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In an invocation to the god Apollo in his *House of Fame*, Geoffrey Chaucer aspires to 'do no diligence, / To shewe craft, but o sentence'. Literary craft, as so often in the medieval period, is seen as a potential hindrance to the presentation of clear meaning, 'sentence'; no matter how indispensable, it is always dangerous, a slippery slope to the emptying-out of substance.

It’s part of a branch of the word's meaning which survives today only in the idea of craftiness – connoting not much more now than amusingly ineffective, Disney-villain trickery, all twirled moustaches and elaborate schemes. Yet a complex of more subtle value judgements still linger around the concept of craft, stemming from other leaves of the etymological tree. Stubborn hierarchical assumptions cling to the supposed binary of art and craft, rooted in the association of the latter with materiality and the commonplace, children’s crafts and women’s work. The idea of writing as a craft can carry an air of the literary try-hard, taking classes and gaming the overstuffed modern market, supposedly inferior to the airy inspiration which strikes almost at random to create the genuine and the unique.

The sheer variety of this seventh issue of *Oxford Research in English* serves to thoroughly upend the implicit hierarchies in such uses of the concept of craft. Six research articles, contributed by emerging scholars from the Oxford Faculty of English and beyond, dive deep into analysis of cultural material as various as eighteenth-century embroidered samplers and classic episodes of *The Twilight Zone*. Each interrogates a different aspect of craft and crafting,
considering the processes of creation – literary and otherwise – which produce culture, and the matrix of theory through which we perceive and classify these processes, from the 'high' to the 'low' and everything in between (and outside).

Several articles introduce us to material, or combinations of material, with relatively little history of analysis in literary criticism. Sarah Pickford opens the issue with her discussion of the incorporation of verse into the eighteenth-century women's craft of the sampler, examining the warp and weft of intertextuality used by young women to construct the self and its legacy. Lorraine Lau also focuses on women's experiences through the lens of two contemporary novels by Monica Ali and Leila Aboulela, reading comparatively with regards to how their female characters carve out space for themselves in modern cities and social structures. Jessica Terekhov traces the lines of common thought running between the works of that famous theoriser of art and craft, William Morris, and the cultural and artistic ideals of socialism in its Soviet form.

Others discuss better-known works, adopting notably innovative approaches arising from lateral interpretations of the issue's theme. Molly Clark looks closely at the grain of early modern theatre texts to demonstrate how the writerly tool of rhyme can act as an interpretative key, helping us reconstruct the pressures and serendipities of composition and performance. Archie Cornish digs into the representation of skilled makers in Seamus Heaney's poetry, from the thatcher and the ploughman to the poet himself, and their close, Heideggerian interweaving with the earth and its people. Finally, Matthew Connolly threads his discussion of several Victorian texts – and the aforementioned episode of *The Twilight Zone* – through the device of self-conscious narrative precarity, cast into sharp relief around the repeated motif of the threatened watercraft.

The rest of the issue reflects still more conceptions of literary and academic crafting, with five book reviews on topics ranging from fantasy worldbuilding to the 'trash ekphrasis' of Samuel Beckett. A review of a groundbreaking collection on Indian poetry in English
is accompanied by a special feature in which C. S. Bhagya interviews the collection’s editor, Rosinka Chaudhuri, illuminating the process of putting together this kind of academic volume. Finally, in a second special feature Georgina Wilson surveys the new interdisciplinary project Thinking 3D, an investigation and multi-part exhibition series examining dimensionality and its representation in material culture.

However various the meanings and manifestations of craft, then, a common thread might be identified as care – the focused attention of the maker, whether author, farmer, exhibitor, or Soviet factographer. Such attention demands that we take care in our turn as we read, analyse, and compare: all skills to be crafted and honed. These skills are amply in evidence in the following work, which I hope is illuminating and enjoyable for all who read it.
‘A wreath that cannot fade’: Crafting a Legacy in Eighteenth-Century Sampler Verse

SARAH PICKFORD

But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow’r
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn
Unfolds its bosom, buds and leaves and sprigs
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair,
A wreath that cannot fade, of flow’rs that blow
With most success when all besides decay.¹

— William Cowper, The Task (IV, 150–57)

In 1794, at the age of thirteen, a girl named Sally Cozens added the finishing touches to her needlework sampler by signing her name, age, and date. This conventional way of autographing her work, as well as providing invaluable information to modern-day researchers of the sampler, evinces concerns with ownership, posterity, and preservation. Her sampler is an explosion of flowers, incorporating everything that could possibly inhabit an English garden. Humans, birds, dogs, and deer frolic among the plants, and in the centre of the piece a lady plucks a rose from the embroidered garden. The only text on the sampler, aside from the autograph, is six lines of unattributed verse from Dryden’s ‘The Despairing Lover’, likening the ephemeral nature of flowers to the ‘with’ring’ earthly joys of human life.²

When William Cowper composed *The Task* (1785), a girl or woman like Sally may have served as inspiration for the scene above. Twice described as a ‘task’ and later referred to as ‘female industry’, needlework in Cowper’s imagining is principally an act of productive labour. Yet in *The Task* sewing is also an act of creation; an act that is at once natural as the flower ‘grows’ and ‘unfolds’, and laboured as it is ‘wrought’ or ‘depicted’ by the guiding female hand. Whilst ‘wrought’ implies craftsmanship, ‘depicted’, among its other eighteenth-century definitions, connotes the skills of drawing or painting. This act of creation is therefore an artistic one. Most interestingly, in light of Sally Cozens’s sampler verse, the needle is esteemed for its ability to create the permanent and perdurable, to produce ‘a wreath that cannot fade’ in contrast to the inevitable decay of its surroundings and, of course, of its subject. Cowper’s depiction of this domestic scene in *The Task* is valuable in that it captures the process, rather than the product, of sewing and offers an insight into eighteenth-century perceptions of needlework.

What is missing from Cowper’s vision of busy creation, however, is the presence of the creator. Aside from a passing reference to the ‘nimble finger of the fair’, the needle seems to move of its own accord; the sampler is the product of ‘female industry’ as action rather than ‘female’ as maker. This essay will examine the intersection between memory and the sampler form espoused in Cowper’s poem through a ‘sociology of texts’ framework, defined by D. F. McKenzie as the study of ‘texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission’. The adaptation of a poetic text to the sampler form constitutes a new publishing of the text, and the processes of composition and display enshrine the creator in the sampler form. Embroidery therefore provides young women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a means of crafting an identity and legacy for themselves.

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The eighteenth-century attraction to permanence has been examined by modern critics. In his study of written culture, Roger Chartier claims that ‘the fear of obliteration obsessed the societies of early modern Europe’. The ‘mission of the written’, therefore, ‘was to dispel the obsession with loss’. Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass have demonstrated that seventeenth-century textiles were one such means by which women inscribed lived experience in the ‘material of memory’. As needlework verse did not become widespread in Britain until the eighteenth century, their analysis takes a more intrinsic view of ‘textile’ as ‘text’ and does not extend to the discussion of embroidered content.

This essay falls into three parts. Using Sally Cozens’s sampler as a case study, I will first chart the transmission of Dryden’s verse through the eighteenth century, examining how its extraction and appropriation across various print mediums fashions and alters its original sense. In the second part I examine how the changed content of this verse interacts with the sampler form. I will build on Jones and Stallybrass’s theory of early modern textiles as ‘material memories’, and examine the sampler not as a mere vehicle for verse, but as a form that directly informs our reading of the text. Despite – and perhaps because of – the concerns with ephemerality exemplified by their verses, samplers have an inherently and sometimes designedly memorialising function. They work to inscribe the moment of making for public display. In the final part of this essay, therefore, I will examine sampler creation at the levels of composition and display. In drawing parallels between sampler and manuscript production, I argue that the process of transcription constitutes a personal ownership of a conventional text, enshrining both the compositional processes and the creator within the form of the fabric. Needlework provided young women in the eighteenth century with a means of self-crafting a legacy.

1. Refashioning verse

First published in print in *Sylvaes, or, The second part of Poetical miscellanies* (1685) as part of a longer poem ‘The Despairing Lover’, Dryden’s original verse reads slightly but significantly differently from that on Sally Cozens’s sampler:

The Rose is fragrant, but it fades in time,
The Violet sweet, but quickly past the prime;
White Lillies hang their heads and soon decay,
And whiter Snow in minutes melts away:
Such is your blooming youth, and withering so;
The time will come, it will, when you shall know
The rage of Love; your haughty heart shall burn
In flames like mine, and meet a like return.7

The poem as a whole, a translation of the twenty-third Idyllium of Theocritus, narrates the story of a cruel nymph and her spurned lover. The rejected lover speaks the words above shortly before he hangs himself over the unrequited love. The prophetic threat transpires in a more literal way than expected: at the poem’s climax the nymph meets a ‘like return’ in death when a statue of the ‘God of Love’, controlled by the deity it depicts, falls and kills her. In her lover’s imagining, the nymph is a fading flower. Through a description of her youth as ‘blooming’, she is both linguistically and analogically akin to a decaying natural plant. The metaphor of the first four lines is dependent on the natural and inevitable lifespan of these roses, violets, lilies, and snow. Here, however, the comparison with the nymph weakens. The image of slowly withering flowers is juxtaposed with the abruptness of the nymph’s death; there is nothing organic in the process of a stone statue falling on her and her ‘gushing blood’ besmearing the pavement. Instead of ‘love’ being an

abstract emotion that will burn her heart ‘in flames’ like her lover’s, ‘Love’ is shorthand for the ‘God of Love’, a personified and active agent capable of killing. The nymph, although dead, escapes the processes of withering and fading that were depicted as inevitable. The moral, then, is found in the dying nymph’s final speech and the poem’s concluding couplet: ‘Lovers, farewell, revenge has reacht my scorn / Thus warn’d, be wise, and love for love return’. In the extreme, being ‘ungrateful’ results in death. A more applicable moral teaches readers not to scorn offerings of earthly love. In an unpredictably short lifespan, it is ‘wise’ not to reject it.

Tracing the afterlife of this text in the eighteenth century reveals that when displaced from their original context, the same lines could be adapted to a variety of morals. The first four lines resurface unattributed in 1746, 1756, and 1780 in an educational miscellany titled Select Tales and Fables with Prudential Maxims, under the heading ‘Beauty’s a fair but fading Flower; or External charms are very precarious blessings’. Dryden’s comparison to ‘blooming youth’ in the fifth line is removed, and instead embedded in the ‘prudential maxim’ of the fragment’s title. Gone are the references to love, hearts, and flames; the verse does not teach readers to ‘love for love return’ but simply to be wary of the precarious blessings of external charms. The focus shifts from earthly love to eternal and spiritual values, in an inversion of the original carpe diem sentiment. A second repurposing of these same lines is found in a miscellany of epitaphs printed in 1775. The preface boasts that the majority of the epitaphs were ‘copied by [the compiler] from the tombs in principal churches and burial–grounds in London’, which suggests that Dryden’s verse could be found inscribed on gravestones. What was initially a rather spiteful attack on a heart–breaking nymph becomes a respectful memorial of human life, a prototypical attempt to ‘dispel the obsession with loss’ through the written.

10 Chartier, Inscription and Erasure, p. vii.
The four lines about fading flowers are constant in these iterations of the verse, demonstrating the metaphor’s capacity for semantic transience. Pregnant with potential meanings, it is adaptable both to verse that warns against placing too much value on the ephemeral present, and that which celebrates and commemorates the past.

Thomas Dilworth’s *A New Guide to the English Tongue: In Five Parts*, printed 127 times between 1740 and 1800, also includes a variation on this metaphor. The identical style and content of Dilworth’s and Cozens’s use of Dryden, coupled with the immense popularity of Dilworth’s *Guide*, positions it as the most likely source for Cozens’s sampler verse. Advertising itself as ‘A useful Collection of Sentences in Prose and Verse, Divine, Moral, and Historical’, Dilworth’s miscellany arranges the extract under the heading ‘On Youth’, and makes some minor changes to the original:

Fragrant the Rose is, but it fades in time:  
The Violet sweet, but quickly pass’d the Prime;  
White Lilies hang their Heads, and soon decay;  
And whiter Snow in Minutes melt away:  
Such and so with’ring are our early Joys,  
Which Time, or Sickness, speedily destroys.

All nouns are capitalised, rather than just the words ‘Rose’, ‘Violet’, ‘Lillies’, ‘Snow’, and ‘Love’. Although most likely an attempt to regulate grammar rather than a conscious attempt to alter meaning, the personifying function of capitalisation, which emphasised the relationship between flowers and humans in Dryden’s version, is lost. The word order of Dryden’s ‘The Rose is fragrant’ is also shifted, placing the personified flower in the passive case, and stressing the ephemeral attribute over the definitional identity. Significant and intentional change does come in the fifth and sixth lines: ‘Such and so with’ring are our early Joys / Which Time or Sickness speedily destroys.’

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destroys’. The original romantic context is undoubtedly lost. Instead of ‘Love’, ‘Time’ and ‘Sickness’ are the agents of destruction. ‘Sickness’ as a cause of ‘with’ring’ is more applicable to humans than flowers. Dryden’s metaphor is clearly used as an epigrammatic springboard from which to adjoin meaning suitable for the subject of ‘Youth’. The transition from ‘your blooming youth’ to ‘our earthly joys’ further changes it from a particular invective to a gnomic truth, of the type more valued by miscellanies and samplers. If we observe the transmission of Dryden’s text across its three stages – from original print, to verse miscellany, to sampler – we can identify the semantic shift as occurring primarily in the second stage.

2. ‘A Wreath that Cannot Fade’

Just as Cowper struggles to cast needlework as either an act of artistic creation or of female labour, contemporary scholarship has struggled to reach a consensus when defining the sampler form. Numerous critics have argued that textile should be read as text, and the early modern needle as a feminine equivalent of the pen.¹² Some, such as Rozsika Parker, have refuted traditional designations of ‘craft’ or ‘work’ and instead argued for needlework’s position as ‘a cultural practice involving iconography, style and a social function’ that should therefore be qualified as ‘art’.¹³ Definitional conflict also occurs within the overarching category of needlework. Judith Tyner has discussed how early modern needlework could be divided into ‘plain’ and ‘fancy’, with plain needlework being the practical repair or marking of clothing, and fancy needlework having a more ‘decorative’ function. She places samplers in this category, stating


that middle-class and upper-class girls learned needlework as ‘an accomplishment and something to keep their minds and hands busy’, but also as a ‘learning aid for reading and spelling or to instil piety with religious and didactic verses’. Given this debate around art or craft, fancy or plain, the terms used to describe the actions of the needle and thread necessarily have ideological consequences. Whilst the term ‘embroidery’ is associated with ‘fancy’ needlework, ‘sewing’ and ‘work’ are more closely allied with the category of ‘plain’. Perhaps a sharper way of conceiving of needlework can be found in The Polite Lady, a book structured as a series of letters from mother to daughter, reprinted six times between 1760 and 1788:

But be serious, you ought to attend to your sewing, and, to acquire a perfect knowledge of that useful art, not only as it is a genteel accomplishment, but likewise from the motives of economy and convenience.

This eighteenth century definition of sewing as a ‘useful art’ is more historically secure than retrospective labelling attempts, which carry anachronistic value judgments. Here needlework is divided into two ‘uses’: firstly as an ‘accomplishment’ that adorns the young lady, and secondly as the more task-based use of ‘economy’ and ‘convenience’, which may be described as ‘plain needlework’. A sampler need not be categorised according to whether it is for functional use or decorative display. It can, in fact, achieve both aims. As McKenzie would argue, a text cannot be alienated from the form it takes. This is particularly relevant to the sampler form because both of the professed ‘uses’ of sampler-making involve improving the skill of sewing itself.

The presence of Dryden’s verse on Sally Cozens’s sampler in 1794 marks a change not only in meaning but also in form. Her use

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of the poem is not unique, and the same lines can be located on at least three other samplers (now in the Feller collections and the Victoria and Albert Museum). Hannah Hey’s 1784 work sandwiches Dryden’s lines between an embroidered alphabet and idyllic fishing scene, and Ann Parson’s of the same year combines it with two other verses on ‘Virtue’ and the role of ‘The Needle and the Book’. The verse reappears in 1794, flanked by embroidered flowers on Ann Woodgate’s sampler. None of the samplers attribute the verse, and it can therefore be seen less as a tribute to Dryden and his literary tradition and more as a supplement to the sampler form. The commonality of Dryden’s verse on samplers situates Dilworth’s Guide essentially as a pattern book, minable for quotable fragments to be combined with visual embroidery. This combination of the verbal and visual perhaps accounts for the popular appropriation of this extract, and indeed other verses with a theme of fading flowers, on samplers across time periods and geographies. Embroidered flowers appear on virtually all samplers. Joseph Addison’s invective on needlework describes it as the act of ‘imitating fruits and flowers, and transplanting all the beauties of nature into their own dress’, and Naomi Tarrant goes so far as to argue that ‘by 1740 the terms “to embroider” and “to flower” were interchangeable’. Chief amongst these flowers was the rose. It seems likely, then, that Cozens’s selection of ‘Fragrant the Rose’ was dictated by visual demands in order to create a congruous floral theme. The association of choice pieces of verse in this period with flowers that are plucked and replanted heightens this sense of harmony; the word ‘anthology’ derives from Hellenistic Greek ἀνθολόγιον, meaning ‘gathering of

flowers. This relationship was emphasised by several miscellanies of the time, with titles such as The Flowers of Parnassus: or, the Lady’s Miscellany (1736), and The Flowers of Gallantry, by the Earl of Rochester (1773). We can see the sampler-maker as creating her own anthology, literally gathering pictorial and poetic flowers together and weaving them into the ‘snowy lawn’ of her fabric.

Whilst the agreeable coupling of text and image is likely intentional, the material form seems to clash with the contents of the poem. Through embroidering floral images onto samplers, the sampler-makers were capturing and ensuring the material continuation of a flower far past its usual lifespan. In other words, in describing the temporariness of their subject, the samplers make it permanent. An early nineteenth-century sampler by Ann Green reworks a verse by Isaac Watts, and echoes the temporal specificity of Dryden’s ‘Snow’ that melts away ‘in minutes’: ‘But the leaves are beginning to fade in an hour/ and they wither and die in a day."

The act of producing such a complex piece of embroidery would take longer than an hour, and so even the compositional process exceeds the lifespan of the subject. Marcus Bourne Huish, an early twentieth-century chronicler of the sampler form, describes the process by which samplers were ‘preserved and even handed down as heirlooms in the family’, and the number of samplers archived in collections and museums today speaks of the success of this undertaking. As documents intended for conservation, their embroidered floral subjects resist their verses’ claims to inevitable decay. In a literary tradition where select verses are figured as flowers, the anthology form functioned as a means of collating and preserving verse. Similarly, the sampler form created wreaths that did not fade in defiance of their accompanying moral.

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21 Cowper, The Task, IV, line 152.
23 Huish, Samplers and Tapestry Embroideries, p. 2.
This inscription of the ephemeral flower in the material memory of fabric is complemented by another popular style of sampler verse that circulated throughout the eighteenth century. Variations on the following were popular choices:

When this you see, remember me  
And keep me in your mind,  
[...] When I am dead, and laid in grave,  
And all my bones are rotten,  
By this may I remembered be  
When I should be forgotten.²⁴

On the one hand, this verse displays the same concerns with ephemerality that the fading flower samplers do; Dryden’s verse was, after all, appropriated to serve as an epitaph. However, whilst flower samplers are not absolutely attempting to create something perdurable, the creators of these ‘remember me’ samplers are entirely aware of the sampler’s ability to act as a self-memorialising space. Asking the reader to remember the creator ‘When this you see’ calls attention to the visual act of regarding a displayed sampler, and inscribes the creator’s ephemeral self in the image. Such verses indicate a broader preoccupation with the impermanent beyond the metaphor of fading flowers. Whilst Chartier examines the capacity of the ‘durable record’ to inscribe and preserve the ‘ephemeral text’, as far as these samplers are concerned it is not the text, but its subject – the ephemeral creator herself – that the girls wish to preserve.²⁵

A particularly morbid iteration of this speaking-from-the-grave formulation, and perhaps the best example of a sampler used for a commemorative purpose, is found in the work of Elizabeth Caroline Peirce.²⁶ In her circular sampler, dedicated to ‘the Memory

²⁴ Tarrant discusses the voice of ‘vindictive triumph’ of this verse (‘Remember Now’, p. 134).
²⁵ Chartier, Incription and Erasure, p. vii.
of Providence Maria Peirce, Elizabeth sews the biographical details of her sister’s death alongside two locks of Providence’s hair plaited and folded into bows. Six lines of epitaphic verse follow:

Behold ye thoughtless Young and Gay  
What I am now ye Shortly may  
I preach, whilst mouldring here I Lie  
This is my text ____ Prepare to Die  
Reader _ Beware _ Observe each line  
My Fate perhaps may soon be thine.

Reading like a textile tombstone, this verse portrays a far more corporeal and ghastlier image of decay than Cozens’s fading flower euphemism. Something of the threat of Dryden’s “The Despairing Lover” is mirrored in the ominous ‘Prepare to Die […] My Fate perhaps may soon be thine’. The word ‘text’ is tantamount to ‘message’ or ‘moral’, and so the sampler becomes an overt means of communicating a ‘prudential maxim’ like the miscellanies in which Dryden’s verse circulated. Whilst the first four lines of verse are taken from a poetry miscellany, the last two lines, including the address to an imagined ‘reader’, appear to be original.  

In these lines Peirce both creates a sense of audience for her sister’s fictional ‘text’, and calls attention to her own process of creation through asking the viewer to ‘observe each line’. By using her sister’s hair as a piece of the work and symbolic decoration, Elizabeth physically enshrines her in the material. Hair, as part of her deceased sister that will not decay or moulder, is tantamount to the embroidered flowers that resist decay in Sally Cozens’s sampler. Providence’s hair becomes a non-decaying memorial: a relic and symbol of a deceased relative like the curls kept in the mourning rings of the period. Memory resides in the tangible, and sentimental verse must be bolstered by

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physical form. If texts are to be viewed as ‘recorded forms’, then these sampler verses prompt us to consider ‘recording’ as a primary rather than secondary function of the sampler form. They disclose a conscious and intentional recording, designed to enshrine the subject or maker of the sampler within the fabric.

3. ‘Her Work’

This essay has traced how the content of Dryden’s verse is complicated when deployed in the perdurable sampler form. However, sampler verse also acquires a specific relational significance to its creator that in turn affects our reading of the text. A number of material changes to the sampler form in the eighteenth century indicate changing contexts for the production and display of samplers. Firstly, and significantly in discussions of whether sampler-makers can be seen as authors, this was the period when the use of verse on samplers became widespread. A second distinguishing feature of the period is that needlework moves from a skill practiced in the home to one taught as a part of a formalised education. Dilworth’s *Guide to the English Tongue*, for example, is an overtly educational publication, and the title page declares the work ‘the most useful performance for the Instruction of Youth […] designed for the use of schools’. Among surviving eighteenth-century samplers we find embroidered maps, alphabets, solar systems, and mathematical tables. Finally, we see a transition in the eighteenth century from the ‘spot and band’ samplers discussed by Jones and Stallybrass, towards square samplers with borders that resemble pictures, probably intended for display in the home.

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32 Tyner writes extensively on eighteenth and nineteenth–century map samplers in *Stitching the World*.
33 To track this change in early modern samplers, see collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
Whilst little has been written on the relationship between sampler-maker and the text she sews, parallels can be found in scholarship around manuscript circulation in the early modern period. Adam Smyth argues that different media constructed ‘different notions of ownership’, and so ‘the act of transfer rendered the poems the property of the compiler in a way the mere ownership of a printed book could never do’.\(^\text{34}\) Henry Woudhuysen adopts a similar relational hierarchy, owing to the fact that ‘manuscript bore witness to hours of personal labour with paper, pen, and ink’.\(^\text{35}\) Moving beyond what James Wald refers to as ‘the normative status of the codex’, these comparisons can be extended to include the needle and thread as tools of labour.\(^\text{36}\) Sewing was, after all, commonly referred to as ‘work’ or, to cite Cowper, as ‘task’. The time-consuming act of transfer consequently constitutes a more personal ‘ownership’ of the text. At a compositional level, the same processes at work in the learning aids of map and diagrammatic samplers are present when inscribing verse on samplers. Sampler-making can therefore be seen not only as a vital part of needlework education, but also as a means of instilling the creator with moralistic sentiment through the act of transfer. In acquiring a skill, one theoretically acquired a virtue.

More than an educational and individual communion with a text, works of embroidery can also be regarded as vehicles for social and educational display. There is inevitably always some degree of display involved in the transmission of a text from print to a decorative material form. Material objects that can be inscribed with text, such as jugs, snuff-boxes, and of course samplers all have an inalienable performative function. Jones and Stallybrass

have argued that needlework in the seventeenth century ‘meant creating new objects through subtle forms of imitation and putting them on display: it approached other kinds of public artistry’.

The introduction of sampler verse in the eighteenth century provided another opportunity for display; verse could exhibit the inner virtue of the maker. Cozens’s embroidered ‘such and so with’ring are our early joys’ positions her as a girl imbued with moral maturity and propriety. The metaphor, as a result of its semantic flexibility, can be read either as illustrating the pictorial flowers on the sampler or as symbolising its creator. The educational and moralistic verse comes to signify and symbolise the creator’s inner self. In copying out moral verse, the sampler-maker is at once addresser and intended addressee; in selecting verses about flowers she is creator and creation. In essence, she is demonstrating both her compositional labour and ownership of the text.

As in the ‘remember me’ samplers, this conception of the sampler mode as a product for display is sometimes recalled in the content of the verse. By the early nineteenth century, we see the following lines growing in popularity:

    When I was young
    And in my prime
    Here you may see
    How I spent my time.

In this conception, the ‘here’ of the sampler is celebrated for its ability to act as a memorialising space, inscribing the moment of composition within the fabric. Once again, the sampler verse appeals to a visual onlooker who is placed in a future time period. It is designed with display in mind. Employment of the word ‘prime’, echoing Dryden’s description of violets, demonstrates the conceptual

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37 Jones and Stallybrass, Renaissance Clothing, p. 135.
38 See, for example, Sarah Pelham’s sampler cited in Huish, Samplers and Tapestry Embroideries, p. 3.
similarities between fading flowers and youthful girls. Time here is not only, as in Cozens’s verse, a relentless force that will cause inevitable decay, but an allotted commodity that must be spent well. Youth, although fleeting and precarious, is likewise something to be celebrated if expended in the correct way. We can see this complex attitude towards youth in the girls’ signing of their ages at the end of the sampler. When Sally Cozens signs ‘Her Work in the 13 Year of Her Age’, she is celebrating or displaying her skill in needlework at such a youthful age. However, this appears directly after a statement of youth’s instability. In her use of Dryden, therefore, Sally Cozens is essentially memorialising, celebrating, and displaying a maxim of her own youth and transience. It is the conversion from unfinished to displayed product that positions the sampler-maker as author of a new text. Discussing, like Smyth and Woudhuysen, the continued presence of manuscript forms in the early modern period, Harold Love argues that a text should be regarded as ‘republished as often as it is copied’, and that this process of scribal publishing is ‘distributed, not centralized, with each copying demanding a separate act of will’. In moving from the sphere of composition to the realm of public display, a sampler is essentially republishing a verse that it has taken from a print miscellany, with all the attendant consequences such repurposing entails.

Conclusion

Despite signing her name, age, and date at the bottom of her sampler in 1794, Sally Cozens is all but anonymous to us. Her obscurity exposes our attitudes towards replicators of texts, and touches on hierarchies we assume between male and female, adult and child, craft and art. However, a ‘sociology of texts’ framework allows us

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to bridge the gap between the literary and the material: the same binary that has traditionally designated the sampler form into separate categories of art or craft. Through the material processes involved in the creation of her sampler, Sally Cozens comes to own and republish Dryden’s verse, which acquires an entirely new semantic and material significance in the process.

What we lose in the modern-day archiving of samplers is the sense of needlework as process, rather than merely a product. Inevitably, collections and archives place value on the permanent and preservation, and lose the ephemeral moment of making. Hence we receive only the ‘fancy’ product rather than the fleeting process of ‘work’, the ‘art’ and not the ‘craft’. Cowper captures one way of regarding the process of sewing samplers in *The Task*. Yet material samplers themselves call our attention to the act of needlework, and how it was used to memorialise and display the self. Sally Cozens's person is doubly on display in her sampler: firstly at the material level of her accomplishment, and secondly at the linguistic level of her subject. In the print age of the eighteenth century, at the tail-end of Chartier’s analysis of the early modern ‘fear of obliteration’, sampler-makers are no longer attempting to preserve ephemeral texts in a durable mode. Rather, they are concerned with preserving their own legacy through the symbol of the sampler. ‘The Rose is fragrant’, claims Dryden, ‘but it fades in time’. In embroidering flowers and their own names on their samplers, eighteenth-century schoolgirls resist this conclusion and participate in crafting a ‘wreath’ and legacy ‘that cannot fade’.
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William Morris championed the everyday and made progressive strides out of the ‘Century of Commerce,’ as he called the 1800s, through socialist activism and anti-industrial entrepreneurship. His revival of early printing techniques at the Kelmscott Press in the 1890s, like his promotion of artisanal design at Morris & Co. since 1875, supported the craftsman who would exercise creativity and care in ornamenting functional manufactures under improved labour conditions. However, Morris’s passage from the book to the text and to literary art/work tells a slightly different story. That Morris broke away from daily life into fantastical, utopian, or antiquarian themes and conventions in his own works, as well as those he printed, posed contradictions, apparent to Morris’s contemporaries, between his political and aesthetic policies. Among modern scholars, Josephine Guy notes that ‘the dependence of his literary works upon tradition, both in terms of their form and subject,’ appears to belie ‘his view of revolutionary social change.’ The critique of mass print manifested by Morris’s Kelmscott initiative and the rejection of realist narrative articulated in his 1890 ‘utopian romance,’ News from Nowhere,

withheld literature materially and substantively from popular reception, and his rendition of an ideal future borrowed from a possibly idealised past.\(^2\) Morris’s experiment with narrative fiction in *News from Nowhere*, his first of only two novels, helps imagine his labour paradigm as it might apply to literary production, an ultimately retroactive variety of “work-pleasure” for Morris’s cast of utopian socialists.\(^3\)

Morris’s writings on socialism and the book arts, moreover, illustrate a correlation between use-valued aesthetics and architecture that invokes another historical moment for consolidating literary production, technique, and popular energies: the 1920s in Russia, when the task of erecting a Soviet way of life coincided with the promotion of proletarian and factographic writing. ‘Not the market for the person, but the person for the market,’ wrote leading theorist of productionist art Boris Arvatov regarding ‘Capitalism and Artistic Construction’ in the first chapter of his 1923 pamphlet, *Art*

\(^2\) The novel’s publication history is a matrix of surprising intersections. *News from Nowhere* circulated alongside overtly political texts in the *Commonweal* newspaper and sold more than any of Morris’s other socialist writings in a cheap edition published prior to its release from Kelmscott; Elizabeth Carolyn Miller cites E. P. Thompson’s work for this observation on its popularity (Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, *Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 316 n.30). It could in fact be argued that the novel cut across the Victorian reading public: it appeared weekly in 45 one-penny installments; the third edition from 1892 advertises it for 8s., or just over twice the cost of the serial run; and the Kelmscott Press issued 300 copies at £2 2s., about five times the cost of the volume edition. For comparison, the three-volume novel went out of fashion in 1894 at its long-standing price of £1 11s. 6 d. (also known as a guinea and a half), so most Kelmscott merchandise was decently expensive, though it sold well. For a list of Kelmscott Press publications and their sales prices, as well as a discussion of the private press movement, see Colin Franklin, *The Private Presses* (Dufour: Chester Springs, 1969).

If capitalism depended on alienated labour, the Soviet revolution overturned the worker’s relationship to the means of exchange, such that his subordination within the commercial sector became his regulation of its processes, and rendered art a conscious expression of productive energy on a par with industrial design. Although few Russian figures acknowledged Morris’s work, or even considered his resistance to commodification ‘reactionary-utopian,’ his predictions for post-revolutionary trends in imagining craft beg attention to differences in socialist attitudes toward the agency of imagination itself: Reading News from Nowhere as an exponent of Morris’s socialist aesthetics in conjunction with appeals for a ‘literature of fact’ from Arvatov’s close contemporaries yields an appraisal of imaginative labour as, respectively, consistent with enjoying utopian reality or incompatible with setting sociocultural

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goals. While it relies on no direct influence or critical precedent, this juxtaposition of Morris’s late Victorian projections with certain early Soviet projects illuminates the role of craft in popularising literary art/work.

Morris’s commitment to recuperating ‘the popular’ and the lesser arts or handicrafts throughout *Hopes and Fears for Art* and in a later anthology of ‘lectures on socialism’ called *Signs of Change* captures his claim for the compatibility of labour and art in the sphere of everyday activity. Democratic art, for Morris, consists in ‘the ennobling of daily and common work,’ and ‘art which is, or ought to be, done by the ordinary workman while he is about his ordinary work, [...], has got to be called, very properly, Popular Art.’

Commercial pressures endemic to industrial society have driven decorative and fine arts – and fundamentally, work and pleasure – apart, casting the artisan behind the artist, relegating craftsmanship to the status of mechanical toil, and effectively splitting all handcraft into ‘works of art and non-works of art.’

Morris’s remedy to the fractured state of contemporary art forms and labour protocols involves restoring the ‘happiness of labour’ by ‘discover[ing], or rediscover[ing] rather, that the true secret of happiness lies in the taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life, in elevating them by art.’

He challenges the disparity between the lesser arts – such as joinery, carpentry, pottery, and weaving – and the ‘master-arts’ – sculpture, painting, and architecture – in seeking a place for the artisan beside the artist.

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7 Morris, ‘The Beauty of Life’.

Architecture provides a potent medium for Morris’s bid for a democratic art indivisible from putatively higher art forms. It is ‘the art which most depends upon the taste of the people at large,’ Morris contends in a lecture on ‘the art of the people.’ In speaking of the popular arts elsewhere, he adds: ‘they might all be summed up in that one word Architecture; they are all parts of that great whole, and the art of house-building begins it all.’ A survey of his texts discovers the relevance of architecture to his conception of creative labour, popular art, and a utilitarian aesthetics; his high praise for Ruskin’s ‘The Nature of Gothic,’ reprinted with a preface by Morris at the Kelmscott Press, is a case in point. Morris’s project at Kelmscott was actually bound up with architectural concerns and indexed the affinity Morris perceived between architecture and book production. Books became bridges between so-called ‘high’ and ‘low’ art forms insofar as book-making promoted various key conjunctions or reconciliations relative to a Morrisite labour economy: work and pleasure, use and beauty, and the ‘lesser’ and ‘greater’ – or, the applied and fine – arts. Books and buildings, in other words, could and should be made ‘good and rational’ and artistic by and for the average worker: for Morris, the categories all aligned under a critique of commercialism in industrial society. Morris denounced the commodification of art objects into ‘makeshifts’ and ‘sham’ goods devoid of beauty and manufactured under exploitative circumstances, an objection seminal to his participation in the late Victorian Arts and Crafts movement, consistent with his attachment to Ruskin’s ethos of creative labour and its celebration of medieval art, and compatible with a socialist political program.

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9 William Morris, ‘The Art of the People’ in Hopes and Fears for Art <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1882/hopes/chapters/chapter2.htm> [accessed 28 May 2018]. It is noteworthy that Morris often literally spoke to his audiences by delivering pieces that were subsequently published.

10 Morris, ‘The Beauty of Life’.

11 Morris, ‘The Beauty of Life’.

12 For Morris’s frequent use of either term, see, respectively, The Ideal Book and Hopes and Fears for Art.
‘The Woodcuts of Gothic Books’, one of the papers that Morris delivered at the time of his Kelmscott enterprise, demonstrates the interrelatedness of popular art, aesthetic taste, and, additionally, historicity and narrativity in Morris’s commercial intervention at the turn of the 1900s. He refers to the medieval period as the age when ‘the force of tradition’ ‘cultivated the appreciation of good work by the general public,’ every member of which ‘was a potential artist.’

Gothic art, for Morris, is an ‘organic art’ and is ‘genuinely growing,’ and art at large could not be living unless informed by tradition, unless rooted in the experiential legacy of the workman. In likewise holistic terms, Morris admires the integration of narrative and ornamental design in the earliest texts. ‘Not only is all its special art,’ he writes of the Middle Ages, ‘obviously and simply beautiful as ornament, but its ornament also is vivified with forcible meaning, so that neither in one nor the other does the life ever flag, or the sensuous pleasure of the eye ever lack.’

Rhetorically, Morris invokes a matter of life and death by tapping the antithetical tension between vitality and lifelessness, in keeping with an organicist vocabulary. Speaking of illustrations relative to book design in the Victorian period, he archly observes: ‘the mass of utilitarian matter in which they are embedded is absolutely helpless and dead. Why it is not even ugly, as least not vitally ugly.’

Much as the schism between fine and decorative art invalidates the handicrafts, the disjunction between the substance and the presentation of a text debilitates its aesthetic identity. Beauty and its corollary, pleasure, conform to meaning and its corollary, use, in a Morrisite aesthetics of labour articulated in synthetic terms applicable to the infrastructure of the book.

Morris’s attraction to holism and harmony is not idiosyncratic or incidental for a socialist aesthetics invested in the fusion of seeming opposites – foremost among them, labour and pleasure, beauty and functionalism. Good books – and goodness is a function of sound execution, for Morris – ‘are alive all over’ and ‘beautiful taken as a whole’ ‘as things to be looked at’: good reading, then, explicitly demands sensory enjoyment, ‘the sensuous pleasure of the eye’ that Morris applauds in Gothic texts.\(^\text{16}\) Indeed, he considers it a ‘partial crippling of the faculties’ to take purely literary interest in books and treat their illustrative content, if any, autonomously.\(^\text{17}\) Yet in a further dialectical pivot, Morris rationalises aesthetics by emphasising that ornament ‘must submit to certain limitations, and become \textit{architectural}’ in order to succeed.\(^\text{18}\) It must contribute to an ‘architectural arrangement,’ in other words, predicated on the legibility of the pages, the clarity of the type, and the proportionality of the margins, three benchmarks for ‘books in which type, paper, [and] woodcuts […] are so treated as to produce a harmonious whole.’\(^\text{19}\) Morris actively controlled all material aspects of printing at the Kelmscott Press, from sourcing linen-based paper to designing his own types, and measured the integrity of book production against a rubric of practicality. In effect, an ostensibly facile conjunction between form and content, derived from a Gothic fusion of ornament and epical design, dictated a more composite understanding of the book arts on utilitarian grounds.

Morris’s attention to the rudiments of book-making defends his argument for practical aesthetics and, importantly, renders labour more visibly cooperative and cognitive, two volatile


categories in a lexicon of literary activity. For Ruth Livesey, the time-honoured opposition between communal labour and individual genius generates two questions manifest in late nineteenth-century socialist debate: ‘First, can art exist without individual genius? And second, to what extent will socialism eradicate individuality in favor of the commune?’ Against the more autonomous author-figure endorsed by Wilde, Morris’s poet becomes ‘once more a ballad-maker, a socially engaged labourer whose work spoke from the people and returned their pleasures to them.’ Certainly, Livesey’s observation accurately recalls Morris’s refrain, in Hopes and Fears for Art, in favour of ‘art made by the people and for the people as a joy to the maker and the user,’ but her claim rests on a tenuous resemblance between the medieval lyricist and the Victorian professional writer, however commercially unadulterated the latter’s work may be. While communal ballad-making presents something of an oxymoron, Morris lends book-making a collective identity, wherein standard divisions of labour are overcome on the basis of shared technical knowledge. He insists specifically on a mutual understanding between artists or designers, whose illustrations must account for the physical media of printing, and engravers, whose task it remains to ‘translate’ penned or penciled drawings onto metal or wood. ‘The illustrator has to share the success and the failure, not only of the wood-cutter, who has translated his drawing, but also of the printer and the mere ornamentalist,’ Morris elaborates in urging ‘the harmonious cooperation of the craftsmen and artists’ who produce books. For him, the book provides a clearer index of collective labour than the text, and his suggestion that artists receive training in wood-engraving – advice consistent with his promotion

22 Morris repeats the slogan at least four times in ‘The Beauty of Life’ and at least once in ‘The Art of the People’.
of the trade arts – aligns creativity with technical skill.

Indeed, ‘the difference between Intelligent work and [...] Imaginative work, is a matter of degree only,’ Morris asserts in an 1880 lecture that identifies three varieties of work or toil.\textsuperscript{24} The semantic distinction is important: Morris condemns the supersession of all Intelligent Work and an adjacent range of Imaginative Work by depersonalised, money-driven, and joyless Mechanical Toil in the ‘Century of Commerce.’\textsuperscript{25} The difference between the two higher forms of labour does not distinguish cognitive from creative work, but refers to the artificial division between applied and fine art, both of which foster freedom of expression and pleasure in industry. Morris envisions the development of contemporary art-work into fully Imaginative Work as a transformation of “operatives” – each of whom ‘does not note the difference between bright and dull in his colours, but only knows them by numbers’ – ‘into workmen, into artists, into men.’\textsuperscript{26} Morris’s remarks correlate conscious discretion with aesthetic agency and even personal identity, to the effect that work, art, and life become interdependent terms.

Morris’s tripartition of labour into Intelligent Work, Imaginative Work, and Mechanical Toil occurs in a paper on ‘The Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation’; although his account pertains broadly to the arts, it is with work specific to architecture that it begins. When he reminds his audience at the Bibliographical Society in 1893 that ‘a book quite un-ornamented can look actually and positively beautiful, and not merely un-ugly, if it be, so to say, architecturally good,’ he alludes to a relationship between the architectural and book arts.\textsuperscript{27} Architecturally executed books reflect a superior aesthetics of labour – but does Morris also conceive of structurally sound texts? His discussion of ‘The Ideal Book’ ventures furthest into notions of literary craft and, appropriately, concludes with sentiments on superlatives:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} So Morris refers to the 1800s in ‘The Beauty of Life’.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Morris, ‘The Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation’.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Morris, ‘The Ideal Book’, p. 67.
\end{itemize}
a mere black and white picture, however interesting it may be as a picture, may be far from an ornament in a book; while on the other hand, a book ornamented with pictures that are suitable for that, and that only, may become a work of art second to none, save a fine building duly decorated, or a fine piece of literature.

These two latter things are, indeed, the only absolutely necessary gift that we should claim of art. The picture-book is not, perhaps, absolutely necessary to man’s life, but it gives us such endless pleasure, and is so intimately connected with the other absolutely necessary art of imaginative literature that it must remain one of the very worthiest things towards the production of which reasonable men should strive.28

Words and expressions like ‘second to none,’ ‘only,’ ‘absolutely,’ ‘such’ and ‘so,’ ‘endless,’ ‘intimately,’ ‘must,’ and ‘very worthiest’ convey the force of Morris’s categorical statements and lend intensity to the culmination of his essay. While his comments on book-making are properly conclusive, he introduces an allusion to the literary arts in reiterating the primacy of architecture. Books, texts, and buildings accordingly triangulate the best art, and Morris couples the latter two in several significant ways. Literature and architecture – both branches of art, and the presumable parents of the ‘picture-book’ – each exhibit the Morrisite union of beauty and utility, insofar as Morris calls for buildings ‘duly decorated’ and affirms the absolute necessity of imaginative writing. Morris’s deceptively chiasmatic stipulations subvert the identification of literature and architecture, respectively, with entertainment and use by resisting such a false dichotomy, an operation in evidence when Morris uses ‘gift’ for a more embodied word like ‘works’ or the transactional ‘yield’ in speaking to an economy of art, or when he makes full-throated provision for the ‘endless pleasure’ contained in ornamented books. A gift, in other words, can be indispensable, and although endless

pleasure carries less urgency, imaginative literature redeems the picture-book with a sufficient measure of gravity. The cross-currents override the contradictions between aesthetic and practical value, but Morris's rare reflection on the craft of writing raises questions nonetheless.

In fact, literary production foregrounds the tensions intrinsic to Morris's labour aesthetics and registers possible fault lines between art, work, and life. Morris never locates imaginative literature among the greater or the lesser arts, and he makes little use of the 'fine arts' designation, but it is suggestive that he labels architectural and literary touchstones 'fine.' Assuming it belongs to the so-called master-arts, might literature owe as much as architecture to craft? For that matter, how might literary composition reflect social over individual agency, and might imaginative literature, by dint of its intimacy with pleasure, verge on a luxury tailored less to popular than to elite audiences? Above all, what constitutes the absolute necessity of literary fictions to lived experiences?

It is tempting to speculate over Morris's probable answers, but at least as instructive to witness their articulation by writers who followed many of Morris's precepts to the letter, albeit independently of his influence, during the age of socialist reform in post-revolutionary Russia. Morris's sustained depiction of post-capitalist society in *News from Nowhere* and his sketches of revolution in scattered essays and talks are remarkably consistent with the early progress of the Soviet platform. The Nowhereians' motivated work ethic, fidelity to aspects of daily life, and indiscriminate access to art found expression in activism from policy-makers and artists pledged to the reality of a politicised, socialist art. During the 1920s, accounts of factography as a site for productivism in literature probed the contours of Morrisite craftsmanship and campaigned for its cause, but they made an important departure from Morris's position on fiction in particular. If Morris and his Soviet successors disagree in spite of shared concerns over productive processes, it is due to their differences in coding imaginative literature according to the modalities of literary experience.
Literature, like every other function of productive activity, served a social purpose under the newfound Soviet state: it was ‘only one given province of life-building.’ Production received universal circulation in contemporary discourse as society rerouted revolutionary ferment into state-building frenzy, and the preoccupation with proletarian empowerment in labour terms paralleled the excavation of an international construction site. Having dismantled the capitalist regime, citizens from all walks of life were workers and state-builders trained toward a common ‘social order’ or demand ['социальный заказ'], as Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote of the first requisite for poetic composition, and tasked to remodel all social institutions into socialist prototypes.

Nikolai Chuzhak, the editor of a 1929 anthology of contributions to the prominent LEF magazine, stations the function of literature within the context of life-building: ‘In literature this stands for the writer’s direct participation in the construction of our day (production, revolutionary politics, way of life) and for the alignment of all his writing with concrete needs.’ Productivist discourse in the wake of the Russian Revolution all but literalised the architectural horizon of Morris’s artistic outlook.

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Within the space of an essay-length address delivered in 1934, Walter Benjamin brilliantly anatomised the Soviet ethos of production, political awareness, and technique in its implications for the ‘author as producer.’ Benjamin establishes a distinction between the literary work considered ‘vis-à-vis the production relations of its time’ and the text that functions ‘within’ those relations. According to the former approach, literary production occurs in parallel with commercial production and literature addresses economy, whether by endorsing or subverting the prevailing mode of exchange. The Soviet upgrade to the sociopolitical function of literature, by contrast, inscribes the text into the productive process. The new Soviet author ‘will never be concerned with products alone, but always, at the same time, with the means of production’ – which embodies a concern with ‘literary technique.’ By conceiving of writing as a technical process, Benjamin observes, the Soviet press begins to bridge the disparity between the author as producer and the average Soviet worker. It deploys its most potent political manoeuvre by enacting the proletarian appropriation of the means of production on the literary front, to the effect that ‘[t]he reader is always prepared to become a writer.’

Benjamin might have been paraphrasing the Soviet writer and paradigmatic factographer Sergei Tretyakov, who brings egalitarianism to bear on literature at the conclusion of the LEF anthology: ‘We do not think that the ability to write should be concentrated in a small group of lit-specialists, but the reverse: the ability to be a writer should become as basic a cultural feature as the ability to read.’ Further intertextual resonances evoke Morris’s

33 Benjamin, ‘Author as Producer,’ pp. 98, 87 (original italics).
34 Benjamin, ‘Author as Producer,’ p. 90.
petition to let the arts ‘grow in one word POPULAR’ by, namely, becoming ‘widely spread, intelligent, [and] well understood both by the maker and the user.’36 Ruth Livesey interprets Morris’s democratizing fervour as a gesture toward ‘returning the aesthetic to a logic of production as opposed to consumption,’ following Regenia Gagnier’s claim for Morris’s ‘manifestly productivist’ – and thereby alternative – fin-de-siècle orientation.37 Whether or not Morris spoke as explicitly about his economic logic, Soviet socialists expressed their policies in identical terms, with one contributor to LEF urging worker-correspondents to ‘describe things [not] on the consumptive method,’ but ‘productively, examining each thing in the process of its operation, in its functional dialectic.’38 Literature qualified as a vector of life-building insofar as it could be adapted to the socialist value system, under which workers – writers included – represented genuine producers instead of merely supplying commodities in demand.

Part and parcel of the radical inclusivity of authorship, as Benjamin suggests, was precisely the insistence on writing as technique. In a state-sponsored publication on ‘art in production,’ Russian Futurist, Formalist, and cultural figure at large Osip Brik demands that every worker addressed understand his every application of colour and form, a request reminiscent of Morris’s frustration that the mechanical labourer ‘does not note the difference between bright and dull in his colours.’39 Brik asks that the

39 О. М. Брик, ‘The Order of the Day’ [‘В порядке дня’], in Art in Production, p. 8; see p. 8 above.
artisan rationalise his every aesthetic decision according to a species of blueprint, and he arrives at just such a conception of literary composition after discussing the author’s selection of detail in _LEF_. ‘Between an artwork and social fact,’ he tells prospective writers, ‘stands a literary theme in the same way that a technical blueprint lies between a piece of wood and a chair. The literary theme – is just this blueprint, according to which a thing is built.’ In effect, Brik compares writing to chair assembly; neither permits much deviation from an objective plan. Other notable proponents of the literalised approach to literary technique include Viktor Shklovsky, in his 1930 pamphlet on writing techniques, and arguably the foremost poet of the revolutionary era, Vladimir Mayakovsky, whose 1926 essay ‘How to Make Verses’ contains the laconic, ‘Poetry – is production.’ With no explicit theoretical agenda – and sometimes in conflict with his better known views – Shklovsky affirms the bond between literature and lived existence and discusses the writing process as the conscious, discriminate combination of detail, facilitated by practice instead of inspiration. Most specifically, his publication exemplifies the notion of literature as tradecraft by offering instructions and advice for composition. Shklovsky produces a writer’s manual on the same methodological premise that informs Mayakovsky’s ‘how-to’ on versification: ‘the technique of production is everywhere the same.’ Mayakovsky includes personal anecdotes and copious examples in his semi-autobiographical account of the ‘architectonics of verse’ ['архитектоника стиха'], pitting the praxis of poetics against the canonisation of its standards by speaking

40 ‘Между художественным произведением и социальным фактом стоит литературная тема точно так же, как между куском дерева и стулом лежит технический чертеж. Литературная тема — это тот чертеж, на основании которого строится вещь.’ О. Брик, ‘To Teach Writers’ [’Учить писателей’], in _Literature of Fact_ [http://teatr-lib.ru/Library/Lef/fact/#_Toc318542201] [accessed 28 May 2018], p. 188.

41 ‘Поэзия – производство.’

42 ‘техника производства везде одна и так же.’ Viktor Shklovsky, _The Technique of Writer’s Craft_ [Техника писательского ремесла] (Moscow: The Young Guard, 1930), p. 16.
as a ‘practitioner’ ['практик'] and not a ‘dogmatist’ ['начетчик’]. Mayakovsky’s is the voice of an artist resistant to literary-critical or theoretical pretensions, but also, and all the more conspicuously, the stance of a worker opposed to the illusion of inspired art.

In becoming a productive process under the socialist mandate, the literary endeavour went beyond sourcing and showcasing proletarian labour to acquiring rules of operation and deferring to scientific standards of assessing utility. Usherèd along a trajectory from aesthetic activity to industrial productivity, it surrendered its exceptionalism as a creative act to a new monopoly of rational consciousness, a ‘three-quarter rational’ pragmatics of art heralded by the LEF collective. 43 An article on ‘the literature of life-building’ announces a positivistic embargo on the very category of aesthetics, which stands less to be reformed than dismissed outright for a ‘new science of art’ ['новая наука об искусстве']. 44 It was unanimous among commentators that authorship meant the capacity to format or formulate material according to a particular design, with Tretyakov rallying fellow craftsmen, Brik observing the writer deploying and combining literary elements, and Brik and Shklovsky discussing the process of giving form to content.

That form and content were sociohistorically prescribed and sociologically contingent in the Soviet mindset legitimated new dominant genres – such as reportage, travelogues, diaries, biographies, and essays – fitted to the narrativity of dialectical materialism. In the 1920s, the trend toward documentarian storytelling with maximal fidelity to the conditions of Soviet existence produced ‘literature of fact’ or ‘factography,’ the subject of the first anthology of LEF publications, or, as LEF correspondents might have claimed, a new kind of hero for a new type of text. Indeed, the editor’s memo to writers dubs ‘the process of overcoming material’

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of exposing the dialectical fabric of reality – ‘the best secretly-narrative heroics of our day,’ and the observation is valuable in context for the series of tactical subversions folded in. Predictably, Chuzhak reverses any retreat from the factors of everyday life. He argues for writing that penetrates the “uninteresting,” “plain,” “ordinary” subject until it identifies the processual nature of any routine, from labour at large to pants alterations – ‘until [it arrives at] technique!’ Chuzhak’s interjection provides a valid slogan for factography itself, which, by his account, whets attention to material arrangements and replaces the ‘experiences of the hero with the experience of processes’ in the writer’s repertoire. Process is to protagonist what method is to aesthetic expression, in effect, and Chuzhak’s commentary certifies the factographic displacement of the hero by the sociological process, of fantasy by fact, and of verisimilitude by accuracy.

Morris might have sympathised with the factographer’s suspicion of simulation in routing a critique of the nineteenth-century novel through the utopian voices of News from Nowhere. Actual and imagined socialists, of the Soviet and Morrisite stripe respectively, appear to militate against the sham realities posited under narrative realism, a poor placebo for lived experience if not an obstruction to social progress. In Morris’s novel, Clara finds “something loathsome” about archetypal adversity and “dreary introspective nonsense” that suspend attention to the “sordid miseries” of the world, which “must even then have [...] dug and sewed and baked and built and carpentered round” its privileged

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readers. Her resentful diction and impassioned delivery, charged with visions of physical labour, find a sober counterpart in Hammond’s complaint against Victorian sensibilities earlier in the book:

It is true that in the nineteenth century, when there was so little art and so much talk about it, there was a theory that art and imaginative literature ought to deal with contemporary life; but they never did so; for, if there was any pretence of it, the author always took care (as Clara hinted just now) to disguise, or exaggerate, or idealise, and in some way or another make it strange [...].

Old Hammond’s stature among the Nowhereians lends authority to his slighting account of the realist canon and inflects his humor at the expense of its falsely advertised mimeticism, a pretension Soviet revolutionaries would hardly have found funny. Advocates for factography echoed Clara’s contempt for the pseudo-real and took aim precisely at the novelist’s habit of estranging himself from actuality and conveying a semblance of things as they were. It is as uncanny that Morris should have anticipated Shklovsky’s famous coinage as it seems odd that Shklovsky should have joined authors hostile to defamiliarisation in contributing to LEF. As it was, Chuzhak’s instructions to writers stipulated that they approach objects unlike foreigners and regard things with familiar eyes in the clear-sighted pursuit of truth.

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47 Notably, Clara’s alternative to “useless” reading culture is resoundingly proto-Soviet and shades into a Morrisite salute to architectural labour as optimally gratifying work. She reminds her audience of their surroundings and indicates each of her listeners in turn: “Yes, these are our books; and if we want more, can we not find work to do in the beautiful buildings that we raise up all over the country (and I know there was nothing like them in past times), wherein a man can put forth whatever is in him, and make his hands set forth his mind and his soul.” Morris, News from Nowhere, pp. 156–57.

48 Morris, News from Nowhere, pp. 105–06.

49 Notions of familiarity and strangeness were of course crucial to an account
However similar Chuzhak’s and Morris’s thoughts on near-contemporary fiction, Chuzhak’s sense that the imaginative faculty impairs perceptive vision is a far cry from Morris’s alignment of Intelligent and Imaginative Work and his conviction in the ‘absolutely necessary art of imaginative literature.’ Morris’s venture into the novel form with *News from Nowhere* almost belies his adherence to medieval, folkloric, or hereditary themes and genres throughout his prolific career; Morris subtitles *Nowhere* ‘a utopian romance’ as if in token of his literary affinities. In *Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture*, Elizabeth Miller approaches the problematic relationship between his activism and aestheticism by distinguishing ‘a revolutionary rather than a progressive politics of print’ in his utopian breaks with the present and by aligning Morris’s attraction to fantasy with ‘[a] conception of art as a thing above and separate from everyday reality [that] could serve political ends.’

Morris himself is more effusive and even less precise when he equates romance with humanity in commemorating Walter Scott, but his defense of generically imaginative literature is unequivocal in result. The constructivist spirit of Soviet state-building, by contrast, rendered any distraction from reality simply counter-productive, while the utilitarian stamp of Soviet socialism preempted any deviation from fact in raising collective awareness of social operations. Was Morris’s conjunction between labour and craft inappropriately radicalised under unique circumstances – or was it rather arrested on the spectrum between emancipated Mechanical Toil and realised Imaginative Work?

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50 Miller, *Slow Print*, pp. 37, 51.
51 Morris, ‘The Beauty of Life’.
The version of social transformation recounted in *News from Nowhere* and corroborated in Morris’s expository writing would seem to identify the early stages of Soviet society with the turbulent adolescence of an ideal state. Although he holds out hope against the wholesale dissolution of the arts elsewhere, Morris prepares his audience in ‘Useful Work versus Useless Toil’ to ‘accept the passing phase of utilitarianism as a foundation for the art which is to be’ in the event of sweeping institutional change, and the piece ends with a similar call for resilience in the face of possible warfare. Given that Morris increasingly favoured abstention from political measures late in his socialist career, the practical horizon of his radicalism was such that ‘[t]he revolution [...] receded constantly from view,’ as Mark Bevir observes. Morris’s revision of *News from Nowhere* for volume publication bears this comment out: he postpones the revolution in Nowhere by forty years. Notwithstanding the novel’s ambiguous timing, the transition to “pure Communism,” which Hammond calls “the only reasonable condition of Society,” takes another several decades – several times more than the decade elapsed since the Russian Revolution around the release of *LEF’s* factography primer. If, as Tretyakov alleged, the newspaper stood analogous to the Bible and the didactic novel as a touchstone for its day, ‘[j]ournalism is a moribund genre in a society that has reached the end of history.’ Miller interprets the telling absence of newspapers in Nowhere as evidence that Morris’s utopia has outlived a historical dialectic and arrived at an equilibrium state. In Hammond’s parallel

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54 Krishan Kumar considers the significance of the change and discusses Morris’s chronology in his commentary on *News from Nowhere* (pp. 115, 138–39).
rendition of events, the Nowhereians resuscitated the fine arts – namely, music and, among literary forms, poetry – by indulging an instinctual desire for beauty and cultivating ornamental art in a gradual progress towards ‘an epoch of rest,’ the alternate title of Morris’s text. Timing, indeed, forces Soviet and Morrisite approaches to literature apart.

Immersive productivism in the Soviet context, where leisure serves to catalyse work, differs from a Morrisite productivity offset by intervals of rest and compatible with the retroactivity of memory as well as imagination. Early Soviet socialists would have challenged Morris’s claim that ‘labour is good when due hope of rest and pleasure accompanies it’ in ‘Useful Work versus Useless Toil,’ let alone the frequency of allusions to pleasure and its semantic relatives across his body of writing. Whereas ‘rest,’ ‘leisure,’ and ‘idleness’ would have struck false notes in a post-revolutionary bulletin on literary objectives, Morris founds the ‘aims of art’ on the assumption that ‘all men’s lives are compounded of […] two moods,’ energy and idleness, and writes candidly that ‘the Aim of Art is to increase the happiness of men, by giving them beauty and interest of incident to amuse their leisure, and prevent them wearying even of rest, and by giving them hope and bodily pleasure in their work; or, shortly, to make man’s work happy and his rest fruitful.’

Morris ranks ‘hope of rest’ before ‘hope of product’ and ‘hope of pleasure’ in work itself when he characterises useful labour because ‘[our] simplest and most natural’ expectation figures first; he calls for peace, furthermore, ‘in order that we may live and work in hope and with pleasure.’ With what Hammond calls “work-pleasure,” the Nowhereians have consummated the exchange between restful and active spheres of existence intrinsic to Morris’s account of labour, but if it happens that they had a Soviet upbringing, it is explicit that their lifestyle derives from an even earlier past.

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57 Morris, ‘The Aims of Art’.
58 Morris, ‘Useful Work versus Useless Toil’.
59 Morris, News from Nowhere, p. 137.
Morris’s historical orientation – manifest in his celebration of Gothic art and culture, his recourse to medieval topoi in poetry and narrative prose, his knowledge of antiquarian books and early printing techniques, his pre-classical principles of design, and his conviction of the impact of tradition on all forms of art – represents another key condition of his productivist labour aesthetics and clarifies the status of imaginative literature in *News from Nowhere*. Morris believed that the past informed the present in the space of the workroom or studio, where labour expressed a sense of belonging to a human heritage. ‘Memory and imagination help him as he works,’ he writes of the artist who relies on experience and combines imparted wisdom with creative vision.60 Hammond assimilates Morris’s temporal dynamic when he affirms the advanced state of Nowhereian affairs as a period of “second childhood” – a view fitted perfectly to Holbrook Jackson’s opinion of the Morrisite revolution in printing as ‘a turning round to the period when craftsmanship, imagination and life were one and indivisible.’61 Hammond’s admission follows Clara’s complaint that Nowhereian painting and poetry outsources its subjects – that Nowhere figures nowhere, as it were, in the utopian imagination, which emulates Morris’s own creative propensity for myths and fantasies over immediate realities. Realist mimeticism provides a counterpoint to “natural,” inborn imaginative tendencies, and Hammond accepts another

60 Morris, ‘Useful Work versus Useless Toil’.
61 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 106. An especially incisive account of Morris’s time-keeping occurs in Holbrook Jackson’s study of the 1890s, when he refers to the private printers of the fin de siècle: “They were moved again by that vital form of atavism which, by throwing back to an earlier period, picks up the dropped thread of tradition, and so continues the process of evolution; their protest therefore became, in the best sense of the word, a revolution: a turning round to the period when craftsmanship, imagination and life were one and indivisible.” Jackson is keen to perceive the dynamic capacity of history posited by Morris’s aesthetics of labour, which valorises the inheritance of tradition rather than the displacement of the present by the past. Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, new illus. edn. (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976), p. 256.
speaker's analogy to juvenile diversion in good faith: “Thou hast hit it, Dick,” quoth old Hammond; “it is the child-like part of us that produces works of imagination. When we are children time passes so slow with us that we seem to have time for everything.” The episode distinguishes between innocuous escapism through literary romance and unhealthy dislocation on the pretext of verisimilitude. It sanctions a primary imagination, of sorts, responsible for something like purely imaginative art.

Not only would deceleration and nostalgia have factored out of Soviet productivist discourse: fiction came under factographic attack as a mode of disengagement, if not dissent, from a proper range of action. Eminent literary figures renounced texts whose aesthetic experience displaced worldly involvement and whose readers departed from the phenomenal realm into a fabricated time and space; the introduction and mission statement to Literature of Fact, handbook and movement, rejects just this class of ‘idle fiction’ and ‘naïve and false verisimilitude.’ Chuzhak minces few words in calling the novel-reader ‘passive and aesthetically drugged’ on the insubstantial figments of imagination, while Brik condemns the immobilising function of artifice. He explains that ‘[an] idealised reality can only be lived through,’ not ‘acted in,’ and for the active person, that which incapacitates does not exist. Brik further associates fiction with the bourgeois division of labour and leisure, maintaining that the capitalist work ethic facilitated the
consumption of escapist, idealised narratives for which the Soviet proletariat had no need, absorbed as it was in the fortification of socialism. For the factographic coterie in particular, the danger of imaginative literature and the threat of consumptive commercial logic take all too similar form. Indeed, the worker-correspondent warned against ‘the consumptive method’ of description is discouraged precisely from ‘remote[,] metaphorical’ observation.66 With imaginative literature on a slippery slope from pacifying, to intoxicating, to instrumentalising workers for commercialistic ends, Soviet socialists in the factographic camp endorsed the exercise of reason and agency through literary literalism, thereby securing the author as producer, the hero as process, and the text as an index of productive acts.

Many of the same premises motivated William Morris, nineteenth-century architect’s apprentice turned artist, activist, and professional multitasker, and the taskforce on life-building through art in post-revolutionary Russia. Their common effort to de-stratify the artistic sector by closing the gap between fine art and handicraft, as well as to spotlight the cooperative identity of book-making, deserves a discussion of its own.67 Salient differences – such as those between Morris’s insecurity over mechanisation and the glorification of industry under the Soviet regime, or the organic dialecticism detected by Morris between past and progressive events and the historical dialecticism of socialists bent on futurity, or Morris’s license for individual liberty and the primacy of the collective in communist society – also merit attention. Morris’s claim for the correlation between artistry and craftsmanship was refracted in taking literary effect during the early Soviet period. Given his

66 See p. 13 above. ‘Рабкор должен научиться описывать вещи не остраненно и не метафорически [...]’ Trenin, p. 216.
67 The pamphlet on Art in Production (see pp. 2–3, 13–14 above), which inquires into ‘the problems concerning the interrelations between art and production culture, industry and artistic creativity’ is a valuable resource on the former topic (‘From the Editorial Board’ [‘От редакции’], p. 3). With respect to the latter, B. V. Tomashevsky’s The Writer and the Book: An Essay on Textual Criticism [Писатель и книга: Очерк текстологии] (1928) is a strong place to start.
esteem for the originary value of imagination, Morris championed intersections between labour and leisure without sequestering a passive or even consumptive modality of narrativity.

If the politics of the Soviet literary scene promoted writing that preserved encounters with reality and espoused socialist doctrine, they also enforced Morris’s stance on popular art and piloted open access to textual experience. Within such a discourse of empowerment, however, the very first sentences of Shklovsky’s guide to writing techniques – ‘Today there are several thousand writers. This is too many.’ – sound misplaced, and Mayakovskyan’s more expressive comment in ‘And What Are You Writing?’ – ‘Writers multiply like bacilli – by simple division: there was one writer, there became two.’ – is equally unexpected. Later in his essay, Mayakovskyan expresses hope that ‘How to Make Verses’ will improve the quality of an increasingly programmatic literary output. Whether or not his concern registers the fallacious reasoning and the incipient sterility of factographic – or, obliquely, socialist realist – literature, it asks how closely some Soviet writers followed their own ostensible prescriptions against individualism or poetic inspiration. The editor of LEF publications on factography himself, for that matter, makes a concession for imagination on materialist terms, arguing ‘only against fiction in the absolute.’ It may be that the work of an effective fabulist – not impossibly a socialist craftsman as well – authenticates a comment that Morris might have found irrelevant and his Soviet successors, reactionary: Mikhail Bakhtin’s observation that ‘the artist is precisely one capable of being active outside of life.’

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**Secondary works**


Rhyme occurs in the eye and the ear, in play text and theatrical performance. It is pleasurable to the twenty-first-century academic poring over editions and pondering the ‘Shakespearian style’; we assume it was equally pleasurable to the Elizabethan audience member watching a Shakespeare play at its first performance. Rhyme, this essay will argue, can act as an important bridge between the written document and the spoken play, a bridge between the study of literariness and the study of theatre’s material history. For it is, on the one hand, a classic example of the ‘literary’ feature, the fruit of writerly craft. But at the same time, as remains to be proved, it can be used as a tool in investigating how drama was acted and acted upon in the early modern period. The crafting that takes place when an early modern playwright uses rhyme is the crafting of a literary text, but also of an authorial identity and a historically conditioned performance event. This playwright was no pseudo-Romantic genius, working in isolation and influenced only by the promptings of a muse; instead, we must conceive of this dramatist as a craftsman, operating according to the conventions and constraints of the theatrical community, and equipped with a number of specially designed tools to create the finished product — tools such as rhyme. This essay will consult a range of dramatic

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texts, considering the ways in which we can use rhyme to enhance our study of theatrical documents in three categories: collaboration and shared authorship; cues and actors’ parts; and censorship. The aim is for these investigations to bring together literary criticism and theatre history, two paths of study that so often fail to intersect, going some way towards responding to a plea made by Paul Eggert:

The next step is to learn how to configure a conjunction of bibliography and book history in the study of literature. [...] My hope, in conclusion, is that we will be able to find conceptual room for the aesthetic so that book history can revive and refresh literary study.²

Over a decade earlier, Scott McMillin had voiced a similar desire, in particular relation to early modern drama: ‘Ultimately, I hope the division between textual scholar and theatre historian can be softened so that the two disciplines can be brought into a much-needed cooperation.’³ This integrated approach, still evasive as these two pleas prove, is especially crucial for drama, because drama exists in both textual and occasional form. Early modern playwrights were literary authors, crafting their dramas according to generic convention and their own individual styles; at the same time, this process happened within a framework of historical performance conditions and a network of historical figures that controlled their output. This essay will demonstrate that rhyme’s dual character, as a feature of text and of performance, makes it the perfect tool for exploring these two different worlds that the early modern dramatist simultaneously inhabited.

I. Collaboration

If for a moment we strip back historical context, authors are largely characterised by their styles. The performance of a literary style enables a writer to lay claim to an authorial identity: his or her own individualised identity, an identity shared with another writer or a community of writers, or the identity of a writer that she or he has never met. Modern stylistic studies need to recognise that, alongside and in tension with the distinctive attributes that enable us to tell one playwright from another, there is the performativity of style – its ability to be put on and off like a mask through imitation – and therefore the performativity of authorship. This kind of performativity is crucial to the early modern theatre, where authorship was regarded in a manner alien to modern critics attached to Romantic notions of authorial importance (an attachment evidenced by ‘bardolatry’). In fact, in accordance with the ‘craftsman’ model established above, playwrights worked in any way that was necessary to produce the finished product, and their efforts often went uncelebrated. The frequency of collaboration, a frequency perhaps greater than we will ever know, is a testament to this.

‘Collaboration’ is a term that is used in the context of early modern drama without always having the connotations of deliberate cooperation that it has in general usage. Large numbers of plays were composed by several authors, either working in tandem from the outset, joining the already existing team to improve a play after censorship or bad reception, or being drafted in long afterwards to add to or edit the play without the knowledge of the original author. These multi-author plays are often belied by their title pages. Though sometimes viewed in the modern age as a dilution of authorial agency, collaboration was a fundamental part of early modern theatre. Collaborating authors do to some degree relinquish control over the overarching whole of the play they are working on, but they retain literary autonomy in the lines and sections they write. This
is where the issue of style, particularly performative style, becomes important both for literary critics and for theatre historians.\textsuperscript{4}

This section will use the notion of collaboration to prove the usefulness of rhyme – that striking and distinctive feature of a playwright’s style – in posing questions about early modern ideas of authorship. Rhyme’s frequency, positioning, and lexical specifics have often been used as ‘forensic’ evidence in attribution studies; selected examples will be cited later in the discussion. This section will attempt to go beyond scientific attribution and ask questions about the ways in which early modern authors negotiated authorial style within the paradigm of ‘shared authorship’.

Let us take for our primary example the case of Marlowe’s \textit{Doctor Faustus}. The play survives in two versions: the A-text printed in 1604, and the B-text in 1616. The listing in Henslowe’s diary of a sum in 1602 ‘to paye unto Wm Burde & Samwell Rowle for their adicyones in docter fostes’\textsuperscript{5} suggests that the dramatists Birde and Rowley may be responsible for the adaptations and additions which characterise the 1616 text as opposed to the 1604. One very specific change that occurs in the transition from the A-text to the B-text is an increase in rhyme. In his analysis of the B-text, Fredson Bowers points out that one of the 1602 revisers seems to be fond of rhyming couplets (as well as of completing a part line with the opening line of the next speech).\textsuperscript{6} The following analysis demonstrates how rhyme can be useful as a material indicator of collaboration at work, and how it can help us to map the literary journey between two texts.


\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Henslowe’s Diary}, ed. R.A. Foakes, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 206. This essay will use modern critical editions for its quotations, apart from when a facsimile edition is preferred for analysis (see Bibliography). When facsimiles are used, long ‘s’ and ‘u/v’ are modernised; all other spellings are retained, as is typography.

The scene in Rome provides a helpful case study. In the A-text, Mephistopheles makes Faustus invisible by placing a robe upon him and simply saying, ‘So, Faustus, now do what thou wilt, thou shalt not be discerned.’ In the B-text, the moment appears to call for much more ceremony in the form of a nine-line jingling charm in three rhyming couplets and one tercet, beginning, ‘Whilst on thy head I lay my hand / And charm thee with this magic wand’ (III. ii.15-16). Only after this poem does Mephistopheles tell Faustus he may do what he will. The rhyme here appears to fit well with the overarching literary project that has been attributed to the revisers of Faustus: it creates spectacle, turning the more cerebral A-text into a theatrical romp. It is the aural equivalent of the special effect.

Later on in this same scene in the A-text, Mephistopheles and Faustus have an exchange during which Faustus, unusually for this earlier version, uses rhyme:

MEPHISTOPHELES: Nay, I know not. We shall be cursed with bell, book, and candle.
FAUSTUS: How? Bell, book, and candle, candle, book, and bell,
Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell.
Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray,
Because it is Saint Peter’s holy day.
(A, III.i.82–7)

These two couplets very clearly signal Faustus’ derision in the face of Roman Catholic ceremony; his sarcastic disdain at the cursing is evident in the sing-song repetition of words, compounded of course by the rhymes.

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7 Doctor Faustus and Other Plays, eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), III.i.58–9. Further references to Marlowe’s plays are from this edition and are given after quotations in the text.
In the B-text equivalent for this scene (B, III.ii), only Faustus’ first couplet is present; the one about the grunting, bleating, and braying on St Peter’s day is absent. We might speculate that this is at least partly because the speech does not have the same power as it did in the earlier text. The jigging sarcasm of the rhyming couplets in A is somewhat lost in a play that uses such couplets liberally. In this scene of the B-text, shortly before the discussion of bells, books, and candles, Faustus has made frequent use of rhyme, saying, ‘The pope will curse them for their sloth today, / That slept both Bruno and his crown away’ (III.ii.7-8), and ‘Now, friars, take heed / Lest Faustus make your shaven crowns to bleed’ (III.ii.26-7), neither of which utterances occurs in the A-text. In the B-text version of the scene, Faustus seems to use rhyme to convey glee, triumph, and sarcasm fairly interchangeably: his speech before the cursing does not therefore have the same strikingly disdainful quality that it has in its earlier counterpart. The B-text is often characterised as intensifying the anti-Papist humour, but analysis of rhyme can be used to complicate overarching arguments like these in subtle ways: in this scene, the revisers seem to have missed a good opportunity to foreground Faustus’ mockery of the Pope’s gaudy ceremony through his sing-song rhyme.

The rhyme in this section of the B-text’s narrative is also an ultimate failure of camouflage. We cannot know for certain whether the aim of a multi-authored play of this period was always stylistic unity or not; both are fascinating possibilities. After a close reading of the Faustus B-text, a technique as obvious as rhyme highlights the discontinuity between original play and additions. There is even an instance at which the revisers reveal their own literary individuality while in the very act of trying to be ‘Marlovian’. This example is in the ‘Bruno’ plot line that the B-text adds from scratch to the episode in Rome. The Pope forces the Saxon Bruno to crouch, so that he can use him as a footstool to ascend his throne:
To me and Peter shalt thou grovelling lie
And crouch before the papal dignity.
Sound trumpets, then, for thus Saint Peter’s heir
From Bruno’s back ascends Saint Peter’s chair.
(B, III.i.94–7)

This action strongly echoes Tamburlaine’s use of Bajazeth as a footstool, in Marlowe’s earlier play.⁹ Yet in the moment of using a theatrical trope made popular by the playwright to whose work they are joining themselves, the revisers abandon the patented Marlovian blank verse and demonstrate their own predilection for rhyme.

*Faustus* plays around questions of agency and identity, then. Did the authors of the additions try and fail to dissolve themselves into Marlowe’s authorship, or did they stake a claim to their own distinctive styles? The latter is not out of the question: the additions were presumably commissioned in the first place to enliven the play and bring back audiences, so perhaps a noticeable ‘newness’ was part of the attraction of the revised version. Shared authorship in early modern drama is often far from seamless, and rhyme is an excellent way of analysing this: MacD. P. Jackson’s article on *Pericles* uses recurrence of individual rhyme pairs in the acknowledged work of Shakespeare and Wilkins to provide further evidence that the former wrote Acts III–V and the latter I–II.¹⁰ Certain pairings are characteristic of Shakespeare, certain of Wilkins. Analysis like this is a sound way of quantifying the feeling readers and audiences have that *Pericles* I–II is not ‘Shakespearian’.

Grace Ioppolo writes: ‘Many plays show a marked difference in style or content between collaborators’ shares, as in the case of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which Fletcher’s scenes seem less polished

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⁹ Nearby mentions of ‘German Frederick’ (B, III.i.137) and ‘princely Sigismond’ (146) confirm this connection with the world of Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*.

than Shakespeare’s.\textsuperscript{11} But sometimes rhyme can lead us in the opposite direction if we look at a play solely through its lens. Unlike *Faustus* and *Pericles*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in fact displays a much more unified stylistic project when it comes to rhyme. Scenes thought to be by Shakespeare and scenes thought to be by Fletcher are both largely non-rhyming, often splitting blank verse lines between different speakers, but they both frequently make room for rhyming songs, and a selection of rhyming performative speeches (epilogue and prologue in Shakespeare-attributed scenes, and the schoolmaster’s speech introducing the dance in Fletcher). Further computer analysis following the methods of Jackson would need to be carried out to establish whether the few rhymes that do occur are polarised between ‘Shakespearian’ and ‘Fletcherian’ usage, but the overall impression when it comes to rhyme is, unlike in *Faustus*, one of blending between the two authors.\textsuperscript{12}

Like any other literary feature, then, rhyme can be explored – with caution – as an indicator of authorial style and individualised poetic and dramatic project; much invaluable work has already been done in this quarter. Style is a slippery thing, of course: its co-option out of the literary realm into the scientific must always be handled with caution if it is to be, as it can be, truly enlightening. Using rhyme diagnostically as an attribution technique, and at the same time considering the aesthetic functions it is fulfilling in an individual play within its historical and theatrical situation, can give a nuanced picture. It helps us think more subtly not only about which authors may be responsible for different pieces of text, but also about how these authors stake a literary claim in the play on which they are working. In an era of increased respect for and


\textsuperscript{12} This conclusion is in line with Jeffrey Masten’s portrayal of the play as indicative of a homoerotic and homoromantic model of harmonious co-authorship (*Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)).
interest in collaborative and anonymous drama, we can use rhyme to shed light on early modern attitudes to literary unity and literary individuality.

II. Cues

Rhyme concerns not only playwright and reader, but also, of course, performer and audience member. This section will explore some issues surrounding rhyme and the early modern actor, or, more specifically, the document that directly affected his performance: the part. It will analyse cues both as they appear in actors’ parts and as they can be inferred from full play texts. In doing so, it will argue for the importance of rhyme as a two-way bridge between spoken performance and documentary history.

It is common knowledge that rhyme can be an invaluable tool in the mechanisms of memorisation; therefore, it can also be an invaluable tool when mapping a journey from play text to stage, via an actor’s part, and when mapping a journey in the opposite direction, from stage to published text. Rhyme’s usefulness in memorisation was evidently a commonplace in the early modern period too: Philip Sidney could almost be describing an underprepared actor’s experience when he writes, in his *Defence of Poesy*,

that verse far exceedeth prose in the knitting up of memory, the reason is manifest: the words (besides their delight, which hath a great affinity to memory) being so set as one cannot be lost but the whole work fails; which accusing itself, calleth the remembrance back to itself, and so most strongly confirmeth it. Besides, one word so, as it were, begetting another, as, be it in rhyme or measured verse, by the former a man shall have a near guess to the follower.13

We might imagine Shakespeare taking hold of this idea, and even gently mocking his cast, in a highly self-reflexive passage in Love’s Labour’s Lost:

KING: How well he’s read, to reason against reading.
DUMAINE: Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding.
LONGAVILLE: He weeds the corn, and still lets grow the weeding.
BEROWNE: The spring is near when green geese are a-breeding.
DUMAINE: How follows that?
BEROWNE: Fit in his place and time.
DUMAINE: In reason nothing.
BEROWNE: Something then in rhyme.¹⁴

Berowne comically supplies a rhyme in this ‘place and time’ because the dialogue and its momentum demand it, but its content is very much in the wrong place at the wrong time. Like an underprepared actor, he allows an instinctive response to rhyme to rule over common sense. Shakespeare demonstrates rhyme’s role both as a literary flourish and a practical feature of theatre.

The idea that he is playing on here is embedded in theatrical convention. Glancing at almost any early modern play text shows us rhyme’s practical use for actors: but let us look for an exemplar at 2 If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, printed in 1606 and attributed to Thomas Heywood. We see examples here of rhyming exchanges between characters, like the one in Love’s Labour’s Lost:

Gresh[am]. Ther’s law inough to right you, take your course.
D[octor]. Now[ell]. Reason being made man’s guide, why is’t that force
Are violent passions…¹⁵

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The lines flow easily between the two actors, thanks to the rhyme. This play also makes strikingly frequent use of the convention to end blank verse speeches on a rhyming couplet: in this work, as in other works attributed to Heywood such as *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, this practice is common to the point of becoming an expectation. Occasionally speeches end on two such couplets, and even less frequently three, at the end of longer speeches.

We cannot know whether the pragmatic aid that this offered to actors who were getting ready to say their next lines was in fact merely a by-product of a primarily literary vogue – but its existence is undeniable. Given that the cues actors were given to learn in their parts were seldom more than two or three words long, an aural indication that those few words were approaching would have been very helpful. Discovering that one’s cue was in fact the second half of a couplet gave better warning of its arrival. In their fascinating study of actors’ parts, Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern identify the theoretical usefulness of this onstage, as well as discussing the ways in which rhymed cues can create theatrical events and set up emotional shifts and dynamics. But in the following passage they underemphasise rhyme’s real practical value to the performer:

> Cues are not, for instance, chosen in order to help with versification: indeed, intricate rhyme patterns are sometimes hard to spot, as they are shared between characters, not all of whose parts have survived. Tellingly, then, actors frequently lacked the advantage of having a mnemonic rhyme on their own individual parts.16

This makes it all about pre-learning. According to their own thesis, rehearsal was often very limited, and actors would have had to rely to a certain extent on instinct and convention, alongside their memorised ‘part’, during the performance. Rhyming cues played into

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learned behaviour, a behaviour purely based in stage performance and too ingrained to require concretising in the written part.

Sometimes in 2 If You Know Not Me we see a character’s line so abundantly signalled that a pre-learned cue would have barely been necessary at all. The actor playing John in the following exchange would have to be positively comatose not to notice that his time had come to speak:

_Gresh._ Provide you presently: where much is spent,  
Some must be got, thrift should be provident:  
Come hether Cosin, all the rest depart.  
_Exeunt Factors._  
_Iohn._ I had as good depart too…  
(TLN 86–9)

‘John’ would be able to go on not only his memorised cue, probably something along the lines of ‘-rest depart’, and the obvious implications of the context, but also the couplet signalling the end of Gresham’s speech proper. Examples like this prove that rhyme would have provided for actors a theatrical aid _additional_ to the written part, rather than simply representing a missed opportunity for more effective memorisation in advance. The part-learning process is based on written words, of course. But when the words rhyme, this adds another layer of memorability, a more sensory one, below the level of content or context.

A speech like this also exemplifies the fact that a rhyming couplet was often not only a signal for an actor to speak. In this instance, it may have also got the _factors_ ready to depart, which they would have to do as soon as the next line was spoken. This is of greater importance in the following example, in which our hapless ‘John’ must already be visible onstage by the time his presence is alluded to, rendering the written stage direction already too late:

_Gresh._ Ile raise a worke shall make our Marchants say,  
T’was a good showre that fell upon that day. How now _Iacke_?  
_Enter Iohn Gresham._  
(TLN 559–61)
The ‘say / day’ rhyme here is a signal that a cadence in the speech has been reached, and it is time for something new to happen: perhaps this signal enabled John to begin his entrance in time to be greeted onstage. This formula, whereby a direct question to the next speaker or a reference to that speaker’s entrance is tagged onto the end of a rhyming couplet, recurs often enough to suggest that we ought to view it as a theatrical convention.

Occasionally rhyme appears to act as a cue for other types of stage business besides speaking, exiting, and entering (although these are by far the most frequent). Here, a rhyming couplet occurs at the beginning rather than the end of a speech:

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Gresh. \text{ Good sooth tis true, if we could think it so,} \\
\text{But tis mans nature, he desires his woe.} \quad A \text{ storme.} \\
\text{Now passion of me…} \\
(TLN 540–43)
\]

The speech then continues in blank verse. The only practical explanation for the rhyme signal here is that it cues the storm sound-effect. A similar instance occurs later, when ‘A blasing Starre’ appears in the middle of a scene, following a couplet: ‘… Forgot with me, but that before I die, / The world shall see Ile leave like memorie’ (TLN 1254–5). Here, the rhyme appears to cue a visual spectacle.\footnote{Other instances of stage business cued by rhyme in this play occur at TLN 2331 and 2603, when a couplet signals ‘He offers to shoote’ and ‘A noyce [sic] within crying a Furbisher’, respectively.} If this was the case, then it seems as if the whole theatre, including those in charge of effects, was hardwired to respond to the sound of rhyme, in a way that was distinct from yet complementary to its trained response to written cues. Integrating rhyme into our knowledge of cues, plots, and stage business would offer a new way to understand the mindset controlling early modern rehearsal and performance.
We must not lose sight of rhyme in its textual form, however: its occurrence on the page can often be intriguing. For an example of how rhyme can be used when re-analysing a much-analysed document, let us turn to the actor Edward Alleyn’s part of Orlando in Robert Greene’s *Orlando Furioso*. In Act II scene i of the printed quarto, before Orlando reads the tormenting roundelay left for him by his enemy, the Shepherd says to him, ‘Poore haples man, these thoughts containe thy hell!’ However, in the manuscript part of Orlando, the cue is not ‘-containe thy hell’, but ‘-sorowes dwell’. Another interesting feature of this example is that only some thirty lines earlier in the scene, the Shepherd, who appears very fond of couplets, has said, ‘The heaven of love is but a pleasant helle, / Where none but foolish wise imprisned dwell’ (570–71). This is of course a quarto reading, but it is supported by the Alleyn manuscript, which lists this speech with the cue ‘-dwell’. Why does this ‘hell / dwell’ rhyme seem to recur in ghostly form in the difference between the Shepherd’s line in quarto and his cue in manuscript? This difference has, perhaps rightly, been overshadowed by its proximity to a textual crux about the ensuing roundelay lyrics, written out for Orlando’s voice in the quarto but not the part; however, small as it is in the grand scheme of things, this ‘rhyme substitute’ is a textual oddity that can help us think further about this much contested theatrical document.

19 MS facsimile accessed through The Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project’s online database; Greg gives the same reading in his printed transcription of the text (*Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: ‘The Battle of Alcazar’ and ‘Orlando Furioso’*, Malone Society Reprints Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922)).
To demonstrate the ways in which rhyme can enter into such hard-fought critical debates as these, let us turn our minds to several possible explanations for its intrusion in *Orlando*. The first explanation is that it is a coincidence: the Shepherd’s line was changed at some point in the transition between the version of the play represented by the actor’s part and the version printed in quarto (which came first is a different question), and the fact that the new line rhymes with the old may well be pure fluke. A second explanation, however, is that it was a deliberate choice by the practically-minded acting company: they decided to rewrite the Shepherd’s speech, say, and in order to make the change less irritating to the lead actor they kept the sonic effect of the cue as it originally stood. Alleyn perhaps would not have even needed to be informed of the change, given that the memorial trigger would still work onstage. Aside from the issue of its being entirely speculative, this theory has some problems of course: the presence of the Shepherd’s earlier couplet ending with ‘dwell’ means that deliberately introducing a second speech ending in the same word would probably have been more of a hindrance than a help from the point of view of an actor picking up on cues.

In fact, this hindrance need not necessarily prove a counterargument, but rather a third theory: as Stern and Palfrey demonstrate, the ways in which actors could have mistaken their cues might have often been the result of deliberate traps by the playwright, to create spontaneous moments of comedy, power-play, or psychological and textural complexity. In this instance, if the Orlando actor were to repeat the lines he had uttered after the shepherd’s earlier couplet ending in ‘dwell’, then he would say, ‘Orlando, what contrarious thoughtes be these, / That flocke with doubtfull motions in thy minde?’ (572–3). Provided that the actor righted himself shortly after, this mistakenly repeated couplet would be an appropriate response to having discovered the first treacherous roundelay. The repetition would in itself provide an insight into Orlando’s spiralling interiority and confusion, and would foreshadow his portrayal of obsessive madness.
A fourth theory relies on W. W. Greg’s view of the quarto as a memorial reconstruction of the original or ‘good’ play that now survives only in Alleyn's part, created during a prompt-book-less tour. This is extremely problematic in itself, considering the caution with which we must always approach Greg’s important but at times overly creative work: the notion that a group of actors would sit down and write a play from memory is now discredited in many quarters. Let us entertain the idea for a moment though: we might imagine, à la Greg, the actors sitting round and trying to re-create the lines of the Shepherd, who is perhaps playing too small a part to be present. Misremembering the words, but remembering the sound they make, the company creates a rhyming substitute. This theory could perhaps be stretched to include a view of the quarto on the one hand as a text misheard and inaccurately transcribed during a performance, or on the other hand as an accurate transcription of an actor’s mistake.

A final explanation could attribute the rhyme to a scribal error, springing from a particularly athletic eye-skip back to the Shepherd’s earlier couplet. This seems immediately implausible, however, because of the manuscript’s inclusion of ‘sorowes’, absent from the quarto couplet. Surmises in the vein of these five must always be speculative and ultimately inconclusive, but they help us keep debates about documents of theatre history alive. Theories about Orlando’s part in relation to the quarto tend to pin themselves on deductions about historical processes of theatre, but being attuned to literary features like rhyme could in future help us to bring these theories firmly back to the text.

Again, then, rhyme proves its usefulness as both a written and a spoken artefact. As demonstrated above, the specificity of the connection that rhyme builds between words encourages us to probe textual variants, and this alertness to word choice will inevitably yield discoveries in the study of cues and parts: Stern, for example, has made fruitful deductions about compositorial mistakes, examining non-rhyming cues that have accidentally become the last
lines of songs in printed play texts. On the other hand, rhyme can also lead us to more general impressions of the guiding principles behind early modern performance, and the practical considerations around which authors framed their literary creativity. It can help us understand what playwrights expected to provide for actors in the texts they offered, and what actors expected to use when bringing those texts to life.

III. Censorship

We have seen some examples of rhyme through the eyes of the author and the actor, and now we must attempt to hear it through the ears of the audience. Rhyme was a familiar and expected part of the theatre-going experience as much as any other dramatic convention, and the insidious, sensory way in which it interacts with the human brain makes it the perfect tool for letting the audience in on secrets. Using rhyme to help us understand how audiences might have perceived censorship, and also comedic self-censorship, will demonstrate its usefulness as an indicator of the way drama enacted its own treatment in the early modern world.

Early modern censorship – of incendiary political allusion, inappropriate sexuality, and blasphemy – was not always just about content. It was increasingly rooted in the construction of language itself. The 1606 Act to Restrain Abuses of Players, which forbade actors to speak the name of God or any person of the Trinity onstage, ‘cut the dramatist off from a part of language and a part of life’, to use Gary Taylor’s words. This constraint is of course symptomatic of a less author-centric culture than our own; it disperses the attribution of literary judgement and style across a broader selection of people and organisations – scribes, editors, politicians – than does the model of the playwright as isolated genius. This section will look

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at the ways in which rhyme can aid discussions of various forms of censorship, including those resulting from the 1606 Act, and their position alongside aesthetic creation.

The 1623 Shakespeare Folio is an enormously valuable compendium of post-1606 censorship. This is a far from simple issue for scholars, as Taylor explains: given that Shakespeare’s pre-1606 work would have had to have been expurgated long after its first stretch in performance, and given that the Act only applied to plays in their spoken form, it would have been odd if the texts used in the Folio were adapted solely for print. Furthermore, the Folio is only shoddily censored: many words, and even whole plays, seem to have avoided expurgation. After thorough analysis of sources, Taylor concludes that there was in fact very little effort on the part of the Folio editors and printers to censor the texts they were given, apart from in the cases of words to do with the tortures of the Crucifixion, primarily ‘zounds’ (‘God’s wounds’), which they seem to have objected to. The rest of the censorship, such as it was, had already been carried out in the varied array of theatre documents that the printers had used to set all the plays in the Folio. Despite this dizzying dispersal of responsibility, we can still compare the 1623 texts with earlier quarto counterparts in order to find out which blasphemous words have been substituted, and with what.

Looking with a close eye to aural effects can add another dimension to this analysis. There are numerous examples of moments when this kind of reading can prove interesting, but the practice can be demonstrated using just a few. In 1 Henry IV, then, a play that lost a good deal of blasphemous language between Quarto and Folio, we see ‘God’ changed to ‘heaven’ in Hotspur’s lines: ‘By (God / heaven), he shall not have a Scot of them / No, if a scot would save his soul he shall not’.23 The sound of ‘God’ fits much better into

the matrix of the ‘Scot/not’ internal rhyme than does the more diluted ‘heaven’. Hotspur’s anger at the thought that he might be asked to give up his prisoners forces the emphasis in line 213 onto the three chiming words, ‘God’, ‘not’, and ‘Scot’, and this effect is partly produced by the blasphemous word at the start of the line that sets the assonance in train. Later on, in Act II, the word ‘zounds’ is removed from Gadshill’s description of men: ‘such as will strike sooner than speak, and speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray. And yet, zounds, I lie…’ (II.i.77–9). In this unexpurgated version, the assonance of ‘zounds’ seems to have become bound up in the repetition of ‘sooner’, and carries the energy of the sound forward.

Similarly in the following line in _The Merry Wives of Windsor_, a Quarto reading of ‘O lord sir’ is replaced in the Folio with ‘Alas the day, good heart’: ‘(O lord sir / Alas the day, good heart), that was not her fault’ (III.v.36). The editors of the Oxford Shakespeare also adopt the Folio reading. However, the ‘lord’ variant takes on more literary interest when we look at the speech that directly precedes Mistress Quickly’s line:

Mistress Ford? I have had ford enough: I was thrown into the ford, I have my belly full of ford.

(34–5)

To have ‘O lord sir’ immediately follow the outburst on ‘ford’ builds on the comedy of the sonic repetition, an effect that is lost in the alternative reading.

But it is dangerous to make value judgements like these, and it is even more dangerous to turn them into general rules. There may be just as much evidence of expurgatory editorship that is sensitive to literary and sonic effect as there is of its more tin-eared counterpart. One such piece of evidence may be found in _The Second Maiden’s Tragedy_, a play now most commonly attributed to Middleton, which survives in a manuscript that contains emendations by Sir George Buc, the Master of the Revels, or one of his agents. The last three
lines of the following speech are marked for deletion by the censor, who seems to have been cautious about veiled allusions to sexual intrigue in the court of King James:

_Govi:_ from y’ on old fellowes pratlinge
all your intents he reveald largelie to her
and she was trobled w/ a foolish pride
to stand upon her honor, and so dyed,
[ twas a straunge trick of her, few of yo’ ladies ]
[ in ordnary will beleive it, they abhor it ]
[ theile sooner kill them selves w/th lust, then for it; ].24

It appears that the speech would have ended on a rhyming couplet both in its pre- and post-censorship forms.25 Given that it was presumably only the last line that contained real offence, it is interesting that the censor chose to veto the entire sense unit, and leave behind a speech with a concluding aural effect equivalent to its salacious predecessor. In some ways, it almost seems too convenient: one wonders whether the writer of the speech was trying his luck, slipping in an appendage to a safely concluded utterance to see if it would get past the censor, but ensuring that it would stand well enough on its own if it did not.

The extent to which censorship interacted with a literary conception of authorship is complex, and further study using details such as rhyme would be a useful way of taking the debate into the future. Audiences would have known that there were things not being said onstage, but different levels of literary skill in expurgation

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25 Whether the couplet preceding the expurgated matter would have produced a full or a half rhyme depends on whether the actor chose to pronounce ‘dyed’ as ‘died’ or ‘diéd’. Its status as a full rhyme is supported by the play’s attribution to Middleton, of whom ‘jumbling of blank verse, rhyme, and prose is typical’ (Brian Vickers, _Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays_ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.261).
would have encouraged different levels of perception. Theatregoers may have been listening closely to the lines the actors spoke in a prurient attempt to work out whether dangerous content had been excised; or they may have bought entirely into the political necessity of censorship and accepted the expurgated finished product as a unified work, a collaboration between author and censor. Either way they would have known that the language of the theatre was a unique and controlled language, and, after 1606 at least, a language that was subtly different from that of normal life – a language in which certain words were missing, leaving gaps to be filled.

It was perhaps this audience consciousness of censorship that encouraged many early modern playwrights to use a similar device of their own free will, for comic purposes. The following couplet ends an act in Thomas Heywood’s *A Woman Killed With Kindness*: ‘If they proceed as they have done before, / Wendoll’s a knave, my mistress is a —.’ So attuned is the human ear to rhyme, that the blank (sometimes rendered as ‘&c’) is readily filled in, and in fact ‘whore’ is anticipated even before the blank is reached. The rigidly metrical regularity of the first line helps build this expectation. A more obviously comic example comes in John Marston’s *The Malcontent*:

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MALEVOLE: The Dutchman for a drunkard,
MAQUERELLE: The Dane for golden locks,
MALEVOLE: The Irishman for usquebaugh,
MAQUERELLE: The Frenchman for the ( ).
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It is not only the audience’s xenophobic assumption (that the French were rife with the ‘pox’) that is being played on here; it is also their aural assumption of rhyme and their knowledge of the conventions of censorship which create these accessible and enduringly popular jokes.

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Of course, we cannot know whether occlusions like these arose purely from prudishness on the part of the printer: perhaps onstage the inappropriate words, including those officially vetoed, were uttered loud and clear. As Stern points out, our extrapolations as to what a play’s ‘approved book’ might have looked like cannot ever tell us for certain what happened in a given theatre during a given performance, and in fact we know that very often companies did get in trouble for breaking the rules. Most of the time, a study of historical documents cannot capture the more ephemeral moments of early modern theatre – the moment, for example, when a company decided to take a risk – but it can tell us about dramatic convention, and the political pressures that were placed upon it. Rhyme can extend this politics to the realm of the audience: through putting ourselves in the places of early modern theatregoers and being attuned to their aural expectations, we can understand the ways in which dramatists embroiled them in the dangerous world of censorship and made them complicit in their choices.

Conclusion

This accumulation of examples has shown that the study of literary style and the study of theatre history can refresh each other in the field of early modern drama. They can also call each other to account: an investigation of literary style that ignores the material conditions in which that style was first brought forth, and an investigation of documentary theatre history that ignores the aesthetic pleasure a theatre was designed to facilitate, are both equally limited. Rhyme, with its dual nature as textual and sonic, documentary and ephemeral, provides this much needed bridge. Ioppolo takes on Stephen Orgel, alluding to his Authentic Shakespeare:

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The post-modern contention that ‘Shakespeare’s own working conditions, the requirements of his playhouse and the fact that his texts were to be read by actors, may be considered a form of contamination’ ignores a multitude of evidence to the contrary. This evidence demonstrates that these precise conditions and requirements, for which the plays were specifically created, allowed authors to collaborate in the theatrical production and performance of their texts.29

In fact, there were times when plays went, to a certain extent, out of the author’s control, in the ways that Orgel describes. But Ioppolo’s emphasis on the collaborative nature of this is crucial. Playwrights walked a line between literary individuality and practical accommodation within a historical framework, and bringing these two facets together was the way they made drama. This essay has progressed from looking at rhyme and the author, to rhyme and the actor, to rhyme and the audience, showing how this little instrument functions as a tool in both the highest considerations of literary genius and identity in early modern drama, all the way to the most practical investigations of its everyday material reality in the theatre. A play exists as the two- or three-hour-long event that was brought into being because of and in spite of authors with deadlines, playwrights hired to add jokes, actors learning a week’s worth of parts at once, and company sharers trying to avoid a prison sentence from the Master of the Revels. It also exists as the text that is studied, quoted, admired, and made to exemplify a style and a time and a place throughout centuries. The early modern authors of theatre – dramatists and the people who controlled their work – crafted both the event and the text. Studying rhyme helps us turn these two plays into one in our minds, and, in doing so, brings us nearer to the condition of the early modern playwright.

29 Ioppolo, Dramatists, p.10.
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Agency in the multicultural city: Politics of Gendered Space in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* and Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret*

LORRAINE LAU

Introduction

The protagonists of Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* and Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret* follow inverted yet symmetrical trajectories in their respective novels. In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen is a Bangladeshi Muslim immigrant who arrives in London for an arranged marriage, with no knowledge of the English language or culture. As her interactions with the city gradually extend beyond her husband’s apartment, she evolves from a passive housewife to an independent businesswoman integrated into London society. Her journey differs sharply from that of *Minaret’s* Najwa, a wealthy and westernised Sudanese young woman who escapes to London after a coup in Khartoum. Lost and vulnerable without her family, Najwa eventually rejects London’s mainstream culture to identify with its diasporic Muslim community. From the outset, Ali and Aboulela use their characters’ relationships with urban space to dramatise a binary between liberal feminism and Muslim femininity: Ali envisions integration into western spaces as a source of emancipation for Muslim immigrant women, whereas Aboulela constructs the Muslim community as an alternative space for encouraging the
cultivation of non-western principles and identities. Yet neither novel truly enforces the idea of a geographical distinction between secular liberalism and religious duty. Instead, *Brick Lane* and *Minaret* focus on experiences of individual women as they navigate gender, cultural, and socioeconomic dilemmas on a personal level. Both novels allow flexibility within their visions of immigrant life, as characters inhabit different spaces while negotiating their identities. This paper will examine how *Brick Lane* and *Minaret* use their protagonists’ relationships with urban space to conceptualise different forms of agency. After contextualising the two novels within London as a multicultural city, I will discuss how the binary of public and private spaces limits both Nazneen and Najwa, albeit in different ways: Nazneen’s confinement to the apartment prevents her from achieving autonomy, whereas Najwa’s freedom in the public sphere isolates her from a sympathetic community. I will then compare how the two women negotiate their identities by crafting spaces for themselves that allow them agency. While *Brick Lane* understands agency as individual and socioeconomic autonomy, *Minaret* portrays an agency in which the protagonists choose subordination to faith. At the same time, both novels acknowledge the impossibility of absolute segregation between liberal British and Muslim diasporic cultures. The multicultural city serves as a landscape in which Nazneen and Najwa seek, define, and craft supportive communities for Muslim women. By establishing a business with her female neighbours, Nazneen participates in the consumer market on her terms, breaking free from the gendered constraints of Bangladeshi Muslim culture. Conversely, Najwa’s solidarity with her sisters at the mosque helps her cultivate a spiritual identity apart from the consumer values that she finds unfulfilling. By conducting a dialogic reading of *Brick Lane* and *Minaret*, I aim to explore how the two novels demonstrate the importance of female-oriented communities as a means of gaining and creating agency. The two female protagonists choose lifestyles that appear to counter one another, yet their goal remains the same. Both Nazneen’s pursuit
of integration and Najwa’s rejection of multicultural values convey narratives of diasporic women strategically navigating the city for survival.

London as a Multicultural City

In order to discuss Nazneen and Najwa’s experiences as immigrants in London, I must first provide context for London as a multicultural city. Ali Rattansi defines multiculturalism as sets of policies developed in response to the rise of non-white minorities in Western Europe and North America after the Second World War.¹ The institution of multiculturalism varies between different nations: in Britain, multiculturalism mainly concerns immigrants from nations previously colonised by the British Empire, including Bangladesh and Sudan. As the capital of Britain, London became a popular location for immigrants to settle. As a result of the distinction between the white host nation and non-white immigrants, the concept of multiculturalism has been racialised from the beginning.² According to Rattansi, multiculturalism should aim to integrate immigrants by providing them with equal opportunities, while allowing them to preserve elements of their home culture.³ Due to its purported recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity, multiculturalism is generally viewed as aligned with liberal politics, with conservative critics arguing that it threatens to destabilise the dominant western culture.⁴

¹ Multicultural policies are based on the principles of neutrality toward race and religion, as well as accommodation towards different ethnic identities in public institutions including schools, media, and welfare services. (Ali Rattansi, Multiculturalism: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Very Short Introductions online, Sept. 2013, p. 9 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780199546039.001.0001> [accessed 24 Nov. 2017].)
² Rattansi, Multiculturalism, p. 10.
³ Rattansi, Multiculturalism, p. 8–9.
⁴ Rattansi, Multiculturalism, p. 31.
Yet socialist critics have pointed out that multiculturalism does not necessarily equate to anti-racism. Focusing on Canada, Sunera Thobani argues that multiculturalism functions in opposition to anti-racism: by reframing the white settler society as tolerant and pluralist, multiculturalism stabilises white supremacy without interrogating the structure of racism.\(^5\) To participate in society, minority communities must view their own culture as fixed, distinct, and Other.” On the surface, multiculturalism replaces the singular narrative of assimilation, in which immigrants are expected to adopt all characteristics of the dominant society. However, multiculturalism also displaces anti-racist activism by integrating immigrants on the nation’s terms instead of directly challenging institutionalised racism.\(^6\) In Britain, anti-racists associated with the Institute of Race Relations have moreover criticised multiculturalism as essentialist. Instead of engaging minorities as equals, they argue, multiculturalism exploits and commodifies minority cultures to superficially broaden the knowledge of the white majority.\(^7\) Although a proponent of multiculturalism himself, Ali Rattansi acknowledges that multiculturalism in Britain has been a top-down project that has failed to stimulate public discussion among the white majority and non-white immigrants, resulting in division between the two groups.\(^8\) Consequently, the modern city is still largely understood as a Western construct: in his treatise on city spaces, Ali Madanipour traces modern categories of public and private spaces to Enlightenment ideals.\(^9\) The spatial divisions that inform and organise modern society are rooted in Eurocentric discourses of liberalism.\(^{10}\)

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7 Rattansi, *Multiculturalism*, p. 27.
Published in 2003 and 2005 respectively, *Brick Lane* and *Minaret* show an awareness of rising Islamophobia in Britain, as well as criticism against multiculturalism as enabling radical Islam. While both novels are critical of the racism against Muslim immigrants resulting from the terror attacks of 9/11, neither promotes political engagement as a response to discrimination. To disavow radical Islam, Ali and Aboulela seem determined to establish Muslim identities for their protagonists that exist outside of politics. Nazneen negates racism by actively engaging with British society, whereas Najwa’s submersion in Islam suggests the possibility of a faith-based identity that stands apart from but does not threaten mainstream British values.

*Brick Lane*’s popularity is rooted in its accessibility to mainstream readers: reviews have continually praised Ali for making Bangladeshi immigrant culture relatable to an implicitly white British audience. *Granta* named Ali as one of twenty ‘Best of Young British Novelists’ in 2003 based on the unpublished manuscript. Geraldine Bedell, writing for *The Guardian*, commended the novel for ‘opening up a world whose contours I could recognise, but which I needed Monica Ali to make me understand.’ The warm reception of *Brick Lane* as a simultaneously British novel and immigrant’s tale offers a clue to its popularity: Nazneen’s successful integration, aided by her adoption of liberal values, reinforces multiculturalism as positive and non-threatening. In the field of postcolonial literary criticism, scholars such as Alistair Cormack have criticised the novel for its emphasis on liberalism as a source of emancipation for immigrant women, which reduces immigrant experiences and cultures to backward stereotypes. Ali Rezaie argues that *Brick Lane* opposes cultural relativism, or the preservation of non-western traditions, as reactionary and oppressive to women. Similarly, Michael Perfect

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describes *Brick Lane* as a ‘multicultural bildungsroman’ for its celebration of Nazneen’s integration into Britain.\(^{14}\) *Brick Lane* is an effective multicultural narrative because it aligns with liberal values such as autonomy and equality, while depicting the preservation of Bangladeshi customs that are not viewed as threatening to British society.

In contrast, *Minaret* is a novel that places religion as its focus. Leila Aboulela is noted for being a Muslim author who writes in English. *The Muslim News* described her debut novel, *The Translator*, as the ‘first halal novel written in English’,\(^{15}\) while Ziauddin Sardar praised Aboulela for ‘show[ing] the rich possibilities of living in the West with different, non-Western, ways of knowing and thinking’.\(^{16}\) Both *The Translator* and its successor, *Minaret*, focus on devout Muslim heroines who reject western liberalism in favour of subordination to Islam.\(^{17}\) Aboulela has expressed a desire to use her writing to ‘show the psychology, the state of mind and the emotions of a person who has faith’.\(^{18}\) Aboulela’s Muslims, like Nazneen in *Brick Lane*, do not view politics as an integral part of their religion or culture. By aiming to depict ‘ordinary Muslims trying to practice their faith in difficult circumstances, Aboulela uses her novels to deconstruct the stereotype of the Muslim as a radical fundamentalist.\(^{19}\) A politicised and violent image of Islam

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was pervasive in popular western imagination in the years following 9/11, an idea that Aboulela hoped to distinguish from her personal understanding of the religion.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, unlike Ali, Aboulela’s speciality is not her portrayal of the Muslim immigrant’s integration into London, but her portrayal of a Muslim immigrant whose adherence to her faith, while different from British secularism, retains moral values with which the reader can sympathise.

‘An Unspoilt Girl from the Village’: Criticism of Tradition in \textit{Brick Lane}

To frame liberal consumerism as emancipating, \textit{Brick Lane} depicts Bangladeshi Muslim culture as repressively patriarchal. As an eighteen-year-old from rural Dhaka, Nazneen arrives in London to enter an arranged marriage. Lacking knowledge of the English language or culture, she is initially confined to her husband Chanu’s apartment in Hamlet Towers, Brick Lane. When Nazneen expresses a desire to venture outside independently, Chanu argues: ‘If you were in Bangladesh you would not go out. Coming here you are not missing anything, only broadening your horizons’.\textsuperscript{21} By depicting the apartment as a space of patriarchal authority and feminine domesticity, Ali establishes a correlation between Nazneen’s submission and her upbringing in Bangladesh. Islam as practiced by Nazneen’s family is shown as rigid and superstitious, as exemplified by her mother’s absolute subservience to ‘Fate’. The idea of Fate that Nazneen’s mother articulates is specifically gendered. By claiming, ‘If God wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men’, Nazneen’s mother positions agency as masculine and blind passivity as feminine.\textsuperscript{22} Chanu, although described as a ‘kind and gentle’ husband, shares Nazneen and her mother’s assumptions on gender.\textsuperscript{23} As patriarch, he assumes all authority over household decisions,

\textsuperscript{21} Monica Ali, \textit{Brick Lane} (London: Black Swan, 2003), p. 45.
\textsuperscript{22} Ali, \textit{Brick Lane}, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{23} Ali, \textit{Brick Lane}, p. 22.
invading the apartment with furniture and gadgets of his choice. Focalised through Nazneen, the imagery of ‘crushing furniture stacked high, spread out, jumbled out’, and the ‘clutter of frames that fought for space on the walls’ demonstrates her feeling of entrapment in a space dominated by her husband. Her resignation to ‘grow used to this [apartment]’ instead of confronting Chanu is telling. The apartment completely subsumes her agency, as she works within it but lacks control over its function. In this sense, the apartment’s monolithic picture of Bangladeshi culture furthers the novel’s argument for liberalism: Nazneen’s repression is a direct result of her lack of engagement with the consumer world outside. While domestic space represents Bangladeshi tradition, the public sphere, a space of commercial activity, represents an idealised freedom. Nazneen’s limited scope of experience contrasts with the white female figure skaters she glimpses on television, who enthral her with their grace and agility. Significantly, the first ice-skater Nazneen watches wore ‘a look so triumphant that [Nazneen] knew she had conquered her body, the laws of nature, and the heart of the tight-suited man who slid over on his knees, vowing to lay down his life for her’. The skater’s image of absolute power contrasts sharply with Nazneen: she is so dependent on Chanu that she seeks his permission to buy a sari. Furthermore, Nazneen’s mispronunciation of the term as ‘ice-e-skating’ in English connotes the freedom of ice-skating as western. Although ice-skating, as a form of sport and cultural fixture, would have been more comprehensible to socio-economically advantaged populations in Bangladesh, the ice rink remains distinctly western in Nazneen’s limited perspective. As a commercial space, the ice rink is privately owned by a company, but open and accessible to those willing to pay for entry. A space that mediates the exchange of capital, the ice rink exemplifies the public

24 Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 139.
28 Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 43.
sphere and the market economy on which the modern city relies. The skater and ice rink represent liberal emancipation contingent on moulding the female body to western social norms. While the male gaze may sexualise the skater’s short and tight skirt, the star-struck Nazneen views western femininity as allowing for a greater scope of movement and financial independence through the profession of figure skating. For Nazneen, the ice rink signifies a freedom that is unavailable so long as she remains trapped within the confines of her apartment. Through the symbolism of the ice rink, Ali associates individual freedom and empowerment with commercial exchange.

‘This Empty Space Called Freedom’: The Loneliness of Public Space in Minaret

In Minaret, Najwa’s storyline seems diametrically opposed to Nazneen’s: Najwa voluntarily rejects her freedom in favour of the quiet piety of the mosque. By contextualising Najwa’s freedom of movement in London with her dislocation from Khartoum, Minaret challenges the assumption of freedom and individuality as inherently positive. The privileged daughter of a Sudanese politician, Najwa is forced to flee to London after a coup in Sudan in 1989. After her father’s execution, her mother’s fatal illness, and her brother’s imprisonment, she finds herself on her own at twenty-four. Sitting alone in a restaurant, an act that would have been inappropriate for a woman in Khartoum, she comes to a ‘fascinating’ realisation: ‘I’m in London… I can do what I like, no one can see me.’ From the beginning, Najwa understands her freedom in terms of isolation from her community and anonymity within the London population. These new possibilities are a result of her physical displacement into a city that prizes individual liberty over family and community bonds. Yet young Najwa’s solo walks in the public spaces of London are not as liberating as she wishes. Hearing wolf whistles from construction

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30 Leila Aboulela, Minaret (New York: Grove; Atlantic, 2005), p.128.
workers in the street, Najwa feels a mix of embarrassment, self-consciousness, and pleasure. Acknowledging that ‘in Khartoum [she] would never wear such a short skirt in public’, she understands her sexual attention as a diasporic experience. The men's sexual objectification of Najwa calls into question the superiority of western social norms over Muslim ones. Despite her supposed freedom to engage with the modern city, Najwa's experience suggests that the public sphere remains dominated by the male gaze: through their voyeurism, men can assert power over women for being visible in public spaces. In this sense, Minaret subverts the main message of Brick Lane. Najwa’s experience of harassment, as well as pressure from her westernised boyfriend to engage in sex, shows that western society also allows exploitation of women, albeit in different ways. By suggesting the westernised concept of ‘freedom’ exposes women to sexual objectification, the scene challenges Nazneen's reverence for the short-skirted ice-skater as a celebratory symbol of emancipation in Brick Lane.

As Najwa associates freedom of movement with displacement and isolation, she becomes increasingly disillusioned. Realising her family is no longer present to judge her sexual relationship with her boyfriend Anwar, she is left with ‘this empty space […] called freedom’. The image of ‘empty space’ links Najwa’s sexual freedom with the locale of London, which provides anonymity for the young couple. Praising Najwa’s ‘independence’ for resisting Sudanese social norms, Anwar points out that Najwa is now ‘in the majority’ and ‘a true Londoner’. Although a self-identified Marxist, Anwar's argument aligns with the message of Brick Lane: a western lifestyle emancipates women. However, Saba Mahmood has argued that the dominant feminist understanding of agency is insufficient. The concept of agency as subversion of hegemony fails to include the motivations and desires outside of an essentialist

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31 Aboulela, Minaret, p.130.
32 Aboulela, Minaret, p. 175.
33 Aboulela, Minaret, p. 176.
binary between resistance and subordination.\textsuperscript{34} Mahmood argues that definitions of agency cannot be fixed in advance, but must be placed in context: agency should include the option to follow as well as subvert social norms.\textsuperscript{35} Following Mahmood’s argument, \textit{Minaret} questions the western celebration of sexual freedom as empowering. Instead, Najwa’s early experiences in London are characterised by powerlessness and tinged with guilt.

Najwa repeatedly associates sex with feelings of desolation and shame, as well as imagery of filth. After her first sexual encounter with Anwar, she vomits in the bathroom, a literal purge that emphasises her feeling of emptiness. Observing how her vomit has ‘bits of tomato like flecks of blood’, she also becomes ‘conscious of [her] shitty-coloured skin’ (174).\textsuperscript{36} Significantly, blood and excretions are contaminants in Islamic discourse, which views cleanliness as a vital component of purity.\textsuperscript{37} The imagery of blood, vomit, and excrement characterises Najwa’s sexual behaviour as physically impure rather than uplifting. When confronting Anwar about the status of their relationship, Najwa notes how they are ‘wedged in a stinky bathroom instead of being somewhere clean’,\textsuperscript{38} again suggesting a correlation between physical and moral impurity. Notably, these sexual exchanges take place in Anwar’s apartment, a place that Najwa, under Muslim doctrine, should not be allowed to visit. While Anwar’s apartment is a private space, its ‘wrong, messy, student-like’ atmosphere that ‘smell[s] of Anwar’s cigarettes’ negates all potential for domestic or familial comfort.\textsuperscript{39} The imagery

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\textsuperscript{36} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 173–4.
\textsuperscript{38} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 232.
\textsuperscript{39} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 173.
\end{flushright}
of filth exposes how uncritical support of western freedom does not account for either experiences of shame and loneliness or a desire for belonging. Instead of engaging independently with her lover and the dominant British community, Najwa’s secular freedom makes her lost and disoriented. Interestingly, *Minaret* does resemble *Brick Lane* in its acknowledgment of the loneliness of isolation. Whether in a small apartment or large crowd, both novels highlight the loneliness of dislocation from one’s home country and the importance of community for immigrant women.

‘This is London’: From Female Solidarity to Social Mobility

Nazneen’s gradual engagement with the public sphere and commercial sector plays a critical role in her liberation. By communicating with her English-educated daughters, Shahana and Bibi, Nazneen’s vocabulary in English expands. Despite Chanu’s rule that the girls can only speak Bengali at home, Shahana and Bibi manage to switch between the two languages when out of his presence. While Chanu desires to maintain the apartment as a space of Bangladeshi heritage, the girls’ rebellious use of English demonstrates the impossibility of absolute segregation. By ‘demand[ing] to be understood’, they bring information from their school, the English language, into the apartment, and unsettle the ideal seclusion of domestic space.\(^{40}\) Nazneen also finds access to the outside world when she begins work as a seamstress. Although she works with a sewing machine in her apartment, the job necessitates her increasing contact with the public sphere through a young middleman, Karim. Karim offers Nazneen information on the politics of the Bangladeshi Muslim society in Brick Lane outside her apartment, widening her knowledge.

Yet Nazneen becomes truly emancipated when she begins working with Razia in a women-only business. When Chanu returns to Dhaka alone, Nazneen finds herself – like her friend Razia

\(^{40}\) Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 194.
– responsible for supporting her household. Since her husband’s
death, Razia has worked in a sweatshop for years to provide for
her children. Dependent on her employers, Razia has little agency
within her working conditions, which strain her physically to the
point of weakening her eyes, hands, and back.\(^41\) By joining forces
with Nazneen and two of their neighbours, Hanufa and Jorina,
Razia sets up an independent business that specialises in designing
and making Bangladeshi women’s clothing. Notably, Nazneen’s
memory of Razia ‘[w]alk[ing] into Fusion Fashions, bold as a mynah
bird, and ask[ing] for work’, frames Razia as assertive.\(^42\) By taking
control of their labour, the women’s participation in the market
economy allows them fuller control of their lives, while reflecting
the monetary worth of their craft.

Nazneen and Razia recreate their apartments into a hybrid
of domestic and work space, in which they become entrepreneurs
rather than simply labourers. As she joins Razia’s business, Nazneen
transforms the domestic space of her apartment into a work
environment. Consequently, the apartment becomes a hybrid space
reflective of multiculturalism. Her new control over her household
is shown through her freedom to engage in consumerism by her
own choice and not her husband’s. Instead of suffering Chanu’s
chaotic choice of furniture, Nazneen can reorder the apartment
according to her wishes. She decorates the window with flower
pots, buys chocolate for her daughters, and listens to English pop
music on the radio while sketching a design for work.\(^43\) Formerly a
space of feminine subservience, the apartment is now also a space
that reflects Nazneen’s commercial exchanges and consumerist
choices. After she listens to the music, Nazneen remembers that
‘Razia w[ill] pay her tomorrow,’ and that ‘she w[ill] go to Sonali
Bank and send money to [her sister] Hasina’.\(^44\) Therefore, Nazneen’s
financial autonomy allows her to better her home, help her sister,
and strengthen her agency as an individual.

\(^41\) Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 188.
\(^42\) Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 481.
\(^43\) Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 486.
\(^44\) Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 487.
To participate in the market, Nazneen and Razia must negotiate a working relationship with western retailers. When the shop Fashion Fusions first opens, Razia assesses its products with anger. The new shop markets South Asian fashion to mainstream consumers, as shown by a white female customer who tries on a black kameez. The narrative notes that her outfit’s trousers are ‘not the usual baggy salwar style but narrow-hipped and slightly flared at the bottom,’ implying an imitation of a fitted western style. Nazneen also notes the white girl’s inexperience with putting on glass bangles, suggesting the girl’s distance from South Asian culture. The shop reflects the exploitative side to multiculturalism, appropriating South Asian fashion for the interests of a privileged white population that does not understand the style or culture. By marketing South Asian clothing as trendy, Fashion Fusions increases the prices of South Asian garments to make them less accessible to the immigrants who wear them. When Razia sees the price tag at the window, she criticises the hypocrisy of the British market: ‘Look how much these English are paying for their kameez. And at the same time they are looking down onto me. They are even happy to spit on their own flag, as long as I am inside it.’ By selling their products to Fashion Fusions, though, Nazneen and Razia reposition themselves as active participants in the market. Taking orders from shops in different districts in London such as Tooting, Ealing, Southall, and Wembley, the women find themselves working with materials like beads, laces, feather trims, leather trims, fake fur, rubber and crystals. Although Razia dismisses many of the new fashions as inauthentic, she and Nazneen also embrace this hybridity for profit, as reflected by Razia’s businesslike comment: ‘We can do this very, very easy. […] But it’s going to cost them more.’ Thus, retailers like Fashion Fusions become commercial spaces that the women appropriate for their financial gain. Nazneen and Razia’s integration into the public sphere is not blind assimilation, but strategic integration.

45 Ali, Brick Lane, p. 394.
46 Ali, Brick Lane, p. 394.
47 Ali, Brick Lane, p. 481.
48 Ali, Brick Lane, p. 480.
Nazneen’s induction into multicultural London continues to the end of the novel, in which she finally participates in a commercial space that she has longed to enter for years. As a surprise, Nazneen’s daughters bring her and Razia to the ice rink. When Nazneen protests, ‘But you can’t skate in a sari,’ Razia replies, ‘This is England. […] You can do whatever you like.’ Nazneen is welcome to participate in London’s consumer spaces while retaining characteristics of Bangladeshi culture, so long as she possesses the required capital. While the novel acknowledges race-related injustices in London, the optimistic ending reinforces that multiculturalism can benefit immigrant women, so long as they can strategically follow and co-opt the liberal system. *Brick Lane* also frames the British city itself as an optimal space for integration. The geographer Doreen Massey argues that the modern city challenges assumed gendered binaries.\(^\text{50}\) Comparing representations of metropolitan and rural spaces in the mid-twentieth century, Massey notes the tendency for working-class men in the city to idealise women from their villages of origin as mother figures and symbols of home.

The solidarity between Nazneen and Razia frees both women from the patriarchal norms that the novel consistently associates with Bangladeshi Muslim culture. Nazneen’s friendship with Razia, unlike her relationships with Chanu and Karim, show an equal power dynamic between the two. Both men assume an authority over Nazneen, as they hold more capital and knowledge than she does. At the beginning of their marriage, Chanu describes Nazneen as ‘an unspoilt girl from the village’, viewing her as a canvas on which he can imprint his intellectual ideas.\(^\text{51}\) Similarly, Karim praises Nazneen for being ‘the real thing’, framing his ideal of an authentic Bangladeshi woman as an object. In contrast, Razia and Nazneen have similar positions in life that allow them to empathise with

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each other with equal humanity. Their solidarity also affords both financial mobility: while Razia is the unofficial leader of the group, she, Nazneen, Jorina, and Hanufa divide their salaries equally. The novel demonstrates the significance of female-oriented communities in allowing women to participate in the liberal economy. By merging public and private spaces through the exchange of capital, Brick Lane supports a form of multiculturalism that centres western liberal values. As Ali Rezaie describes, ‘Emphasizing the universality of the desire for freedom and individualism, [Monica] Ali seeks to show how liberalism better ensures the autonomy and equality of women in non-Western societies and cultures than relativistic discourses such as postcolonialism and multiculturalism’. Without fully rejecting Bangladeshi culture or Islam, Brick Lane shapes a selective vision of Nazneen’s home culture that is palatable to liberal London.

‘Happy to be No Longer Outside’: Piety as Agency in the Mosque

While acknowledging the necessity of a female-oriented community, Minaret challenges Brick Lane by presenting the mosque as an alternative diasporic space rooted in the Muslim faith. Minaret’s representation of the mosque challenges normative views on urban space, presenting the mosque as an alternative public space that does not demand monetary exchange. By the time Najwa joins the mosque, her family savings have diminished. With no university degree to qualify for a white-collar career, she works as a servant, a position that offers little socioeconomic power. The Muslim community of the Central Mosque offers Najwa an opportunity to both regain a sense of belonging regardless of her background and circumstances, and to redefine her identity in a space that provides guidance and acceptance. Emily Churilla claims that Minaret voices an identity found in alternative communities rooted in faith and

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53 Ali, Brick Lane, p. 482.
54 Rezaie, ‘Cultural Dislocation’, p. 52.
outside western conceptions of the nation-state.\textsuperscript{55} Indeed, although the mosque’s worshippers are from a variety of different nations, races, and cultures, Najwa comments, ‘In the mosque I feel like I’m in Khartoum again.’\textsuperscript{56} As Churilla argues, the ‘equalizing hijab’ hides distinctions of origins and social class between women.\textsuperscript{57} Najwa prays alongside students, mothers, and even the wife of the Senegalese ambassador without any tensions, as none of these women attempt to seek information on or judge her past. Instead, the women derive mutual admiration and respect from their shared commitment to religion, as exemplified when Najwa first enters the mosque in her twenties and watches another girl read the Qu’ran aloud. Although the girl does not appear beautiful, fashionable, or successful, Najwa admires the serenity and moral goodness that she exudes.\textsuperscript{58} The girl exemplifies the egalitarianism of the mosque, a space that welcomes all believers irrespective of wealth or ability. The mosque counters the consumer spaces in London, such as the shops and restaurants that become increasingly inaccessible to Najwa as her bank account runs low. By presenting the mosque as an alternative public space, \textit{Minaret} challenges the western ideal of public sphere as necessarily secular.

The gendered space of the mosque also offers a healing experience for Najwa. The ‘absence of men’ creates an atmosphere that Najwa finds ‘cool and gentle, girly and innocent’.\textsuperscript{59} At an Eid women’s party, Najwa observes that ‘the mood is silky, tousled, non-linear; there is tinkling laughter, colours, that mixture of sensitivity and waywardness which the absence of men highlights’.\textsuperscript{60} These stereotypically feminine traits rely on a gender binary that assumes femininity to be pure and delicate in opposition to the aggression of masculinity. The mosque’s spatial divisions rely on

\textsuperscript{56} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 244.
\textsuperscript{57} Churilla, ‘Coming Home’, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{58} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 237.
\textsuperscript{59} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 242.
\textsuperscript{60} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 183.
characteristics traditionally assigned to masculinity and femininity, but the distinction is ultimately framed as positive due to the protection it offers women. Indeed, Najwa’s language of an idealised femininity suggests an experience of comfort not found in her previous interactions with Anwar. Najwa’s new understanding of gendered spaces extends to her physical self, as she covers her hair with a hijab. As Seda Canpolat argues, Najwa’s hijab signifies her refusal to interact with western masculinity.\textsuperscript{61} By choosing to become ‘invisible’ to the men around her, Najwa refuses access to the sexualising male gaze.\textsuperscript{62} Najwa associates the veiling of her body with crafting Muslim femininity, but she also uses this femininity to resist the masculine dominance of male voyeurs. While Nazneen in \textit{Brick Lane} strives to rise above cultural racism by proving her financial ability to integrate, Najwa creates a protective barrier for herself using the hijab.

Najwa’s solidarity with other Muslim women stems from a shared commitment to the practice of piety. Her new sense of belonging stems not from specific cultural or familial ties, but shared values. Despite having ‘little in common,’ Najwa and her closest friend, Shahinaz, bond over the fact that they ‘both want to become better Muslims’\textsuperscript{63}. Najwa and Shahinaz’s practice of Islam includes a mutual recognition of piety. When Shahinaz complains about her mother-in-law, Najwa reminds her to ‘think of all the reward from Allah’ that Shahinaz will receive for deferring to her mother-in-law, to which Shahinaz concurs.\textsuperscript{64} Rather than advise her friend to assert her individual rights, Najwa counsels obedience, citing both respect for elders and subordination to a higher force, Allah. At first glance, Najwa’s rhetoric may appear regressive in its advocacy for repression of individual desire. Yet as Saba Mahmood explains,

\textsuperscript{61} Seda Canpolat, ‘Scopic Dilemmas: Gazing the Muslim Woman in Fadia Faqir’s \textit{My Name is Salma} and Leila Aboulela’s \textit{Minaret}, \textit{Contemporary Women’s Writing}, 10:2 (2016), 216–236 (p. 229), <DOI:10.1093/cwwrit/vpv026>.
\textsuperscript{62} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 247.
\textsuperscript{63} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{64} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 105.
agency should be viewed not only as resistance against patriarchy, but also as a woman's ability to make decisions within her social structure.\textsuperscript{65} Najwa's character development counters normative understandings of female agency as the subversion of patriarchal norms and social order. For her, piety is a choice that allows her to belong, both to Allah and to the Muslim community. Reciting a prayer at an Eid party, she becomes overcome with joy that she is ‘no longer outside, no longer defiant’.\textsuperscript{66} Najwa's subordination to Islamic teachings reflects a process of spiritual cleansing that, in contrast with the freedom of a western lifestyle, helps her cope effectively with her feelings of guilt and loneliness.

In addition, \textit{Minaret} offers an alternative geography mapped through the ideal of faith. Najwa frames her experience in London in the language of physical decline. The novel opens with a spatial imagery of her position fourteen years after her arrival in London: ‘I've come down in the world. I’ve slid to a place where the ceiling is low and there isn't much room to move’.\textsuperscript{67} Najwa's traumatic loss of family, home, and career opportunities are framed in a language of stagnation. At almost forty, she continues to feel as though she has had little opportunity to develop as a person: ‘If I feel young it is because I have done so little. What happened stunted me’.\textsuperscript{68} Najwa views faith as a destination for her spiritual recovery. When she first arrives at the mosque after leaving her relationship with Anwar, she feels that ‘the worst [is] over’ because she is ‘settling at the bottom’ after much ‘skidding and plunging’.\textsuperscript{69} This extreme decline leads to salvation: ‘And there, buried below, was the truth’.\textsuperscript{70} Faith becomes a spiritual guiding point for Najwa. At the novel's conclusion, when she is once again unemployed and heartbroken, she comforts herself by praying: ‘No matter what, I will return. This

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Mahmood, \textit{Politics of piety}, p. 15.
\item Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 184.
\item Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 1.
\item Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 71.
\item Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 240.
\item Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 240.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
is my base and goal; everything else is variable.\textsuperscript{71} Through religion, Najwa is able to craft a geography that is metaphysical rather than physical. Najwa’s development counters Massey’s discussion on the possibilities offered by the city to its female participants. Instead of liberating women by eroding the division between public and private spheres, the protagonist of \textit{Minaret} draws strength from creating distinctions between masculinity and femininity, as well as secularism and sacredness, and through identifying with pre-existing categories.

\textbf{Intersections: Reading \textit{Brick Lane} and \textit{Minaret} in Dialogue}

Having discussed the challenges and solutions presented in \textit{Brick Lane} and \textit{Minaret}, I hope to underscore how the two novels’ messages are in fact less contradictory than they may appear. While rejecting subservience to Fate and radical Islam, \textit{Brick Lane} does not reject religion altogether. Instead, Nazneen reconceptualises faith to suit her own needs, incorporating ideas that align with western feminism. Reflecting on her gratitude on the success of her new business, Nazneen realises that ‘she pray[s] to God, but He ha[s] already given her what she needed: Razia.’\textsuperscript{72} Similarly, when Nazneen stands up to her usurping neighbour, the ironically named Mrs Islam, she uses faith to her advantage, asking Mrs Islam to swear on the Qu’ran that Nazneen has not already paid her back in full. Unable to commit sacrilege by lying, Mrs Islam departs. A relieved Nazneen thinks: ‘God provided a way, and I found it.’\textsuperscript{73} Nazneen’s new understanding of God is one that supports her faith in herself and her ability to take action. Indeed, by acting to control her finances, Nazneen ensures her independent survival in a liberal city.

\textsuperscript{71} Aboulela, \textit{Minaret}, p. 275.
\textsuperscript{72} Ali, \textit{Brick Lane}, p. 484.
\textsuperscript{73} Ali, \textit{Brick Lane}, p. 446.
Minaret also shows the possibility of positive interactions between different spaces; the novel advocates for negotiating a balance between public and private life for women that is rooted in piety. In contrast with Najwa’s ‘stunted’ development, her Muslim friends navigate a successful balance between their faith and other aspects of their lives. Shahinaz, a mother and wife, fulfils her dream of enrolling in university as a mature student, with the support of her husband. After allowing her mother-in-law to live with her family, Shahinaz is rewarded with the opportunity to return to her education with the support of her family. With a degree, she will be qualified to join the work force if she chooses. Najwa envies Shahinaz’s life, as it contrasts with the bleakness of her own: ‘I am touched by her life, how it moves forward, pulses and springs. There is no fragmentation, nothing stunted or wedged. I circle back, I regress; the past doesn’t let go. It might as well be a function, a scene repeating itself, a scratched vinyl record, a stutter.’ Neither Najwa nor Shahinaz oppose the structure of liberalism itself, as both accept qualifications and employment as an important part of social mobility. Shahinaz’s potential progress within the liberal framework shows that piety can be compatible with a woman’s participation in the market economy.

Minaret also allows room for different cultures to exist within its religious paradigm. Najwa attends an Eid party in which she observes her friends out of hijab: ‘It is as if the hijab is a uniform, the official, outdoor version of us. Without it, our nature is exposed.’ Najwa is reminded that these women can still construct individual personalities and positions as students, mothers, teachers, and office workers. The hijab allows the women to craft their diasporic identity with privacy under the guidance of religious doctrine. Even on a regular day, Najwa notes the variety of women at the mosque. She expresses admiration for the second-generation Muslim girls who ‘strike [her] as being very British, very at home in London,’ with an

74 Aboulela, Minaret, p. 216.
75 Aboulela, Minaret, p. 186.
‘individuality and outspokenness [Najwa] didn’t have when [she] was their age.’ Najwa’s constant nostalgia and discomfort with modernity is a product of her trauma rather than a requirement of Muslim faith. Through other characters, Aboulela reinforces the possibility of devout Muslim women who negotiate aspects of British cultures into their practice of piety, just as Ali shows Nazneen reinterpreting faith to navigate a higher level of autonomy.

Conclusion

Through their relationships to urban spaces in London, Nazneen and Najwa in Brick Lane and Minaret cultivate different but not mutually exclusive forms of agency as they navigate the multicultural city as Muslim immigrant women. Significantly, both promote female-oriented communities as a source of support for coping with social problems such as gender oppression, racism, class inequality, and cultural displacement. Ali’s advocacy for liberalism plays out in her representation of public spaces in Britain as liberating. Brick Lane depicts Nazneen’s shift from isolation to integration into British society in relation to her growing socioeconomic independence, with the support of other women in similar plights. These business transactions transform the apartment into an intersectional space connected with London society, while empowering Nazneen to become an agent instead of an object. Meanwhile, Aboulela questions the western conception that freedom is inherently positive or empowering. Instead, Minaret is concerned with its protagonist’s navigation of the western world with values and customs. However, like Nazneen, Najwa employs a female community to help her assist her goal.

Perhaps Leila Aboulela herself best encapsulates the relationship between Brick Lane and Minaret. In an interview on Minaret, she explains: ‘I thought that if [Minaret] were a secular feminist novel, then at the end she would rely on her career and

76 Aboulela, Minaret, p. 77.
maybe her friends after her disappointment with men. In *Minaret*, on the other hand, I wanted it to be that at the end she’s relying on her faith rather than a career.” In Aboulela’s view, both *Brick Lane* and *Minaret* would fall within the category of a feminist novel in which the protagonist, who is ‘disappointed by the men in her life’, finds self-sufficiency through another means: the difference is that one path is secular and the other religious. Ali and Aboulela do not depict the secular and sacred journey of the Muslim immigrant in opposition to each other, but show how they convey parallel ideas, even if they arrive at different destinations. Although they are associated with official beliefs, *Brick Lane* and *Minaret* are less about ideology than they are about individual women’s strategies for survival in an urban diaspora. Read in dialogue, the two novels testify to the plurality of viable experiences for Muslim immigrant women in the multicultural city.

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The language of architectural assembly and disassembly pervades the lexicon of writing: we craft or build arguments which we must support; we consciously structure a paper or story; form paragraphs or plot elements; and bridge ideas through transitions. Authors construct essays or novels while others, with what Wordsworth called ‘meddling intellects’, deconstruct or break down their properties, often laying bare structural components or seams for critical readers. A story’s material is shaped, finished, stitched, or moulded, and the manner in which it is designed or built – and with what supposed intentions – has often been the basis for its aesthetic evaluation and ability to stand the test of time. All stories, whether they are judged finely or flimsily built, whether they stand or fall, are the result of some form of craftsmanship, a term with widely applicable meanings circling around the general concepts of skillful building and creation.

More often than not, authors have sought to conceal obvious traces of the design or craftedness of their stories. Since at least the eighteenth century, immersion in text has persisted as a reading ideal, and, for readers, too much consciousness of a story’s operation may serve to disrupt this experience of captivated engagement. Nevertheless, one of my personal strategies for dealing with horror films has been to imagine that makeup artists, stunt doubles, grips manning cameras, or mundane set items (water coolers or a lunch buffet will do) lie just off-screen from the masked killer. In a sense, this move is akin to pursuing the seams of story; I force myself out.
of the milieu of the represented scene and take mental residence among the practical concerns, rhetorical decision-making and design choices that undergird the crafted whole. Similarly, though for different reasons, one of the aims of literary criticism has been to explain textual elements like style, technique and structure that may escape a consumer of text or image traveling with the story. Yet a well-built story does not necessarily strive to conceal evidence of its own construction or captivate an immersive reader. Especially since the rise of literary modernism, a successful finished product can be a self-conscious reflection on its tools or the hand of its builder. Such stories are meditations on crafting itself and do not necessarily strive to create an immersive experience or provoke a state of reader captivation.

In this essay, I argue that narratives often generate tension through the interplay of discernible artifice, or craftedness, and a pretense to the naturalness of plot construction, and that this phenomenon is particularly present in realist fiction. I interpret fictional works that use a specific image, a ship or (water)craft, to develop tension between a story’s navigability and its own potential to sink at any moment. Far from being oppositional to the development of the plot, this use of narrative precariousness is often an essential element of its successful movement. The chronotope of the sea, associated with endless movement, possibility, and chances – ‘various and great like life itself’, as Joseph Conrad put it in *The Mirror of the Sea* – also implies the possibility of sinking and destruction. Like a watercraft sailing on the ocean waves, a metaphor which has been used to describe writing (see Ursula K. Le Guin’s 1998 *Steering the Craft: A Twenty-First Century Guide to Sailing the Sea of Story*), stories can engage us in a constant interplay between wind and water; their structural components below deck may be revealed or concealed but are always at work to propel the plot. Craft books have sometimes sought to explicate the choices and

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manoeuvres working to sustain the illusion of natural gliding, or to interpret works of fiction that develop theme by revealing their own gliding mechanisms. This essay will interpret several narratives that use watercraft not simply to introduce dangers or hazards into the plot, but also to meditate on the relationship between unfortunate disaster and the role of the author as designer. Instead of interpreting modernist or postmodernist works that are often associated with self-consciousness and deconstruction, I will focus on works and authors from the heyday of realism in the nineteenth century. In ‘precarious readings’ of realist watercraft, I cite examples of storms, shipwrecks and sea disasters which prompt Victorian narrators to reflect on their understanding of the relationship between fate and authorial agency, between plot artifice and the introduction of natural disaster. The first section therefore takes examples from Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*, Dickens’ *David Copperfield*, and Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*. In the second section, I theorise narrative precarity in the context of re-reading, an experience in which the unpredictability of plot and the precariousness of outcomes is already anticipated. I argue that, even here, knowing full well the hazards that will be introduced into the plot, ‘precariousness’ remains a constitutive element of narrative craft and an apt term to describe the relationships that narrative creates among text, author and reader.

I will begin by introducing two meanings of the word ‘precarious’ that are key to this paper. In its wider application today, the term is used to describe anything ‘[d]ependent on chance or circumstance; uncertain; liable to fail; exposed to risk, hazardous; insecure, unstable’. Since the seventeenth century, the term has been

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In contemporary social and economic theory, the term *precariat*, combining precariousness and proletariat, has been used to describe a growing social class living on the precipice of economic catastrophe under global capitalism. This emerging class is defined by the vulnerability of their livelihoods and lives, by absent or informal labour contracts, a lack of benefits and job security, and crushing pressures of debt repayment. In *The Precariat: The New Dangerous*
associated with contingent appointments, property ownership and unstable tenancy; a ‘precarious’ position is one that is ‘vulnerable to the will or decision of others’. My discussions of narrative watercraft and re-reading bring both of these definitions into play. First, I am interested in exploring precarious narrative dynamics in the context of textual disaster. Focusing on narratives that use the image of the ship to problematise narrative expectations, I show how the craft of precarity registers the text’s capacity for sudden disaster or abrupt change, and how appeals to destructive fates in realist fiction both contribute to the ‘realness’ of realism and simultaneously suggest the interventions of the author. Turning to the phenomenon of re-reading, I theorise multiple ways of seeing precarious dependencies as part of the reading process: are readers vulnerable to the destructive will of authors? Are authors vulnerable to the destructive will of readers? Or are both reader and author vulnerable to the destructive will of the text?

**Precarious Realism**

In his famous 1897 letter to R.B. Cunninghame Graham, Joseph Conrad describes the world as a knitting machine that stitches without design. While we wish it would embroider, we ‘cannot by any special lubrication make embroidery with a knitting machine… It knits us in and it knits us out. It has knitted time space, pain, death, corruption, despair and all the illusions – and nothing matters. I’ll admit however that to look at the remorseless process is sometimes amusing’. Conrad’s novels often position characters’ desires against the meaningless march of time, fate, and pure chance; the author

*Class*, economist Guy Standing cites globalisation, deindustrialisation and neoliberal policy-making as central contributing factors to this heterogeneous body. Standing’s work has provoked criticism for its discussion of the precariat’s susceptibility to fascism and nativism, as well as what some have read as its inability to situate precarious labor in a longer history of capitalist exploitation (see, for example, Nick Bernards’ new book, *The Global Governance of Precarity*).

3 ‘precarity, n. 1.’ *OED Online.*

may be said to inhabit a God-like (or rather machine-like) role of stitching desiring characters into being only to subject them to a larger purposelessness or indifference beyond their control (the sea often represents this insouciant force, or the wilderness in a novel like *Heart of Darkness*). Yet Conrad also maintained that artful crafting and design were nevertheless essential to narrative storytelling. In the preface to his unfortunately named *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897), Conrad describes how an author’s task is not simply to imitate the ‘remorseless process’ he mentions in his letter to Grahame, but to snatch flickering meanings and impressions from it, to reveal fragments of ‘truth’ which illuminate meaningful moments in an otherwise indifferent universe.

To snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush of time, a passing phase of life, is only the beginning of the task. The task approached in tenderness and faith is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a sincere mood. It is to show its vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth—disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment. In a single-minded attempt of that kind, if one be deserving and fortunate, one may perchance attain to such clearness of sincerity that at last the presented vision of regret or pity, of terror or mirth, shall awaken in the hearts of the beholders that feeling of unavoidable solidarity; of the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world.\(^5\)

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Solidarity and binding occur not in embroidery, then, but in the very wish to embroider in the face of ‘uncertain fates.’ That is, the sense of precarity generated by the ‘remorseless rush of time’ can stimulate a search for narrative meaning, or rather for meaning through narrative designs. In Conrad’s interplay between meaninglessness and meaning-finding lies the possibility for radical empathy based on mutual precariousness and fragmentation. As I will demonstrate, this shared desire to embroider often acts as a prefatory note to the uncontrollability of narrative disaster in realist texts. A narrator may express the wish that a ship reach harbour or a sailor be spared, but the plot nevertheless seals destruction, and the author is at the helm.

A balance among forward movement, narrative fixity, and the potential for narrative failure is one of many factors that structure realism’s claim to be ‘real.’ Critics have dismissed the faulty belief that realism, which achieved prominence in the Victorian period, strives to offer an unmediated reality, that its plots seek to conceal the mechanisms of narrative crafting and authorial choice that exist below the deck of the story. In *The Realistic Imagination*, for instance, George Levine shows how ‘nineteenth-century writers were already self-conscious about the nature of their medium’ many decades before representational self-consciousness came to be known as an identifying feature of modernist writing. The Victorian realist novel can be identified by its emphasis on character depth over plot event, established distance between narrator and narrated subject, representations of the domestic scene, and concern with detail and precision. But perhaps its most defining feature is its use of meta-commentary through narratorial intrusions and its direct address to an ineffable reading subject. Authors of realist fiction repeatedly draw reader attention to their decision-making processes and representational scope. Somewhat paradoxically, the move to recognise the limitations of the novel as a selective representational medium serves as an authenticating move. In other words, part of

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realism’s project required acknowledging that novels could not fully achieve fidelity to the actual world, that they were not unmediated representations holding up a mirror, but dependent instead on a method of responsible and restrained artifice that was often juxtaposed with so-called undisciplined representations in popular romance and sensation fiction. In bringing its own compositionality to the fore, realism asks us to consider what it does not represent versus what it has to represent.

Andrew Miller theorises this move to recognise exclusions in his brilliant study of the optative tense in Victorian realist fiction. Miller argues that ‘realism is intrinsically optative’ – constantly evoking the could have been, might have been, if only, and ought to have been – and that the realist author is particularly interested in underscoring the text’s unrealised potential to be something else in relation to what it is or has to be. ‘To the extent that realism proposes to give us stories about how things really were, a space naturally opens up within that mode to tell us how things might have been, but were not.’

According to Miller, the optative mode in realist works underscores the fixity and efficacy of plot construction.

In regularly shadowing forth lives for our characters that we do not see, realism reminds us of the singularity of those lives that we do see: it is this life, lived thus, and not other possible lives, formed by other choices, other chances, that the author has decided to represent. But in giving us this reminder, the fiction tests its own economy: in it, ideally, no choice or chance need be changed; all should be of a piece and that piece accepted by the reader without regret. Acknowledging counterfactual possibilities within the story, fictions aim to expel them from the discourse; in this way, the ethical economy of characters provides an ideal for the aesthetic economy of the novels they inhabit.

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In Miller’s shrewd analysis, realism gestures toward the optative in order to assert the necessary completeness of the unalterable novel. That is, the illusion of completeness does not depend on ignoring ‘counterfactual possibilities’, but by containing them through strategic address. Of course, the degree to which this authenticating move may be said to succeed is subject to debate. Levine has argued that realism’s suppression or exclusion of alternatives (and its general faith in a stable moral order) always suggests the incomplete suppression of disorderly energies and desires suffusing the novel. As he writes, ‘The irrational and rebellious are latent in every important English realist novel, and within every hero or heroine there is a Frankenstein – or his monster – waiting to get out’.9 A reading which brings together Levine and Miller’s perspectives suggests that realist meta-commentary performs an authenticating move in two directions. To emphasise multiple narrative possibilities is to support the inevitability of the choices made, while also to acknowledge that narrative ordering (the tension between authorial inclusion and exclusion) evokes a contingent process of creation and destruction.

A brief look at the conclusion of Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* will show the multiple ways in which realist meta-commentary highlights the role of precarity in narrative. Brontë famously upsets the expectations of closure while testing the idea of narrative agency in her final pages. Lucy Snowe, the novel’s heroine, has gained independence and is running her own school at last. Her lover, M. Paul Emanuel, has helped to make this possible. As he settles accounts in the West Indies, Lucy awaits his return; to her surprise, her enthusiasm for her profession brings her immense joy even in his prolonged absence: ‘M. Emanuel was away three years. Reader, they were the three happiest years of my life’.10 Nevertheless, Lucy eagerly prepares for his return as M. Emanuel is set to embark

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home: ‘And now the three years are past: M. Emanuel’s return is fixed. It is Autumn; he is to be with me ere the mists of November come. My school flourishes, my house is ready. I have made him a little library, filled its shelves with the books he left in my care.’

But the sea intervenes. As the novel comes to a close, Lucy suggests that M. Emanuel’s ship is wrecked in a storm and he perishes. His return is not ‘fixed’ after all, and he never again holds the books that he has left in her care. Crafting pure chance and unpredictability into the narrative, the narration cedes control over the story to fate, and the result is that the author, Charlotte Brontë, skillfully denies her own inventiveness of Lucy’s life; that is, the choice to deny M. Emanuel his return is not represented as a choice. Through Lucy, the narration resigns itself to an agency beyond itself, namely to the possibility of bad timing and missed connections that can upset both the reader and the narrator’s desires for narrative harmony.

The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee, ‘keening’ at every window! It will rise, it will swell, it shrieks out long; wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong: by midnight, all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm.

That storm roared frenzied, for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks: it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work, would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder—the tremor of whose plumes was storm.

Peace; be still! Oh! a thousand weepers, praying in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice; but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it—till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some!

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11 Brontë, Villette, p. 473.
Here pause—pause at once. There is enough said. Trouble no quiet, kind heart; leave sunny imaginations hope. Let it be theirs to conceive the delight of joy born again fresh out of great terror, the rapture of rescue from peril, the wondrous reprieve from dread, the fruition of return. Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life.\textsuperscript{12}

‘Peace, peace, Banshee.’ Lucy Snowe dramatises the impotency of language to control circumstance, even as the plot’s conclusion – M. Emanuel’s death – is carried on linguistically. These final passages switch back and forth between the present and the past tense as if to perform the tension between fixity and desire for agency, the possibilities of the ‘now’ versus the finality of the ‘then.’ Brontë denies the wishes of the reader of ‘sunny imaginations’; the stormy imaginings of the author will prevent the ‘fruition of return.’ In crafting unforeseeable hazard into the plot (abruptly, and in its final moments), Brontë uses the sea and the imperilled ship to dramatise the desire for narrative certitude and the continuance of ‘a happy succeeding life’, even as she lends credibility to the natural turns of her own novel precisely because they subvert these narrative conventions. The preponderance of marriages and childbirths near the close of a narrative often serves as a promise that diegetic lives will continue to exist in the storyworld after the story has ended and the reader has closed the book. This convention addresses the kinship between the inevitability of narrative conclusion and the finality of death; closures that end in promises of renewal therefore evidence an act of faith in an afterlife of narrative finitude (sometimes realised as a sequel). Denying her readers this promise, however, Brontë’s faith in a ‘succeeding life’ for Lucy Snowe beyond \textit{Villette}’s conclusion is arguably more feasible because of its possibility \textit{not to be} a conventional one.

\textsuperscript{12} Brontë, \textit{Villette}, pp. 475–476.
In an increasingly globalising age, in which the British Empire expanded its territory and improved its transportation networks, perhaps it is not surprising that nineteenth century fictions so often used the phenomenon of the storm and the shipwreck to meditate on this dynamic between narrative verity and the limits of authorial influence. M. Emmanuel is returning from his stewardship over Madame Walravens’ estate in Guadeloupe when a storm overcomes his vessel. In *David Copperfield*’s famous shipwreck chapter, Steerforth meets his demise sailing with a ship from ‘Spain or Portugal, laden with fruit and wine’,

13 while in *Dombey and Son* Walter Gay is shipwrecked (and survives) as he sails aboard *The Son and Heir*, an English trader bound for China. David begins his narrative of the storm by relinquishing narrative agency: ‘As plainly as I behold what happened, I will try to write it down. I do not recall it, but see it done; for it happens again before me’.14 From the shore, as he watches the tall waves pluck men one by one from the broken ship, David’s helpless situation informs this insistence on authorial passivity; so vivid and powerful, the storm is construed as its own author, reappearing with a force that hardly requires a process of recollection and recording. Its strength is such that it breaks apart Yarmouth’s church tower and whips the sea into a chaotic frenzy whose smallest waves appear like they would ‘engulf the town.’15 David watches helplessly, as ‘the rolling and beating were too tremendous for any human work to suffer long.’16 When Ham ties a rope to his body and attempts to rescue the last remaining sailor clinging to the wreck, ‘He was so near, that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it,—when a high, green, vast hill-side of water, moving on shoreward, from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a mighty bound, and the ship was

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14 Dickens, *David Copperfield*, p. 663.
15 Dickens, *David Copperfield*, p. 666.
16 Dickens, *David Copperfield*, p. 669.
gone’. Structured destruction is often represented as the intrusion of fate, and yet, fidelity to the games of chance and ambition is the ultimate form of realist narrative authority. When Dickens has his readers believe in Walter Gay’s death in the shipwreck of *The Son and Heir*, the very title of the ship suggests the role that the resurrected Gay will later assume. The ‘craft of precarity’, so often visible in representations of the watercraft in the nineteenth century novel, is the skillful balancing of a threat to a narrative whose very movement is premised on creating such challenges to itself.

Tennyson’s extended elegy *In Memoriam* is a loosely connected series of poems exploring grief, prayer, and randomness after the death of Arthur Hallam. Though the work is autobiographical, Tennyson recalls Brontë’s Lucy Snowe (‘Peace, peace Banshee’) when, early in the poem, he prays for Hallam’s remains to return safely across the sea. His prayer simultaneously acknowledges the limitations of language and the desire for language to transcend its own limitations.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro’ early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;¹⁸

*In Memoriam* dramatises the fruitlessness of prayer alongside its own vigorous praying. The sincere pathos of the lines above lies

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¹⁷ Dickens, *David Copperfield*, p. 671.
in their simple wish for return after tragedy has already occurred. Earlier in section 6, however, Tennyson has represented the failures of prayer to save a life, and the cruel ironies of sincere wishes in a precarious and unpredictable world:

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow’d,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.\(^{19}\)

Although the mother prays for her son’s life at precisely the moment that his lifeless body is buried at sea, this scene anticipates Tennyson’s own compulsion to pray for Hallam’s remains. *In Memoriam* is a meditation on the compatibility or incompatibility of faith and the unknown. Unlike the mother, Tennyson’s more modest prayer is answered, as the ship returns Hallam’s remains safely. But the next may break apart and sink to the ocean floor. The bond which connects the author and his readers is the desire to control the outcome, and ‘[t]he wish, that of the living whole,/ No life may fail beyond the grave’\(^{20}\) is something like a wish for embroidery in the face of randomness and the unknown.

**Precarious Re-Reading**

Thus far I have discussed how the crafting of unpredictable events into plot stimulates reflections on narrative agency and control. In Victorian realist fiction, catastrophic disaster often becomes an occasion for meditations on order versus disorder, desire for control versus unpredictable and uncontrollable destinies. The unforeseen possibilities suggested by the craft of narrative precarity generate interest and suspense; unstable developments and outcomes may upset or reward the expectations of the reader, but the inability to

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foresee the ultimate design of the novel is an inducement to turn the page. But when we revisit a narrative for a second or third time, knowing full well its developments and outcomes, how might we think about precarity in the context of predictability? When we return to narratives that we have read before, is their solace in the fact that we know their outcomes? Or does this predictability make for stale reading? What are the pleasures and perils of re-reading in general? Do our desert island books become our nightmares, fixed as they are in unchanging narrative formulations, or is repetitious reading an experience of pleasurable predictability in an extra-textual world that denies us this pleasure? It is a mistake to posit generalisable answers to these questions beyond an individual level, but the theoretical implications of precarious re-reading are nonetheless fascinating to consider. When we re-read, we can often recall moments from previous readings and retain our knowledge of outcomes. But it is important here to point out that our repetitious readings, for a variety of reasons, can never be quite identical to one another. In fact, repetitious reading registers changes in our understanding of the text and therefore may register changes in the way we see ourselves growing over time.

One of the popular, more pronounced cultural examples of this process is the re-watching of Disney films in which elements like adult suggestiveness or political references that were likely to have escaped childhood’s interpretive gaze now become readily apparent to an adult viewer. Not only do I notice them now, but I do so wearing spectacles, and re-watching has made me aware of my changing intellectual and physical self, my own precariousness as an aging reader and body. Some critics wonder whether such repetitions with a difference might offer readers comforting evidence of growth and change:

If the repetition is of a larger unit and extended over time the receiver’s own mind and feelings will have changed, however slightly. For that very reason repetition may bring the comfort of continuity within change. Since completely
identical repetition is impossible, this may be another reason why such repetition as we can achieve in a world of flowing time has profound satisfactions concerned with stability and continuity.\textsuperscript{21}

Of course, it is also possible to conceptualise repetitious reading as a less comforting experience, one which shows that extra-textual change is continuous; a book or film, like the surface of a reflective mirror, retains the same plot while reflecting our changes upon our interaction with the story. As we read the text again, we read ourselves, and our interaction may evidence our involuntary obligation to time and change: Conrad’s ‘remorseless process’. Paul Ricoeur recognises balance or organisation within disorganisation as a critical component of narrative’s humanising quality. ‘The world unfolded by every narrative work is always a temporal world. Or... time becomes human time to the extent that it is organised after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience.’\textsuperscript{22} Put in other words, narrative may organise and humanise time, but perhaps the most humanising component of narrative lies in its implicit recognition that temporal experience can defy the very order which narrative seeks to impose. The struggle of the realist author is to construct fiction while remaining true to the precarious rules of the non-textual realm.

How might these rules influence the precarious dynamics among the author, reader, and text, when we attempt to chart their mutual destinies? A crafted narrative produces both a precarious author and a precarious reader. In one sense, the author’s success, livelihood, and longevity may be beholden to the judgment of public opinion and the specialised readers attempting to control this judgment. Virginia Woolf described the reviewer as a ‘formidable

both recognising his power and diminishing his capabilities. In another sense, however, the reader is not only beholden to the unforeseen movements and broken promises of the plot, but also to the real time committed to reading and the permanency of the financial exchange (I have never known a purchased book to be returnable due to its unsatisfying plot; the best we can do is lay down the book or include it in our next garage sale). These mutual dependencies reach in multiple directions and are mediated by the crafted text as a connective link between authors and readers. If we view the text as a living document that survives the author, the question of its precarity shifts more firmly to the reader. In *Narrative Discourse*, Gérard Genette theorises that written narrative moves through time and exists in time only in the act of reading and re-reading, thus pointing to the power of the reader as a kind of necromancer:

The temporality of written narrative is to some extent conditional or instrumental; produced in time, like everything else, written narrative exists in space and as space, and the time needed for ‘consuming’ it is the time needed for *crossing* or *traversing* it, like a road or a field. The narrative text, like every other text, has no other temporality than what it borrows, metonymically, from its own reading.  

Genette implies that the precarious temporality of a text is contingent upon activation through a readership; in this theory of reading and time-as-distance, the desire and willingness to read breathes life into written narrative, and the text requires reader consciousness to travel.

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I will now turn briefly from realism to science fiction, because, even in the Victorian novel, it would be difficult to find a more voracious reader/necromancer than *The Twilight Zone’s* Henry Bemis, the unfortunate bibliophile from the first season’s classic episode ‘Time Enough at Last’. Bemis’ relationship to books provides a reality-bending case study in the mutual precarities I have discussed, and helps to explain Genette’s concept of the temporality of written narrative. We are first introduced to Bemis as he struggles to balance his duties as a bank teller with his literary habit. In the episode’s opening scene, Bemis simultaneously counts money for a customer while reading *David Copperfield* from his lap. As he enthusiastically explains the plot, the uninterested customer interrupts him, ‘Mr. Bemis, you’ve shortchanged me again.’ ‘Time Enough at Last’ pits literary reading against the time constraints of life under capitalism. In this anti-intellectual society, Bemis’ wife, boss, and customers discourage his reading habit as a detriment to his productivity, until a hydrogen bomb explodes and silences them all. The episode suggests that a society prohibiting literature’s humanising narratives is a precarious one indeed. Bemis is the lone survivor because he had stolen into the bank’s vault to read unmolested. His desire to read saves his life. He emerges from the vault dishevelled and distraught, until he realises there is ‘time enough at last’ to indulge his books. Through a devastated landscape, Bemis finds his way to the town library whose trove of literary works remains intact. He proceeds to stack the books that litter the library steps and plan his reading regimen. In the episode’s iconic conclusion, Bemis’ glasses break as he begins to read. Books of all kinds tower beside him, but they are all unreadable.

When Bemis’ glasses break, the works of Dickens, Shakespeare and Fielding ‘break’ too as they become static objects lacking the potential to be experienced in temporal motion (crossed or traversed). The physical books remain on the steps of the post-apocalyptic library, but they become the most significant part of an immense wasteland of useless objects surrounding Bemis. They hardly exist without Bemis the reader, and yet the destruction
of their narrative temporality signals the end of Bemis’ story as well; his broken glasses indicate the final annihilating victory of destructive capitalism and the anti-intellectual current which led to the blast; in a devastating twist, the sheer masses of unreadable books evoke the ironic triumph of capitalist accumulation as a destroyer of humanising narratives. Although Bemis finally escapes the demands of capitalist time that had ordered his life (symbolised by the destruction of his pocket watch in the vault), he then imitates the same sequence of accumulation and destruction that ruined the bank where he worked as a teller and the society in which he lived. He delightfully stacks his books as his treasures, but then, worse than the H-bomb blast that left him the lone surviving man, his glasses shatter. In this moment, reader, author, and text experience mutually assured destruction.

Conclusion

If watercrafts can underscore the contingencies of plot design, the intrusion of uncontrollable fate, or the story’s own potential to sink, this fragility can also structure appeals to a mutual solidarity between author and reader. This suggestion of unity through destruction is implicit in the works discussed above but explicit in a work like Walt Whitman’s ‘Crossing Brooklyn Ferry’, in which the poet reaches out to future readers who ‘shall cross from shore to shore years hence’, traversing the same places the poet once occupied and the pages the poet has left behind. Whitman writes as an already ‘disintegrated self’ who envisions his reincorporation into the future reader’s consciousness. The ferry embodies this temporal ‘crossing’, a forger of ‘similitudes’ between the shores of past and future:

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day,
The simple, compact, well-join’d scheme, myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage over the river,
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them,
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.\textsuperscript{25}

In his understanding of what we may call ‘connective precarities’, Whitman imagines language as a breaker of temporal rules, even as author and reader are subject to temporal rules. An aesthetic of tenuous fragility informs Whitman’s desire to hear, touch, and feel, while the promise of ‘others that are to follow me’ revises and redeems the precariousness of temporary sensations. In ‘The Poem as Time Machine’, Tess Gallagher writes that poems are ‘in a state of perpetual formation and disintegration’, alive to new emergences in time.\textsuperscript{26} In Gallagher’s reflections on the temporal aspects of poetry and reading, poems originate in a past act of composing but are brought to life again in the consciousness of the reader, where they interact with the reader’s past, present, and hopes for the future. In Gallagher’s view, poems have the ability to transcend or rather collect tenses: ‘The poem…is like a magnet which draws into it events and beings from all possible past, present, and future contexts of the speaker. It is a vortex of associative phenomena’.\textsuperscript{27} Whitman brings certitude to an unpredictable future tense by scripting disintegration and fleeting time into an all-encompassing, connective vision. To be ‘disintegrated yet part of the scheme’, finally, is an apt phrase to describe both the authorial agency which undergirds the craft of narrative precarity and the precarious relationships among author, reader, and text that narrative engenders.

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‘Mythologized, demythologized’: Dwelling, Building and Writing in the Early Poetry of Seamus Heaney

ARCHIE CORNISH

Introduction

When Seamus Heaney died in August 2013, Harvard University constructed a domestic memorial. Suite I-12 of Adams House, where Heaney had stayed as visiting professor and poet in residence, became the Heaney Suite. Designed to reflect Heaney’s long involvement with Harvard as a visiting professor and poet, the suite provides a meditative space for students to read and work.1 ‘Perhaps they’ll be moved’, speculates an article in Harvard Magazine, ‘in a way described by Heaney in his poem “The Master”, [whose] narrator visits the quarters of a revered elder who “dwelt in himself / like a rook in an unroofed tower”’.2 Harvard’s Heaney Suite now has a counterpart in the Old World: in Bellaghy, Co. Derry, the poet’s home town, the Seamus Heaney HomePlace opened in 2016. A museum and arts centre dedicated to Heaney, it features a reconstruction of the writing room in the Dublin house where he lived from 1976, including the skylight.

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1 Heaney first visited Harvard in 1979. From 1984–1995 he was Boylston Professor of Poetry and Rhetoric. He was Poet in Residence until 2006.
described in an eponymous poem (Seeing Things, 1991). Part of the attraction of both spaces is an accompanying intuition that a trace of Heaney might linger in them – in the Harvard rooms where he slept and lived, and in the study reconstructed using his own books and possessions. The seductive possibility of such haunting perhaps underpins our fascination with writerly spaces. A series of popular profiles of ‘Writers’ Rooms’ in The Guardian, which ran from 2007 to 2009, included the room now transported home, across the border, to Bellaghy. Since Heaney’s death in 2013, his life and work have received a great deal of honorific mythologising; as the Adams House Suite and HomePlace in Bellaghy indicate, dwelling and building are at the heart of the Heaney story.

Sense of place, both macroscopic and domestic, remains in general constant throughout Heaney’s career. His first four collections, on which I will concentrate here, vividly depict the dwelling places of his childhood in County Derry, and their rich atmospheres. The participation of these early volumes in a mythologising of contemporary Northern Irish Catholic culture has been widely discussed; Heaney’s abiding interest in Jung is well known. Yet less prominent in critical treatments of Heaney’s early work are the many craftspeople it portrays. For the purposes of this essay, I take ‘craft’ to mean a kind of making or arranging that involves skill; such skill is acquired slowly, through practice, and often inherited. Furthermore, craft does not seek to re-order the world ab initio, from first principles, but proceeds according to what is at hand. Many of Heaney’s craftspeople are farmers, of course, but they also include builders and maintainers of houses. The craft of construction, I will argue, is available to Heaney as a suitable

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3 At the time of writing, this border remains frictionless, invisible to the naked eye.
model for poetic composition; however, it is characterised not as an organic, passive response to the earth (as many expect and some claim) but as control of the earth through skill. A preliminary survey of the seductively but threateningly dark dwelling places of Heaney’s early verse demonstrates this sense of the earth as something to be tempered by craft. Heaney also expresses the differences between the art of writing and the craft of building, especially in his later work. In his poetry the relation of craft to writing is that of a simile, implying both sameness and difference. I want to argue, finally, that Heaney’s poetry and poetics presents an understanding of poetry as intimately connected to craft, distinct in important ways but always equal in status.

**Dark Dwellings**

Heaney’s concern in his early collections is to enchant and mythologise the under-represented ground of his childhood. Merely by publishing poems that describe the culture and landscape of the Catholic north, Heaney legitimises his community as a people worthy of literary description. Like his early inspiration Patrick Kavanagh, he imagines this extension of poetic attention to be belated and overdue. Heaney follows Kavanagh in stripping Irish rural life of its clichés (many of them British, or Anglo-Irish, in origin) and investing it with quotidian detail. At the same time, however, he attempts to connect this precisely described everyday world with its physical and cultural history. Images of mid-twentieth-century rural life point back to an ancient past, and ask to be considered as the latest iteration of endlessly repeating processes. This conferral of both ancientness and timelessness on a realistic modern world is what I refer to as ‘mythologising’. My first example is Heaney’s description of darkness. The south Derry landscape he depicts is full of dim, dank, mysterious places. Many of these are places in nature, like the bottom of the well described in ‘Personal Helicon’, the last poem of *Death of a Naturalist* (1966):
I loved the dark drop, the trapped sky, the smells
Of waterweed, fungus and dank moss.

This ‘dark drop’ into the earth is also a drop into the past, the ancestry and origin of the speaker’s people. Early in Heaney’s career, the ground itself becomes a well. ‘Bogland’, the concluding poem of Door into the Dark (1969), depicts the watery terrain on which Heaney grew up as ‘kind, black butter / Melting and opening underfoot’, and its dwellers as ‘pioneers’ who travel not westwards but downwards. Elsewhere in the collection, Lough Neagh is a magnification of the ‘dark drop’ of a village well: it is the widening hole left by the pebble Finn MacCool threw at a giant. (The pebble itself became the Isle of Man.) Like the well, it can sustain and preserve: ‘the lough waters / Can petrify wood’. ‘Investing silt and sand / with a sleek root’, the eel which arrives at the Lough journeys ‘hungering / down each undulation’ into the dark.

Dwelling-places constructed by humans might not penetrate so deeply into the ground, but many of them immerse and enwrap their inhabitants like the dark silt of the lough. Door into the Dark begins with two stable poems: ‘Night-Piece’ depicts a close and closed place where the horse is ‘bundled under the roof’; in ‘Gone’, the stable is ‘old in his must’. The speaker of ‘The Outlaw’ recalls taking a heifer to be ‘serviced’ by an unlicensed bull belonging to ‘Old Kelly’. This old figure

[W]hooped and prodded his outlaw
Who, in his own time, resumed the dark, the straw.

These lines imply a similarity between Kelly and his bull; both live nestled in the dark, too deep to be flushed out by the law. The ‘Door into the dark’ to which the collection’s title refers is that of ‘The Forge’, where a blacksmith ‘grunts’ at passing traffic ‘and goes in, with a slam and flick’ to a seemingly more authentic, grounded place. ‘In Gallarus Oratory’ compares a religious building in Co. Kerry to a ‘a turfstack / A core of old dark walled up with stone’, where a crowd seeks communion with God by experiencing intimacy with the
earth. Such intimacy can be found even momentarily, as in ‘Oracle’ from Wintering Out (1972), in which a sprite-like ‘you’ hides ‘in the hollow / of the willow tree’ and becomes ‘lobe and larynx / of the mossy places’. The willow tree, like many spaces in Heaney’s work, evokes the womb. To dwell, Heaney’s early work implies, is to go deep into the ground, or far back to a uterine darkness.

Dwellings as pointedly remote as these have political significance. Houses, especially those built on contested land, stand as symbols of the dwelling of a particular people, or of a general manner of dwelling. In ‘Frontiers of Writing’, the last of the Oxford lectures collected as The Redress of Poetry (1995), Heaney imagines a ‘quincunx’ of Irish houses, four totemic dwellings on Ireland’s coasts surrounding a central stone tower. The southern point of this ‘diamond shape’ is Kilcolman: ‘Edmund Spenser’s tower, as it were, the tower of English conquest and the Anglicization of Ireland, linguistically, culturally, institutionally’.

Redressing the conquest gathered in and symbolised by Kilcolman is Yeats’s tower at Ballylee, mythologised in 1928 as The Tower, restoring ‘the spiritual values and magical world-view that Spenser’s armies and language had destroyed’. Alongside the inheritance of Yeats’s mythology of Irish dwelling, the Northern Irish poet beginning their career in the 1960s had another reason, more prosaic and painful, to appreciate the political inflections of houses and dwelling. Adam Hanna makes the sharp point that for the Catholic minority during the civil rights campaign of the late 1960s, discrimination had become encapsulated in ‘the discriminatory allocation of council accommodation in some areas in favour of the Protestant majority’.

Participating in a Yeatsian mythology of landscape, the dwelling places of Heaney’s early collections also claim centrality for themselves in a climate of marginalisation.

6 Heaney, Redress, p. 199.
Yet in *North* (1975), in which he undertakes his most sustained exploration of the idea of intimate connection with the earth, Heaney draws inspiration not so much from Yeats as from Germanic rituals of dwelling, sacrifice and ritual punishment. (These he discovered first in P.V. Glob’s *The Bog People*.) The first poem of *North*’s Part I is a portrait of Antaeus, the giant of classical myth who, ‘cradled in the dark that wombed me’, derives superhuman strength from the ground. The preserved bog people depicted in subsequent pages are slaughtered victims, and share with Antaeus not only eventual defeat but also an intense connection to the ground. Lying ‘as if he had been poured / in tar’, the Grauballe Man ‘seems to weep / the black river of himself’: solid boundaries between man and place have collapsed. ‘Bog Queen’ harnesses an ancient (and problematic) Gaelic conception of woman as landscape to depict a female figure ‘digested’ by the ground. ‘My skull hibernated / in the wet nest of my hair’, Heaney’s imagined figure says, fused like the Grauballe Man to her place. In this context, dwelling places such as the setting for ‘Belderg’ – a house full of ‘quernstones out of a bog’ – embody the intense involvement with place achieved in bog-burial.

These dark and ancient dwelling places of Heaney’s early poems seem to have been secreted by the earth. At first sight, his sense of what it is to dwell seems in sympathy with Heidegger’s. In ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, Heidegger argues that true building can only occur after dwelling; in fact, true building is a kind of dwelling. Buildings are understood as ‘locations’ – points in space which

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release ‘the fourfold’ of earth and sky, man and gods. Releasing the fourfold, effective locations provide a ‘site’ for close and organic connections between man and his environment. Heidegger provides an archetype of this kind of dwelt building:

[A] farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants. Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness into things, ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring... It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table...  

It is easy to see this farmhouse as a Black Forest variant on Heaney’s Mossbawn; it is ‘close to the spring’ and the ‘meadows’ just as the houses at Mossbawn are close to the bog. Yet Heaney’s vision of dwelling is, from his earliest work, more cautious and ironic – and therefore far more politically savoury – than Heidegger’s. Considering Heaney’s work from an ecocritical perspective, Greg Garrard argues that even in North, where he mythologises the landscape, Heaney’s poetry ‘thinks dwelling through to the truth of its ambiguity’. Bringing an intense, dark and deep kind of dwelling to light, Heaney simultaneously stands as an exile from it. Therefore, Garrard argues, Heaney senses a place’s history as crossed and multiple, whereas for Heidegger it is purely single. ‘I’d told how its foundation / Was mutable as sound’ says the speaker of ‘Belderg’, alluding to his personal derivation of ‘bawn’ in ‘Mossbawn’ from

both the English word ‘bawn’ and the Gaelic ban (‘white’).\textsuperscript{12} ‘I am deeply suspicious’, comments Garrard, ‘of the dream of dwelling, the people it may exclude’.\textsuperscript{13} Heaney’s life and identity gives him privileged, experienced knowledge of the terrifying exclusion latent in a Heideggerian insistence on the purity and singularity of place. (Similarities between Heidegger’s mythology of place and the Nazi dream of Germanic dwelling are profound.) As Northern Ireland’s recently violent history demonstrates, houses must have the right to choose what to place ‘in the altar corner’. Places, and their peoples, have multiple derivations. The only civilised dwelling is co-dwelling.

**Building: craft and technique**

A further corrective to the excesses of Heidegger’s dream of dwelling, alongside this sense of the ambiguity and plurality of place, is a thorough demythologising of house-building. Heaney’s early collections present house-building, and a host of related crafts, as light and airy opposites to the seductive but frightening darkness of the dwelling places themselves. ‘Thatcher’, from *Door into the Dark,* is a good example:

Bespoke for weeks, he turned up some morning  
Unexpectedly, his bicycle slung  
With a light ladder and a bag of knives.  
He eyed the old rigging, poked at the eaves,  
Open and handled sheaves of lashed wheat-straw.  
Next, the bundled rods: hazel and willow

\textsuperscript{12} Derived from the Irish word *bó-dhún,* ‘bawn’ in Elizabethan English denoted ‘a fortified enclosure, enceinte, or circumvallation’ (‘bawn, n.1’, OED Online [Oxford University Press, June 2018]). In early modern Ireland the word was associated with the Elizabethan ‘New English’ and their culture, and yet (in an irony which lends credence to Heaney’s instinct for plural derivation), itself has Gaelic origins.  
\textsuperscript{13} Garrard, p.179.
Were flicked for weight, twisted in case they’d snap.
It seemed he spent the morning warming up:

Then fixed the ladder, laid out well honed blades
And snipped at straw and sharpened ends of rods
That, bent in two, made a white-pronged staple
For pinning down his world, handful by handful.

Couchant for days on sods above the rafters,
He shaved and flushed the butts, stitched all together
Into a sloped honeycomb, a stubble patch,
And left them gaping at his Midas touch.

Here is a local builder and repairer of roofs, a twentieth-century Northern Irish equivalent to the imagined ‘peasants’ of Heidegger’s Black Forest who build ‘by dwelling’. Yet Heaney’s portrait of thatching is striking for its total lack of Heideggerian mythology. Rather than welling up organically from the ground, the thatcher arrives casually (‘some morning’), deftly, on a bicycle whose poise and balance echo in the chiastic vowels of ‘a light ladder and a bag of knives’. His touch, like his ladder, is ‘light’: the eaves are ‘poked’ and the rods of hazel and willow are ‘flicked’. His attitude is not that of a slow releaser of the earth’s energy, but of a professional adroitly ‘warming up’. To some extent the thatcher resembles the ‘bricoleur’ described in Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *The Savage Mind* (1962), a maker whose method is magical rather than scientific:14

His universe of instruments is closed, and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always

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14 As a work of (investigative) anthropology Lévi-Strauss’s book is dated and of limited use. The dubious terminology of its title suggests as much. Yet the distinction of bricoleur and engineer continues to provoke thoughts, if applied metaphorically to literary creation rather than literally to so-called ‘savage’ societies.
finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains ... is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock.\textsuperscript{15}

The thatcher’s ‘bag of knives’ is perhaps a version of the bricoleur’s ‘set of tools’ – if not as ‘heterogeneous’, it is certainly as ‘finite’. His domain is small, confined not only to a district navigable by ‘bicycle’, but on the roof itself, where the stapled rods become ‘his world’. Like a premodern stone-mason, he works not according to an overarching design, but ‘handful by handful’. Yet this is not the magician steeped in folklore that Lévi-Strauss imagines, and distinguishes from the science of the ‘engineer’. The thatcher is ‘bespoke’, not the village shaman so much as an esteemed local artisan; lying above the rafters, he is ‘couchant’, a term drawn not from a mythology of organic building but from the Anglo-French language of heraldry.\textsuperscript{16}

After his modest exit, his work seems that of a king – a ‘Midas touch’.

The thatcher is in distinguished company in Heaney’s early collections, which are populated by a host of similarly skilled, professional and thoroughly demythologised craftsmen. Even the most mysterious of artisans, ‘The Diviner’ in \textit{Death of a Naturalist}, is ‘professionally / unfussed’. The masons of ‘Scaffolding’ work not by instinct but by cautious skill:

\begin{quote}
Make sure that planks won’t slip at busy points,
Secure all ladders, tighten bolted joints.
\end{quote}

Once more, craft is a corrective to the dark energies – ‘dark’ in their intimate warmth but also in their capacity to terrify and exclude – of the ground on which the house is built. The majority of the


\textsuperscript{16} ‘Couchant, adj.1: lying down; couching’; adj.2 \textit{Heraldry} Of an animal: Represented as lying with the body resting on the legs and (according to most authors) the head lifted up, or at least not sunk in sleep (\textit{dormant}) (\textit{OED Online} [Oxford University Press, June 2018]).
Craftsmen of Heaney’s early books are farmers. Farming might easily be imagined as an interaction with the earth more intimate than house-building. Yet Heaney’s farmers exhibit the same artisan professionalism of his builders. Working the plough in ‘Follower’, Heaney’s father can ‘set the wing / and fit the bright steel-pointed sock’ like ‘an expert’. Of this poem Elmer Andrews comments that ‘the poet recalls his father’s expertise as a ploughman, his almost mystical oneness with the natural world’. The (Catholic) farmer’s close union with his earth, compensating for a lack of representation in the polis, certainly features in Heaney’s work, as in Wintering Out’s ‘The Gift of Rain’, in which a farmer reaches through water to grasp a potato drill, so that ‘sky and ground / are running naturally among his arms’. Yet this poem’s circumstances are exceptional: the field is flooded, the drills sunken. On a farm unravaged by the elements, like the one evoked in ‘Follower’, the farmer’s mystical union is not so much with the earth, as Andrews suggests, as with the craft of farming.

Craftsmen/Domestic Women

It’s significant that these craftspeople are overwhelmingly male. Women in Heaney’s work, as feminist considerations have pointed out, are confined narrowly to archetypal or mythic roles. North, as we have seen, depicts women as landscapes. A related restriction of women in Heaney’s early work is their exclusion from craft. The artisans of the first three collections vary in their trades, but few are female; as Karen Moloney observes, the only women seen ‘acting as an artist or expert craftsperson are Heaney’s aunt in the poem “Churning Day” and the first owner of the musical instrument described in “Victorian Guitar”’. Otherwise, the women of the early collections are confined to domestic rituals such as drawing

water from the pump. Even the butter-making in ‘Churning Day’ lacks the professional manner of the thatcher’s craft: the ‘rhythms’ of stirring set up by Heaney’s mother require endurance (‘arms ached’) rather than precision. The thatcher’s craft happens in the dry rafters, above the dark, damp ground; the churning women are steeped in wetness, ‘spattered / with flabby milk’ whose ‘plash and gurgle’ resounds. Theirs is a more passive, responsive kind of making, the kind of which Heidegger fantasises. ‘The Wife’s Tale’ (Door into the Dark) depicts women in another traditional restriction: the ‘wife’ recounts bringing tea and bread-and-butter to the men working at the ‘thresher’. To humour her husband, she goes to inspect the bags of seed:

But I ran my hand in the half-filled bags
Hooked to the slots. It was hard as shot,
Innumerable and cool. The bags gaped
Where the chutes ran back to the stilled drum...

For Daniel Tobin, the comparison of the seed with ‘shot’ suggests the violence latent in this exclusively male threshing; the ‘masculine desire to master and control’, he argues, ‘ends in abuse, brutality, even war’.19 Yet shot, on a farm, is more likely a necessary resource than a symbol of brutality; the comparison of the forks ‘stuck at angles’ in the ground to ‘javelins’ suggests a ‘lost battlefield’ rather than a present war.20 Tobin’s account misses the precision of the threshing machine and its operatives, and the pleasure of plunging one’s hand into a neat bag of seed (perhaps evoked in the clean, curt consonants of ‘hooked to the slots’). The field is certainly a masculine domain, as he suggests. Yet the wife’s exclusion is not from male brutality, but from the precision and delicacy of a male realm of craft.

20 Italics mine.
Heaney’s instinctive connection of (male) artisan craft to the writing of poetry gives him much in common with Robert Frost. Rachel Buxton’s study of Frost’s influence on Heaney, argues for the central importance of Frost’s assertion that the good poet should write the way ‘the Canadian wood-choppers whittle their axe-handles, following the curve of the grain’. The poet is a craftsman who must be able not only to execute his will, but also to submit to the intentions and inclinations inherent in his language, just as grain inheres in wood. As Buxton argues, this association of poet and craftsman is a key underlying metaphor in Heaney’s early collections, where ‘blacksmiths, carpenters, thatchers [are]... models for the developing poet’. Frost’s remarks on craft are also one source of Heaney’s distinction, in the essay ‘Feeling Into Words’, between two skills necessary for the composition of good poetry:

I think technique is different from craft. Craft is what you can learn from other verse. Craft is the skill of making... It can be deployed without reference to the feelings or the self.

It is striking that for Heaney ‘the skill of making’ is executive and judicious, rather than the attunement to mysterious forces required for good ‘technique’. If Heaney understands poetry as a craft, and is able to compare it genuinely to the artisan crafts of his home ground, it is partly thanks to Frost. Yet it is also due to the nature of such crafts, as perceived by the poems’ speaker: not the Heideggerian response to the ground’s mystical requirements, but a precise mastery of that ground by skill.

22 Buxton, Robert Frost, p. 95.
Rebukes to Airiness: writing’s distinction from craft

There is clearly for Heaney great imaginative and personal potential in the idea of the poet as a builder. The poet is exiled from a landscape whose dark dwelling places are endued with the power of mythic timelessness. Yet the craftsmen who build and maintain these houses, and who farm the countryside, are an adequate model for the poet. However, though it departs from this view of poetic composition, Heaney’s later work also charts the differences between the life of local craftsman and worldly poet. One poem (xlv) in ‘Squarings’, the sequence from Seeing Things (1991), imagines the afterlife of the speaker’s ancestral people:

For certain ones what was written may come true:
They shall live on in the distance
At the mouths of rivers.

For our ones, no. They will re-enter
Dryness that was heaven on earth to them,
Happy to eat the scones baked out of clay.

A resting place ‘at the mouths of rivers’ suggests a widening out to the world; the river’s mouth is a locus of influence, both literal and figurative. Perhaps the poem refers to the unusual career of the (successful) artist, who in his or her afterlife achieves a commerce and exchange with a numberless sea of readers. This kind of after-dwelling is in marked contrast to ‘our ones’ – a common way in Northern Irish English of referring to one’s community – whose afterlife will be ‘happy’ but confined. Once again, the achievement of the speaker’s ancestors is imagined as ‘dryness’ – the imposition of order by craft on the wet, anarchic energies of the bog.

The reach of writing is wider than that of local craft. Yet throughout ‘Squarings’ the imagery and language of building functions as a kind of protection against the airiness some readers associate with Heaney’s later work – as if building is what tethers the
poet who has travelled far and wide beyond the place of his roots.24 Remembering a clay-floored house, the speaker pays tribute to its ‘cold memory-weights / To load me, hand and foot, in the scale of things’ (xl). ‘Sink every impulse like a bolt’, the speaker admonishes himself in the second poem of the sequence: ‘secure / the bastion of sensation’ (ii). ‘Crossings’, the sequence’s third section, includes a haunting vision of ‘my father’s shade appearing to me’; ‘it steadies me to tell these things’ (xxxii), says the speaker. Yet the next poem begins sternly – ‘be literal a moment’ (xxxiii) – and remembers the death of the speaker’s father in stark terms of the ‘tiles’ feeling ‘harder’ that morning, and the house ‘emptied out’. The poem concludes with an evocation of the house planned by Heaney’s father, ‘rebuke to fanciness and shrine to limit’. The language of houses and more particularly of building functions in this later work as a rebuke to airy non-specificity. The moment poetry becomes completely detached from a down-to-earth craft like house-building, ‘Squarings’ implies, it risks failure.

Conclusion

A love poem from Field Work (1979) locates its speaker in ‘the night earth and air / Of California’, missing his wife who is elsewhere. (Heaney taught at Berkeley from 1970–71.) As the speaker stares out over the ‘verandah’ from the desk where he is ‘composing / Love-letters again’, ‘The Skunk’ suddenly appears, ‘the intent and glamorous’

Ordinary, mysterious skunk,
Mythologized, demythologized,
Snuffing the boards five feet beyond me.

The antitheses of these phrases achieve a characteristic kind of ambiguity. Marital love is at once ‘ordinary’ and ‘mysterious’; the

skunk’s appearance is both a miracle – the spirit of the speaker’s wife made briefly incarnate in an animal – and a conventional sign, a comic reminder of a person who remains decidedly absent. As I have shown, houses in Heaney’s poetry are similarly both ‘mythologized’ and ‘demythologized’. The figurative language that describes the bog (and the darker dwelling places of the eel) also evokes human dwellings; both lie beyond doors into the dark. Houses in twentieth-century Derry seem as timeless and magical as a medieval chapel in the Gaelic west of Ireland. Yet house-building, and the related crafts of thatching, ploughing and turf-cutting, is presented in radically different terms. Heaney’s craftsmen are sharply distinguished from the peasants imagined by Heidegger whose making is a passive response to nature’s demands. Instead, their skill is a corrective to and a control on the potential violence of those demands. They carry out their craft with the local specificity of Lévi-Strauss’s *bricoleur*, and similarly prize practical over theoretical knowledge. Yet the trace of the shaman, suggested by the figure of the *bricoleur*, has vanished. Instead Heaney’s craftsmen – almost all, indeed, are men – are characterised as expert, professional artisans. Craft, like art, engages with the mythical and spiritual, but remains itself a secular matter of practice and skill.

The craft of building and the art of writing, in Heaney’s poetry and poetics, are kept distinct. Craft is both more modest and more grounded in its scope. Unlike the artist, who communicates with an imagined whole world, the (usually male) craftsman expresses himself to a solidly tangible, limited community. Yet if craft and art are finally distinct, they are equal in status. For Heaney, the achievements of craft – a ploughed field, a thatched roof, a stone wall – have the same capacity to sustain and reassure as poetic art. Both houses and poems deserve contemplation; both are deep and, though ultimately secular, wondrous. Heaney’s reckoning of art and craft with equal esteem is certainly post-Romantic, if not peculiarly modern. Pre-Romantic cultures of the British Isles almost never confer prestige on the art of literature by invoking the metaphor of craft. Often writing was a craft: many of the playwrights in the
last decades of Elizabeth’s reign worked not *ab initio* but, like the thatcher, in response to commercial demand and opportunity. Yet writing rarely derived legitimacy or prestige from this proximity to the sphere of the artisan. Ben Jonson’s attempts to control the publication of his plays, for example, reflects an anxiety to appear not as a professional or hack writer, but as a laureate.25 Furthermore, the vast majority of contemporary architectural activity was relegated firmly to the denigrated province of the artisan. As late as 1615, Sir George Buck affirms that

There be in this citie [London] cunning masters, for either shadowing, pourtraying, counterfetting, tricking, painting, enlumining, or limming. But this is now an art... much fallen from the reputation which it had aunciently... sure I am, it is now accounted base and mechanicall, and a mere mestier of an artificer, and handy craftsman.26

An imagined ‘art’ of house-making, noble and ancient, has atrophied to ‘the mere mestier’ of craft: the latter is simply the ‘base and mechanicall’ poor relation of the former. This is a far cry from the celebration – or even fetishisation – of rural people and their crafts in the poetics of Robert Frost. The notion of craft as a legitimate model and metaphor for art might well have its roots in Romanticism, most obviously the celebration of rural life in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), though Coleridge’s later appraisal indicates uncertainty as to this celebration.27 A century later, Frost

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27 In the *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge contends that Wordsworth’s rustic characters are really simply figures blessed with certain attributes, namely independence and education, that are ‘not necessarily connected with their “occupations and abode”’. Rural England is the mere setting. See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* [1817] II.xvii, ‘Tenets Peculiar to Mr Wordsworth’, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, eds. Kathleen Coburn and
exhibits an emphatically artisan poetics, from which a clear link to Heaney’s celebrations of craft can be forged. The best literary art, Heaney’s Frostian poetics imply, is as honest and humble as craft; his images of craft, meanwhile, call on us to dispense with Heidegger’s dubious myth of building and dwelling.

Literature itself, of course, has not always enjoyed the respectability and prestige of a ‘high’ art. In early modern and medieval Britain literature could be dismissed as the work of the ‘handy craftsman’, but the commoner charge levelled against it, originating with Plato, was its potential to deceive and corrupt with its fabricated fictions. The numerous treatises of poetics in the second half of the sixteenth century which sought to justify literature had to rescue it not so much from the realm of lowly craft as from its alleged power to infect with falsehood. In fact, writers such as Sidney and Spenser, who defend poetry as a tool for moral edification, also express the desire for its creators to improve technically, to master the craft of their art. If literature became prestigious, it was by superiority to the lowliness of mechanical craft. Heaney attempts to abolish such a hierarchy. In his poetics, art does its work best when it is equal to craft in status, despite ultimate differences. In the context of Northern Ireland after 1969, this equation has deep political resonance and relevance. The poet’s surest inspiration is not art from the metropolitan world of the (imperial) centre, but the craft of the local community, marginalised both geographically and culturally for its Catholicism. ‘Mythologized, demythologized’, Heaney’s anonymous south Derry craftsmen, with their skill and professional control, are made as important and endearing as the poet born among them.

Bart Winer, 16 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), VI.ii: Biographia Literaria, eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, pp. 40–44. We might also note that Wordsworth, while estimating the lives and uncorrupted diction of his rural subjects, has less to say about their crafts.
“MYTHOLOGIZED, DEMYTHOLOGIZED”

Bibliography


Reviews


Bags, Beds, Bicycles, Bowler Hats, Crutches, Feminine Hats, Greatcoats, Old Boots, Pockets, Rocking Chairs, Sticks, Stones, Wheelchairs, Widow’s Weeds. Fourteen objects, what Bates (after a stage direction in Beckett’s *Breath*) terms the ‘miscellaneous rubbish’ that constitute Samuel Beckett’s material imagination. As Bates notes, much of the action in Beckett’s pared-down world, whether Molloy’s predilection for sucking-stones or Gogo’s struggles with his boot, is comprised by character interaction with these ‘poor materials’ (p. 11). While objects, and stage props in particular, have been examined in some detail in Beckett studies, the novelty of Bates’ approach is in examining the use of these chosen objects (as they progress and regress) over Beckett’s half-century-long writing career. Bates associates the greatcoat, for example, with the Ulster overcoat sported by the author’s father, Bill Beckett (and incidentally, Sherlock Holmes) (p.83). First presented in *Watt* as a hand-me-down, before later finding its way into *Waiting for Godot* where Didi tenderly drapes his coat over the sleeping Gogo, it is argued that for Beckett, the greatcoat is ‘a distinctly paternal kind of swaddling’ which goes some way to sate the desire of many of his characters ‘to be hugged by their dead fathers’ (p. 86). No wonder then, when it later becomes ‘a poetically charged icon of loss, a metonym for mourned loved ones’, as the coat, once associated with country walks with his father, becomes the funereal shrouds worn by the shades of the late short prose (p. 89).

While there is some consideration of existing research concerning the phenomenology of objects, Bates’ study does not allow engagement with the niceties of various theoretical paradigms
to detract attention from her subject, and discussion of these issues are confined mainly to the book's introduction. Indeed, the work positions itself as part of a wider turn in Beckett Studies toward less arcane criticism of his writings (p.1). It should briefly be remarked in this context that the work is pithily and engagingly written: *Murphy* is a ‘tale of two chairs’; the characters of the Trilogy spend their time ‘wandering, wondering’, and later, ‘[walking] the same roads and [grappling] with the same round of thoughts’ (p. 24, p. 27, p. 137). Much of the study adopts a broadly biographical approach, or rather, utilises elements of Beckett’s well fleshed out biography to biograph the particular object under consideration. Thus, (amongst other associations) bowler hats are linked to Beckett’s middling Irish Protestant background, rocking chairs with mental freedom, and entertainingly, bicycles with sexual pleasure (p.30, p. 108, p. 130). This object-centred approach defamiliarises both the biography and writing of this oft-studied writer. Overbearing maternal affection, for example, is explored through a photograph of Beckett as a small child kneeling in prayer before his austerely hatted mother; a scene, which Bates notes, finds its way into both *How It Is* and *Film*: ‘Mother’s big hands. Her severe eyes devouring him. Her big old-fashioned beflowered hat’ (p. 98). The life and work are held in interesting tension as, scooped from the heady ethers of theory, a full-blooded and embodied Beckett emerges.

The study is divided into an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion under which Bates pools the fourteen objects considered together as ‘relics’, ‘heirlooms’, ‘props’, and ‘treasure’, before turning to consider ‘stone’ in her conclusion. Further to this schema, however, Bates notes that the work is thematically split in half between a consideration of the personal significance of certain well-worn objects for Beckett and a discussion of the manner in which his writings self-reflexively interrogate the writing process (p.206). Although both arguments are broached through objects, these are separate theses and while compelling, serve to challenge, at least somewhat, the overall cohesion of the book.
Notable in the second half of the book is an engaging discussion of Winnie from *Happy Days* and the eponymous Malone. As Bates notes, these works written in different media ten years apart may seem an unusual pairing, but interesting parallels between the two titular characters’ shared preoccupation with the contents of their handbag and pocket respectively are, however, shown to exist (p.201). This pairing of Winnie and Malone is illustrative of one of the benefits of the material methodology deployed throughout. Ranging through Beckett’s entire writing career, Bates draws together surprising connections that bridge what she, following other recent studies, persuasively demonstrates to be a critically-constructed false division between the novels, plays, and poems (p.127). The material approach serves as a skeleton key unlocking insights into Beckett’s oft-perceived inaccessible oeuvre, but perhaps more interestingly for the Beckett specialist, also provides a unique vantage point from which to engage in myriad critical debates. Thus, Bates takes aim at time-honoured contentions about the function of bowler hats in *Godot*, arguing that Hugh Kenner et al.’s contention that hats ‘are removed for thinking but replaced for speaking’ is not supported by a text where, while Lucky requires a hat to think, the other characters can only think hatless (p.45). In a segment entitled ‘literary prosthetics’, underlining the role prosthetics play in Beckett’s narrative complicates our understanding of physical disability in his work: ‘[prosthetics] supplement the decreasing physical capacity of Beckett’s characters to keep moving, and in doing so … prop up the narratives that are organised around this movement’ (p.116).

Also of interest is the ‘associative strategy employed throughout the book’ as Beckett’s use of objects is put into creative dialogue with other writers and visual artists (p.6). Bates notes that these associations help in defining more precisely the distinctive nature of Beckett’s ‘creative practice’. Beckett keeps good company in this context as his use of bowler hats is put into conversation with Flaubert and P. G. Wodehouse, old boots with Van Gogh’s still lifes, and perhaps inevitably, the matter about a bicycle with Flann O’Brien,
but also interestingly for a man born before the bicycle, Laurence Sterne. In a reading of ‘Sanies I’, Bates suggests that ‘the dynamic throttle’ of the poem’s beginning evokes the vigorous pedalling of a bike: ‘belting along the meantime clutching the bike’ (p.127). A further comparison is made between Sterne’s giddy references to the hobby-horse in Tristram Shandy and Beckett’s use of the bicycle ‘to determine the structure, theme, rhythm and speed of the narrative’ (p.123). On the whole, these analogues are compelling and demand wider comparative study of the use of objects in the modernist, or perhaps modern Irish, contexts; to what other ends are fragments shored?

Bates’ first book is an attractive analysis of Beckett’s trash ekphrasis, which through use of an innovative methodology, engages with the wide sweep of his work in an accessible way likely to appeal to student and scholar alike.

CIARÁN BYRNE


What does it mean to imagine a world? For those individuals who poured much of their lifeblood and energy into the creation of fictional universes – J. R. R. Tolkien, Frank L. Baum and Frank Herbert among them – what it meant was everything. The imagined world is a source of devotion and obsession, a project both cathartic and intensely demanding. The building of an imaginary world can be a complex, time-consuming process, or it can be an implied backdrop, described in a single sentence; and yet fundamental to any of these processes is the very act of creation. For some this is a political act, the positing of a future utopian or dystopian society – though these are generally confined to a single work of fiction; for others it is a means of exploring facets of culture, in Tolkien’s case philology, within a controlled narrative. And, indisputably, it is deeply enjoyable to exist in such worlds, as evidenced by the
current legions of reading, watching, playing fans, who in turn feel compelled to extend a particular creator’s world, or even to furnish their own.

Editor Mark J. P. Wolf, who has already proven himself an adept in the theories and practicalities of world-building in books such as *Virtual Morality*, *Building Imaginary Worlds* and *Revisiting Imaginary Worlds*, assembles this daunting compendium for Routledge’s Companion series. Its parameters are wide, but Wolf’s structure offers stability. His own contributions are scattered throughout the first few sections, and offer quick step guides for the aspiring builder, among them ‘Invented Cultures’, ‘Narrative Fabric’ and ‘World Design’.

Barring Wolf’s chapters, the main body of this companion is a study of what has come before. Beginning with such works as Plato’s allegorical conception of Atlantis in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, early world-builders in prose Thomas More, Margaret Cavendish and Jonathan Swift are regularly invoked, as are familiar twentieth-century fantasists Baum, Tolkien, Le Guin and Rowling (though only the former two are given their own chapters). A lack of Spenser, Blake, or any other poet who could be said to build worlds, is noticeable, but then – it could be countered – this isn’t a specifically literary companion. Of particular interest to scholars of the mythopoeic practices of the Inklings will be Lars Konzack’s chapter on what Tolkien termed ‘Subcreation’, literally ‘creating under’, an approach to myth-making which presupposes a Primary World created by God: anything created, or imagined, within this Primary World is in turn Secondary and therefore reflects the first. Konzack argues that Tolkien positioned himself between Romanticism and Modernism, and yet discarded both as incompatible with his own sensibilities: his form of subcreation became a reaction to Victorian irrationality and Modernist reductionism, an insistence on reason to better comprehend ‘the inner consistency of reality’ (p.212).

Lily Alexander’s contributions examine the dominant symbols (once Jungian ‘archetypes’) at play in mythological narratives, and how these are fundamental to the structuring of imaginary
worlds. Using theorists of myth-criticism such as Frazer, Campbell, Propp, and Lévi-Strauss, Alexander introduces the deconstructed ‘The Hero’s Journey’ mytheme, an element of narrative she argues is rooted in ancient rituals of initiation, and is essential to portraying any newly-discovered world. A protagonist must perform this journey, metaphorically or otherwise, in order to develop and mature through contact with the unknown. Any imaginary world is a system of symbols, Alexander continues in her much broader chapter ‘Mythology’, symbols which have come to be repeated and ritualised, and The Hero’s Journey is perhaps one of the most dominant.

As is usually the case with these companions, the enormity of the subject matter is its own worst enemy, and it is only the book’s careful structure which prevents *Imaginary Worlds* from untethering. The implications of the title are vast when considering its parameters are not even limited to the conventional media of literature, film, television and video games. ‘Imaginary’ might refer simply to ‘speculative fiction’, or it might mean any act of imagination, reverie, or otherwise. Indeed, many works of fiction are offered as examples of imaginary worlds which question these very definitions. In his chapter on ‘Island Worlds’ Ian Kinane discusses Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* at some length as a standard for castaway fiction (the setting is also a conflation of the Pacific *Más a Tierra* and an unnamed Caribbean island), and William Proctor in a chapter on ‘Canonicity’ devotes much attention to the ‘world’ of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes. Any fictionalised setting, indeed any location rendered in any form of art, it seems must, to an extent, be imaginary. The Londons of Blake, Dickens and Peter Ackroyd are their own separate worlds, as are Hardy’s Wessex, Scorsese’s New York and the entire corpus of Arthurian legend, any of which could have been mentioned. The potential scope is intimidating, and yet reducing this companion to the traditional bounds of fantasy and science fiction would be limiting and unproductive. Wolf himself admits it could have been twice the size.
Imaginary Worlds sits precariously between the two extremes of standard fantasy and science fiction on one hand, and the unplumbed sociological studies of childhood paracosms and virtual reality on the other. This is generally to its merit, however: Edward Castronova’s chapter ‘Worlds as Experiments’ is a brief exploration into how the social sciences might harness synthetic worlds to simulate and observe our own societies, using economic or political variables ‘to conduct direct experimental tests of grand theories of social organization’ (p.301). A research student might upload such a world onto social media, Castronova suggests, and members of the public would be able to dip in and out of it as they wish, participate or move on when they like. The companion proves most fruitful – and of use to future scholarship in the area – when engaging with these potential acts of creation, and not necessarily the worlds themselves.

The final section – Dimitra Fimi on Tolkien’s Arda and Kevin Schut on the video game No Man’s Sky, among others – succeeds mostly due to its accounts of the creative process. Contributions such as Wolf’s are in danger of coming across as mere inventories, but due to the companion’s more theoretical entries – such as Alexander’s – and the more sociological, forward-thinking scholarship towards its conclusion, Imaginary Worlds manages admirably to hold its ground.

FELIX TAYLOR


‘Le vieux Paris n’est plus (la forme d’une ville / Change plus vite, hélas! que le coeur d’un mortel),’ writes Charles Baudelaire in his poem ‘Le Cygne’.1 Old Paris, he laments, is no more, and the form of a great city changes far more quickly than the human heart. Baudelaire’s Paris – that of the Second Empire – underwent radical reformation during his lifetime, and the capital was a crucible

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for unprecedented societal change. Overseen by Napoleon III’s Prefect of the Seine, Baron George-Eugène Haussmann, Paris became a violent architectural palimpsest, as crowded networks of streets were razed to make way for Haussmann’s grand, sweeping boulevards and places – today they are internationally recognised as being symbolic of the city. An 1859 report stated that these new boulevards and public spaces ‘brought air, light and healthiness and procured easier circulation in a labyrinth that was constantly blocked and impenetrable, where streets were winding, narrow, and dark’. In reality, however, their effect was more complex: the process caused mass displacement of people, creating the Parisian banlieues, and was driven less by a desire to bring ‘light and healthiness’ to the city than it was to refashion a space that resisted uprising and civil unrest. Haussmann’s ‘gutting’ of Paris, as he later wrote with pride in his Mémoires, provided the crucible in which Baudelaire composed and published his most famous collection of poems, Les Fleurs du Mal. Containing over a hundred verse poems and a further fifty innovative prose poems, Baudelaire’s œuvre reflects the sights, sounds and experiences of the modern city, with all its shocking freneticism and seemingly unreconcilable paradoxes.

These immense societal changes were far more than simply a backdrop to Baudelaire’s poetic project, and its intersections with music and song, however. Aimée Boutin, for instance, has noted how Baudelaire’s city is a fundamentally ‘melodious space’: ‘attuned to the popular tradition of the Cris de Paris, the flâneur understood the city as a melodious space that orchestrates different, often conflicting sound cultures’, she writes. Also occupied with the relationship between noise, the city, and poetics, Ross Chambers in his fascinating An Atmospherics of the City establishes Baudelaire’s role as a mediator and poetic processor of the sounds and noise

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3 de Moncan, Paris, p. 34.
of the city. While poems such as ‘Une Charogne’ reveal the poet’s indiscriminate gaze, crafting exquisite verse from the sight of decomposing flesh, Chambers suggests that ‘noise is the inescapable accompaniment to city life that the modern poet must face in his effort to make beauty from the mundane.’

Helen Abbott argues at the beginning of this thorough study of the song settings of Baudelaire’s verse that ‘commentary on Baudelaire songs has been largely limited to a reductive set of famous songs by Duparc, Debussy, and Fauré’ (p. 2), and Baudelaire in Song makes a concerted effort towards broadening the scope of our understanding of the lineage of song settings of Baudelaire. Its analysis convincingly refutes previous accusations that Baudelaire’s verse is either too ‘resistant’ or ‘unpliable’ (p. 173) when it comes to being set to music, instead demonstrating that it excels in a number of musical settings, genres and styles. Abbott’s pioneering Baudelaire Song Project further demonstrates the near dizzying pervasiveness of Baudelaire’s musical legacy, beyond Baudelaire in Song. This is an interdisciplinary and international project which aims to collate song settings of Baudelaire into an accessible research database, and to subject these collected song settings to rigorous and innovative analysis.

And, indeed, our experiences of music and the city are where the insufficiencies and arbitrariness of demarcations between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture are revealed. The city is a space in which the quotidian jostles alongside the revelatory – profundity and banality meet on street corners. David Evans asserts that in nineteenth-century France one saw ‘the blurring of the boundaries between high and low art’; in the Paris of the Second Empire, Baudelaire negotiated as much a new publishing landscape, as an architectural one. In literature and music, Baudelaire’s legacy and lineage reflect

this; he wanders between genres and varying critical fields seemingly with all of the curiosity and disinterestedness which defines his famous poetic type, the flâneur. Baudelaire is found in the complex cultural and sociological analyses of Walter Benjamin and Marshal Berman, but can also be spotted in the lyrics of Jim Morrison, The Cure, and in the music and theatrical self-presentation of David Bowie’s twentieth-century dandy, ‘both insider and outsider’ who plays ‘tantalisingly with social conventions’, as Neil Sammells writes.\(^7\) Bowie himself cited Baudelaire as the driving inspiration behind ‘Rock ’n’ Roll Suicide’, the final track on his seminal 1972 album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. Indeed, although here Abbott focuses her chapters on, in turn, the compositional works of Maurice Rollinat, Gustave Charpentier, Alexander Gretchaninov, Louis Vierne and Alban Berge, in order to strengthen her contention that ‘analysing the many different factors which shape how the poet’s work is repackaged into new song sets reveals the extent to which poetry’s relationship with song has been little understood’ (p. 67), her choices are by no means exhaustive. Rather, the book constantly stresses the protean nature of its project, and its commitment to continuing research and discovery: because there is no ‘perfect “ideal” setting of Baudelaire’, these ongoing processes of close-reading, comparative reading, and data analysis yield judgements which are constantly being shaped and reshaped. This continued analysis frequently poses what Abbott calls the ‘quel Baudelaire’ question (p. 180), one concerned with examining which elements of the poet’s multi-faceted corpus composers seem to tend towards. There is, for example, limited engagement with Baudelaire’s violent or misanthropic works, such as ‘Une Charogne’ or ‘Les Petites Vieilles’, whereas works from the ‘Spleen et idéal’ section of *Les Fleurs du Mal* recur with greater frequency. Fundamentally, he is a writer to whom many people – readers, translators, composers – have responded in a variety of ways, and ‘assembling, disassembling, and repackaging Baudelaire’s poetry as song will remain an iterative process’ (p. 182).

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There are, too, vital questions about the relationship between poetry and music being addressed and interrogated here. It is too reductive to assert either that Baudelaire’s poetry is simply a versification of the cacophony of the Parisian streets, or that his poems echo only the gentler, interior spaces of the salons frequented by writers, composers and enthusiasts. Rather, Abbott writes, he exploits both of these ‘auditory worlds’ (p. 7), and this aesthetic project is itself a challenge to the status of poetry as a stand-alone form. It fundamentally resists taxonomy, or the limits of genre and formal categorisation. Furthermore, the book confronts the difficult intersection between our experiences of words and of music, drawing on recent work in cognitive neuroscience and neuropsychology by Aniruddh Patel, Nina Kraus and Bharath Chandrasekaran, amongst others. Crucially, this research ‘make[s] us think again about simply allowing the words ‘poetry’ and ‘music’ to be interchangeable’ (p. 21), and to move beyond analogy as a means of understanding how we process and respond to music. These sections of the book are, it must be said, dauntingly complicated at points – such demands on the reader are perhaps inevitable in a work of such interdisciplinary ambition.

Abbott makes full use of her dual specialisms in nineteenth-century French poetry as well as music and voice studies, and Baudelaire in Song is rigorous – almost compendious, even though it clocks in at just under two-hundred and fifty pages – and academically both rich and challenging. Our experiences of the city and of music are remarkably similar. They move us to highs and lows of emotion, and yet, despite the intensity of feeling both engender, they often seem perpetually elusive, somehow ineffable. Books such as this are vital in illuminating not only Baudelaire’s vast and continuing musical legacy – alongside his place at the very heart of urban studies and the literature of the city – but also the intricate relationship between word and music. Baudelaire in Song is concerned with fruitful and complex intersections: between music and poetry, the aesthetic impulse and the experience of the
city, and of Baudelaire’s place as a touchstone for composers and songwriters. It is a useful and rewarding book for students of music and poetics alike, and a further testament to Abbott’s determined work in this diverse and endlessly rich field. The book gestures excitingly towards future study, projecting an ethos encapsulated in Michel de Montaigne’s affirmation of complexity, with which Abbott concludes: ‘Les contradictions donc des jugements, ne m’offensent, ni m’altèrent: elles m’éveillent seulement et m’exercent’ (p. 183).\(^8\)

EDWARD GRIMBLE


As the ‘value’ of the humanities is increasingly questioned in Anglo-American universities, Catherine Bates’ timely book takes us back to the debate between Stephen Gosson’s 1579 *School of Abuse* and Philip Sidney’s 1595 *Defense of Poesy*. *On Not Defending Poetry* reminds us that the use of poetry has always been under scrutiny and unpacks the unexamined premises of our obsession with ‘value’ and ‘use’. Her book is divided into three sections, following Sidney’s three responses to Gosson’s three accusations: that poetry is useless, that poetry lies, and that poetry corrupts morality. Just as Sidney circles back to the same argument of poetry as an instrument of moral education in his defence against all three charges, Bates develops an overarching argument that poetry has deconstructive potential in resisting cultural hegemony through her analysis of Sidney’s three defences.

In Part One of her book, Bates examines Gosson’s accusation that poetry is useless to society and Sidney’s idealistic defence that it is an instrument for moral education. The juxtaposition of these two

\(^8\) ‘The contradictions of judgments, therefore, neither offend nor alter me; they only rouse and exercise me’.
voices is familiar to us, from cuts in public funding for humanities to the rise of literature classes in medical and business schools for moral education. Bates points out that Sidney’s idealistic defence still presumes that something is socially acceptable only when it is profitable – a capitalist mentality (p. 41) that she will deconstruct in Part Two. Moreover, Bates examines idealism itself, tracing Sidneyan idealism back to Plato and money fetishism (p. 30), whereupon she demonstrates the first inconsistency in Sidney’s tripartite argument: defending the ‘use’, or ‘profit’, of poetry, Sidney simultaneously idealises a Golden Age of poetry (p. 34) where concerns about profit are not necessary (p. 53), and relies on languages of money, profit, and mass production to think about virtue.

Part Two examines the Gosson-Sidney debate about the deceptive nature of poetry. Bates argues that Sidney equivocates Gosson’s charges by redefining ‘truth’ and ‘lie’ (p. 87). Sidney claims poetry uses empirically false narratives to convey moral truths. According to Bates, this manoeuver purposefully misinterprets Gosson’s attack, which is about the truth value of these so-called ‘moral truths’, in order to dodge it (p. 96). She identifies Sidney’s failure to fend off Gosson’s scepticism as a symptom of a larger problem with idealistic understandings of poetry as a pedagogical tool, namely that there is no empirically reliable way to verify whether a particular poem instructs or corrupts. That is to say, there is no way to tell whether the virtues it claims to teach are in fact universal and worthy of being reproduced in its audience (p. 118). Here Bates returns to her observation about the capitalist mentality in the idealistic view of poetry explored in Part One, and explains how poetry benefits certain groups by making relative virtues appear universal. This seemingly cynical view, which identifies idealistic use of poetry with propaganda, is supported by an internal inconsistency in Sidney’s argument. Sidney assumes that the virtues taught in humanist education are universal rather than sectarian (p. 104), yet he inevitably acknowledges the arbitrariness of these virtues because he considers education necessary (p. 121). Like capital, ideology must be constantly reproduced to stay dynamic and functional.
Here Bates begins to reveal the central object of her study, which is neither the Gosson-Sidney debate nor the idealistic use of poetry. The debate is her source material, whose inconsistencies and nuances she analyses to enrich her argument. The idealistic use of poetry presents the contemporary relevance of her study: too often we adopt Sidney’s idealistic view of poetry to defend our existence as academics in ‘the crisis of humanities’ without examining what values it teaches and whose interest it perpetuates. Does poetry teach its audience to become better human beings, or does it endow them with cultural capital shown in their increased ability to impress, to persuade, and to lead? The book certainly contributes to a proper understanding of the Gosson-Sidney debate and provides Delphic insight into our own engagement with the defence of poetry. However, it also aspires to dismantle a much greater foe: intellectual tyranny in its various forms – the promotion of a single absolute value over pluralistic values.

After revealing herself as an advocate for pluralism, Bates makes the clarion call in the second half of the second part and the third part of the book. She envisions a deconstructive, rather than constructive, use of poetry. Poetry would demystify and destabilise, and be a force of resistance rather than of coercion. Bates did not invent the transformative (and sometimes revolutionary) use of poetry – poetry is often used as an instrument for social change by giving a voice to the voiceless and inviting empathy for sufferers of institutional injustice. However, this process often circumvents the scholar-critics, because the power of poetry to inspire resistance often transfers directly from poet to reader through emotions and intuitions. Therefore Bates’ attempt to bring the scholar-critics, who often occupy the conservative space in this triangular relationship, into the poetic enterprise of social transformation is particularly refreshing.

Bates’ indirect, gradual, cylindrical progression towards the central argument is an unmistakably idiosyncratic choice, and is a stylistic strength. The stakes of the argument are not immediately clear at the beginning of Part One. Perhaps the author intends
to write another close reading of Sidney; perhaps she wants to explore the linguistic system of money metaphors in early modern England. But as the reader delves deeper into the book, the stakes raise dramatically. It soon becomes evident that the very questions asked about the ‘value’ of poetry are loaded with under-examined (and probably indefensible) premises; one starts to wonder whether idealism itself is problematic because it makes relative values seem universal; by the time one reaches the final part, one realises that everything from monotheism to patriarchy has been renounced. The raising of the stakes is not unfounded, because the progression is cylindrical. Bates always begins each argumentative move by identifying specific inconsistencies within Sidney’s text. If one looks at the Table of Contents, one might assume that her argumentative structure is simply mimicking Sidney’s preference in his three defences. However, her argument only takes its current form because the inconsistencies she identifies in Sidney fall into a hidden parallel sequence as well. When Bates moves from ‘profit’ to ‘lies’ and eventually to ‘abuse’, she is actually moving from ‘idealism as capitalism’ to ‘ideology’ and finally to ‘deconstruction’. Incidentally, the argument that gradually unfolds is characteristic of Kierkegaard’s ‘indirect communication’, a performative use of speech that communicates what is beyond systematic inquiry. This argumentative style seems appropriate for Bates’ thematic goal.

In the local structure of the argument, Bates combines textual evidence with conceptual leaps. The latter are sometimes executed speedily and euphorically through asyndetons. For example, in one single sentence, she lists nine ideologies in which the pluralist particulars are subordinated to and regulated by the homogeneous ideal (p. 115). Elsewhere she lists seventeen forms of abuse of power in one asyndetic sentence (p. 129). Each item in the list (‘matter to mind’, ‘woman to man’, ‘labour to capital’, etc.) is laden with an entire philosophical discourse, and their juxtaposition shows how propaganda operates similarly in each case. I believe these moments are some of the most enjoyable in her writing, although I recognise that they are an acquired taste. Those who are habituated to strictly
‘scholarly’ writing, where each sentence is backed up with empirical evidence, and who do not recall the theoretical traditions her asyndetic lists are referring to, may be put off.

Bates’ critical style seems to align with her vision of deconstructive poetry – one more like the Delphic Oracle than a science paper (p. 217), perhaps with Derridean ‘play’ in mind. If this is indeed the goal, the book has made an conformist misstep. Bates claims that she has identified two conflicting voices, ‘the speaker’ versus the true Sidney (p. 10). She claims to be explicating his hidden (or ‘subconscious’) insights when she examines his inconsistencies. By doing so, she conforms to the standards of historicism, which views the study of authors and texts as an end in itself and prioritises them over the questions these authors and texts aspire to and sometimes fail to answer. However, presenting her study of Sidney’s inconsistencies and their wider implications as a decipherment rather than critique of Sidney is unsuccessful because doing so requires unrealistic concessions (‘It is as if Sidney’s poet just cannot help himself’, p. 41; ‘at some deep, intuitive, and quite possibly unconscious level’, p. 110). These concessions distract from her important arguments about idealism and propaganda, because they allow the reader to (falsely) expect her book to be an explication of Sidney per se and to dismiss her arguments when she fails to deliver on this promise. Instead of engaging with historicist scholars by speaking their language, the laborious reconstruction of Sidney’s consciousness may have impaired communication by committing a cardinal sin of historicist scholarship – applying psychoanalytic theory anachronistically. The book might benefit from focusing solely on the question rather than the text, and demonstrating, with its own example of unapologetic stylistic idiosyncrasy, how words (poetry and criticism alike) can be deconstructive.

SOPHIE ZHUANG
As a student at the Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in 2011, I was trying to articulate my nascent love for Indian poetry in English through the easiest means available to a student of literature (however confounding the desire): by writing a term paper. I went on to re-read Arun Kolatkar’s slim yellow volume of poems published in 1976, *Jejuri*, many times before producing, first, a critical piece which was little more than a gushing review, and later, a slightly better thought out article on Kolatkar’s urban poetry. Even to my then rather myopic research gaze, the paucity in critical writing on the flourishing world of Indian poetry in English was obvious. Some names resurfaced often: M. K. Naik, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Amit Chaudhuri, Bruce King, G. J. V. Prasad, Makarand Paranjape, to name a few, have written on numerous aspects of a long lineage.  

It was difficult, however, to find critical works that adequately gauged the breadth and depth of the terrain, and bolstered the evolution of the field by providing sustained critical reflection abreast of new developments in writing. Edited by Rosinka Chaudhuri, the massive *A History of Indian Poetry in English*, published in 2016 by Cambridge University Press, precisely and compendiously fills this lacuna. In her introduction, by acknowledging upfront that ‘[b]ooks of criticism on the subject of Indian poetry in English have been much scarcer than the anthologies, although certain defining publications have appeared fitfully over

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the years’ (p. 8), Chaudhuri sets the stage for an anthology of critical works that performs multiple roles. Preeminently, it foregrounds a genealogy of poetry written by Indians in English from ‘the broad nineteenth century’ to the present (p. v). Different sections demarcate diverse phases of development: the famous Bombay group of Modernists are situated in ‘the meatiest section’ of the book which traces patterns and divergences in the period 1950–2000 (p. 13), while the substructure of publishers, publishing houses, and the periodical press which enabled the emergence of many of these poets, receives special attention in another section. After orienting the spotlight onto poets of the diaspora in the penultimate segment, the anthology, excitingly, concludes with pieces by contemporary poets who reflect on their practice and their peers, while providing a framework of critical commentary for emergent poetics.

The index of writers includes an impressive array: Arvind Krishna Mehrotra writes on Toru Dutt and ‘An Eurasian Poet’, while Amit Chaudhuri reads Nissim Ezekiel as a ‘poet of a minor literature’ and Peter D. McDonald contextualizes Mehrotra and ‘the interplay of languages’. Crossovers of form and content, author and subject, as in the instance of the McDonald piece on Mehrotra – the latter himself a contributor in the anthology – formally mirror ongoing dialogues within the community of Indian poets in English. The book underscores how these conversations are diachronic, occurring both in the present day and simultaneously travelling back in time to contact precursors, acknowledge influence and delineate a tradition. The raft of authors within the book also comprises well-known Indian poets like Jeet Thayil and Anjum Hasan, sharing space with scholars of the field like Anjali Nerlekar and Laetitia Zecchini.10 McDonald’s eponymous ‘interplay of languages’, moreover, features as an overarching theme spanning the various sections of the book,

which revisit the politics of writing poetry in English in a variety of contexts in precolonial and postcolonial India. Indeed, the phrase lays bare the frictions and productive tensions between English and regional languages as facets of the literary sphere greatly impacting craft and creative practice. If one of the major successes of Indian poetry in English has been to bring ‘new things and new connections into being’, especially by encouraging plural linguistic inflections in such poetry by multilingual writers, the anthology itself reflects the disruption of ‘self-enclosed worlds’ by ‘bringing new things and new connections into being’ (p. 274).

Translation, translatability and cultural sensibilities surrounding linguistic experimentation has always been located at the heart of debates regarding Anglophone Indian literature; the political question of writing poetry in English – particularly considering early writing in idioms and forms obviously in thrall to Eurocentric modes – has haunted generations of Indian poets. The History demonstrates an ongoing engagement with this question by showcasing fierce language debates which inexorably accompanied the evolution of Indian poetry in English. Poet R. Parthasarathy’s lament about the sense of entrapment created by the postcolonial condition, rendering his ‘tongue in English chains’, is vigorously contested by charting the emergence of the field which resourcefully embodies these dilemmas about language and identity to innovate new approaches to both poetry and the usage of English.11 Vivek Narayanan notes in ‘From the Language Question to the Question of Language: Three Recent Books of Indian Poetry in English’ that ‘the best of this new poetry’ maintains ‘the dual idea of language as both possibility and limit’ (p.408). As Lopamudra Basu points out in his contribution, many in the latest generations of Indian poets living across the world are doing so by writing in an English blended with the cadences of ‘the languages of diaspora’ (p. 389).

Although any reader interested in discovering more about the contexts and practices constituting the field could dip into the book at leisure and fish out a wealth of intriguing detail, the collection is replete with pieces that shine a light on hitherto obscured aspects of the history of Indian poetry, making it a scholar’s delight. Mary Ellis Gibson’s article illuminates the work of women poets in colonial India, while Ananda Lal and Rubana Huq recreate the trajectory of growth and operation of Writers Workshop, Calcutta, through a quasi-biographical lens, offering a rare perspective into P. Lal’s labours keeping the workshop alive. Lal and Huq’s article reveals little-known correspondences between different hubs of poetry in India in the 1960s and 1970s, dispelling, for example, the myth that ‘the Bombay poets had nothing to do with the [Writers] Workshop’ (p. 165). On the other hand, Jerry Pinto generates a short history of Clearing House, ‘a Poets’ Cooperative of the 1970s’, from a ‘blue Rexine bag’ bequeathed to him by Adil Jussawala, a significant poet from this cooperative (p. 177). Pinto’s article, like several others in the anthology, taps into half-remembered sources of knowledge about Indian poetry in English, to remedy ‘the absence of archives’ he has long ‘bewailed’ (p. 177), breathing life into moments of history once presumed lost.

In ‘Our Speaking English Voice: A Voice That Speaks for Us?’ poet Anjum Hasan maps her own relationship with the poets writing in English preceding her, whose writing echoed her own experiences, clearing a space, form and language for expression. In doing so, Hasan encapsulates continuities in themes that mark contemporary Indian poetry in English produced by a large transnational community, concurrently gesturing at current trends. Though the final article in the anthology, Hasan’s contribution acts as a transitional piece by allowing a glimpse at the rich and diverse kinds of Indian poetry being written in English today. Culminating where it does with the Hasan article, The History, by signaling at rather than including this diversity, underscores its biggest omission, addressed by Rosinka Chaudhuri in her introduction: ‘the absence of a myriad contemporary practitioners who form the matrix of
the scene of Indian poetry in English as it exists today’ (p. 15). This ‘open-ended conclusion’ to the anthology will hopefully herald more nuanced chronicling of the field (p. 15), especially developments in contemporary Indian poetry and poetics, continuing the excellent work done by an otherwise entirely satisfying collection of writings on the subject.

C. S. BHAGYA
Interview with Professor Rosinka Chaudhuri

Rosinka Chaudhuri is currently the Director and Professor of Cultural Studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC). She was the first Mellon Global South Professor (2017–18) at TORCH, Oxford. For this special feature, Chaudhuri spoke about the occluded intricacies of craft at work behind editing anthologies, referring, in particular, to her role as the editor of A History of Indian Poetry in English (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Whether it is the William Wordsworth quotation that poetry is ‘the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings […] recollected in tranquillity’, or the famously misattributed Hemingway decree to ‘write drunk, edit sober’, beliefs regarding the two-pronged process that constitutes writing have frequently highlighted the importance of painstakingly thought-out craft bolstering a solid and functional piece of writing. Producing new writing typically entails, as Jack Heffron puts it, ‘carving order from chaos’, in turn creating self-sufficient universes working according to forms of seen or unseen narrative logic.¹ Often side-stepped in discourses surrounding writing, albeit a closely related cousin to authorship, editing – especially when expressed as a curatorial role as with producing collections or anthologies – is an equally exacting job demanding associated forms of dexterous craftsmanship. For

Rosinka Chaudhuri, editor of *A History of Indian Poetry in English* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), the heft of the editorial process behind its production lay in both conceptually structuring the layout of the edition, and foregrounding the hitherto invisible, but tremendously rich, tradition of Indian poetry in English which has emerged and evolved from the nineteenth century in India.

Many of Chaudhuri’s concerns dictating the form of the edition are displayed in her expansive introduction to *A History*. Often the only place where editorial intentions or agendas are explicitly aired in collections of this sort, the introduction, for Chaudhuri, became a space wherein she sought ‘not just to provide a historical genealogy – which I did and was interested in doing – but to showcase this body of work to the world, since I was very conscious of the fact that this has not been done before. People haven’t accessed this material the way they should have in the past.’ In the process of bringing the edition together, Chaudhuri says that the presiding organising principle behind its formation was, somewhat paradoxically, her decision to allow its evolution on its own terms. ‘Above all the shaping of the edition was effected in the desire for it to be an organic work that responded to my own enthusiasms as an editor,’ she says. ‘Unless you do that, unless you follow the axiom “to thine own self be true”, I firmly believe you will not produce something that is quirky or interesting enough to last.’

Having initially considered co-editing the anthology with another editor in order to split work and distribute interests more evenly, Chaudhuri was dissuaded from the idea after conferring with other scholars and important figures in the field, especially poet and critic Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. Editing with another person can be smooth or onerous depending on the geographical location, mutual amicability and shared proclivities of the people working together. ‘I had already edited *The Indian Postcolonial: A Critical Reader* (Routledge, 2010) with Elleke Boehmer, which was a very different project with different concerns,’ says Chaudhuri. ‘Elleke and I worked well together as a team although we were located in two different continents.’ That project, however, for Chaudhuri,
operated on a wholly different set of conceptual premises from the current one, without any overt question of craft entering the picture. When CUP commissioned the project, Chaudhuri took it up predominantly because the edition was set to be the first comprehensive work of the kind on the subject. Of important critical predecessors, Chaudhuri knew of an earlier work by Bruce King, an American academic settled in Paris, who had already brought out a monograph on the subject titled *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (Oxford University Press, 1987), albeit using a selective approach. Chaudhuri herself has written on nineteenth-century Indian poetry from her first book onward: *Gentlemen Poets in Colonial Bengal: Emergent Nationalism and the Orientalist Project* (Seagull Books, 2002) spanned the nineteenth century covering Indian poets who wrote in English from 1828 (its year of inception coinciding with Derozio's first book of poetry in English), to Toru Dutt's posthumously published poems brought out in 1875, the latter being the first Indian woman to write poetry in English. Yet, she says, ‘There was no overarching narrative giving a historical perspective on everything that had happened in the subcontinent – in India – from the nineteenth century to the present day. Once you start thinking about it, you also begin to realise that this is not something one person can write in the form of a monograph. Because of what I knew about the corpus I was being asked to address, and because I thought it was a felt need that such a history should exist, I decided to take on the project offered by CUP.’

The initial stages of the ambitious project, which took about two or three years to complete, were elaborate and time-consuming. Although the project was commissioned, a proposal had to be preliminarily prepared and approved, as is *de rigueur* when a book project is inaugurated; subsequently, a Call for Papers was also circulated to kick-start the accretion of relevant pieces. The essays which came to finally constitute the book in its present form, says Chaudhuri, were gathered by a combination of methods, including screening responses to the CFP and soliciting contributions from the right people. The big question about who to approach regarding
contributions was resolved through ‘informal research, asking friends, poets and critics, and being referred to subject experts.’ She says, ‘it works through a system whereby you are recommended by somebody first, and word travels in the field through writers themselves, or via critics. You have to bet, of course, and use your own instincts about who might be the sort of people who would want to write for such a volume and best represent a particular area.’ But some of it happens on a more or less automatic basis, according to Chaudhuri. ‘Once you get the ball rolling and send it on its way, it gathers a momentum of its own.’

Although cognisant that such an undertaking usually involves relinquishing some degree of editorial autonomy to allow disparate elements to work together, allowing a holistic and multifaceted collection of pieces to coalesce, Chaudhuri did have a brief set of concerns she wanted tackled upfront. ‘I wanted not just to start from the nineteenth century and give it some prominence as it has been a much-neglected area, but also wanted to include print culture in a big way. I wanted the volume to explore publishing houses like Writer’s Workshop (Calcutta) and Clearing House (Bombay), and tell the story of how these poets got published in a culture that was inimical to Indian Poetry in English, by glancing at both independent small publishers of poetry and who published journals and how they survived.’

Though she focused on including these elements, Chaudhuri was dead set against a heavy-handed approach premised on tokenistic representation. Her instincts resonated with the editorial methodology of Amit Chaudhuri in The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature (Picador, 2001), which argues against imposing a forced representational mode on anthologies. ‘What we tend to do in India very often is that we swear by having the north and the south and the west and the east and the north east all included within such works. You cannot leave out any of these territories. And you also have to think about categories like gender and minority representation.’ She affirms, however, that some consideration of these factors is crucial, and A History did privilege the inclusion of works
representing minority communities and gender representation. ‘But this should manifest in an organic way,’ she insists. ‘I didn’t want to do a history of Indian poetry in English that would map everything in a reductively cartographic way, destroying the soul of the work. When you do things in this way there are bound to be gaps and silences, and some things may not get addressed,’ she acknowledges, ‘and people may take issue with it. But, as an editor, you need to be brave enough and be ready to take that flak.’

Despite its overt fashioning as a history, tracing a genealogy of writing does not solely entail a sequential, chronological ordering of texts emerging within and representing different periods in order to epitomise their social, political or stylistic preoccupations. Sourcing together works to form a coherent corpus necessarily involves negotiating the politics of canonisation: it requires treating any given agglomeration of writing as a historically formed body of work, while being sensitive to ongoing predilections, concerns and themes. ‘In some sense, a work that’s called A History of Indian Poetry in English has to address the major concerns,’ states Chaudhuri. ‘What is called a canon is something that is often put together by poets, critics and readers in relation to the past. Hence, a canon does not really form, or is much more nebulous, when it relates to contemporary times. That is why the section on contemporary poetry in the volume is such a short section,’ she explains. ‘It’s easier when texts have receded into the past, at which point one knows almost without contention the writers and texts you want to include from any given literary period.’

If canons are shaped as much by blatant or subtle political workings within different social contexts as by the work of time in testing the resilience of certain literary works over others, anthologies as cultural artefacts are equally temporally fixed. ‘Whatever work you do, you are doing for your own time,’ says Chaudhuri, ‘as a response to where you are, what the state of scholarship is at that moment. And it will inevitably date, you can’t possibly militate against that.’ In fact, the only thing that could militate against attrition over time, according to her, ‘is if you manage to produce something that speaks
to people across the ages. That, I sincerely believe, you can only do if you somehow manage to hit the core of the issue you are addressing.’ She points out that such works will inevitably be contextualised and historicised. ‘What will probably happen a hundred years later is that people will pick this book up and say, a hundred years ago this is what this editor did with this particular project, and this is how it was influenced by its time, and these are the ways in which the editor went against her own time.’ It will obviously be superseded by the next thing, she says in conclusion, but with quiet assurance that archives and libraries will perform the function of safeguarding the continued relevance of such projects. ‘Once a work is done, it’s done. That’s the great thing about it: it’s there,’ she says. ‘And if you manage to do something genuine, then, hopefully, it can help people see what you meant when you crafted it the way you did.’
Thinking 3D: Building the World from Page to Screen

GEORGINA WILSON

What’s the relationship between a botanist’s scribbled field-sketch of an interesting species of plant, the fine drawing she makes back in the study, the copperplate onto which the drawing is engraved, and the book in which the illustration ends up? Is there a teleology in which the first three are finished off or fixed by the latter? And what relationship do they all have to the original specimen? These are just some of the thought-provoking questions raised by Thinking 3D: an international, interdisciplinary and collaborative project stretching from Oxford to St Andrews, which asks how we have endeavoured throughout history to represent the world on the flat surface of the page.

Thinking 3D is the brainchild of Daryl Green, librarian of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Dr Laura Moretti, Senior Lecturer in Art History at St Andrews. The project was hatched on a train journey from London to St Andrews due to the pair’s long history of collaboration and recent groundbreaking research. It took shape around the slippery notion of dimensionality, or as Daryl Green explains, ‘how we communicate three dimensional ideas in a two dimensional form’ – whether that be on the page, in the codex, or ever-increasingly on a screen. Thinking 3D charts a journey through medieval manuscripts, via printed early modern book illustrations,
to the first photographs, and the new technologies of 3D printing and live CT scans: drawing on treasures not only from the Bodleian, but from a whole range of institutions including the Ashmolean Museum, the Museum of the History of Science, Modern Art Oxford and the Oxford Mathematical Institute.

At its heart is the inexhaustible wonder of Leonardo da Vinci. His drawings articulate ground-breaking concepts in anatomy, astronomy, architecture and geometry (the four co-ordinates which plot the terrain of Thinking 3D itself). But, as Daryl Green is keen to stress, some of Leonardo’s ideas did not see the light of day until the eighteenth century because they had never made it into print. Just as progress in intellectual and practical disciplines create new technologies, developments in technology open up pathways within and beyond disciplines. Leonardo will take a starring role in the ten-month Thinking 3D exhibition running at the Bodleian from March 2019: the year which fittingly marks the five-hundredth anniversary of his death. The exhibits stretch from medieval anatomy drawings – purposely simplified outlines which reveal not a fifteenth-century ‘inability’ to draw people, but a desire to clearly communicate the workings of the human body on the flat surface of the page – to a display which changes every ten weeks to showcase a current Oxford practitioner’s work in three dimensions. Here we might learn how geometry helps to fathom the depths of black holes, how in vivo imaging reveals the mechanisms of the heart with live CT scans, and even what goes on in mathematically-constructed and mind-boggling worlds of four or six dimensions.

The intellectual and artisanal skill required in the representing of ideas through dimensionality is itself a kind of ‘craft’. To collapse, expand and re-negotiate space in order to illustrate ‘real life’ plants, black holes, or human bodies is a kind of deceit as much as an illumination of ideas. Thinking 3D therefore carries with it the anxieties of representation that are inherent in the theme of this entire journal: the power of the maker, the possible ‘craftiness’ of craft. The historical and disciplinary range of expertise being channelled into the project demonstrates the intellectual sparks that
fly off the idea of ‘dimensionality’, taken in its barest form. Historians of science might consider the concept in terms of the sixteenth-century printed papery scientific instruments which co-ordinate the user within three-dimensional space. Mathematicians might be reminded of ‘dimensionality’ by the pop-up Euclidean geometry book which teaches geometry through physical interaction, whilst literary bibliographers might be drawn to how the seemingly smooth surface of paper – which obediently takes the ink of a writer’s pen or printing press – is revealed to have a bumpy and disruptive life of its own under the newly invented microscopes of the mid-seventeenth century. However we begin thinking about three-dimensionality, Thinking 3D draws connections beyond early modern books back into fifteenth-century manuscripts, forwards into nineteenth-century stereoscopic images and into the present day, provoking new questions beyond the comfort of our own disciplines and time periods.

Some of these questions include reassessing the disciplinary status of historical figures. Whilst Leonardo is a known polymath, the showcasing of some little-known prints by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) at the Ashmolean will frame the print-maker as a teacher of geometry and perspective, calling into question the usefulness of our own categories of knowledge as much as our assessment of this particular individual. Today’s technologies – including the ubiquity of the screen, with its pre-codex-like ‘scroll’ function, and the nostalgic return to materiality in the digital age made by possible by 3D printing – demonstrate the continuing pertinence and shifting nature of our use of dimensionality to convey and communicate new discoveries and invention.

Fittingly, Thinking 3D manifests in multiple forms across 2D and 3D spaces; the exhibitions and conference are supported by a glossy website ([https://www.thinking3d.ac.uk/](https://www.thinking3d.ac.uk/)) on which a ‘Book of the Week’ and an ‘Item in Focus’ make space for a punchy case-study with a dimension-based insight. The range of these articles’ expertise is further testimony to the wide-ranging disciplines and conversations charged up by Thinking 3D. These conversations will
take to the stage in the upcoming Byrne-Bussey Marconi talk from Dr Moretti and Daryl Green themselves at the Weston Library, in which the pair will tell the story of the project’s inception via some landmark texts which will be on display in the exhibition later in the year. 2019 promises a celebration not only of the inimitable mind of cultural giant Leonardo da Vinci, but of the pools of knowledge and curatorial treasures through which we are invited to peruse, scroll, stroll, click and flick.

*The Thinking 3D: Architecture conference will take place on 27–28 September 2019 at Worcester College, Oxford.*

Johan Remmelin, *A survey of the microcosme: or, The anatomy of the bodies of man and woman* (1695), which will be on display at the *Thinking 3D* Bodleian exhibition in 2019.
Notes on Contributors

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Call for responses

To our readers:

What kinds of thoughts, opinions, or arguments have the essays of our Craft issue stimulated? We welcome your responses, to be printed in our next issue. Please submit *constructive* pieces, in a form of your choice – be it epistolary, argumentative, or essayistic – and in less than three double spaced pages, or approximately 800 words. We are intrigued to learn how reading our work has affected your thinking, and to encourage a discursive continuity among ORE’s community of readers.