

I initially contacted Lisbon's German Department and Research Centre for Comparative Literature in spring 2018, proposing my idea for what would eventually become the conference held on the 13th and 14th of February 2020. The Call for Papers that I drafted with Professor Gerd Hammer, Head of Lisbon's German Department, attracted colleagues from institutions around the world, including Columbia University in New York, the University of Mpumalanga in South Africa, the Universidad de Granada, Warsaw University, and the Freie Universität in Berlin. (For the programme see: https://lisemotions.weebly.com)

The conference traced loneliness as a literary motive across a range of periods and artistic forms. Presenters focused prominently on the German Romantic phenomenon of *Waldeinsamkeit*, a rather positive idea of loneliness as seeking refuge from the accelerated pace of life experienced by most people in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, stemming from the tradition of Rousseau's 1782 book *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*. The conference's exploration of this particular notion culminated in Kathrin

Wittler's detailed analysis of Goethe's famous poem "Über allen Gipfeln" and Professor Jochen Hörisch's enlightening keynote speech on the influence of Romantic poetry on Karl Marx. In addition to presentations exploring the productive and beneficial solitude of German Romanticism, colleagues gave intriguing papers on gender politics in recent Sci-Fi literature, East German queer cinema, and the loneliness of the monarch in Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Overall it became clear that earlier periods, particularly before the recognition of transcendental loneliness as established by Friedrich Nietzsche, had a much more positive view of loneliness, which was seen as a state of connection with the divine and nature and as a source for artistic inspiration. This differs quite significantly from the supposed contemporary desire for constant digital connection, which eventually more often than not rather aggravates than cures loneliness (see e.g. Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together*) – an issue that is all the more pertinent during the global COVID-19 pandemic, in which lockdowns and border closures enforce loneliness by keeping families and friends apart, with potentially grave effects on mental health. Particularly social media are seen as a tool to replace to ensure social connection virtually when embodied meetings could prove fatal. In this context, nature becomes an important meeting space, resembling the Romantics desire for *Waldeinsamkeit* as a secure refuge.

This basis in Romantic literature was the most valuable insight I gained for my post-doctoral project as besides the period of Modernism in the beginning of the 20th Century and the Digital Age, it is the one at which the question of technology's influence on social bonds intersects with a striking artistic interest in human-machine interaction. I am currently preparing two articles on the topic: The first explores the potential of human-machine interaction as a cure for loneliness in Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, Spike Jonze's *Her*, and Charlie Brooker's and Annabel Jones' *Black Mirror*, with reference to Romantic predecessors such as E.T.A. Hoffmann's novella *Der Sandmann* or the Brothers Grimm's version of the Bluebeard myth. The second article analyses Austrian author Marlen Haushofer's influence on the novels of Robert Seethaler and Thomas von Steinaecker, drawing on the Romantic notion of *Waldeinsamkeit* and the escape into nature from an accelerating technical world.

On the whole, my Lisbon conference experience has not only deepened my knowledge of the loneliness in the 19th Century but also expanded my international academic network. After the presentations, our discussions continued over bacalhau and vinho verde and future collaborations were initiated: I was invited to join the *Solitude – Die Einsamkeit der Literatur* ("Literature's Loneliness") early career research group supported by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* ("German Research Foundation"), which is currently being established at the Freie Universität, Berlin, which opens up the possibility of a further conference on loneliness as the source for artistic inspiration. A

conference anthology will be published as a special issue of the academic journal *Dedalus - Revista Portuguesa de Literatura Comparada* in summer 2021.

Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages

SPARK Reviews

SPARK Reviews are concise 1500-2500-word reviews of any medium or performance which authors find engaging and wish to share with the student community. The range of review material includes but is not limited to films, television programmes, fiction, academic texts, poetry and theatre performances. We publish all SPARK Reviews online on the STAAR Website.

The winner of the £50.00 prize for STAAR's first ever Firework Competition is Andreea Scridon for her review of *Romeo and Juliet* (2017) at Sadler's Wells Theatre. Andreea displayed outstanding originality, critical evaluation and concision in her review of this livestreamed ballet performance.

TV and Film Reviews

The Hills are Alive with the Sound of Silence: Sound, Silence, and War in Terrence Malick's *A Hidden Life*

Joel Casey

Review of: *A Hidden Life* (2019) US
Written by Terrence Malick
Directed by Terrence Malick

Editorial Note: This review contains spoilers for A Hidden Life.

Early in Terrence Malick's *A Hidden Life* (2019), Fani Jägerstätter (Valerie Pachner), looks up nervously from the Austrian mountain village of St. Radegund as she hears the low rumbling of a military aircraft. We do not see the plane; only her reaction to the noise. This moment signals the arrival of war to this remote location and the hardship it causes Fani, her husband Franz (August Diehl) and the rest of her family. Crucially, this moment is articulated through sound.

A Hidden Life is centrally concerned with the sounds of war and how it might be recorded and remembered through sound, representing a more sensory, immediate experience of conflict. Robert Sinnerbrink cites Malick as a filmmaker whose films enlist spectators 'to experiment with the aesthetic disclosure of alternative ways of thinking and feeling, acting and being, in our relations with nature and culture' (Sinnerbrink, p. 43). I argue along similar lines that Malick uses diegetic and non-diegetic sound to

enable an alternative, bodily evocation of war. Owen Gleiberman describes *A Hidden Life* as 'a cathedral of the senses', encapsulating its incorporation of the spiritual and the corporeal (Gleiberman). Sound and silence are the gateway to this corporeal, yet spiritual, experience.

Silence, Nostalgia, Intimacy

Critical response to the film has been mixed. Gleiberman lists *A Hidden Life* in his top ten films of 2019, and Sophie Monks Kaufman calls it 'An exquisitely emotional and thorough account of an individual resisting state fascism' (Kaufman, p. 13). Yet Sight and Sound and the Guardian critique it for distancing the horrors of the Holocaust through Malick's rhapsodic, lyrical style (James, Bradshaw): Peter Bradshaw complains that 'Malick has in a way marooned and islanded Jägerstatter, detaching him from much of the larger historical context' (Bradshaw). Yet as Kaufman argues, this is precisely Malick's intention, and by rooting the film in their relationship and its connection to the land, *A Hidden Life* avoids excessive abstraction (Kaufman, pp. 12-13).

The film begins with Franz's voice and a black screen. Franz speaks wistfully, in English, of his misguided belief that he and his family could live life 'up in the trees' like birds, away from earthly concerns. The opening scenes of the Jägerstätters' everyday life in St. Radegund evokes this aerial existence. Franz and Fani are depicted working and playing with their children with a constant panoramic backdrop of mountain, cloud, and sky. These early scenes are notable for their silence and slowness. Narrative, personal or historical, does not seem to impinge on the languorous playing out of the quotidian. There are the noises of scythes being sharpened, grass being scythed, of bells ringing and cows mooing, as well as Fani and Franz's playful whisperings and polite small talk with other villagers. However, these early scenes mostly transpire in contemplative silence, shifting the focus to the magnificent landscape and the labour that takes place on it.

Fani and Franz finally begin talking significantly inside their cosy wooden cabin, reminiscing about their first meeting. As the film's musical theme, 'A Hidden Life', (composed by James Newton Howard), begins, this conversation transmutes into voiceover. Fani remembers Franz's motorbike, which we see threading through mountain roads, but do not hear. Again, this Edenic location is represented noiselessly. We see a village party and Franz approaching Fani but do not hear them speak. Only the sounds of nature, farm work, and the Jägerstätter's voices transcend this: insignificant noises which do not overpower Fani's voiceover. The voiceover evokes only quiet, repetitive daily life.

Figure 1: Still from *A Hidden Life* trailer.

The Noises of War

The end of this voiceover leads directly to Fani's worried response to the aircraft. Soon after, Franz is conscripted and sent to Enns Military Base. Franz marches in formation in soldiers' uniform; the stomping of feet impose a rhythmic and loud presence. The voiceover's aural prominence is highlighted once more, as it overpowers this stomping as Franz reads a letter to Fani explaining that he is enjoying his training, and silent shots depict him playing and laughing with another man. Homosociality has replaced intimate family life, but Franz muses that he would 'love to hear her singing'. The rowdy play of the base is not the same as the quietude of St. Radegund. This is confirmed as his new friend's song is replaced by Franz's scream as he stabs a scarecrow with a bayonet, a symbolic piercing of their Edenic dream. Pastoral silence is replaced by sudden, violent noise.

An opposition is thus established between the noise of war and the silence of a pre-war pastoral world. However, this aural evocation of war, and the calm before it, is connected to the other senses. St. Radegund's initial silence allows for physical intimacy with other bodies and the earth itself. Walter Ong observes that hearing is the only sense which 'can register interiority' (Ong, p. 70). He asserts that '[s]ight isolates, sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the viewer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer' (Ong, p. 70). Ong evokes the way in which sound connects us to the physical world and other bodies in much the same way as *A Hidden Life*. In a literal sense, the privileging of Fani and Franz's voiceover provides an interior narrative within the public, political story of war. Sound and physical intimacy are connected formally too. Early in the film, a quiet close-up of Franz and Fani's hands brushing together and then holding each other as they pick potatoes shows them in contact with each other and the dirt, the tangible, physical material of their rural farm existence. The connection of quietness and intimacy is clearer when the family plays blind man's buff. Shot in one long take, the scene contains no speech; just the occasional laugh and

bell-ringing to indicate to the blindfolded Franz his family's whereabouts. Catching one of the girls, they fall to the ground and laugh together. With the foggy mountains in the background, earth and sky come together as the silence of St. Radegund enables familial intimacy

Figure 2: Promotional image from *Variety*: https://variety.com/2019/film/columns/at-cannes-2019-cinema-came-roaring-back-1203226087/.

Scholars on war and war memory have questioned the primacy of the visual in memorialising war, foregrounding the other senses, especially for marginalised people away from the frontline or without the clear vantage point to experience war visually. In her book on 'postmemory' and the Holocaust, Marianne Hersch observes that '[t]he bodily, psychic, and affective impact of trauma and its aftermath […] exceeds the bounds of traditional historical archives and methodologies' (Hersch p. 2). This could be extended to methods of narrating history on film too. The everyday experience of war, A Hidden Life suggests, can only be narrated by transcending the visual. Up in the Austrian mountains, Franz and his family initially have a clear view of life, articulated in the long shots which depict the beautiful, silent landscape with majestic clarity. However, these views are revealed to be obscuring the reality of war occurring outside their 'nest' in the clouds. As their idyll unravels, the film implies that a 'truer' or more comprehensive representation of war must address the other senses, especially the sounds and feelings of war.

Transcending the Noises of War

Franz returns from Enns as farmers are no longer required for the war effort. However, the atmosphere in the village shifts: its quietness creates claustrophobia as those who oppose the Nazi regime are forced into silence by Nazi soldiers and sympathetic villagers. Hushed conversations about the war occur on dirt roads outside the village, in narrow alleyways: liminal spaces where trees or walls loom to emphasise a new claustrophobia. Franz speaks with religious figures, other villagers, and his family about his choice to remain in St. Radegund rather than enlisting; in whispers to sympathetic ears and in shouted conflict with others. In both scenarios, the other villagers get too close to Franz, underlining this sense of claustrophobia engendered by the village's silence. As in the early scenes, the film connects sound to tactile sensation. With the arrival of the military in St. Radegund, this is no longer pleasurable physical contact but a disconcerting, disorienting sense of the external world pressing in in the silence that renders expressing dissent impossible.

Later, as another villager shouts Nazi propaganda, the soundtrack is silent apart from the slowly increasing noise of a train. The film then suddenly cuts to silence and blackness, a full stop that signals the end of intimacy and quietude. Franz is called up again and boards a train. As it pulls away, the sound of the train overwhelms all and Franz disappears from view. Shots of Fani talking to her children and her saddened sister, then Franz arriving at Enns are still soundtracked only by the train's noise. Sounds of machinery and metal, of warfare, overwhelm the family. The sequence in which Franz begins again at Enns, refuses to pledge allegiance to Hitler, and is consequently arrested is underpinned by a darker choral score, as well as the sound of other soldiers pledging. Franz's silence here marks him out.

The violence Franz experiences for his silent resistance is associated with the mechanical sounds of war: the train and aircraft which overwhelm voices and the rest of the soundtrack. When Franz is sent to Tegel prison, where he spends most of the film, the clanking and slamming of metal doors and handcuffs is, after a series of shots on the train which similarly emphasise its clanking over tracks and hellish close-ups of the furnace and the noise of coal being shovelled. It is through this evocation of the noise of warfare, especially the noises of imprisonment and of trains which shuttled Jewish people and other minority groups to concentration camps, that the Holocaust is registered. On hearing the rumble of a vehicle outside, Franz uses the chair in his prison cell to climb up and look out of the high window. A furious guard enters his cell—we hear the door creaking before we see him—and his chair is taken away. Deprived of a view of the outside world, Franz's war experience is reduced to sound once more, the discordant and jarring noises of the prison.

Throughout his stay in Tegel, however, the Jägerstätters' experiences are soundtracked by voiceovers of their letters, delivered in the same calm, quiet, even tone as other voiceovers in the film. As voiceover, delivered almost regardless of what is occurring on screen, they provide an aural escape for both Franz and Fani from prison life and a

claustrophobic St. Radegund. In one of his few interviews, Malick asserts that voiceover 'seems to work better' when it 'doesn't have a direct relationship to what's happening' (quoted in Michaels, p. 108). Charlotte Crofts compares this disjunction between voiceover and image in Malick's films to Soviet montage cinema, suggesting that the dialectic created between these is exploited to political effect in his works (Crofts, pp. 22-23). In *A Hidden Life*, the voiceover creates a personal, interior narrative which serves as an escape from war as well as a critique of it. At one point, a guard gleefully explains to Franz that he can do whatever he wants to him, and no one will know. Franz's resistance renders him vulnerably unheard. Yet as this guard enacts this power, bashing bits of the cell with his truncheon and then beating Franz, the noises of this violence, the clanking, crashing, bashing and beating that has characterised his prison time, is silenced by Franz's voice, talking of his 'shepherd', his 'light', who makes him 'lie down in green pastures'. The ambiguity about whether this refers to Fani or God, whether he is writing a letter or speaking a prayer, gives his love for Fani a spiritual power. An internal quietude and calmness—and an internal connection with Fani and God—allows him to transcend the noisy violence of his imprisonment.

Figure 3: Still from *A Hidden Life* trailer.

It is not just hearing these letters but the speaking of them which blocks out the violence of the imprisonment. The voiceovers give these characters, silenced by the Nazi regime, a voice. Another German officer, trying to convince him to relinquish his silence, asks Franz if he thinks anyone will ever 'hear of you'. We do hear both Franz. It is sound which allows the Jägerstätters to rise above the noise of war, and as a result, to be remembered. This gets to the heart of the questions raised by the film. How might we remember war, and not just its frontline experiences? Is the primacy of the visual, which war cinema has been central in establishing, enough to represent its horrors, traumas, and even small moments of escape, intimacy, respite? *A Hidden Life* aims to offer a more comprehensive sensory representation of war. Sound is the vehicle that enables this.

Sound and the History of War Cinema

Malick's film about the experience of war away from the front is also, implicitly, about the history of war film, about the ways in which World War 2, and war more generally, has been represented. At various moments, the film cuts to archival footage, drawing attention to its part in this wider tradition. After Franz's voiceover about life in the trees, the film's first images are black-and-white shots of the city of Nuremberg taken from a plane, footage of Hitler travelling through the streets by car, and the massive Nuremberg Nazi rally of 1934. This material is taken from Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi propaganda film, Triumph of the Will (1935). A vision of a life lived in the trees, mountains, or as Fani later puts it, the clouds, is immediately undermined by the image of Hitler's plane viewing the world from above, the totalising view of war strategy and aerial bombing. Later, with the news of the occupation of France at Enns, the trainee soldiers watch a silent newsreel of the invasion, in which we hear the clapping and cheering of soldiers, and see, intercut with the archival footage, Franz's anxious face not sharing in their patriotic enthusiasm. Finally, shortly before he is called up for the second time, Franz tells Fani of a dream he has had about a train, in which he cannot see the landscape but can only feel the speed of its movement, the muscularity of its mechanical body. This train is depicted on screen in black and white in quickly cutting shots from various points of view. Strangely, however, this cuts suddenly to grainy colour footage of Hitler holding hands with a young girl, taken by Eva Braun herself at Hitler's own mountain retreat in the Bavarian Alps, known in English as the 'Eagle's Nest'. Literally on the other side of the Alps to Franz and Fani, this strange moment in which dream and reality collide, reminds us of Hitler's proximity to them, his ability to penetrate their clouds.

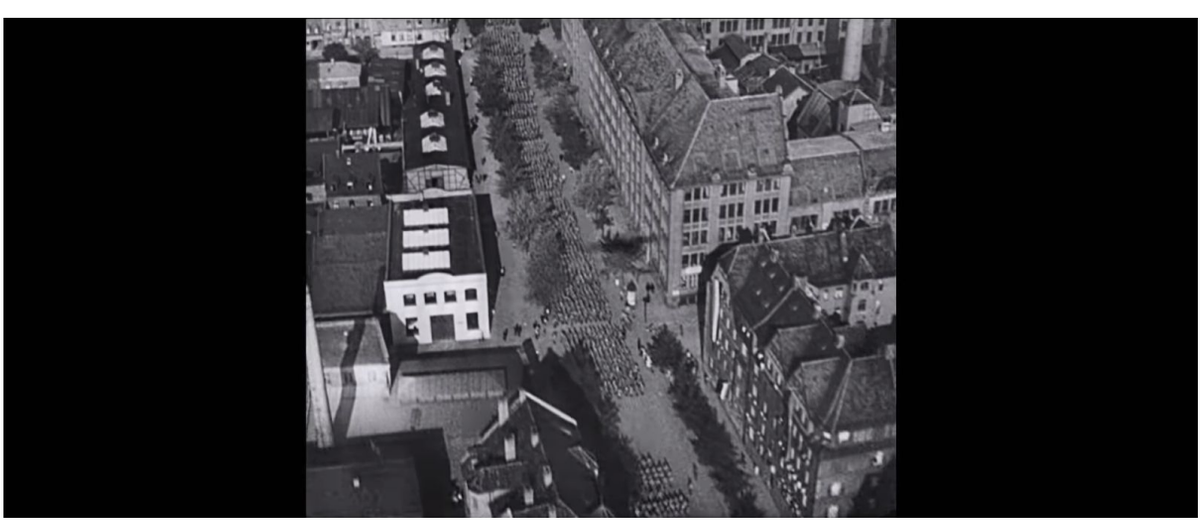

Figure 4: Still from *A Hidden Life* trailer.

Figure 5: Still from *A Hidden Life* trailer.

Propaganda film, newsreel, home movie: three versions of war film, all of which merge with *A Hidden Life's* own account of war. All of these films are silent, providing visual, but not aural archival traces of the war, other ways of representing it that impact on Franz and Fani's own experience, while also only representing official narratives. In their lack of sound, they are unable to give the full embodied experience of war which *A Hidden Life* represents.

Of course, for the spectator, a later, unspoken intertext is a different kind of war film. As the title of this article alludes, the story of a man taken from his family in the Austrian mountains because of the war, dealing with the religious and moral implications of fighting for the Nazis, and experiencing this through sound, invokes Robert Wise's The Sound of Music (1965). Alongside the newsreel, 'documentary', and home movie accounts of the war, a popular musical film version of World War 2 is also silently present. The Sound of Music tells its story of war through song: the conflict that Georg Von Trapp feels between his patriotism and his opposition to Nazism is expressed through his singing of 'Edelweiss', a song which also makes evident to him that his family of singers is more important than his loyalty to Austria. The only singing in *A Hidden Life* is the quiet singing of Fani and her sister, shortly after Franz has told her in a letter that he misses hearing her sing. Song is not the narrative driver that it is in The Sound of Music but it forms part of a wider tapestry or landscape of sound and silence that evoke a previously unspoken, unheard experience of war.

The film ends with Franz's execution. As he and other political prisoners wait outside the execution chamber, a younger man also condemned to death sits next to him on a bench. The noise of a guillotine is the only sound as the two men sit in silence, hearing their fate without seeing it. The younger man kisses Franz's neck and Franz returns this, brushing his lips against his cheek before he is pulled away to his death. This is another, final moment of silent resistance. Like the continuation of his marriage through voiceover, Franz achieves a final moment of intimacy in the face of the impersonal

noisiness of the machinery of death, fascism, and war. In our current moment of loud, ascendant fascism, it might be questioned whether 'quiet resistance' is an act worth valorising, or whether shouting back might be more productive. Given the role that the British Empire and the Anglo-American eugenics movement played in the genesis of Nazism, and the genocidal war crimes like the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 or the British response to the Bengal famine in 1943, issue might also be taken with the partitioning of the violent shouting of Nazis in un-subtitled German from the English spoken by Franz and Fani, and the moral superiority of English that this implies. Notwithstanding, the film offers a meditation on cinema's ability to evoke war's aurality. *A Hidden Life's* sounds and the silences offer an alternative means of articulating war, of speaking of and for those who experienced it in all of its multisensory dimensions.

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Satire on Steroids in Autumn de Wilde's *Emma*

Elena Porter

Review of: *Emma* (2020) Film
Screenplay by Eleanor Catton
Directed by Autumn de Wilde

"Everybody has their level", retorts an astonished Mr Elton, the local vicar, upon discovering that Emma Woodhouse – handsome, clever, and rich – intends to refuse his offer of marriage. Her encouragement of his suit has not been for herself, but for her new friend, Harriet Smith: a parlour border from an unidentified family, whose father Emma has both optimistically and cruelly assumed must be a gentleman. Upon discovery that her unfounded confidence in Harriet's marital prospects has no place amid the village of Highbury's rigid social hierarchy, Emma's vision is shattered. Some men may overlook the misfortune of Harriet's background, explains the vicar, but *he* could not be expected to.

Misunderstanding follows Elton's (Josh O'Connor) troubles to frame Emma's portrait of Harriet. From IMBD:
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9214832/mediaviewer/rm2614737665.

It is here that Autumn de Wilde's adaptation of Jane Austen's most unusual novel starts to get interesting, as we see the social skirmishes at the story's heart unfold. Set in Regency England, the narrative of *Emma* (1816) hinges on the social structure of a small country village. After crediting herself with the successful match between her governess, Miss Taylor, and prosperous widower Mr Weston, Emma sets her sights on securing a match for the pretty and agreeable Harriet Smith. Harriet's position as a woman without any known family is precarious: she has few options, but the best is to secure a husband. As readers, we experience Emma's slow realisation of her own folly

after she encourages Harriet to reject a man she loves who is also able to give her financial security: the tenant farmer, Robert Martin.

When Emma's intended match between Harriet and Mr Elton is a dramatic failure, she doubts her own wisdom, but not yet enough to revise her position on the level at which Harriet should aim to marry. Later, she believes that Harriet has fallen in love with Frank Churchill, a man set to inherit 'one of the finest houses in Yorkshire' – as continually, and comically, described by Josh O' Connor's Mr Elton. Although she had originally hoped to marry Churchill herself, she has not yet come to her senses quite enough to discourage her friend. It is only when Harriet confesses that she is actually enamoured with Emma's brother-in-law Knightley – master of the impressive Donwell Abbey, and object of Emma's own affections – that the full consequences of her aggrandisement of Harriet strike our protagonist.

The skill of the adapter lies in capturing the central dynamics of the text: Emma's slow realisation of her own snobbery, and how it blinds her to reason; the treatment of Miss Bates, a respectable woman who has fallen on hard times, when she spouts ridiculous but endearing monologues; and the intrigue of Frank Churchill's secret engagement to Jane Fairfax, Miss Bates' mysterious niece. Occasionally, this version sacrifices some of the details of characters' relationships to de Wilde's larger ambition of depicting Highbury through a satirical lens. It's worth the sacrifice: this adaptation captures Austen's energy with a sincerity and subtlety that is both fresh and timely.

Style Meets Substance

Is this the twenty-first century adaptation of Austen that we have been waiting for? *Emma* is Autumn de Wilde's first feature film (her lens is usually focused on rock stars, as a music video director) and is Booker-Prize-winner Eleanor Catton's screenwriting debut. Catton manages a skilful adaptation of the text, retaining many of Austen's key phrasings as written, and changing them where they might sound stilted to a modern audience.

Unlike Joe Wright's 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* (much mud, many pigs); Yorgos Lanthimos's *The Favourite* (filthy finery); or Armando Iannucci's *The Personal History of David Copperfield* (mud again), this *Emma* does not go in for dirt-spattering to remind us that the past was a bit grimy. In 2020, Emma's world is almost entirely pastel-hued, and every outfit matches the wallpaper. Everything is just a little grander, and more expensive, than we might expect. It's so easy on the eye that we might forgive the excess of it all. But in a world ruled by social mores, in which a single social misstep can provoke a small crisis, do these details not matter?

Emma explores Knightley's home, Donwell Abbey. From IMBD: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9214832/mediaviewer/rm2581183233.

The most obvious area of aggrandisement is in the houses that comprise Emma's sheltered world. Firle Place in Sussex stands in for Emma's family home, Hartfield. In Austen's time, the house was owned by Henry, 4th Viscount Gage, who was one of the wealthiest men in England. Wilton House in Salisbury becomes Knightley's seat, Donwell Abbey. This was also owned by a peer in Austen's time – the Earl of Pembroke – and we might be forgiven for thinking that we are watching a film about the nobility rather than the gentry, as the Knightleys and the Woodhouses are. Even Harriet Smith, a fair few steps below Emma on the social ladder, is given the gilded treatment. Sure, her allowance is 'very liberal' (Austen, chapter VIII), but would she really be spending *quite* so much money on ribbons?

Costume design has been taken up a notch from the 1996 (dir. Douglas McGrath) and 2009 (BBC TV series) adaptations; this level of colour coordination might have taken the residents of Highbury a great deal of correspondence to organise themselves. It has the potential to detract from the story. However, as Manhola Dargis notes, Austen's text is 'unsurprisingly durable and impervious to decorative tweaking' (Dargis 2020). Costume designer Alexandra Byrne managed to provide the characters with a touch of modern elegance that nevertheless remains believable as Regency dress. Moreover, this attention to sartorial detail reflects Emma's own preoccupation with appearances. She must be *seen* to behave impeccably, regardless of the true intentions behind her actions. The film's first scene, in which Emma goes down to the greenhouse at dawn to create a bouquet for her governess, captures this side of Emma perfectly. Emma poses underneath the lanterns that the footmen have been charged with dangling above her head as she floats around the flowers and instructs her maid to cut a choice few blooms.

This is just one example of how, in straying from a more realistic depiction of the characters' appearances, the film elaborates character traits visually.

Harriet and Emma, played by Mia Goth and Anya Taylor-Joy. From IMBD: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9214832/mediaviewer/rm3889806081.

The effect of this general glamorization is to shift everyone slightly up the social hierarchy. It mostly works, except when a few characters are left behind. Robert Martin, Harriet's suitor, is still a tenant farmer. The even greater disparity between Emma's social standing and his changes the nature of her rejection of him (on her friend's behalf). It's a small detail, but this is frustrating in a story in which plot points hinge on details of social disparity.

Lest we get lost completely in a fairy tale, de Wilde sobers us with a sudden nosebleed at the film's dramatic climax: Knightley's declaration of love for Emma. This directorial decision is the highlight of the film. Emma is too focused on her concern that a match between herself and Knightley would upset Harriet (personal growth!) to indulge in a neat romantic moment, and the scene maintains the characters' slightly awkward dynamic in a way that is both funny and moving.

The dramatic intensity of these small but pivotal moments of village life is heightened by the operatic and string-filled score, from Isobel Waller-Bridge and David Schweitzer. It succeeds in enhancing the absurdist elements of the world that de Wilde has created, with overlays of melodramatic motifs, but overshoots the mark. The music quickly becomes repetitive, and is not as easy on the ear as the production design is on the eye. There is enough visual absurdism in the Handmaid's Tale-esque troop of red capes when the parlour boarders traipse across the screen, and in the clever camerawork that

draws our attention to the minute details of social interactions. The inclusion of folk music that was popular in the seventies, such as The Watertons' *Country Life* and Maddy Prior's and June Tabor's *Game of Cards*, provides welcome contrast to the intensity of the main themes and further elevates some of the film's happier moments. Johnny Flynn's contribution to the soundtrack, *Queen Bee*, is a similarly refreshing addition.

Badly Done, Emma?

Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* (2019) demonstrated that there is plenty of appetite for a refreshed version of a classic penned by a woman – especially when there is scope for beloved fictional women to find new empowerment under the female gaze. We get this from the 2020 *Emma*, too, but the feminism is all in the details.

Famously, Austen described Emma as 'a heroine whom no one but myself will much like'; and this is the central conceit of the novel. An adaptation of *Emma* must live or die by the protagonist's characterisation. Emma is blatantly, and knowingly, selfish. Her attempts to remedy this are misplaced, and only serve to simultaneously mask and deepen her vanity.

In the novel, Austen skilfully switches the authorial voice between her own assessment of Emma, and Emma's own way of viewing the world. The reader is kept on their toes. Previous film and TV adaptations of Emma have sought to maintain this ambiguity with the inclusion of a narrator, to recount Austen's carefully-worded characterisation. In the 2020 adaptation, we are given an abridged version of the novel's first line – 'Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, […] had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her' – and then left to fend for ourselves.

The exclusion of the narrative voice creates a great feat for the actor. They must play ambiguity; we are not *supposed* to know whether we like Emma – whether we approve of her actions and the motivations behind them, or condemn her vanity outright.

Anya Taylor-Joy's Emma is the meanest yet, so it is no wonder that the director did not feel the need to include the complete, jarring irony of the opening sentence: '… with a comfortable home and happy disposition, [Emma] seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence …'. This Emma is almost completely unlikeable – where is that 'happy disposition'? – at least until the final third of the film, when she finally realises the full extent of her errors and the pain that they have caused both others and (the clincher!) herself.

Taylor-Joy pulls it off. Emma's meanness is the great strength of this adaptation, although it is the element that has ruffled most feathers among those who prefer an Emma who has better intentions at heart – like Gwyneth Paltrow's 1996 portrayal, or Alicia Silverstone's Cher Horowitz in *Clueless* (1995), in which Emma is a spoilt teenager living in Beverly Hills. But why should a woman who has grown up pampered and wanting for nothing be fundamentally good and charitable? She has to learn these qualities, and de Wilde gives her greater scope to do so – even if the slow start to Emma's education in humility is a little tiring in the film's first thirty minutes. We have to wait for the penny to drop, but when it does it is all the more believable and all the more satisfying.

George Knightley played by Johnny Flynn, from IMBD: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9214832/mediaviewer/rm2430188289.

The same is true of the central romance between Emma and George Knightley, played by Johnny Flynn. Knightley is sixteen years Emma's senior, and her constant critic. Flynn provides a welcome fresh take on the character. Knightley's eminent sense contrasts so starkly with Emma's vanity that the match can seem an unlikely one. Flynn is able to make his character's fondness for Emma clear from the beginning, while maintaining enough ambiguity to enable the realisation that the couple are in love (during a steamy turn about the dance floor) to transform him, briefly, into a lovestruck fool. This Knightley is vulnerable: he is the subject of the "natural nudity" of which cinema-goers are warned at the titles; we see him undress and dress after a long journey, demonstrating that it was not only women who suffered the rituals and constraints of status-appropriate clothing. (Some Janeites (i.e. dedicated Austen purists) have boycotted the film on the grounds that Austen does not need or want sullying with this apparent vulgarity.) He struggles with his very high, very starched, collars throughout the film – but his efforts are appreciated.

Many of the other characters are expertly played, too – though Josh O'Connor's Mr Elton and Callum Turner's Frank Churchill cannot match the subtlety of Flynn's performance. Both are played as caricatures: Elton entirely for laughs, and Churchill as a womanizer. Churchill is supposed to be Knightley's main rival for Emma's affections, but her flirtation with the long-awaited Frank is only superficial in this version.

The story can withstand these weak characterisations, but the most substantial departure from Austen – in the depiction of the friendship between Emma and Harriet friendship – is a heavier blow. Taylor-Joy's Emma is cold and often dismissive towards

Mia Goth's bouncy and juvenile Harriet. Goth's performance is predominantly comic, which works as a happy contrast to Emma's harshness. However, Emma's interest in Harriet – beyond her potential as a match-making project – is not obvious for most of the film. When later scenes highlight their warmth and affection towards each other, it comes as a bit of a surprise. However, if this is the price of a meaner depiction of Emma, it is just about justified.

The peripheral characters are played to great comic effect. Connor Swindells takes a brief but star turn as Harriet's love interest, Robert Turner, and Miranda Hart's signature comic style adapts well to the character of Miss Bates – although we miss the humorous dynamic between her and her silent mother. Her niece, Jane Fairfax, the object of Emma's envy, is suitably and discreetly angst-ridden as played by Amber Anderson. Bill Nighy is in his element as the pernickety hypochondriac Mr Woodhouse, who performs elaborate choreography with fire screens to fend off cold chills about the house. Mrs Elton, a later addition to the narrative, is given a suitably haughty portrayal in Tanya Reynolds, who deftly ekes out every ounce of humour in her minimal screen time.

Mr and Mrs Elton, Josh O'Connor and Tanya Reynolds, take tea with Miss Woodhouse, from IMBD: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9214832/mediaviewer/rm2530851585.

Indeed, this film's specialism is moments of levity and humour. In interviews, Autumn de Wilde has spoken about the huge influence that screwball comedies of the 1930s have had on her work, and particularly on *Emma.* Critic Mark Kermode believes that the screwball element of this adaptation 'reduces the complexities of the original text to a rather more caricatured screen romp' (Kermode, 2020). However, the dynamics of these romantic comedies – often riffing off class tension, and brimming with physical

humour – find excellent parallels in the comedy of misunderstandings and class-based awkwardness in *Emma*, and de Wilde succeeded in amplifying these elements. The scene in which Knightley dashes to Emma's house as dawn breaks on the ball, after their mutual realisation of their attraction, is a perfect example of this. As Emma rushes out to meet him, Frank Churchill arrives with Harriet in his arms; she is dramatically deposited on a chaise longue, and the men run back and forth in a scramble to follow Emma's orders. For some, it may seem overblown: this is the first time we have seen Knightley lose his composure, and he loses it completely. But the scene is convincing as the climax of slowly-escalated tensions between Emma, Knightley and Churchill. Harriet's theatrics work as a display of how far Emma's vanity has rubbed off on her friend. The slapstick provides another layer of subtlety to the characterisations, rather than reducing the original complexity.

Ultimately, de Wilde contains a strong, fresh take on Emma – and, crucially, her relationship with Knightley – in a pretty, comical picture. Our protagonist is portrayed as written by Austen and without compromise that would render her more "likeable", unlike other adaptations. The central dynamics emerge intact, and enhanced, from the screwball comedy treatment, and the high stylisation of the production works within this framework (despite the resultant misleading representation of the character's social situations). If we can overlook the excess of glamour, and Janeites can overlook the nudity, *Emma* is the most incisive adaptation of this classic novel yet.

Faculty of History

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Book Reviews

Sentinels Aloft: *An Indifference of Birds*

Vicki A. Lee

Review of: *An Indifference of Birds* (2020)
Written by Richard Smyth

Birds have been concretised as familiar figures in literary tradition and the popular imagination: to name a few, they have been portents of death, icons of freedom, vestiges of idyllic times past. Yet these are appellations humans ascribe to birds, who carry these manmade ideas on delicate wings. Birds, however, harbour scant attachment to us other than as purveyors of food scraps or abandoned shelter.

Wildlife writer Richard Smyth overturns this human tendency to romanticise birds in *An Indifference of Birds*, published February 2020 by Uniformbooks. This is not the first excursion to avian territory in Smyth's non-fiction corpus: *An Indifference* follows A Sweet, Wild Note: What We Hear When the Birds Sing with Elliot & Thompson Limited in 2018. In An Indifference, he quells the impulse to project our human preconceptions onto avian wildlife, urging us to consider the gestalt of human activity on the lives of birds, and the planet at large.

Smyth demystifies the bird species by recontextualising them as central figures in human affairs, a reactive force engaged in an eternal tug of war with us. He contends that "ecologies aren't monolithic" (Smyth 2020, p. 44), exemplifying a holistic environmental history that elevates us from our human milieu to the bird's eye view. Through decentring the human point of view, Smyth helps us relinquish our entrenched biases of birds and, in effect, ourselves. He illuminates recesses of our humanity we wilfully ignore: the underbelly of human progress towards which we ourselves have been indifferent.

A Revisionist Environmental History

Growing up in a city where green space is ever dwindling, the boundaries between human life and urban wildlife are seldom crossed. I derive an almost childlike joy from spotting a Northern cardinal perching on a backyard tree, a spectacle of now-estranged fauna infiltrating human domain, our urban homes each a microcosm of the city it occupies. The spheres of human life and wildlife rarely collide—and when they do, we recall just how arbitrary these margins are. What makes An Indifference a compelling read is the flavour of novelty in what is—to a layperson like me—a science lesson about

bird-human diplomacy. He urges us to unlearn and relearn our evolutionary course with renewed curiosity. Smyth does not alienate the reader with technicalities, either, as he outfits us with the repertoire of an ornithologist while maintaining accessibility. Reading the text, I am reacquainted with what have become inconsequential creatures camouflaged in the white noise of urbanity.

An Indifference invites us to consider the lived experience of birds before recorded time. Smyth offers a counternarrative to anthropocentric history as we know it, focalised by our avian neighbours. In Exploring Environmental History (2005), T.C. Smout summarises the discipline as "the history of wolf hunting from the perspective of what happens to the wolf as much as what happens to the hunter" (pp. 1-2). Smyth not only includes the bird's outlook but prioritises it. The paradox of his project is that his ostensibly avian-centric account still fixates on the lives and movements of humans, the centre of gravity around which birds orbit. Smyth calibrates our outlook to the acuity of a bird to see our full radius of impact.

Smyth also individualises these birds by referring to their innumerable species names throughout the text. For once, we feel dwarfed and outnumbered. This only seems natural, as the species is composed of "more specialists than generalists" (Smyth 2020, p. 26) in their habitats (farmland birds, moorland birds, wetland birds), just as we are experts in our professions. "If phenomenological archaeology is the practice of understanding prehistoric sites through our physical and emotional experience of them", Mathew Lyons writes in a New Humanist review, "this is something like phenomenological ornithology: trying to understand birds through their experiences and behaviours" (2020, para. 3). Beyond decoding avian behaviour, however, this phenomenological thrust that Lyon observes is the engine of Smyth's text; it is how he cultivates the audience's affinity with birds. To this end, Smyth refracts our sense of being by re-examining the history of our species through the aerial, detached vantage point of birds.

Smyth narrates the spatial evolution of our planet with a telescopic eye, at times zooming into the English locales of his formative years and zooming out to survey the panorama of entire continents. An Indifference remarkably endows its readers with the same mobility as birds. Smyth encourages us to adopt their mode of being through how they navigate de facto human territory: the forests we raze, the land we cultivate, the horizons we obstruct with towers. As Smyth puts it, "Where we act, birds respond" (2020, p. 13). Humans demarcate physical space to our advantage and, in doing so, have encroached on the jurisdiction of birds. As architects of our habitat, we have customised our natural and built environment to satiate our appetite for expansion.

An Unflattering Self-Portrait

Smyth unpacks what we consider the immutable binary of civilisation and nature, which entirely dissolves in the lives of birds. "We construct human realities around the things we make, the things we built", (2020, p. 77) Smyth writes, "Birds see a different reality: flatter, sharper edged, locked into the present moment: what is this is now, what is it good for now?" (Smith 2020, p. 77). They adapt to human vagaries, rescuing our detritus to fulfil their immediate survival requirements. Our relationship with nature, by contrast, is informed by the extent of profit we can derive. Our guiding ethos is always: how arable—how lucrative—is this land we occupy?

Our relationship with birds begins and ends with our physicality. We made first impressions not with our persons but our "circles of consequences" (Smyth 2020, p. 17): the resources we select and where we discard the refuse. To amend a human platitude, one man's trash is one bird's treasure. Waste is "the currency of our bargain with birds" (Smyth 2020, p. 22) as they occupy the negative space of our physical presence and material consumption. Inarable land lacks use-value because it is unprofitable in our myopic human eyes. In this utilitarian appraisal of nature, humans are very much like the birds. The major caveat is that we can afford to be selective, while birds must be astute opportunists. We thoughtlessly squander our surpluses at great disservice to the planet and other lifeforms.

With this unsavoury representation of humans, Smyth gives insight—albeit imaginary—into what birds think of us. It is unlikely we have redeemed ourselves from our debut: "They must see us, watch us, from the same calculating perspective as they did too many years ago. We're still galumphing heavy-footed through the edge lands, causing havoc, small life scattering wherever we tread" (Smyth 2020, p. 20). Although humans are the veritable protagonists in this ecological drama, Smyth does not imbue us with any heroism.

Humans have mastered environmental exploitation. We have forced fellow organisms to reconstitute their lives just to make room for us. As Smyth clearly illustrates, "our many overlaps with the birds coupled with the breadth and strength of our grip, mean that the birds have had to rebuild themselves […] to move just a little further out of our reach" (2020, p. 38). We can't help but cheer on the minor characters, the birds, for their resilience and resourcefulness; how they salvage places we desert to become subsequent custodians.

Smyth evokes the infancy of western civilisation: "If we can watch the prehistoric creep of our species across North America [...] we might see landscapes being scraped clean of large mammals large birds large anything; we might see habitats hollowed-out as we shoulder our way in" (2020, p. 36). Smyth reminds us that humans have been agents of destruction acting on a selfish survival imperative long before late-stage capitalism. Colonial and imperial enterprises of our history have wreaked irreparable damage on human lives, and this callous disregard for the livelihood of others has been the fulcrum

of our species' progress. We have made not just birds but members of our own species constant fugitives on this shared planet.

An Indifference of Humans

Although our lives are ostensibly disparate, we and the birds are entangled in an "unfathomable symbiosis" (Smyth 2020, p. 17). This ecological mystery permeates An Indifference and engulfs his audience. Smyth expertly manipulates time and space, catapulting us from the prehistoric migration and nascent experiments of our ancestors to the minutiae of bird life in modern London, all in one chapter. Smyth expresses most poignantly, "I think a bird's being extends beyond its outstretched wingtips; its identity is knotted up in its habitat, in the world that has shaped it, and continues to shape it" (2020, p. 63). While he reminds us of the birds' indifference at every turn, we are also driven to interrogate our perennial indifference towards the birds. This is the avian perspective of humanity on a macro scope: the indiscriminate course of human evolution and the acceleration of modernity that privileges human lives.

Indeed, birds spare no concern for human welfare nor our sentiments. They have no consideration for us beyond the purview of survival, whether we aid or abate it. Smyth almost humanises the birds as he delineates their thought processes, which are perhaps even more logical and pragmatic than our own. As readers, we cannot help but applaud the birds for their shrewdness where we ourselves are careless.

An Indifference ignites in readers a profound compassion for the birds: Smyth puts our relationship with birds at the forefront of our shared environment, our resource allocation, and the imperceptible call and response of our parallel lives. But as we close the book to peruse its title again, we are reminded one last time this feeling of camaraderie is unilateral and always will be. It is impossible to confirm what birds are thinking; we can only infer as ornithologists do but these interpretations are ultimately human abstractions.

We can never reconcile the birds' motivations with our human frameworks. We can, however, admire the clumsy harmony in which we live with them. In an essay published in The Times Literary Supplement, Smyth intimates how his perception of birds changed during the COVID-19 lockdown (he even gave a virtual reading of chapter three, "Movements"), namely how birds have offered him respite from his domestic captivity:

"Often our little parishes of sky will seem too small. Mine seems small now. But then, at some point soon, a woodpigeon will leap up abruptly into a clap display above the opposite roof-ridge, or a goldfinch will pose fiercely on the vent pipe to clatter out its song, or the bandit-masked magpies will drop down to harry a cat somewhere below, and it will seem, all at once, a little bigger". (2020, para. 18).

An Indifference succeeds as an environmentalist manifesto that converts readers without vilifying them; it does not reprimand their ecological destruction nor insular habits of existence. Instead, An Indifference appeals to the kinship between humans and birds: both species circumscribed by bodily shortcomings, shouldering the same burden of surviving in insurmountable physical limitations. In this way, humans and birds are compatriots of the same existential and evolutionary plight. How we negotiate our parameters is much like the birds. As Lyons writes, "to the birds, it is us who are just another natural phenomenon" (2020, para. 4). They are apathetic to us the same way that we may be apathetic to, say, the changing of seasons—but this seasonal phenomenon directly affects our lived experiences. We do not question it, however, nor do we protest against it; we respond and adapt accordingly, just as birds do with humans.

An Indifference of Birds is a coming of age story of the human race, a narrative in which birds are reluctant, always apathetic onlookers. Smyth does not offer a remedial solution to our collateral environmental damage but makes us confront the reverberations from our circles of consequences. After all, birds embody—in their movement, their shelter, their ontology—the legacy of human existence.

Faculty of English

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Because of This, Too, I Loved: Danez Smith's *homie*

Caroline King

Review of: *homie* (2020)
Written by Danez Smith

Beginning with Jonathan, "eleven & already making roads out of water / young genius, blog writer, lil community activist, curls tight / as pinky swears, black as my nation...", Danez Smith's poem 'my president' kicks off their latest collection *homie* (2020) as a paean to their community. Other potential candidates for their campaign range from the boys selling candy outside Walgreens to single mothers to Beyoncé. A proven master of bathos, a poetic device which lifts things high to cut them with the ordinary—a balloon is inflated to be popped, effecting humor and some sadness—Smith starts their conceit with biblical resonance, *the least among you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation*... (Isaiah 60:22). "Show me to our nation", they write, connoting a president who personifies the everyday people they know and admire. Following the tradition of ecstatic poetry, described by Anne Carson as a spiritual event based off the Greek definition "standing outside oneself" (Carson p. 190) as is typical of mad persons, geniuses, lovers, and poets, Smith is generous with lofty diction and exclamation points. The poem ends:

o my
presidents!
my
presidents!
.....
i sing your
names sing your
names
your names

my mighty anthem

But as their collection contours, this exaltation points to more painful realities. In an interview with Smith, Kaveh Akbar notes how "a line can be celebrating, exalting blackness but also lamenting the inherent tragedy of it". (Akbar 2015). In *homie,* Smith, a black, queer, non-binary, HIV-positive writer and performer, expands on complex truths explored in their previous and award-winning collections, *[insert] boy* (2014), *Black Movie* (2015), and *don't call us dead* (2017). Quoting Ilya Kaminsky and Lil Wayne for its epigraphs, their latest collection is rich with cultural allusions. They reimagine their nonwhite friends as traditionally white characters: "& i elect eve ewing, eve who i know would ms. frizzle the country into one big classroom...". By transfiguring familiar personalities, Smith is calling out accepted tropes. But their remaking reaches further: the series is also about shaking off the shackles of white interpretation, a theme established in *Black Movie* whose poems such as 'Sleeping

Beauty in the Hood', 'Lion King in the Hood', and 'Boyz N the Hood 2' parody well-known cinematic diegeses. However, as *homie* shows too, inherent in this reclamation is an uncomfortable duality. Introduced in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), the term "unhappy consciousness" (Hegel p.119) describes the experience of a divided self suspended between desire and reason. Identity, derived both from soul and situation, is therefore muddled; a concept that has tracked forward to W.B. Du Bois' theory of "double consciousness" —a source of inward "twoness" experienced by African-Americans that was later expanded to reflect other oppressed groups (Du Bois p. 38). We imagine our souls transcending societal apperceptions to become the identity's backbone but then kinesthesia creeps in to remind us what transcendence depends on: however gross or unjust, without the skewed society there would be nothing to transcend; the exalted state exists only because of the degradation it fights against. When Smith uplifts "the trans girl making songs in her closet, spinning the dark", "my auntie, only a few months clean, but clean", the cab drivers, swollen nurses, drag queens and addicts, the reader is reminded of a sadder, more familiar underbelly where they've been denied.

Truth is Everyone's Stakes:

Beginning as a performance poet, Smith says that this experience has shaped their writing's sense of *duende*. Described by Federico García Lorca as "the fertile silt that gives us the very substance of art" (Lorca p. 49), duende represents the keeper of the dark, mysterious space within each of us that poetry seeks to let loose. In Smith's work, the duende tradition pushes this vulnerability to the edge of death. These stakes can be seen in 'Self-Portrait as a 90s R&B Video', a poem which was widely performed before appearing in *homie*. To start, Smith grounds the audience in a familiar narrative: a stereotypical female breakdown as portrayed in a R&B music video. "Lately, I've been opening doors in slow motion / & find myself often wearing loose white silks / in rooms packed with wind machines..." it begins, Smith tossing back their buzz cut head in affectation of the long, lush hair blowing behind.

Image from Danez Smith – "Self Portrait as a 90s R&B Video". Full video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOE7O9pkczY.

Their lover treats them wrong but they don't leave, idling instead in a house of luxury—in a basement pool of gold "dip my head in, let even / my hair get wet & rise out the water hood Venus / Afrodite, bitch god with iced out ropes draped / from my head & arms & covering my nipples / & ill nana just so" (Smith shimmies their hands along their torso).

When Smith performs their poetry, their meaning comes through additional channels: voice, pace, place, and body. It is not a matter of poetic diction or figuration alone, but rather results from intricate interactions between movement and the broader social contexts in which they are deployed. Certainly, as in Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" (1956) or "America" (1956), the words sometimes work on the printed page, but their true power usually lies in the moment of public performance and depends upon the context of the audience. Similarly, Smith's 'Self-portrait' comes to life onstage when they speed and stress lines like a flow, a nod to the rap-meets-poetry scene. This rhythmic style alludes to Smith's blackness through musical performativity, echoing the black poets of the mid 1900s who helped revive poetry's oral origins. Sonia Sanchez, for example, was a forefront spoken-word artist known for using wildly varied tonal semantics to authenticate her identity. Many of her poems, such as 'We a BaddDDD People' (1970), are scored on the page to inform their performance vocalizations. "We a Bad-Bad-BaD-BaDBaD People", it begins, echoing a staccato stutter. She also transcribes scat, improvised jazz singing where voices imitate an instrument, through nonsense but specific syllables: "aaa-ee-ooo-wah / wah", repeating. Throughout history, music and poetry have developed side by side, and Smith has continued in this tradition. By the end of 'Self-Portrait', the lover takes revenge and burns the miscreant house down, admiring their Bakunin's urge come to life. However, this victory is unsettled when Smith's register drops their fire-and-ice, foxy tone for fear in the last lines: "I'll burn this motherfucker down...whatever

survives the blaze will be / my kingdom. I hope I make it". In line again with ecstatic poetics, Smith claims the wreckage as their kingdom, evoking religious and power systems from which black people have been excluded in America.

By introducing us to the individuals affected by these injustices, the stakes Smith sets become more significant to the readers: at its core, *homie* is about black friendships and communities. Smith begins with a group of neighborhood kids, a microcosm that can seem like the world. 'Jumped!' describes the magnetic oscillation of inclusion and exclusion among peers. Love, violence, and beauty are not separate entities, Smith's narrator describes as they're beaten up by a group of boys. "The fists that broke my ribs also wanted me to live...each hand laid upon me like a rude & starving prayer", they write. For the first half, the poem is written in couplets zig-zagging down the page like a group of boys traipsing together down the street: just as couplets might be considered a safe, familiar form, groups are a safe way to move through a community, allowing each boy to share in a larger identity while creating their own. Many of Smith's poems use typology to reflect the narrative, for example 'gay cancer' which begins as a tight block then unravels with the death of a friend. Similarly, when the group turns on the narrator in 'jumped!' the couplets break down into smaller fragments and the poem ends with a familiar metaphor concretised as a bloody nose:

> i didn't know
> a thing about love
> until those boys
> walked away
> so happy.
>
> my heart pouring from my nose.

A metaphor we can touch. Through the violence, the sense of interconnection within their community becomes palpable. The other boys' pleasure reads stronger than the narrator's pain, which is also given a positive connotation. By reconstruing the metaphor "I poured my heart out", Smith suggests that because of the attack, they were opened to more complicated truths about pleasure and love.

But homie doesn't substitute love for honesty: even hopeful words like solidarity are more nuanced. 'i didn't like you when i met you', one poem is titled, "like dude, you were stank...". Intergenerational, interracial, and transnational, the community Smith lets us see is also realistic. 'What was said at the bus stop' chronicles an exchange with a girl from Pakistan. "*Lately has been a long time*", she begins and the narrator latches on to this shared sense, ready to connect then hesitates: shared is not sameness and, knowing what it's like to be a forum for ignorant assumptions, the narrator fears ascribing his experience to others, saying, "what advice do the drowned have for the burned? / what gossip is there between the hanged & the buried?". And though the narrator feels unable to speak about their lives as a common narrative, as they face discrimination and want the girl to know they stand beside her:

> & i want to reach across our great distance
> that is sometimes an ocean & sometimes centimeters

& say, look, your people, my people, all that has happened
to us & still make love under rusted moons, still pull

children from the mothers & name them
still trach them to dance & your pain is not mine
& is no less & is mine & i pray to my god your god
blesses you with mercy & i have tasted your food & understand
how it is a good home & i don't know your language
but i understand your songs & i cried when they came
for your uncles & when you buried your niece
i wanted the world to burn in the child's brief memory
& still, still, still, still, still, still, still, still, still
& i have stood by you in the soft shawl of morning
waiting & breathing & waiting

Here, the word "waiting" may have two meanings: waiting for the go-ahead to come together then waiting together for racism to end.

Tensions are also heightened around questions of sexuality. In 'on faggotness', the narrator describes coming out to their grandparents and being neither understood nor embraced. "Grand. pa said. that boy gonna be a. faggot. i didn't. know / what it meant. but it had to be. akin to king. or mighty. different. a good kind. / but then i looked it up in his eyes. saw my body upside down", they write. However, Smith's sketches are rarely clear-cut. They acknowledge both the good and the bad, reading like truth as we understand it, and truth is something we look for in poetry: *why should we want anything in particular in or out of a poem?* (Sutherland p. 10), scholar Keith Sutherland once asked. But, as the reader experiences in Smith's work, when the good and bad are both allowed as true, cognitive dissonance eases. The grandparents are not flat characters, myopic and homophobic as might be stereotypical their generation. Instead, Smith describes them as the community's roots into black history. Their imagery conjured wisdom and magic: granddaddy's gold teeth are "crowns", "country tiara", "all those suns so near his tongue" that made "even his vomit expensive." In 'happy hour', Grandma's moles become "a night sky" across her face but the metaphor extends deeper than beauty: each mole represents a friend who has died. The grandparents' wisdom isn't shallow, ascribed by age alone, but rather is a product of the same painful experiences Smith seeks to navigate throughout the collection. "Grandma say she going to the funeral to see who all there / like i say i'm 'bout to grab a drink", Smith writes. That their wisdom is manifest physically is also significant. One can see reflections of Yusef Komunyakaa's 'The Body Remembers' (2019) as Smith describes the inextricable connections between mind and body, between their own body and those around them, and the resonance of loss when those connections are broken.

First, Trees:

In Smith's work statistics are people. Throughout *homie*, plant motifs represent individuals within a larger space: fragile, beautiful, and essential. Their poem 'the flower who bloomed thru the fence in grandmama's yard' analogizes someone trapped in a hard place to a small flower that grew into a fence, choking through the

pickets. "Locked in & strangled pretty / nosey-ass flower peeking his head / in search of greener grass now stuck / in a guillotine refusing to guillotine", they write. This image is smart and powerful, compelling the reader to remember that people aren't their circumstances. Personifying the land also recalls American traditions, marking Smith and their subjects' place in that history. "*Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west, / And thought of him I love...*" (Whitman 1865). Walt Whitman's elegy for President Lincoln insinuates that the interconnection between human and land is biological, spiritual, and indivisible. Inverting the aphorism 'can't see the forest for the trees', Smith's poem 'undetectable' ends:

> i am the most important species in my body.
> but one dead boy makes the whole forest
> a grave. & he's in there, in me, in the middle
> of all that green. you probably thought
> he was fruit.

Even one death changes humanity, and one hears echoes of Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit' (1939) at the end.

Though poets often shy away from name dropping for fear it will alienate readers, *homie* challenges this reservation. Smith addresses their own reasoning in an interview with Rosemarie Ho: "What is a name but the most intimate piece of language that we can infuse within a poem?", (Smith 2020) they say. "If poems are these little light things that seek to be the most exact and specific language to describe a feeling, to describe a situation, then a name is another tool to help us locate where that poem is supposed to go". (Smith 2020). By these criteria, their poems are very intimate: throughout the collection, they name over fifty people ranging from fellow poets like Eve Ewing to cultural icons like Shonda Rhimes to friends including Melvin Dixon and Essex Hemphill who have died of H.I.V./AIDs. They call out first-names only they can know, as in 'trees!' where they envision a tree after each friend they would like to be planted alongside. "I would be the happiest tree", they write. Reaching out in second person to those who *know who you are*, the postscript acknowledgements are like poems themselves, if one's written through a high school yearbook: "you invite me out for drag queens on the nights i think of finally [ ]"; "i call your mama mama"; "God bless you who screens my nudes, drafts my break-up text"; "how often have i loved a thing because you loved it? (including me)"; "you & you & you & you go in on a dildo for my birthday...". Smith lets us see into their life but not all the way, personal and true as they choose it to be.

One name reappears throughout the collection and is reified in the poem 'For Andrew'. There, Smith processes their friend's death in what is both a eulogy and a prayer:

> *i. swagged-out Jesus*
>
> name yourself that mess when you wore the rainbow
> beaded crown à la Stevie in the '70s & let the great
> religion of your belly hang like some Southside
> Buddha

with a boombox dangling from your neck old Radio
Raheem looking ass dude walking around blasting Ye
random folk following you like you were the Christ
of the night or maybe just a mirage of bass
& flesh stained with June's turmeric—

o if the gods would let me edit & loop
o if i could stop here—

Following this memory, the poem waterfalls into ruminations on the relationship between death, the soul, and the body the soul inhabits—but the memories are why we even care to get those abstracts figured out. Memories are what prove, too, that *homie* is not just a celebration but rather a call for humanity between communities. After a jokey qualifier that art can be interpreted in any which way, Smith tells us their hope for their collection: that when we finish reading, we'll sit down and call a friend, honoring the ones we still have as we honor the lost. "I call for god", they write. "I call for god but out comes your name."

Department of Continuing Education

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Theatre and Exhibitions

A Socially-Distanced *Romeo and Juliet* at Sadler's Wells

Andreea Scridon

Review of: *Romeo and Juliet*
Directed and Choreographed by Rudolf Nureyev (1977)
Adapted by Sadler's Wells Theatre and the English National Ballet Philharmonic (2015)

Winner of the 2020 Firework Competition

Rudolf Nureyev is perhaps a name more familiar to an older generation (due to his untimely death from AIDS in 1992) or to ballet connoisseurs exclusively. But the dancer and choreographer, who has recently come back into the spotlight with Ralph Fiennes' 2018 biopic *The White Crow*, was one of the world's most famous ballet dancers a few decades ago. A legend of magnetism and vision, Nureyev repeatedly sparked outrage for always insisting on dancing and interpreting in his own way, often making radical, modernizing changes to classical ballet. In 1977, after a history of playing Romeo himself, Nureyev turned out his own production of *Romeo and Juliet*, set to Sergei Prokofiev's 1935 score, which premiered at the London Coliseum and has remained in the repertoire of the English National Ballet to this day.

Now, the successful dancer, choreographer, and director Johann Kobborg has re-adapted this production. In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic, the full show was available from May 6th to May 8th, 2020, on the YouTube channel of the English National Ballet. This consideration of the show's online premiere seeks to document the unprecedented experience of watching a ballet performance online, and how the future of ballet might look in a post-pandemic world.

The Show Itself

Nureyev may be one of a kind, but his version proves quite contested: critics in recent years have suggested that Rudolf Nureyev's direction of *Romeo and Juliet* is 'unconvincing' (Crisp, 2017) and 'neurotic' (Jennings, 2011). Though it may be less daring than Alexander Ekman's famously innovative *Eskapist* (2020), I for one, as a long-time lover of all that pertains to ballet but by no means an expert in the field, found it an intriguing interpretation the original text, highlighting certain aspects in a way that has not previously explored. In many ways Nureyev's *Romeo and Juliet* is experimental, or rather more representational than originally expected: bawdy, foamy, and intense.

Photo by Bill Cooper.

It might seem unorthodox at first glance to mute Shakespeare entirely: there is absolutely no audible speech in this ballet. But Nureyev may have struck gold. Radical silence only serves to emphasize the profoundly communicative and initiative nature of dance. The phenomenal evidence of hard work in the dancers' movements, in their very *bodies,* evokes a downright biological, genetic connotation of creativity in which the human being becomes a work of art. These human spectacles convey dream states in a way that words are rarely able.

What stayed with me long after the show was Shakespeare's understanding of how much Renaissance dancing, life and costumes mirror the spirit of cabaret. Unlike Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film *Romeo + Juliet*, Nureyev's ballet does not attempt to contemporize or provide a version of the original play, but instead presents it as a fusion of elements that highlight its modernity, emphasizing that it is a truly timeless tale. The famous Queen Mab scene, approached differently by every director and every Mercutio, is downright burlesque and rambunctious here, while the Capulet party seems to evoke the avant-garde, hyper self-aware dance scene in Yorgos Lanthimos' 2018 film, *The Favourite*.

Photo by Bill Cooper.

The 'versatile' (Pritchard, 2020) Alina Cojocaru, Kobborg's off-stage partner, is appropriately lithe and energetic to play a girl of Juliet's age (the director resists the traditionally nubile casting choice - think Olivia Hussey in Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film adaptation), seeming to fly, flitting across the stage like a dragonfly. She is ethereal and innocent, yes, kissing Romeo *en pointe* (and later dies *en pointe* - a graceful touch), but I have never seen her have so much direct and raw agency before. Juliet's fraught drama at Tybalt's death is the stuff of Greek tragedy; she claws at herself, her hands fan rapidly and chaotic, she races across the stage and back again, showing the adolescent's irrational, internal struggle between her family and the object of her infatuation. We witness fully and intensely the true drama of her short life. Isaac Hernández plays a Romeo of Classical serenity, delivering difficult steps smoothly; Pritchard is right to call his 'lines pure and lean' (2020). He is the ideal apollonian lover in physique and in attitude, if less absorbed in character than Cojocaru – although it becomes clear that in this version, she is the truly active agent. If he is the conventional lover, then Juliet is the spunk and dynamite, the clear focus of the production, the one character who feels horrified by the bloodshed around her. That said, Hernández is an exceptionally skilled collaborator, gaining momentum in choreographic dialogue. Hernández's dance with the Montague men is particularly enthralling: he bullfights Tybalt, played by James Streeter, to death. One such example of on-stage collaboration is the scene of Mercutio's death: what is a grotesque joke becomes a gripping act of horrible revelation, as everyone realizes that Mercutio, played by Cesar Corrales, is not playing any joke this time but is drawing his last breath. This foreshadows Juliet's convincing agony upon finding that Romeo has drunk the poison at the end of the ballet. Like a swan, she throws her head back, releasing a shuddering cry, before making the decision to plunge the dagger into her heart. When it comes to secondary characters, Paris, played by Max Westwell, stands out in particular. Though arguably insipid in the original play, Paris's domineering masculinity is expressed here by Maxwell's physical movements. Westwell's duck-toed walk is imperious and he almost manhandles the tiny Juliet when dancing with her at the Capulet ball; a great contrast to her tender harmony with Romeo.

Photo by Bill Cooper.

Of the arts, it is dance that naturally makes for the best expression of sensuality. The wedding night scene takes its time in unfolding but is the very opposite of lewd or pornographic: the symmetry of the dance emphasizes a natural, almost tantric order to the unfolding of the consummation. The religious imagery of the wedding scene is also beautiful: Romeo and Juliet go around in a circle, on their knees. Secondary dances provided comic relief (physical humor fitting the Renaissance context well), but also brought to mind the Greek chorus in moments of tragedy. For example, when Tybalt and Mercutio die, the secondary dancers freeze cinematically, hovering above the corpses, adding great drama to the scene. Set design, by Canadian-based sculptor David Umemoto, was beautiful, harmonious and unobtrusive: the contours of Verona's buildings and stairwells are blurred in a distant, pastel-coloured sky, giving an impression of the painterly *Sfumato* technique. Costumes seem faithful to the time-period; indeed, it becomes apparent that Renaissance clothes, consisting of tights, puffed sleeves, and rich, jewel-toned colours, simply looked like ballet costumes. The atmosphere is naturally theatrical.

For the first half hour or so, my immediate reaction was to find the introduction slightly tedious. The slowness before the action begins, along with the fact that Prokofiev's music here is less explosive and more of a background soundtrack, gave the production a slightly peripheral quality. Ultimately, Nureyev's production builds tension slowly and steadily towards climax, as foreshadowed by the early figures of fate rolling dice and the funeral procession for plague victims at the beginning of the ballet.

Photo by Bill Cooper.

Ballet Streaming: Technology and Cinematography

Yet I was surprised to notice several choreographic slips and wrong moves, confirming the belief that the physical presence of the audience is conducive to the quality of a performance. It is only natural for this to be the case, considering the effect of adrenaline on the body. Ballet is a tight-rope-walk between sport and art, exacerbated by Nureyev's notoriously difficult, flurried choreography. Alternatively, perhaps this only became apparent because many spectators would have been sitting too far away to notice such – perhaps inevitable – mistakes in a live performance. The camerawork could have been better: the shots were often too wide and there weren't enough

close-ups for online viewers to fully enjoy the unique experience of supposedly having the best seat in the house. At other moments, we were shown the orchestra – understandable, but distracting when the action is already taking place, which occurred once or twice in the streaming. Nureyev's *Romeo and Juliet* is a ballet, but it is also a film, and there should be equal respect for both mediums. In addition to wishing that I could have seen individual movements better by getting a closer view, I also would have appreciated an informative, brief documentary following the show introducing its historical context and role in dance and theatre aesthetics. In the pandemic context that has prompted these unprecedented streamed productions, opera seems to have had a better fate, particularly those productions uploaded online by the Metropolitan Opera in New York (such as the Richard Strauss opera *Capriccio* (1941), streamed at the same time as Nureyev's *Romeo and Juliet*). One example of a very well-filmed ballet is Christopher Wheeldon's adaptation of *The Winter's Tale* (2014) at The Royal Ballet, which premiered online on May 1st, 2020.

The Future of Ballet in a Post-Pandemic World

Needless to say, this pandemic has been a terrible experience. However, the opportunity for anyone anywhere to watch ballet from the comfort of their own home represents undeniable progress for humanity. It is heartening to see that, with the global paradigmatic shift caused by covid-19, culture has become more available to people who may otherwise not have the means, time, money or interest pre-covid. This democratic sentiment of accessible educational advancement is one positive response to the fact that many performance venues in the UK are in a seriously dire financial situation.

I hope that this will be an opportunity for virtual communication of the arts to become the norm along with traditional live performances, and that the English National Ballet will continue streaming a program on their excellent YouTube channel in a post-pandemic context. As for the debated production itself, my verdict is favourable: the arts have intersected beautifully. Shakespeare has been understood and clearly relished by ballet masters and dancers alike.

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AMALGAM: Theaster Gates, Liverpool, and Monumentality

Siân Round

Review of: *AMALGAM* (2020)
Curated by Theaster Gates at Tate Liverpool

On the fourth floor of a building on the Royal Albert Dock, visitors to the Tate Liverpool are invited to look out of the window at the now famous view across the River Mersey. Looking inland, they can see Liverpool's famous Three Graces: The Royal Liver Building, The Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building. The environs of the Tate Liverpool tell a story of the city's wealth as a port, the second city of the British Empire. Across from the gallery, however, there is a different story to be told. The International Slavery Museum, opened on the Albert Dock in 2007, focuses on the history and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade in Liverpool. Between 1695 and 1807, over five thousand voyages to Africa were made from Liverpool with the purpose of transporting African people to the Americas. As the 'Liverpool and Slavery' Twitter project states, 'Beyond a doubt it was the slave trade that raised Liverpool from a struggling seaport to be one of the richest and most prosperous trading centres of the world' (2020). The story of the Albert Dock is that of a city whose wealth came from the trading of black lives, a story which is told in the names of the streets.

A Farmhouse on Malaga. Image from Maine State Museum.

Inside the Tate Liverpool, a further story is being told. In 1912, the residents of the small island of Malaga, off the coast of Maine, were all evicted with no offer of support. The school was closed, and all the buildings were left derelict. Many of the citizens were placed in mental institutions. There was no illness on Malaga Island. Rather, it was a utopian integrated community, in a segregated United States. Governor Frederick W. Plaisted felt the island was damaging his state's reputation and forcibly removed all the island's residents, even digging up graves and moving the bodies to the mainland

(Maine State Museum 2018). The shocking, and forgotten, history of Malaga Island provides the inspiration for Chicago artist Theaster Gate's exhibition *AMALGAM* which is showing at Tate Liverpool until 3rd May. In this review, I examine how the physicality of Gates' exhibition interacts with the city in which it is being shown, and how *AMALGAM* makes its viewer consider how space is occupied and passed down.

Signs and Materials

Theaster Gates, born in 1973, is a social practice installation artist based in Chicago. He works across many media and is particularly interested in the redevelopment and occupation of space, as shown by his founding of the Rebuild Foundation, which revitalises communities and buildings in neglected areas of Chicago. *AMALGAM,* Gates' first UK solo exhibition, makes use of the same mixture of media for which he has become known: each installation in the exhibition is made of a different material and takes on a different form. This is reflected in the multiple meanings of the exhibition's title. *AMALGAM* is a near anagram of Malaga, but it also provides a second meaning of the mixed, interracial community, and perhaps a third meaning referring to the exhibition's mix of materials and forms. When first entering the exhibition, you are faced with a large black slope made of slate, resembling a rooftop, as if the rest of the house is buried. Behind that is a rotating neon sign with the word MALAGA written on it. The sign is literally advertising the place, forcing it to be recognised, while the slope highlights what isn't there, the missing pieces of Malaga. The sign is placed on top of more pieces of slate. The reference is to plans to build a resort on Malaga, as referenced later in another neon sign for 'Malaga Dept. of Tourism'. The opening room of the exhibition introduces you to what Gates cites as one of his most important themes: monumentality (Perchuk 2019). That is, both the physicality and scale of the exhibition's pieces and the significance of their history. Gates' interpretation of Malaga Island constantly draws attention to what stories we tell.

The monumentality of the exhibition forces the history of Malaga upon the viewer, often in a way which seems heavy-handed. It is easy to go through this exhibition with a cynical view. The great injustice of the island's evacuation, and of racial segregation itself, surely hardly needs to be told in 2020. However, it is through Gates' uses of different media and materials that he builds a more pertinent message of what is allowed to be passed on, and, indeed, what is regarded as valuable.

'Black Space'

A later part of the exhibition features Gates' approximation of an island, with scattered rocks as well as a blackboard, a chair, and a large cabinet, employing his frequent method of placing natural and manufactured materials side-by-side. The impression is of the schoolroom at Malaga, in which both black and white children were taught as equals. On this invented island, another neon sign tells the viewer that 'In the end nothing is pure.' This can be read as a complaint that the purity of the interracial classroom has been destroyed but, particularly within the context of the gallery, the sign tells us something else. The very exhibition in which this story is being told is in a building built from the profits of slavery. Many of its visitors have profited indirectly

from slavery. Everything which is passed down is part of a complex history so that even the idealism of Malaga Island and the injustice of its destruction cannot be told as a story without being interwoven with the traumas of the past. If the theme of the exhibition is a question of what is passed on, and who profits from history, the exhibition's answer is that white people still profit. These ideas are an important part of Gates' other work. The Dorchester Art and Housing Collaborative is a project initiated by Gates which provides thirty-two units for creative space for those with low income in Chicago. His work demands space while asking who occupies and controls it. Gates' website states that 'In all aspects of his work, he contends with the notion of Black space as a formal exercise.' (Gates, 2019).

Copyright: Theaster Gates. Photo by Chris Strong.

With this in mind, this exhibition is one which investigates how the creation of 'Black space' interacts with history. Another installation in *AMALGAM* is a large blackboard on which Gates has written a history of slavery. The piece is a sprawling mind-map, linking together events from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. In the top right corner, Gates proudly tells us '1973: Theaster Gates is born a free man.' Other writings state that 'WE ARE ALL MIXED.' This installation, more than any other in the exhibition, hints that this is an American story. It is only as we go throughout the exhibition, with an eye out of the window at the world around the gallery, that we realise that the history of slavery is not simply an American story. The history of the transatlantic slave trade is a story of movement and impermanence, just like the story of Malaga. The exhibition, then, attempts to reclaim space for African Americans, while revealing that such space is held by those with power.

Monumentality and Impermanence

The final room of the exhibition houses the largest installation and the most successful attempt by Gates to create a piece so monumental that it demands space. Titled 'So Bitter This Curse of Darkness', it features a series of masks on pillars made from dying ash trees. Gates states in the exhibition: 'These trees were dying. A miller said they were not fit for timber. Useless. Somewhere in the death of a tree is the truth of its strength.' (Tate, 2020). Gates has taken something that has lost its intended value and has fit it to his purpose; he is literally reclaiming space. This final room is large and echoing, and the wood creates an uneven floor. The visitor is taken out of the exhibition space and

placed into a kind of manufactured forest. Gates' exhibition always teeters between the natural and the manufactured, eliding the differences between the two, highlighting the significance of mixedness to his work. The final room takes the viewer outside the gallery space, into a separate space in which you are permitted to touch the wooden pillars. In this sense, the viewer is taken to Malaga; they are occupying its space by bearing witness to it. The repurposed pieces of wood, replicating the trees they used to be, hints at the impermanence of the space we occupy, and the reality of environmental catastrophe.

Copyright: Tate Liverpool. Photo: Roger Sinek.

As you walk through the exhibition, the juxtaposition between this destroyed island community and the city outside provokes many questions. Who determines what is valuable and what is worth keeping? Gates' exhibition tells a story of what is passed on, and what history is maintained in the process. While the exhibition had previously been shown at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, it takes on a new significance in Liverpool. Ten years ago, Tate Liverpool hosted *Afro Modern: Journeys Through the Black Atlantic,* an exhibition inspired by Paul Gilroy's seminal book, *The Black Atlantic*. (Gilroy, 1993). The exhibition highlighted the hybridity of modernity which emerged from transatlantic black culture. As a city which was at the heart of the transatlantic slave trade, this city-wide celebration of black culture was an important step to reclaiming the importance of black people in Liverpool. Theaster Gates' exhibition, in contrast, is far from a celebration. It is a cry to force people to recognise the spaces that black people occupy, and the spaces which have been taken away from them.

Inheritance and Afterlives

The synthesis of Gates' themes of how space is occupied, owned, and passed down, and their importance beyond America, is made clearest in the 30-minute video, *Dance of Malaga,* the exhibition's centrepiece. Once again combining different forms, the video features choreographed performance of dancers on the island in a collaboration with Kyle Abraham, interspersed with clips from documentaries, and a shocking scene from Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life* (1959) in which a woman is beaten for having African American heritage. The film is scored by Gates' band *The Black Monks* who take

inspiration from the blues and gospel traditions of African American communities in the southern United States. Perhaps one of the most pertinent clips comes from an advert for Patek Philippe watches, in which a young child comes downstairs interrupting her mother's dinner party. The advert then tells us that you don't really buy a watch for yourself, but to pass down to the next generation. Within this video installation, Gates tells the viewer that the history of Malaga is not just a history of segregation. The residents of Malaga were not able to pass their wealth down to the next generation; the story of Malaga is as much a story about property and ownership as it is about segregation.

Still from 'Dance of Malaga'. Copyright: Theaster Gates. Photo by Chris Strong.

AMALGAM is not an exhibition about the slave trade, but about its afterlives, and it is exactly this which makes its appearance so important in Liverpool today. Gates' use of multiple forms intersects with his questions of ownership and value. By working across media, Gates not only suggests that the worth of art is not restricted to a form but also, by participating across forms, he is reclaiming a space for black voices, a space which operates across the natural and the manufactured. *AMALGAM* holds onto a history that is asking to be forgotten, just as Liverpool is built on a history its residents often ignore. Gates creates a monument to Malaga while questioning the history of monumentality and how space is occupied.

Faculty of English

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ENDNOTE

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