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More information about the course can be found at www.conted.ox.ac.uk

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**INTRODUCTION**

Interdisciplinarity challenges the boundaries of traditional academic thinking, makes connections, seeks patterns, traces influences, draws comparisons and brings new perspectives to old topics. It also questions the established ivory towers of humanities in which scholars shy away from gaining knowledge from other disciplines. It is liberating to be ‘allowed’ to study across different disciplines and this enables academic thinking in ways that were previously obstructed. TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities) and its equivalent in other universities are leading the way in sharing knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. Yet true interdisciplinary degree programmes remain scarce, in the UK at least, and although we will be the fifth cohort to graduate from the MSt. in Literature and Arts, we are still, to an extent, torchbearers.

In contrast to postgraduate programmes that offer study in a highly specialised field, MLA students run the risk of being the proverbial Jacks-of-all-Trades, Masters-of-None, flitting dilettanti-like across topics, time periods and disciplines. Our challenge is to use our greater breadth to bring together disparate areas of study. We have each brought to the course a different set of skills and specialist knowledge, historians working next to lawyers, art historians next to literary scholars, and it has been our privilege to learn from each other as well as from our inspirational course tutors.

This journal bears the fruit of interdisciplinary study. Twenty-two articles analysing a range of paintings, prints, poems, buildings, parks, songs, cartoons, novels, plays, sermons and more, from over five hundred years of British history, have given rise to a surprising number of common themes, enabling a wider perspective. The nature of academic study means that research is often conducted at a micro level, but our combined output is certainly greater than the sum of our parts.

In the end, academia is not just about studying in isolation: it is about exchange, discussion, different perspectives, and about personal connections. Going forward we will continue to benefit from the friendships and links we have forged on an academic level as well, continuing the discussions, still learning from each other. The MLA is about more than study, however. As Hogarth so aptly captured in his iconic print, a happy and fruitful society is one that makes time for wholesome leisure. And so, as the modern-day inhabitants of Beer Street, we leave it to the Reverend James Townley to reflect on the productivity-enhancing properties of that wheaten elixir:

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Labour and Art upheld by Thee
Successfully advance
We quaff Thy balmy Juice with Glee
And Water leave to France
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PART I

IMAGE AND REPRESENTATION
Representations of Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby

This article will focus on two representations of Lady Margaret Beaufort, King Henry VII’s mother. It will examine Bishop John Fisher’s *Mornyng Remembraunce*, delivered a few weeks after Lady Margaret’s death in 1509, which provides a representation from a close contemporary of hers. It will also look at Rowland Lockey’s portrait *Lady Margaret Beaufort at prayer*, painted c.1598. By assessing both the sermon and the portrait this article will look at different representations of Lady Margaret Beaufort.

This article will examine Fisher’s *Mornyng Remembraunce*¹ and Rowland Lockey’s portrait *Lady Margaret Beaufort at prayer* (figure 1). It will begin with a brief historical background that will help grasp a better picture of Lady Margaret’s life. This work intends to provide further understanding of her through both her funeral sermon (written and delivered by her friend and spiritual advisor) and through Lockey’s portrait, which is a copy of an earlier work and was painted several decades after her death. This article will consider that although her sermon gives an overall representation of her it is biased and just like the portrait, it only depicts some aspects of her life.

Lady Margaret Beaufort was not just Henry VII’s mother, she was also a very accomplished, intelligent yet complex woman. She was born on 31 May 1443 to John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset and Margaret Beauchamp of Bletsoe. After her father’s death in 1444, her wardship and marriage was given to William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk who, in a desperate attempt to secure his son’s position married him to Margaret in 1450 because she was a rich and sole heiress. However, this marriage was later dissolved and her wardship was transferred to the king’s half-brothers, Jasper and Edmund Tudor.² She was married to Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, but the marriage was short-lived as he died in 1456 leaving a twelve-year-old Margaret six months pregnant. Henry Tudor was born at Pembroke Castle on 28 January 1457 and the birth was a difficult one leaving Margaret with permanent physical damage.

She was not able to conceive more children after this. She soon remarried Sir Henry Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham’s second son. Margaret took an active role in the negotiations of this marriage. Buckingham was a very powerful magnate and by marrying Stafford Margaret knew she could get not only the necessary protection for herself and her son but also avoid having a husband imposed on her.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Ibid. pp.39-40.
The Staffords supported the Lancastrians but when Edward IV ascended the throne in 1461, Sir Henry switched alliances and by doing this protected Margaret’s estates. However, she was separated from her son and his wardship and marriage was given to William Lord Herbert as a reward for the capture of Pembroke Castle. But when Edward IV regained the throne Stafford had been once more by his side, safeguarding both his wife’s and his own interests again. Unfortunately, Margaret was not able to protect her son as he was a Lancaster and Henry Tudor had to flee into a long exile. After Stafford’s death in 1471, Margaret married Thomas Lord Stanley. This marriage was convenient for both as she gained influence and protection in the Yorkist court and he obtained life-interest in her estates and also amplified his territorial influence. This marriage brought her closer to the Woodville family and this connection would prove fruitful in the future. Throughout the Wars of the Roses she showed her political savviness, survival skills and also her complete devotion to her son, evidenced in her participation of conspiracies to overthrow King Richard III and place her son on the throne instead.

Bishop John Fisher first met Lady Margaret Beaufort at court at Greenwich in 1494. At the time he was serving as Senior Proctor at Cambridge University. After this meeting he joined her service and eventually became her spiritual advisor. He was a theologian and a pastor and throughout his life the university was a vital part of him as it gave him a platform for patronage and influence. Interestingly, Fisher’s works were usually written or published at the instance of others rather than by his own initiative. However, Lady Margaret’s funeral sermon could have been the exception because they were close and he had a high opinion of her. The Mornynge Remembraunce was delivered in July 1509 and followed the format of initially praising the dead person, then expressing compassion for the dead person, and finally consolation for the ones left behind. Fisher skilfully integrated this format with the chosen scriptural text, which was ‘a conversation between Christ and Martha during the episode of the raising of Lazarus’ comparing Lady Margaret with the ‘blessyd woman Martha.’ Even though Fisher greatly concentrates on Lady Margaret’s spiritual qualities including her charities, her piety, and self-discipline, he also gives a detailed account of her noble birth and royal lineage, her character, and marriage.

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4 Ibid. p.41.
5 Ibid. p.57-58
6 Ibid
7 Ibid. pp.58-59.
13 Ibid. pp.41-42.
Fisher’s admiration for Lady Margaret comes across in the sermon as he greatly extolls her life. Additionally, the tone of the sermon was one of hope and resurrection.15

Rowland Lockey’s portrait *Lady Margaret Beaufort at prayer* is currently at St John’s College, University of Cambridge. Rowland Lockey (1565/7 – 1616) was an English goldsmith and painter. He did an eight-year apprenticeship under Nicholas Hilliard. One of his most well known paintings was *The Family of Sir Thomas More* based on Holbein the younger’s painting. The commissioning of this type of painting during this time was common as it was an ancestor-obsessed period.16

*Lady Margaret Beaufort at prayer* is a donor portrait that was presented to St John’s College by Julius Clippersby in 1598.17 Unfortunately there is no information as to why Julius Clippersby donated the portrait to the college. Furthermore, there is also conflicting information regarding the donor as Art UK states that Julius Clippersby donated it whereas in *Artists of the Tudor Court* by Roy Strong states that Juliana Clippersby or Clipesby donated it. This article will use the information given in Art UK as St John’s College also confirmed this information. It is a full-length memorial painting planned for public display. It depicts Lady Margaret kneeling in prayer wearing her vowess or widow attire.18 Her royal rank is clearly emphasized as she is underneath a canopy, which is richly embroidered with a Tudor Rose above her head and on the back her personal coat of arms and her badge, the Beaufort Portcullis, are seen. Moreover, the Beaufort Portcullis is seen in the stained glass window as well as throughout the dark cloth surrounding the room. Thus, due to the decoration displayed it seems she is at one of her private chapels.19 By showing Lady Margaret in this intimate setting rather than the usual landscape or ecclesiastical setting shows a departure of the usual depiction of donor paintings from the late fifteenth century.20

Hepburn argues that it is possible to see Lockey’s portrait as a reliable copy of an earlier painting done during Lady Margaret’s lifetime.21 Even though in the portrait Lady Margaret is seen wearing a widow or vowess attire, her hood has a fashionable gable shape at the front, similar to those shown in portraits of Elizabeth of York,22 (figure 2), and her barbe is seen worn over the chin, as according to her rank.23 The likeness and detail of her neckwear and hood can be compared with earlier surviving representations such as her tomb in Westminster Abbey, (figure 3).

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21 Ibid, pp.126-129.
22 Ibid.
Figure 2. Unknown artist, *Elizabeth of York*, late 16th century, based on a work of c.1500. Oil on panel, 565 mm x 416 mm. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure 3. Pietro Torrigiano, *Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond*, c.1526. Tomb effigy, marble and bronze, 2.30 m x 1.20 m x 1.55 m. © The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey.
The painter Meynart Weyck drew the design and gave one copy to the sculptor Pietro Torrigiano who was in charge of producing the gilt-bronze tomb effigy. Weyck was commissioned to draw a picture and image as Torrigiano needed a likeness and Weyck had supposedly already painted her.  

Another surviving representation is the portrait published by Edward Harding in 1801 (figure 4). Unfortunately there is no information about the artist of this portrait. Moreover, Lockey’s portrait is very similar to Harding’s portrait and Lucas Horenbout’s miniature c.1530, not only in the likeness of her features but also in the details of her hood, including the ‘tippet’, which is the narrow strip of cloth that hangs at the back of the hood. Lockey’s portrait is most certainly a copy of an earlier anonymous work, probably the one mentioned in Edward VI’s Royal Collection in 1549-1550.

25 For Horenbout’s miniature see Hepburn, ‘The portraiture of Margaret Beaufort’, p.124.
Lockey’s portrait depicts Lady Margaret’s royal rank whilst at the same time shows another important aspect of her life, that of a devoutly religious person. Although she seems to be wearing a ‘simple’ attire it can be seen that it is made of rich cloths. Additionally she is wearing three rings which are clearly displayed, which, at that time only the wealthy or royals were able to afford. The rings had different uses including ‘sign of affluence and rank; used as a seal; seen as a token of love; or a mark of religious faith.’27 Interestingly, the canopy gold cloth and that covering the prayer-desk in front of her are richly embroidered with a pattern of foliage woven into it in black thread, which seems to have been out of style after c.1530.28 Unfortunately, it is not possible to know if Meynart Wewyck painted the portrait belonging to the Royal Collection mentioned in Edward VI’s inventory, and which it is thought could have been the one used by Lockey to paint his portrait. Moreover, there is no information on whether the half-length formats of Lady Margaret’s portraits were done during her lifetime or after her death. The amount of Lady Margaret’s portraiture as a whole can be seen as a good example of the use of a single image over a period of nearly a century, to ‘serve different functions in different contexts in different artistic media.’29

Lady Margaret was a very religious person and as seen in the portrait she is wearing a religious attire and kneeling in prayer with her book of hours in front of her placed on a richly cloth cushion. In the funeral sermon, Fisher described her as, ‘Mercyfull also and pyteous she was unto such as was grevyed and wrongfully troubled, and to them that were in Poverty, or sekeness, or ony other mysery … To God and to the Chirche full obedient.’30 During the late fifteenth century pious people were confessing more than once a year, especially those who had spiritual guides, as they were adopting the confessional as a manner of spiritual guidance.31 Similarly, people used to receive the Host once a year, yet Lady Margaret did so every month, which was perceived as a something extraordinary.32 Furthermore, through her patronage Lady Margaret helped develop the cult of the Holy Name of Jesus, and eventually establishing it as a feast,33 ‘she that ordeyned two contynuall Reders in both the Unyversytyes to teche the Holy Dyvynyte of Jhesu; she that ordeyned Prechers perpetuall, to publish the Doctrine and faythe of Chryste Jhesu.’34

Her devotion to be a good Christian included attending several masses each day kneeling down and her age or pain did not deter her from doing so, ‘dayly herde four or five Masses upon her knees … though all this long time her knelynge was so paynful, and so paynful that many tymes it caused in her backe payne and disease.’35

28 Hepburn, ‘The portraiture of Margaret Beaufort’, p.129.
32 Ibid. p.93.
33 Ibid. 284.
34 Fisher, Baker, Hymers, The funeral sermon of Margaret, countess of Richmond and Derby, mother to King Henry VII, p.129.
Therefore, due to her known devotion, it is not surprising that she should be portrayed in that manner in the portrait. Bishop also emphasises her charity towards those most in need, ‘Poore folks to the nombre of twelve she dayly and nyghtly kepte in her House, Gyvynge them lodynge, mete and drynke and clothynge … and mynystrynge unto them with hero owne hands.’ Another important aspect of her life depicted in both artefacts is the fact that she took the vow of chastity during her husband’s lifetime, as mentioned by Fisher in the sermon, ‘As for chastite … yet in her husband’s dayes, long time before that he deyede, she opteyned of him licence, and promysed to lyve chaste.’ However, the real motives of why she decided to take this step whilst her husband was still alive are not very clear because there were some like Fisher who attributed this to her piety, whilst others thought it could have been to strengthen her relationship with her son. Jones and Underwood argue that it is important to look at her piety through her private motivations and her social duty. Although not a queen, Lady Margaret was the King’s mother and she had an influential and constant presence at court. Christine de Pizan stated that a queen’s piety should be apparent in the charity she was involved in, for instance, gifting the sick and poor, going on pilgrimages, or acting as a mediator between the king and his subjects. In many respects Lady Margaret acted as the queen and as seen from her sermon she fulfilled some of the expected duties of a queen. In some ways her piety led to her interest in the education system of England because she was interested in spreading the Christian doctrine.

Her piety and her love of books, important aspects of her life, are depicted in both Lockey’s portrait and her funeral sermon, ‘Right studious she was in Bokes, which she had in grete number, both in Englysh and in Frenshe.’ Although, apart from her piety and love of books, her interest in the education system and spreading of the Christian Doctrine could have been influenced to an extent by Fisher who not only had close links to Cambridge but as a clergy man was very interested in spreading the Doctrine. Lady Margaret founded Christ’s and St John’s Colleges at Cambridge, translated devotional treatises from French, established lectureships in both Oxford and Cambridge (still ongoing), and was patron to printers, artists and to the clergy. During the sixteenth century, portraits of women reading depicted them in their different social roles, illustrating the diverse meanings reading had for these women, for instance, showing their responsibility, or their attitudes of frivolity or piety. Furthermore, the majority of women in the portraits belonged to the elite. In Lockey’s portrait Lady Margaret is seen kneeling yet surrounded by royal emblems,
thus stressing her royal rank, with a book of hours placed prominently in front of her. By showing her reading a book of hours her piety is expressed whilst at the same time illuminating the centrality of the types of books women were reading at the time.\textsuperscript{45} Christine de Pizan argued in \textit{The Book of the Three Virtues} that a lady needed to have an appropriate and good education in order to be able to fulfil her responsibilities.\textsuperscript{46} However, defining what constituted a good and appropriate education as well as how they achieved it can be challenging because records of aristocratic education from late medieval England are limited. However, education was linked to social preservation of the social structure, and aristocratic and gentry women most likely knew how to read.\textsuperscript{47}

Lady Margaret was a Royal Mother as well as an independent woman and she was able to balance these two aspects of her life quite remarkably. Her royal status is displayed both in the portrait as in the sermon. Interestingly, Fisher refers to her throughout the sermon as a ‘noble Prynces’, although he does acknowledge at the beginning that she is a countess. Lady Margaret was very conscious of stressing her royal rank and this can be observed when she decided to change her signature from ‘M Richmond’ to ‘Margaret R’. This change was very ambiguous and left unclear whether the ‘R’ meant Richmond or Regina.\textsuperscript{48} It is unknown whereas this change in her signature was deliberate or not. When Henry VII came to the throne he named her \textit{femme sole} through an Act of Parliament, with both economic and judicial power making her an independent, albeit still married woman. This was very important because it created a precedent for married English noblewomen.\textsuperscript{49} This gave her power to administer her own estates of which Fisher extolls her fairness in administering justice, ‘her owne housholde with mervaylous dylygence and wysedome this noble Prynces ordered … provided men lerned … to admynyster ryght and justyce to every party.’\textsuperscript{50} Furthermore, the fact that she took the vow of chastity in 1499 whilst her husband was still alive helped her gain more independence. By this time Stanley’s position within the royal family had started to diminish and after she took the vow he was welcomed at her home and allocated his own rooms but was treated as a friend and not a spouse.\textsuperscript{51}

Lady Margaret led a complex life, similar to some of her contemporaries, where there was a mixture of duties and rights.\textsuperscript{52} She always put her son’s best interests first even if that meant that he could not be by her side.\textsuperscript{53} A new dynasty was bound

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. pp.119-133.
\textsuperscript{48} Jones, Underwood, \textit{The King’s mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby}, p.86.
\textsuperscript{49} Beaufort, Roper, Basset, Khanna, Thomas, Erasmus, More, (2000) \textit{Early Tudor translators: Margaret Beaufort, Margaret More Roper, and Mary Basset}, p.ix.
\textsuperscript{50} Fisher, Baker, Hymers, \textit{The funeral sermon of Margaret, countess of Richmond and Derby, mother to King Henry VII}, p.116.
\textsuperscript{52} Jones, Underwood, \textit{The King’s mother}, p.171.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. p.58.
to encounter challenges and Lady Margaret was instrumental in helping strengthen
her son’s reign. As seen in the portrait, the amount of royal emblems as well as the
piety could be considered a very good propaganda effort, as it was sending the
message that not only the Tudors had a ‘rightful’ claim to the throne but that they
were pious people, obeying God’s will. And through the sermon, Fisher talked not
only about her immense piety but equally emphasized her royal rank from her direct
lineage from King Edward III as well as being King Henry VII’s mother and King
Henry VIII grandmother. Bishop Fisher had a high opinion of Lady Margaret,
including her humanity, which comes across the quote below taken from a segment
of her funeral sermon. In addition, as a clergyman he valued her monastic life and
perceived this as a virtue that needed to be extolled, and by providing a detailed list
of everyone that would be affected by her death, he gave a clear portrayal of the reach
of her patronage, influence, and great impact she made in so many people’s lives.
For instance, it is interesting how he refers to her as a ‘moder’ to the students of both
universities as though her role of Royal Mother extended to them by nurturing and
guiding them through her patronage and interest in education and spreading of the
Christian doctrine.

All Englonde for her dethe had cause of wepynge. The poore Creatures
that were wonte to receive her Almes, to whome she was always pyteous
and mercyfull; the Studyentes of both the Unyversytees, to whome she
was a Moder; all the Learned Men of Englonde, to whome she was a veray
Patroness; all the vertuous and devoute persone, to whom she was a lovynge
Syster; all the good relygyous Men and Women, whom she so often was
wonted to vysyte and conforte; all good Preests and Clercks, to whom she
was a true defendresse; all the Noblemen and Women, to whom she was a
Myrroure and Exampler of honoure; all the comyn people of this Realme,
for whom she was in theyr causes a comyn Medyatryce, and toke right grete
displeasure for them; and generally the hole Realme hath cause to complayne
and to morne her dethe.

Although the sermon provides a detailed account of her life and good deeds it
overlooks an important aspect of her life such as her political role not only through
the Wars of the Roses but also after her son’s ascension to the throne. Interestingly,
the sermon equally denied her avarice, which was well documented at the time.
This document gives an overall representation of Lady Margaret but it is biased and
just like the portrait, it only depicts some aspects of her life. The bias in the sermon
could be attributed to Fisher’s proximity to her and wanting to present the best image
as he had a high opinion of her. However, it is also important to consider that after
her death, and per her will, Fisher still had to fulfil her planned foundation of St

55 Ibid. p.121.
56 See Jones, Underwood, The King’s mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, p.82; Crawford,
John’s College at Cambridge and securing the college’s future. Moreover Fisher, being seasoned in court life, understood the importance of being on good terms with Henry VIII if he wanted to complete this goal. This could have been one of the reasons why Fisher decided to focus on her spiritual life and patronage and not include her political role.

Both artefacts show her royal rank, piety and love of books. Yet, due to the medium, the sermon allows the possibility to provide more information about Lady Margaret than the portrait does. However, the portrait does show her apparent true likeness and even though she is kneeling and at prayer she is fearlessly looking up, displaying her strength. Similarly, the sermon shows her strength through the description of the tribulations she endured during her lifetime highlighting the fact that she did not give up and continued fighting for what she believed was rightfully hers and her family’s. Likewise the sermon mentions her patronage of universities, which as mentioned earlier was another important aspect of her life. And through this patronage she was able to establish, probably more than any other medieval queen, her influence on future generations. In short, these artefacts can be considered to a certain extent accurate representations of Lady Margaret Beaufort but both have limitations and even though they are helpful to get a better understanding of her they do not show the whole picture of who she was.

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New wine in old bottles: A comparison between *The Boxley Rood of Grace*, and John Soane's *Monk’s Parlour and Cell and Monk’s Yard*, with reference to religious symbolism in material culture at the time of the Dissolution, and in the Romantic Era

This article compares and contrasts the sixteenth-century miraculous crucifix *The Boxley Rood of Grace*, and the architect John Soane's nineteenth century creations, the *Monk’s Parlour and Cell* and *Monk’s Yard*, which he built in his home at 12-14 Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Both the Rood as an object, and the *Monk’s Parlour* and *Yard*, as architectural novelty, are conduits for religious symbolism, and this article will examine how that symbolism was represented and treated at the time of the Dissolution, and in the Romantic Era.

In 1538, when *The Boxley Rood of Grace*, a miraculous crucifix, was condemned in a fiery sermon by the Bishop of Rochester, and then cut to pieces and burnt, a potent symbol of the old religion was destroyed. In 1824 Sir John Soane designed and built a *Monk’s Parlour and Cell* in the basement of his townhouse at 12-14 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, looking out into a *Monk’s Yard*, where he built the ruins of a fictitious abbey in the courtyard, as a satire on the nation’s growing taste for the Gothic.

*The Boxley Rood* was a victim of the widespread iconoclasm of the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536-40. On the eve of the Henrician Reformation England’s religious houses were deeply embedded in the fabric of society - the country was home to approximately 800, including monasteries, nunneries and friaries, housing different religious orders, and home to 7,500 men and 1,800 women. The 1534 Act of Supremacy saw Henry VIII not only declare himself Supreme Head of the Church of England but give himself the power to ‘visit, repress…amend all…error, heresies, abuses…’ within the Church. Henry, with Cromwell as his vice-gerent in spirituals, thus had the power to dictate religious belief and practice. Cromwell’s visitations and *Valor Ecclesiasticus* saw the implementation of the reformist Protestant agenda with the systematic destruction of the material culture of Catholic worship; widespread destruction of reliquaries, shrines and pilgrimage sites were commonplace. As part

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of their propaganda machine, and to ridicule and discredit both the monks and the sanctity of the shrine, Cromwell and his commissioners made a point of exposing formerly venerated images as fraudulent, and the exposé of *The Rood of Boxley* in 1538 was part of a series of ‘set-piece’ exposés.³ Also known as *The Rood of Grace*,⁴ the Boxley Rood was a crucifix with the body of Christ supposedly imbued with the miraculous gift of speech and movement. It was proved to be a fake by Geoffrey Chamber, the commissioner charged with the dissolution of the Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Boxley, an institution founded by William of Ypres on 28th October 1146. Chamber wrote to Cromwell in 1538 describing the system of levers and pulleys used to operate the mechanism before taking it to Maidstone on market day to show it as a falsity to crowds there, before being taken to London and destroyed.

By contrast the *Monk’s Parlour and Cell* and the *Monk’s Yard* still stand to this day in what is now The Sir John Soane’s Museum at numbers 12-14 Lincoln’s Inn Fields in London. The museum comprises three town houses extended into each other and lived in at various times in his life by Sir John Soane (1753-1837), a highly innovative English architect, collector and educator. Soane bequeathed his house at No. 12 and his house and museum and its contents at No. 13, to the British nation in 1833. On his death in 1837 the house at No. 14 was sold but was subsequently bought back by the museum trust in 1996; all three buildings are now the property of the Sir John Soane’s Museum.⁵

Figures 1 show plans of the basement of No. 12-14 Lincoln’s Inn Fields c.2017, where the *Monk’s Parlour; Cell* and *Yard* are situated.

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Curators since the 1990s have endeavoured to preserve the museum as far as possible in the state Soane intended. Designed as a satire on the nation’s growing taste for the Gothic, Soane created the *Monk’s Parlour and Cell*, a suite of rooms for the imaginary monk Padre Giovanni or Father John, a satirical alter-ego of Soane’s - in the basement of the house looking out into the *Monk’s Yard*, where he created the ruins of a fictitious abbey.

Soane himself was not particularly interested in religious beliefs, worship or theology. His genius lay in his manipulation of interior spaces. He used his architectural prowess to create within the preserved and restored interiors and exteriors of numbers 12-14, a ‘poem of architecture’\(^6\); the different rooms showcase different architectural styles. In the first published guidebook to the Museum, written by Soane’s friend and antiquarian John Britton in 1827 and entitled, *The Union of Sculpture, Architecture and Painting*, Soane’s endeavour in the houses and museum is described as the wish ‘to produce a succession of rich, varied and striking architectural scenery.’\(^7\) *The Monk’s Parlour and Cell* and *Monk’s Yard* were designed to be a part of this scenery, and the medieval religious style of architecture in these rooms is merely one small

\(^6\) Various Anonymous Contributors, *A Short Guide*, p.2

\(^7\) J. Britton, *The Union of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting*, (London, 1827), p.6
stanza of an architectural poem. Religious symbolism is jumbled with other styles: the religious is given a ‘cell’ in a series of substantial townhouses. This implies the gentle insignificance of religious medievalism in the face of other styles; the domination of the classical is evident in the museum, with its numerous classical models and the central domed structure in the breakfast room. The Monk’s rooms and yard are essentially a novelty, which Soane designed to produce ‘the most powerful sensations in the mind of the admires of the piety of our forefathers who raised such structures for the worship of the Almighty’\(^8\) Piety here is referenced with a sense of nostalgia, it belongs to ‘our forefathers’, not to us, and is described as an antiquated notion i.e. Soane is not building for the worship of the Almighty.

Figure 3. The Monk’s Yard at No. 14 Lincoln’s Inn Fields

*The Boxley Rood* belongs to that earlier, more pious age. Before its violent fall from grace, it was originally considered to be a holy object. Pilgrims would travel to Boxley in Kent to view it, and marvel at its miraculous properties. There are records of gifts to the shrine; in 1387 Lord Poyning’s will references Boxley; and the Abbey housed important visitors as late as 1518, when the papal legate Cardinal Campeggio stayed there.\(^9\) Such was the object’s importance that the Abbey which housed it, St Mary The Virgin,


began to refer to itself from 1412, as The Abbey of the Rood of Grace. Writing to Wolsey about accusations of abuses at the Abbey, Archbishop Warham referred to the Rood as ‘much sought after by visitors ...from all parts of the realm’ and to the Abbey as ‘so holy a place where so many miracles be showed.’ The Rood’s purpose was to elicit shock and awe in its audience, and to inspire musing on the miraculous. Its status as a shrine and its ability to elevate the Abbey into a place of pilgrimage, shows the power of its original religious symbolism. By contrast, in Soane’s rooms, the gentle humour of creating a monk’s retreat for his alter-ego Padre Giovani breaks the religious potency of the medieval religious symbolism. In his *Descriptions of the House and Residence on the North Side of Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields: The Residence of Sir John Soane* (London, 1836), Soane himself warns the visitor not to take the monk’s suite too seriously. Answering the question of who the monk may have been he uses the quote ‘Dulce est desipere loco/ It is pleasant to be nonsensical in due place’, alluding to the fact that the monk is his own slightly strange nostalgic creation. Soane also indicates that architecturally the medieval is a step back into a period that will never again be relevant; the rooms are tucked away in the basement, while the Picture Gallery room above displays his designs for the classical. This suggests that the classical remains relevant, while the Gothic and the religious symbolism of the medieval era belong in the past.

Mockery plays its part in the story of the *Boxley Rood*, but it was brutal rather than gentle. When Geoffrey Chamber, the Cromwellian agent charged with the destruction of Boxley Abbey, discovered the Rood, it became a symbol of the ‘falsity’ of the Catholic faith. Chamber wrote to Cromwell on 7 February, 1538, claiming he found in the Rood, an object ‘which heretofore hath been held in great veneration by the people’, a series of old wires and rotten sticks in the back which controlled the moving eyes and mouth, of which the monks denied any prior knowledge. Due to the fact that the object had been venerated by the people, and that the abbey had been a pilgrimage site, Chamber, on the advice of other commissioners, ‘...did convey the said image unto Maydston... (and) did show it openly unto all the people...to see the false craft.’ Chamber reports the reaction from the crowd was such that they ‘had the matter in wondrous detestation and hatred so that if the monastery had to be defaced again they would pluck it down or burn it.’ This source details the outrage of the people at having been hoodwinked. In the only source detailing the Rood’s origins, however, the mechanical elements of the Rood were supposedly common knowledge. In his *Perambulations of Kent* (1570), the local historian William Lambarde records the

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11 Houses of Cistercian Monks

12 Ibid.

13 A. Thomas (ed.), *Complete Description*, p.41

14 Cave Browne, *History of Boxley Parish*, p.60

15 Houses of Cistercian Monks pp.153-55

16 Cave Browne, *History of Boxley Parish*, p.60

17 Ibid.
tale of the Rood’s origin, gathered from local oral sources. Lambarde claims the local people ‘to their everlasting reproach, shame and confusion’, told him that the Rood was made by an English carpenter who was imprisoned in France. On his return to England while carrying the Rood on his horse’s back, the horse bolted, and pitched up at Boxley Abbey where it refused to move until the Rood had been unloaded and positioned in the ground on the spot where its shrine subsequently stood. Lambarde implies then that the real origin of the Rood was common knowledge, and no historian to date has found an alternative ‘miraculous’ tale of its origin – perhaps its origins were deliberately shrouded in mystery. In any event Chamber’s reported outrage of the people was clearly not sufficient to discredit the Rood; it was taken to London where the Bishop of Rochester preached a sermon on it, before overseeing it being publicly cut to pieces and then burned. The Rood was used as a part of reformist propaganda - its falsity was used to discredit monastic institutions, and its display, ridicule and destruction were a demonstration of government power. Proved falsity in such a potently religious symbol was considered a disgrace, and brought shame on those who presented it as genuine.

By contrast the Monk’s Parlour and Cell and Monk’s Yard glory in their use of falsehood, but also have a complex intertwining of the real and the fake. Genuine historical fragments and objects as well as contemporary creations juxtapose, until the visitor does not know which is which. The large window in the Monk’s Parlour is made up of an elaborate collection of Flemish stained glass, (sixteenth and seventeenth century) pieces designed as genuine religious decorations which would have contributed to the material culture of worship, put together with eighteenth century stained glass. All around on the walls of the Parlour are gothic-style casts, many are neo-gothic plaster casts which may have come from designs for neo-gothic buildings, but are mixed with genuine pieces from Henry VII’s chapel at Westminster Abbey.

The fictitious abbey ruins in the Monk’s Yard include two arches which were originally window openings in the old House of Lords, a thirteenth century building demolished in 1822 when Soane built his Royal Gallery. Other pieces in the courtyard are from the fourteenth century St Stephen’s Chapel, Westminster, and were acquired in 1800 while Soane was working as architect to the Office of Works. These pieces come from the destruction of the old, and together form something new that contain elements of the original; a pastiche on the medieval is created where religious symbols are romanticised, and a form of romantic idealism remains. The fashion for the creation of Follies in country house gardens and the eighteenth and nineteenth century fascination with ruins is being almost adhered to, but typically of Soane he

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18 Ibid. p.47
19 King, ‘Shrines and Pilgrimages Before the Reformation’
21 Ibid. p.54
22 A. Thomas (ed.), Complete Description, p.44
23 Ibid. p.45
creates outside of the popular imagination, for his use of real medieval pieces ensures he transcends fashion. Both the Monk’s rooms and the Boxley Rood can be seen in one sense to be masquerading as the genuine article; the Rood was displayed as a miraculous object, and Soane’s attention to medieval detail in his collection of rooms and his creation of the myth of Padre Giovani suggest reality. But both are fake: the Rood was debunked as a machine, and we know Soane built his ‘medieval’ rooms and ruin in 1824.

The restricted space, dark colours and stained glass were intended to simulate a sensation of melancholy and claustrophobia, and the rooms are theatrical in their own right, as well as being part of the architectural theatricality of the museum as a whole. The creation of a sense of theatre for fun, variety, to flex creative muscles and to gently mock the Gothic, starkly contrasts with the Boxley Rood’s violent destruction in the light of its own proved mechanical theatricality, and the theatricality of that public destruction. Soane’s Monk’s Parlour and Cell celebrate the wonder of the material culture of medieval worship, using statues, grotesques, stained glass, whereas the Rood began life as an object of genuine veneration, as well as to thrill and surprise, but its deception led to its destruction.
The choice of Padre Giovani, a monk, for an alter ego and the subsequent creation of a home for him suggests Soane believed there was a place for self-imposed isolation, and he often referred to himself as a ‘solitary hermit’24 after the death of his wife Eliza in 1815. However the melancholy is mixed with humour – in the Monk’s Yard Soane built an elaborate grave for Padre Giovani, including a section for his faithful dog Fanny, which has a headstone bearing the legend, ‘Alas Poor Fanny!’25 Similarly the courtyard was paved with bottle tops and bottoms to create a pavement, causing a friend of Soane’s to wonder how a holy monk could have drunk so many bottles of wine.26 Many of his friends spent happy hours with him taking tea in the parlour, and evidently it was room he enjoyed showing off and hosting in.27 The reason behind the creation of the Monk’s rooms had elements of the deeply personal; they were created in his home, but were later shared with friends and then in Soane’s own lifetime with the public who visited the museum. We have no hard evidence as to who created the Boxley Rood, but its one origin story lists it as a fake made by a carpenter to earn money or to show skill, suggesting the object was conceived out of greed or vanity. The idea that a religious symbol could be manipulated by monks to earn money was part of Cromwell’s strategy to ridicule and discredit both the monks and the sanctity of the shrine, thus attempting to justify the closure of the monasteries.

The Boxley Rood of Grace was in its time believed to be the genuine miraculous article in an age of religious belief, but Soanes’s Monk’s Parlour, Cell and Yard were not part of a religious revival but of an artistic and aesthetic movement. Soane’s use of religious symbolism and the medieval was not, like Baroque, a counter reformation revival, but a folly, a matter of cultural interest divorced from original religious meaning. The Boxley Rood was used by the Thomas Cromwell’s regime as the encapsulation, in an object, of the falsehoods which the monks relied on to fool laymen, and its debunking was part of a strategy to discredit monastic institutions and the Catholic faith; it became a tool of government propaganda. Soane’s designs addressed a public fad for the Gothic, but his creation of rooms to house his alter ego, Padre Giovanni, was also deeply personal. The destruction of the Boxley Rood was a potent symbol of governmental power, but Soane’s rooms have outlived him, and continue to encourage the imagination of the public.

26 Dorey, ‘Death and Memory’ p. 15
27 Various Anonymous Contributors, A Short Guide, p.14
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Figure 2: The Monk’s Parlour at No. 14 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, https://assortedscribbles.wordpress.com/2013/08/30/5-discoveries-at-the-sir-john-soanes-museum/ [Accessed: January 2017]


JEMIMA HUBBERSTYE

Given a free rein? Representations of power in the stables at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, and John Wootton’s Sir Robert Walpole with his Hunter and Groom

When Sir Robert Walpole first rose to political power from humble origins, he had much to prove to the world. In order to consolidate his position as Prime Minister against the backdrop of the new Hanoverian dynasty, Walpole capitalised on extravagant displays of power, impressing political peers and local squires alike by inviting them for entertainment and hunting at his estate at Houghton Hall, Norfolk. This was hardly coincidental: although relatively unexplored in scholarship, historically, horses served as vehicles to showcase a man’s elite social standing and ability to govern. However, it was also important for Walpole to recognise the limits of his power in order to demonstrate that he was no threat to the monarchy. This study examines the stable architecture at Houghton Hall and the equestrian portrait of Walpole by John Wootton (1726) in order to demonstrate the extent to which equestrian representations could function as a metaphor for both power and submission, which is particularly pertinent when applied to the hierarchical relations between Prime Minister and King.

Writing to the Prince of Wales on July 14, 1731, Lord Hervey would remark that Sir Robert Walpole’s Houghton Hall in Norfolk was a paradigm of ‘taste, expense, state and parade.’¹ This comment in itself is perhaps unsurprising – country houses, after all, have always been about display, founded and embellished as part of a conscious mission to establish a dynastic ‘line’.² However, what makes this comment so interesting in Walpole’s case is that as the first Prime Minister, Walpole was essentially a commoner who had risen to power. Satirists of the day delighted in deriding his flagrant display of riches and honours.³ Yet as a parvenu, Walpole relied on traditionally aristocratic tropes of power - notably the idea of chivalry - to consolidate his political image against the backdrop of the new Hanoverian line of kings. Walpole’s establishment of the Order of the Bath in the name of the King, for example, clearly aligned Walpole with the medieval tradition of knighthood - formerly the preserve of monarchs alone to promote loyalty among

their subjects. Walpole was therefore trying to strike a delicate balance between asserting his own power while still showing his submission to King George I (and later George II). One way of exploring this tension is to examine Walpole’s own methods of signifying his power to political peers: notably the way in which he invited influential politicians and local squires to Houghton Hall for what Giles Worsley describes as an ‘orgy of politicking, entertaining and hunting.’ Equestrian activities had long been a key signifier of elite status and prestige, and were thus an integral part of creating Walpole’s public political and social image, yet there have been few studies to actually explore the presentation of Walpole’s power through the lens of horsemanship. In Walpole’s case, this is particularly pertinent, as this is a man who allegedly opened letters from his huntsman before any other correspondent. This study will aim to explore the stable architecture at Houghton Hall to reveal how far Walpole invested in impressing his peers and asserting his position. At the same time, by looking at the equestrian portrait by John Wootton (1726), I hope to demonstrate the extent to which the horse could function not only as a metaphor for power, but also for submission, which is particularly pertinent when applied to the hierarchical relations between Prime Minister and King.

Today, it is easy to overlook the importance of stables when the horse has been replaced by the motor car and stable buildings have been converted for commercial purposes. Architectural historians, too, have neglected this topic, and although Giles Worsley’s pioneering work *The British Stable* does redress this, by focusing purely on stable architecture, it does not place stables in a wider cultural context. In this study, however, I wish to examine the stables at Houghton in the context of aristocratic display in the eighteenth century. When it was first built in the 1720s, Houghton Hall

![Figure 1. The Stables at Houghton, photograph, from Country Life.](image)

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VIDES

was considered to be one of the most impressive estates of its time, originally designed by Colen Campbell in the fashionable neo-Palladian style. The original designs still survive in Campbell’s *Vitruvius Britannicus*, although it is difficult to tell from these designs what the original stables would have been like. What is known is that, almost as soon as the stables were completed, Walpole decided that they obstructed some of the best views of the landscape and had them demolished in 1732, claiming that they had been badly built in the first place. The stables that can be seen today are the result of this. While they are built in Palladian style, it is important to note that the stables depart from Palladio’s *Quatro Libri*, which recommends that ‘stalls and stables…must be far from the principal house, because of the ill smell of [horse’s] dung’. Walpole clearly had no such intention to follow this advice, building his stables to be conspicuous as a prominent feature of Houghton Hall. While Palladio’s suggestion is indeed practical, it nonetheless reduces the horse to a dirty, dung-producing beast. By contrast, horsemanship manuals at the end of the seventeenth century had already begun to ideologically construct the horse as a noble creature. The writer A.S. Gent believed that ‘the horse is a naturally proud beast, and delighteth in cleanness’ and instructed that ‘the dung must not by any means lye close to the stable.’ Instead of regarding horses and the stables in which they were sheltered as serving a purely utilitarian purpose, it is likely that Walpole saw them as a status symbols to be exhibited and admired. Indeed, it remained a Houghton tradition until the 1930s for the family to pass through the stables and admire the horses on their way to church every Sunday.

In fact, not only did Walpole elevate his horses by providing them with stables in the stylish Palladian design, but by choosing a quadrangle structure, Walpole was also making a political statement. As Giles Worsley notes, it was standard in the early eighteenth century for stables to be located in the wings of the houses, whereas the quadrangle had previously only been used for royal stables, such as Henry VII’s stables at Greenwich Palace, James I’s at Theobalds, Charles I’s country house at Wilton and Charles II’s hunting stables at Lyndhurst. Worsley even goes on to argue that ‘if quadrangular stables had traditionally been a demonstration of royal power, the stables at Houghton and its successors were a telling illustration of where power lay in Georgian Britain: no longer with the monarch but with the landowning classes, with Parliament, and specifically with the Prime Minister.’ There is certainly a tension here between royal and ministerial power, which becomes evident in the appropriation of architectural styles. The royal stables may have informed William Kent’s designs

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11 Giles Worsley, ‘Riding on Status’, p. 111.
12 Giles Worsley, *The British Stable*, p. 133.
13 Ibid p. 133.
for the new stables at Houghton, but considering that Kent was later commissioned
to design the Royal Mews in 1731-33 and the Horse Guards in Whitehall in 1748, one
might infer that the stables at Houghton had by that point established a new, neo-
classical ‘royal’ precedent. Certainly, the neo-classical elements of both the exterior
and interior of the stables lend themselves to creating what might be considered an
equestrian temple. On the outside, each of the four facades has blank arcading with
Diocletian windows, broken by a central pedimented entrance block, with octagonal
cupolas in each of the four corners (figure 1). On the inside the tall, brick-vaulted
stables have giant Ionic columns, topped with balls at the head (figure 2). In such a
setting, Walpole and his horses must have been a spectacular sight.

Nevertheless, satirists of the day also sought to undermine such signifiers of power.
Recognising the importance of horsemanship as a metaphor for effective governance,
they often chose to challenge those in power by reversing this representation. In The
Statesman’s Fall or, Sir B—b in the Dust, although Sir Robert is not named explicitly,
the political allegories suggest that he is almost certainly the butt of the satire. In
the song, the statesman is thrown from his mare, which the song then parallels with his
fall from political power, concluding that the knight ‘who steers,/ Who eke the Mare
of Government,/ Has Switch’d these many Years:/ Yet thick in Skull, in Judgement
addle,/ He scarce knows how to sit in Saddle.’

It is interesting how far this satirical song works to undermine and even emasculate the statesman/Walpole. According
to the late seventeenth-century writer J. Gailhard in The Compleat Gentleman,

Figure 2. Stables at Houghton Hall, photograph, from Country Life.

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‘...Horsemanship is a very manly thing, and 'tis no small matter to manage so strong and courageous a Creature as Horses are, so to curb and hold them in, or else to put on, tame, and govern them, as to make them useful and serviceable to us...’\textsuperscript{15}

Even here in the language of horsemanship manuals, the verb ‘to govern’ appears, and it is no surprise that the riding metaphors should so readily illustrate man’s ability (or lack of) to keep order and demonstrate his authority. In \textit{The Statesman’s Fall}, the final rhyming couplet ends on a feminine rhyme so that the cadence falls mimetically to suggest the statesman’s/Walpole’s falls from power. More than this, the sonic contract between “addle” and “saddle” further implies that far from being an orderly pursuit, the obsession with hunting could addle the brains of those in power.

In another more explicit caricature of Walpole’s power, \textit{The Norfolk Congress: or, A Full and True Account of Their Hunting, Feasting and Merrymaking}, it ironically comments on how ‘comfortable it is unto the People to see their Governors indulge themselves in Ease, Diversions and Pleasures...’\textsuperscript{16} Clearly then, although equestrian imagery could be used to demonstrate the abundance of power, satirists could also rework this to signify a power reversal and depict Walpole as an incompetent horseman, and, by extension, a poor governor over the country.

The fact that satirists chose to target Walpole through equestrian imagery reveals much about its crucial role in signifying those in power. Indeed, it was an expectation for anyone with significant political power to build impressive estates to consolidate their social standing. There were other means too by which persons of rank could convey their influence, and studies have certainly been done to show how far Walpole was able to manipulate public opinion through the power of the press, for example,\textsuperscript{17} but none of these are quite as heavily symbolic as visual representation in the arts.

Hence in this study, I would like to draw attention to Walpole’s equestrian portraiture, which has hitherto been unexplored in scholarship. Instead of looking at the stable architecture and equestrian portraiture from a purely aesthetic perspective, or, what the historians Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery term as a ‘\textit{Country Life} view’,\textsuperscript{18} I hope to demonstrate that Walpole was in fact very much aware of the signifying political power invested in the arts. Considering that the court of the Hanoverians no longer dominated artistic and literary life through patronage, there was clearly scope for eminent politicians such as Walpole to use this to their advantage and commission artists to depict them as they wanted to be seen.\textsuperscript{19} However, we should also be careful about assuming how far Walpole attempted to appropriate formerly royal signifiers of power for himself. As Andrew Hanham notes, when Walpole returned to office in


\textsuperscript{16} Anon, \textit{The Norfolk Congress. Or, A full and true account of the hunting feasting, and merry-making} (London, 1728), p. 4.


1721, he and the senior secretary, Charles Townsend, endured a ‘gruelling struggle’ to maintain George I’s favour. Walpole must have been aware that to compare himself too closely to the King would have put him in an increasingly unfavourable position, and it is no surprise that when he established the Order of the Bath, it was publicised as an initiative of the King. It is at this point that I would like to turn to John Wootton’s *Sir Robert Walpole with his Hunter and Groom* (1726; figure 3). Painted before the impressive stables at Houghton were built, the painting effectively demonstrates Walpole’s acute self-awareness about how he represented himself. On one level, this is a highly stylised portrayal; Wootton painted hundreds of horse portraits and was indeed the pioneer of the equine portrait in England, so at a first glance, it would seem to be another of his fashionable, yet generically aesthetic portraits of the English thoroughbred. Walpole’s equestrian portrait is not celebrating an individual horse (unlike, for example, Wootton’s *The Bloody Shouldered Arabian* or George Stubb’s *Whistlejacket*), so one might infer that it is intended instead to signify something about the Prime Minister himself. It is significant that the title of the painting names Sir Robert Walpole, but the horse has no identity other than the fact that it is his property. Like the groom, its purpose is to serve Walpole.

Consequently, on the surface there is much to suggest that *Sir Robert Walpole with his Hunter and Groom* is nothing more than a panegyric to Walpole. However, on closer inspection, there are some subtle details in the painting which serve to undermine such a reading. Certainly, the Palladian-style building in the background, like the stables at Houghton, provide an impressive neo-classical setting, but one might ask why Wootton chose a to depict a generic Palladian building instead of Walpole’s Houghton Hall. One might hazard a suggestion that it is the old stable block that was pulled

Figure 3. John Wootton, *Sir Robert Walpole with his Hunter and Groom*, 1726, 40 ¼ x 50 ¼ in, oil on canvas, Christie’s.
down in 1732, although this is unlikely since the narrowness of the building and the steps by the entrance would hardly have been practical for stabling and manoeuvring horses. By contrast, there was, after all, precedent for equestrian portraits to include specific landmarks in the backdrop, such as the engravings in William Cavendish’s *A New Method, and Extraordinary Invention, to Dress Horses, and Work Them According to Nature* (1667), which feature the Duke’s impressive stables at Bolsover and Welbeck.\(^{20}\) For Cavendish, the riding house was the theatre for his dressage performance as he and his horses took the limelight as the stars of the show. By depicting a more generic, pastoral scene, Wootton takes the focus away from aristocratic display and focuses instead on rural simplicity. According to the art historian Roy Strong, the return to the pastoral in eighteenth century portraiture was a means of disguising social rank and recognising that nobility was first and foremost a question of sensibility and virtue.\(^{21}\) In the case of *Sir Robert Walpole with his Hunter and Groom*, I would argue that the pastoral setting helps to neutralise Walpole’s position as a Prime Minister. This is not to say that Walpole was lowering his status exactly, but in fact defusing his apparent power and ambition to demonstrate that he had no intention to disrupt the social or political hierarchy.

The composition of *Sir Robert Walpole with his Hunter and Groom* also supports this interpretation. It is especially significant that it is not Walpole at the heart of the painting, but the elevated horse’s head. In royal portraiture, such as in Sir Anthony van Dyck’s hunting portrait of Charles I, *Le roi à la chasse* (1635), the horse’s head is lowered to show its submission to the King,\(^{22}\) whereas in this depiction, the hunter’s head is the highest point. The horse is therefore the figure that commands the viewer’s attention. Not only this, but Walpole is unmounted, which can be interpreted as a sign of humility. Tellingly, his sideward glance avoids acknowledging the viewer and this renders the scene much more private. Although the viewer is able to behold the scene, there is the sense that Walpole is not making a public statement, but enjoying a moment of private recreation. Walpole is identifiable by his Order of the Garter star, yet the fact that he is standing alongside his grooms suggests that Walpole has no ambitions to be the centre of attention. This is particularly pertinent if we consider that Walpole had an equestrian portrait of George I commissioned to hang at Houghton Hall. Although there is no visual record of this painting, it was described in Horace Walpole’s *Aedes Walpolianae: or, a Description of the Collection of Pictures at Houghton-Hall in Norfolk* (1752) as hanging in the common parlour, the place where Sir Robert would have received his visitors. Horace suggests that the ‘figure is by Sir Godfrey, which he took from the king at Guilford horse-race. The horse is new painted by Wootton. I suppose this is the very picture which gave rise to Mr. Addison’s beautiful poem to Kneller.’\(^{23}\) Through Addison’s ekphrasis, it is possible to glean a sense of the impression of this royal portrait:

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With the ‘monarch’s rise’, it is likely that he is astride a rearing horse, in command of both horse and his people. The deification of the King further suggests that compositionally, he would be the highest, central point of the portrait. The fact that this painting would inspire awe in the viewers suggests that its location in the reception room was a deliberate move on Walpole’s part to demonstrate his obedience and loyalty to the King. Even though his visitors may well have been impressed with Houghton Hall (and of course, the magnificent stables), this portrait exemplifies how far Walpole makes a significant hierarchical statement. While the King is clearly the governor in control of the land, in *Sir Robert with his Hunter and Groom*, Walpole literally presents himself as a down-to-earth figure who is another of the King’s subjects.

In considering both the stables at Houghton Hall and *Sir Robert with his Hunter and Groom*, it becomes evident that Walpole was able to project different, and perhaps even paradoxical significations of his power. The equine imagery in all these sources acts as a metaphor for governance and obedience, demonstrating a complicated power structure at work. While the stables were an important means of consolidating his image politically and socially, it is notable that such impressive tokens of power were open to satire, which in turn held the potential to damage Walpole’s public image.

It was also necessary, for the sake of his political stability, to demonstrate his loyalty to the King. Therefore, in *Sir Robert with his Hunter and Groom*, Walpole presents a humble concession of power. One might speculate why Walpole chose to bolster his image through impressive stable architecture after such a humble portrayal in the Wootton portrait: perhaps there was a shift in Walpole’s attitude as he settled into his position and gained power and confidence, or perhaps he felt justified in such a flagrant display because he had already proven his humility. Yet ultimately, such suppositions perhaps overlook the complexity of the equestrian metaphors at work in these representations. The relationship between a rider and horse is never one of complete dominance and submission, but a complex dialectical play of power. Thus the stables may have signified Walpole as quasi-royalty, but without respecting the authority of the King, Walpole’s signifiers of power are made redundant. Walpole may have been a competent horseman, but without respecting the ‘Mare of Government’ and suffering from excessive pride, there was always the potential that he could fall.

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*Statesman’s fall: or, Sir B--b in the Dust*, (London, 1740) Eighteenth Century Collections Online <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco> [accessed 5 Feb 2017]


Wootton, John. *Sir Robert Walpole with his Hunter and Groom*, 1726, 40 ¼ x 50 ¼ in, oil on canvas, *Christies*. 
Britons will never be slaves! Britannia and liberty as a construct of British national identity in James Thomson and Thomas Arne’s song *Rule Britannia* and Thomas Rowlandson’s engraving, *The Contrast, 1792, British Liberty, French Liberty, Which is best?*

In comparing and contrasting the song, *Rule Britannia* and the political print, *The Contrast, 1792, British Liberty, French Liberty, Which is Best?* this paper will evidence how the concept of liberty was a key construct of British national identity in the eighteenth century. Linking the two pieces is Britain’s national icon, Britannia, the feminine personification of the nation whose image still resonates today. Notions of British national identity that were developed in the eighteenth century, will continue to reverberate in the twenty-first, as Britain attempts to re-identify itself in the nation’s new, post-Brexit, world.

On 1 August 1740 the first performance of *Rule Britannia* took place before Fredrick, Prince of Wales, in the grass amphitheatre at Cliveden, Buckinghamshire. The Prince and his circle of friends in the audience, probably had little idea of how this finale to the masque of *Alfred*, would become a long lasting and popular ‘touchstone of British national identity.’ Once separated from the rest of *Alfred*, *Rule Britannia* became increasingly accessible to a wider audience and highly popular in its own right. *Rule Britannia*’s repeated mantra that ‘Britons never will be slaves’ highlights how important liberty was to Britain’s sense of self during that period. Whilst less fortunate nations kneel before ‘haughty tyrants,’ *Rule Britannia* is representative of an ongoing movement for the preservation of British liberties. Thomas Rowlandson takes this mantra further in the political print, *The Contrast, 1792, British Liberty, French Liberty, Which is Best?* by comparing the benefits enjoyed by people living under the mantle of ‘British liberty’ to that of those living under ‘French Liberty.’

In comparing and contrasting these two artefacts this paper will evidence how the concept of liberty was a key construct of British national identity in the eighteenth century. Britannia, who first appeared in Roman times, links the song and the political print in her role as the feminine personification of the nation, so it will be

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necessary to consider how this icon developed into her eighteenth-century role and how national icons have a key role to play in notions of national identity. The term ‘national identity’ is widely invoked so it is worth setting down at least some of the theory about what it actually means. This is particularly appropriate in the context of the national identity of Great Britain, a nation that had only been formed a few decades before Rule Britannia was written.

Keith Cameron has argued that national identity is a term that is ‘used frequently but which often beggars definition.’² Peter Jackson suggests this might be because national identity is ‘contested terrain’ that depends on the interests of those involved.³ There is certainly no lack of scholarly debate around notions of national identity. As Norman Davies drily remarks, ‘there are as many theories on the essence of nations as there are theorists.’⁴ Much of the earlier discourse was largely based on arguments about whether the nation was a natural phenomenon based on its common heritage, or a ‘a manipulative project’ carried out by elites who mobilize their followers using nationalist ideology.’⁵ Notwithstanding the merits of these and other arguments, perhaps for our purposes Benedict Anderson’s famous concept of the nation as an ‘imagined political community’ is sufficient.⁶

Following the Treaty of Union in 1706 the imagined ‘British’ political community in the early part of the eighteenth century needed to integrate the identities of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland into one new identity, the kingdom of Great Britain. Linda Colley has suggested that ‘Protestantism was the foundation that made the invention of the new, ‘Great Britain’ possible.’⁷ The new combined nation state was an invention forged by war, mostly with Catholic France, but war ‘could never have been so influential without the impact of religion.’⁸ However, in considering how contemporary Britons saw themselves, David Armitage suggests that they self-identified as, ‘Protestant, commercial, maritime and free.’⁹ The weight given to each of these factors is difficult to determine but in considering Rule Britannia and The Contrast, 1792, British Liberty. French Liberty, Which is Best? it will be argued that notions of liberty were a much bigger factor in the new imagined community of Briton’s self-identity than Colley postulates.

Within this imagined community the nation is often presented as, ‘a larger than life human being,’ a symbolic character that encapsulates the nations characteristics.¹⁰ Gerald Newman points out that this character is much more complex than a stereotype.

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⁵ Calhoun, p. 30.
⁸ Ibid. p. 376.
'because of its psychological, educational and historic dimensions.' Madge Dresser has pointed out how an icon of the nation has the 'ability to convey a multiplicity of meanings at many levels.' She goes on to point out that the powerful psychological force of a visual symbol transcends logical explanation. Britannia became established as the visual symbol of Britain from the early days of James I and eventually became a national icon that its people could relate to.

Britannia had first briefly appeared as a symbol of Britain in a series of reliefs from the first century AD that celebrated the conquest of Britain by the Emperor Claudius. The Romans gave provinces they had conquered symbolic feminine names that developed into allegorical figures. In one of the reliefs Claudius is seen overpowering a semi-naked Britannia who wears a Phrygian hat. Originally worn by a manumitted slave to denote their free status the Phrygian hat or cap later became a symbol of liberty. It was a symbol that Britannia would continue to wear, sometimes interchangeably with a peaked helmet, as she appeared on coins in the Roman period. Britannia disappeared from view in post Roman times only appearing after the Reformation. In the early seventeenth century she appeared symbolising Britain in a few frontiers pieces and then later some coins. It was in the reign of James I that she appeared frequently portrayed as a symbol of national unity. Tamara Hunt suggests that she was used at this time ‘to stress the union of Scotland and England under one crown.’

By the mid-eighteenth century Britannia had become truly established as a national icon and lent herself to Rule Britannia, the patriotic song that emphasised Britain’s freedom, backed by its naval power, above all else. Britannia was also appearing in political prints, coins and pamphlets, as she became ‘the embodiment of triumphant self-esteem’ and an icon of national identity. Her classical appearance had now become standardised and usually included: a trident or spear, a shield with the arms or stylised flag of Britain and a helmet or cap of liberty. This cap of liberty strongly associated Britannia, the personification of the nation, with the idea that Britons were a free people.

13 Dresser, p. 43.
18 Ibid. p. 28.
20 Dresser, p. 30.
21 Hunt, p. 121.
22 Atherton, p. 84.
23 Ibid. p. 97.
24 Hunt, p. 122.
Thomas Rowlandson takes the connection between Britannia and liberty further in his political print, *The Contrast 1792. British Liberty. French liberty. Which is best?* (Figure 1).

In the two medallions entitled ‘British Liberty’ and ‘French Liberty’ a seated, dignified Britannia is shown opposite her French counterpart, a gruesome ‘Medusa like’ figure. Liberty in feminine form had been elevated to an official icon of the French Republic in August 1792 and her image appeared on currency, engravings and statues. British caricaturists were quick to adopt Liberty as an emblem of France and Britannia was the obvious parallel. In her right hand Britannia holds Magna Charta, ‘the original guarantee of the nation’s liberties’ and also a symbol of the law that underpinned the Briton’s freedom from tyranny. On her left hand are the equally balanced scales of justice. Perhaps the most telling part of this figure is that Rowlandson does not simply adorn Britannia with a Phrygian cap but places it on her staff almost as if she had taken it from her French counterpart.

In contrast ‘French Liberty’ is a medusa-like hag with writhing serpents for her hair and girdle. In direct contrast to the seated and majestic Britannia, this fury runs madly in profile to the left whilst trampling on a decapitated body. Rather than the scales of

26  Hunt, p. 141.
27  Atherton, p. 127.
justice ‘French Liberty’ carries the dagger that she has probably used to murder the bleeding corpse that lies at her feet. Whilst Britannia’s staff proudly hoists a Phrygian cap, French liberty’s trident impales two bleeding hearts and a severed head. In the background, the body that swings from a lamppost represents the chaos unleashed by French liberty. In direct contrast the sturdy old oak tree underneath which Britannia sits, peacefully reposed, represents the stability of British liberty. The lion seated at Britannia’s feet and a large British war ship in full sail leave the viewer in little doubt of the power that defends Britannia’s liberty.

Rowlandson backs up this powerful visual imagery in a direct response to the French revolutionary’s cry of ‘Liberté, égalité, fraternité.’ In the left hand medallion ‘British Liberty’ is inscribed in the border and underneath the medallion is an inscription in large letters: ‘Religion. Morality. Loyalty Obedience to the Laws Indepandence Personal Security Justice Inheritance Protection Property. Industry. National Prosperity Happiness.’ Underneath the right hand medallion, inscribed ‘French liberty,’ the inscription is: ‘Atheism Perjury Rebellion. Treason. Anarchy Murder Equality. Madness. Cruelty. Injustice Treachery Ingratitude Idleness Famine National & Private Ruin. Misery.’ In these two lists Rowlandson directly compares the virtues of British liberty to the dangers of French Liberty. Briton’s ‘obedience to the laws’ that underpins their liberty entitles them to ‘independence, personal security’ and ‘justice.’ In stark contrast French ‘rebellion’ leads to ‘anarchy, murder’ and ‘injustice.’ The viewer is invited to choose, ‘which is best?’ British ‘happiness’ or French ‘misery.’

Perhaps the popularity of the print evidences how its viewers responded to this question. Loyalist associations set up to counter French republicanism ensured it was perhaps one of the ‘most widely distributed and recycled’ political prints of its time.28 Demands for more copies and its appearance on pottery mugs indicate its evident commercial success. Moreover, political prints like this were one of the few cultural items available to all classes, as César de Saussure a French visitor noted in 1748.29 Rowlandson’s print may have affected public opinion but it also reflected it, as artists were well aware of the importance of their works appeal to its potential audience.30

It seems apparent that the message of The Contrast 1792. British Liberty. French liberty. Which is best? struck a chord in the imagination of at least some of the British public at the time.

Like Rowlandson’s political print, Rule Britannia, also became very popular especially once it was separated from the masque, Alfred. The masque’s libretto was written by David Mallet and James Thompson and set to music by Thomas Arne. Alfred told

28 Donald, p. 152.
30 Hunt, p. 17.
the dramatized story of part of the life of King Alfred’. It was first performed on 1 August 1740 as part of a private stage production for Frederick, Prince of Wales at his country home at Cliveden. Michael Burden has suggested that Alfred was a tribute to the future King who had been exiled from court. Much of the plot centers around resistance to a Danish invasion of Britain and Alfred contains ‘much patriotic material ... of the virtues of Britain and the British people.’ The Prince of Wales was ‘so well pleased’ with the whole entertainment he commanded it to be repeated a short time later albeit this time it was affected by rain and had to be completed indoors.

Martha Vandrei has suggested that, ‘despite its prominence, few scholars have commented on the significance of Rule Britannia in any depth.’ This is perhaps surprising given that it has been described as ‘an important national cultural artifact.’ In one commentary Tim Blanning points out how the six verses of Rule Britannia ‘manage to cover all the main characteristic of eighteenth-century British nationalism.’ The opening stanza sets the nationalistic tone. Britain is not just any old country but one that is divinely ordained, the nation raised from the ocean ‘at heavens command.’ The declaration that Britain ‘shalt flourish great and free’ links the concept of liberty to prosperity and the name, ‘Great’ Britain that had only been established a few decades earlier.

**Rule Britannia**

When Britain first, at Heaven’s command  
Arose from out the azure main;  
This was the charter of the land,  
And guardian angels sang this strain:  
‘Rule, Britannia! rule the waves:  
Britons never will be slaves.’

The nations, not so blest as thee,  
Must, in their turns, to tyrants fall;  
While thou shalt flourish great and free,  
The dread and envy of them all.  
‘Rule, Britannia! rule the waves:  
Britons never will be slaves.’

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33 Burden, p. 10.  
34 Ibid. p. 3.  
35 London Daily Post and General Advertiser, 2nd August 1740.  
37 Cox, p. 931.  
Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful, from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies,
Serves but to root thy native oak.
‘Rule, Britannia! rule the waves:
‘Britons never will be slaves.’

Thee haughty tyrants ne’er shall tame:
All their attempts to bend thee down,
Will but arouse thy generous flame;
But work their woe, and thy renown.
‘Rule, Britannia! rule the waves:
Britons never will be slaves.’

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine:
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles thine.
‘Rule, Britannia! rule the waves:
Britons never will be slaves.’

The Muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair;
Blest Isle! With matchless beauty crown’d,
And manly hearts to guard the fair.
‘Rule, Britannia! rule the waves:
Britons never will be slaves.’

In *Rule Britannia* Great Britain is not only free, it will remain uniquely free as other nations, ‘not as blest ... must, in their turns, to tyrants fall.’ The ‘haughty tyrants’ of France or Spain will ‘envy’ Britain but they will also fear her. Their attempts to try and ‘tame’ Britannia will fail and her unflinching opposition to continental despotism will prevail. At the time *Rule Britannia* was written, Spanish attempts at taming Britain had led to war, partly as a result of the severing of Captain Jenkins’ ear, so references to tyrants overseas dreading Britannia’s power would have received a very receptive audience. Moreover, *Rule Britannia* warns these continental tyrants that any attack on Britain would merely make its power even more terrifying and only improve the nation’s fighting ‘renown.’ ‘Foreign strokes’ from tyrants overseas will not weaken Britain, but rather aid her ‘majestic’ rise to glory.

40 Robertson (ed.) p. 144.
The Great Britain of *Rule Britannia* is eulogized as a beautiful, prosperous and ‘happy’ place to live. The fledgling nation will become home to the ‘Muses,’ those liberty-loving women of Greek mythology. These ‘deities of poetry, literature, music, and dance,’ and later also of, ‘all intellectual pursuits,’ will ensure the nation’s cultural predominance.\(^41\) Their home will be unrivalled for its beauty and as such, a ‘blest isle!’ an allusion to the Blessed Isles (Fortunatae Insulae) of ancient Greece. The new nation will also be prosperous, as commerce ‘shines’ in its cities, and its agriculture flourishes. However, it will not be content to simply stay at home and defend itself from foreign tyranny. In his use of quotation marks around the last two stanzas of each verse Thompson is quoting Britain’s guardian angels who urge Britannia to, ‘rule the waves.’ In this penultimate stanza of each verse, it is these angels of heaven who exhort the newly formed island to its ordained role as a thalassocracy. The angels then go on to sing the stirring mantra, ‘Britons never will be slaves,’ that ends each verse.

Although they are from different genres there are striking similarities in the song *Rule Britannia* and the political print *The Contrast*, 1792, *British Liberty, French Liberty, Which is best?* Foremost amongst these is the emphasis on liberty as a key element of British national identity. Britannia as the embodiment of the nation is heard in the song and seen in the political print. In the song Britain’s guardian angels constantly reiterate the mantra that Britons will ‘never be slaves’ whilst in the print, Britannia holds the charter that guarantees its people’s liberty. Both the song and the political print strongly emphasize that Britain’s liberty is backed by its naval power. The ‘native oak’ that cannot be moved by ‘foreign strokes’ in the song, is the same oak tree under whose branches Britannia sits serenely, but defiantly, in the print. Both pieces emphasize the benefits of British liberty; the song in boasting how commerce shines in this ‘blest isle.’ the print with its long list of positive benefits including ‘prosperity’ resulting in ‘happiness,’ The print’s classically dressed Britannia contrasts with the allusions to the classical Muses in the song. By rooting Britannia in antiquity each piece confirms the nation’s heritage and rightful place in the world.

Although there are strong similarities in the two pieces there are also differences that partly derive from their different genres. Whilst one is meant to be seen the other is more likely to be heard. Moreover, the stirring music of *Rule Britannia* adds an emotional dimension to the piece that has not been considered here and would be worthy of further study. There is also a difference in gender relationships in each piece. In the song, Britain’s ‘manly hearts’ will guard its ‘fair’ maidens, whilst in contrast in the print there are no visible men other than the two corpses that have been respectively hung and decapitated by French Liberty. However, perhaps the most significant difference in these two representations of British national identity is in their reception. The song’s easily remembered lyrics and tune invite the reader (or listener) to participate, especially in the last two stanzas of each verse. In this way

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the reader, or audience are participating in reiterating mantras of British national identity that were written in 1740, but seem to be just as relevant when performed today. The audience participation in Rule Britannia in contemporary times can be seen in a clip from the Last Night of The Proms that is televised annually live from Britain’s Royal Albert Hall. In this 2010 performance soprano Renée Fleming sings verses one, two and six.\footnote{Thomas Arne, Rule Britannia, Renée Fleming sings Rule Britannia - Last Night of the Proms 2010’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wa3EYcVxbO> [accessed 21 Feb 2017].}

The Contrast, 1792, British Liberty, French Liberty, Which is best? offers us a tantalizing glimpse, a snapshot, into the mood of the period. In contrast Rule Britannia did not remain in the eighteenth century but went on to become even more popular and a long-standing British patriotic song. Britannia too is still with us today, for example, on the 2015 two pound coin. Each piece offers some insights into the ways in which notions of national identity are developed. Moreover, the popularity of each work emphasizes how, in their own different ways, they struck a chord in the way Britons saw themselves at the time. The enduring appeal of Britannia, as an icon of national identity, and Rule Britannia as the nation’s most popular patriotic song continue unabated. They are as much a marker of British national identity today as they were in the eighteenth century. What being British means will continue to resonate within the discourse of national identity that frames Britain’s uneasy post-Brexit relationship with the rest of Europe.
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FRANCESCA KETTLE

‘For the Snark was a Boojum, you see.’
The case of The Claimant, The Medals and The Poem
An article in five fits

This essay explores two artefacts pertaining to the most infamous case of imposture in British legal history. The Tichborne Case was the kind of spectacle on which the nineteenth century thrived; an heir lost at sea miraculously returned, an enormous fortune ripe for the picking, sexual intrigue, class division, hyper-politicised journalism and above all, an almost existential ambiguity around identity. The artefacts include two commemorative medals produced in support of the Claimant, against Lewis Carroll’s The Hunting of the Snark, a literary satire capable of reducing the entire saga down to nothing but nonsense.

Fit the first: Introduction

To quote The Spectator, “There never was in the long record of English crime a trial so thoroughly discreditable to British intelligence or so thoroughly creditable to British character as this of the imposter Arthur Orton.”1 The butcher from Wagga Wagga, who laid claim to an ancient British title and fortune ‘was a shape shifter; he meant different things to different people.’2 To those who supported him, he was a lost baronet returned home to reclaim what was rightfully his, or (and sometimes as well as) he was a labourer being done out of his rights by a corrupt system. To those who opposed his claim, he was an imposter and a threat. A threat not only to those in possession of the Tichborne fortune, but to the aristocracy at large, for his imposture suggested they ‘were pretty much like anyone else and could be impersonated or even parodied.’3

The pursuit of the Claimant’s identity had a wider socio-political meaning. Indeed news of the case helped to strengthen Australia’s emerging sense of national distinctiveness around equal opportunity, in contrast to entrenched inequalities at the centre of the British Empire.4 Whereas back in England, the Tichborne Case has been described as ‘a state of mind’, it permeated all aspects of life. Rohan McWilliam sees the Tichborne Claimant as the rallying point for perhaps the most significant

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1 The Spectator, 7 March 1874, p.4.
3 Ibid. p.201
movement of popular agitation in Victorian Britain, between the decline of Chartism in the 1840s and the rise of organised socialism in the 1880s. What is fascinating about this case is how two fiercely opposing sides, both riddled with contradictions and spectacle, speak so clearly to the underlying themes of insecurity, identity and social mobility, which entrenched the Victorian consciousness of the late nineteenth century. This essay looks to explore an artefact from each side of the debate: one in favour of the Claimant and one seemingly against the entire case.

Fit the second: The Claimant

The year was 1854, a young Englishman, fleeing heartbreak, has been exploring Latin America and is last sighted in Rio de Janeiro awaiting a sea passage to continue his travels. Though lacking a passport it is reported he was able to secure a berth on a ship named Bella, which was to sail for Kingston, Jamaica on 20 April. Tragedy ensues and a mere four days later, just off the Brazilian coast, a capsized longboat bearing the name Bella is discovered. Given the wreckage and absence of personnel, it is assumed the Ship and all hands have been lost at sea. The young Englishman who had seemingly found a watery grave, was none other than Sir Roger Tichborne, eldest son of Sir James and Lady Henriette Tichborne and heir to the ancient Tichborne Baronetcy.

In June of the same year, though the family were told Roger must be presumed drowned, there was still a persistent rumour that a ship had rescued survivors of the Bella wreck and provided them with safe passage to Australia. On the death of Sir James in June 1862, the matter of Sir Roger’s survival became a pressing one – alive he is the eleventh Baronet, dead the family title and fortune falls into the hands of his financially reckless younger brother Alfred. So, while Alfred applied to the courts to have his brother legally declared dead, Lady Tichborne, with the help of A. and F. Cubbitt of the Missing Friends Office in Sydney, placed adverts in Australian newspapers offering a ‘handsome reward’ for any information regarding her favourite son’s whereabouts.

Armed with the local advertisements, a solicitor in Sydney confronted a client who had alluded to both involvement in a shipwreck and some unclaimed properties back in England. On further questioning, Tomas Castro, a butcher in the outback locale of Wagga Wagga, conceded that he was indeed Sir Roger Tichborne, living under an assumed name. Almost immediately communications were struck up between Castro and the Dowager Lady Tichborne, resulting in a meeting in Paris in January 1867, during which, the mother immediately recognised Castro as her son. For many supporters, the mother’s acceptance of the Claimant as her son is the cornerstone of the case, it was the ‘chief point lending credibility to his assertion of identity.’

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6 Which consisted of an estate in Hampshire and the colossal income of twenty-five thousand pounds per annum.
7 Thomas, Cultivating Victorians p. 87.
In opposition, the wider Tichborne family denied Castro’s claim with equal vigour. Their doubts being fed by the much-changed physicality of the new Sir Roger (Figure 1), as ‘the Claimant inhabited perhaps the most heavily discussed body of the Victorian age.’ They also questioned his much-changed manners, the *Aukland Star* jeered that ‘his knowledge was the knowledge of a Wapping butcher, and his ignorance not the ignorance of an English gentleman.’ After Lady Tichborne’s death the subject of inheritance became more pressing for the Claimant, and so began the most famous English court proceedings of the nineteenth century.

The first Tichborne trial was a civil suit of ejectment. It ran from 10 May 1871 to 6 March 1872 and lasted 103 court days in the Court of Common Pleas before Lord Chief Justice Bovill. The length of the trial was unprecedented; it was followed closely in the media. Thomas notes that ‘interest in the case divided very roughly along class lines – with labouring folk inclining to the Claimant and the wealthier establishment and respectability disposed against him,’ but the thematic debates wove themselves into the popular consciousness of Victorian society across those class divides, touching on Anti-Catholic rhetoric, whispers of an ancient family curse, questions of the Australian Bush and its ability to affect the ‘the bearing of an authentic gentleman’, decency and the social order and physicality of the body. Such was the intrigue around the case that even Trollope remarked “We poor novelists had not, amongst us, the wit to invent such a grand plot as that!”

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9 *Aukland Star*, Volume XVIII, Issue 13, 6 August 1887.
10 *Tichborne v. Lushington*.
11 Thomas, *Cultivating Victorians* p.89.
12 Ibid.
The case had many points of contention: those against the Claimant pointed to his inability to speak French, when it had been a language from Sir Roger’s childhood; his inability to differentiate Greek and Latin, despite Sir Roger’s training in classical languages at school and his ‘at best spotty observance of gentile manners’. On the other hand, supporters of the Claimant pointed to the assortment of persons from Sir Roger’s past who recognised the Claimant as him, not solely on appearance, but on his knowledge of things only the real Sir Roger would have known. During the course of the trial the claimant called eighty-five witnesses, ‘his own mother, the family solicitor, one baronet, six magistrates, one general, three colonels, one major, two captains, 32 non-commissioned officers and privates, four clergymen, seven tenants of the estate, 16 servants of the family, and 12 general witnesses, who all swore to his identity’; the family called seventeen. And yet still he lost, ‘the plaintiff withdrew the case from the consideration of the jury- allowing himself to be non-suited.’ Even the anti-Claimant press couldn’t deny that the numbers didn’t seem to add up, which only added fuel to the movement now furious at the call to a criminal trial.

The Tichborne case started to represent ‘a state of mind as much as a political movement. It expressed an emotion about the unfairness of current society.’ The ambiguity of the Claimant himself, a man caught between the airs and graces of the aristocracy and lowliness, an outsider, was ‘transformed into [a representation] of universal human values.’ The Claimant’s counsel in the criminal trial, Sir Edward Kenealy, played on this and the widespread feeling that the Tichborne family represented ‘England’s over-privileged and corrupt aristocracy’, subsequently pushing the case to almost symbolic status. Indeed, the rationality of Victorian public life was challenged by the pig-headed determination of Tichbornites to promote the Claimant. The contradiction here being, that the Claimant is attempting to ‘pass himself off as a baronet’ with the support by an association of labourers on the ground, so that in resisting the claim the Tichborne family were seen to be doing a labourer out of his rights! The general public were in the thrall of Tichbornite sensationalism, so much so that such a contradiction didn’t matter as the cause was now more than the sum of its parts.

The criminal trial lasted 188 days; the Lord Chief Justice Cockburn began his charge to the jury on the 169th day of the trial and concluded on the 188th day – having talked for 20 days, ‘with a painful lucidity no journalist can rival.’ The jury was out for half an hour and found the defendant guilty on both counts of perjury. The defendant, now identified as Arthur Orton, was immediately sentenced to ‘seven years in penal
servitude for the first count of indictment and for a further term of seven years upon the second count.\textsuperscript{22}

Public attention in the case inevitably waned. The Claimant died destitute in 1898, but in a final act of defiance had himself buried under the name ‘Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne’. In its coverage of the funeral, the \textit{Daily Mail} observed, ‘The judges of the High Court were two years in determining that the living Tichborne was Orton. The Registrar of Births and Deaths determined in two minutes that the dead Orton was Tichborne.’\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Fit the third: The Medals}

Medals of the Victorian period were struck for an array of purposes. They were made to suit every social class, with the more elaborately engraved medals struck in gold, silver or bronze and ‘the cheapest variants minted in brass or in tin alloy generically albeit unimaginatively named white metal.’\textsuperscript{24} In the nineteenth century, medals sold or even given away in great numbers ‘enabled the ordinary citizen to…sympathise with a protest movement, display patriotic loyalty to the monarchy, or identify with a popular hero.’\textsuperscript{25} It was not uncommon for small holes to be drilled into the medals, enabling them to be pinned to the clothing and worn with pride. There were two such medals struck in support of the Tichborne Claimant, one in 1871 during his civil case (Figure 2) and the other in 1874 (Figure 3) after his criminal conviction. Both add a numismatic dimension to the \textit{cause célèbre}, because they conveyed different messages. The assured iconography of the earlier medal ‘expressed widespread public support for [the Claimant]’, and scepticism of the establishment. The more subdued message of the later medal, ‘after two defeats in the courts, reflected a much more polarised context.’\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{The 1871 Tichborne Claimant medal, obverse then reverse © The Philip M. Treves collection, Sidmouth, Devon UK, with permission.}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{22} Kinsley, ‘The Tichborne Case’ p.568.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{The Daily Mail}, 18 April 1898.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. p.13.
\end{footnotesize}
It is thought that both medals were likely to have been produced in Birmingham, as alongside London it was the main centre for manufacturing medals in the nineteenth century. The quality of the craftsmanship could vary and the choice of material is a signifier to the quality of the product and process. The 1871 medal would have targeted the mass market, it was struck in brass at 29mms wide; this example (Figure 2) has been pierced for wearing. The brass medal is not just ‘typically smaller’ than the later 1874 white metal version, which measures 42mm wide, but is also ‘cruder in layout, imagery and message’. Though malleable, brass did not afford the craftsman the same workability for capturing fine detail. Indeed, simply comparing the obverse of both medals illustrates this point, ‘where the 1874 profile sympathetically captures a romantic idealism and gravitas in the Claimant, the 1871 profile is a cruder portrayal lacking in artistic merit or emotional appeal.’ Though both were struck for the masses, the lack of craftsmanship, the absence of an engraver’s name and the apparent lack of artistic pride and material speak to the 1871 medal being a much cheaper piece of memorabilia. Interestingly, the 1874 medal is only known in white metal and the medallist A. G. Darby was a relatively unknown engraver with this piece being the only example attributed to him. Any diversity in memorabilia suggests a diversity of audience, these medals add to the growing cache of evidence that the ‘Claimant camp’ was not just full of the disenfranchised lower classes. What is clear is that both medals were politically charged in his favour.

The 1871 medal dates from the peak of the Claimant’s popularity and is the product of ‘Cartomania’, the fashionable hobby of collecting ‘album portraits’ or cartes de visite photographs portraying famous people. The enormous public interest in the Tichborne Case created a huge demand for such photographs and drove a strong market competition among the leading photographic studios in London. The reverse of the medal shows a mop-haired boy, surrounded with the legend ‘THE ALLEGED RIGHTFUL HEIR / AGE 5 YEARS’. It is an image of Henry Alfred Joseph Doughty

28 Ibid. p.14
30 See Spink’s Catalogue of British Commemorative Medals 1558 to the present day with valuations, published in 1984.
Tichborne, twelfth Baronet; the posthumous son of Sir Roger’s late younger brother, Alfred. Three narratives were created by placing the Claimant on the obverse with the ‘alleged’ rightful heir on the reverse; firstly, that the Claimant was a dignified ordinary citizen, secondly, that the foppish youth born into privilege was nothing more than an ‘alleged heir’ himself and lastly, that there may be some family resemblance in those round cheeks.

The flavour of the case in 1871 allowed the medal to be more anti-establishment; it depicted the individual fighting for justice in the face of a corrupt, prejudiced system – here illustrated by the young Henry; it was actively asking the public to choose a side. The more polarised context in which the second medal was struck was the aftermath of the Claimant being defeated in his criminal trial. No longer was the heroic vehicle for social change rallying mass crowds in public places, the Claimant was now a wrongfully imprisoned martyr, whose conviction only cemented anti-establishment feeling amongst the ranks. This is what is now expressed on the reverse of the new medal (Figure 3). A spiral layout commencing with an arrow chronicles the entire saga from the Claimant’s arrival in England to the Jury finding him guilty in February 1874, ‘the iconography cleverly portraying the defence case of a conspiracy against an innocent man seemingly trapped in an endless spiral of events.31 Though a different message, the medal was still a show of solidarity for both the man and the greater cause he had come to represent.

Fit the fourth: The Poem

The propaganda that accompanied the Tichborne Case through the Victorian social conscience was quite remarkable. The mobilisation of the mass media to the heels of this cause célèbre ensured that the case was elevated to almost mythical status.32 The hyper-sensationalist approach nudged the real-life case into the realms of farce and the burlesque. Punch magazine portrayed the claimant as a monster, nicknamed the ‘Waggawock’ after Lewis Carroll’s ‘Jabberwocky’: an immoral threat to the ordered world. The ‘Waggawock’ was an appropriate representation because Lewis Carroll was fascinated by the trial.33

Carroll’s personal feelings were seemingly of contempt for the case and specifically the Claimant’s counsel – he worked out that Edward Vaughan Kenearly could be anagrammed as ‘Ah! We dread an ugly knave’34 and parodied the Barrister in his epic nonsense poem The Hunting of the Snark. There is an unmistakable likeness in Henry Holiday’s original illustrations of the character and the carte-de-visite portrait of Kenearly from the trial (Figure 4).

32 In one cartoon published in the Englishman, Kenearly is portrayed as St George slaying the dragon of corruption, whilst trampling a character known to represent rival journal, Punch.
A more acute commentary on the Tichborne Case comes from Carroll’s fit entitled ‘The Barrister’s Dream’. While out hunting the Snark, the Barrister dreams he is in a court room where a pig is on trial for deserting its sty. The Snark is defending the pig and ‘spoke for hours before anyone guessed’ what it was the pig was charged with. The Jury all speak at once and dissent into confusion, the Snark then sums up the case on behalf of the Judge before exclaiming the verdict ‘GUILTY!’ and pronouncing the sentence:

> But their wild exultation was suddenly checked  
> When the jailer informed them, with tears,  
> Such a sentence would have not the slightest effect,  
> As the pig had been dead for some years.35

Reference to a lengthy trial, a verbose court speaker, transformative summation and a nonsensical judgement (rendered meaningless if one but cares to look at the peculiarities of the case i.e. is the defendant alive?), do hint at themes prevalent in Tichborne saga. This epic-poem can be read as a piece of anti-Claimant propaganda. In stark contrast to the medals, this artefact pokes fun at the trial and some of its key players. This poem is termed ‘nonsense’ because it deliberately lacks meaning, however it does speak to the ludicrous nature of chaos particularly in the law, it touches on logical

contradiction, and the search for identity. The Snark is a creature of ambiguity, it both exists and doesn’t exist, is both defined and undefined. Much like the Claimant, its identity is constantly in flux. The poem follows the hunt for such a creature, whilst also placing it at the centre of a court case. There are definite echoes of reality in Carroll’s verse, though at all times it is emphasising the ridiculous. Where the medals lifted the Claimant to almost heroic status, a cause to rally behind, this literary satire steps away from the detail and guffaws at the ludicrous nature of the entire saga and the chaos it descended into.

**Fit the fifth: Closing remarks**

‘One of the many reasons for the abiding interest in the Tichborne Claimant is fascination with identities and identification,’ and I think both artefacts speak to this. The medals allowed the common man to engage in popular culture, decide on the identity of the Claimant and in so doing, define themselves by choosing a side and rallying behind a cause. Carroll’s satire mocks the failings of a cumbersome system, but also those who submit to it blindly. The poem reeks of existentialist angst; it hunts for authenticity in the sensational and shows the importance of identity in establishing meaning. Both artefacts offer a unique insight into what is a fascinating case.

‘In the midst of the [meaning they were searching to find],
In the midst of [their satire] and glee,
[The Claimant’s case was pushed to the back of the mind],
For a Snark was a Boojum, you see.’

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Figure 1. On the left, the London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company’s image of Sir Roger Tichborne in 1854: © the National Portrait Gallery, London. On the right, the Claimant in the early 1870s: © the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure 2. The 1871 Tichborne Claimant medal, obverse then reverse © The Philip M. Treves collection, Sidmouth, Devon UK, with permission.

Figure 3. The 1874 Tichborne Claimant medal, obverse Sir Roger Tichborne then reverse.

Figure 4. On the left Henry Holiday’s illustration of the hunt, on the right a carte-de-visite portrait of Edward Keneally (1874), © London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company.
‘The Cult of Gloriana’ and the challenges it faced

In the 1590s, the ‘cult of Gloriana’ emerged publicly to promote the divinity of the monarch through official portraits and miniatures. Through his ‘Mask of Youth’ portraits Nicholas Hilliard provided the official depictions which emphasised that Elizabeth was God’s deputy on earth and that the institution of monarchy was eternal and godlike. This article will discuss the challenges to this ideology of the divine right through considering the key messages behind William Shakespeare’s Richard II. In Richard II Shakespeare asks the audience to question this believe of the divine right and presents an alternative view of kingship, based on hereditary rights and lawful conduct. A comparative analysis of Richard II and the portrait Queen Elizabeth I (1599) figure 1) known as the Hardwick portrait by the workshop of Nicholas Hilliard, will be undertaken to illustrate what the nature of these differing interpretations of monarchy were and how Elizabeth’s court responded.

By 1601 the political ideology of the divinity of the monarch, who was seen as God’s deputy on earth and so whose rule was only accountable to God, was beginning to be challenged. It was becoming increasingly clear that the discrepancy between the dream of peace and justice and the realities of the political world was not being addressed by Elizabeth’s government. In 1601, this culminated in open rebellion led by her previous favourite the Earl of Essex. Six months after it was suppressed, Elizabeth I is reported by William Lambarde as providing this response to his chronicle Pandecta Rotulorum when they came to discuss one of her predecessors, Richard II who had faced a similar situation:

I am Richard, know ye not that. He that will forget God will forget his benefactors: this tragedy was played forty times in the open streets and houses.

1 John Guy Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years (London: Random House 2016 ) p.345
2 Ibid.
3 Roy Strong, Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered 1520-1640 (London: Victoria and Albert Museum 1983) p.128 please note this will be known as the ‘Hardwick’ portrait throughout the rest of the article
4 Stanley Wells ‘Introduction’ in Richard II (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011) Please note this is the version I will be using throughout this article 1-118
5 Ibid
6 Ibid.
7 Guy, Elizabeth p.345
8 Ibid. p.345
Guy suggests that Elizabeth believed that the Earl of Essex, by criticising her rule as well as rebelling, had forgotten to respect the divine royal status and through doing so, had sinned against God. Guy argues Elizabeth is recognising that like Richard, due to her childlessness, she was vulnerable and the question of succession was still unresolved which had led to instability in the realm.  

This political world which it seems Elizabeth and her government were largely ignoring was, as Guy suggests, one of the most unstable in history. This was due to the unresolved question of succession as well as the social and economic crisis of the time, with high food prices due to several harvest failures as well as the long war with Spain. During this period there were areas of contention with her closest advisers

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9 William Shakespeare ‘Introduction’ in Richard II (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011) Please note this is the version I will be using throughout this article 1-118
10 Ibid
11 Ibid
especially William Cecil. Cecil’s priority at this time was more about ensuring the security of the Protestant realm whereas Elizabeth was more focused on securing the rights of the divinely appointed monarch. The granting of Royal Monopolies became one area where the policy of the monarch was questioned by the wider public, especially in parliament. This controversy, fuelled by public opinion led Elizabeth to take a course of action that was anathema to her, that of having to make concessions regarding these monopolies to parliament, so she could secure the finances needed to continue the war in Ireland. These finances were only granted once these concessions were agreed. Elizabeth found herself being held accountable to public opinion for the conduct of her ministers and councillors to ensure the funding she required.12 Guy suggests that after this episode there were still some councillors who were unhappy and ‘Elizabeth might not have believed herself accountable to the people but the problem now was that others did.’13

Elizabeth and her government recognized that much of her power came from being able to sanctify her persona through using imagery and unauthorised images challenged this power base. The mythologising of her virginity was also utilised as part of a ‘calculated projection of her unique place and role.’14 Elizabeth’s government issued various proclamations throughout her reign to try and control the royal image such as in 1563, where controls over anything that ‘gave royal offence’15 led to only authorised prototypes being used. These authorised prototypes provided a standard depiction of Elizabeth which included ‘a head of hair loaded with crowns and powdered with diamonds, a vast ruff or farthingale and pearls.’16 This control was tightened in the 1590s as it was recognized that the realistic image of Elizabeth would need to be abandoned. It was thought that any lifelike depiction would emphasise the fact that the succession had not been secured as Elizabeth was childless.

There was also a general hostility to the idea of an unmarried female who was childless having any power.17 In 1594 a decision was taken that the official image of Elizabeth would be one of ageless beauty. The standardised face pattern for royal portraits was then developed by Nicholas Hilliard and his workshop based on this image. These pictures produced in the 1590s onwards have been given the title ‘the Mask of Youth’18 as they were used to promote this ideal of eternal youth and beauty rather than any form of reality. The key of any depiction was to highlight the glory of the nation through emphasizing the magnificence of the dress and the jewels that Elizabeth wore rather than focusing on Elizabeth as an individual. The primary aim of the state portrait was also to invoke an image of immortalisation of the monarch which

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12 Ibid
13 Ibid p. 361
14 Howard Maurice, The Tudor Image (London: Tate Gallery 1995)
18 Strong, Artists of the Tudor Court
reflected the humanist appeal to antiquity where Elizabeth became the embodiment of kingship.¹⁹

Royal portraits were owned by a narrow section of society and were often commissioned by prominent nobles, such as the Hardwick portrait. This portrait exemplifies the desire of the nobility to highlight the power and social standing of the buyer as well as portraying this ‘Mask of Youth’ imagery.²⁰ It was commissioned by Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury and completed in about 1599.²¹ It was hung at Hardwick Hall in the Long Gallery where it would have had the most impact on visitors, becoming a focal point as it was becoming fashionable to assemble these portraits as part of a collection. At this time the portrait had already become what Strong calls the ‘outmoded aesthetic and typifies how out of touch this official version of the glory of kingship had become. This can be seen by the fact that the portrait is characterized by a ‘rigid, hieratic expression and almost depicted as an impersonal image.’²² This is reinforced by the emotionless face which is part of this ‘mask of youth’. Instead the sacred nature of the monarch as well as the glory of the nation is the most prominent feature. The ornate dress and the jewels along with the fan are all part of the symbolism used to promote this message.²³ The gown incorporates the imagery of royal celebration as well as dominance. Two illusory messages of peace and youth are symbolized by the fan with is a possible allusion to Cynthia, the moon goddess, who was the symbol of youthful regeneration.²⁴ The naturalistic animals in the gown do seem to contrast with the mask-like face but this could, instead of portraying any form of realism, be sending out a political message. The message is that the peaceful realm of England provides refuge against any threat or monster and the monarch is implacable against this threat. The portrait also contains pearls, symbols of purity, emphasising monarchial chastity and virtue. The other standard symbols of the Tudor monarchy are present, including the white and red flowers which seems to emphasise the unity that the Tudors have brought to the nation.

This lack of reality began to fuel an alternative view of how the monarch should be portrayed.²⁵ It can be argued that Shakespeare’s Richard II was part of this questioning of the official portrayal. Shakespeare’s historical sources included Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland (1577)²⁶ but historical accuracy was not his primary aim. He was more focused on considering the contemporary political situation. A special performance was commissioned by the supporters of the Earl of Essex just before the rebellion in 1601. It was seen to have resonance with some of the

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¹⁹ Strong, Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I
²⁰ Strong, Artists of the Tudor Court
²¹ Strong, Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I p.150
²² Hardwick Hall Hardwick Hall (National Trust 1996) p.65
²³ Strong, Gloriana: The Portraits of Elizabeth I
²⁵ Andrew, Hadfield. Shakespeare and Republicanism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008)
²⁶ Hadfield. Shakespeare and Republicanism p.150
key aims of the rebellion, such as the removal of bad councillors. Wells sees Richard II as the ‘Divine Right Play’ as the crucial debate revolves around the question as to whether it is acceptable for the monarch to rule outside the law, even if they are God’s deputy on earth. Initially Shakespeare seems to endorse the view, as Gaunt warns the Duchess of Gloucester that she cannot take revenge on God’s appointed for the murder of her husband,

GAUNT God’s is the quarrel, for God’s substitute,
    His deputy anointed in his sight
    hath caused his death, the which if wrongfully
    let heaven revenge, for I may never lift
    An angry arm against his minister. (I. 2. 36-41.)

It can be argued that as the play progresses the divine right is questioned by what Hadfield calls Republicanism. Republicanism was at the time an intellectual conviction that it was necessary to control the power of the monarch by establishing a means of ensuring that there were virtuous advisers, who would have the constitutional right to counsel the monarch and influence his or her actions, so they acted within the limits of the law. This form of republicanism was propagated in the universities, as well as the Inns of Court, and was promoted through theatrical productions such as Marlow’s Tamburlaine the Great part I. Hadfield argues that even if Shakespeare was not directly influenced by this group, he was potentially interested in exploring how political institutions function. He was also interested in how individuals came to occupy offices of state, whether it was by virtue or favouritism. These interests are highlighted throughout Richard II but they are used specifically as justification for Bolingbroke’s rebellion. Richard’s reliance on favourites, ‘the Caterpillars of the Commonwealth’ (2.3.165), and the lack of wise counsel to control his power has led him to ignore the law, threaten traditional hereditary rights and thus has brought about the current disorder within the realm. Bolingbroke makes it clear, that the removal of these councillors will restore the nation to its former glory. This is then explored in more depth through the prolonged metaphor which goes to make up the Garden Scene, as Shakespeare promotes the idea of England as the Garden of Eden which is being destroyed by corrupt councillors. This then supports Hadfield’s argument that Shakespeare was willing to explore the ideas of republicanism within his work as it is only through virtuous councillors that the balance of power can be restored. Wells proposes Shakespeare is asking the audience to think about the

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27 Wells ‘Introduction’ p.16
28 Stanley Wells, ‘Introduction’ in Richard II p.16
29 Shakespeare, Richard II p.147
30 Hadfield, Shakespeare and Republicanism p.17
31 Hadfield, Shakespeare and Republicanism
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid. p.53
34 Shakespeare Richard II p.200
nature of political authority and under what circumstances is it legitimate to resist, which is something that the Duke of York will not allow himself to do.\textsuperscript{36} This was part of the idea being expounded at the time, that individual conscience could allow the demands of political obedience to be overturned when there was a need to carry out a higher service regarding the individual’s salvation.\textsuperscript{37} The papacy reinforced this message from 1570 onwards when the pope legitimized, as far as Catholics were concerned, the right to resist the monarch. This was further supported by Catholic writers such as Cardinal William Allen, who in the Declaration of the Sentence of Sixtius I,\textsuperscript{38} incited Roman Catholics in England to rise up against Elizabeth. Protestants were also writing about this issue of legitimacy, with the potential need to rise up against a Catholic monarch due to the continuing perceived threat of invasion from Spain. In Richard II it can be argued that resistance is not just about individual salvation but the nation’s, thus lending plausibility to the idea that it is the nation that is the embodiment of the divine and not the monarch. Even this concept could be construed as a challenge to monarchical legitimacy or at least to the official political doctrine of the time, which was that it was a sin against God to rebel against the monarch even if it was to restore order to the realm.\textsuperscript{39}

Wells suggests one of the pivotal concepts to the challenge of the divine right is that Shakespeare presents two different ideas as to what monarchical rights are based upon.\textsuperscript{40} The first idea is that the monarch is the servant of the commonwealth where their rule is assured by the common law and parliament as well as popular opinion, which is ignored at a cost. Bolan takes this view further by contrasting the attitude taken by Richard, who enslaves his people and acts if their interests are unimportant, with Bolingbroke, who recognises the need to engage with the common people and uses popular opinion to his advantage.\textsuperscript{41} The other component of kinship that Shakespeare presents to his audience, is to ask them to consider the idea that kingship did not depend on God’s will, but on the legal of inheritance. Gaunt’s deathbed speech lends weight to this argument as Gaunt principles suggests that Richard is a landlord of the realm not its embodiment.\textsuperscript{42} ‘Landlord of England art thou now, not king, thy state of law is bondslave to the law.’ (2. 1. 113.)\textsuperscript{43}

This idea of the monarch being the servant of the commonwealth, whose rule is assured by common law is explored in more depth as an underlying theme by considering what happens when the monarch breaks this law. Bolingbroke when he rebels makes it clear from the start that his primary aim is to restore his rights,
which have been seized from him unlawfully. He emphasises this as justification for the rebellion when he says to the Duke of York ‘a wandering vagabond, my rights and royalties plucked from my arms perforce and given away’ (2. 3. 119-20). It can be argued that Shakespeare is suggesting that there are limits to royal authority, as even the monarch’s actions have to be within the bounds of the law, respecting the hereditary rights of his leading aristocrats. Ultimately Shakespeare was making political comments which was part of the counter discussion which challenged the official stance of the time, a Betts suggests: ‘Every celebration of the Queen’s eternal reign invited a counter discussion in which her waning authority could be more accurately represented.’

Elizabeth’s strategy, if there was one, for addressing any challenges was to carry out various stage-managed appearances as well as expecting her court to endorse her sacred image through commissioning portraits which then fed into this ‘cult’. When discussing the ‘cult of Gloriana’ there has to be clarification as to what is meant by this term. The most appropriate definition in this context seems to be that it denotes a system of inspiring devotion and worship attached to an individual. Elizabeth did try to control her image which can be seen by the various official proclamations such as the one in 1563 which prohibited giving ‘offence’ as well as a standardisation of her portrayal. None of these pieces of evidence seem to indicate that there was a systematic strategy by Elizabeth or her government to promote the worship of the queen, but does point to a desire on the part of her court to control the image of kingship as evidenced by the destruction of any unauthorised portraits. Doran makes the point that a more accurate way of describing this desire to promote this immortalisation instead of using the word ‘cult’ is that authors as well as courtiers and government officials ‘commissioned and created the royal images themselves within certain prescribed limits.’ This was to advance their own position but with some it also indicated courtly love and loyalty to the queen. Doran’s interpretation seems more plausible than any desire to promote the systematic worship of the monarchy. This interpretation does need to be treated with caution as these official representations still had legitimacy and authority and were regularly manipulated to send out the required messages to the populace, otherwise there would not have been the need for the political debate or counter culture, as exemplified by Richard II.

44 Ibid p.198
45 Hannah Betts ‘“The Image of this Queen so quaynt” The Pornographic Blazon 1588-1603 ‘ in Dissing Elizabeth ed. Walker p.176
47 Guy, Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years p.345
49 Strong, Gloriana p. 147
50 Doran, ‘Virginity, Divinity and Power’ p.192
51 Ibid. p.192
Overall the presentation of monarchy to the public in *Richard II* and the *Hardwick* portrait is different in its focus but there are some common concepts. Both highlight the immortalisation of the monarch, the recognition that even though the present incumbent is mortal the institution of monarchy is not. There are the traditional features ascribed to visual depictions of the nature of kingship which include similar types of classical symbolism used through metaphorical representations of the monarch either as a God or Goddess. Richard often alludes to himself as the Sun God, as the sun image was often linked to royalty, and Elizabeth is portrayed with symbols of Cynthia the moon goddess. This symbolism suggests that the monarch is the source of light and regeneration for the realm. Both, it can be argued, depicted the idealisation of the nation rather than the individual, so that the identity of the monarch almost becomes incidental.

One of the main challenges to this prescribed image making, was that outside the court the impact of this official imagery such as that depicted within the *Hardwick* portrait would have been limited, as Guy argues the Queen was no more than a distant name to many ordinary people.52 Elizabeth’s government did try various ways of promoting and responding to any negative imagery or criticism. This included regular proclamations which were to be read out in every parish church, but this did not always occur. Sharpe suggests that despite these official messages, there were still rumours and criticism that circulated against Elizabeth especially in the last decade of her rule. There were also the beginnings of the more widespread production of commemorative medals which helped to present her image and the monarchy to a wider audience. Sharpe highlights that there was still a desire for those with money to possess images of the monarch and the medals were one of the most accessible way of obtaining her likeness.53 The court also responded by predominately focused on the production of miniatures which promoted this ideal of courtly love and sacred monarchy, thus reinforcing the message that the monarch was divine. Doran highlights that all of these visual presentations would have only reached a small population especially the miniatures. The coins were an exception but she suggests any imagery on these coins would have been largely ignored.54 This contrasts with *Richard II* which could have been seen by as many as a thousand people at any one time, including those who were not part of those that could afford any of the other visual representations of monarchy. Wells sees *Richard II* as Shakespeare looking to educate the audience in the practice of debating and judging the issues of the day, which he would have been able to do with these numbers.55

In the last decade of Elizabeth’s reign, despite this official desire to promote the continued sacredness of monarchy it had become open to question, both politically

52 Guy, Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years p.402
54 Doran ‘Virginity Divinity and Power’ p.19
55 Wells ‘Introduction’
and culturally. Neither of these depictions were aiming to overthrow the institution of monarchy but the chivalric and ceremonial symbolism in both exemplifies the fundamental ideological differences between these two depictions of kingship. The Hardwick portrait is part of this desire to hide the unpleasant truth and preserve this illusory image of the divine power of kingship, whilst Richard II highlights how these ceremonies and rituals hide what is truly going on within the state at the time. Shakespeare provides his audience with a different version of the nature of monarchy and it is not necessarily divine.

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Hardwick Hall: *Hardwick Hall* (National Trust 1996)

Illustration

Figure 1. *Queen Elizabeth I*, Workshop of Nicholas Hilliard (1599) Oil on Canvas, 88” x 66.5”, Hardwick Hall reproduced with permission of the National Trust
Christian Verdú

‘Me thinks I see the love that shall be made’: two Restoration views of St James Park

The Restoration saw a strong dependence of the visual arts and verbal arts upon each other. This paper analyses one painting and one poem about a public space closely connected to the monarchy: St James Park, to illustrate how different artistic media could express contrasting views on Charles II’s self-fashioning as an approachable yet regal figure, and how sexual slander was used by both court wits and parliamentarian poets to debunk the painterly idioms of court portraiture and landscaping.

Charles II was the first English king to pursue popularity by means of an image of ordinariness. It was an image he fashioned with an astute political sense, being aware that an English society transformed by civil war, regicide and republic would not endorse the Personal Rule attempted by his father. “A subject and a sovereign are clear different things”, declared Charles I on the scaffold: determined to avoid his father’s political miscalculations and to restore the monarchy durably, Charles II would endeavour to fashion himself as a bonhomous monarch. He was also determined to reconnect with the Elizabethan and early Stuart tradition of public processions and pageants, which had done so much to consolidate Elizabeth I and James I’s public image, and which his father had forsaken at his own risk, preferring, as he did, to perform in the grand masques designed by Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson for the court’s eyes only.

As part of Charles II’s self-fashioning project, programmes of architectural work and royal display played an important role right from the beginning of the Restoration. As early as 1664, John Evelyn would write: ‘It would be no Paradox, but a Truth, to affirme, that Your Majesty has already Built and Repair’d more in three or four Years (...) than all Your Enemies have destroy’d in Twenty.’1 One of the places in London that underwent a major transformation was St James Park; here, Charles II spent £400 on a lodge, £1,700 on bringing water from Hyde Park to create a canal, where he then would float gondolas given him by the Doge of Venice, and he bought plants and flowers for the gardens at an exorbitant price. A wall was built to protect these

1 John Evelyn, ‘To the Most Serene Majesty of Charles the Second’, in A parallel of the antient architecture with the modern in a collection of ten principal authors who have written upon the five orders by Fréart, Roland, sieur de Chambray. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A31653.0001.001> [Accessed: 4 March 2017]
treasures, which cost £2,400, funded from prize money in the Dutch wars.² When in London, the king would often enjoy a walk in this public space, sometimes with no attendants, making his body public and approachable by his subjects.

Sycophants were quick to commend the new park: prominent among them was Edmund Waller, who in his poem *On Saint James Park, As Lately Improved by His Majesty*, praised it in heroic couplets, stressing its connection to Whitehall Palace and to dynastic display (‘In such green Palaces the first Kings reign’d (...) Here Charles contrives the ordering of his States’)³ and depicting it as a new garden of Eden: ‘Me thinks I see the love that shall be made / lovers walking in that amorous shade; / the gallants dancing by the river’s side; / they bathe in summer, and in winter slide’.⁴

But by the 1670s any public space connected to the monarchy would have been tainted by Charles II’s scandalous sex life, as the king was increasingly criticised by both parliamentarian poets such as Marvell and court poets like Rochester, and his public image came increasing closer to the ‘Prince who is his Pleasures Slave’ in Rochester’s *Lucina’s Rape*.⁵

This paper analyses two artefacts from the early 1670s which reflect the tensions in this policy of public display; *Whitehall from St James’s Park*, a painting by Hendrick Danckerts from c. 1674-5 (fig. 1); and *A Ramble in St James Park*, a poem by John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester, from c. 1672-3. While neither of these were

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³ Waller, *A Poem on St. James’s Park As lately improved by his Maiesty* [http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A31653.0001.001] [Accessed: 27 February 2017]
⁴ Ibid. 21-4
conceived as a propaganda piece, and neither are primarily concerned with St James Park, the contrasting views they produce of a public space closely connected to the king illustrate how Charles II’s scandalous private life had started to impinge on the intended public image devised by the monarch.

The painting

While allegorical and actual landscapes formed an important background to Van Dyck’s royal portraits, there were few landscapes commissioned by Charles I. By contrast his son, following his return to England, appointed Hendrick Danckerts, another Dutch artist, as a painter of ‘prospect pictures and landskips’. Danckerts was a Catholic who would have to flee England during the Popish plot, but by 1688 there were twenty-nine works by him in the Royal Collection; fifteen of which remain today. One of these is Whitehall from St James Park; a landscape depicting Whitehall Palace in the background, with the king and his retinue in the foreground as they enjoy a walk in St James Park. English landscapes of the period are often permeated with a sense of prosperity and wellbeing (precisely the impression which Charles II would wish to convey) and this is no exception: king, courtiers, soldiers, town people, deer and fowl cohabit peacefully in the shadow of Whitehall Palace.

But the implicit geography of the palace, which would be obvious to contemporary viewers of the painting, would kindle less pastoral feelings. Contemporaries would be well aware that the Banqueting Hall (the only component of the Palace that remains today) was not only the former setting of the Stuart kings’ court masques but also the place of Charles I’s execution. Furthermore, the window frame through which he stepped out onto the scaffold can be explicitly seen in the painting (fig. 2).
The labyrinthine complex of the Palace of Whitehall was also host to Charles II’s mistresses: Louise de Kérouaille, the unpopular French mistress whom many said was an agent of Louis XIV and was directly blamed for the dissolution of Parliament, had moved in in 1671. Evelyn described its magnificent apartments:

Following his Majesty this morning through the gallery, I went, with the few who attended him, into the Duchess of Portsmouth's dressing room within her bed-chamber, (...) that which engaged my curiosity was the rich and splendid furniture of this woman's apartment, now twice or thrice pulled down and rebuilt to satisfy her prodigal and expensive pleasures, whilst her Majesty's does not exceed some gentlemen's ladies in furniture and accommodation. Here I saw the new fabric of French tapestry, for design, tenderness of work, and incomparable imitation of the best paintings, beyond anything I had ever beheld. Some pieces had Versailles, St. Germain, and other palaces of the French King, with hunting, figures, and landscapes, exotic fowls, and all to the life rarely done.6

Although the Duchess's lodgings are not visible in the painting (they were on the river side), the presence of the royal mistress at Whitehall and the lavish lifestyle that the king allowed her and other mistresses, would have been very much in the mind of contemporary viewers, as by this time many court lampoons and parliamentarian poems denouncing the court's salaciousness had achieved wide circulation. In Bishop Burnet's words, the court was 'full of pimps and bawds, and all matters in which one desires to succeed, must be put in their hands.'7 Evelyn’s stress on ‘French tapestries’

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and on pieces which ‘had Versailles, St. Germains, and other palaces of the French King’ is hardly fortuitous: since about 1673 the court had underwent a shift toward a more French-oriented stance. This French connection is obvious in the painting once we stop considering the mazy, messy Tudor palace and follow the procession of the king and his retinue as they walk down the Old Staircase (fig. 3) in the middle of the painting to stroll down the alleys of St James Park, which form a trident in the French formal manner.

The French architect Le Nôtre, consulted by the king’s mother about the park’s redesign, had actually recommended that the rural atmosphere of the formal deer park be preserved, but Henrietta Maria, who had been allotted St James’s Palace on her return to England, longed for the jardins à la Française of her exile in Fontainebleau, and resorted to Le Nôtre’s rival André Mollet to impose a formal layout of patte d’oie. It is not surprising therefore, that Danckerts’s view of the English court’s walk in the radial alleys of St James Park strongly echoes Allegrain’s painting celebrating Versailles and the promenade of Louis XIV in its famous gardens (fig. 4).

Another signature feature of the French formal garden is the canal, seen to the right of the picture: built at great expense by bringing water from Hyde Park, this straight, ornamental sheet of water was 2,800 feet long and 100 feet wide and ran along the long axis of the Park. The king was probably proud of this achievement since Waller did not fail to state in his sycophantic poem that ‘its of more renown / to make a River then to build a Town’.⑧ Danckerts himself cleverly highlights the importance of this formal feature: contrary to many of his landscapes, where he liked to place bird formations in the skies, all the birds in the painting are basking in the canal created by the bountiful monarch.

⑧ Edmund Waller, On St. James’s Park 11-12
French influence was perhaps unavoidable since Charles had spent nearly two years in the orbit of the French Court. It ranged from landscape gardens and mistresses to sartorial matters: even after his restoration he preferred the Parisian style in tailoring. But he knew it to be unpopular and eventually relinquished it. Thus, in the painting he can be seen wearing the so-called ‘Persian vest’ which he had put into fashion some six or seven years before as a reaction to the former French combination of doublet, petticoat and breeches (fig. 5), as John Evelyn recalls in his diary. The contrast between anti-French fashion and the very Versailles-like view of the king and his courtiers in the French formal park is illustrative of the constant negotiation between contrasting interests and influences in Charles II’s self-fashioning project.

At any rate, the St James Park of Danckerts’ painting is suffused with the pastoral overtones that permate also Waller’s poem. Rochester’s poem, as will now be seen, produces a much more cynical view of the same London public space, where, in the dead of night, order and harmony are replaced with ‘rambling’ and the orderly alleys of the park regress to a primeval forest.

The poem

The Earl of Rochester was part of the inner-circle of court wits. As a Fellow of the Bedchamber, whose task it was to sleep in an alcove in the Royal bedchamber, he would have had first-hand knowledge of many of the salacious scenes that informed the court’s scandalous reputation and that he himself would exploit in many court lampoons. His poem *A Ramble in St James Park*, though, is not a court lampoon: it belongs to the satirical sub-genre of the ramble poem which narrates an expedition by a disreputable male into the city by night in search of drink and prostitutes. In it, the author wanders in the park at night in search of his beloved Corinna and finds her involved in the sexual orgies that take place among the bushes. As Love points

9 John Evelyn, *Diary*, 18th October, 1666
out, the sub-theme of an upper-class male's infatuation with a whore was echoed in real life by Prince Rupert's for Peg Hughes; Thomas, Lord Colepeper's for Sue Willis; and Edward Mountagu, Earl of Sandwich's for Becky Becke; it would also resonate with the King's infatuation with Nell Gwynn, the former orange-seller and probable prostitute who had had recently borne him two children.¹⁰

Rochester's *St James Park* has little to do with the pastoral setting of Danckerts's painting: to this notorious *débauché*, 'park-time' is, like in Wycherley's *Love in a Wood*, a code-word for sexual cruising.¹¹ In this he is not alone, as the park at night, was a well-known centre for street prostitution. The pickup area, in the southwest corner near Rosamond's pond (close to what is now Buckingham Palace), became so well known that the theatres acquired stock flats depicting it for use in comedies. It was actually so popular that in 1678 the King had to instruct Sir Christopher Wren to repair the wall and to take action against trespassers, because:

several persons have without leave put up doors in the wall of St. James' Park and others have broken through the park wall about the Old Spring Gardens and put up doors there, which gives occasion to many inconveniences by affording passage and retreat to lewd and disorderly persons.¹²

These 'lewd and disorderly persons' are the protagonists of Rochester's poem, when night has fallen and the orderly crowd of Danckerts's painting has given way to a rabble of ramblers ('to ramble' meaning, here, 'to rove loosely in lust'):

Unto this All-sin-sheltring Grove,
Whores of the Bulk, and the Alcove,
Great Ladies, ChamberMaids, and Drudges,
The Ragpicker, and Heiress trudges:
Carr-men, Divines, great Lords, and Taylors,
Prentices, Poets, Pimps and Gaolers
Foot-Men, fine Fops, do here arrive,
And here promiscuously they swive.

Interestingly, this inventory stresses the fact that this nocturnal crowd is more diverse than the fashionable *Town* people and courtiers that wander through the alleys of the park during the day: the park may have been officially opened to the public by royal decree, but it is sex, the great leveller, which manages to bring together Town, City and Court and turn the park into a truly democratic space.

¹⁰ John Wilmot, second earl of Rochester, 'Poems probably by Rochester: Flytings and Invectives: A Ramble in St James's Park', in Harold Love (ed.), *The Works of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, note 0.1
Furthermore, the colourful sartorial particularities that, in the painting, identify the social standing of their wearers (such as the scarlet uniforms and the ensign of the soldiers identifying them as Coldstream Guards) no longer apply: in the park, at night, when all cats are grey, vision has been replaced by a more primitive sense: flair. And flair boils down this heterogeneous mix of lords, ladies, coachmen and prostitutes to their common condition of mammals in heat. Hence Rochester’s brutal description of the ramblers as dogs following the scent of a bitch:

> a proud Bitch does lead about,
> Of humble Currs, the Amorous rout'
> Who most obsequiously do hunt,
> The sav'ry scent of Saltswolne Cunt

Not only animal nature has regressed: the vegetal world has also regressed to its primeval state, and the galleries of trees of the French formal garden that Waller praised have reverted here to their pre-Tudor state of wilderness. This victory of nature upon nurture is Rochester’s way to mock the king’s public project, and he makes it clear by parodying some verses of Waller’s poem: ‘Next this my Muse / (what most delights her) sees / A living Gallery of aged Trees, / Bold Sons of Earth, that thrust their arms so high / As if once more they would invade the sky.’

Rochester’s outré vision of the trees becomes:

> Rowes of Mandrakes tall did rise,
> Whose lewd Tops Fuck’d the very Skies.
> Each imitative Branch does twine,
> In some lov’d fold of Aretine.

The ‘lov’d fold of Aretine’ that each lascivious tree branch imitates refers to a set of engravings by Marcantonio Raimondi of pornographic illustrations by Giulio Romano, first issued in 1524, which were later supplied with sonnets by Pietro Aretino. They were a favourite with Rochester, who is said to have had a set of paintings based on Romano’s illustrations at the ranger’s lodge at Woodstock, and with many libertines, so that the aforementioned verse would have immediately summoned up, in most of the poem’s readers, very specific images of intercourse (fig. 6 and fig. 7).

Waller’s verses ‘Me thinks I see the love that shall be made, / The gallants dancing in the Amorous shade’ are also crudely parodied as ‘And Nightly now beneath their shade, / Are Bugg’ries, Rapes, and Incests made’. Indeed, there is nothing left, in the poem, of the pastoral vision of Danckerts’s painting and Waller’s verses. Trees are gone wild; respectable citizens have become dogs in heat; the canal has disappeared, and the water motif is reduced to unsavoury allusions to body fluids, as in

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13 Waller, On St James Park 65-8
14 Waller, Ibid. 21-2
Fig. 6: Giulio Romano (c. 1524). Engraving. In Pietro Aretino, Sonetti supra i “XIV modi” (Rome, Salerno Editrice, 2006) p. 22

Fig. 7: Giulio Romano (c. 1524). Engraving. In Pietro Aretino, Sonetti supra i “XIV modi” (Rome, Salerno Editrice, 2006) p. 44
'My Dram of Sperm, was supt up after, / For the digestive Surfeit Water’. The whole park becomes an actor in an extravagant orgy of cosmic proportions that can be read as an extended metaphor for the scandalous reputation of Charles II’s court.

In conclusion, by eroticising the public space, Rochester brings into question the public persona of a monarch who, in his pursuit of popularity, had shrewdly reconnected with the Elizabethan tradition of public display (preserved in commissions like Danckerts’s *Whitehall from St. James Park*) and strived to command reverence without relinquishing an image of ordinariness, but eventually allowed his scandalous sexual lifestyle to compromise this project.

The relation of *A ramble in St James’s Park* to *Whitehall from St. James Park* can be read retroactively as an avatar of the mock-heroic *Last Instructions to a Painter*, by Andrew Marvell, where the established idioms of court portraiture are brought into question by describing an imaginary painting where Charles II falls short of raping Britannia herself:

Paint last the King, and a dead shade of Night,  
Only dispers'd by a weak Tapers light;  
(....) Naked as born, and her round Arms behind,  
With her own Tresses interwove and twin'd:  
Her mouth lockt up, a blind before her Eyes,  
Yet from beneath the Veil her blushes rise;  
He wonder'd first, then pity'd, then he lov'd:  
And with kind hand does the coy Vision press,  
Whose Beauty greater seem'd by her distress;  
But soon shrunk back, chill'd with her touch so cold,  
And th' airy Picture vanisht from his hold.  
In his deep thoughts the wonder did increase,  
And he Divin'd 'twas England or the Peace.'

In Rochester, as in Marvell, sexual slander has become the lingua franca to describe the court as well as the private and public spaces associated with it, the ultimate point being that England itself has become, under Charles II’s rule, yet another object of the monarch’s basest appetites.

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PART II

EXCLUDING THE OTHER
Edward VI's dying thoughts were of the looming threat to his kingdom of 'papistrye'. Others at the same time shared this concern: William Baldwin’s *Beware the Cat* alludes to the threat of Catholicism obliquely in terms of a potential political significance, whereas the painting *King Edward VI and the Pope* painted during Elizabeth’s reign, takes anti-Catholic rhetoric further, by emphasising the threat from a clearly defined and individual political figure – the Pope. This shift reflects Elizabethan concerns of the time and the need, through reference to Edward, to legitimise Elizabeth’s own position as the head of the Church of England.

On 6 July 1553, three hours before his death, the fifteen-year-old Edward VI with closed eyes, made his final prayer to God. Having asked for deliverance out of ‘this miserable and wretched lyfe’ he then remembered his Christian teaching, tempering that request by humbly asking ‘howbeit not my wyll, but thy will be done.’¹ Calling on God’s blessing for the people of England, he then bequeathed to those very same people a future of religious uncertainty and turbulence with the words, ‘Oh my Lorde God defende this Realme from papistrye…’

There were five witnesses to this private prayer, including the staunchly protestant Sir Thomas Wroth and Sir Henry Sidney, and whether of course this is a strictly accurate account of what was said, particularly since one of the attending doctors is reported to have told the king that ‘we hearde you speake to your selfe, but what ye sayde, we knowe not’, we cannot know with any certainty. What is of interest however is that Edward’s final concern was at least understood by his subjects to be the spectre of Catholicism. Perhaps it is no surprise then that William Baldwin’s *Beware the Cat* was written at about the time of Edward’s death, and the unknown artist of *King Edward VI and the Pope*, working twenty-two years after the death of the king, nevertheless chose as the focus of his work the reign of Edward VI. This article will examine the messages that the author and artist were attempting to convey in their respective works in relation to the position occupied by Catholicism during the reign of Edward VI.

¹ Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before his death – Mtt 26:39
VI, and with regards of *King Edward VI and the Pope*, why an Edwardian setting was so essential to the artist.

*Beware the Cat* by William Baldwin is considered the first English novel, and is an odd and often unsettling satirical read, with in places a distinctly anti-Catholic bias. It dates from 1553, the final year of Edward VI’s reign, although it remained unpublished until 1570, when anti-Catholic propaganda began to flourish following the northern rebellion of 1569 and the failure by northern Catholic nobles to depose Elizabeth in favour of Mary, Queen of Scots. The structure of the book is three interlocking stories or *Orations*, recounted by a fictional narrator Gregory Streamer, ‘a divine’. Streamer’s first Oration is an account of a strange tale concerning a Staffordshire man who is accosted one day by a talking cat that wants to pass on the baffling message that ‘Grimalikin is dead.’ Reaching home, the man recounts the story of the talking cat to his wife and household, but ‘when he had told them all the cats message, his cat, which had hearkened unto the tale, looked upon him sadly, and at last said, “And is Gramalkin dead? then farewell dame!” and therewith went her way and was never seen after.’ This story, although on its face perhaps nothing more than a simple story of nonsense, and indeed this is how some of the fictional listeners in the story view it, does on another level pose the question, how did the domestic cat know of Grimalkin in the first place, and what hold did Grimalkin have over that cat to make it want to leave the comfort of its Staffordshire home? Baldwin intimates by this tale and the allegorical use of cats that there exists a whole network of secret communication and affiliation amongst certain sectors of society, of which the rest of society is unaware.

The next story recounts the death of Grimalkin in Ireland. It begins with two men, a kern (a Gaelic soldier) and his horse keeper, stealing cattle and hiding in a church. They cook a sheep, at which point the she-cat Grimalkin enters and demands to be fed, going on to eat an entire sheep and cow. The kern kills Grimalkin but during an ensuing fight with a group of cats which come to Grimalkin’s aid, the other man is killed, leaving the kern to return home to his wife and tell the tale. Upon hearing of his adventure however, ‘… a kitten which his wife kept, scarce half a yere old, had heard, up she starts and said, “Hast thou killed Grimallykin?” and therwith plunged in his face, and with her teeth took him by the throat, and ere that she could be plucked away, she had strangled him’. Again we see the secret network at play, and the kitten responding to a higher authority than that of its mistress, but this time prepared to kill in response to it.

The fictional narrator Streamer and his companions then discuss the plausibility of the story just recounted, and it is here that the anti-Catholic bias becomes apparent. Grimalkin is said to wield the same power over cats ‘as the Pope hath had ere this over all Christendom, in whose cause all his clergy would not only scratch and bite, but kill and burn to powder though they know not why, whom so ever they thought to think against him’. Here Baldwin equates the unthinking obedience of cats towards
Grimalkin, to that of Catholics’ loyalty to the Pope. Baldwin then goes further: one of Streamer’s companions doubts the ability of Grimalkin to eat so much in one sitting, to which another companion replies that the Pope, ‘all things considered, devoureth more at every meal than Grimalkin did at her last supper’ with Streamer responding that ‘although the Pope … have spoiled all people of mighty spoils, yet, as touching his own parts, he eateth and weareth as little as any other man…’. This short exchange is rich in anti-Catholic rhetoric: first is the explicit point that the Pope has by deceit deprived ‘all’ people of their wealth; secondly, the reference to ‘last supper’ is reminiscent of Christ’s last supper, at which the priesthood was instituted, and the comment that the Pope ‘devoureth more at every meal’ than this second ‘last supper’ is suggestive that the Pope has usurped or abused his position; and thirdly, that despite his own wrongful enrichment, the Pope is still the same as any other man, and subject to the same physical restrictions as any other human. As we shall see, these points are recurring observations in sixteenth-century anti-Catholic rhetoric.

According to Maslen, Baldwin’s cats ‘exhibit a number of characteristics which Protestant propagandists attributed to the Catholic clergy: they are sexually promiscuous, inordinately greedy […] and given to meddling with magic’.2 But given that some of Baldwin’s cats live in Catholic households, and so we are presented with scenes wherein cats and Catholics co-exist, we cannot simply insert ‘Catholic’ for ‘cat’ - as tempting as it might be to do so. Little is known of William Baldwin other than that he studied logic and philosophy at Oxford before going on to write and publish various works between 1547 and 1569, the most famous of these being Mirror for Magistrates in 1559, an anthology of poems on the lives of historical figures seemingly as an example of how not to behave and for which Baldwin contributed four poems. We do not know Baldwin’s motives for writing Beware the Cat, but whatever they were, an all-out attack on Catholicism does not appear to have been one of them.

Whereas the anti-Catholic message in Beware the Cat is often veiled and coded, in King Edward VI and the Pope it is about as explicit as it is possible to be. This picture is a 622mm x 908mm oil on panel group portrait, painted by an unknown artist circa 1575. The dating has proved somewhat controversial however: originally dated by Roy Strong at circa 1548 because of the presence in the painting of the Duke of Somerset as Lord Protector and inset scene of image-smashing, the dating was subsequently challenged by Margaret Ashton who posited that the painting is in fact Elizabethan, a suggestion which was later supported by dendrochronological analysis; the accepted dating by the National Portrait Gallery is now 1575.3 This issue over the dating has thrown up an interesting question: given that the picture was painted

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during the reign of Elizabeth, and that under Elizabeth there had been passed the Act of Supremacy which confirmed her as Supreme Governor of the Church of England as well as the revival of earlier Acts of Henry VIII that had been repealed by Mary, why has the artist chosen Edward VI as the focal point for his painting, and not Elizabeth? The answer lies in the composition of the work itself.

King Edward VI and the Pope is not so much a depiction as a narrative. The painting can be read from both left to right and top to bottom, its cruciform construction thus underscoring the religious nature of the work. On the left side of the picture is Henry VIII in bed and at the point of death; his serene features, white bedclothes and raised left hand – appearing to be something between a pointing and a blessing – give Henry an almost Christ-like appearance. The pointing from Henry to Edward signifies the succession of Edward as head of the Church of England: in the same way that Christ appointed Peter to be his successor on earth and thus the first in an unbroken chain of popes, so the Christ-like Henry is instituting a new, Protestant succession to rival – and indeed surpass – that of the Catholic apostolic succession.4 Both Henry and Edward look face-on at the viewer, the only characters in the group portrait to fully do so and thereby setting them apart from the other characters, which of course both spiritually and ecclesiastically they are. Edward's legs and feet however do not follow the line of his body and face on to the viewer, but instead point to the right, away from his father on the left, signifying that the path he is to take is a continuation

4 ‘And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ Mtt. 16:18
of that started by Henry VIII. In the top right hand corner of the painting is what
appears to be a window through which can be seen a Marian statue being pulled
down from its pedestal by two men, and another statue behind it being smashed by
a third; by having this image at the far-right hand of the painting, these events are
being portrayed as part of that continuous path that the new Protestant succession is
ordained to follow, the succession from Henry to Edward being the starting point of
a train of proceedings which would in due course and as a natural progression, take
Elizabeth as the next Protestant successor.

Following the painting vertically, at the top of the axis is the Tudor coat of arms of
lions quartered with French fleur-de-lis, directly below which sits Edward, and in turn
below him, the Pope, possibly a reminder to the viewer of the Great Chain of Being
and the Pope’s true place in the world. The Pope’s head has been knocked to one
side by a book which is inscribed THE WORDE OF THE LORDE ENDVRETH FOR
EVER – the opening words to 1 Peter 1:25 which goes on to say ‘And that word is the
Good News that was preached to you.’ The reference to ‘Good News’ is important
for it is the definition of The Gospel. So what the Pope is being struck down by is the
bible itself, and not only that, but a bible written in English: the Protestant bible. The
message that the Pope, here representing Catholicism, is wrong and Protestantism
is right, cannot be more clearly conveyed. Both the Pope’s triple crown and the two
monks at his side, effectively his ‘right-hand men’, point to the left in the direction
of death (here Henry’s) and the past. On one flowing infula, one of the two ribbons
on the Pope’s crown, is the word IDOLATRY and on the other, SUPERSTICION,
both anathema to any religion calling itself True. The Pope wears a rose coloured
alb, a colour even today associated with Gaudete and Laetare Sundays in the Catholic
liturgical calendar, and days upon which fasting requirements were relaxed – by
having the Pope in a rose coloured alb, golden cloak and tiara with flowing infulae, he
is portrayed in robes of office which are entirely ecclesiastical in origin and removed
from any divine law consideration; from a Protestant viewpoint, these garbs would
represent the epitome of excess.

Emblazoned across the Pope’s chest are the words ALL FLESHE IS GRASSE, a
reference to Isaiah 40:6-8 which reads in full ‘All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is
like the flower of the field … The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our
God stands for ever’; the meaning in relation to the Pope is clear, he is as mortal and
corruptible as any other man. This reference is reminiscent of the comment that the
Pope ‘eateth and weareth as little as any other man’ in Beware the Cat, and thus would
appear to be a common theme in Edwardian and post-Edwardian thinking as an
argument against papal supremacy. The two monks in the bottom left of the painting
have been suggested by Strong to be in the act of pulling down King Edward’s dais,
and to make it clear on whose behalf they are doing it, a panel with the word POPS
[popes] is attached to the chains they are using. Finally, in case the viewer still has any
reservations as to the meaning intended, the artist has added the legend, FEYNED
HOLINESS. The use of these words suggests they are intended for a particular person (the Pope), rather than a group of people (Catholics in general), and thus the depiction of the Pope in the painting is utilised not just as a representation of Catholic doctrine, but also as a political individual in his own right.

*King Edward VI and the Pope* thus conveys two very simple but forceful messages: first that Roman Catholicism or papistry is a false and corrupt religion that has already been judged so by God; and secondly that it is the Tudor dynasty which has the duty of putting Christianity back on the right (Protestant) path. The evils of papistry as portrayed in the painting appear to fall into two camps: doctrinal, hence the bible that tells the Pope being in English rather than Latin; and, in view of the activity of the two monks, political also, with the Pope being personally singled out. In *Beware the Cat*, whilst the Pope is mentioned, it is the Catholic system – the perceived blind obedience of its devotees – which is attacked, although Baldwin does so in an almost passing way; presumably if he felt, when writing in the final year of Edward’s reign, that Catholicism was a particular *political* threat then his references would have been all the more pointed; the fact that they are not suggests that whilst Catholics on a political level might have been viewed as having the *potential* for threat, they were not at that point perceived as a real or present danger. This is a view which appears to have been shared by Edward himself, whose antipathy for Catholicism appears to have at its heart the doctrinal differences between the two faiths. At the age of just twelve Edward wrote his *A Small Treatise Against The Primacy of The Pope* wherein he argued that the papacy was unable to adduce its supremacy from scripture and as a result Protestant adherents were not bound by the Pope’s authority and so were free to follow their own faith; thus it was the doctrinal differences between the two faiths that was at the heart of the king’s objections to the Pope. Indeed, Edward’s dying prayer that ‘Oh my Lorde God defende this Realme from papistrye …’ goes on ‘… and mayntayne thy true religion, that I and my people may prayse thy holy name’, which does not of itself suggest that he was, even on his deathbed, overly concerned with any *political* threat Catholics at home or abroad might pose. In fact Baldwin and Edward VI share an interesting analogy of the Pope: whilst Baldwin has Grimalkin the cat consume a whole sheep, Edward has in his *Treatise* this to say of the Pope, ‘he doth not feed his sheep, but devours them, like a roaring lion who walks about to seek his prey’; and like Baldwin, he complains the Pope usurps his true position; perhaps then in interpreting Baldwin’s allusions to the Pope, we need to do so in the light of Edward VI’s own writings.

Twenty years later however the position had changed and with it the focus of anti-Catholicism in the arts. England had gone through five years under the Catholic Mary, Elizabeth had re-introduced Edward’s Book of Common Prayer and had the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis* issued against her: what we see between 1553 when Edward VI made his dying prayer and Baldwin wrote *Beware the Cat*, and 1575 when *King Edward VI and the Pope* was painted, is a shift in anti-Catholic emphasis, from
Catholicism being an oblique threat and the Pope being a denounced because of the doctrinal beliefs he espoused, to Catholicism being a particular political threat, in the person of the Pope. As the political menace posed by Catholics during this period was perceived to increase, so did the need to strengthen Elizabeth’s own position, and this is possibly why the need to bring Edward to the fore became so important: by emphasising the Tudor Protestant succession at its very earliest stage, back to Edward, Elizabeth’s subsequent place in the succession could be presented as the natural progression, and thus all the more legitimate.

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‘Crossing borders of representation’: Intersections of race, class and gender in Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s ‘Jenny’ and William Holman Hunt’s The Afterglow in Egypt

This paper considers the intersection of issues of race, class and gender in Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s ‘Jenny’ and William Holman Hunt’s The Afterglow in Egypt. Specifically, the intersection of class and gender, as exemplified by the prostitute Jenny, is analysed in Rossetti’s work, whilst the intersection of race and gender, focussing on the lone Eastern female figure on which the Hunt work is centred, is likewise contemplated. In closing, the intersecting representations in these two works are compared and contrasted with reference to the role and representation of the female in the Victorian period.

The intersectional approach, as evolving from intersectionality, is a disciplinary ‘border-crossing’ concept produced through feminist theorising … about the social relations of power.¹

Race, class and gender were once deemed separate issues for members of both dominant and subordinate groups; the problem with an approach that sections issues in this manner being that, whilst perhaps allowing in-depth consideration of a certain issue, it tends to homogenise the effect of the issue in its conclusion. Mainstream feminist theory has traditionally been unable, and often unwilling, to ‘grapple with the complexity of multiple identity categories,’ instead tending to ‘parcel out race and class in order to talk about a universal woman.’² However, the last few decades of social scholarship, and feminist criticism in particular, have seen a greater appreciation for an intersectional approach, whereby an understanding of the intersection of these issues—as well the likes of nation, age, culture, and sexual orientation—is deemed integral to appreciating individuals’ positions in the social world.³ Although feminist scholars have made great strides in taking an intersectional approach to feminist literary analysis and art criticism, such an approach is—particularly in Britain—by no means mainstream, with the result being that the intersection of race, class and gender remains unconsidered or barely touched upon in a number of English works. The focus of this essay will be on analysing such

³ Ibid. p. 1.
intersections in Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s poem ‘Jenny’ (1881) and William Holman Hunt’s painting The Afterglow in Egypt (1863), two Pre-Raphaelite works for which previous criticism appears to be somewhat lacking in in-depth consideration of the intersection of the issues raised by these works and of the consequent reflection of feminine realities in the period.

Lazy laughing languid Jenny,
Fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea (1-2)²

At the outset Rossetti’s protagonist introduces Jenny as a fallen woman, a prostitute, casting her as both subject and object of his internal monologue on ‘the consequences of woman’s fall from virtue.’³ Yet, though ‘Jenny’ absolutely focuses on female sexual deviance, it is not merely a stereotypical reiteration of the fallen woman trope. Jenny—blue-eyed, golden haired, and undressed in ‘silk ungirdled and unlac’d’ (48)—is typically fetishized, lusted after, and used for sexual gratification, but she is simultaneously judged, berated, and ridiculed for her sexual deviance.⁴ She suffers the ‘hatefulness of man | Who spares not to end what he began’ (83-84). By recognising this double standard, the poem concerns itself with the ‘personal and moral consequences of sexual sin’⁵ for men as well as women and illustrates the ‘widespread and growing interest at this time in the plight of the fallen woman.’⁶ I deem an intersectional approach to the poem’s treatment of the latter, specifically the plight of the prostitute, to be particularly relevant.

Jenny is the quintessential Victorian prostitute—embodying all that that entails. She is more than a sexually deviant fallen woman; she is a working class girl, albeit on the fringes of that class. Judith Walkowitz asserts that prostitutes in nineteenth-century Britain were in fact not ‘rootless social outcasts but poor working women trying to survive’⁷ and that ‘there is little to distinguish these women from the large body of poor women who had to eke out a precarious living in the urban job market.’⁸ Regardless of whether Rossetti meant for the poem to exemplify gender and class discrimination, by virtue of Jenny being a prostitute in Victorian England, she is contextually subject to the realities of women of her profession. A close reading of the poem reveals that, both overtly and implicitly, Rossetti does in fact touch on the specific plight of the working class prostitute, thus—whether advertently or inadvertently—raising the intersecting issues of gender and class discrimination.

⁴ ‘Where envy’s voice at virtue’s pitch | Mocks you because your gown is rich; And from the pale girl’s dumb rebuke’ (71-73);
And from the wise unchildish elf, To schoolmate lesser than himself Pointing you out, what thing you are:—Yes, from the daily jeer and jar’ (77-80) – Rossetti, ‘Jenny’.
⁵ Bentley, ‘Rossetti and the Fallen Woman/Flower’, p.178.
⁶ Ibid., p.181.
Scholarship on ‘Jenny’ is curiously lacking in explicit focus on the intersection of gender and class discrimination as exemplified by the prostitute, but in my reading of the poem a strong class contrast is drawn between Jenny and the protagonist in particular.\textsuperscript{10} The protagonist is markedly middle class by his intellectualism and affluence—he is a scholar, a reader (22-23) and he lays ‘among [her] golden hair | These golden coins’ (40, 42). Jenny’s lack of intellectual endeavour, her lack of books, could be read as purely sexist commentary on her as a woman—a natural phenomenon lacking consciousness\textsuperscript{11}—and if one considers the protagonist’s comments on his cousin Nell who, while more respectable and ‘the girl [he is] proudest of’ (191), is nonetheless unintellectual, frivolous, and ‘mere a woman in her ways’ (187), such an interpretation may seem just. However, an exclusively feminist reading of ‘Jenny’ is reductive. In the section in which the protagonist ruminates on what Jenny may dream about, ‘rich wares’ and to be ‘[a]pparelled beyond parallel’ (357-365), he is at last able to see Jenny ‘as she really is—a prostitute with the dreams of a prostitute.’\textsuperscript{12} Jenny epitomises the Victorian stereotype of the working class: she does not dream of a higher, spiritual or intellectual, pursuit. She is single-mindedly preoccupied with money, ‘fond of a guinea’ (2), with a purse as the ‘lodestar of [her] reverie’ (20-21). And she, or some aspect of her, is twice referred to as ‘lazy’ (1, 97).\textsuperscript{13} She is not merely a sexual deviant in the form of a prostitute—she is a poor, greedy, uneducated, unaspiring, degraded woman.

Walkowitz argues that, as exemplified by the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869, the prostitute was ‘an object of class guilt as well as fear, a powerful symbol of sexual and economic exploitation under industrial capitalism’ and that the acts reflect ‘[a] view of the social underclass as degraded and powerless, yet potentially threatening and disloyal.’\textsuperscript{14} With her ‘wealth of loosened hair’ (47), ‘lifted silken skirt’ (145), and ‘shameful knowledge’ (265), Jenny is undoubtedly an object of lust and a symbol of sexual deviance. However, as already touched on, the protagonist elicits sympathy for ‘[p]oor shameful Jenny’ (18), ‘so fall’n’ (207) by thinking of how she has been exploited by man ‘who, having used her at his will, | Thrusts [her] aside’ (87-87). He goes further, passionately lamenting in general terms man’s fall from grace through this degradation, ‘What has man done here? How atone, | Great God, for this which man has done?’ (241-242), and thereby touching on the systematic exploitation that Walkowitz refers to.

\textsuperscript{10} This class contrast between prostitute and male client may not entirely reflect the reality of prostitution in the Victorian period. Whilst, as a ‘Haymarket whore’, as opposed to a prostitute on the cheaper East End, Jenny would have serviced middle class clients, ‘a substantial majority of prostitutes catered to a working-class clientele.’ - Walkowitz, ‘Prostitution and Victorian society’, p.23.
\textsuperscript{12} Bentley, ‘Rossetti and the Fallen Woman/Flower’, p.192.
\textsuperscript{13} The term ‘lazy’ may perhaps be interpreted to be ‘lazing’ as opposed to ‘unwilling to work’, but through the image of Jenny created in the poem as a whole, and the fact that she ultimately does not earn the coins the protagonist bestows upon her, the latter may rather be connoted.
\textsuperscript{14} Walkowitz, ‘Prostitution and Victorian society’, p.4.
Rossetti’s protagonist’s focus on the role of industrial capitalism in all this agrees with the reality of the day. In the stanza about the sickening death of the lilies of the field (100-110), symbolising the loss of purity for the ‘lily’ Jenny, the transformation from ‘field’ to ‘garden’ potentially creates a ‘paradigm for the urbanisation which was one of the major reasons for the rise of prostitution in industrial England.’ The protagonist also literally points to the effect, or at least the outcome, of migrating to London on the innocent, rural youth Jenny, who would ‘wonder’ (132) about the city as a child, but, as a young prostitute, ‘know[s] the city now (135).’ As a victim of the exploitative consequence of industrialisation, Jenny, a working class prostitute, signifies the loss of an ideal—not only a feminine ideal, but a pastoral ideal of the rural working class as well.

The comparison the protagonist makes between Jenny and his cousin Nell is also significant in showing class division. Nell is ‘so pure’ (207), compared to Jenny who is ‘so fall’n’ (207); as a woman, Nell elicits pride, whereas Jenny elicits shame. This contrast between the ‘ideal’ and the ‘debased’ is not merely one of rural versus industrialised though—that is, it is not necessarily a suggestion that, had Jenny chosen differently and not been drawn to the city, she might have ended up a Nell instead—it is a contrast of class and an indication of ‘the central role of money and class in shaping individual histories.’ Nell, presumably middle class or at least able to marry into the middle class to obtain the family of her ‘fair tree’ (211), ‘may use marriage to save herself from the economic necessities that compel Jenny to sell herself.’

A final aspect of the class discrimination experienced by Jenny that may be considered pertains to Walkowitz’ statement on the view of the social underclass as ‘degraded and powerless,’ yet potentially ‘threatening and disloyal.’ Bryan Rivers performs an interesting study on the possible origins of Rossetti’s specific choice of name for his prostitute, identifying ‘jenny’ or ‘ginny’ to be contemporary slang used by London thieves for a housebreaking tool, and thus suggesting that Rossetti is symbolically associating Jenny with her threatening male equivalent, the common Victorian thief. Whilst such an interpretation may be somewhat farfetched, and prostitution in the Victorian era tended to be autonomous and largely organised by the women themselves without significant male influence, whether thieves or pimps, a number of East End prostitutes were forced to cohabit with thieves and were part of a professional criminal underworld, and even when this was not the case, a general view of prostitutes as being in cahoots with thieves pervaded. Rossetti does not explicitly paint Jenny with this brush, but he would have been aware of this view of prostitutes when writing her, and—by the protagonist’s assertion that Jenny does not care for him, or anyone else, rather merely for a ‘purse’—at the very least indeed presents her as being ‘disloyal.’

15 ‘lilies of the field’ (100) to ‘its new lord the garden hath’ (106) – Reference to the ‘new lord’ is furthermore significant here because it again points to the culpability of man.
18 Ibid.
A consideration of the intersection between class and gender discrimination in 'Jenny' would of course necessitate more thorough reflection on the gender aspects of the text than I have provided thus far. As it is beyond the scope of this discussion to give further consideration to Jenny as fallen woman, ruined flower, and sexually deviant female in general, and my thesis as stated at the outset of this paper holds that such a general, homogenising feminist focus tends to be problematic and reductive, I would like to conclude my consideration of intersectionality in the poem by very briefly focussing specifically on gender discrimination and the prostitute. Insofar as the prostitute as a specific type of sexually deviant female is concerned, when Rossetti’s protagonist identifies Jenny as a prostitute, ‘he designates her sexuality a commodity having a specific value.’

Prostitution literally objectifies and commodifies the female body, and with the man being the buyer and the woman being the seller, this creates a certain sense of male entitlement and ownership of the female. This in turn generates an imbalance of sexual power and, in a societal context, further exploits a section of the already subjugated working class—poor women. In 'Jenny', the imbalance of sexual power between the protagonist and the prostitute is exemplified by Jenny being asleep and silent for the entirety of the poem. Jenny does not represent herself, she is solely what the protagonist perceives of her; she cannot respond to his internal monologue on her thoughts, dreams, motivations, and attributes nor to his moral judgment of her. As a prostitute, she does not have a valid social existence, and thus does not need to be represented poetically, save as a ‘figure (trope, icon) in the man’s imagination.’

The negation of the personhood of the prostitute through male lust is specifically tied to her commodification, though such objectification is not couched solely in her sexuality being ‘for sale’, nor is it, obviously, exclusively the plight of the prostitute. Another archetypal example of the intersectional representation of the female form and the ‘female as object’ can be seen in Hunt’s The Afterglow in Egypt (Figure 1).

In his criticism of the painting, Ernest Chesneau summarises the image the title may conjure in the viewer’s mind before the painting is viewed:

_The Afterglow in Egypt!_ What would one naturally expect from such a title? An extensive eastern landscape, subsiding into shadowy twilight, whilst overhead the pale sky is lighted by the last gleams of the setting sun, which has just sunk below the horizon.

22 Ibid., p.200.
23 The reproduction included in this paper is a second version of The Afterglow in Egypt.
Instead, the viewer is confronted by the arresting gaze and figure of an Eastern female, with the Egyptian landscape minimally visible in the background. The work is overtly ‘Orientalist’ in nature. Briefly, based on Edward Said’s work,25 the particular aspect of Orientalism I find prevalent in ‘Afterglow’ is the feminisation of the East as ‘other’ and conquerable, much as the man conquers the prostitute, by the West. The choice of the female subject is highly relevant in this respect. In general, the image speaks of prosperity; the female figure is opulently dressed, the land seems fertile, the calf on the foreground is well fed, a fantasy of colonial plenty is created.26 However, the fact that the gatekeeper of this land, the only object barring the Western male viewer from entering the landscape, is a sexualised Eastern female, represents inferiority and begs conquest—an exemplification of imperialist ideology. Hunt’s

The presentation of the female figure in this work is strong yet sensuous and exotic and the work is unequivocally charged with sexual desire. I fail to appreciate Chesneau’s interpretation of the female figure’s complexion as ‘dull’, her face as ‘severe [and] pale’ and her eyes as ‘dull, black … frigid and lustreless as a lifeless coal.’ 27 Rather, her complexion is rich, exotic, her skin glowing; her eyes are large, her face open and sensuous, her lips rosy; and her figure, draped in a loose-fitting gown with a section of her chest visible, is voluptuous. In response to criticism such as Chesneau’s that the title and the female figure depicted represent ‘Egypt, deposed from the splendour of her ancient civilisation,’ 28 Hunt in fact insisted that the title came from his choice of the hour, which best captured the glow of his Eastern female subject. 29 If she, an object of Western male desire, represents the afterglow in Egypt, the rhetoric of colonial possession and domination is implicit. Furthermore, a Bedouin woman (unlike the Islamic Arabs, unveiled and willing to model), 30 serving as a symbol for the Eastern woman and the East in general, is somewhat suggestive. The ‘unveiling of the Eastern woman’ may specifically be seen an allegory for the unveiling of, and intrusion into, the East by the West. 31

The intersection of race and gender in the symbolism of this female figure is clear and simple—as a native of the East, her race represents the East, whilst as a woman, her sexuality represents the possibility for ownership and conquest of the East. Insofar as the reality for a woman such as this in the period is concerned, in her comprehensive work on the use of female figures in monuments and the allegory of the female form, Marina Warner asserts that the presence of female symbolism does not guarantee the uplifting of women as a group or as individuals. 32 In a misreading of Warner, Jan Marsh, referring specifically to The Afterglow in Egypt, further argues that ‘the use of female allegory cannot be analysed as bearing any rational relation to the actual position of women in society at a specific period.’ 33 The problem with such a definitive assertion—that there is no relation whatsoever between the symbolic or allegorical representation of the female in a literary text or work of art and the position of women in a certain society at a specific period—is that it ignores the societal underpinnings of the dominant ideologies that may inform such symbolic or allegorical representations. In particular, such a view disregards the race and gender issues that inform Western representation of the ‘Oriental Female’ 34 and ultimately creates the colonising overtones in a work such as ‘Afterglow.’ Warner’s point is that

28 Ibid., p.182.
30 Barringer, ‘Reading the Pre-Raphaelites’, p.132.
31 Mohja Kahf argues that ‘the harem and its symbolic extension, the veil, constitute the supreme silencing mechanism’ and that, ‘within Orientalist representations, the veil conjures both eroticism and oppression’—eliciting the desire to unveil, gaze upon and penetrate, whilst simultaneously being purported as a symbol of oppression—Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque (University of Texas Press: Austin, TX 1999), pp.4-5, 162.
33 Marsh, ‘Pre-Raphaelite women’, p.123.
34 For example, the unveiling and fetishisation of Eastern women by the West, or the objectification of women in the West that informs Western male representation of the female in general.
'a symbolised female presence both gives and takes value and meaning in relation to actual women,'\textsuperscript{35} but that an approach to the interpretation of such symbolism should not be homogenous and reductive.

In conclusion, a final comparison and contrast can be drawn between Rossetti’s ‘Jenny’ and Hunt’s \textit{The Afterglow in Egypt}. Both works present intersecting identities and ideologies pertaining to race, class and gender through the depiction of the female form. However, while Rossetti attempts to engage with the social relations of power he addresses—albeit, perhaps due to not wanting to be seen as a reformer with no plan, not entirely without resorting to apathy about certain ideological issues—Hunt merely upholds the dominant ideology in his work. The primary preoccupation of this paper has been to show the importance and value of taking an intersectional approach in the analysis of representations of the female in the Victorian period.\textsuperscript{36} Holistic analysis of the intersections inherent to such representations will not only continue to improve our understanding of the actual view and position of women in society at a specific period, but may also improve our scholarship on the realities of the intersecting groups that these women formed part of.


\textsuperscript{36} I in no way mean to put this paper forth as an exhaustive or conclusive analysis of the intersections in the works discussed; due to the constraints of the paper, I have not at all touched on other intersectional aspects of representation that may be present in these works, particularly such as nation, culture and class in the Hunt work.
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The fear of the ‘Other’ and anti-semitism: Representations of the Jews in *Punch* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* in the light of rising English nationalism

Othering is a common practice: who am I? In order to answer this question, one must first define who one is not. In nineteenth-century England, one of these 'Others' was the Anglo-Jewry, ever growing due to large masses of immigrants from the East, blamed for threatening the very quintessential, domestic English sphere. In reality, the nation was suffering from the nearing decline of the Empire. It is the aim of this article to examine how depictions in *Punch* Magazine and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* shaped the notions of English- and non-Englishness in the light of rising nationalism.

The concept of 'Othering' gives away a lot of information - following the Hegelian idea, in order to define oneself, one must first define what one is not.¹ In nineteenth-century England, 'Othering' was just as common a practice as it is today. Effectively, '[t]he fear that a supposedly homogenous national culture was being overwhelmed by an unassimilable 'Other'² helped to sustain the belief that it was an 'Other' that threatened a nation, while in reality, it was suffering from the decline of its long-standing position as the biggest Empire in the world. One of these 'Others' in the nineteenth century was the Anglo-Jewry, characterized by being both at the very core of the English society, and being apart from it. It is the aim of this article to examine how depictions in *Punch* magazine and the reading of the vampire in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as Jewish helped shape the notions associated with English, and non-Englishness.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a rising British nationalism carried with it a heightened perception of 'the Other'. While in the mid-nineteenth century, there were approximately 35,000 Jews living in England and Wales,³ by the turn of the century, estimates reach up to 100,000.⁴ This phenomenon was mainly fuelled by the mass immigration of Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia between the 1880s-1905, part of a general movement.⁵ With the rising number of Jews in Britain

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⁵ Lipman, p.85.
came a heightened perception of this demographic group. It was three important events that eventually led to an increased awareness among the British: first of all, the larger number of Jews in Britain led to their struggle for full political rights, especially in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Furthermore, on a political level, the first professing Jew, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, was admitted to the House of Commons in 1858, and finally, his son admitted to the House of Lords in 1885. Jews were definitely integrated very well into the British community by that time, a large proportion being both successful and well-connected. As Feldman points out, ‘Jews were disproportionately well represented among the nation’s very wealthy’. Most of the Anglo-Jewish community at that time worked in finance, with the firm of Nathan Mayer Rothschild & Sons the most impressive example, issuing more than £700 million in loans to foreign governments between 1860 and 1876. In English society as well, the ‘new’ Anglo-Jewish community played a major part, with the ‘English society once ruled by an aristocracy […] now dominated by a plutocracy […] [which] is to a large extent Hebraic in its composition’. In politics, too, the Anglo-Jewish minority began to play an even bigger role. By the time that Disraeli became prime minister in 1868, the 1870s brought about a change that meant increased antipathy towards the Jews, defining the root of Disraeli’s ideas and actions as inherently ‘Jewish’ or ‘oriental’ (i.e. foreign). One has to understand this situation on a larger scale: a speedily growing community of Anglo-Jews made up only a very small percentage of the overall population but had significant influence on the economy and on social life. In the nineteenth century, when the British Empire was beginning to decline, British nationalism began to rise; there was a heightened perception of what was domestic and what was not. At the heart of it was the Anglo-Jewish community, both part of and apart from it.

The growing antipathy against the Anglo-Jewish community and the rising English nationalism paralleled the invention of the steam-driven press and with it, the mass production of print media. As Linda Colley argues, the greater consciousness about nation and nationality was promoted by, among others, a growth in communication and wider circulation of newspapers as well as magazines. Holmes gives various examples from literature portraying, what he calls ‘unflattering images’ of the Anglo-Jewish community, depicted with a variety of features, from the Shakespearean figure of Shylock to Daniel Deronda. Literature and popular media play an important part in fostering dichotomies and stereotypes. What then, was domestic, and what was the significantly non-domestic ‘Other’? It is the aim of this article to examine how this development was characterised in both a cartoon from Punch from July 1858, and Bram Stoker’s Dracula.

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7 Feldman, p.78.
8 Ibid. p. 81.
9 Ibid. p. 94.
10 Ibid. p. 13.
11 Cheyette, p. 12.
The cartoon below is from the *Punch* issue of 31 July 1858, appearing with an article on the Jewish Relief Act from the same month and year, and its implications are stereotypical for the depiction of Anglo-Jewry in the mid-nineteenth century. The Jewish Relief Act was also called the ‘Oaths Bill’, and was introduced following the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, effectively making it possible for Anglo-Jews to take the Oath of Allegiance, sworn for certain public servant positions. It ‘provided that whenever any of her Majesty’s subjects professing the Jewish religion shall be required to take the said oath the words “and I make this Declaration upon the true faith of a Christian” shall be omitted.’ The very existence of mockery in its illustrations is typical for *Punch*. It was a weekly magazine that was first published in 1841 with the aim of reporting on current affairs in a satirical manner. The magazine was probably best known for its illustrations that featured mockery and other humorous elements, which quickly came to be what is now known as a ‘cartoon’. The idea, according to the founders, was to have a magazine that was more comical, but at the same time possessed a higher degree of literary standard than other comic magazines. While at the beginning of its existence, *Punch* was largely known for attacking the Establishment, by the 1860s with the underlying sense of the British Empire coming to stay (but eventually starting to decline shortly after), it was less critical. This could also be seen in its cartoons. It falls into the mid-1800s and can thus not be counted towards the period of increased antipathy towards the new Ashkenazi Anglo-Jews of the 1880s and onwards. Nevertheless it portrays a strong early stereotypical, picture of English Jewry, as the ‘new national enemy’ following the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829.

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15 http://www.punch.co.uk/about/
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
The exaggeration depicted with regards to money in the cartoon addresses one way society assessed the ‘issue’ of the Anglo-Jewish community around the whole, and especially the second half of the nineteenth century. The first impression of the scene definitely points towards the association of Anglo-Jewry with money. The caricature portrays Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, who had become the first Anglo-Jewish person to take the oath of allegiance in order to become a member of the House of Commons just a few days before the publishing date of this issue of *Punch*. The cartoon alleges that Baron de Rothschild is obsessed with money, is greedy and even light-fingered and thieving. Alluding to the ceremony of the oath of allegiance, the man in the cartoon touches the mace and examines it like a pawnbroker would do in his shop. The symbolic mace stands in for the monarch’s presence and alludes to the royal permission by which Parliament sits. By the early 1880s, when the mass immigration from Eastern Europe and Russia began to rise, of the Anglo-Jewish community, 14.6% belonged to the upper or upper-middle class with a yearly income of £1,000 or over. Taking into account that in the 1870s, 14% of the non-landed millionaires were made up of Anglo-Jewry, the approximate number of the Jewish population in England of 51,250 compared to the overall population of 32,149,021 in 1881 seems small and disproportionate. By the early 1900s, the percentage of Anglo-Jewry among non-landed millionaires had risen to 23 per cent, with the overall Jewish population making up less than one per cent. It is true that a large number of the wealthy Anglo-Jewry worked in banking and stock exchange, which is what the cartoon is most likely alluding to. The material worth of the mace itself, held by the caricature of Baron de Rothschild, refers to the idea that he wants to make money out of everything, and most prominently, out of something that he does not own. Taking this thought further, the mace can stand as a signifier for the English Crown itself, which is at a threat by the ‘foreign’ Anglo-Jewry, characterised by strong social upward mobility. Now that Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild has become a Member of the House of Commons, the ‘Other’ portrayed by the Anglo-Jewry is not only right in the middle of the domestic sphere of England, where it controls a large amount of wealth, but is also right at the core of the political sphere, threatening quintessential England: the Monarchy and its large Empire, paralleled by no other.

Similarly, the figure of the Count in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), although he is never explicitly stated as Jewish, serves as a personification of the Jewish stereotype of greed for money, signified by his bloodthirstiness. The vampires with their venomous bite effectively try to ensure the survival of their race. From an anti-Semitic perspective, the Anglo-Jewish community with their strive for social and economic advancement in the nineteenth century could be interpreted as doing just the same:

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18 Lipman p. 77.
19 Feldman, p.78.
20 Lipman, p.66.
21 http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/table_page.jsp?tab_id=EW1881POP2_M4
23 Feldman, p.78.
they are comprised of a small number, and secure their continued existence, and even growth, by ‘feeding upon’ the English. One can interpret this as weakening Englishness in all its facets. This idea can easily be discerned when analysing various passages of Stoker’s novel dealing with the vital importance of blood for sustaining the vampire’s existence. For example, when the reader is first introduced to the bloodthirsty appetite of the Count, with ‘[h]is face [...] deathly pale, and the lines of it [...] hard like drawn wires’, close to biting Jonathan Harker. The victim had up to then stood for everything morally good, for everything stereotypically English, and for tradition, and now almost becomes the Count’s elixir. Once fed, his full strength comes back, his cheeks become red, yet with no human pulse and no breath, the Count resembles nothing human:

There, in one of the great boxes, of which there were fifty in all, on a pile of newly dug earth, lay the Count! He was either dead or asleep. I could not say which, for his eyes were open and stony, but without the glassiness of death, and the cheeks had the warmth of life through their pallor. The lips were as red as ever. But there was no sign of movement, no pulse, no breath, no beating of the heart.

By feeding off Englishness as personified by Mina Harker, Dracula sustains his race’s survival, just as the Anglo-Jewry of the nineteenth century may, from an anti-Semitic viewpoint, have sustained themselves by acquiring and dealing with the Englishmen’s money and wealth. Similar to the Count lacking human qualities due to the nature of his race, the Jewish community of nineteenth-century England may be interpreted to have lacked the very human essence that was assigned to the Englishmen, because of their very race. In the eyes of the nineteenth-century English population, the (Anglo-) Jewry, no matter what, could not escape their ‘characteristic’, ‘bloodthirsty’ appetite for money, as portrayed in Dracula.

An aspect that is furthermore contained in both the cartoon from Punch and Bram Stoker’s novel Dracula are the parasitic desires that are assigned to the Jewish characters, reminiscent of anti-Semitic remarks, effectively strengthening nationalist ideas. The male figure in the Punch cartoon, Baron Rothschild, can be said to already be ‘well-fed’, nevertheless, he would like to enrich himself with the opportunities presented by the newly attained position as a Member of the House of Commons. The lusty gaze at the mace is comparable to the way that the nationalist English sentiment may have interpreted the advancing inclusion of ever more groups into the wider social and economic as well as political spheres of life. A prominent chronicler of England and journalist with political aspirations, William Cobbett in the early nineteenth century was an advocate for the Catholic Emancipation, but

26 Stoker, p.50.
completely disapproved of Jewish Emancipation as enacted by the 1858 Jewish Relief Act. He was one of the most prominent figures in English history to openly call the Jewish population parasitic in 1833. 27 He did not only attack Benjamin Disraeli, who was openly mocked in Punch as well, he also noted that the Jewry 'liv[e] in all the filthiness of usury and increase', 28 once again drawing the conclusion that the Anglo-Jewry feeds off their host, the Englishmen. In the background of the Punch cartoon, one can see a shocked Member of the House of Commons, the drawing of him faint and vague, as if depicting the very parasitic personality of the Jewish Baron de Rothschild. In Bram Stoker’s Dracula, the parasitic features alluding to the Jewishness of the Count are just as prominent. He literally sucks the life out of his victims, and drains them of their powers. Like parasites, the vampire feeds to live and lives to feed, 29 feeding off their host. As Halberstam further shows, this idea went so far as to point towards the late nineteenth century ideas of Jews being parasitic and repugnant in the sense that they transmitted diseases. 30 Indeed, Anglo-Jewry in the late nineteenth century with the wave of Ashkenazi immigrants was linked to being responsible for the spread of syphilis, 31 and in earlier centuries, ideas for specifically Jewish diseases such as ‘Judenkrätze’ existed 32 - to a certain extent, though, it has to be noted that some poor (Jews) did show similar symptoms, which can however, be attributed to poverty, and not to Judaism. Dracula, like the Jew, and vice versa, are not only parasites to the wealth of the English community, but further stand for the conflict with nation, and reproduction of ‘the English’. 33 Especially the ever-larger groups of Jewish immigrants in the late nineteenth century could be interpreted as a threat to the quintessential English life and race and all they symbolize, resulting in the anti-Semitic tendency to relate Jews to parasitism. 34

Finally, the use of facial features of Jewish stereotypes strengthens the level of anti-Semitism portrayed, depicting the fear of the new Jewish immigrants. In Punch, Baron de Rothschild’s nose is exaggerated to the point where one can clearly interpret it as unnatural. The well-fed body depicts the gluttony assigned to the Jewish, the top hat and the jacket are a form of mockery too, since they were often assigned to the Jewish population. 35 One can almost equate the top hat to a criminal’s hiding place for (even more) acquired monetary wealth. The Count in Bram Stoker’s Dracula is described in a number of ways, but either way, his physiognomy is most prominent. He is assigned bushy hair and an aquiline or beaky nose as well as a beard – evidence that the Count in Dracula was intended to be interpreted as Jewish. 36 Indeed, the aspect of physiognomy, especially the nose, was of utmost importance in creating

29 Halberstam, p. 96.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
33 Halberstam, p. 96.
36 Cf. Stoker, chpt. 2
the stereotypical Jewish character, not only in literature and media.³⁷ People who were seen as having a Jewish nose had long been mocked, and the first rhinoplasty performed in 1898 was seen as having cured the patient of a disease.³⁸ Although it is unknown whether the patient was Jewish or not, the success outlines the very widely spread idea of the Jewish nose. This notion alone again points towards the negative tendencies assigned to (Anglo-)Jewry in the nineteenth century. Linking further back to the idea of Judaism as inherently malignant and repugnant, in the mid-nineteenth century, there were voices claiming that the ‘very Jewish nose’ was the result of the Jewish-associated syphilis.³⁹ Linking back to Punch’s cartoon of Baron de Rothschild, it is interesting to note that his caricature, along with others, can be interpreted as essentially portraying the ‘characteristics of recent and impoverished immigrants’.⁴⁰ Especially Sephardic Jews were, after all, known to have a broad knowledge of the stock market, new to England, but already introduced in the Netherlands in earlier centuries, which was a capital fear for the English.⁴¹ The largely successful Sephardic Jews, often working in finance, were ‘visually erased’ and ‘the Jewish physiognomy’ from then on mostly depicted along the physical features assigned to the poorer Ashkenazi immigrants arriving in Britain in the late nineteenth century. There is a definite link to Ashkenazi-specific anti-semitism in Dracula, linked to the new Ashkenazi immigrants in the late nineteenth century, as the Count is of Eastern European origin, and is one of the first Gothic novels to feature this region. Furthermore, in physiognomy, as advanced by Johann Casper Lavater, the very physical features of ‘the Jew’ reflect the social stereotyping and personal features assigned to them, such as greed and light-fingeredness,⁴² as listed earlier. Along these lines, Dracula with his specific physique echoes the nineteenth-century idea of physiognomy as an indicator for delinquency and crime.⁴³ Most definitely, both the physiognomy of the Punch caricature of Baron de Rothschild and of Count Dracula confirms the assumption of a construction of ‘the Other’ in the light of new Ashkenazi immigration in the late nineteenth century.

The pollution of Englishness is also apparent in the language of the Punch cartoon and Dracula. According to Jonathan Harker, Dracula will always be the foreigner, even though he has ‘a vast number of English books […] all relating to England and English life and customs and manners’,⁴⁴ and Englishmen will never cease to notice his foreignness due to his way of speaking. Dracula, interestingly, is aware of this, as he himself notes how anyone in London would always recognize him as a foreigner. Naturally, Standard English is only spoken by a small number of educated Britons such as Jonathan Harker or John Seward, whereas the Count himself is a

³⁷ Gilman, p. 179.
³⁸ Ibid.
³⁹ Gilman, p.173ff.
⁴⁰ Sharrona Pearl, About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain (Cambridge, MA, 2010), p. 130.
⁴¹ Pearl, p.130.
⁴³ Halberstam, p.93.
⁴⁴ Stoker, p.25.
parvenu, even asking Harker to correct any mistakes he makes. Just like his words are often syntactically misplaced, he is himself misplaced in the English sphere. The mere fact that most of what is known about the Count is narrated through the other, non-foreign characters is comparable to the process of ‘Othering’ the Anglo-Jewry. The caricature of Baron de Rothschild utters distinctly foreign words as well: ‘Vot a beewtiful Bauble! Vonder vether its reel Gold!’ His ‘Jewish accent’ marks him as different and as decidedly not belonging to the cultivated Englishmen. Even though Baron de Rothschild, as a member of the Anglo-Jewry, has come as close to the domestic English core as possible by becoming a Member of the House of Commons in July 1858, his very accent gives away that he will never, no matter what, become a true Englishman. A Jew was, after all, in the eyes of the English, perceived as a Jew first, most immediately by his apparent misuse of the English language.

By and large, both artefacts depict the imminent fear of decline of the English nation, of the loss of everything ‘domestic’ as threatened by Jewish immigrants in the nineteenth century, especially the Ashkenazi from the East in the latter half. Indeed, this sentiment is not only reflected by physiognomy, but also by the (mis-)use of language, and the personal traits assigned to both the definite Jewish caricature, and assumingly Jewish personification of the vampire. That being said, ultimately, the stereotypical notions of what was ‘Jewish’ and what was not in both *Punch* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is characterized by what is non-English, not what is essentially ‘Jewish’. The Anglo-Jewry in the nineteenth century only functioned as a placeholder: had there been no Jewish population, the Anti-Semite would have invented it – as a means to distinctly depict what is not English, and what is. In order to create an English identity, there has to be a ‘national enemy’ to some extent. One might argue that after the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829, the Anglo-Jewry became the ‘non-English’ counterpart. Until the mid-nineteenth century the culprit was the largely successful Sephardic population, later the new wave of Ashkenazi immigrants. In essence, the real vampires or light-fingered, greedy population were the Englishmen: they fed off ‘the Other’ in order to sustain their own imagined Englishness, in light of the decline of the British Empire, its social and cultural power, and ultimately, to ensure the preservation of its national identity.

46 Gilman, p.11.


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**List of Illustrations:**

PART III

ENLIGHTENMENT AND PROGRESS:
ACTION AND REACTION
Walter Pater’s landmark *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* suggested that artists should attempt to capture emotive realities as best as possible even if meant subverting the purposes of moral instruction. This shift away from didactic writing, with a view to faithfully representing reality is also demonstrated time and again Robert Browning’s poetry. This essay will suggest that his style of writing in dramatic monologues is similar to Pater’s treatment of the Renaissance, in that it identifies and illustrates the emotional or human aspects of artists and their work as opposed to focusing abstractly on technical superficial impressions.

In an anonymous essay written for the Guardian, on the 9th of November 1887, two years after the death of Robert Browning, Pater reviewed An Introduction to the Study of Browning by Arthur Symonds that showed his great respect for the poet and playwright. Describing his style as ‘the condensed expression of an experience, a philosophy, and an art’1, that he ‘had fared up and down among men, listening to the music of humanity, observing the acts if mean, and he has sung what he has heard, and he has painted what he has seen’.2 Indeed Pater went far as to say that Browning’s work would be hailed through the years, a foresight that has indeed held true.

This high regard Pater held for Browning can perhaps be explained by the similarity in approach that both of them employed with respect to interpreting the past. The volatile and frequently dramatic pace of change in the politics and art of Renaissance Italy fascinated them both, and it featured heavily in their works. Pater’s essays and Browning’s poetry suggest that the environment which fosters creative development is very much an extension of the artist or writer themselves implying that a holistic view of a piece of art or philosophy cannot develop unless seen from the context of the environment from which it originates. For Pater, Michelangelo’s art was a reflection

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2 Ibid
of his personality, with his childhood spent among stone carvers and in close relation to the Medici family, in the cultural wellspring that was Florence in the 1600s. Whilst for Browning, Fra Fillippo Lippi’s art was the reaction to his impoverished roots and his mirthful rebellion against the stringency of cloistered life. By explaining art and philosophy through looking at the lives of artists, both Pater and Browning give emotional contexts to creative output, which goes some way towards contemporizing it. In that readers are confronted with the fact that art is often composed in chaotic and unpredictable ways and that some of its outstanding qualities arise as a result of this.

Pater in his essay ‘The School of Giorgione’, an appendix to the Studies in the History of the Renaissance, summarizes this approach to history, individuals and art particularly well. He wrote:

It is a mistake of much popular criticism to regard poetry, music and painting – all the various products of art - as but translations into different languages of one and the same fixed quantity of imaginative thought, supplemented by certain technical qualities of color, in painting; of sound, in music; of rhythmical words, in poetry. In this way, the sensuous element in art, and with it almost everything in art that is essentially artistic, is made a matter of indifference; and a clear apprehension of the opposite principle – that the sensuous material of each art brings with it a special phase or quality of beauty, untranslatable into the forms of any other, an order of impressions distinct in kind – is the beginning of all true aesthetic criticism. For as art addresses not pure sense, still less the pure intellect, but the ‘imaginative reason’ through the senses, there are differences in kind of the gifts of sense themselves.

He goes on to say that in order to delineate and analyze a specific instance of beauty or harmony created through a skilled and inventive use of a given medium one must appreciate not only technical skill but also the subtle quality of emotion that underwrites a work of art. Pater’s view differed from his contemporaries, in that he stressed on an almost hedonistic conception of the impact of art on the lives of people. Arguing that emotional interaction with beauty however fleeting in nature ought to be considered the highest and the most worthy of occupations. Indeed this was a principle shared by many of the proponents of the aesthetic movement at the time such as Charles Swinburne, Arthur Symonds, Oscar Wilde and William Morris. Those who took on these views regarding art and its centrality to a fruitful life also at times extended these beliefs to their view of politics and the question of how to

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5 Pater, Studies in the Histories of the Renaissance p.122
6 Ibid.
govern society. Wilde in particular was infamous for his elaborate style of dressing and dandyism, once remarking that his life itself was a work of art. Infamous for rejecting a didactic approach to writing, he instead adopted, witty almost frivolous styles when approaching topics such as moral depravity. Prose writers such as Arthur Symonds and Pater also, were often accused of using ‘purple prose’ in their writing, referring to an overelaborate but ill advised style that appeared to be somewhat lacking in gravity. This opinion seems particularly well expressed by Henry James in a letter to Edmond Gosse in 1894 when he said of Pater, ‘He is a mask without the face, and there isn’t in his total superficies a tiny point of vantage for the newspaper to flap its wings on.’

Whilst Robert Browning himself, was not as outspoken as Pater or Wilde in encouraging a shift away from paying emphasis to structured, serious arguments his work does reflect some of the developments in the freeing of stylistic form that Pater seems to define in his Studies. His first published poem Pauline especially shows a liberal treatment of the subject of self-examination. It regards Browning’s relationship with the character of Pauline, who becomes an almost allegorical figure for poetic aspirations and frustrations. The poem draws on fragmented imagery and contains a strong sense of barely restrained energy that permeates the writer’s vision of himself and his art. Browning did not receive much popular or critical success in his early career, with Pauline being self published by the help of his aunt who lent him thirty pounds as a guarantee. John Stewart Mill’s criticism of Pauline made a deep impression on Browning, who had published the poem anonymously. Mill remarked that the poem was saturated with an ‘intense and morbid self-consciousness,’ and went some way to rattle Browning’s self-possession, and was known to have affected his style.

Later in his life, he claimed authorship of the poem and in an introductory note to a reprint of the poem in 1888 he wrote: ‘Twenty years endurance of an eyesore seems more than sufficient: my faults remain duly recorded against me’.

Following his initial attempts, Browning later developed the style of writing in dramatic monologues. Rising to great critical and popular acclaim later in his life, especially following the publication of The Ring and The Book in 1868-69. With Wilde in May 1891 commenting ironically in The Critic As Artist, ‘he is the most Shakespearian creature since Shakespeare. If Shakespeare could sing with myriad lips, Browning could stammer through a thousand mouths.’ This method seemed to have been
able to create a freedom of expression that built on historical contexts. By humanizing distant figures from the past, he made them almost contemporary but making them emotionally relatable to the reader.

His first mastery of this style of writing appeared in the poems published under the title of *Dramatic Lyrics* by Moxon in November 1842. In it he worked to delineate characters and their motives from national stereotypes. This is perhaps best signified by the way in which he grouped his poems when they were printed as a 16-page pamphlet. It consisted of six categories; ‘Cavalier Tunes’, ‘Italy and France’, ‘Camp and Cloister’ (France and Spain), ‘Queen Worship’ and ‘Madhouse Cells’, as well as five other individual poems. Under the category of ‘Camp and Cloister’, ‘Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister’ refers to the contrast between everyday life and the formality of a life dedicated to ecclesiastical learning in a monastery. He humorously explores the small hypocrisies that infuse lives so intent on the outward expression of piety. The second stanza summarizes this effect particularly well:

> ‘At the meal we sit together:  
> *Salve tibi!* I must hear  
> Wise talk of the kind of weather,  
> Sort of season, time of year:  
> *Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely*  
> *Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:*  
> *What’s the Latin name for “parsley”?*  
> *What’s the Greek name for Swine’s Snout?*’

The lines in italics seem to refer to the conversations around the dinner table. Appearing polite and moderate it takes on an air of affected learning especially as it seems to lack in true philosophical insight yet takes on the gravity of a meaningful discussion. The sense of resentment that such an environment of prolonged, enforced moderation seems to be reflected in the last line, ‘What’s the Greek name for Swine’s Snout?’ Acting almost as an aside, it perhaps reflects the real thoughts of the speaker showing an ironic apprehension of the artificiality of the exchange. Similarly the stanza regarding the reading of what was thought to be subversive literature illustrates this sense of the juxtaposition between real people and their everyday lives and the façade imposed by their environment:

> ‘Or my scrofulous French novel  
> On grey paper with blunt type!  
> Simply glance at it, you grovel  
> Hand and Foot in Belial’s gripe…’

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13 Browning, Selected Poems pp.27-28
14 Ibid.
The terminology used in this passage seems to evoke an ironic regard for the rigorous censure on reading that the conservatism of the cloister vilified. The use of ‘scrofulous’ in particular is suggestive of this as it draws on the imagery associated with the medical term used to describe the inflammation of lymph nodes. Likewise the use of the term ‘Belial’ to describe Satan is reminiscent of a more archaic term for Satan drawn from the readings of the Hebrew Bible. Perhaps also, suggesting that the perspective to regard popular novels in such a manner was likewise antiquated and over emphasized. Added to this, the ‘Soliloquy’ is composed of nine stanzas with a trochaic tetrameter, which uses sets of four stressed syllables each followed by unstressed syllables. The formality and rigid order in the structure of the poem perhaps is likewise suggestive of the stringent formality and order that pervaded in the life of those who lived in the cloister.

One of the most striking aspects of Browning’s work is that he juxtaposes the lives of individuals from their own perspectives with how they are widely perceived. He drew extensively upon cultural stereotypes and popular historical references for this purpose. Throughout Dramatic Lyrics he draws attention to the differences in cultural perception by specifying French novels that were frequently associated with a more liberal attitude towards relationships and politics. The general title of ‘Italy and France’ is used to thematically classify two poems each of which draws on cultural stereotypes regarding different attitudes towards romantic relationships. Whilst the poem about Italy refers to the violence directed against an unfaithful wife from the point of view of her husband, the poem ‘Count Gismond’, presented under the title of France speaks from the perspective of a much-adored mistress. Perhaps this reflects the general pattern in Italian Renaissance history that saw much violence spurred on by romantic liaisons amongst the ruling parties, a historical trend not seen so markedly in France. Also the fact that the ‘Soliloquy’ is specifically from a ‘Spanish Cloister’, further draws on cultural stereotypes as the Spanish monarchy were certainly highly religious and committed to the Church.

The medium of dramatic dialogues gives a sense of compression to storylines as a reader is plunged into a given perspective with only the context that they surmise from their own knowledge of the background of the poem. This method is particularly successful in creating a sense of immediacy. This is because once the context becomes clear the dialogue can combine commonly felt emotions with background knowledge to create a relatable impression of the lives of otherwise distant historical figures. This seemed to be a quality that was much appreciated by Pater who felt that it reflected Hegel’s conception of aesthetic in his ‘Heitekeit’ and ‘Allgemeinheit’ theories of generality and idealization for artistic success. In his essay on Winckelmann, Pater writes about the legacy of Hellenic ideals in creative output, referring to Hegel’s conception of

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16 Pater, Studies in the Histories of the Renaissance, pp. 86-117

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‘Heitekeit’ which talks of a sense of a purposeful reduction of reality, observing a certain ‘blitheness or repose’ and ‘Allgemeinheit’ that refers to generalities. He argues that it is the work of an exceptional artist to create new ways of expressing reality, with the capacity to exert ‘a novel power of refraction, selecting, transforming, recombining the images it transmits, according to the choice of the imaginative intellect.’17

In Men and Women Browning shows this transformative capacity by relating historical figures with colloquial imagery. Published first in 1863, it did not meet with much critical success at the time, but as Browning’s reputation rose later in his career; it came to be more widely well regarded. With ‘Fra Lippo Lippi’ and ‘Andrea del Sarto’ in the anthology, in particular now being regarded as among his masterpieces. It represents an instance where the use of dramatic dialogues is developed and expanded to create a free-flowing, informal narrative that interprets the life of a sixteenth-century painter in very vivid, modern terms. Composed of 392 lines of which the majority, excepting six and a half lines of lyrical interlude of stornelli or ‘flower-songs’ is free verse, it tells the story of the life of the Carmelite monk whose life is recorded, albeit somewhat inaccurately, in Vasari’s The Lives of the Artists, presumably written whilst Browning was living in Florence with his wife Elizabeth Barrett. A note on their copy of Vasari’s work of Florence 1846-57 has suggested that Vasari might very plausibly have been the source of Browning’s inspiration for the poem.18 Although Browning appeared to be discontent with Vasari’s version of the artist’s biography, and in writing to Edward Bowden in 1866 showed a preference to Filippo Baldinucci’s account of his life and constructed his own theories based on this.19

The life of Fra Lippo Lippi, according to Vasari, was something of great drama and turbulence, frequently coloured by instances of neglected oaths and volatile emotions. Born around 1409, the son of a butcher by trade and orphaned at a young age, Fillipo Lippi was entered into a Carmine convent at the age of eight and was accepted as a Friar in the Carmelite Priory of Florence taking oath at the age 16 in 1421 and ordained as a priest four years later. Vasari notes of his character that Lippi was ‘always liked to befriend cheerful people and he always lived a happy life’ and ‘spent exceptional amounts on his love affairs, which he continued to enjoy throughout his life up to the time of his death.’20 For instance on being imprisoned by Cosimo di Medici, in order to be forced to work, he was known to have escaped from his room by means of a rope constructed from his sheets. Whilst later in his life, during his commission to paint the frescoes at the cathedral in Prato, he asked for Lucretzia Buti, thought either to be a ward of the Covent of Carmelites in Prato or a young novice to pose as a model for his work. He was known to have abducted Lucretzia,
and together they had a son Fillipino Lippi, who later became a novice of his father alongside Sandro Botticelli. Fra Lippi is thought to have died in 1469, from poisoning, although the motives for this still remain under conjecture.21

Browning in Fra Lippo Lippi, writes about the painter’s conversation (albeit one-sided) with some city guards to whom he speaks with freedom as he is under the patronage of Cosimo di Medici. He creates a colloquial dialogue that removes the formality from the encounter and captures something of the real feeling of the humorous, drunken meeting between the painter and the guards. The questions it raises about whether art should be restricted to the conscious inculcation of Christian morality or whether it should be an illustration of real life appears throughout:

‘It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world’s no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
“Ay, but you don’t so instigate to prayer!”
Strikes in the Prior: “when your meaning’s plain
It does not say to folk — remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!” Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what’s best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.”22

Lippo’s questioning of the nature of what art should represent, seems to reflect also the question of how writers should also interpret and portray the past. Should it be seen as a sequence of events characterized by logical causality, as a warning for future generations or should it be the representation of the frequently chaotic lives of real people? By nuancing what art should represent by representing artists and their work in real life terms, Browning seems to give an answer to the question. He implies that art, whatever form it may take should attempt to represent moments of emotional intensity, which characterize the lives of real people. And that to restrict expression to didactic aims or overtly idealized settings does not well represent the truth. Indeed this was an approach that Pater also promoted as he saw art, poetry and music, not merely as composed of technical qualities that are observed and commented in an abstract manner. Rather he saw creativity, as artist working with their chosen medium, be it paint or verse or music in new and skillful ways to create an emotional response in the viewer. He saw art as a means to inspire feeling and not merely moral instruction, a view that was forward thinking for his time, and indeed went some way in helping to lay the foundations for modernism.

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‘A perticuler sort of Christaline Glasse’: A taste of politeness and politics in the early eighteenth century

This paper examines and compares two artefacts of the early eighteenth century; a heavy baluster wine glass c.1700 - 1710 and the poem Glass by Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea (1661-1720) first published as a separate verse in her Miscellany of Poems on Several Occasions in 1713. From her unique position as a female aristocrat, once at the centre of court as maid of honour to Mary of Modena, and then for many years an internal political exile, Finch’s poem explores how the humble wine glass and its contents can embody an external and internal form of politeness and the division between the temporal and spiritual condition.

In 1674, George Ravenscroft was granted a patent for the English manufacture of ‘a perticuler sort of Christaline Glasse…not formerly exercised or vsed in this our Kingdome’. Whilst the patent itself is silent on the raw materials used in production, presumably to prevent competition, contemporary evidence suggests that it was substantially different in composition to existing glass manufacture. This initial composition was prone to ‘crizzling’; a form of glass corrosion which renders blown glass cloudy and eventually causes breakage. The defect was later corrected with the addition of lead oxide and as John Houghton, writing at the turn of the seventeenth century notes, Ravenscroft’s modified metal became known as ‘flint glass’- the term synonymous with colourless lead-based glass.

This new brilliant English crystal, which mimicked naturally found rock crystal, had an extraordinary ability to refract light and was heavy, ‘hard, durable and whiter than any from Venice.’ Whilst knowledge of producing coloured domestic glass was also

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1 Albert Hartshorne, Old English Glasses: An account of glass drinking vessels in England from early times to the end of the eighteenth century (London, 1897), p. 240.
3 Dr Robert Plot, writing in 1677, noted that Ravenscroft’s glasses were ‘subject to that unpardonable fault called crizzling…a Scabrities or dull roughness irrecoverably clouding the transparency of the glass’. He went on to note that problem had been corrected and that a new glass had been perfected that ‘…will not Crizel, but endure the se verest trials whatever, to be known from the former by a seal set purposely on them.’ The Natural History of Oxford-shire, Being an Essay toward the Natural History of England (Printed at the Theater in OXFORD and in London at Mr.S.Millers, at the Star near the West-end of St. Pauls Church-yard, 1677), para 93, p. 258.
readily available there appears to have been little or no demand for it in England in the first half of the eighteenth century, suggesting that consumers prized the qualities noted above.

The discovery of this flint glass gradually replaced the lighter, rather dull, Venetian-type soda-glass and the Northern European potash-glass. Its development was adapted for use in high-quality tableware which dominated the market in Britain and abroad for at least a century. Certainly by 1700 the previously admired Venetian influence had disappeared altogether from English stemware, giving way to a mode known as ‘heavy baluster’, produced until 1720. These early glasses, shaped from heavy flint were so-named after their large, bold stem. Often the part most susceptible to changing fashions in the eighteenth century, the stem was baroque in style and incorporated large, proportioned knops which resembled furniture legs and candlesticks of the period. The remainder of the vessel encompassed the simple and solid shape of a conical, funnel-shaped bowl and workmanlike feet with folded rimes to guard against accidental chipping (fig. 1). In this example, the smaller basal knop with the narrow tear would have trapped a sliver of light, spotlighting it upwards into the larger ball knop above it. The air bubble in turn would have captured the candlelight around the dining table and glowed; highlighting the brilliance of the crystal and showcasing
the sparkling body of its contents. This was a familiar technique of the period. Heavy baluster glasses relied on the vast use of a material that was enhanced by internal air bubbles rather than depending upon elaborate ornamentation for their attractiveness like their Venetian counterparts. It cannot be said that such glasses were never decorated, but the addition of diamond-point or wheel-engraving was so rare in this period that Bickerton asserts that it is safe to assume that manufacturers and consumers alike were completely satisfied with them.\(^6\)

That translucency was the quality most prized in this technical innovation can be seen in Anne Finch’s poem *Glass*. The poem appears to be an apostrophe to “Man” for the invention of glass and its subsequent adaptation into objects such as the ‘Shash’ (sash) window, ‘Flakes of solid Ice’ (mirror) and ‘Vessels blown’ (wine glasses). The reader is invited to attend to the materiality of these objects and to consider how a sensory encounter with a material object is conveyed within a mediating text:

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O Man! what Inspiration was thy Guide,
Who taught thee Light and Air thus to divide;
To let in all the useful Beams of Day,
Yet force, as subtil Winds, without thy Shash to stay;
T’extract from Embers by a strange Device,
Then polish fair these Flakes of solid Ice;
Which, silver’d o’er, redouble all in place,
And give thee back thy well or ill-complexion’d Face.
To Vessels blown exceed the gloomy Bowl,
Which did the Wine’s full excellence controul,
These shew the Body, whilst you taste the Soul.
Its colour sparkles Motion, lets thee see,
Tho’ yet th’Excess the Preacher warns to flee,
Lest Men at length as clearly spy through Thee.\(^7\)
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The final three couplets are devoted solely to the wine glass, presumably the heavy baluster glass of this period, which contrasts with and ‘exceeds’ the opacity of the ‘gloomy’ bowl – alluding to its superior status by virtue of transparency. The fine translucency of the wine glass allows you to see the robust ‘Body’ and character of the wine, whose excesses the ‘Preacher’ warns against. However, Finch recognises that a glass of wine is more than simply a vessel containing fermented grape juice. She encourages her reader to see beyond the secular drinking ritual and consider the question: what does it mean to be able to see the contents of a wine glass?


\(^7\) Anne, Countess of Winchilsea, *Miscellany of Poems on Several Occasions* (London, Printed for J.B. and Sold Benj. Tooke at the Middle-Temple-Gate, William Taylor in Pater-Noster-Row and James Round in Exchange Alley, Cornhill, 1713) at p. 264. Glass originated as part of a larger manuscript poem ‘Some occasional Reflections Digested (though not with great regularity) into a Poem’. For her *Miscellany Poems*, Finch extracted the lines to make a separate composition (Jennifer Keith, *Philological Quarterly*, 88 (2009), pp. 79-80, 77-102).
Finch articulated a different literary and political authority to the overtly public and political poetry of Dryden, Pope and Swift in an era in which the culture of politeness was at its apex. Born Anne Kingsmill, to a family noted for Royalist sympathies, she began her adult life amongst the coterie of wits in Charles II’s court by serving as maid of honour to Mary of Modena, wife of the future James II in 1682. In 1684, she married Colonel Heneage Finch, a courtier later appointed to Groom of the Bedchamber to James II.

As an intimate member of court, Finch would have been aware that objects were necessary for polite display and that men, as well as women, were involved in considering and selecting items that helped to construct their identities. Certainly, flint glass drinking vessels of the early eighteenth century were considered to be luxurious commodities and appealed to two distinctive markets with similar aspirations – the emerging affluent middle class who wished to emphasise their gentility and educational refinement and the aristocratic upper class who purchased glass to demonstrate good taste and interest in fine craftsmanship. Politeness was mediated by personal conduct but also by whether one owned items of sufficiently genteel design, was capable of discussing and appreciating their beauty and able to use them in the ‘correct’ manner. A set of flint glasses and other effects such as ornate clothing, chinaware and literature were all fashionable accessories within a polite culture that Finch’s reading audience would have recognised and likely possessed. After all, the successful display of politeness was indicative of individual good taste and taste was a sign of virtue. Luddington notes that this virtue was what gave the post-1688 elite ‘the right to rule and simultaneously denied that right to those that had money but poor taste, or more often, those who did not have the means to purchase the objects that would signal whatever taste they had.’ This idea of taste was not an entirely new concept, but it acquired prominence in England in the late seventeenth century and quickly became a justification for political power. This performance then was essential in legitimizing authority that was moving away from the Royalist tradition and old aristocratic order to the new space of Tory/Whig party polity.

Following the austerity of the Interregnum, alcohol was consumed at all levels of society to embody new-found liberalism and indulgence. Wine was generally less common and usually more expensive and so tended to generate connotations of exclusivity, as opposed to beer or mead. The English political and cultural elite in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries typically drank wine, at least in the privacy of their own homes. We do not know if Finch herself partook, but wine itself was a key theme in classical antiquity, which in turn was a model for polite culture. Consuming imported wine was an inherently cosmopolitan act, akin to going on the

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10 Luddington, p. 96.
11 Ibid.
Grand Tour and therefore an indicator of one’s politeness. Moreover, wine could also embrace polite display; chilled in a large engraved silver wine cooler, ceremonially served from a crystal decanter, poured into individual flint baluster glasses and consumed while sitting around a table fashioned from mahogany, imported from the New World. However, even in this ‘performance’, so fashionable in the grand dining rooms of the early eighteenth century, there were political demarcators. In political discourse emerging from the Restoration, alcohol became a symbolic marker of cultural difference in which Tory and Stuart supporters stood for French claret and Whigs, representing the new mercantile class, became synonymous with Port.

Certainly this was the principle on which the two sides pursued their public drinking and insulted each other in print. For Tories, claret represented geniality, sophistication, wit and good taste. It also stood for loyalty to the crown – a residual effect of the Royalist pledging during the Interregnum. For Whigs, claret characterized their fears. France was viewed as a major source of Catholic threat and French wines became targeted as both culturally popish (presumably an idea bolstered by the role of wine in the Eucharist) and an economic drain which benefitted the coffers of the French treasury. The type of wine you consumed was therefore an indicator of your political loyalties and by extension your patriotism. Centlivre illustrates this in her play The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret (1714). Don Felix says to his prospective father-in-law, Don Pedro: ‘I have been drinking right French Claret, Sir. But I love my own Country for all that.’ ‘Ay, ay’ responds Don Pedro, ‘who doubts it, Sir?’. Centlivre, who often satirized Tories, cynically parallels Don Felix’s questionable loyalty to his country with the dubious Tory loyalty to the incoming Hanoverian monarchy.

Given her proximity to court both through her personal role and her marriage, Anne Finch would have undoubtedly been aware of the political divisions represented through alcohol. Her sensitivity to representation and power relations may have developed in part from the drastic changes in her circumstances following the revolution and deposition of James II in 1689. Anne herself was a noted non-juror but it was her husband’s refusal to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary

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14 Fay Banks, Wine drinking in Oxford, 1640 – 1850: A Story Revealed by Tavern, Inn, College and Other Bottles (1997), p. 17. Early discourse ascribed ale or beer as a symbol for the Whigs. As Banks explains, between 1640-1850 the type of wine imported largely depended on the political climate of the day. Britain waged periodic wars with France and Spain so that wine from these two countries were at times unobtainable or had high import duties imposed upon them. See also Andre Louis Simon, Bottlecourt Days: Wine Drinking in England during the Eighteenth Century, (London, 1926).
16 Luddington, p. 79.
which led to the loss of his government position and virtual exile from political life. The subsequent loss of income forced the Finches into financial hardship and they were forced to take temporary refuge with various friends in London until Heneage’s nephew Charles invited them to settle permanently on the family’s estate in Eastwell, Kent in 1690. Here they resided for more than twenty-five years where, secluded from the turbulent world of politics, which had seen no fewer than ten elections between 1688 and 1714, they experienced a period of apparent calm and stability.

Perhaps this explains why, despite being a staunch Tory and Stuart supporter, Finch does not distinguish between heavy-bodied claret or port and remains neutral, simply referring to the ‘colour’ which ‘sparkles Motion’ (lines 10-12). Court politics, in her bitter experience, had been a source of distress and danger, corruption and calamity. This was exacerbated on 29 April 1690 when Heneage was arrested with several others on charges of treason, allegedly attempting to join James II in France. The charges were later rescinded although accusations of disloyalty appear to have persisted. To avoid further implicating herself or her husband, the ambivalent political stance Finch takes in Glass means she neither has to denounce her personal views in favour of the current ruling class, nor expose herself and invite scandal or accusations of treason. This could also have been an effort to support her husband when the couple returned to London and he ran (albeit unsuccessfully) for Parliament during the reign of Queen Anne. It is also arguable that her neutrality aims to promote unity amongst the political parties at the time, following a period of such public and private turmoil. Finch’s attempt to moderate party conflict without direct discussion of politics (and religion) could itself be construed as polite behaviour.

The interplay between polite and political display and public and private spheres can be seen in a double-portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller (fig. 2) of two seated members of the Whig Kit Kat Club, the Duke of Newcastle and the Earl of Lincoln. The subdued brown of their environment stands in stark contrast to the modish vibrancy of their garments. A small window opens on to a partial view of a country house. Lincoln looks directly at his friend and holds a full glass of red wine in his right hand. Newcastle is poised to fill his own identical balustered wine glass in his right hand from the wicker-covered bottle in his left – his action prominently placed in the middle of the painting. Having already served his friend, we can only presume that these two polite, learned gentlemen will now taste and discuss the wine, along with important matters of state. Whether these men are consuming port or, somewhat hypocritically, claret is moot. What matters is what the sitters want to convey to the viewer. Politeness set an aesthetic standard for the hegemonic ideal of elite gendered behaviour in court and town. The concept, especially among men alone was not separate from the idea of honourable drinking that required every man to keep up with the group. By returning the viewer’s

19 See Finch’s highly-acclaimed ‘The Spleen, A Pindarique Ode. By a Lady’ (London: Printed & sold by H. Hills, 1709). The poem explores the melancholy that Finch experienced as a result of her personal circumstances.
gaze, Newcastle is enticing the individual to join them in polite conversation – the clipped nature of the painting to the right suggests that there is capacity for others to be at the table. Moreover, as long as one drank from fine flint glasses and discussed fine wines, any resulting inebriation could be excused as an excess of good taste. This was typically a manipulation of vice by the ruling class into something sophisticated; they were beyond reproach in their behaviour but could still disparage and subjugate the lower classes. The Preacher’s warning presumably does not apply to them.

We have explored the external, temporal nature of the wine glass, as part of a polite (and often political) public performance but there is an internal dimension to Finch’s poem. Klein comments that politeness was associated with improvement in the sense not just of refinements of style but of moral and other reform. A deeply committed Anglican and prolific writer, Finch’s religious poetry often connects state politics with the suffering soul and *Glass* is no exception. The sonnet-length poem displays ‘typically Augustan qualities’ in style, namely the ‘characteristic neatness and plainness of verse structure, the social and aristocratic tone, the religious solemnity and high morality and the inevitable fondness for the satirical attitude,’ suggesting her belief that an individual’s spiritual conditions are inextricable from social and political phenomena.

21 See ‘Psalm the 137th Paraphras’d to the 7th Verse’ in the 1713 Miscellany, pp. 282-283.
In this regard it is worth noting that by the beginning of the eighteenth century, gender differentiation in religious life increased. Women’s virtues were described in family terms, so that to be a good woman was to be a good Christian, while to be a good man was to be a good citizen. In an era that lacked published female authors, a number of well-educated Anglican women managed to gain the respect of their male peers for their piety and learning. Anne Conway, for example, wrote theological treatises which orthodox Anglican divines had admired. In the late 1690s, Mary Astell gained public recognition for her defence of the Anglican Church. In employing religious imagery, it could be argued that Finch is being particularly shrewd in relation to her elite audience; commenting on the masculine political sphere but being careful not to usurp it by adopting a feminine religious tone.

Whilst *Glass* is a complex, multi-layered composition it is striking that Finch arranges a collection of modern luxuries akin to an artist painting a vanitas picture. In sharp contrast to the secular conversation piece at fig. 2, the poem could be interpreted as an attempt to convey the essential meaninglessness of earthly goods and pursuits when compared with the eternal nature of true Christian values. The ephemeral nature of glass, in all its manifestations, is symbolic of the fragile transitory nature of life, the vanity of wealth and the inevitability of death. Finch’s personal experience suggests a hollowness in the visual emphasis.

Certainly behind her direct address, there is a sense of irony which questions the value of what ‘Man’ has accomplished. Finch invites the reader to think about the human condition and sets the tone of in the first two lines. ‘Inspiration’ suggests divine inspiration but there is a clear play on words. The literal meaning of inspiration is drawing in air the element Man has mastered by creating glass. By controlling nature in its infinite forms, whether by separating the wind from light or creating a vessel which enables an observer to view its contents (and presumably its secrets?), Man is essentially usurping the natural order and function of God, the Divine Creator. Whilst the arrogance of Man has enabled him to conquer the unconquerable, the ‘motion’ of wine indicates a restless soul - one that can be seen but is trapped, ‘controil[ed]’ and therefore unable to escape and reach a state of ecstasy. This trope continues in the lines that follow with the image of glass as ice extracted from fire by a ‘strange device’ suggesting that production embodies some sort of miracle allowing the two elements to co-exist. There might also be a more ominous suggestion, as hell was often depicted as a place of both fire and ice. This narrative of a ‘miraculous calamity’ essentially challenges some of the very basic assumptions of the Enlightenment. Rousseau had previously argued that rather than promoting morality, the advancement of the arts and sciences had actually had the opposite effect and led to the decline of virtue. In a similar fashion, Finch appears to align the focus on commodities during courtly display with a degeneration of moral character and a decline of ‘internal’ politeness.

23 See for example, Book of Exodus, 9:23-9:24, and the miraculous imperviousness of ice to fire in the seventh plague: “So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.”

24 See for example, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, (1674), Book II, lines 574-628.
The issue of religion becomes compelling in Finch’s use of highly-charged language to describe ‘the Wine’s full excellence’. In drinking wine at Holy Communion worshippers taste the blood/body of Christ, or a reminder of the two, depending on Catholic or Protestant views. The conflict and animosity between these two denominations was of course the reason behind James II being deposed and in turn the unfortunate situation that Finch found herself in. So the idea of ‘taste[ing] the Soul’ of wine is a very striking one; it does not quite correspond with Finch’s Anglican beliefs about Holy Communion but it certainly suggests some kind of religious experience. By invoking a ritual that is central to both groups, Finch is encouraging her audience to consider the sacrament and what it spiritually means to be able to see the wine you taste when engaged in secular, polite display. There could also be an allusion to the futility of trying to do without God in an age where politeness prevails. Essentially, any temporal constitutions that place human arrangements before the Divine could be construed as false.

The final couplet is instructive in this context. It appears to be a light-hearted admonition that if the reader does not heed the preacher’s warning to drink less, there will be empty glasses that people can ‘spy through’, a clear allusion to spy glasses. An empty glass could also be a symbol of death. An alternative interpretation is that if the reader does not avoid ‘Excess’ in religion, either via fanaticism, or an overt display of religious sensibilities, he will make himself vulnerable to spying and suspicion. The jarring final lines suggest a real fear on Finch’s part for the future of both individual and state. Queen Anne was in declining health and in fact passed away a year after publication of the Miscellany of Poems.

Following the political and social chaos of the seventeenth century, luxury objects such as crystal wine glasses and fine wine (with all its connotations to aristocratic, state and church institutions) were exactly what the post-Revolution order required. In an environment where aristocratic lineage no longer provided the fundamental rationale for political rule, having good taste became one of the foundations of political legitimacy for a ruling order that combined both old and new families. Finch accepts that opulent display is an essential part of court and emerging party politics but Glass hints at her awareness of the corruption rife in the cultural and political ‘body’. Distinguishing between the ‘body’ of the glass which enables the ‘soul’ of its contents to be seen - the translucent wine glass is a metaphysical conceit for the ‘false’ politeness of external courtly politics and the ‘true’ politeness of the internal, spiritual nature of man, informed by Christ’s sacrifice and inner good will.

Glass appears to ironically eulogise man for the creation of such inventions but by focusing on sensation mechanisms, the body and self (to create a new spark) the poem grants the glass itself the agency to bring a new ‘body’ into being. Whilst Finch expresses a real fear for the future following the end of the Stuart line, she also appears to accept that nothing is eternal. In this context she gives rise to hope for the
incoming Hanoverian succession. The heavy baluster wine-glass, whether filled with claret or port or used as a prop for polite performance by the social or body politic, is not yet broken.

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**List Of Illustrations**

Figure 1: Lead glass wine goblet with heavy baluster stem, c.1700-1710, unknown maker, English (London), object number C.233-1912, Height: 17.2 cm, Diameter: 8.5 cm, Wilfred Buckley Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 2: *Thomas Pelham-Holles, 1st Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne; Henry Clinton, 7th Earl of Lincoln* by Sir Godfrey Kneller, Bt oil on canvas, circa 1721, 50 in. x 58 3/4 in. (1270 mm x 1492 mm) © National Portrait Gallery, London
Ethics and natural philosophy in the public representation of the scientific experiment: A reading of Wright of Derby’s *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768) in the light of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818)

Joseph Wright of Derby’s painting of the Air Pump has often been described as a representation of the scientific enquiry and natural philosophy of the Enlightenment, whereby an itinerant scientist-philosopher lectures a family about the functioning of a well-known scientific instrument, the air pump, and enlightens them about its associated phenomena. This article proposes an alternative philosophical and moral reading of this powerful visual artefact by comparing it to the famous horror experiment of Mary Shelley’s gothic novel *Frankenstein*. When realism crosses fiction: the representation of the ethical boundaries of science in the life and death experiment.

A very great and uncommon genius in a peculiar way.”¹ These words from an anonymous art reviewer in 1768 summarise well how Joseph Wright of Derby was perceived in the second half of the eighteenth century. Indeed, he has been often described as a ‘provincial’ painter (Wright ‘of Derby’) by contrast to his established London rivals Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough. His famous candlelight scenes have also been categorised as ‘cultural oddities’.² *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (Figure 1) is probably one of the best known of these scenes. This fascinating painting is today on display at the National Gallery next to iconic paintings of some of the most acclaimed British painters of all time: Constable, Gainsborough, Turner, Stubbs, Lawrence and Reynolds. However, with its rather peculiar subject matter, this large painting (183 x 244 cm) attracts far more viewers than more famous paintings in the room.³ This unusual scene represents an itinerant scientist who demonstrates to his audience the functioning of an air pump, at the expense of a white cockatoo. As the air is being withdrawn from a glass bowl, a vacuum is created and the bird falls and suffocates. In the *Air Pump*, Wright of Derby captures the various reactions of the members of the audience. From the indifferent young lovers, the dubitative young boy on the left, the frightened girls at the centre,

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to the meditative old man sitting at the table: the painting displays a whole range of emotions that contributes to the dramatic effect of the scene. A decomposing human skull in a jar completes the scene in the foreground. The scientist stares at the viewer and seems to invite us to participate in the experience and decide whether we think the bird must live or die.

On 30th August 1797, a day after the death of Wright of Derby, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, later known as Mary Shelley, was born. Mary Shelley is best known for her gothic novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, first published in 1818. The protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, is a young natural philosopher who manages to impart life to a creature made of relics from the dead, with terrible consequences. In the summer of 1816, Mary Shelley and her then lover and husband-to-be Percy Bysshe Shelley spent time in Switzerland with Lord Byron.4 During several rainy days, confined in Lord Byron’s house, he and his guests read German ghost stories translated into French to distract themselves. Lord Byron then challenged Mary, Percy and his own personal physician John Polidori to a writing contest to demonstrate their skills. “We will each write a ghost story”, said Lord Byron.5 The subject of the story was “The nature of the principle of life and whether there was any probability of

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5 Ibid. p.194.
its ever being discovered and communicated.” Mary came up with a story that would two years later become Frankenstein.

The Air Pump and Frankenstein were created exactly fifty years apart. Despite this period, the painting and the novel show some fascinating points of comparison. The November 1992 edition of Frankenstein and a later audiobook of October 1996 of Three Classic Horror Stories (Frankenstein, Dracula and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde) by publisher Penguin Classics actually used the Air Pump as their cover page. The Air Pump has usually been studied in the light of Wright of Derby’s keen interest in the depiction of scientific experiments and his close connections to the Midlands circles of industrialists, natural philosophers and intellectuals of the Enlightenment and, in particular, some prominent members of the Lunar Society of Birmingham such as Erasmus Darwin and Joseph Priestley. Together with Frankenstein, the painting depicts a scientific experiment based on genuine research of the time and evidences the popularisation of science and dissemination of scientific knowledge. In this depiction of the scientific experiment, the painting shares the gothic atmosphere of Frankenstein and some of the philosophical thoughts of the Enlightenment. Another reading of both works in the light of religious symbolism opens the question of ethics and morality.

The experiment of the Air Pump is easy to understand: the air is pumped out of the glass bowl by two pistons and, a vacuum being created, any animal placed in the bowl is asphyxiated and may possibly die if the air is not readmitted in time. Despite the dramatic scenery of the Air Pump, such demonstration was not revolutionary in 1768. Invented in 1649 by Otto von Guericke, the air pump was already a well-known scientific instrument at the time. The first effective air pump built in England in 1658 for scientific purposes was used by Robert Boyle (Figure 2) in a series of tests he conducted to demonstrate the role and function of air in the respiration of animals. The Air Pump neither shows a breaking experiment nor makes history. As highlighted by Benedict Nicolson, the air pump was already a popular instrument in the eighteenth century and widely used by the scientific community. The audience in the Air Pump is clearly not comprised of scientists or experts: Wright of Derby depicts here different generations of people that might be the members of a same family. The focus seems to be the popularisation of science rather than trying to show any new ground-breaking scientific development. Indeed, Wright of Derby illustrates a demonstration of popular science in the form of public spectacle, rather than pure scientific research. The scientist Joseph Priestley used to teach his students to use instruments such as the air pump to entertain their families.

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6 Ibid.p.195.
9 Nicolson, Joseph Wright of Derby, p.112
Indeed, itinerant lecturers and natural philosophers used to hold scientific demonstrations in public to teach and disseminate scientific knowledge in accordance with Enlightenment values. In this form of entertainment, they would enthral their audience with spectacular experiments, using instruments such as the air pump. Wright of Derby certainly attended some of these scientific demonstrations. The model of air pump he depicts may well have been copied directly from the one used by the scientist James Ferguson who gave several lectures in Derby. In the novel, Victor Frankenstein, following the path of any enlightened young scientist, explains that he avidly attended these lectures during his formative years ‘[…] my utmost wonder was engaged by some experiments on a airpump, which I saw employed by a gentleman whom we were in the habit of visiting.’ In contrast to the painting, the experiment in *Frankenstein* is a radical and secretive one. From the public lecture of the *Air Pump*, we are now into the private and hidden laboratory of the apprentice-sorcerer. Despite being transgressive by nature, the experiment of Victor

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Frankenstein is ground-breaking and is seen by him as a progress of science. When Mary Shelley refers to the ‘spark of being’ which animates the ‘lifeless thing’, this is possibly an allusion to Galvani’s contemporary experiments to animate dead animals with electric stimulation. She indeed mentions ‘galvanism’ as a source of inspiration in her introduction of the 1831 edition. Galvani’s nephew Aldini also attempted the reanimation of hanged criminals and managed to stimulate artificially some of the limbs of a dead criminal. Shelley also claimed that she took inspiration from the works of Erasmus Darwin to write her novel. Indeed, Darwin alluded to the creation of a monster from nature in his study *Zoonomia*:

> For we can create nothing new, we can only combine or separate ideas, which we already received by our perceptions: thus if I wish to represent a monster, I call to mind the ideas of every thing disagreeable and horrible, and combine the nastiness and gluttony of a hog, the stupidity and obstinacy of an ass, with the fur and awkwardness of a bear, and call the new combination Caliban. Yet such a monster may exist in nature, as all his attributes are parts of nature.

Erasmus Darwin was coincidentally a founding member of the Lunar Society and a close acquaintance of Joseph Wright of Derby. Darwin, who moved to Derby after 1780, was also the physician who treated Joseph Wright of Derby for his asthma. Darwin’s strong influence on the writer and the artist either as a source of inspiration or as a reference cannot be completely ignored and evidences the influence of the Enlightenment on Shelley and Wright of Derby.

In the depiction of popular and accessible science, both works encapsulate a gothic atmosphere. This atmosphere clearly contributed to the success and popularity of these works, by creating a feeling of mystery and horror. Shelley’s novel is usually described as a subgenre of gothic, the gothic horror. The combination of light and dark and multiple allusions to the moon are dominant gothic tropes. Indeed, Victor Frankenstein, in his narrative, constantly refers to night and day, light and dark or the moonlit atmosphere: ‘Until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me – a light so brilliant and wondrous [...].’ In another passage: ‘[...] the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding places.’ The creature also experiences light and dark: ‘Darkness then came over me, and troubled me; but hardly had I felt this, when, by opening my eyes, as I now suppose, the light poured in upon me again.’

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14 Ibid. p.38.
16 Shelley, *Frankenstein*, pp. 3 and 195.
18 Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p.34.
19 Ibid. p.36.
20 Ibid. p.60.
Similarly, the Air Pump, through Wright of Derby’s clever use of chiaroscuro, confronts the viewer with a stark contrast of light and dark. The atmosphere of the painting is also haunting and feels, surprisingly, very gothic. The viewer is drawn into the painting by the light. The main light source is a single candle hidden behind the jar containing the skull. A second light source appears on the right through the window in the form of a full moon, maybe a hidden reference to the Lunar Society? We also distinguish through the window, a dead tree, and what resembles the ruins of a castle or a church, both intriguing artistic representations which can be found later in the gothic genre. The painting was however created only four years after Horace Walpole’s novel The Castle of Otranto (1764), which established gothic fiction as a new literary genre. There is no suggestion here that Wright of Derby read the novel or was influenced in any way by this new genre when he painted this particular scene. However, this gothic atmosphere is quite peculiar in this artwork and clearly stood out when it was exhibited the first time. Another aspect of the gothic narrative is the expression of fear and horror. In the following passage of the novel, Frankenstein describes for example his horrific and dark practices:

> Darkness had no effect upon my fancy; and a church-yard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength had become food for the worm. Now I was [...] forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel houses.

In the painting, the reflection of the light on the figure of the scientist accentuates the wild appearance of the man, like a magician or sorcerer emerging from the shadows. A feeling of terror, expressed by the petrified attitude of the two children, captivates the imagination of the viewer. Influenced by Frankenstein’s modern adaptations or portrayals, the modern viewer may see the natural philosopher of Wright of Derby’s Air Pump with his wild hair and staring eyes as the archetype of the sorcerer or ‘mad scientist’.

Beyond the pure scientific representation and the dissemination of knowledge, both works seem to reflect or borrow from the Enlightenment philosophers and, in particular, John Locke and David Hume. The painting as well as the novel appears to embody certain principles and methods of the empiricist theory. In his Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, David Hume makes the proposition that ‘causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason, but by experience [...].’ Hume suggests that we usually infer causation on the basis of our sensory experience of the conjunction of two things. He applies an inductive reasoning process by which a series of observations or experiences lead us to formulate causation. The experiment of the Air Pump reproduces indeed an experiment conducted by Robert Boyle in 1660 to infer the

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21 Ibid. p.34.

role of air in the respiration of animals: the bird suffocates and suffers when the air is removed from the receiver and revives when the air is readmitted. Boyle applies here an inductive reasoning to various experiments he made. Similarly, Monique R. Morgan argues that the acquisition of knowledge by creature in *Frankenstein* resembles David Hume’s proposition on causation through our sensory experience. As she highlights:

Hume’s hypothetical situation aptly describes how Frankenstein’s creature is ‘brought on a sudden into this world,’ endowed from the start ‘with the strongest faculties of reason and reflection,’ and yet devoid of experience. As Hume predicts the creature is eventually able to infer cause and effect once ‘he has acquired more experience’.

Another influence of empiricist theory is also visible in the *Air Pump*, whereby the use of *chiaroscuro* recalls the metaphor of the mind as a darkened room made by John Locke in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. Indeed, Locke explains: ‘That external and internal Sensation, are the only passages that I can find, of Knowledge, to the Understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the Windows by which light is let into this dark Room.’

In the painting, the darkness of the room symbolises our ignorance and the source of light symbolises our understanding of nature: we are ‘enlightened’. Through external (visual) and internal (feeling for the bird) experience we gain knowledge and understanding. The classical doorway accentuates this idea that we are experiencing revelation in the ‘temple’ of Enlightenment.

During the eighteenth century, some thinkers of the Enlightenment embraced the scientific revolution and attempted at the same time to reconcile it with religion. The famous epitaph written by the poet Alexander Pope for Isaac Newton illustrates this well:

Nature and Nature’s laws lay hid in night:  
God said, Let Newton be! and all was light.

Pursuant to this new natural theology, religion would be no longer grounded on faith and divine revelation, but could now be backed by reason and science. The *Air Pump* contains a visual religious narrative inspired from this natural theology. Indeed, Wright of Derby depicts the scene in the manner of Caravaggio, using a theatrical *chiaroscuro* to accentuate the mystique aspect of the scene and bring a religious atmosphere. The range of emotions of the audience is also significant in

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26 Peter Millican in Hume, *An Enquiry*, p.xxv.
its religious symbolism, because the representation of emotion in art was reserved for religious imagery during the Renaissance. Joseph Priestley wrote in 1761: ‘[…] real history resembles the experiments with the air pump, condensing engine and electrical machine, which exhibit the operations of nature, and the nature of God himself.’ In the *Air Pump*, Wright of Derby depicts such an operation of nature, and viewers of the time would have seen this experiment as the ‘overpowering sensation of awe in the face of God’s work.’ Wright of Derby is illustrating here the ‘invisible hand of God’ and his almighty power over life and death. The natural philosopher, the white cockatoo and the old man could represent a Holy Trinity: the scientist with a Christ-like figure at the centre among his disciples, the white dove of the Holy Spirit and the old man meditating in front of a skull, as the Father figure. Similarly, in *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein compares himself to the Creator (God) when he claims that:

A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs.

This religious symbolism in *Frankenstein* raised some criticism when the novel was first published. In particular, Sir Walter Scott wrote a review of the novel. He generally praised the writing qualities of Shelley but criticised vigorously the almost blasphemous idea that a man could take on the role of the Creator.

The novel and the painting share the theme of the mutability of life. In the novel, Mary Shelley also reproduces some verses of the poem ‘Mutability’ by Percy Shelley. This passage from one stage of nature to another through transformation is very present in the novel. The creature of *Frankenstein* is created from the dead and brought to life. In the *Air Pump*, the bird is suffocating and about to die, but can revive at any moment by decision of the scientist. We can visualise here a sort of cycle of life and death. Frankenstein claims that ‘Life and Death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world.’ Equally, the skull in the painting reminds us of death. It can be interpreted in this scene as a visual symbol of spiritual significance such as a *vanitas* or *memento mori*, to illustrate the transience of life or the certainty of death.

In his *Treatise on Ancient Painting*, Georges Turnbull expresses the idea that painting should contribute to natural philosophy and morality. He explains that ‘Pictures are of two sorts, natural and moral’, the former represent ‘Samples of Nature’s visible Beauties, and for that Reason Samples and Experiments in natural Philosophy’

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28 Helmers, ‘Painting as a Rhetorical Performance’, p. 76.
29 Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p.36.
31 Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p.36.
and also argues that ‘moral Pictures’ are ‘Samples of moral Nature, or of the Laws and Connexions of the moral World, and therefore Samples in moral Philosophy’. According to David Solkin, Turnbull reformulates the aesthetic philosophy of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Turnbull does not strictly separate these ‘two sorts’ and considers painting as a form of cultural expression which combines moral and natural philosophy for the improvement of human understanding. In this sense, the Air Pump is not only a painting showing an experiment in natural philosophy, but it also clearly provokes a moral debate. The suffering of the bird seems unnecessarily cruel, particularly if the experiment is seen as a form of entertainment. The dismay of the young girl is an illustration of it. Viewers at the time would also have seen it similarly. Indeed, as highlighted by James Ferguson in his Lectures on Select Subjects in 1764:

If a fowl, a cat, rat, mouse or bird, be put under the receiver, and the air be exhausted, the animal is at first oppressed as with a great weight, then grows convulsed, and at last expires in all the agonies of a most bitter and cruel death. But as this Experiment is too shocking to every spectator who has the least degree of humanity, we substitute a machine called the lungs-glass in place of the animal […].

Wright of Derby’s choices of subject and composition show that the painting was intended to be seen by a larger audience. He knew that his painting would be widely seen because it was exhibited in London at the Society of Artists in 1768 and reproduced in prints in 1769. Why then does Wright of Derby represent a white cockatoo, a rare and expensive bird ‘and one whose life would never in reality have been risked in an experiment such as this’? The answer is maybe that Wright of Derby wanted to use this dramatic visual device, in order to highlight the risks of science and its consumption for popular entertainment.

More generally, the painting raises the question of the benevolence of science: is science always a source of real positive progress? Is it God that is defeated by science in this painting, whereby the viewer becomes himself God because he can decide upon the life or death of the bird? These questions of morality and benevolence of science are very pertinent in the context of Frankenstein because Victor is initially pursuing a noble cause: ‘if I could banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!’, but ends up making himself God Creator by vanity. Is his experiment a success (he revived the dead) or a failure (what he created is a monster)? In François Rabelais’s Gargantua, Gargantua teaches his son Pantagruel that ‘science sans conscience n’est que ruine de l’âme’ (Science/knowledge without conscience

34 David Brewster, Ferguson’s lectures on select subjects, (Edinburgh, second edition, 1806), vol. I, p.228. This is a re-edition of lectures published by Ferguson in 1764.
is nothing but the ruin of the soul).\footnote{François Rabelais, The Very Horrific Life of Great Gargantua, Father of Pantagruel (also referred to as Gargantua), 1534.} Both the Air Pump and Frankenstein allude to this moral dilemma of science and, whereas they both celebrate some values of the Enlightenment in the public diffusion of knowledge, they also demonstrate its limits. These two works are opening up the ethical question of conscience in the scientific experiment. Could they be seen as precursors of the modern bioethics?

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A border to the unknown: folk ritual and interpretations of astrological phenomena in Edmond Halley’s *A Description of the Passage of the Shadow of the Moon over England* (1723) and James Catnach’s almanac, *The Prophetic Messenger* (1833)

Halley’s widely circulated broadside presents one of the earliest rational analyses of a solar eclipse. In it, the Enlightenment scientist attempts to pre-empt the superstitious interpretations that often accompanied astrological occurrences. A century later, an anonymously published broadside and image, *The Prophetic Messenger* depicts an anarchic, folkloric view of a comet visible over Britain. What do these wildly different interpretations tell us about folk ritual in the post-Enlightenment era? In both, the sky represents a border into the unknown; it is either a mappable terrain that can be conquered by rational thought, or a space where folk custom breaks down and fragments into disparate images. Do these representations intersect in any other ways? By examining these artefacts side by side, we can see a variation in cultural attitudes and popular belief amongst different communities, and how supernatural interpretations of natural phenomena were borne out of a reaction to social change.

In the basement of the Tyne and Wear archives, amongst a curious collection of scrapbooks, folk songs and photographs, avant-folk musician Richard Dawson captured *The Prophetic Messenger* in song as a relentlessly unnerving trudge through the countryside of northeast England. A ‘scream’ from the sky introduces an ominous ‘great ball of fire’ that hurtles over death, famine and destruction on the landscape below.1 Commenting on the artefacts in the collection, Dawson remarked on the ‘people living at a different point in time from us. At first they seem so far away but after a short while they begin to move closer.’2 This interaction between people, place and period is broadly speaking, the framework I have followed in understanding the changing ways in which ‘high’ and ‘low’ audiences shared and appropriated ideas on the natural world, and formed different interpretations of astrological phenomena. Alongside the rather intense displays of portentous folkloric tropes in *The Prophetic Messenger*, Edmond Halley’s rational, Enlightenment study of an early eighteenth-century solar eclipse, *A

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Description of the Passage of the Shadow of the Moon over England,³ attempts to engage with the framework of popular ritual and lore in its scientific explanation of the appearance and reoccurrence of comets. Presented alongside each other, The Prophetic Messenger and Halley’s broadside seem the very antithesis in content, audience and systems of belief. Their focus on borders, boundaries and division is what makes this comparison far less straightforward, and far more interesting.

Until the middle of the seventeenth century, all members of society accepted unexplained apparitions in the sky quite widely as portents or omens of future events. The periodicity of comets and eclipses made it easier to project onto them the fears and expectations of the time: empires, dynasties and warfare, could all be traced back to the appearance of something strange in the sky. A panel of the Bayeux tapestry records the apparition of what would come to be known as ‘Halley’s Comet’ in April 1066 (Figure 1). This was later regarded by many as an omen on the death of King Harold and the beginning of the Norman dynasty in England. The difference in tone between Saxon and Norman observations of the comet is one of the earliest recorded examples of astrology used for propaganda.⁴ While post-Enlightenment scholarship discouraged attaching a prophetic meaning to cosmic apparitions, the appearance of ‘Norman Yoke’ theories and other dubious forms of historistic propaganda merely replaced one ‘ignorant’ system of belief with another.⁵

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³ Title abbreviated to A Description from here on.
One similarity between both artefacts is their form. Both are examples of popular print, and this inexpensive and unregulated medium could combine ‘low’ forms of culture, such as familiar tropes from popular lore, with classical or philosophical topoi. These ‘cultural and intellectual alloys’ produced by an intermingling of ‘high’ and ‘low’ systems of belief prevented the decline of superstition in popular discourse.

Halley’s 1715 publication of *A Description* was the first recorded eclipse map to be published, and produced at a time when astronomy was still recovering from its ‘vulgar’ appropriation during the English Civil War as a prophetic tool. By combining the accessibility of the broadside form with the established reputation of scientific publisher John Senex, Halley was able to exploit a growing culture of commercialism in eighteenth-century Britain, using it to align his discipline with reputable Enlightenment ideas. We know that Halley’s commercial venture was a success because his eclipse map was published again in 1723, with more accurate calculations. Writings by Halley during the time in between the two publications reveal a great deal about the audience he was hoping to attract with his findings:

The Novelty of the thing being likely to excite a general Curiosity … with a Request to the Curious to observe what they could about it … as requiring no other Instrument as a Pendulum Clock with which most persons are furnish’d.

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6 Angela McShane, “‘Ne sutor ultra crepidam’; Political Cobbler and Broadside Ballads in Late Seventeenth-Century England”, in *Ballads and Broadsides in Britain 1500-1800*, eds. Patricia Fumerton and Anita Guerrini, (Farnham: Ashgate: 2013), p. 226.
8 Ibid., p. 177.
Language like ‘novelty’ and ‘curiosity’ point to a culture of leisure and ephemera amongst the burgeoning middle classes and the example of the pendulum clock, not an inexpensive item, is telling. ‘Most persons’ in this era would still have relied on the sun and their everyday ritual to perceive time.

Halley was aware and eager to cultivate this attitude of exclusivity. In the late seventeenth century, he had calculated the reoccurrence of his eponymous comet with remarkable accuracy. The comet’s relatively short cycle and good visibility meant it was viewed by many and, consequently, it was linked to several significant and largely negative events. Allied to this, Halley initially made no secret of his acknowledgment of popular lore within astronomy, viewing comets as natural markers of changes in the earth’s atmosphere, which in turn had the potential to enact widespread social or moral change. These observations were challenged in 1694 when the Royal Society censured Halley’s suggestion that a cometary impact may have caused Noah’s Flood. In trying to disentangle astronomy and his own work from popular lore, Halley gives force to his argument by advocating the guiding ideology of the period. When his eclipse maps were published in 1715 and 1723, Halley was clear to reassure readers against observing the eclipse as ‘portending evil to our Sovereign Lord King George and his Government, which God preserve.’

The interaction between politics, astronomy and folklore is subtly reinforced in *A Description*. In 1715 Britain was still a ‘freshly minted state’ which ‘lacked any enduring raison d’être.’ Custom remained ‘the most powerful legitimating force’ for culture, a sentiment which Halley exploits by stressing the ‘natural’ recurrence of eclipses, in language similar to that describing popular seasonal rituals. He replaces the idea of a community united by populist ideology with his own ‘imagined community’ of ‘many curious individuals’ whose observations of the eclipse he acknowledges and encourages. Halley’s publisher John Senex was a distinguished cartographer and maker of globes; his reputation for accuracy would have added to the intellectual weight of the broadside. Britain is cast in shadow, but the drawing, and the layout of the ballad in general, is geometric, precise and ordered.

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10 Schechner, p. 218.
11 Ibid., p. 218.
By contrast, *The Prophetic Messenger* (Figure 4) is full of hostile, ruptured borders, where the sky, detached from the rest of the nation, is open to invasion. The sky has always occupied a significant place in British folklore. A ‘red sky at night’ was to the mutual ‘delight’ of sailors and shepherds everywhere. Folklore in general often provided people with the understanding to utilise the natural world around them. However, the popularity of *The Prophetic Messenger* reveals how the sky also provokes uncertainty well into the nineteenth century. Borders function as one of the most significant tropes in folklore. They not only represent a difference in landscape or nation, but also act as a division between the realms of the natural and the supernatural. Displaced rural communities forced to migrate to industrialised towns and cities at the beginning of the nineteenth century, adapted many of their traditions in line with their new surroundings. The Reverend Herbert James observed that despite the technological and scientific developments throughout the nineteenth century, many of his parishioners preferred to seek out ‘esoteric superstition’. Incidentally James’ son, the acclaimed ghost-writer and antiquarian M.R. James, continued to popularise superstition with his stories of the supernatural, and their particular interest in highly localised popular lore and customs.

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James Catnach’s *The Prophetic Messenger* took its title from a series of popular annualised almanacs of the same name, offering anything from weather forecasts to ‘unfortunate days’ for the year ahead. As Ian McCalman notes, for Catnach to have produced an inexpensive mimicry ‘there must have been considerable demand for the original’ and with it, a demonstrable market for its sensational material.\(^{18}\) Prior to 1833, ‘Raphael’s’ almanacs had run smoothly for thirteen editions, on the pretence that their predictions came from one omnipotent, angelically-named astrologer. It was the ugly transition between the first and second ‘Raphael’s’ that exposed the almanac’s methods:

…in order to prevent the public from being so grossly imposed upon, as I understand it is the intention of the two aforesaid young men to write the Prophetic in 1833, for WC Wright, which publication will be said to be written by Raphael! I thought it proper to premise this much, and put the public in possession of the facts, in order to prevent the dissemination of such trash as cannot fail to emanate from the hands of those who have yet to learn their ABC in astrology.\(^{19}\)

This controversial episode in the popular almanac’s history presented a lucrative opportunity for Catnach, who had already built a reputation on parody and libel.\(^{20}\) As well as being cheaply printed and widely circulated, Catnach’s overwhelming image is meant to be entertaining. Its recognisable symbols from popular lore made it accessible enough for display in taverns and working class homes.

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\(^{21}\) James Catnach, Tyne and Wear Archives, *The Prophetic Messenger*, c.1833, DX17/1, folio 72.
From within their Enlightenment bubble, Halley and his contemporaries had underestimated the endurance of superstition and ritual in Britain. Halley’s comments on the ‘natural’ occurrence of comets and eclipses would have done little to convince almost three quarters of the population who were illiterate at the time of his publication.\(^22\) Catnach’s broadside appears to have exploited the market of its print location in Seven Dials. A notorious slum with significant passing trade in nearby Covent Garden, it was famed for its gin shops, ballad mongers and rapidly increasing Irish population. Charles Hindley notes how James Catnach maintained strong roots with his heritage in the north east of England.\(^23\) Here, a strong and distinctive tradition of popular lore existed in the region between Newcastle and the lowlands surrounding Edinburgh, which placed a particular emphasis on borders and the supernatural. The focus on these themes in The Prophetic Messenger (Figure 4), along with Catnach’s strong sense of his heritage, shows us that the image is an expression of a certain kind of national and regional identity.

Ancient omens of sky snakes, dragons and raining fire are some of the more fantastic additions to what appears to be a statement against the homogenising of popular lore. Hovering on the horizon between these two ‘worlds’, Catnach places a sinking ship, engulfed in flames. Although Britain’s epigraph to ‘rule the waves’ is not entirely demeaned, the use of this emblem as something symbolic of a united British national identity is certainly undermined. In an attempt to inspire unity at times of foreign warfare, antiquarians looking to demonstrate continuity between the island’s Teutonic warrior heritage and its current Hanoverian rulers constructed an invented nationalist history.\(^24\) The undefended British citadel, teetering precariously on a cliff edge behind the ship (Figure 5), is symbolic of the anxieties towards Britain’s internal divisions and the attributes that defined its contentious national identity. The appearance of two crowned phantoms pointing out ominously from above the castle’s ramparts suggest a rupture between the natural and supernatural worlds.

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\(^{23}\) Hindley.

This image is particularly effective as it appeals to both ‘high’ and ‘low’ audiences. The former would recognise the literary allusions to Hamlet’s ghost and the implication that ‘something is rotten in the state of Denmark.’ For those audiences not familiar with Elizabethan rhetoric, the image of a ghost wearing a crown would certainly have presented itself as an omen, passed down through pre-literate, oral folk tales. Jaqueline Simpson references the use of crowns as ‘convincingly “traditional”- looking’, with the ability to be successfully woven with the “rules of folklore”. The appearance of the ghosts indicates a nation struggling to repress its unsettled, ‘barbarous’ past, and the endurance of such superstition offers an alternative history to the uncritical narratives of contemporary antiquarianism.

In the bottom right-hand corner of the almanac, Liberty is left undefended after a dragon overpowers a ‘gallant knight’ - one of popular antiquity’s most prominent motifs. The notion of British liberties exposed by the ravages of superstition reveals much about the context in which The Prophetic Messenger was produced. Those that still carried superstitions in the post-Enlightenment era largely belonged to the working classes whose access to education and basic literacy was still extremely limited. Significant reform with the Factory Hours Act and the Abolition of Slavery in Britain’s colonies in 1833 proved for many that further change for the least enfranchised in society was possible. Britain’s ‘liberties’ of property ownership and social order were now placed under threat. While the dragon’s position as an airborne creature reclaims the sky as a place of folklore and tradition.

The century separating the publication of A Description and The Prophetic Messenger is often referred to as a significant period of intellectual progress; a transition between the principles of enlightened scientific thought and their application during the Industrial Revolution. For those that were left behind, access to these ideas was restricted by a widening social and economic ridge, leaving popular lore as a viable and accessible system of belief. As Britain’s railway network was developed later in the nineteenth century, it passed through landscapes and communities irretrievably altered by urbanization. Superficial improvements to infrastructure were achieved at the expense of the erasure of many local customs and histories. The investigation and romanticising of the unknown was a form of escape; uncovering something ‘ancient’ and ‘innate in the country’ that had ‘somehow managed to survive’. The atemporality that folk tradition espouses sometimes keeps the past in quarantine, configuring the disunity between communities and ideologies in spatial terms; the borders between sky and land, the unknown and the known.


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MATTHEW KEY

‘Through the Gains of Industry we promote Art’: George Dawson’s Civic Gospel and the architecture of the Improvement Scheme.

This essay explores two artefacts from late Victorian Birmingham; a period in which the city went through remarkable transformation, culminating in one commentator describing it as ‘the best governed in the world’. The artefacts include George Dawson’s speech on the inauguration of Birmingham Reference Library (1866) and a drawing of Birmingham in 1886 by H.W. Brewer. These artefacts reveal how Unitarian preaching on civic morality was used to justify the hegemonic entrepreneurial politics of civic government during the period. However, what has been traditionally portrayed as a symbiosis of humanitarian progressivism, civic pride and business acumen, had less altruistic undertones.

I hope that Corporations generally will become much more expensive than they have been – not expensive in the sense of wasting money, but that there will be such nobleness and liberality amongst the people of our towns and cities as will lead them to give their Corporations power to expend more money on those things which, as public opinion advances, are found to be essential to the health and comfort and improvement of our people.

John Bright in a speech at Birmingham (January 1864)

It is doubtful that even John Bright, the legendary radical and Liberal statesman, was aware of the magnitude of change that the Civic Gospel, whose tenets he had alluded to in the above public address of the 26th January 1864, would have upon citizens of Birmingham. The history of Birmingham in the ensuing years of Joseph Chamberlain’s mayoralty (1873-6) is considered almost universally in the literature as one of ‘municipal revolution’; within these three years the ‘Town [had been] parked, paved, assized, marketed, gas-and-watered and improved’.1 Chamberlain’s civic achievements transformed Birmingham, famously leading an American writer Julien Ralph to describe it as ‘the best-governed city in the world’.2 But what basis did Ralph have for his description? More than fifty corporations had municipalised gas before Birmingham, even its largest provincial rival Manchester had achieved this feat as early as 1817, and an even greater number of taken

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control of their water supplies. However, even if Birmingham was not the first to implement a municipalising agenda, it was the first to attribute a philosophical voice to such proceedings; elevating such policies ‘above sheer pragmatism and invest[ing] the dull business… with a profoundly ethical dimension’. When Chamberlain’s mayoralty was over, and he entered national politics, he often reflected upon his civic achievements and implored his colleagues that ‘increased responsibilities bring with them a higher sense of the dignity and importance of municipal work’. Yet this sense of ‘altruistic’ or ‘enlightened’ responsibility was learned not from Chamberlain’s political contemporaries, initially as a Liberal politician and later as a Unionist, but from the strong tradition of religious dissent which was uniquely prevalent within the society of Birmingham. ‘The examination of two artefacts, George Dawson’s speech on the inauguration of Birmingham Reference Library (1866) and the architecture of Joseph Chamberlain’s Improvement Scheme, as seen in a drawing of 1886 by H.W. Brewer for the Graphic magazine, enables us to understand the genesis of such ideas. Furthermore, the artefacts explain how the moral lessons and improving tenets associated with the Civic Gospel soon came to be used to justify and legitimise the increasingly entrepreneurial enterprises of civic reformers of the Chamberlain period.

To understand the culture of municipal politics in the Birmingham of the late Victorian period it is necessary to examine the preaching of George Dawson, the intellectual driving-force of the ‘Civic Gospel’ and its most recognised proponent. Dawson, who had received a secular and unorthodox education from Aberdeen and Glasgow universities, settled at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Birmingham in 1844. He was initially regarded with scepticism from fellow Baptist ministers because of his divergent theology. They particularly viewed the emphasis he placed on the liberty of creed, and the ensuing theological constraints this placed upon his own adherence to the evangelical ‘scheme of salvation’, with deep suspicion. Dawson took his chance to break with Mount Zion completely in 1847 and, having become one of the most popular preachers in the area, his sermons adopting a more conversational tone than the ponderous rhetoric employed by his peers, established his own church: The Church of Saviour. It was from his ‘preacher’s platform’, in place of a pulpit, that Dawson ‘inculcated great principles… needful to the people’s wellbeing’ amongst his diverse and large audiences.

In his first sermon, ‘The Demands of the Age on the Church’, Dawson set out his belief in the value of churchmen engaging with the world rather than retreating into narrow

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8 Ibid, p. 196.
9 Dawson, G., The Demands of the Age Upon the Church, delivered on the opening of his Church on August 8th 1847.
and quixotic theological debate. To Dawson, the value of an individual’s confessional life lay not in a developed understanding of the esoteric complexities of theology but instead should be ‘judged by its effects on practical conduct’. The importance therefore placed on social interventionism and practical idealism was in contrast to those evangelicals who, Dawson considered, ‘became perverted and enfeebled about what constituted ‘worldliness’ when they should have been involved in matters of importance to the world’. Dawson consistently preached to his congregation an exalted vision of municipal government which empowered councillors and citizens to do God’s work in elevating the populace. However, salvation would not merely be achieved by the meeting of the physiological needs of the people but through an emphasis on a heightened cultural and spiritual education for all. Furthermore, he identified that there had been a long-standing decay of public virtue throughout Britain, by which he meant there was a decline in ‘that spirit which makes a man prefer, before his own prosperity and wellbeing, that of the town or country to which he belongs’. Though, as a minister, Dawson was debarred from serving on Town Councils, he was committed to encouraging others to employ themselves in this manner. His influence on local governance and the elevation of the populace soon became evident. Remarkably, for 31 of its first 33 years of its establishment, the chairmanship of the Free Library Committee of the Town Council fell to a member of Dawson’s congregation. Dawson divined the vital importance of recruiting ‘the able, the talented and the prosperous to the Town Council and its committee’, seeing that effective management by successful businessmen, many of whom attended his sermons, would ‘channel entrepreneurial methods into municipal projects, to the benefit of all’. Dawson’s belief clearly came to fruition, more than fifty-five percent of Birmingham’s sixty-four councillors, between 1860 and 1891, were businessmen and a strong majority identified as nonconformists; undoubtedly many would have come into contact with Dawson, who had quickly become the primary figure in the confessional life of dissenting Birmingham.

Perhaps the most famous of Dawson’s orations was that given at the establishment of the Reference Library in Birmingham. The Reference Library (1865), aside from Hansom and Welch’s Town Hall (1832), was one of the few significant municipal projects of early Victorian Birmingham. The library was built by Edward Middleton Barry, son of Charles Barry, architect of the new Palace of Westminster (1840-70). Complete with a handsome classical façade it seemed to exemplify the achievements

12 Wright Wilson, W., The Life of George Dawson (Percival Jones, Birmingham, 1905), p. 151.
14 Wright Wilson, W., The Life of George Dawson (Percival Jones, Birmingham, 1905), p. 94.
15 Ibid.
17 The first Roman Revival building in England and modelled on the Temple of Castor and Pollux (495 BC) in the Roman Forum.
and spectacle of ancient Rome and Greece, manifesting such civic spectacles in the centre of industrial Birmingham. It was clearly a most fitting setting from which Dawson could preach a culturally progressive and civic-minded Gospel. A transcript of Dawson’s speech can be found below:

A great library contains the diary of the human race; when the books of mankind are gathered together we can sit down and read the solemn story of Man’s history. Here in this room are gathered together the great diaries of the human race, the record of its thoughts, its struggles, its doings. So that a library may be regarded as the solemn chamber in which man can take counsel with all that have been wise and great and good and glorious among the men that have gone before him. (Cheers)

Men are very apt to think that the universe inspired their little creed. When a man has worked himself into an unwise heat, a good place for him to go is a great library, and that will quiet him down admirably. The man who is fond of books is usually a man of lofty thought, of elevated opinion.

One of the greatest and happiest things about this Corporation Library [is that], supported as it is by rates and administered by the Corporation, it is the expression of a conviction on your part that a town exists for moral and intellectual purposes. A great town like this has not done all of its duty when it has put in action a set of ingenious contrivances for cleaning and lighting the streets, for breaking stones and for mending ways; and has not fulfilled its highest function even when it has given the people of the town the best system of drainage...

I had rather a great book of a great picture fell into the hands of the Corporation than into the hands of an individual – a great picture God never intended to be painted for the delight of but one noble family, which may be shut away through the whim of its owner. But the moment you put great works into the hands of the corporate body like this you secure permanence of guardianship in passionless keeping... what a noble thing it would be if the nobility should take to giving their precious collections to the Corporation... and then they would be open to the multitude. I hope in time that this Corporation will be as rich in pictures and works of art as it has already become in books, for I believe that one of the highest offices of civilisation is to determine how to give access to the masterpieces of art and of literature to the whole people. There is no object higher and nobler than that – to make Raphael common, to make Michelangelo intelligible, to the multitudes, to lay open to the workman and the peasant what heretofore only ranks and riches could command. And this freedom from payment is the glory of this library.
There are few places that I would rather haunt after my death than this room, and there are few things I would have my children remember more than this, that this man spoke the discourse at the opening of this glorious library, the first fruits of a clear understanding that a great town exists to discharge towards the people of that town the duties that a great nation exists to discharge towards the people of that nation – that a town exists by the Grace of God, that a great town is a solemn organism through which should flow, and in which should be shaped, all the highest, loftiest and truest ends of a man’s intellectual and moral nature. We are a Corporation who have undertaken the highest duty that is possible for us – we have made provision for our people – for all our people – and we have made a provision of God’s greatest and best gifts unto Man. **(Loud cheers)**

Dawson’s speech is a model of Late-Victorian idealism. It is an exhortation to the Council to take up the ‘improving’ tenets of the Civic Gospel. The speech is laced with a sublime faith in the beneficial and improving impact of great art and literature and of the accumulated wisdom refined from centuries of Man’s history. At its emotional core is an ‘idea of community drawn [not from scripture but] from the works of Goethe, Schiller and other German romantics’. These sentiments resonate with contemporary commentators and comparisons with Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) can be clearly made. Indeed, the Arnoldian emphasis on the promulgation of ‘sweetness and light’, the conferring of not merely moral and material improvement but an attempt to address the aesthetic condition of the masses, is prominent in Dawson’s message that there is no ‘object higher and nobler than that – to make Raphael common, to make Michelangelo intelligible’. This trope of ‘feeding the mind’ was prominent in Dawson’s rhetoric, in a later sermon given at the Church of the Saviour Dawson concluded that,

> when a man has his comfort, his health, his security, the mind and the spirit have needs of their own too, and those needs to be satisfied. This means that the city which really is a city must have parks as well as prisons, an art gallery as well as an asylum, books and libraries as well as baths and washhouses, schools as well as sewers. It must think of beauty and dignity no less than of order and of health.

This was a creed of civic responsibility and a recognition of the equality of the citizens of Birmingham. The language of the speech clearly renders the city as the new corpus, a paternal and powerful organism with a duty to its inhabitants, not dissimilar

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18 Inaugural Address by George Dawson, MA, Borough of Birmingham, Opening of the Free Reference Library, 26 October 1866 (Birmingham, E.C. Osborne, 1866).
to ‘a Church in which there was no bond, nor text, nor articles – a large Church, one of the greatest institutions yet established’. Dawson’s view is clearly that it is the highest and most noble duty of the Corporation to act as the nave or spiritual focus of this new church.

Dawson was not alone in preaching the Civic Gospel and his influence was felt upon many dissenting preachers across Birmingham. Robert Dale, Congregationalist Minister of Carrs Lane Church (1854-1895), had seen Dawson preach in his youth and was similarly bent on transforming the Town Council into a guiding force of a Christian polity, whose Councillors were able to practically effect the mission Civic Gospel. For Dale, perhaps similarly to Matthew Arnold, the imperative for political involvement in the Civic Gospel was not simply humanitarian. He feared that there lurked a spectre of anarchy and a nascent desire for insurrection amongst the subterranean working class and that it was, therefore, the prerogative of the ‘prosperous people of a free nation’ to intervene in alleviating their hardships, lest ‘the political greatness and stability of their country [be] exposed to the most serious dangers’.

In addition to Dale, H.W. Crosskey, Unitarian Minister of the Church of the Messiah, was pivotal in transferring such ideas to Birmingham’s most influential families and giving them a new social sense. Unitarianism, of course, was a religion of the minority in Birmingham but its impact on Victorian politics was certainly disproportionate to its size. Crosskey’s congregation included a triumvirate of Birmingham’s elite business families: the Chamberlains, the Nettlefolds and the Martineaus, whose prestige and wealth enabled them to dominate local political and social life. As Dale concludes, ‘the men that took part in the great and successful movement for reforming our administration… had learnt the principles on which they acted and caught the spirit by which they were inspired very largely in the Nonconformist churches of Birmingham’. Such men, so distinct to the unenlightened, corrupt and retrenched Town Councillors of the old ‘Economist’ days, would be capable of

sweeping away streets in which it was not possible to live a healthy and decent life… of providing gardens and parks and a museum; that good water should be supplied without stint at the lowest possible prices; that the profits of the gas supply should relieve the pressure of the rates.

Ultimately it would be through the invocation and implementation of this Civic Gospel that Birmingham would undergo its ‘civic renaissance’ under this new generation of business magnates-cum-municipal reformers.

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26 Ibid. p. 206.
It is significant that the architecture of this ‘new Jerusalem’ would be a consummation of Dawson’s Civic Gospel; Birmingham would become an expression of ‘Hebraism built with Hellenic bricks’.27 One need only observe the symbolic spaces manifested as part of Chamberlain’s ‘Improvement Scheme’ to appreciate the rhetorical and visual strategies employed to promote this message. Brewer’s *Birmingham City Centre from Mason College Roof* (Figure 1) speaks of a rebuilt Birmingham replete with civic monuments and splendid architectural developments. In the centre of his drawing stands Yeoville Thomason’s Council House (1874-9), the largest and grandest of all the architectural manifestations of the Civic Gospel.

![Figure 1. Brewer, H.W., *Birmingham City Centre from Mason College Roof* (1886), drawing, The Graphic / British Library](image1)

Built as a complement to Joseph Chamberlain’s Improvement Scheme (1875), and as a permanent home for the town’s Council,28 the Council House dominates the city’s central Victoria Square (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Council House. 2006. Wikimedia Commons, Web. 5. Feb. 2017.](image2)

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28 Birmingham Town Hall was never envisaged as a political space and was always used as a public forum and concert venue.
At 150 feet long and 162 feet tall, complete with a Grand Dome and sumptuous portico relief, the Council House evokes a grandiose civic polis, reminding the observer instantly of Robert Dale’s invocation of ‘the glories of Florence’ and the opulent civic palaces of the Italian Renaissance. Although Thomason’s building is largely in the Corinthian order - rather than adopting, and completely answering, the tight classicism of the neighbouring Town Hall - the Council House is lavishly decorated in an Italianate or ornate Renaissance manner and is replete with big projections which burst out near the corners with columns in antis and large segmental pediments. As Tristram Hunt has suggested, the building stands as ‘a nineteenth-century Venetian palace with Victoria Square acting as St. Mark’s… a bricks-and-mortar memorial to the municipal gospel’. Elevated in a large niche in the central portico is a mosaic depicting Municipality enthroned in the centre and receiving the classically attired allegories of Science, Art, Liberty, Law, Commerce and Industry (Figure 3).

Above the portico is the central pediment (Figure 4) which further reinforces the importance of the city, this time placing it directly in relation to the nation personified as Britannia, whose arms are outstretched to reward the manufacturers of Birmingham with laurel wreaths.

In 1881 the Council House was extended to include the City Museum and Art Gallery, on one corner stands the ‘Big Brum’ tower, a ‘doughty Venetian challenger (modelled on San Marco)’ to Westminster’s Big Ben and a symbol of secular civic pride.\textsuperscript{31} Notably this extension was built on top of the offices of the municipal Gas Department, the proceeds from which had gone towards subsidising the £40,000 outlay from the council to build it and circumvented tight restrictions of the Public Libraries Act of 1850 which limited the use of public funds on arts.\textsuperscript{32} This was a clear indication of the municipality as \textit{patria}, with the very purpose and fabric of the building evoking Dawson’s earlier call for the city to play the leading role in elevating the artistic, aesthetic and moral sensibilities of its denizens.

Yeoville Thomason’s building is one which reinforces the dignity of municipal office whilst reminding the observer of the lofty and the exalted responsibilities of those tasked with executing and fulfilling the Civic Gospel. This civic responsibility is enmeshed within the architectural order of the building; the viewer cannot help but perceive that Britannia herself is supported not only by the physical architecture of the building but by the work of those that occupy it. If the centrality and importance of the Civic Gospel to local governance in Birmingham was not apparent enough in the architecture of its predominant municipal space, hidden behind a desk in the lobby has always hung a delicate 1879 oil painting, executed by local artist Edward Philips Thompson, depicting George Dawson and Friends congregated to discuss the affairs of the town and how they might fulfil their Civic Gospel. Furthermore, even at the laying of its foundation stone the message of Dawson, Dale and Crosskey, of the city as a ‘solemn organism’, found articulation in the words of Mayor Chamberlain who proclaimed his ‘faith in municipal institutions, an abiding sense of the value and importance of local self-government... [they] represent the authority of the people’.\textsuperscript{33} Ultimately, the Council House is monumental architecture in a triumphant style, honouring and heralding the improving virtue of the municipal ethic. It is a profoundly symbolic space celebrating the dominant narrative of urban liberalism, civic intervention and improvement.\textsuperscript{34}

Returning to Brewer’s drawing, it is possible to discern the other large-scale projects undertaken during Chamberlain’s mayoralty. Other than the completion of the Council House, the construction of a ‘broad Parisian boulevard’,\textsuperscript{35} seen in the right-hand corner of the drawing, was the crowning achievement of Chamberlain’s ‘Improvement Scheme’. Having already municipalised the gas and water supply of the town, Chamberlain sought to transform Birmingham into the ‘Metropolis of the Midlands’, an epicentre of enlightened civic culture. But civic pride, and particularly

bourgeois capital interests, were more conspicuous than the moralising and improving narrative of the Civic Gospel in this endeavour. Despite this, the arguments made by Chamberlain for the project were consistently figured in the humanitarian ethos and narrative of the Civic Gospel: at least half of the 93 acres of the area which occupied that earmarked for Improvement were a veritable quagmire, disfigured by noxious slums, inadequate back-to-back houses arranged in ill-ventilated and ill-drained courts. Streets such as Upper Priory, the Minories and the Gullet made up St Mary’s Ward, an area where zymotic diseases were so prevalent that the death rate reached twenty-six per thousand - double that of affluent suburban Edgbaston.36

Invoking the powers granted to local authorities by Richard Cross’ Artisans’ and Labourers’ Dwellings Improvement Act, Chamberlain ordered the demolition of 653 houses in the area to make way for Corporation Street, the main thoroughfare of this newly ‘improved’ town. The fact that this new development, paid for by the local ratepayers, would eventually be lined with boutique shops housed in opulent buildings commanding high rents for the Council and investors, rather than improved artisan’s dwellings, was obviously a matter of much controversy. Indeed, only 62 houses had been rebuilt as late as 1885, providing homes for a minority of the 9,000 inhabitants expelled.37 To make matters worse, Chamberlain’s Liberals in the Town Council had always made it clear that such housing would be replaced and used the language of the Civic Gospel to justify their arguments; during the elections of 1875 the Birmingham Post declared that the purpose of Chamberlain’s Scheme was ‘the clearing and remodelling of unhealthy areas, so as to improve the houses of artisans, and thus to raise vitality and lengthen the duration of life’.38

The real intention of the Improvement Scheme was becoming clear to Chamberlain’s opponents who pilloried him and the endeavour. Many accused him of betraying the principles on which it had been marketed and for championing what was increasingly seen as a financially irresponsible investment racket whose beneficiaries would be limited to the entrepreneurial classes.39 They were not unjustified in their criticism. The annual burden of ‘improvement’ on the rates came to double the £12,000 originally projected by Chamberlain and revenue from the scheme did not exceed expenditure until 1892.40 Furthermore, in 1877, John Lowe, a former Conservative councillor of the ‘Economist’ sensibilities that men like Dawson had long castigated, highlighted Chamberlain’s bullish and dissembling tendencies, ‘greater men [than he had also been culpable of such vices] … Look at Napoleon, where did he finish? In exile’.41 The parallels between the two men could not be clearer. Just as Napoleon had preached a culture of meritocracy and liberty to justify his expansionist ambitions

38 Birmingham Daily Post, 2 November 1875.
to the oppressed subjects of the *pays conquis*, Chamberlain’s personal ambition had seemingly supplanted the humanitarian ends of the Civic Gospel. Indeed, the local satirical newspaper *The Dart* depicted Chamberlain as ‘Turning the Screw’ on local ratepayers and common citizens and chastised the lavish architecture of the prestigious ‘Corporation Street’, the centrepiece of the Improvement Scheme, rebranding it *Rue Chamberlain*. The Improvement Scheme, despite its pretentions to liberal progressivism and outwards portrayal as the manifestation of the Civic Gospel, became figured as a profligate endeavour designed only to propel the business and political interests of the mayor and his middle-class cronies.\(^{42}\)

Even the Council House, an emblematic bastion of the moral and improving manifesto of the Civic Gospel, did not escape this criticism, with the *Dart* playing on its palatial Italianate architecture as evidence of it being little more than a *Palazzo Ducale*. The Council House was merely a ‘Mayor’s Palace’, it was conspicuously the largest and grandest building of the Council’s Improvement Scheme.\(^{43}\) For all its outward projections of the sanctity of public office and the dignity of its officials who were charged with implementing the Civic Gospel, to many, its opulent marbled interior and ornate classical exterior started to become signifiers for exclusivity. This beacon of the Civic Gospel was as accessible as the luxury banquets it frequently hosted in honour of the achievements of Birmingham’s bourgeois political elite. Chamberlain’s complex relationship with the Civic Gospel, so understated in the ‘official’ literature of the period,\(^{44}\) meant that by the end of Chamberlain’s mayoralty Birmingham ‘was adorned with expensive public buildings which had little to do with improving the welfare of poor slum dwellers’.\(^{45}\)

Bright’s exhortations for the Council to reject retrenchment and focus its energies on the elevation of the moral, aesthetic and physiological condition of its citizens seemingly did not fall on deaf ears. Yet the legacy of the Civic Gospel, as executed by Chamberlain, is much more difficult to reconcile with the humanitarian and ‘improving’ tenets on which it was built. On the one hand, the extent of these constructions and acquisitions made these decades the most dramatic in Birmingham’s history, certainly down to the reconstruction of the 1960s. As Victor Skipp notes, ‘to many Brummies… high Victorian Birmingham did bear some resemblance to the promised land, a holy city’.\(^{46}\) Was he incorrect in his assessment? Brewer’s drawing certainly proclaims a proud, distinguished and improved city to its viewer, replete with buildings which are clearly articulated in terms of the improving tenets on which the Civic Gospel was constructed. Surely the abundance of grand edifices depicted in the image: a new Council House (1879); Art Gallery (1885); a new Reference Library (1882); the


\(^{44}\) Bunce, J.T., *History of the Corporation of Birmingham; with a sketch of the earlier government of the town. 2 vols.* (Birmingham, 1878-85).


Chamberlain Memorial Foundation (1880) must have instilled a degree of civic pride in the citizen of Victorian Birmingham.

In the final analysis, it is impossible to omit a brass relief which appears just as one enters the entrance to the Art Gallery extension of Yeoville Thomason’s Council House, the building which occupies the prominent central position in Brewer’s drawing. A motto inscribed below it simply reads: ‘By the Gains of Industry We Promote Art’. A closer analysis of the impact of Chamberlain’s Improvement Scheme, and indeed the contemporary criticism it attracted, arguably reveals that the Civic Gospel, however noble an idea in its genesis, swiftly became a populist rhetorical device used to legitimise local entrepreneurialism and the hegemony of business interests. Furthermore, a study of the architecture of the Improvement Plan depicts the Civic Gospel as a powerful symbolic tool, able to outwardly project the semblance of progressive, humanitarian ‘improvement’ whilst maintaining the reality of order and control. Birmingham’s local governance would effectively remain in the hands of businessmen until the ‘slow emergence of effective labour, unionist and socialist opposition’ by 1914.47 The improving ethos of the ‘Civic Gospel’ may well have given Birmingham its ‘municipal revolution’ but it did so on the terms of its most influential proponents.

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Gothic ‘artefictions’: fabricating history in Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill and The Castle of Otranto

Horace Walpole’s house at Strawberry Hill and his 1764 novel The Castle of Otranto are both considered landmarks in the development of the Gothic in their respective genres of architecture and literature. They also played a significant role in Walpole’s activities as a historian. Considered together, it becomes apparent that Walpole used a common approach to their creation, combining antiquarian scholarship with modern media to create ‘artefictions’, reconstructed historical artefacts, in order to invoke a sense of the Gothic past and create an emotional and sensory alternative to the rational historiography of the Enlightenment.

The connection between Horace Walpole’s Gothic villa at Twickenham, Strawberry Hill, and his 1764 novel, The Castle of Otranto, is well known. Walpole claimed that the story was inspired by a dream in which, ‘on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour,’ and he thereafter often referred to Strawberry Hill as his Otranto. However, the relationship between the house and the novel is deeper than a simple case of inspirational scene-setting. They share a common approach in Walpole’s use (or misuse), recreation and interpretation of the medieval past that illuminates his methods and intentions as a historian. The historiography of Walpole and that of the Gothic revival are closely linked, perhaps not surprisingly as Strawberry Hill is considered one of the defining buildings of eighteenth-century Gothic, and The Castle of Otranto has assumed canonical status as the founding text of the Gothic fiction genre. Just as eighteenth-century Gothic (or, pejoratively, ‘Gothick’) has been considered ‘a period of ill-formed and uncritical enthusiasm’, so Walpole has been accused of lacking in seriousness, and seeking only aesthetic effect at the expense of veracity.

More recent scholarship has highlighted the importance of ideology to eighteenth-century Gothic, bearing political, religious and sexual meanings, although the shifting nature of these associations meant that it could be co-opted by both ends of the political spectrum. In particular literary criticism has begun to rescue Walpole’s

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reputation as a historian.\(^5\) Sean Silver argues that Walpole’s renowned collection of art and artefacts reveals his prioritisation of the artefact as an alternative to politically-motivated textual narrative, and Ruth Mack defends Walpole from accusations of dilettantism, identifying a coherent historiographical theory underpinning his body of work.\(^6\) The comparative analysis of Walpole’s Gothic creations undertaken here suggests that Walpole's aim was not so much to interpret as to invoke the past, combining genuine artefacts with dramatic and modern materials and literary effects in order to appeal to the emotions as much as the intellect.

Strawberry Hill and *The Castle of Otranto* can both be categorised as ‘artefictions’, historically accurate replicas based on meticulous research but created in a new format.\(^7\) Strawberry Hill was a Thames-side villa reconstructed into a ‘little Gothic castle’, with wooden pinnacles and papier-mâché ceilings mimicking the decorations of medieval cathedrals.\(^8\) *The Castle of Otranto* combined the supernatural romance of the Middle Ages with the realism of the modern novel, and was presented in its first edition as translation of a recently discovered medieval manuscript.\(^9\) This opened Walpole to accusations of levity in his architecture, and hypocrisy in his literary output, with allegations that Walpole’s rejection of Chatterton’s ‘Rowley’ manuscripts on grounds of suspicion of their authenticity, contributed to the young poet’s suicide.\(^10\) The publication history of the novel and its relationship with Strawberry Hill illuminate Walpole’s activities as a historian and creator of Gothic literature and architecture, suggesting that he did not seek to deceive, but rather to invite a suspension of disbelief that would create an emotional connection with the past. In this reading, Walpole’s creative output ceases to be incoherent or fraudulent but instead becomes a dramatic re-creation of the past in which the visitor or reader is invited to form an imaginative link with history. Walpole’s antiquarian scholarship was important as a sound and authentic foundation, but it was by marrying the fruits of that scholarship with new methods and materials, and above all through dramatic re-enactment, that Walpole was able to bring that history to life. This emotional and atmospheric reading of history was an alternative to the rational and orderly scholarship of the Enlightenment. Just as Walpole often chose the genuine artefacts in his collections for their associative value (Cardinal Wolsey’s hat, James I’s gloves), so too his ‘artefictions’ were a link to the past, through the sensations that they aroused.

\(^{5}\) Ibid. p.56
\(^{7}\) The term ‘artefictions’ is coined by Nick Groom in *The Gothic* p.75. He applies it to forgeries; I extend the meaning of the term here to differentiate between forgery and replica.
\(^{8}\) Correspondence xx, 111
Strawberry Hill was never intended to be taken for a genuine Gothic castle but was always referred to in affectionately diminutive terms by Walpole as ‘a little play-thing house’; he had acquired it in 1747 from the celebrated toy-shop owner Mrs Chevenix and was delighted by the analogy. Over a period of twenty-five years he extended and remodelled a modest eighteenth-century lodging house into a bijou Gothic castellated and pinnacled villa (figure 1). A retreat from London, it was an eclectic mix of old and new and housed Walpole’s extensive and ever-growing collection of art, artefacts, china and upscale bric-a-brac. Even as the fabric of the building grew ever more Gothic, it was always intended for comfort and entertaining, and the statuary niches and ogee window arches overlooked luxurious eighteenth-century French-style furnishings. Nor was Walpole’s famed collection restricted to the Middle Ages, and some of Walpole’s greatest treasures, such as the marble eagle found near the baths of Caracalla in Rome, were of classical origin. Antique, contemporary and reproduction furnishings and fixtures sat alongside each other, creating a home that was striking, comfortable and full of interesting stories of provenance. It was not, and was never intended to be, a complete recreation of a genuine Gothic castle. Hitherto, domestic use of the Gothic revival style had been restricted to the ‘re-Gothicization’ of existing houses with an authentic pedigree, such as Hampden House in Buckinghamshire, with its medieval core and parliamentarian associations. Walpole’s innovation was essentially to re-invent Gothic as a fantasy style, by applying it to a domestic building with no Gothic credentials at all. It was fantasy on a grand scale, inside and out, and like all fantasies it was not a hoax but rather an invitation to participate in a thrilling transport of the imagination.

12 Ibid. p.84
14 Brooks, p.82
This historical fantasy, however, was based on thorough and accurate antiquarian scholarship. Walpole was a historian: author of historical works, chronicler of his own times and keen researcher of antiquarian architecture and artefacts. As the house was remodelled and extended, the interior and exterior architecture, furniture and fittings were designed by Walpole’s ‘Committee of Taste’ principally comprising designer Richard Bentley, antiquarian and architect John Chute, and Walpole himself. Chimneypieces, mouldings, bookcases and furniture were designed using antiquarian sources, often books of engravings from medieval cathedrals but sometimes unusual sources, such as the chair designed from a fragment of the medieval stained glass which Walpole bought and incorporated into Strawberry Hill’s windows. In designing bookcases for the library, Chute used Wenceslaus Hollar’s prints of old St. Paul’s, and the chimneypiece was a composite of two great Gothic tombs, Clarence’s in Canterbury Cathedral and John of Eltham’s in Westminster Abbey (figure 2). These were Walpole’s ‘artefictions’, based on accurate scholarship and giving the appearance of genuine Gothic provenance, but newly created for Strawberry Hill. Furthermore, much of the Gothicization of the house was done in modern materials which added to the fiction: chimneypieces were of plaster, ceiling mouldings of papier-mâché, and the ‘stone panelling’ of the hallway and stairs was
painsstakingly and expensively painted trompe l’oeil wallpaper (figure 3).18 Despite the use of new materials, he took his role as antiquarian seriously, considering himself to be a historian as much as an interior designer.

Turning to The Castle of Otranto, it is apparent that Walpole used many of the same techniques that he was employing at Strawberry Hill: antiquarian scholarship, the combination of historic and modern, and their recreation as ‘artefiction’ are all found the novel and its production. The story synthesises the medieval tradition of romance and supernatural tales with the realism of character and naturalness of dialogue of the modern eighteenth-century novel. Walpole acknowledged this as his aim, writing in the Preface to the second edition, ‘It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern.’19 A rollicking tale of usurpation, dynastic politics, ghosts and giant enchanted armour, set in the courtyards and dungeons of

18 Ibid. p.36
19 Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto (London, 1765 2nd ed) p.i
an Italian castle, it revived the medieval taste for fantastic tales, but brought it to life through the realism of the novel format. He also brought his antiquarian knowledge of manners, clothing and incidental detail to full effect in the text. Writing to his friend William Cole soon after publication, Walpole admitted, ‘You will laugh at my earnestness, but if I have amused you by retracing with any fidelity the manners of ancient days, I am content.’20 The combination of an ancient Gothic form of literature with accurate historical details and lifelike characters and prose, was the literary equivalent of rooms such as the Holbein chamber at Strawberry Hill, with its medievally-derived chimney-pieces and Holbein prints complemented by a state-of-the-art papier-mâché ceiling and luxurious bed hangings.21

The comparison with Walpole’s methods at Strawberry Hill also sheds light on the controversy surrounding the initial publication of *The Castle of Otranto* and Walpole’s reasons for presenting it pseudonymously as a ‘found’ manuscript. First published on Christmas Eve 1764, not by Walpole’s own Strawberry Hill Press but by Thomas Lowndes in London, the novel claimed to be the work of Onuphrio Muralto, Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas, Otranto, translated by William Marshal, Gent. The ‘Translator’s Preface’ gave details of the manuscript’s supposed provenance, ‘found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear.’22 After a swift sell-out of the original print run of 400 copies, it was reprinted in April 1765. This time, Walpole owned up to his authorship, subtitling it ‘A Gothic Story’ and including a new Preface in which he explained his intentions and influences. Much literary criticism has been devoted to the Prefaces, with Emma Clery accepting Walpole’s assertion in the second Preface that ‘diffidence of his own abilities, and the novelty of the attempt, were his sole inducements to assume that disguise.’23 Others have located the text within the 1760s phenomenon of Gothic literary fakery of which the works of ‘Ossian the ancient Gaelic bard’ (actually James Macpherson) and the ‘medieval monk, Thomas Rowley’ (Thomas Chatterton) were the best known.24

Walpole’s novel is indeed part of this phenomenon of ‘artefictions’, but clues within the text and the reaction of friends and reviewers suggest that Walpole did not seriously intend to deceive the reader. ‘Onuphrio Muralto’ is a convoluted anagrammatic pun on Horace Walpole.25 Echoes of *Hamlet* also warn the reader that the manuscript is not what it seems: themes of deception and meta-theatricality are writ large, and *The Castle of Otranto*’s purported translation from Italian mirrors *Hamlet*’s counterfeit

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20 Correspondence i, 88
21 Chalcraft and Viscardi, pp.75-79
22 Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) p.iii
24 Groom, *The Gothic* p.75
25 For a full explanation of the pun see Chalcraft and Viscardi, p.41 n.6
drama which is also supposedly ‘writ in choice Italian’.26 Walpole acknowledged his
debt to Shakespeare, and Hamlet in particular, in the second Preface.27 Reading the
first Preface with knowledge of the author’s true identity, it is clearly full of self-
deprecating jokes: ‘I am not blind to my author’s defects.’28 The reviewers reserved
judgement on its authenticity, with Smollett’s Critical Review remarking, ‘whether he
speaks seriously or ironically we neither know nor care’, and even the more credulous
Monthly Review hedged its bets, commenting ‘on the supposition that the work really
is a translation, as pretended.’29 Taken alone, the textual clues are not conclusive, but
when considered alongside Strawberry Hill, the novel shares many characteristics with
Walpole’s other ‘artefictions’. Indeed, the library where the manuscript was ‘found’
was quite probably, in Walpole’s imagination, his own library, and Strawberry Hill
drew heavily on the aesthetics of Catholicism. Rather than authorial bashfulness or
deception for commercial purposes, the novel and its supposed medieval provenance
was another facet of Walpole’s historical play-acting. So successful was the emotional
and historical journey of chilling suspense and excitement on which The Castle of
Otranto took its readers that it led to a new genre, the Gothic novel, which proliferated
so widely that by the century’s end it was being satirised by Jane Austen.30

Drama was central to how both Strawberry Hill and The Castle of Otranto achieved
their effects. In designing his house, Walpole’s guiding principle was never purely
historical recreation. Authenticity was important, but only in so far as it contributed
to a carefully orchestrated whole in which the effect on the visitor was equally
prioritised. Walpole’s aim was an atmospheric recreation of ‘the gloomth of abbeys
and cathedrals’.31 Careful consideration was given to the effects of light and shadow;
the Refectory chairs were designed and placed so that the shadows they cast on the
wall behind resembled traceried windows.32 As the fame of his house and collection
spread, Strawberry Hill received a steady stream of visitors, obliging Walpole to issue
tickets and produce a guidebook. It shows how his housekeeper Margaret led guests
along a carefully choreographed route.33 After inspecting the heraldic Library and
the regal splendour of the Holbein chamber, the crescendo came as visitors trooped
through the gloomth of the trunk-ceiled passage and Margaret flung open the door

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27 Walpole, The Castle of Otranto (1765) p.ii
28 Walpole, The Castle of Otranto (1764) p.vi
31 Correspondence xx, 372
32 Chalcraft and Viscardi, p.31
33 Horace Walpole, A description of the villa of Mr. Horace Walpole, ... at Strawberry-Hill near Twickenham, Middlesex. With an inventory of the furniture, pictures, curiosities, &c (Twickenham, 1774, 2nd ed. 1784) ECCO available at: <www.gale.com> [accessed: 13 December 2016]
to reveal the dazzling crimson and gilt of the Gallery (figure 4). Visitors to the house today are still treated to this flourish. When entertaining friends, Walpole pulled out all the stops, and on one memorable occasion, the actress Kitty Clive descended from the ceiling by moonlight. It was Walpole himself, however, who was the chief actor on the stage he had created. He delighted in role playing, often signing correspondence as ‘the Abbot of Strawberry’, or dressing up in items from his collection to receive visitors. Strawberry Hill was a performance, and Walpole was its director, set designer and principal actor.

*The Castle of Otranto* was shaped by the same desire for theatrical effect, and the novel shares many characteristics with drama: its five act structure, the rapid sequence of events and the mixture of ‘high’ and ‘low’ characters for contrast and comic effect. Walpole used his skill with lighting effects here too, as when Manfred pursues Isabella: ‘the moon, which was now up, and gleamed in at the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet.’ But the drama is not restricted to within

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34 Chalcraft and Viscardi, p.88
the text itself, with fantasy and role-playing operating on several different levels. Firstly, the use of dramatic techniques within the text itself. Secondly, the publication and presentation of the story was a form of acting, with the novel playing the part of a translated found manuscript. Thirdly, the story of Otranto became seamlessly integrated into the narrative of Strawberry Hill. As well as being originally inspired by the house and collection, its success ensured that it became a part of the story of Strawberry Hill, bringing visitors to ‘the scene that inspired the author of The Castle of Otranto.’ Walpole tied Strawberry Hill even closer to Otranto by acquiring items for his collection that linked to the plot. In 1771 he purchased the armour of Francis I, writing to Horace Mann, ‘It will make a great figure here at Otranto’, and as it loomed from its niche over the stairs it would immediately remind visitors of the great helmet and glove of Alfonso that featured prominently in the story as supernatural agents.

The symbiosis between Strawberry Hill and The Castle of Otranto was perhaps the strongest manifestation of the tapestry of historical reconstruction that Walpole was weaving; fantastical, yet entirely serious in its scholarship. Walpole’s ultimate goal as a historian and creator was to forge an emotional connection with the past. Historical ‘truth’ lay less in an assemblage or interpretation of facts, and more in atmospheric recreation. It was for this reason that the ‘gloomth’ of Strawberry Hill was so important, and why the first readers of The Castle of Otranto were encouraged to feel the thrill of reading an ‘authentic’ and possibly even ‘true’ supernatural story from the medieval past. Walpole invited his visitor or reader to complicitly share in this fantasy, facilitated by the accuracy of historical details in the building and text. Walpole’s own writings suggest this. ‘Gothic’ was first and foremost an emotional state, in contrast to the supposed objectivity of Enlightenment natural philosophy, hermeneutics or history. ‘One must have taste to be sensible of the beauties of Grecian architecture; one only wants passions to feel Gothic,’ wrote Walpole in 1762 in his Anecdotes of Painting in England. Within this context, historical truth lay not in facts but in feelings. Walpole neatly summarised this with an aphorism in his Commonplace Book of 1780: ‘History is a Romance that is believed: Romance is a History not believed – that is the difference between them.’ His best known ‘artefictions’, Strawberry Hill and The Castle of Otranto tread a fine line between Romance and History. Walpole and his visitor or reader knew that what they were experiencing was not ‘real’, in the sense that it was a recreation, but at the same time Walpole invited the rational part of the brain to push that knowledge aside and indulge in a sensory experience of the Gothic era (loosely located somewhere around the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries). Rarely completely serious, Walpole often combined playfulness with an underlying element of truth.

While Strawberry Hill and The Castle of Otranto may be seen as two facets of Walpole’s historical fantasy, the legacies they have left to the development of different branches of

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36 Walpole, A description of the villa of Mr. Horace Walpole p.iv
37 Silver, ‘Visiting Strawberry Hill’ p.558; Correspondence xxiii,350
39 Cited in Chalcraft and Viscardi, p.68
the Gothic movement have diverged widely. In literature, following the success of The Castle of Otranto, subsequent writers of Gothic novels enthusiastically embraced a whole range of atmospheric and supernatural tropes of which modern-day horror films are the heirs. Strawberry Hill is celebrated chiefly in architectural history as the point at which Gothic domestic architecture was liberated from a specific historical locus, allowing the style to be freely developed and applied across a whole range of buildings. Walpole’s antiquarian researches also helped steer Gothic architecture towards a more precise fidelity to actual Gothic models, as typified by the Ecclesiologists of the nineteenth century. Ironically it was perhaps AWN Pugin who was the spiritual heir to ‘the Abbot of Strawberry’. While the contrast between Pugin’s intensely-held Catholic beliefs and Walpole’s laconic appropriation of Catholic aesthetics could not be more marked, both believed that Gothic architecture represented much more than a decorative style with historical or political allusions, but could recreate the spiritual sensibilities of their medieval forbears. The ‘artefictions’ of Strawberry Hill and The Castle of Otranto are paradoxically a truthful representation of the atmosphere of the Gothic age.

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Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian ideals outside ironwork: William Morris’ Red House and William Holman Hunt’s *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* exemplify craftsmanship in an age of technology

Against the backdrop of technological advancements of the day, artist William Morris’ architecture in Red House and artist William Holman Hunt’s depiction of popular literary character Isabella and the Pot of Basil reinforce naturalistic and emotional ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites and Arts and Crafts movement. The depiction of Isabella includes an outdoor scene that creates an intimate space in the surrounding environment and reinforces Pre-Raphaelite connections to individuals and nature. Morris’ house, through its architecture and inhabitants, depicts a focus on handicraft, nature, design and story and a departure from ironwork and industrialization that was otherwise popular at the time.

Despite the prevailing use of ironwork and mass production, the group of artists called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood emphasized nature and handicraft for a more personal interpretation of the world around them. In a comparison of the similarities and differences between artist William Morris’ architecture in Red House and artist William Holman Hunt’s depiction of popular literary character *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*, similar themes are clear despite different approaches. The architectural details of the house represent ideals and beliefs held by the pre-Raphaelites in contradiction to the technological focus of the time. The depiction of Isabella creates an intimate space and reinforces pre-Raphaelite connections to individuals and nature. With criticism of the industrial and technological advancements of the day, this naturalistic and emotional depiction of Isabella reinforces pre-Raphaelite ideas. Morris’ house, through its architecture and inhabitants, depicts a departure from ironwork and mass production that was otherwise popular at the time. As a movement, the pre-Raphaelites were instrumental in connecting the realistic paintings that predated them with the depictions of poems and characters that came after the movement ended. Critic John Ruskin’s views are instrumental in the relationship of this house and painting to the movement and its impact. Though a discussion of the architectural elements of the Morris’ house and Hunt’s style of the painting, techniques creating emotion and portraying ideals are evident while opposing technological advancements.1

Ironwork was increasing in popularity and was showcased at the Great Exhibition of 1851. As Chairman of the Royal Commision, Prince Albert oversaw the building of Crystal Palace for the 1851 Great Exhibition. This showcased the different styles available in ironworks at the time. Iron was popular in architecture and ornamentation was a way to add personalized detail. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth century a vigorous cast iron industry grew up in England, but at the same time the wrought ironwork declined in quality. While ironwork was popular, there was a backlash against it among craftsmen and an emphasis on individual expression and personalized craftsmanship. 'With the Pre-Raphaelites, Morris acquired that craving for liberty of thought and artistic creation for all, which became the distinctive features of his character throughout his life.' Morris as he developed his views and firm professed the belief and connection between workers and their environment believing there was a societal and political value on creative endeavors over mass production and manufacturing. Red House indicates the combination of the craftsmanship valued by the Pre-Raphaelites and the technological advancements available at the time.

At the same time of the iron advancements, the Arts and Crafts movement had a powerful influence on taste in Britain. 'Concepts such as 'truth to materials' and 'good craftsmanship' were the basis for most critiques of design, and an uncritical belief that handiwork is inevitably best has supported a tide of craft activity which continues unabated.' While the country grappled with the increasing ability to make elaborate iron structures, many artists like the Pre-Raphaelites attempted to maintain individual expression in their works and resist industrialization. Though some like Pugin resisted the technological influence and new possibility of iron and mechanization, others revered its powers of production, communication and potential for artistry. 'Ornamentation addressed the perceived loss of meaning in the use of iron in utilitarian public buildings.' Even in the details at Red House, this combination of technological influence and artistry was clear.

'The most important development of the fifteenth century was the influence of architectural design upon blacksmith’s work. The florid detail of fifteenth-century Gothic was perhaps better suited for execution in metal than in stone. Some idea of the possibilities of the new style and the new methods can be gained from the tomb railing with its buttresses, pinnacles, writhe finials and panels of pierced tracery.'

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The most striking points of Red House include the ‘novelty of using brick on its own, its stylistic freedom and the functionality of its plan.’ The origins of the Arts and Crafts movement rest in the decorating and furnishing of the house and Morris’s firm. Red House was not the landmark it is today until Morris established his reputation as an artist. ‘Red House was the outcome of Morris’s growing passion to be up and doing things to change the domestic art of England. Its building and furnishing served to clarify his ideas and bring to the point of definite enterprise ‘the manufacture on a reasonable and artistic basis every article for domestic use.’ Working with architects and artists with whom he would have a longstanding partnership, Morris created the house with a particular image in mind and to express certain ideals.

In fact, there are several indications that Webb and Morris sought quite consciously to break up the closed inner circle of the Victorian family... The original kitchen is down a passage a short way from the dining-room and has a capacious window looking west onto the garden, a friendly feature typical of the Red House; at the time it was built servants were usually hidden in the basement or a concealed wing.

Deliberate handmade details and personal touches exemplify the focus on craftsmanship of the time in Red House. This was a deliberate departure from the rigid formality found elsewhere in Victorian lifestyle and the structure found in new technology like ironwork. Paintings of the time also exemplified craftsmanship and...
exemplified a personal connection to the work against the backdrop of technological advancement. The function of the house is clear through its architecture just as the emotions of the artist and story behind the painting is clear in William Holman Hunt’s portrait of well-known character from Bocaccio’s Decameron and John Keats’ poem, *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*. In Red House, there is an ‘integration of structure and ornament and a logical expression of plan and indicate the craftsman’s importance.’\(^{11}\) Throughout the house there is a revival of simplicity that shows the ornamentation even in ironwork is not preferable to simple structure. The house it is said is Gothic in principle rather than in style showing the structure and simplicity of Gothic design without the explicit architectural details. ‘The outsides of Webb's houses are extremely simple, relying for their effect on materials, colour and mass.’\(^{12}\) The less is more approach was in direct conflict with developing technology of the time and ornamentation in ironwork as the exhibition and individual businesses offered details in interior and exterior architecture. Morris instead stayed true to the personal reflection and individual craftsmanship that is relatable to the public on a personal level.

‘Morris rediscovered the artistic conscience, the most essential of all qualities in art. So when, in 1936, Nikolaus Pevsner published the book that probably first introduced many readers to Red House - the first edition of *Pioneers* - it was to a public that was already prepared. Pevsner's starting point was Morris's concern to combine appearance and functionality through the recognition that art is not something set apart from everyday life but is relevant to every aspect of life, and hence to the lives of everyone.’\(^{13}\)

This combination of private and work life is new for the Victorian era and allows freedom in the personal life to explore labour and ambitious pursuits outside the home. In allowing the spheres to mix, the distinctions otherwise made in work and home life no longer apply so dramatically. ‘Pevsner proceeded to describe how it was on the continent that the implications of such teaching would be translated into an acknowledgement of the virtues of engineering, of good industrial design and machine production.’\(^{14}\) As the mass production systems in England became more pervasive and for convenience, affordability and style, the public took interest in this, the societal ideals encouraging handicraft and separation between home and work needed to integrate new ideas and incorporate change or become separated and irrelevant.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
In Red House, which was famous only after Morris gained renown, the windows and roof were all derived from architects Buterfield and Street and that brick was the local material, but the round windows could be seen as ‘unfoliated tracery circles and that rooms had been dark and medievalizing, furnished with the Gothic furniture designed by Webb, with stained glass and a minstrels' gallery.’ These mixed genres and styles indicate the change happening in England at this time and the effort made in architecture and art to reflect changing societal values. As the rigid formality of Victorian life gave way to technological advancement, individual expression became paramount. For Morris and all who followed him, Red House was a symbol of this newfound freedom of expression. “It was indeed a dream house’, wrote Thompson, 'but rich and elaborate, the reverse of light and clarity.” With each detail he added, he made a conscious statement about how he wanted to live and how he wanted to be perceived.

Unlike much of Victorian domestic architecture, Red House is unpretentious with simple solid construction and red brick. There are gothicising details such as red brick arches and porches and, inside, construction is frankly revealed by means of uncovered wood lintels and exposed beams. Huge pinnacled newel-posts rise from the staircase and stained glass was designed for the windows and porches and, inside construction is frankly revealed by means of uncovered wood lintels and exposed beams. Huge pinnacled newel posts rise from the staircase and stained glass was designed for the windows in the hall. According to Georgina Burne Jones, this little with its beautiful high roofed brick swell in the center summed up the feeling of the whole place.

While there are new details indicating a new era, there are also Victorian high Gothic ideals shown in construction of the personalized home. ‘Red House has been talked of as a revolutionary building, but it is a part of the High Victorian school of Modern Gothic with a strong element of Romanticism in its design.’ As an example of Morris’ design work, it was a departure from traditional PRB values and started the Arts and Crafts movement leading to Aesthetic movement ideals of beauty. The use of Victorian elements show the house’s place in architectural history, but the way they are combined with the Gothic elements being suggested instead of explicitly focused on throughout the construction show Morris’ effort to distinguish himself and personalize the building. Still, it has been considered a Victorian Modern Gothic building due to many of its predominant elements as explained by Fiona MacCarthy in her 1994 biography of Morris. ‘A house which was complicated and dense, not so different in character from Pugin's elaborately Gothic interiors of a decade before.”

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid. p.46
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid. p.47
20 Ibid.
While he incorporated advancements in architecture, Morris was careful not to be swept up into any one movement so that like other architecture of this time, his house stands unique to its own movement and incorporates many types of design. In 1977 Mark Girouard saw them as having common origins in contemporary tastes and circumstances as the Queen Anne movement.\textsuperscript{21} Because of this mix of design techniques, incorporation of technology and reliance of craftsmanship, it cannot belong to any one style but expresses the divergent thoughts of the day and Morris’ personal artistic beliefs. Red House is extremely influential in the Arts and Crafts movement and remains a study of the integration of modern architecture and personal poetic design.

As far back as 1930 John Betjeman had written an article in the \textit{Architectural Review}, in which he praised Red House's novelty and wrote that, "Arts and Crafts" is now a term of ridicule but the movement may give a hearing in England to Le Corbusier'. Betjeman’s first book, \textit{Ghastly Good Taste} (published in 1933) is polemic rather than history, but in a genealogical table at the end he identified in bold type what he called 'the thin stream of life and vigorous influence for the good', which started from William Morris.\textsuperscript{22}

Pre-Raphaelite painters responded to the technological advances in a similar way as the Victorian architects, emphasizing personal connections in their art and telling stories of human nature. They also used natural scenes and models they knew well to tell their own story as well as the one of a character in their paintings. For example, Hunt chose his wife for a model for many pieces. 'Prior to marrying Fanny Waugh he had been involved with his principal model, Annie Miller. His portrait of Isabella used her as a model.’ Choosing women he knows and not professional models allows the painting to say as much about the artist as his personal life as it does the story being depicted. ‘Hunt's preference for depicting the women with whom he was emotionally and physically close, a tendency which would continue over the years, is exemplified in his \textit{Awakening Conscience} from 1851-1853. In Florence, Hunt decided to set up a studio and to continue to work. It was there that he started a painting entitled Isabella and the Pot of Basil.'\textsuperscript{23} By choosing a model he knows and working in Florence within a community of artists, Hunt transforms the well known story of Isabella into a tale of his own romance with his model and friendship with other artists. He regretted during this time that no picture of Fanny had been done in Florence in 1866 and indeed did not finish Isabella until he returned to London in 1868.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
In looking at the leaning pose of his model, Hunt encourages the viewer to wonder about her mood and immediately involves the viewer in her story of woe. ‘At this early time, in October 1866, Hunt had described Isabella as a delicious subject that he expected to keep him happy in the period of his detainment in Florence.’

She was a complex character who could personify life circumstances beyond her story and relate to societal norms of any time. Hunt related her to his personal circumstances and took many years to finish the details of this painting as his circumstances changed. Much like the construction of Red House, it was a collaborative effort and included many stops and starts as new ideals were considered and new details were added. ‘The character of Hunt’s Isabella changed along with the personal life circumstances of its creator. The painting evolved from being an illustration of a literary theme to another memorial to Fanny.’ While he started with another model for the piece in Florence, he continued the painting back in England with Fanny in mind. His personal woe is seen on the face of the model and Isabella’s story is used to tell a more personal tale of his own circumstances.

25 Ibid.
‘As Judith Bronkhurst has suggested, this picture gradually became not only a celebration of the love Hunt had experienced during his year long marriage, in the sensuality of the figure of Isabella, but also an expression of the anguish of his bereavement.9 The subject of the picture was chosen from a poem by Keats that is based on a tale from Boccaccio’s Decamerone about a woman who had been destroyed by her love for a man.”27

The forlorn gaze and desperate clinging of the model to the large pot predominantly set in the middle of the room show the focus of the piece on what’s inside of the pot. The adoring look and warm embrace of the pot also show the contents symbolize Isabella’s love for her lost lover. “Thus the subject of this painting is notable primarily because of the inevitable connection it has to the bereft artist. Hunt too was suffering from the loss of his beloved. He used the painting of Isabella to express his grief, altering the figure and facial features originally chosen and replacing them with those of Fanny.” The interior space is cluttered showing the complexity of both Hunt’s personal story and that of Isabella’s. There are hidden meanings throughout the piece that would have been signals to the public at the time. The white dress shows her intent to marry the deceased and the size of the pot conceals a head large enough to share a marriage bed. The embrace around a wood podium shows the reliance on Arts and Crafts architecture. The absence of any ironwork or industrialized production shows the focus on the individual in this portrait and human emotion instead of impersonal technological advancement. As in Red House, the architectural detail expresses the feelings of the person who designed it and illustrates a particular story personal to them and universal emotional themes without staying loyal to any single architectural style. The birth of the Arts and Crafts movement is evident in the decorations on the windows and wood panels creating design in the interior.

John Ruskin’s comments were pivotal to the public and defined the art world in the early 1850s. Artists including Morris and Hunt exhibited an interest in John Ruskin’s tenet that a ‘love of detailed realism must be reconciled with a need to make a painting depict unseen truths of the spirit.”28 The portrait of Isabella does this as it draws out our own feelings of loss and empathy for this subject.

“The wedding of scientific detachment, analysis and objectivity, to an intense, immediate and subjective emotional response would achieve a form of sacred realism. James H. Coombs suggests that for Hunt the individual fact conveyed in the canvas had to body forth or symbolize a more important reality, in this case, the essence of the figure depicted. Hunt’s stylistic treatment of the memorial to his wife well exemplifies this effort to illustrate such universal truths.”29

As in the personalized details of the architecture in Red House, the details of the

27 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
painting show universal truths to which the artist and the public could relate. A story such as Isabella’s is a perfect catalyst for a discussion of well known feelings and sentiments. Similarly, Red House needed not only its architecture but the work of Morris to bring attention to the house and allow the public to relate to it in the way that the artist did. Morris’ poems, interior patterns and paintings help the public relate to the details of the house and bring the house out of its own world and into the public consciousness. With the painting of Isabella, Hunt shows a single woman figure enclosed in a space but also exemplifies his own loneliness.

‘Isabella is a depiction of a single female within an interior. The universal meaning of this focus might be... the woman inside single figures of women within an enclosed space or room which embodies their psychological and moral condition. A closer look at the cluttered and suggestive spaces which enclose the figures in the paintings mentioned above seems to support this notion.30

The interior of the Red House and the conflicting architectural details within became more powerful and meaningful after Morris received acclaim. Similarly the public viewing Isabella’s portrait, this popularity shows that despite the theme of loneliness, through the arts, the public can be invited into this space to understand the emotions depicted. Were Isabella in the background and the viewer not invited to gaze upon her head on sharing in her grief, and at the same time relating to the grief of the artist, she would seem more lonely in the room. Before Morris was well known the house may not have had the same power to transform the architectural landscape in a personal way. The cluttered look of the room in which Isabella stands in Hunt’s portrayal is reminiscent of the red brick ornament on Red House. However, the simple line of Isabella’s white gown also reminds us of the simple design and function of the house. Besides being a remarkably innovative architect he was also a renowned industrial designer, whose tile panels, stained glass windows and exquisite pieces of furniture (mostly applied in churches and official buildings) owe much to the works of William Morris.31 Morris’ Red House and Hunt’s Isabella show a departure from technological advancement and a focus on personal expression but still incorporate societal changes inherent in their time in Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite Britain. Even though these are departures from architectural developments around them, they bring further meaning to the use of ironwork and were instrumental in encouraging ornamentation in the ironwork as a means of combining craftsmanship and technology to maintain personal expression within industrialization and mass production.

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‘Quis ineptae tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus ut teneat se’: London, an eighteenth-century city in turmoil?1 Samuel Johnson’s London and William Hogarth’s Gin Lane

In many respects eighteenth-century London was a golden period of prosperity for the city. It was a period of economic affluence, with newly established international trade links, increased industrialisation, and extensive development and generation as its boundaries sprawled out ever wider. Yet, this prosperity came at a cost and was underpinned by an ugly underbelly. This paper, fundamentally, is concerned with this ugliness and the way it is represented in Samuel Johnson’s London and William Hogarth’s Gin Lane. In addition to the representations of the physical world themselves, of particular interest to this paper is the psychological turmoil and anxiety that often manifested itself behind the depictions of instances of physical strife and hardship.

The eighteenth century represented a period of accelerated change for Britain. It was a century that saw greater global exploration, further reaching international trade networks,2 increasingly rapid imperial expansion, mass urbanisation,3 and encompassed the beginning of the industrial revolution and the development of a more modern consumer society.4 It was in London, perhaps, where such changes manifested themselves most patently and where the beginnings of many of the phenomena that would later characterise and define the modern world were witnessed. Its population increased sharply from around six hundred thousand inhabitants in 1700 to just under a million in 1801,5 and mass construction was seen across the city with the completion of St Paul’s Cathedral in 1707 and the new bridging of the Thames at Westminster (1750) and Richmond (1777). Eighteenth-century London saw the mass propagation of the coffee house, daily newspapers, Britain’s

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1 Juvenal, Satire I:30-32.
2 One is able to observe the growth of British overseas trade in the expansion of the country’s merchant fleet. From 3300 ships with a total tonnage of 260,000 in 1702, it grew to over 8100 with a tonnage of 590,000 in 1764, and 9400 with a tonnage of over 695,000 in 1776 – Anderson (2000) 71. There was a sharp increase in British exports over the course of the 18th century: Between 1699 and 1701 British exports totalled £3,784,000, between 1752 and 1754 this rose to £6,350,000 and during the years of 1772 and 1774 exports rose further still to £8,487,000 – Davis (1962) 290.
3 Sharp population growth in conjunction with a progressively more industrialised economy caused mass urbanisation throughout the eighteenth century. In 1650 just 8.8% of the population of England and Wales lived in towns with a population above ten thousand people, but by 1800 this figure had risen to 20.3% - Ogilvie (2000) 101.
4 Overall domestic consumption increased from £10.5 million in 1688 to £34 million in 1770 and home consumption per household grew from £10 to £25 over the same period - Langford (1989) 64.
5 George (1922) 328.
first professional police force, the shop window, and the foundation of the British Museum, arguably the world’s first state-funded and ‘public’ museum in 1753.

And, yet, despite these accounts of generation, commercial prosperity, and cultural augmentation, it was London’s streets and people that also provided the inspiration for the apocalyptic depictions of Hogarth’s *Gin Lane* and Johnson’s *London*:

> ‘But all whom Hungar spares, with Age decay;  
> Here Malice, Rapine, Accident, conspire,  
> And now a Rabble Rages, now a Fire;  
> Their Ambush here relentless Ruffians lay.  
> And here the fell Attorney prowls for Prey;  
> Here falling Houses thunder on your Head,  
> And here a female Atheist talks you dead’.6

This, clearly, is not the eighteenth century London of pretty squares, idyllic Canaletian imagery (figure 1),7 public museums, and increased disposable income, just as Hogarth’s depictions of hunger, death, destruction and bedlam in *Gin Lane* (figure 2) are not either.

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7 Interestingly painted in the same year as Hogarth’s work (figure 2).
It is, in short, the morbid, almost apocalyptic depictions of London found in these works that are the main focus of this paper. Yet, while the manifest and physical portrayals of degradation, briefly underscored above, are certainly of interest, perhaps more important to this study are the latent anxieties that bubble beneath their surfaces. In this regard, this essay is as much interested in the representation of physical turmoil in London during the eighteenth century – hunger, crime, disease etc. – as the motivations, anxieties and psychological turmoil of its inhabitants that informed their articulation and conception in these works. By this brief introduction, however, I do not wish to suggest that Johnson’s *London* and Hogarth’s *Gin Lane* have the same preoccupations, represent London’s physical turmoil in the same way, or have the same anxieties and ideals behind their depictions. Indeed, though both works are manifestly concerned with instances of physical turmoil and strife in eighteenth-century London and, though both works certainly seem to resonate with each other, ultimately the sentiments and ideals that underlie their manifest imagery are quite different.
The scene presented to us in *Gin Lane* is one of sheer physical turmoil. Printed for the first time on 15th February 1751, Hogarth’s work, set in the quarters of eighteenth-century St Giles, depicts a grotesque insight into the ugly underbelly of a city that was, purportedly, entering its golden age of prosperity.8 Widespread hunger and starvation are conspicuously articulated by the skeleton-like man slumped in the foreground of the print, and by another voraciously attacking a bone together with his dog.9 Death lingers in the air: our attention is sharply drawn to a man, hanged by his own hand in one of the many derelict buildings located in the right side of the print; a coffin swings morbidly overhead instead of a shop sign; and, in the very centre of the work, a body is lowered gloomily into a coffin. Crime pervades the work too with the depiction of a riotous mob10 brandishing furniture and tools as weapons and, most shocking of all, an instance, seemingly, of infanticide.11 Greed is another particularly prevalent theme of the work: the greed of the gin drinkers whose lust for the spirit fuels their degradation into poverty and crime; the greed of the distillers of the drink itself whose prosperity comes at the loss of the inhabitants and adjacent businesses – underscored by the hanged man swinging from the rafters - and greed fed by the unrelenting commercialism of free market mercantilism of the eighteenth century that has yielded great affluence for ‘S. Gripe’ the pawnbroker at the cost of those with whom he does business: the carpenter sells the tools with which he should make his living, and the housewife the pots and pans that represent the objects with which she should perform function in society. Noticeably here the pawnbroker’s shop sign stands above the church steeple in the background and the statue of the monarch (George I),12 with which it is topped, underscoring a twisted hierarchy of sorts in which making money and greed occupy a position of greater significance in this world than the church and monarchy.

Johnson’s *London* tells a similar story. The ‘Hunger’ (12) and ‘Poverty’ (48, 159, 177) of the city’s inhabitants are again prevalent, as are the derelict buildings that they occupy where ‘falling Houses thunder on your Head’ and the living conditions are so poor that one may as well be inhabiting a dungeon: ‘rent the Dungeons of the Strand’ (215).13 The widespread criminality of London too – unsurprising when ‘All Crimes

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8 Whilst the reality of how great an issue the Gin epidemic of the eighteenth century actually was – see Abel (2001) – it is fair to say that there was a problem. Gin consumption in England had risen from negligible levels at the start of the century up to 19 million gallons per annum by its mid-point – Barr (1995) 188; Porter (1999) X. Indeed, in Holborn in 1750 one in every five buildings sold gin - George (1964) 41.
9 The 1730s witnessed a decade of bad weather and cold winters, which went down in collective memory as “the hard winter of 1739”. This led to widespread famine and a sharp increase in the poor rate both nationally and in the capital – Habakkuk (1953) 131.
10 Perhaps here resonating the riots held against the Gin Taxes of 1743?
11 Infanticide, aside from its inherently shocking nature, was a particularly poignant example of criminality in connection with the consumption of gin. In 1744 Judith Defour murdered her two-year-old daughter for the clothes on her back, which she sold in order to feed her gin habit – Dillon (2002) 208. Moreover, this period saw extremely high infant mortality rate in London: 20.2 deaths per 100 live births by the age of 2 years in the period 1730-9 - George (1964) 408.
13 Johnson’s tumbling buildings particularly resonate Juvenal’s depiction of Rome’s decrepit housing and her ‘lapsus tectorum adsiduo’ - Satire III.7-9.
are safe’ (159) is even more thoroughly articulated in Johnson’s work with the depiction of ‘theft’ (68), perjury (68), corruption (180), assault (229), and murder in one’s own home (236-241). Furthermore, as with Gin Lane, excessive greed pervades every corner of this work and, accordingly, so too does Johnson’s critique of it. Just as the pawnbroker of Gin Lane acquires more wealth at the expense of others so too do the rich in Johnson’s London where ‘SLOW RISES WORTH, BY POVERTY DEPREST’ (177). The fixation of its inhabitants on mercantilism and making money is strongly evidenced in the description of a place ‘Where all are Slaves to Gold, Looks are Merchandise, and Smiles are sold, Where won By Bribes, by Flatteries impor’d, The Groom retails the Favours of his Lord’ (178-181). In short, Johnson suggests that the driving force behind the existence of the people of this city is their desire to ‘raise their Treasures higher than before’ (205). Moreover, the power of the articulation of these largely socio-political problems of the city – crime, living conditions, greed etc. – is further highlighted by Johnson’s juxtaposition of them with the tranquillity, peace, and ethical respectability in his portrayal, regardless of its fantastical nature or not, of the countryside. The countryside is presented to us as the ‘happier place’ (43) in opposition to the city with its ‘pleasing Banks where verdant Osiers play’ (45) and ‘peaceful Vales’ (46), ‘where ‘ev’ry Bush with Nature’s Music rings’ and ‘ev’ry Breeze bears Health upon its Wings’ (220-221). The ethos and occupations of the inhabitants of Johnson’s countryside are far less centred on wealth generation and instead seek enjoyment in the immaterial, in the ‘Evening Walk and Morning Toil’ (223). In critiquing the city, therefore, the poet uses the countryside as a blank, albeit imagined, space that can be construed as a foil to the problems of the city.

However, while the images of these works highlight elements of the physical strife and turmoil London’s inhabitants had to face during the eighteenth century, they all also suggest some of their psychological anxieties and apprehensions. In this regard, Johnson’s juxtaposition of the city and the countryside in London is as much about contrasting crime ‘rate’ and greed as it is about a collective anxiety over mass urbanisation, increasing industrialisation, and the ideologies behind free market mercantilism. In Gin Lane too do such anxieties of commercial development manifest themselves. Indeed, in many respects Gin Lane succinctly articulates, via the grotesque imagery of the consequence of free citizens exercising their purchasing power within accepted ideological frameworks, the dangers of an unregulated, free market economy operating in a country in which disposable incomes of the lower classes were on the rise. Gin Lane expresses apprehensions regarding the tension of the growing importance of commerce and the position of labouring people in society, and the relationship between private desires and public and between moral reform

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14 We might note that the word ‘Crime’ features four times in the work (66, 84, 159, and 258).
16 We might also note that this brand of bucolicism is particularly prevalent in the satirical works of Ancient Rome – Juvenal’s Umbricius, the central character of the piece on which Johnson’s work is modeled, is after all leaving Rome for the more rural Cumae –, and so too in its elegiac poets of the first century BC, who provided the inspiration for Juvenal et al. in this regard, were happy to ‘divitias alius fulvo sibi congerat auro’ (Tibullus I.1) while they themselves led a vita… inerti… in agris (Tibullus I.5-11).
and economic utility. In short we find here the uneasy convergence of the emerging forces of capitalist development and the residual forms of pre-capitalist societies. Thus, regarding the print within this framework, the imagery of the pawnbroker’s sign placed above the ancient and supporting structures of the church and monarch now has a new, more powerful resonance, conveying collective anxieties over the power of the consumer, the market, and a lower class with increased disposable income. Further to this, the use of imagery that subverts religious iconography also seems to manifest anxieties of self-identity in the face of mass consumerism, and there is a sense of old, national, longstanding values being corroded by the desires of the private consumer. We might also add, with regards to the consumption of gin, that intoxication also raised a very real metaphysical problem as the artificial transcendence of the mundane it represented vied with increasingly unstable notions of religious transcendence.

Yet, perhaps where both of these works seem to manifest the greatest sense of internal conflict is in their depiction of foreigners and the articulation of their negative impact on eighteenth-century London. Johnson’s work is strongly xenophobic, particularly against French immigrants to whom the author attributes much of the problems the city faces.

‘London! The needy Villain’s gen’ral Home,
The Common Shore of Paris and of Rome;
With eager Thirst, by Folly or by Fate,’
Sucks in the Dregs of each corrupted State.

Johnson depicts foreigners as nothing more than the worst criminals from the continent, the ‘dregs’ of society who beg and steal (107), parasites – ‘The supple Gaul was born a Parasite’ (124). However, it is not just that Johnson attributes many of the social problems of the day to French immigrants, but rather that their portrayal also manifests a great sense of collective anxiety over national identity in an age of rapid globalisation. In this regard, Johnson’s work displays a genuine fear of London’s mutation into a ‘French metropolis’ (96), the contamination of the British race – ‘Nor hope the British Lineaments to trace’ (101) –, and the irradiation of shared national values and ideals – ‘Sense, Freedom, Piety, refin’d away’ (105). As a reaction to the psychological anxiety caused by the threat to British self-identity, this work strongly criticises Walpole’s government’s passive stance on foreign policy and seeks to draw

19 Following the dragonnades, forced conversions to Catholicism, which began in 1681, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which outlawed the practice of Protestantism in France, hundreds of thousands of men and women were forced to flee France. Between 50,000 and 80,000 settled in England, with perhaps half this number eventually finding a home in the Greater London area – ‘Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, ‘Communities - Huguenot and French London’, Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.0, 12 March 2017).
20 i.e. ‘a sewer’.
22 For the indication of a paranoid conscious of the enemy from within and the collective memory of the English Civil War see Varney (1989).
strength by nostalgically portraying times of former national glory. The work fondly recalls that Greenwich was the birth place of Elizabeth I – the ‘Dread of Spain’ – Edward III’s victories over the French at Crecy in 1346 – ‘Illustrious EDWARD! From the Realms of Day, the Land of Heroes and of Saints survey’ – ‘And lisp the Tale of Henry’s Victories’ – ‘When a single Jail... Could half the Nation’s Criminals contain’ – ‘Blest Age’ – ‘ALFRED’s golden Reign’ – The nostalgic articulation of the glories of former monarchs is particularly significant and intimates that, at the very heart of the collective crisis of national identity, was the unease of being ruled by a foreign king, especially in the context of accelerated globalisation. Accordingly, George II, of Hanover, is criticised in London: Johnson aligns George II with the delinquent immigrant who ‘gropes his Breeches with a Monarch’s Air’ – humourously confusing the identities of monarch and foreigner and, thus, underscoring the ‘terrifying’ and inescapable fact that the British monarch was a foreigner, not, perhaps, unlike those who come under heavy criticism in London. In this regard, it makes sense that there seems to be a strong sense of Jacobitism throughout the work, with the expression of which further undermining the authority and legitimacy of the Hanoverian monarch. Just as Johnson’s London manifests concerns of a threat to national identity by mass-immigration from the continent, Gin Lane articulates the dangers and anxieties of the corrosion of the Anglo-centric national habit of Beer drinking by the propagation of a foreign drink and custom. This threat can be well observed by the dual consideration of Hogarth’s Beer Street (Figure 3), the companion piece to Gin Lane, in which, in a similar vein to Johnson’s nostalgic regard of Britain’s former glories in war, nationalist pride in Britain’s beer and the customs and national identity behind its consumption are vividly depicted. Because of the consumption of beer over gin, order has been restored. The inhabitants of Beer Street are well nourished – as suggested by their portly physiques, which, of course, stand in contrast to the skeletal bodies of Gin Lane, the basket filled with fish, and the man wielding a giant ham, educated and cultured – as demonstrated by their capacity to read, and have well-respected occupations – as underscored by the many tools on display. We might also note that the hierarchy of church, monarch, and wealth generation has been restored to its proper order with the decrepit pawnbroker’s sign now drooping below the church spire and the monarch’s flag. Thus, Gin Lane seems to manifest the same kind of latent anxieties on its surface as those we find in Johnson’s London. 

23 Examples of Johnson’s criticisms in London of the government’s foreign policy include: ‘English Honour grew a standing jest’ – ‘Explain their Country’s dear-bought Rights away, and plead for Pirates in the Face of Day’ – ‘On Britain’s fond Credulity they prey’.

24 George II was the last British monarch born outside of Great Britain. He was even brought up in Germany.

25 Johnson also critiques George II for the excessive amount of time the king spent abroad: ‘Lest Ropes be wanting in the tempting Spring, To rig another Convoy for the K—g’ – George II left Britain for Hanover in 1729, 1732, 1735, and 1736, decisions that were resented by ministers and the British public alike.


27 The flag on the steeple of St Martin-in-the-Fields was always raised on George II’s birthday, 30th October - Uglow (1997) 499.
However, although these works are similar in that they both depict instances of physical turmoil in London in the eighteenth century and, though they both similarly manifest the concerns and preoccupations of the eighteenth-century Londoner, this does not mean that they identically attribute blame for the aforementioned problems, or that their socio-political perspectives are indistinguishable.

In this regard, Hogarth’s *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street* prints seem to be, whether deliberately or not, ideological state apparatuses in their articulation of those ideologies that served to legitimise the status quo and to maintain hegemonic order. Rather than blaming social policy and the government for the poverty, squalor, and crime of eighteenth-century London, Hogarth’s prints seem to attribute the blame to the drink itself and to those who drink it. Though the works certainly depict anxiety of free-market consumerism, they also suggest at the potential dangers of the poor

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28 Art is held within ideology and so reflects the conditions of its production, a ‘reality’ that is formed from ideology within each person, but is also capable of defamiliarising that ‘reality’, and, thereby, of distancing itself from ideology to a point where it allows the reader to perceive the ideology from which it springs. See Eagleton (1976) 64.

29 For a consideration of Ideological State Apparatuses see Althusser (1971).
trying to pursue the hedonistic lifestyles of the rich, rendering them to be essentially different from the ruling classes and untrustworthy of the responsibility of living such a lifestyle. The prints also show a concern for the destruction of the national workforce (and so too, importantly, its army) as suggested by the juxtaposition of the productive workers of Beer Street, who serve as an example par excellence – tools at the ready, the king’s speech encouraging the promotion of commerce at hand – and the workers of Gin Lane who trade their means of production, their tools, for gin. Moreover, the differing constructed position from which one is forced to gaze at both prints fits with this. The spectator observes Gin Lane from a distant, privileged position, rendering the scene alien, and legitimising the onlooker: in short, you feel better than and above, literally, those you view. This is in contrast to the viewpoint of Beer Street where we view from within the scene, on the same level as those whom we gaze at, thereby legitimising those within the work and the ideals they adhere to. Hogarth’s prints, therefore, project an idealised representation of a society that accords perfectly with the governing ideologies of the day: the poor are encouraged to participate in and sustain a prosperous commercial society so long as they remain in a state of semi-development, subservient to civilised wage labour but confined to primitive appetites.30

The projections of Hogarth’s prints stand in stark contrast with those of Johnson’s London, a work that seems, almost anarchistically, to subvert the status quo, to question dominant contemporary ideologies, to blame the government for the physical turmoil of eighteenth-century London and, ultimately, to sympathise with the poor and disadvantaged. Principally, we should note that the choice to imitate Juvenalian satire in the representation of London by Johnson is an inherently political one, placing the work within an anti-governmental tradition initiated by the classical satirists of ancient Rome and later received, most conspicuously, by Alexander Pope, three of whose later imitations of Horace came out in the twelve months before London. Johnson’s work actively blames the government of the nation and Robert Walpole in particular for the physical turmoil London’s inhabitants have to endure. Indeed, as has already been outlined in this paper, Johnson is especially critical of Walpole’s foreign policy to which he attributes a large degree of blame for the physical degradation of the city.31 The corruption and greed of both the government are underscored throughout and it is made clear that it is the ‘Senatorian Band, Whose Ways and Means support the sinking Land’ (245-246) with their corruption – ‘Here let those reign, whom Pensions can incite, To vote a Patriot black, a Courtier white (51-52) 32 – and greed – ‘Let such raise Palaces, and Manors buy, Collect a Tax, or farm a Lottery’ (57-58). Walpole himself is heavily criticised, whose administration is deemed to have caused

30 This accords well with the projection of nationalism and the pro-monarchy position of Beer Street.
31 In addition to Walpole’s foreign policy, Johnson also directly critiques the government’s Excise Bill of 1733 (line 29) and the Stage Licensing Act of 1737. The latter is particularly significant, with Johnson lamenting, via the depiction of eunuchs on stage, the physical castration of a theatre’s capacity for political commentary and criticism: ‘With warbling Eunuchs fill a licens’d Stage, And lull to Servitude a thoughtless Age.’ (59-60).
32 Pensions were awarded to those who supported Walpole’s administration; ambassadors who were appointed by Walpole ‘were ready to gratify him with expensive gifts’ - Hardy (2014) 185.
the depravity not just within the socio-cultural and political realm but also in terms of individual morality and integrity. Thus, the poem, by representing Walpole as the corrupt and greedy Orgilio, criticises not only the policies of the administration but also the administrator himself: ‘Who shares Orgilio’s Crimes, his Fortune shares’ (83). Orgilio’s wealth, which is detailed thoroughly in the description of the erection of his extravagant palace (195-207) and his pile of gold, which he greedily watches grow – ‘Orgilio sees the golden Pile aspire’ (208) –, stands in stark contrast to Johnson’s depictions of the poor and disadvantaged. The unjustness of a society that refuses to recognise the worth of those who are not privileged in terms of power and resources is well captured in the lines ‘This mournful Truth is ev’ry where confest, SLOW RISES WORTH, BY POVERTY DEPREST’ (176-177). The attribution of blame, therefore, and the ideological perspectives and criticisms raised in Johnson’s *London* differ significantly to those found in Hogarth’s *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street* prints despite the works’ common subject matter of physical turmoil and strife in eighteenth-century London.

In considering Johnson’s *London* and Hogarth’s *Gin Lane* this paper has examined these works’ depiction of physical turmoil in eighteenth-century London. Although the city was entering a period of economic prosperity, development, and growth, its inhabitants, especially the poor, had to endure a range of difficulties and hardships. Increasing crime rates, widespread food shortages, unemployment, and gin addiction, amongst others, were all aspects of London life, which are articulated in these sources, and were prevalent in the city during this period. This paper, however, has also stressed that, behind the depictions of physical strife, we are also able to observe some of the latent collective anxieties of the time, which manifest themselves there. These works both suggest that, with the rapidly increasing industrialisation, urbanisation, and globalisation of the eighteenth century, the identity and preconceived ideals of London’s inhabitants were tested and strained as they came to terms with a more modern, international, consumer society. Yet, it has also been established that, though the manifest preoccupations of both works might be similar, their socio-political standpoints and ideological considerations are quite different. In this regard, it has been detailed how Johnson’s work seems to subvert the status quo and critique the dominant ideologies of the time whereas Hogarth’s prints seem to uphold the former and legitimise the latter. Although these works possess a great deal of careful artifice and destabilising caricature and parody, this paper has, nevertheless, shown that they certainly offer interesting insights into the physical and psychological lives of London’s eighteenth-century inhabitants.

33 The incident of destruction and eventual reconstruction ofOrgilio’s palace in a more extravagant fashion is a direct reference to the magnificent palace of Walpole – Houghton Hall – in Norfolk that inevitably pointed towards not just an uninhibited access to the national wealth but also towards its unjust use for personal luxury and comfort – Hardy (2014) 194-209.

34 We might note that while *London* was being written, Johnson was living a life of absolute penury. He and his dear friend, Richard Savage, were ‘living in cheap rooms, eating penny breakfast and eight-penny dinners in coffee houses and taverns’ Raghunathan (2014) 14.

35 Johnson also vividly expresses the injustice of the treatment of the poor in stating that ‘All Crimes are safe, but hated poverty/ This, only this, the rigid Law persues/ This, only this, provokes the snarling Muse’ (159-160).


Mathias, P. *The Brewing Industry in England 1700–1830* (1959, Cambridge)


Raghunathan, H. *Johnson, Gray, Goldsmith: Poets of Mid-Eighteenth Century* (2014, Delhi)

Shesgreen, S. *Engravings by Hogarth* (1973, New York)


PART III

MIND, BODY AND SOUL
This article explores the attitude towards death through two different sources – a photograph of parents posing with their deceased infant as an example of post-mortem photography and Alfred Lord Tennyson’s elegies *In Memoriam* published in 1850. It will argue that even though they are very different by nature the sources share some striking similarities. The pain about the experienced loss is evident and central in both of them.

Death is an inevitable part of life and an experience every human must face eventually. What has varied greatly during different periods are the burial and mourning practices of different societies. This article focuses on Victorian Britain and aims to examine mourning and grief among the middle and upper classes in that period based on two very different sources – a post-mortem photograph of two parents holding their deceased child taken ca. 1845, and the elegies *In Memoriam* by Alfred Lord Tennyson published in 1850.

The class-bound culture shaped every aspect of life in Victorian Britain; therefore grief and mourning were also affected. It cannot be assumed that the behaviour and beliefs about death of the middle and upper classes automatically filtered down to the working classes.¹ Religion played a central role in the life of most middle- and upper-class Victorian families and was not just a matter of convention.² The two major factors that changed these classes’ attitude to death between 1850 and 1918 were the decline in Christian belief and the substantial demographic change caused by the decline of the death rate, both clearly noticeable factors from the 1870s. The death-rate in England and Wales went from 21.8 per 1,000 people per year in 1868 to 18.1 in 1888 to 14.8 in 1908.³ The First World War accelerated the change in religious values and practices around death, reinforcing the decline in Christian belief when ministers failed to explain God’s purpose in the war amid the growing numbers of fallen soldiers; approximately one in eight men were killed. In addition, it destroyed what was left of Victorian mourning traditions since the vast numbers of fallen men could not be mourned in a traditional way. Without seeing the body of their sons and

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² Ibid, p. 3.
men or participating in a traditional funeral Victorians found it almost impossible to accept the reality of their deaths. Two effects of the growth of unbelief between 1870 and 1918 were the support for cremation and spiritualism. Since some cities simply ran out of burial space, cremation increased in popularity through necessity, despite the practice being in direct contrast to the position held by the church who believed it to be a pagan practice that would make the resurrection of the body impossible. Some people looked to spiritualism as an alternative system of belief. It taught the immortality of the soul and offered the option of communication with deceased loved ones. 4

Psychologists argue that mourning rituals meet the specific psychological needs of a society during a time of grief by structuring death within a system of values accepted by that society, while also rallying the support of family, friends and community for comfort. The memory of the deceased was and is central to all mourners regardless of their religious belief. The recollection of memories of the lost relationship is the core of the painful process of grief. 5 The deceased self is almost split into two parts – the intangible spirit of the deceased on the one hand, remembered by the relatives, and the physical mortal remains on the other side. The mortal remains are at the family’s mercy, and theoretically, they could do with them whatever they choose regardless of the wishes of the deceased. This makes corpses very vulnerable subjects: abject, and at the mercy of the living. 6

Victorians felt the need for external physical symbols of remembrance like mourning jewellery in addition to keeping the memory of their loved ones alive in their heads and hearts. 7 In the initial period of deep grief the mourners sought to keep their loved one’s memory alive as vividly as possible, 8 through monuments, death masks, paintings and mourning jewellery. Another therapeutic method was taking photographs.

The number of daguerreotypes, the first photographs from the Victorian period, that depict death in various forms might seem slightly odd from a modern-day perspective. Images exist of dead adults as well as children, even of parents holding their deceased children and groups of grieving people surrounding a coffin. 9 Why were these daguerreotypes taken? Apart from the proximity to a dead body which seems at least very unusual from a modern western perspective, a further question arises when thinking about the cost of a photograph in the Victorian period. Even tintypes, the cheapest photographs available that produced a single, positive image on a tinned or

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5 Jalland, ‘Victorian’, p. 245.
7 Jalland, Death, p. 288.
8 Jalland, ‘Victorian’, p. 246.
9 Several examples can be found in Jay Ruby, Secure the shadow: Death and photography in America (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), chapter two.
enamelled iron support, were hardly available under 6d, the equivalent of £2 today.10 What was the purpose of these photographs? Where were they displayed?

Post-mortem photography is the further development of funerary portraiture and stems from a long tradition of posthumous memorial. The first post-mortem daguerreotypes were made in 1841, only two years after the introduction of daguerreotypes in general. Over time the technique shifted from a strictly upper class practice to a middle and even lower class one. The photographs were intended to create the illusion of life in death. A photograph created a tangible object that represented the deceased.11 In addition, daguerreotypes were faster than paintings, and still much cheaper, especially since painters often charged double the cost if the subject was dead.12 Professional photo studios advertised that they were prepared to take pictures of a deceased person on one hour’s notice.13 The photographs were displayed in very public forums of the home like parlour tables, mantels and in family albums. Occasionally they were sent to far away relatives who were unable to attend the funeral.14 By the end of the Victorian period the post-mortem photographs had fallen out of fashion and the images moved more towards images of mourners and funerals, the deceased sometimes just represented by the gravestone.15

Post-mortem photographs by their very nature forced the photographer to construct the scene actively and to pose the sitter deliberately.16 Personal items to convey character traits of the deceased were seldom used in the photographs. In most cases, standard props were used to enhance the composition. In addition, the props were usually hidden clues that indicated death. Children were the exception, often holding a favourite toy. Long exposure time was possible without the sitter moving because of discomfort. If relatives were photographed as well, the images often display a lack of emotion.17

Since one-quarter of all nineteenth-century deaths were infants who died before their first birthday, every mother had to face the possibility that at least one of her children would die at birth or soon after. The death rate in England and Wales per 1,000 live births for infants under one year during the entire Victorian period remained more or less stable at 154.18
In Fig. 1 we see a couple, presumably husband and wife. The woman is holding a baby. The pose of the adults is quite commonplace for a photograph in Victorian times and not specific for post-mortem photographs. Their facial expressions are almost neutral, although it can be argued that their eyes convey a certain level of sadness. In any case, this would probably be undetectable if the dead child were removed from the photograph. These daguerreotypes were very intimate objects, depicting people at one of their most vulnerable moments. In itself it is remarkable that a private moment like grief should be deliberately made public through the photographic medium. It is quite likely that it was considered inappropriate to openly convey grief in such a public setting; the long exposure time must also be considered. The couple sits close together, their arms touch; almost intimate gestures of comfort in the face of loss. The main indicator that this is a post-mortem photograph is the fact that the baby seems to be asleep.\(^{19}\) The simulation of ‘the last sleep’ depicted a sentiment towards death which was very popular throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.\(^{20}\) Sometimes the subjects were seated upright on a chair with their eyes closed. This seated pose also implies indirectly that the subject was only sleeping.\(^{21}\) Sleep as a metaphor for death can be read as a form of denial – the deceased is not actually gone, the person they are mourning for is alive, yet dead. It is implied that that person can come back any minute.

\(^{19}\) Unknown, *Photograph of father with mother holding dead child*, George Eastman Museum. (ca. 1845).


Several of the aspects mentioned before can be found in this photograph. There are no personal objects. The scene is technically a natural pose with the mother holding the baby. The high mortality rate for infants made photographs of parents and deceased babies quite common among post-mortem daguerreotypes. The fact that the baby seems to be asleep indicates death. And lastly, this photograph stems from the desire to record a last glimpse of family life. It represents a desire to record the deceased with their kin in a last family portrait.

Photography was a highly standardised form of displaying grief, at once both intimate and public. Poetry could also serve both these aspects while simultaneously being very different. *In Memoriam* by Alfred Lord Tennyson is an insightful example from the same period. Whilst an entirely different kind of source there are several similarities between the two artefacts, which will be articulated.

Tennyson began the 133 elegies that would become *In Memoriam* during the month when he heard of his close friend Arthur Hallam’s death at the age of 22 in October 1833. He expressed to mutual friends the wish to create a tribute to the deceased. *In Memoriam A.H.H.* was anonymously published in May 1850, sixteen and a half years later. 22 The decision to publish it anonymously is obviously significant and might be a further indication that Tennyson was expressing very intimate feelings and thoughts. It would be interesting to further investigate whether the decision to publish the elegies changed the nature of the poems. Most biographers agree that the passing away of Tennyson’s closest friend was the most significant and influential event in the author’s life. The two young men met at an impressionable age, a time when they

were both struggling with severe depression and religious doubts. On the one hand, *In Memoriam* documents a deeply personal experience of intense male friendship and grief. On the other hand, it reflects discussions of the day about science and religion. In the central lyrics of 55 and 56, Tennyson even considers the theory of natural selection long before Darwin made it famous in *On the Origin of Species* which was not published until nine years later. ‘Are God and Nature then at strife/ That nature lends such evil dreams?/ So careful of the type she seems/ So careful of the single life.’ The persona fails to find a supernatural ‘God’ because he cannot find a way to him, so that he must rely upon his own resources. The author obviously struggles with the idea that events like death happen because they are part of an almighty God’s plan. *In Memoriam* is therefore also an insightful source about the public debate about grief and mourning during the Victorian period.

*In Memoriam* can be read as a mourning monument in verse. This is visible even in the design of the original title page from 1850 (Fig. 2) which resembles a tombstone. The poem is a very private expression of grief and therefore in contrast to the elaborate public memorials, tombstones and funerary ritual of the period. Tennyson was aware of this, asking whether the publication of his own feelings can ever be justified:

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

The first verse reveals anxiety about making the private public, something which is also reflected in Fig. 1. The writing of poetry, though, we see in verse two, has through its regularity a pain-numbing effect and is therefore helpful in processing the loss.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

(...)

23 Karen Hodder (ed.), *The works of Alfred Lord Tennyson: with an introduction, bibliography and head note by* (Ware, 2008), p. 305.
25 Ibid.
26 Alfred Tennyson, ‘In Memoriam’, in *The works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. by Hodder, pp. 309–89 (p. 338.), LV.
27 Henry Kozicki, “Meaning” in Tennyson’s In Memoriam’, in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* Vol 17, No. 4, pp. 673–94 (p. 676.)
28 Tennyson, Memoriam, p. 312, IV.
29 Ibid, p. 310.
30 Furneaux, Introduction.
Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.\textsuperscript{31}

*In Memoriam* persistently emphasises the desire for physical contact between the two men, the longing for a touch of hands, chests, lips - 'A hand that can be clasp’d no more.'\textsuperscript{32} But these aspects can also be seen as a form of coping mechanism in a time of deep grief. Physical contact with the deceased would be comforting, the impossibility of this wish is taunting, which makes it even more painful. Additionally, the longing to touch the lost friend implies the wish that the deceased would return from the grave at any moment.

A hand that can be clasp’d no more -
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro’ the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.\textsuperscript{33}

The poem is a more intimate testament to grief than the post-mortem photograph seen above, since it seems to document the author’s direct feelings, thoughts and longings. Keeping in mind that the Victorians were only comfortable with public display if it was highly ritualised, which might explain the lack of emotion in Fig. 1, it is hardly surprising that the amount of emotions evident in *In Memoriam* led to suspicions among contemporaries. And it seems as if Tennyson himself was aware of this, and he chose to express his emotions about the loss of his closest friend in a poetic way, creating a female persona that took his role, deliberately adding a romantic aspect to the relationship. Since Hallam was engaged to Tennyson’s sister Emilia who through Hallam’s death was almost ‘widow’d’ these two aspects became entangled and the female persona becomes a combination of the two of them.

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow’d race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} Tennyson, *Memoriam*, p. 309, OBIT MDCCCXXXIII.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{34} Tennyson, *Memoriam*, p. 315, IX.
And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;35

The image of the ‘last sleep’ can be found in the poem as well:

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit’s folded bloom
Thro’ all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;
(...) 
And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.36

Previously mentioned aspects can be retrieved here. There is the idea of ‘sleep’ and ‘death’ as interchangeable experiences, as well as the hope to ‘rewaken’ someone, alive but dead, at any moment to return to the living. These hopes can be found several times throughout the elegies, calling sleep ‘Death’s twin-brother’ and hoping for a reunion with the lost friend at a later point:

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death’s twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death’s twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead: 37

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
‘Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come. (...)’38

While the parents in Fig. 1 mourn the loss of a baby, Tennyson uses the idea of parents losing a child in a different context:

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother’s face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;39

36 Ibid, p. 332-333, XLIII.
37 Ibid, p. 344, LXVII.
38 Tennyson, Memoriam, p. 355, LXXXV.
39 Ibid, p. 351, XL.
While Tennyson uses the image of a maiden leaving her parents to enter ‘other realms of love’ this can be seen as a euphemism for the world of the dead. And in a broader sense a young person, even if he or she has surpassed the stage of an infant, always leaves grieving parents behind and creates tears on the mother’s face. This can be linked back to the higher mortality rate during the Victorian period, making the loss of a child more likely.

The poem closes with the ode to the bride and the promise of the child as a symbol of a new beginning.\textsuperscript{40} This part emphasises the triumph of life over death. It is possible to argue that this is where the poem was heading from the beginning.\textsuperscript{41} It starts with death and ends with the promise of a new life. It can be further argued that the poem shows the persona moving into happiness through his developing consciousness and his willed construction of ‘meaning’ in the disastrous past.\textsuperscript{42}

In summary, aspects of Victorian mourning culture can be identified in both the post-mortem photograph in Fig.1 as well as in \textit{In Memoriam}. Both use images of sleep instead of addressing death directly. Both sources refer to the loss of a child from a parent’s perspective, a more central aspect in the photograph but still detectable in the poem. While the photograph could potentially be very emotional, it seems more restrained than the poem which deals with the author’s personal grief in a very direct, intimate way. Since the photographs were unusually intimate, exposing forms of mourning memorabilia by definition, which linked the mourning relatives visible with the deceased, a direct display of emotions might have seemed to be too much to bear or simply inappropriate. In addition, the photographs were displayed in quite public forums of the home which would have exposed the private grief to everyone who came to visit. Both the photograph as well as the poem are a striking combination of public and private mourning, addressing a moment in which the introspective nature of grief is displayed to the public eye - anonymously in Tennyson’s case and at least to family, friends and acquaintances in the case of the photograph.

An interesting question to investigate further would be whether this changed the nature of the individual grief.

Yet the most striking similarity between the two sources is the desire behind them - the wish to document the relationship that has been disrupted through death, a last snapshot to capture what has now been lost forever.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, p. 385-389.
\textsuperscript{41} Marion Shaw, \textit{Alfred Lord Tennyson} (Hertfordshire, 1988), p. 38.
\textsuperscript{42} Kozicki, Vol 17, No. 4, p. 675.
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‘Vagary wild and mental aberration styled’;\(^1\) liminality in the fantasmatic spaces of Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market* (1862) and Richard Dadd’s *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke* (1864)

Through a comparison of this painting and poem, I will examine how the motif of the public forum functions as a liminal space within the fantastic setting. Engaging with structuralist critics such as Tsvetan Todorov and Rosemary Jackson, I will conclude that the effect of this motif on the narrative mirrors the effect which the fantasy genre itself has on the wider literary or artistic experience, thereby enacting a microcosmic experience of the fantastic mode. Within the fairy forum, action is stimulated by situating multiple races within a local space. The liminal space of the fantastic forum therefore becomes a veritable ‘world between worlds’ in which desire is explored and, paradoxically, rationalized. Through interrogating the relationship that these works have with the themes of psychoanalysis and sexual desire, I will conclude my argument with the assertion that writers and authors of Victorian Britain used fantasy as a means of exploring the unconscious through an engagement with supernatural forms.

Within the cavernous space of the Tate Britain’s renowned 1840 room hangs Richard Dadd’s (1817-1886) unobtrusive and dimly-lit masterpiece. Recognized as being an important contribution to Victorian art, *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke* (1864) nonetheless sits somewhat incongruously next to more popular contemporary paintings such as the *Ophelia* (1851-1852) and *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* (1885-1886).\(^2\) In contrast to the light and formulaic paintings that surround it, Dadd’s creation is convoluted and chaotic, a hotchpotch of fantastic shapes that appear and disappear through the great, spidery strands of grass that sheath the fairy world from our view. But there is a place for this work within the Victorian tradition. In the same way that *The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke* is most representative of Dadd’s career, so too can *Goblin Market* (1862) be identified as Christina Rossetti’s (1839-1894) foremost work for its technique, narrative genius, and popularity. Rossetti is perhaps best known for her proximity to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which formed around the charismatic founding figure of her brother, Dante Gabriel (1828-1882). However, she stands as one of the great writers of the Victorian era in her own right,

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\(^2\) *Ophelia* (1851-1852) by John Everett Millais and *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* (1885-1886) by John Singer Sargent.
named as the greatest pre-twentieth century female poet by Sir Roy Strong. In *Goblin Market*, Rossetti’s tale of sisterly love, the poet explores the significant contemporary themes of female sexuality and morality. But it is the setting of the poem, the titular goblin market, that is the focus of this essay. Through a juxtaposition of this painting and this poem, a coherent argument for the function of the motif of the public forum within the fantastic landscape emerges.

The fairy kingdom is a place of danger and delight, of commerce and community, of the familiar and the strange, and it functions as a liminal space within the already uncertain boundaries of fantasy. Before engaging with the painting and poem directly, we must establish what is meant, first, by fantasy and, second, by the liminal space. In his seminal study of the fantasy genre (1973), Tzvetan Todorov explains that the fantastic is underpinned by a deep-routed uncertainty within the viewer or the reader as to whether the inferences of the supernatural are harmonious or discordant with reality and that this ‘ambiguity is sustained to the very end of the adventure: reality or dream? truth or illusion?’ Subsequent methodological enquiry into the nature of the fantasy genre has built on this original study and augmented aspects of Todorov’s initial enquiry, most notably by Rosemary Jackson in her study *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion* (1981).

Central to Jackson’s line of research is that fantasy is a product of the social environs in which it is constructed. Taking a psychoanalytical approach, she rightly exposes how and in what ways fantasy articulates desire. She writes that ‘in expressing desire, fantasy can operate in two ways (according to the different meanings of ‘express’): it can tell of, manifest or show desire […] or it can expel desire, when this desire is a disturbing element which threatens cultural order and continuity’. It can therefore be said that fantasy is an embodiment of desire (conscious and unconscious, individual and communal), which is articulated through a landscape of uncertainty and ambiguity. This leads to the assertion that a precept of the fantastic is that it inhabits, or indeed is or creates, a liminal space. Farah Mendelsohn examines this phenomenon thus:

> In the liminal fantasy we are given to understand, through cues to the familiar, that this is our world. When the fantastic appears, it should be intrusive, disruptive of expectation; instead, while the events themselves might be noteworthy and/or disruptive, their magical origins barely raise an eyebrow. We are disorientated.

The motif of the public forum within fairyland performs the same function on a microcosmic scale. As a gathering place, it is within and outside the bounds of the familiar. It exists as a part of the community, being the place where goods are bought and sold and ideas are traded, but it also provides a rare opportunity for the alien

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to advance into the ordinarily closed and regulated environs of the everyday. In his mock-Victorian fairy tale *Stardust* (1999), Neil Gaiman describes the fairy marketplace at the fictional English town of Wall: ‘for every nine years, the folk from Beyond the Wall and over the hill set up their stalls, and for a day and a night the meadow played host to the Faerie Market; and there was, for one day and one night in nine years, commerce between the nations.’ This excerpt serves to highlight the essential quality of the fairy marketplace as a convergence of two discrete societies through the erection of a temporary place of commerce. This is truly the most liminal of all fantastic spaces, existing as it does at the boundary between fantasy and the real world. Nicholas Tromans, in his recent study on Dadd (2011), indicates that even after the inklings of a modern multifacetedness began to creep into the genre as early as 1840, the essence of fairyland ‘remained that of a world within a world’.

Within this space, the unexpected is all that can be anticipated, for the rules of engagement are automatically subverted given that the characters inhabiting the space of fairyland do not operate according to a common culture. Moreover, and perhaps more ostensibly, the essential supernatural aspect of the landscape is disorientating: is this ‘reality or dream? truth or illusion?’.

Helpfully, Gaiman recalls to us the most important rule when dealing with the inhabitants of fairyland, writing that the villagers of Wall in the real England ‘were often tempted by the foods being sold by the folk from Beyond the Wall but had been told by their grandparents, who had got it from their grandparents, that it was deeply, utterly wrong to eat fairy food, to eat fairy fruit, to drink fairy water and sip fairy wine.’ This is the essential rule of Rossetti’s poem also. Speaking to her sister Laura, Lizzie admonishes her for staying out so late, recounting to her the story of a neighbourhood friend:

Do you not remember Jeanie,  
How she met them in the moonlight,  
Took their gifts both choice and many,  
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers  
Plucked from bowers  
Where summer ripens at all hours?  
But ever in the noonlight  
She pined and pined away;  
Sought them by night and day,  
Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey;  
Then fell with the first snow,  
While to this day no grass will grow

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8 Tromans, p. 21.
9 Ibid.
Where she lies low:
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.¹⁰

This cautionary tale is characterized by marked oddities. The action takes place at night, when Jeanie had congregated with the goblins ‘in the moonlight’, as opposed to in the day when most marketplaces are held. From the outset, the ‘space’ in which the story functions does not correspond with our expectations of the familiar and we are immediately thrust into a fantasy landscape by becoming aware that the rules of normal behavior have broken down. The fantasy proceeds. Unlike normal fruits which are healthy and vitalizing to eat, the fruits of the goblin market are deadly, causing Jeanie to pine away and die. Lastly, we are notified in no uncertain terms of the peculiarity of this phenomenon by the fact that the daisies planted over Jeanie’s grave do not blow as normal daisies do. Within the metanarrative, the events surrounding Jeanie’s death are therefore markedly unnatural, yet situated in a landscape familiar to the protagonists, for Jeanie was a member of their community: ‘do you not remember Jeanie’?, Lizzie asks. In conjunction with the moral discourses that are at the heart of Goblin Market, Rossetti’s poem is essentially the most human of all stories, of life and death, which is only made fantastic by the interruption of the supernatural. Therefore, Rossetti’s poem illustrates the tenets of fantasy set out by Todorov, Jackson and Mendelsohn by envisaging a familiar scenario that is made unfamiliar through the subversion of natural laws and customs.

The Fairy Feller depicts a public scene. It could be a marketplace, though there is no ostensible sign of any commercial activity. The creatures of fairyland are attired for a day out, Oberon and Titania are in their finery, and at the top of the painting, there is an indication of some agrarian activity. One fairy-man operates a wheeled machine and another appears to be working with some hay. The location of these groups within the painting is not indicative of any kind of hierarchy: rather, there is a cacophony of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and races who inhabit the same space in a seemingly random fashion. It is neither an elite society nor a parochial one, but rather evokes a vision of the whole of fairyland brought together for a public event or activity. In this work, the ‘queues to the familiar’ are wholly constructed through form, rather than through allusion, like the device of Jeanie’s story in Goblin Market. Both the shape of the natural objects and the design of the fairy clothes are familiar, common to our world and theirs, and most of the faces which peek out at us are human, their expressions more so. However, through the scale of the world before us as well as the minutiae of the painting, we are made aware that this world is a supernatural one. In the same way that the lingering, solitary image of the unmoving daisies points us towards the fantasy of Rossetti’s landscape, the enormous, larger than life daisy heads of Dadd’s painting alert us to the fact that this is an unnatural image. On closer inspection, we perceive how the unnatural elements of the painting

proliferate across the canvas: a cricket plays the trumpet, a host of faeries dance across the brim of the old man at the centre of the painting, before whom a family of squat faced faeries cluster, and all about the painting flutter gossamer wings. It is truly a fantastic painting, yet the forms are rooted in natural imagery. Because of the realistic garments and the familiar natural elements, we can assuredly state that this painting is fantastic, as opposed to marvellous, uncanny, or abstract. It is a fantasy world because it envisages the liminal space between the natural and the unnatural in the same way that Rossetti’s fantasy world is evoked through literary description of the supernatural aspects of the goblin market. Dadd’s binary vision, called ‘the sublime and the sexual, the natural and the fantastic’ by Tromans, foments a feeling of deep unease in the viewer that serves to evidence that central quality of fantasy as identified by the likes of Todorov and Mendelsohn.

As evidenced, the effect of the fantasy world on the viewer or reader is principally to cause uncertainty. This tends towards wonder (the positive experience) or towards anxiety (the negative), according to the function of the fantasy. Both in Dadd’s painting and Rossetti’s poem, the representation of the fairy world imparts a profound sense of danger on the observer through the evocation of a chaos state. One critic comments on Dadd’s painting that it ‘is certainly filled with all the frozen terror of his own patricidal insanity’. Indeed, it is a claustrophobic painting, furthered by the sheaths of grass and random spirals across the top left quarter of the painting that serve to create a sense of tension. We cannot be sure that what we are seeing is really the full picture, because the full picture is obscured from us. This speaks to the artist’s insanity: The Fairy Feller is a schizophrenic rendition of an unreal world, in which forms are half remembered but embellished upon through the imagination. Dadd’s infamous descent into madness, which led to the murder of his father and his subsequent confinement to Broadmoor, has coloured criticism of his artwork. In contrast, whilst biographers have made attempts to explain Christina Rossetti’s sudden decline in health during 1845, the evidence that she also suffered from a mental illness is less concrete than in the case of Dadd, and the poet’s ailments were certainly never as acute nor as violent. However, we can read that same madness and claustrophobia in Rossetti’s poem. The danger of fairyland is most acute at the zenith of the poem’s action, when Lizzie returns to the market in a last attempt to save her sister:

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,

Tromans, p. 34.
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes, -
Hugged her and kissed her,
Squeezed and caressed her.

So the stanza continues as a breathless, unbreaking sentence filled with a relentless tide of imagery of the strange goblin folk, appropriately identified by Kathleen Jones as ‘a metrical helter skelter sweeping its ambiguous subject matter headlong from page to page’. As well as being replete with swathes of vibrant visual imagery, the poem is noisy and full of movement. The effect is overwhelming, the sights and sounds of the fairy world overpower and overwhelm the page in the same way that they do in Dadd’s painting. It is discomfiting, and both Rossetti’s poem and Dadd’s painting impress a sense of danger on the reader and viewer respectively. But in that strange sublime there is a seductiveness to the landscape. For Rossetti’s fruits are more delectable and Dadd’s vegetation more lush that that of our own world. Uncertainty abounds.

If desire is the tenet which drives the design and the plot of the fantastic, articulated through the liminal space, for what purpose would the motif of the fairy forum recur? It follows that as a repeated motif, the desire that constitutes its construction within the Victorian tradition and the wider fantasy genre, as we have seen in Gaiman, is a communal one. Jackson comments on the way that ‘fantastic literature points to or suggests the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems.’ Within the context of The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke and Goblin Market, this statement is certainly true. The fairy forum is an opportunity for the fantasy world to engage fully with our own. It is a moment in time which allows for the coming together of people of disparate backgrounds, by which a

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14 Kathleen Jones, Learning Not to be First: The Life of Christina Rossetti (Gloucestershire, the Windrush Press, 1991) p. 92.
15 Jackson, p. 3.
liminal space is created in which action can take place at an accelerated rate. So, the function is foremostly one of artistic convenience. The fairy forum allows for action by virtue of it’s being a setting full of characters who are not limited by real world social constraints or natural laws.

The employment of the fairy forum is also, as Jackson alludes to, an opportunity for these authors to engage with notions of lawfulness and order. The violent, salacious imagery that concludes Lizzie’s visit to the goblin marketplace is a particularly poignant reckoning of the dangers of an ‘other world’ that is unregulated:

They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,
Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.17

The entrance of the Other is markedly dangerous in Rossetti’s poem. In the same way that the story of Jeanie is instructive, so too is the tone of the poem as a whole didactic. The message of Dadd’s painting is not so clear. Nicholas Tromans attempts to write meaning into the painting by suggesting that the premature postulation of the Fairy Feller himself, who has as of yet not split the seed that will become Mab’s carriage, is emblematic of a repressed or unconsummated action. Mab, who will carry dreams through human memory, is representative of imagination. But without her carriage that power of creativity is castrated. If Goblin Market is a warning against wanton female sexuality, perhaps The Fairy Feller is Dadd’s lament against disbarred creativity. The closeted nature of the painting, the tightness of the composition, the madness that emerges from the wildness, combines to afford the painting a sense of confinement that is perhaps in direct response to Dadd’s own incarceration.

In sum, whilst the pictures of fairyland created by Rossetti and Dadd are harmonious in their architecture, the desires that drive the fantasies are pronouncedly opposite. In form they replicate the tension and abstraction of one another, but in theme they diverge. This returns us to Jackson’s assertion that fantasy is a product of the social environs in which it is made manifest. Like the larger fantastical framework, the liminal space of fairyland allows for the exploration and exposition of all manner of ideologies, by virtue of its being on the fringes of belief. The impossible scenarios of

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16 Ibid.
17 Rossetti, p. 15.
18 Tromans, pp. 146-147.
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a fantasy world, which are the product of its supernatural furnishings, allow for us to reflect on our own humanity in the same way that Lizzie and Laura do upon the story of poor Jeanie. In this manner, Dadd the madman and the spinster Rossetti have influenced generations through the prism of their fairy worlds.

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Figure 1. Richard Dadd, The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke, oil paint on canvas, 1855-1864, support: 540 x 394 mm; frame: 670 x 525 x 65 mm, Tate Britain.
La Vita Nuova: Examining the theme of love in two of Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s most famous works, the poem, The Blessed Damozel and the painting, Beata Beatrix

This essay will trace, briefly, Rossetti’s engagement with, and treatment of love. The Blessed Damozel was composed well before the death of Elizabeth “Lizzie” Siddall, Rossetti’s wife, however, it shows that Dante Gabriel Rossetti “Rossetti” was obsessed with the idea of forever love well before Beata Beatrix. The poem, The Blessed Damozel, is about love and death, but most importantly, about love. The painting, Beata Beatrix was chosen because of the story it portrays, that of Dante Alighieri and Beatrice Portinari, and its parallels with the life and story of Rossetti and Lizzie.

“\n\n"In that book which is my memory,  
On the first page of the chapter that is the day when I first met you,  
Appear the words, ‘Here begins a new life’.”  
Dante Alighieri, Vita Nuova

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he nineteenth-century critic, essayist, and fellow poet Leigh Hunt wrote to Rossetti, stating that ‘if you paint as well as you write, you may be a rich man.’ It was no secret that Rossetti was a skilled and passionate poet, painting with words as vibrantly as he did with watercolours and oils. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (‘Rossetti’) was born in London, 12 May 1828, and lived in England his entire life. Rossetti was originally named Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti. His family and friends called him Gabriel, but in publications he put the name Dante first. His father, an Italian political refugee, was a poet and Dante scholar, and from 1831 Professor of Italian at King’s College London. Rossetti was brought up in a very artistic household. He was the brother of poet Christina Rossetti, the critic William Michael Rossetti, and author Maria Francesca Rossetti. Rossetti was part Italian, and this presumably connected him with his namesake Dante Alighieri, the famous Italian poet. Dante would prove an important source of artistic inspiration, and even obsession, throughout Rossetti’s
career, and it is assumed that this was because of Rosetti’s father’s interest in Dante’s works Vita Nuova and Divina Commedia, which would have a lasting influence on Rosetti’s life and work. One could see how Dante’s work could affect Rosetti, the power of Dante’s influence is clear from the first sonnet from *La Vita Nuova*:

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Joyous Love seemed to me, the while he held  
My heart within his hands, and in his arms  
My lady lay asleep wrapped in a veil.  
He woke her then and trembling and obedient  
She ate that burning heart out of his hand;  
Weeping I saw him then depart from me.
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Rossetti’s entered Sass’s Drawing Academy in 1841 and subsequently joined the Royal Academy Schools as a probationer in 1844, becoming a full student in December 1845. By 1847 he was considering careers in both poetry and painting. He was briefly a pupil of Ford Madox Brown in March 1848. In August 1848, he moved with William Holman Hunt to a studio in Cleveland Street and around September that year founded, along with Holman Hunt and Sir John Everett Millais, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He also finished his translation of Dante’s *Vita Nuova* in October 1848. In 1849 and 1850, respectively, as part of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Rossetti exhibited his first important paintings, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and *Ecce Ancilla Domini*. At about the same time Rossetti met Lizzie, a milliner’s assistant, who became a model for many of his paintings and sketches. Rossetti and Lizzie were engaged in 1851 but did not marry until 1860. It is not known why they didn’t marry until 1860, however, it was always thought that it was perhaps because of her ill health, his financial difficulties, or simply an unwillingness on the part of Rossetti to undertake the marriage commitment. They did get married, and in February of 1862, after only two short years of marriage, it is thought that Lizzie took an overdose of the sleeping medication laudanum and died. It has again been said that it was probably a suicide, though there is no evidence to substantiate this claim.

Perhaps it was because he was Italian, or perhaps it was due to his exposure to the story of Dante Alighieri and Beatrice Portinari that Rossetti was so inspired by the theme, and ideas of love in both his poetry and painting. It has often been said that from an early age, Rossetti was obsessed with the theme of love, and this was perhaps evidenced by some his early works, including the poem *The Blessed Damozel*, which we will come to in a moment. As a true Romantic, Rossetti was said to have understandably preferred the poetry of Keats, the novels of Walter Scott, the works of Blake, Coleridge and Chatterton, the old medieval ballads, and the poems of Tennyson. Nowhere is this romantic inclination more apparent than in his attitude towards the works of

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3 *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* was DGR’s first major oil painting. Exhibited in 1849 at the Free Exhibition in London.
4 1849-50, Oil on canvas, Tate Gallery, London.
Dante Alighieri, the subject of Beata Beatrix. Though the child Rossetti cared little for his father’s Dantean erudition, his father’s acquisition of a Giotto portrait and death mask when the boy was only twelve may have piqued his interest. Rossetti would spend much of his life creating double works, meaning that he would often write poetry to accompany his paintings. We know that Rossetti was influenced by Dante’s Beatrice and Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Raven* when he wrote *The Blessed Damozel* (1850, revised ’56, ’70, ’73). The poem is romantic, yet reeks of yearning, which is synonymous with loss. *The Blessed Damozel* explores the theme of lovers separated by death, yet still connected by love, and who are looking forward to their reunion in the afterlife. This idea of love after death, or everlasting love would take on a deeper meaning after the untimely passing of Lizzie from a laudanum overdose. Rossetti’s identification with Dante had reached a frightening new level, and would come full circle with Lizzie’s death.

Lizzie’s introduction to the Pre-Raphaelite circle led to her appearance in several early works of note, such as *Ophelia* by Millais and *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia* by Holman Hunt. Eventually, she posed only for Rossetti. Over the next decade, she became his muse, his pupil, and his passion. They were finally married in 1860 and she died shortly after. With his wife, no longer a living muse, she becomes an even more Beatrice-like or Blessed Damozel figure, unreachable in the after-life. In his posthumous tribute to her, he painted her as Beatrice on the brink of death. Early in his relationship with Lizzie, Rossetti seemed to idealize her and view her as his Beatrice, the love immortalized by Dante in *La Vita Nuova*. Later works would feature Jane Morris as Beatrice. Rossetti’s personal life was closely linked to his work, especially his relationships with his models and muses Lizzie, Fanny Cornforth, and Jane Morris. The Blessed Damozel first, as it is the earlier of the two works, followed by Beata Beatrix.

**The Blessed Damozel**

*The Blessed Damozel* is one of Rossetti’s most well-known poems. It was first written in 1847, and revised several times throughout Rossetti’s life, one would suppose, as a testament of its enduring theme, or perhaps, the regard in which Rossetti would hold the poem. It was published in 1850 in the Pre-Raphaelite journal, *The Germ*. As we know, the poem drew inspiration from Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Raven*, and Dante’s *Vita Nuova*. In *The Blessed Damozel*, Rossetti explored the theme of lovers separated by death:

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7 See See T. Hall Caine, *Recollection of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (Kessinger Publishing 2010), p. 384. Rossetti explained, that “I saw that Poe had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and so I determined to reverse the conditions, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven.”
8 The date of Elizabeth’s death being in 1862 and the painting being begun in 1863, show that this was a posthumous work, Dante referring to his previous sketches and paintings of Elizabeth in order to create the culmination of his relationship and marriage with his muse.
9 See, http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1847.s244.raw.html [accessed on February 9th, 2017].
The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even
She had three lilies in her hand
And the stars in her hair were seven

Lenore

Ah broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll!--a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river;
And, Guy De Vere, hast thou no tear?--weep now or never more!
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come! let the burial rite be read--the funeral song be sung!--
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young--
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

In what is typical Rossetti fashion, a woman appears in a graceful posture, with seemingly mysterious looks, languishing, and replete with symbolism. According to George Eliot, the poem’s purpose is ‘to praise the human love of man and woman.’10 Like Poe’s Lenore, the damozel11 has died and Rossetti introduces her to us as she looks down upon her lover from heaven. Rossetti later told Hall Caine ‘I saw that Poe had done the utmost it is possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and so I determined to reverse the conditions and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven.’12 Here we can see that Rossetti articulates a kinetic dramatization of the mutual longing between the living and the dead, and the fitful yet powerful communicative circuit that might still connect them. Rossetti seems to imagine such a connection as at once spiritual and embodied, partaking of heavenly grace and yet reliant on an abiding carnality. Crossing the bar of heaven, the damozel has gone to paradise; leaning back over it, she confirms her loiterer’s status in a sub-heavenly mezzanine from which she just might send a desiring lament back to earth.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

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11 An archaic form of damsel.
12 See Caine, Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ibid.
There are shades of Dante’s *Vita Nuova* that can be detected here, except where Dante’s sainted Beatrice was a courtly love, Rossetti’s damozel desires both a romantic and a physical union with her lover. Here the damozel represents an idealized love, but she is not remote and unattainable like Beatrice, she is far closer, not out of reach. He continues, making her appear to be flesh and blood, even leaning against the golden bar of heaven so long that ‘…her bosom must have made/ The bar she lean’d on warm.’ Dante first saw and fell in love with Beatrice when he was nine years old and would later write about his instant love for her in *Vita Nuova*, saying ‘Behold, a deity stronger than I; who coming, shall rule over me.’ Dante loved Beatrice from afar for the rest of her life.

From *The Blessed Damozel* through the production of the 1870 *Poems* and beyond, Rossetti explores the theme of love, which was ever present in his works. This is evidenced by the fact that even though *The Blessed Damozel* was first written in 1847, it appeared with revisions in 1850, 1856, 1870, and 1881. We know that Rossetti was inspired by Poe. Poe, Rossetti said, ‘had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and so I determined to reverse the conditions, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven.’

**Beata Beatrix**

*Beata Beatrix* is a dazzling and beautiful painting that holds enough sway to captivate the viewer immediately. The work is enchanting, haunting, and fascinating. The painting immediately invites the viewer to study the painting and explore the story being told, for Rossetti was a masterful storyteller with his paintings. Rossetti draws a parallel in this picture between the Italian poet Dante’s despair at the death of his beloved Beatrice and his own grief at the death of his wife Lizzie. Dante Alighieri recounted the story of his unrequited love and subsequent mourning for Beatrice Portinari in the *Vita Nuova*. This was Rossetti’s first English translation and appeared in 1864 as part of his own publication, *The Early Italian Poets*. Rossetti’s inspiration was Dante’s *La Vita Nuova*, which explores the Italian poet’s idealised love for Beatrice and her premature death.

There are several questions that immediately come to mind when one sees Beata Beatrix for the first time: who is this woman, and what is she thinking? Who are the strange, blurred figures in the background? What is the relevance of the dial, and of the dove and the poppy? The answers to these questions are all really easy and quite straightforward, for the artist provides us with the answers himself; according to Rossetti,

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13 See Caine, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*.
‘The Picture illustrates the Vita Nuova embodying symbolically the death Beatrice as treated in the work. The picture is not intended at all to represent death, but to render it under the semblance of a trance, in which Beatrice, seated at a Balcony overlooking the city, is suddenly rapt from earth to heaven. You will remember how Dante dwells on the desolation of the city in connection with the incident of her death, and for this reason, I have introduced it as my background, and made the figures of Dante and Love passing through the street and gazing ominously on one another, conscious of the event; while the bird, a messenger of death, drops a poppy between the hands of Beatrice. She, through her shut lids, is conscious of a new world, as expressed in the last words of the Vita Nuova – that blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on his countenance, *qui est per omnia saecula Benedictus.*’

Also, evident from the painting itself, is the fact that it has a double subject, for the principal figure is both Dante’s Beatrice and Rossetti’s Lizzie. The title *Blessed Beatrice*, refers to the end of the *Vita Nuova*. Rossetti painted the intensely spiritual *Beata Beatrix* as a memorial to Lizzie, expressing his love for her as a parallel to Dante’s for Beatrice. The picture is dated 1864, but was worked on over a period of several years. It was said that ‘Everything he [Rossetti] did was undertaken with absolute decision on one hand, and as part of a spiritual pursuit on the other.’

15 Recollections. Ibid.
This painting marks the second time Lizzie was portrayed close to death. In *Ophelia* her hands lie open as she floats along the water. Her hands were open, but neither welcoming nor expecting anything. Again, in *Beata Beatrix* her hands are open, open and ready to welcome the poppies that the Dove (red, the colour of love) is bringing her. The poppies, whose seeds are the source of opium, are an ironic reference to the laudanum that caused Lizzie’s real death. The dove, a messenger of love, was associated by Rossetti with Siddal; it bears a white poppy, a symbol of sleep or death and the source of laudanum, the cause of Lizzie’s death. In the background is Dante (right) looking towards Love (left), dressed in red and holding a flame. In the background, we see the figures of Love and Death. We also see a sundial, with the shadow on the number nine.

In later versions of *Beata Beatrix*, (Figure 2), Rossetti painted the figures on the background with much more detail but changed the face of Beatrice a great deal. Also, the colour of the dove has changed from red to white while the poppies were changed from white to red. The picture, however, is perfectly comprehensible as a simple representation of Beatrice. It does not depend on recognition of the artist’s dead wife for its meaning. In fact, Rossetti stressed the Dantesque subject and not

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18 One of several versions of this subject, this painting was unfinished at the time of Rossetti’s death and the background was completed by Ford Madox Brown. In this version, the poppies are red, perhaps an explicit reference to opium-derived laudanum. [http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1891P25Accessed on February 27th, 2017]
the likeness to Siddal in letters to the picture’s buyers. By the time of his death and the memorial exhibition of his works, however, the identity of the portrait was widely known. Commonly read as a memorial to Lizzie, *Beata Beatrix* (1870) takes as its subject Dante’s beloved Beatrice, imagined in the autobiographical text of *Vita Nuova*. Rossetti’s depiction of Beatrice fuses the quotidian and the supernatural, and it does so in a way that instils the image with a powerful virtuosity and spirituality perhaps exceeding that of other Pre-Raphaelite *femme fatales*.

The golden light emanating from Beatrice envelopes the sundial, compositionally framing her face between her hair and the shape of the sundial. The background provides us with a view of the river Arno, its bridge, with the distant silhouette of the Ponte Vecchio and the Duomo of Florence, where Dante and Beatrice both lived until her death in June 1290. To the viewer’s right, the figure of Dante stands in front of a well, representing Beatrice’s impending rebirth and his own rebirth as a poet when Beatrice becomes his muse. Dante’s figure gazes intently at the figure of Love, who wears a brilliant red dress and who holds a book, the author presumes is a copy of the *Vita Nuova*. Love holds the flaming heart that, in Dante’s first dream of Beatrice, Love fed to Beatrice before sorrowfully carrying her with him to Heaven. Rossetti echoes this visionary event by showing Love seemingly beckoning to Dante’s figure to follow him off the left side of the picture, perhaps heavenwards. Once you have studied Rossetti, and his life, then the symbolism is clear, resulting in a nod of acknowledgement, and perhaps a feeling of sadness.

**Conclusion**

When Lizzie died, Rossetti, we may believe, found some slight consolation in the thought that this loss of the beloved one drew him still nearer to Dante. The analogy was now complete: Rossetti was now Dante in purgatory, while Lizzie was Beatrice in heaven; and his public confession of his faith is his strangely beautiful *Beata Beatrix*. The pre-eminence of Love as a powerful character typifies both Dante and Rossetti. Lizzie was Rossetti’s ideal love; Lizzie was Rossetti’s Beatrice; she was Rossetti’s Blessed Damozel. It was in Lizzie’s beauty that Rossetti saw it all, the past and present, she was his ideal love, she was love epitomised. Lizzie stands as a symbol of art, of love, of Rossetti’s love. It was this link that Rossetti had with Dante, and Lizzie’s death; which reinforced Rossetti’s connection even more, that led to the painting of *Beata Beatrix*; the best of Rossetti’s Dante related works and quite possibly the most powerful and enigmatic painting he ever created. Rossetti’s inspiration was Dante’s *La Vita Nuova*, which explores the Italian poet’s idealised, and eternal love for Beatrice and her premature death.

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19 The picture frame, which was designed by Rossetti, has further references to death and mourning, including the date of Beatrice’s death and a phrase from Lamentations 1:1, quoted by Dante in the *Vita Nuova*: “Quomodo sedet sola civitas” (“how doth the city sit solitary”), referring to the mourning of Beatrice’s death throughout the city of Florence. See http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rosetti-beata-beatrix-n01279 [Accessed March 4th, 2017]
Bibliography


This article will consider depictions of two different mythical women in the Victorian period, namely the characters of Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth and the Jewish folkloric figure of Lilith. It will consider different interpretations of such mythical women by comparing John Singer Sargent’s Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth (1889) with Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s sonnet ‘Body’s Beauty’ (c.1866-8). It will argue that Sargent creates a myth of womanhood in the character of Lady Macbeth via his portrait of Ellen Terry, largely inspired by her costume. It will compare this to the legend of Lilith as an alternative female myth; as that myth is expressed in Rossetti’s sonnet. The article will argue that these two artefacts depict differing interpretations of mythical women as versions of the \textit{femme fatale} in the context of increased female self-expression and autonomy in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

John Singer Sargent’s status as the ‘leading portrait artist of his age’ was barely in its infancy when he painted \textit{Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth} (1889) (see Figure 1).² An American, Sargent had built a reputation as a portrait painter in Paris culminating in his \textit{Portrait of Madame X} (1884). The resulting controversy of the overt sensuality of the central female figure of this painting led him to accept the invitation of his friend Henry James to move to London in 1886.³ Alice Comyns-Carr, Ellen Terry’s costume designer for the production and a friend of Sargent’s, recalled that it was Terry’s entrance into her first scene of \textit{Macbeth} that inspired Sargent to paint Terry’s portrait in this role. She recounts that he exclaimed ‘I say!’ on seeing her in the ‘green and blue gown like chain armour, studded with real beetle wings.’⁴ Terry’s costume was noted by critics of the time, with Oscar Wilde pithily commenting on its contrast to the rest of the cast’s more dowdy attire:

\begin{itemize}
  \item ¹ William Shakespeare, \textit{Macbeth}, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), I.5.40
  \item ² Richard Ormond, \textit{John Singer Sargent}, (London: Tate Gallery, 1998), p.34
  \item ³ Ibid. p.28
\end{itemize}
Judging from the banquet, Lady Macbeth seems an economical housekeeper, and evidently patronizes local industries for her husband’s clothes and the servant’s liveries; but she takes care to do all her own shopping in Byzantium.5

Comyns-Carr notes that in designing the costume she was ‘anxious to make this particular dress look as much like soft chain armour as I could, and yet have something that would give the appearance of the scales of the serpents’.6 Comyns-Carr created this effect of ‘soft’ chain-mail by crocheting the dress using ‘a twist of soft green silk and blue tinsel’. The chain-mail hints at a warrior Queen, a strong female leader who is clad in armour, which symbolizes her role as a woman at war. At the same time, the softness of this form of chain-mail imbues the essentially masculine armour with an element of femininity. In order to make the design even more brilliant ‘it was sewn all over with real green beetle-wings, and a narrow border in Celtic designs,

5 Quoted in Roger Manvell, Ellen Terry, (London: Heinemann, 1968), p.198
6 Comyns-Carr, Reminiscences, p.211
worked out in rubies and diamonds, hemmed all the edges.'⁷ A photograph of Ellen Terry in costume for the role is at Figure 2. The beetle-wings and the colour of the dress created a sense of Lady Macbeth as serpentine or reptile-like, slithering her way around the stage. It also set her apart from the rest of the cast, as Wilde noted above, as somehow 'other-worldly' and exotic: she is both part of this thirteenth-century warring world, but also of another, mythical and fantastical world.

Sargent’s original intention was to paint Terry in a scene exiting the castle surrounded by her handmaidens (see a copy of the preliminary sketch at Figure 3).⁸ However, he decided that a picture of her on her own would be more ‘effective’ and rather than defining her by her environment and the Scottish castle and handmaidens of his original idea, in the final portrait he makes her a ‘simple, exultant figure.’⁹ In Sargent’s portrayal, Ellen Terry stands alone crowning herself in an act of self-authority at the culmination of her ambition. Sargent crowns Lady Macbeth as the driving force of the play’s action, by depicting her in the act of appropriating the crown of Scotland for herself. Sargent captures the richness and vividness of the

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⁷ Ibid. pp.211-12
⁸ Comyns-Carr, Reminiscences, pp.299-300
⁹ Ibid. pp.299-300
costume she wears via his use of vivid colour to show the serpentine green of the
dress. This is a marked contrast to the black and white photographs of Ellen Terry
in the dress itself at the time (see Figure 2 again). Sargent’s portrait thus documents
and records something more akin to the vividness and wonder of her costume, noted
by Wilde above, that contemporary photography could not. The painter seeks to
emulate the real-life glitter of the beetle-wings via the ‘rich stained-glass effects’ of the
vivid blues and greens used in the portrait.\textsuperscript{10} The reptilian nature of the dress echoes
Lady Macbeth’s line that Macbeth should ‘look like th’ innocent flower, / But be the
serpent under’t.’\textsuperscript{11}

Whilst Sargent was undoubtedly inspired by Terry’s performance of the role and in
particular the visual impact of her glittering beetle-wing costume, the scene he has
chosen to paint was never in the production, let alone in Shakespeare’s text itself. He
centralises the character of Lady Macbeth and makes her the symbolic focal point
and lead protagonist of the play’s action. The victory of obtaining the crown (and by
reference therefore the eventual downfall of Macbeth and the carnage that ensures)
is firmly placed at the door of Lady Macbeth. And yet the arms raised in triumph give

\textsuperscript{10} Edith Craig and Christopher St John, Ellen Terry’s Memoirs, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933), p.234
\textsuperscript{11} Shakespeare, Macbeth, I.5.64-65
the painting an exultant and celebratory air rather than a threatening or demonic portrayal of the role. Whilst Ellen Terry did depart from the expected portrayal of the role in her performance (as shall be discussed below), she did not see Lady Macbeth as being the sole architect of Macbeth’s downfall and instead she emphasised the essentially feminine nature of Lady Macbeth. Terry saw her as a partner and help-meet to her husband rather than giving effect to her own ambition. She writes to her daughter, in the midst of performing the role:

it’s precious hard work for I by no means make her a “gentle, lovable woman” as some of ’em say. That’s all pickles. She was nothing of the sort, although she was not a fiend, and did love her husband.12

Roger Manvell in his autobiography of Terry notes that Lady Macbeth was ‘a part with a strong tradition of interpretation.’13 Previous interpretations of the role had focussed on the character as perceived by Malcolm in the final speech of Macbeth as the ‘fiend-like queen’.14 The most famous of these previous performances and the one that Terry was expected to emulate was that of Sarah Siddons in 1785.15 William Hazlitt described Siddons’s performance in glowing terms: that ‘power [was] seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine; she was tragedy personified.’16 Siddons’s Lady Macbeth was a virago, devoid of femininity, driving her husband to murder and death.17 Such a depiction of Lady Macbeth as the ‘dark and dreadful sublimity of evil’ was what audiences expected, and the announcement that Ellen Terry had been cast was met with some consternation by critics and her friends alike.18 Terry defends her playing of the part by pointing out to her friend, the journalist Clement Scott, that a good woman could do bad deeds without becoming intrinsically evil.19 In effect, Terry argued that women had human faults just as men did and that Shakespeare’s tragic women could display similar traits of hubris as their male counterparts.20 Her decision to perform the role in a way which did not emphasise the unfeminine and the demonic in the part of Lady Macbeth led to a mixed reception by critics. The Morning Post notes the quandary that the new interpretation created in its challenge to accepted notions of what the role should be:

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12 St John & Craig, Memoirs, pp.234-235
13 Manvell, Ellen Terry, p.191. The critic Labouchere wrote in Truth on the production that ‘Lady Macbeth […] thirteen years ago, was a shrew of the most determined type’ (quoted in Manvell, Ellen Terry, p.199)
14 Shakespeare, Macbeth, V.7.99
16 Quoted in Manvell, Ellen Terry, p.192
18 See Manvell, Ellen Terry, p.193 for the quote. Terry was known principally for her comedic roles of feminine delicacy and purity, such as Olivia and Portia. See Manvell, Ellen Terry, pp.199-201 regarding the critical reception of the production.
19 Auerbach, Ellen Terry, pp.257-8. Ellen Terry had left her husband, the artist G.F.Watts, and lived as mistress to Edward William Godwin, where she gave birth to two illegitimate children. As such, Terry’s private life was very much the ‘fallen woman’ of Victorian consciousness in reality.
20 See in particular, Ellen Terry, Four Lectures on Shakespeare, (London: Martin Hopkinson, 1932), pp.160-1. Terry argues that the very fact the Lady Macbeth is ‘haunted by the horror of the murder’ and ‘dies of remorse’ is evidence itself that she is ‘not of the tigress type, mentally or physically.’
A creature so spiritual, so ineffable, has never perhaps been put on the stage. Is this Lady Macbeth? Who shall decide? That it is not the Lady Macbeth of tradition or of Mrs Siddons we know. It is scarcely a Lady Macbeth we recognise. It is, perhaps, one of which we have dreamed. Shakespeare, at least, it may be said, would have hailed it a delight as revelation, if not as interpretation.21

Terry herself states that Siddons's playing of the role was more successful as a 'single, forceful dramatic figure' but found in Shakespeare’s text (as well as Siddons’ own writing on the role) evidence that there could be more femininity in the role of Lady Macbeth than previous interpretations would suggest.22 Terry makes an argument for a Lady Macbeth who is more mistaken woman, led astray by her love for an imperfect man, than demonic harridan.23 Her notes on the part comment that Lady Macbeth:

is full of womanliness ... [and she] is capable of affection - she loves her husband - Ergo - she is a woman - and she knows it, and is half the time afraid whilst urging Macbeth not to be afraid as she loves a man. Women love men.24

However, it was the visual spectacle of Ellen Terry's performance, and in particular that of Comyns-Carr’s serpentine costume, which inspired Sargent’s interpretation. Whereas Terry's Lady Macbeth was closely linked to her close reading of the text of Macbeth and in particular the characters of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as the masculine and feminine combined, Sargent's Lady Macbeth stands alone devoid of male influence appropriating the symbol of royal authority for herself. For Sargent, unsurprisingly of course for a painter, it is the physical, visual appearance of the character that is his inspiration and as such, his interpretation of the character is a marked difference to the inner, feminine, inspiration Terry reads from the actual text of Shakespeare. He notes in a letter to his friend Isabella Stewart Gardner:

Miss Terry has just come out in Lady Macbeth and looks magnificent in it, but she has not yet made up her mind to let me paint her in one of the dresses until she is quite convinced she is a success. From a pictorial point of view there can be no doubt about it - magenta hair25

In his portrait, gone is the overly feminine interpretation of the actress, who insists that her character is simply motivated by her devotion to her husband as dutiful wife. Sargent sees beyond Terry’s interpretation to the individuality of Lady Macbeth. Her

23 Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, pp.192-3
24 Ibid. p.195
very act of taking the crown of Scotland for herself symbolises the overthrow of her husband’s ambitions and, by extension, male authority. Sargent’s Queen intends to rule in her own right. The dress she wears, with its rich colours and celtic designs, speaks to a long history of royalty and nobility (especially when compared to the otherwise dullness of the costumes noted by Wilde above). The glittering beetle-wings and chain-mail create a serpentine effect of scales and armour, which aligns this Lady Macbeth with other such slippery, female characters who (notably also affiliated to the snake) instigate the downfall of man: Medusa, Eve and, as I shall now turn to, Lilith. In this way, Sargent portrays Lady Macbeth as a symbol of Victorian womanhood as myth. A myth Terry herself referred to when she stated that ‘in Shakespeare all the elements of womanhood are holy.’

Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s sonnet, ‘Body’s Beauty’ was written c.1866 to accompany Rossetti’s painting Lady Lilith and first published in the frame of that painting when it was displayed at Royal Exhibition in 1868. Algernon Swinburne in his Notes of the Royal Exhibition, 1868 states that Rossetti’s Lady Lilith painting and sonnet are a representation of the ‘sensual beauty’ of the ‘siren’ and that for ‘this serene and sublime sorceress there is no life but of the body.’ Swinburne goes on to say:

> Of evil desire or evil impulse she has nothing; and nothing of good. She is indifferent, equable, magnetic; she charms and draws down the souls of men by pure force of absorption, in no wise wilful or malignant; outside herself she cannot live, she cannot even see: and because of this she attracts and subdues all men at once in body and in spirit.

Swinburne’s interpretation of Rossetti’s Lilith is firmly in the tradition of the threatening femme fatale of the female characters of the ‘sorceress’ and the ‘siren’. Essentially feminine in her attractiveness, she lures men’s souls for her own consumption. However, the absence of spirituality and love means that this is neither good nor bad. She is devoid of either quality, rather she is ‘indifferent’ and ‘passive’. She is another form of virago to accepted notions of Lady Macbeth, as she is devoid of feminine qualities of emotion and feeling. She is sensual and attractive, but her attraction is other-worldly. It is not for earthly procreation but for man’s spiritual downfall that she lures them to her. Rossetti originally published this in his Poems (1870) under the ‘sonnets for pictures’ section. However, in 1881, he amended the title of the poem from ‘Lady Lilith’ to ‘Body’s Beauty’ and included it in his House of Life sequence of sonnets, with some minor textual amendments. This 1881 version reads as follows:

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27 Terry, Four Lectures, p.151
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
Of Adam’s first wife, Lilith, it is told
(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,)
That, ere the snake’s, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where
Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth’s eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.32

Rossetti firmly places this myth of womanhood in the character of Lilith as described by Goethe in his Faust:

Beware of her fair hair, for she excels
All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man’s neck,
She will not ever set him free again.33

Rossetti’s Lilith is the first wife of Adam: beautiful but dangerous. This legend of Lilith appears to have its origins in Jewish mysticism, in particular the tale told in The Alphabet of Ben Sira. In this tale, Lilith is the first wife of Adam and is made from the same clay as him. However, they quarrel when Adam insists her place is beneath him and not on top of him. Lilith leaves the Garden of Eden and God sends two Angels to bring her back, but she refuses. Instead, she is rumoured to cause infant death unless they are protected by amulets.34 Rossetti’s Lilith has hair which catches young men, in the same way as that depicted in Faust. F.G. Stephens also suggests that Rossetti was inspired by Robert Burton’s reference in An Anatomy of Melancholy that ‘The Thalmudists say that Adam had a wife called Lillis [sic], before he married Eve, and of her he begat nothing but demons.’35 Stephens states that Rossetti as both

32 Dinah Roe, The Pre-Raphaelites: From Rossetti to Ruskin, (London: Penguin Classics, 2011), pp.125-6. This is the 1881 version of the sonnet, included in The House of Life sequence. It is largely the same as the one on the frame of the 1868 portrait, but with some amendments to lines 2, 9 and 11.
33 This translation (of Shelley’s) is attached to the back of Rossetti’s watercolour version of the painting of Lady Lilith (1867) and quoted in Virginia M. Allen, ‘One Strangling Hair,’ The Art Bulletin, Vol.66, No. 2 (June 1984), pp.285-294. [accessed: 16 October 2016], p.290
34 Kristen E. Kvarn, Linda S. Scheering and Valarie H. Ziegler, Eve & Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp.204-7
'painter-poet set about to educe a solid form of his notion of the fair and evil-hearted witch, who, as a sort of Lamia, had been originally formed like a serpent.'

For what purpose has Rossetti chosen to select this obscure feminine demon from Jewish folklore as his subject matter? Griselda Pollock notes that Rossetti used ‘opposing categories’ of women, of ‘pure, virtuous women’ pitted against ‘the impure woman’, Beatrice versus Guinevere for example. The painting/sonnet combination of Lady Lilith / ‘Body’s Beauty’ and its companion painting/sonnet, Sibylla Palmifera / ‘Soul’s Beauty’ is one example of such ‘opposing categories’ in their depiction of the ‘siren and the sibyl’ described by Swinburne above. Pollock believes that the ‘dominant tropes of Pre-Raphaelite literature have functioned to secure a regime of sexual difference.’ Lilith as mythical figure, her hair terrifying and threatening dominant male ideology, is akin to Medusa as her hair is a sign and myth of uncontrollable female sexuality, outside of patriarchal authority and control. For Virginia M. Allen, the Lilith of Rossetti’s sonnet and painting is emblematic of Victorian male anxiety of the modern Victorian woman and their call for sexual and political independence. Allen bases her analysis on a letter from Rossetti to one of his patrons, Thomas Hake, in which Rossetti confirms his belief that ‘the perilous principle of the world being female from the first’ is the ‘essential notion of the [‘Lady Lilith’] sonnet.’ Allen reads this as being perilous to Rossetti and his patrons and links the reception of the Lilith painting/sonnet combination as linked to contemporary dialogue on women’s emancipation. In ‘Body’s Beauty’, it is, in particular, Lilith’s hair that contains the threat of entrapment and strangulation. It lulls the ‘youth’ into an almost hypnotic trance, before snapping his ‘straight neck’ in an act of metaphorical castration, her hair overcoming the essence of his manliness. This hair is bewitching and beguiling, it overcomes ‘heart and body and life’ in one by breaking the phallic neck. But her hair also has a value, it is the ‘first gold’, of primary value of all others. It speaks to a basic, primitive instinct that predates the biblical story of the Fall of Man in Genesis, as the legend of Lilith serves in Jewish mythology. The repetition of the word ‘soft’ and the alliteration on the syllables ‘sh’ in the second stanza create a dreamlike, sleepy effect, perhaps created by Lilith’s poppy flowers. The language is not in itself threatening.

36 Ibid. p.68
38 Ibid. p.161
39 Another form of hair as a sign of threatening female womanhood and sexuality can be seen in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination and their reference to the death of Rossetti’s wife, Elizabeth Siddal. They recount the legend that on opening the coffin to retrieve the manuscript of his poetry that he had buried with her, it was discovered that Lizzie’s famous hair had ‘continued to grow after her death, to grow so long, so beautiful, so luxuriantly as to fill the coffin with its gold’. This supernatural (and most likely fictional) account places Rossetti’s wife with her own mythical status. For Gilbert and Gubar, “Lizzie Siddal Rossetti’s hair leaps like a metaphor for monstrous female sexual energies from the literal and figurative coffins in which her artist-husband enclosed her.” Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination, (New Haven & London: 1984 (2000, 2nd edition), Yale University Press), p.27
in this respect, it lulls the listener into an almost hypnotic trance, into another world away from the realities of existence. It acts as a feminine spell of entrapment and domination, this 'witch' beguiling men with her sonorous beauty.

Is Lilith simply a threat to male sexuality or is she instead a reflection of the 'male libido, profoundly ill at ease with itself? Gitter has claimed that the women in Rossetti's poetry are rarely 'passive, helpless objects of ... desire; they are, at best, accomplices, knowing participants in sexual banter; at worst, they are instigators, destructive and dangerous *femmes fatales*, who use their gold to tempt, to corrupt, to strangle.' If so, Rossetti's art and poetry is not about the object depicted. It is about the inner, artistic temperament; the personal inspiration of poetic genius; and ultimately an expression of the Romantic notion of art and the soul of the artist being one, or what Shrimpton terms 'a late - perhaps the last - flowering of a great Romantic genre.' If Rossetti's Lilith is actually about male libido and artistic temperament, what does Sargent's depiction of Lady Macbeth, especially one that departs from both Henry Irving's production as well as Terry's own interpretation of the role, say about his view of women and in particular their identity. There does not appear to be any threat *per se* in Sargent's portrait. Lady Macbeth's hair is safely entwined in two plaits by a gold ribbon, although that gold ribbon does have echoes of the imagery Rossetti uses to describe the gold of Lilith's hair ('first-gold'). Lady Macbeth's hair, in both the production and the portrait, is also red. Whilst this is most likely a reference to her celtic roots, it also subtly references the red hair that was so associated with Pre-Raphaelite painting. This connection with the Pre-Raphaelites is hinted at in Terry's reputation as 'the Painter's Actress', largely as a result of her brief marriage to the Pre-Raphaelite contemporary, the artist G.F.Watts, and her unconventional liaison with the aesthete Edward William Godwin. More particularly Terry explicitly links the Sargent portrait with Rossetti in her comment: 'the whole thing is Rossetti - rich stained-glass effects'. Terry also refers to the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones on the painting:

*Sargent's picture is almost finished, and it is really splendid. Burne-Jones yesterday suggested two or three alterations about the colour which Sargent immediately adopted, but Burne-Jones raves about the picture.*

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46 St John & Craig, *Memoirs*, p.234
The subject matter itself is similar too and both represent male interpretations of this trope of female empowerment and female authority. Both are strong female characters, with power over men in one way or another. Lady Macbeth is ‘fiend-like Queen’ and virago, and Lilith has the power to captivate and strangle men. Both sit outside the male hierarchy. Lady Macbeth as depicted by Sargent is self-crowning and exultant in her self-expression. The Lilith of legend chooses her own existence separate to Adam and Rossetti depicts this by the danger of her ‘one strangling hair’ and the reference to her as the first wife of Adam. The myths depicted in each of Sargent’s portrait and Rossetti’s sonnet can therefore be seen as examples of what Swinburne referred to as ‘woman of the type of Adam’s first wife; […] a living Lilith, with ample splendour of redundant hair.’47 Such ‘living Liltis’ symbolise the empowered woman of Victorian Britain as examples of the ‘first strong minded-woman and the original advocate of women’s rights.’48 In Rossetti’s sonnet, his ‘living Lilith’ is a ‘modern Lilith’ who threatens patriarchal structures. For Sargent, his Lady Macbeth in her Lilith-like serpentine dress, stands in a celebrated act of autonomous defiance and self-expression. Both of these differing myths of womanhood are symbolic women who embody, in their different ways, the ‘divine-demonic woman’ of Victorian imagination.49

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Figure 1. John Singer Sargent, *Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, oil on canvas, 1889, 221cm x 114.5cm, © Tate London, 2017

Figure 2. Window & Grove, *Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in ‘Macbeth’*, platinum print, 1888, published 1906, 137.0cm x 99.0cm, © National Portrait Gallery, London 2017

Figure 3. John Singer Sargent, *Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, oil on canvas, replica 1906 (based on a work of 1889), 86.3cm x 72.5cm © National Portrait Gallery, London 2017
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