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INTRODUCTION

The human urge to recover and preserve the voices of the dead predates even writing itself. Part of the motivation for this perhaps lies in the hope of discovering precedents to confirm and reassure us in our own anxieties, hopes and beliefs. However, it would be undoubtedly foolish to expect - and unrewarding to find - that the voices of the past only chime with our own. In L.P. Hartley’s famous phrase, ‘The past is another country; they do things differently there’. The truth of this propels and gives meaning to the continuation of academic history across the world, as researchers strive to better understand the particularities of specific, historical events, people, trends and systems. Yet, in relation to historic works of human creativity and imagination, public (if not academic) discourse all too often regrets the past’s foreignness and apportions value only to ‘relevant’ canonical works - typically those deemed ‘timeless’ and eloquent of a statically conceived ‘human condition’, or those that seem to speak directly to distinctively modern preoccupations. Against this prejudice, the MLA’s chronological approach to the arts in Britain between 1450 and 1914 compels awareness of the distinctiveness of the mentalities of any given moment from those of any other – including the present. Although we may not deem certain paradigms from the past to be acceptable now, an appreciation of the mutability of the human condition and its infinite possibility challenges complacency in the present and urges innovative and open thinking for the future.

The essays in this collection are alive to difference of many varieties, not simply that between eras, and include those of gender, race, nationality and social class. Rather than conceptualising a given period monolithically as dominated by a single set of values, cultural practices and assumptions, nearly all the essays reveal a multiplicity of discourses and cultures active in a society at any given moment. Such polyphony is inscribed into the DNA of this journal, by its requirement that all submissions take the form of a juxtaposition of two or more ‘artefacts’ from the same fifty-year period but of different forms or artistic media. The objects discussed range from Elizabethan duelling manuals
and designs for Stuart masques to a Victorian cricket-club tie and an English translation of a Persian poem.

Historicism is clearly the dominant intellectual approach of this volume. In their exploration of the violence and absolutism of ‘Shakespeare’s’ England, Marie Harrison, Adam Diaper and Andrés Font Galarza illustrate that the foreign elements of any historical work should not be dismissed merely as archaic and disposable trappings, but recognised as integral to initial audiences’ understanding of the work. Likewise, as Alexandra Mayson and Katerina Kern prove with their sensitivity to religious angst in mid-Victorian England, even those works that seem most timeless tend to have stemmed from the particular concerns of their own period of origin. Several essays, especially Susan Knights’s and Emily Lam’s, expose the gulf between past attitudes towards gender and modern ideals.

Beyond even the motivations for the behaviour and customs of past peoples, the dominant imperatives of any society also shape how its members fundamentally perceive and understand the world in which they act. While Michelle Castelletti, Mariona Ponce Bochaca and Debbie Hicks explore the distinct aesthetics of Early Modern courtly culture, Alex Deamer and Dewey Hall reassess the relative significances of built and natural environments within the mental landscape of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century, ‘Romantic’ writers and artists.

Historical difference must, of course, imply the necessity of change over time. At least six articles in this collection explore moments of cultural transition in Britain. Some papers, such as Craig Paterson’s, Freya Gye’s, David Darbyshire’s and David Allen’s, herald norms that we recognise in the present; others, like Sharon O’Connor’s and Sopna Nair’s, reveal the emergence of a fresh status quo equally distinct from today's. Interestingly, whatever the nature of the change examined, most of these essays depict the process as dialectical, resulting from the opposition of two or more cultures co-existing within British society at a given moment. Hence, the equal stress throughout this volume on both the continuance of tradition and the persistence of dissent.

The range of voices and the potential for conflict and change is expanded even further by the essays that explore encounters between Britain and overseas nations and territories. Largely eschewing the essentialist, ahistorical, ‘orientalist’ dichotomy of East and West, they reveal how British reactions to and interactions with foreign cultures have
varied enormously between period and location: Danny Evans interrogates Early Modern perceptions of black Africans; Ahmed Shokri examines the position and representation of women in Victorian Cairo; Amy Marshall uncovers how British imperialists in India struggled to confront and contain exceptions to their rigid, ideologically informed expectations of the ‘other’; and Natalia de Blasio considers the contested status of the Elgin Marbles at the time of their arrival in Regency London.

It is clear from this selection of essays that interdisciplinarity’s liberation from the confines of any one way of approaching an object of study has encouraged our original and varied voices. The front cover gives visual articulation to this. An original painting by MLA student and contributor to this volume, Katerina Kern, it takes as its literal basis a pre-existing work. By working over this, Kern has produced a beautiful, innovative work, which at once reveals and requires the original that remains visible beneath in order to give form to its own identity.

We are nearly at the end of our MLA, and our futures will be as diverse as our voices. But we hope that, both here and in the years to come, we continue to contribute to and benefit from the bracing process of intellectual reinvigoration, afforded by interdisciplinarity. As T. S. Eliot in *Little Gidding* declared:

\[
\text{What we call the beginning is often the end} \\
\text{And to make an end is to make a beginning.} \\
\text{The end is where we start from […]}
\]

Thus, it is to every member of the MLA 2016-2018 and all our inspirational tutors that this volume is dedicated. It belongs to each of you.

Adam Diaper
Alexandra Mayson
Craig Paterson
I

The Making of English Slave Iconography:

Emerging xenophobia toward black Africans in the coat of arms of Sir John Hawkins (1568) and Ben Jonson’s *The Masque of Blackness* (1605).

DANIEL JAN EVANS

This article will investigate the developing representations of black Africans during the Tudor and early Stuart periods. The presence of Africans in England during this time is frequently overlooked as their residence is often only discernible through scant evidence, in the form of church records, literature and material culture. By examining the coat of arms of Sir John Hawkins (Figure 1) and Ben Jonson’s *The Masque of Blackness*, this article will demonstrate how, although the transatlantic slave trade was not yet prevalent, visual imagery and material culture representing Africans during the Tudor and Stuart periods were already beginning to reflect an attitude equating blackness with the status of ‘sub-human’, a belief that seemingly defined nearly all later English depictions of Africans, as well as being used to justify the English position on the slave trade.

On 6 January 1605 *The Masque of Blackness* was performed in the banqueting hall of Whitehall Palace. In the production, Queen Anne of Denmark and eleven other ladies of the nobility portrayed the ‘twelve nymphs, negroes, and daughters of Niger’ as they attempted to search for ‘Albion the fair’, who would liberate them from their ‘black despair’. Masques such as these were written ‘for the court and about the court’, skilfully weaving mythology, symbology and allegory in order to represent court life and politics. With the performance to be attended by foreign ambassadors

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2 Jonson, p.319.
and high-ranking individuals from court,\textsuperscript{4} writer Ben Jonson and designer Inigo Jones created a lavish masque that was a highlight of the social calendar. \textit{The Masque of Blackness} was meant to demonstrate the superiority of England, and of its new King, James I, over all other nations, juxtaposing the position of England against that of the rest of the world by utilising expensive costumes, special effects and outlandish makeup. Yet, \textit{The Masque of Blackness} was remembered by some individuals at court, such as parliamentarian Dudley Carleton, for a different reason:

Their black faces and hands, which were painted and bare up the elbows, was a very loathsome sight and I am sorry that strangers should see our court so strangely disguised.\textsuperscript{5}

This reaction is significant. The passing comment made in one of Carleton’s personal letters indicates the existence of an attitude that would become the linchpin of the transatlantic slave trade. Thirty-seven years earlier, Sir John Hawkins, who undertook what is widely considered to be the first attempt at English slave trading, had a coat of arms commissioned by Queen Elizabeth I.\textsuperscript{6} The crest was generally

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{Sir John Hawkins’ coat of arms, design sketch, 1568. Reproduced with the permission of The College of Arms, London.}
\end{figure}

unremarkable and included similar heraldic imagery to other designs of the period; however, Hawkins’ coat of arms had one exception, since it displayed the first image produced in England of an enslaved African.

From the commissioning of Sir John Hawkins’ coat of arms in 1568 to the first performance of The Masque of Blackness in 1605, English visual culture seemingly underwent a shift that reflected a growing xenophobic attitude towards Africans. In exploring these two objects, this essay will examine changing contemporary attitudes towards ‘Blackamoores’, ‘Negars’ and ‘Strangers’ in England. Furthermore, the essay will consider the role that visual representations of Africans from after 1558 played in equating blackness with the status of ‘sub-human’ and further helping to standardise a notion of racial superiority that would permeate both visual and imperial culture for the next two hundred years.

Literature and artwork depicting Africans in England during the Tudor period is sparse. However, there is enough surviving material to present a limited picture of life for such individuals during this period. It is known from surviving church records that many non-Europeans resided throughout England. Indeed, Miranda Kaufmann identifies Africans who, usually as a result of their conversion to Christianity, managed to assimilate into English life, working and often marrying into their new communities. Although this was not a regular occurrence, ever-expanding trade boundaries meant that more individuals from African countries could reach England, eventually finding employment as servants, musicians and tradesman. There is visual evidence of London guild crests bearing ‘Moorish’ and ‘Blackamoor’ iconography, including records of a notable silk weaver, Reasonable Blackman, who made his living in Elizabethan Southwark.

Sir John Hawkins’ coat of arms is particularly significant in this regard, since it represents the first reference to slave trading by an Englishman. When Queen Elizabeth I commissioned John Hawkins’ coat of arms in 1568, England had just begun to take its first steps into the incredibly dangerous, yet incredibly lucrative, slave trade. Hawkins, in partnership with his famous cousin Sir Francis Drake, had pioneered this practice in 1562 and, despite an eventual crew mortality rate of 88 percent, still returned to England a success, with record financial profits. Hawkins opted to sponsor a second trip that was made just two years later, which was in part financed by Elizabeth, who, as well as intending to receive a large return on the Crown’s investment, apparently had no issue with the trade in human cargo. In fact, she even went so far as to allow Hawkins to use the royal ship, the Jesus of Lubeck. The Crown’s financial support of Hawkins, and the commissioning of his coat of arms,

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8 Kaufmann, pp.113–133.
10 Kelsey, p.48.
indicates that Elizabeth and her Privy Council had a burgeoning interest in the emerging slave trade of Africans.\(^{11}\)

During this period, terms such as ‘Blackamoor’ seemingly ‘existed in the early modern English psyche as indicative of a concept of abstract absence’.\(^{12}\) Therefore, as Matthieu Chapman argues, ‘deploying the term Negro, then, as a collective descriptor for black Africans serves to ground that abstraction in a corporeal form that is more easily commodified’.\(^{13}\) Indeed, it is evident from contemporary travel accounts that notions of racial superiority were already prevalent, especially in relation to the broad classification of all African tribes as, first and foremost, ‘Negro’. Richard Eden’s widely read account of John Lok’s voyage to Mina included a comment that ‘Moores, Moorens, or Negroes, a people of beastly living, without a God, lawe, religion, or commonwealth, and so scorched and vexed with the heat of the sunne that in many places they curse it, when it riseth’.\(^{14}\) Hawkins’ personal attitudes are reflected in his writings, some of which represent the earliest narratives of contact with Africans.\(^{15}\) In his accounts, Hawkins makes it evident that colour was the ‘primary determinant of difference’.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{11}\) Weissbourd, pp.1–19.

\(^{12}\) Chapman, p.129.

\(^{13}\) Chapman, p.129.


\(^{15}\) Chapman, p.128.

\(^{16}\) Chapman, p.129.
Remarkably, he does not distinguish between tribes’ cultural variances, but rather their efficiency at waging war against each other.\textsuperscript{17} Chapman points out that Hawkins is an overlooked figure, not just in terms of his role in the development of the later triangle trade, but also his role in using blackness to categorise Africans as ‘sub-human’. The narrative of Hawkins’s first voyage deployed the term Negro as a descriptor of what was later given the oxymoronic phrase ‘human cargo’.\textsuperscript{18}

Interestingly, the African figure that adorns the preliminary sketch of Hawkins’ crest is not in chains, which has led to the notion that the image only reflects Hawkins’ contact with Africans, not his practice of slavery. Indeed, although later re-designs of Hawkins’ crest do clarify the African as a slave (Figure 2), the first image is adorned only with armlets, a common fashion for African women, as noted by John Lok.\textsuperscript{19} However, Kate Lowe argues that visual representations of Africans wearing expensive jewellery during this period would have been an indicator of their owners’ status and their desire to have their slaves adored with finery.\textsuperscript{20}

Africans had resided in England and been assimilated into the national culture long before John Lok travelled to Africa, and before Sir John Hawkins had his coat of arms commissioned. However, during the late sixteenth century, following a surge in population, England began to suffer from poor harvests, which led to increased vagrancy and starvation. These issues fostered a xenophobic attitude towards these ‘Blackamoors’, ‘Negros’ and ‘Strangers’. This prejudice is often reflected in plays written during the period. For example, in \textit{Sir Thomas More}, a soliloquy given by More rails against the unfair treatment of these ‘strangers’:

Grant them removed, and grant that this your noise  
Hath chid down all the majesty of England;  
Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,  
Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage,  
Plodding tooth ports and costs for transportation,  
And that you sit as kings in your desires,  
Authority quite silent by your brawl,  
And you in ruff of your opinions clothed.\textsuperscript{21}

However, whether motivated by profit, prejudice, or both, this growing public discontent was exploited by Queen Elizabeth I. Emily Weissbourd argues that this is most evident through the two

\textsuperscript{17} Chapman, p.130.  
\textsuperscript{18} Chapman, p.131.  
\textsuperscript{19} Eden, p.342.  
‘expulsion’ proclamations issued by Elizabeth I. Issued in 1596, the first proclamation explains the Crown’s position:

    Her Majesty’s pleasure therefore ys that those kinde of people should be sent forth of the lande, and for that purpose there ys direction given to this bearer Edward Banes to take of those blackmoores that in this last voyage under Sir Thomas Baskervile were brought into this realme the number of tenn, to be transported by him out of the realme.22

The second proclamation requested that all ‘Negroes and Blackamoors’ hand themselves over to Casper Van Senden, a Dutch trader.23 Weissbourd believes proclamations such as these indicate that a discourse already existed during the late sixteenth century that was beginning to link blackness with slavery, especially with regards to the nobility.24 It is apparent that it would have been a turbulent period for any Africans living in England during the end of the sixteenth century as negative attitudes were beginning to become more predominant.

Nine years later, when The Masque of Blackness was performed, England still did not formally trade in human cargo. However, further prejudice towards colour was apparent in the masque, and not just from the reaction from some members of the audience, such as Dudley Carleton. The use of black makeup on the twelve nymphs was meant to juxtapose effectively the light of England against the darkness of rest of the world. Indeed, masques were designed to be elaborate, and they incorporated

Figure 3. Geoffrey Whitney, The Impossible Task: A Choice of Emblems, 1586.

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23 Tudor Royal Proclamations, ed. by Paul L. Hughes, and James F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven, Conn.,1964–69) III, 22.
24 Emily Weissbourd. “‘Those in Their Possession’: Race, Slavery, and Queen Elizabeth’s ‘Edicts of Expulsion.’” Huntington Library Quarterly, 78.1, 2015, pp.1–19 (p.1).
flamboyant special effects intended to, as Stephen Orgel notes, ‘control the audience’s attention through its eyes’. The Masque of Blackness was meant to be an elaborate spectacle, rendering audience members as ‘living emblems of the autocratic hierarchy’, that also fostered an immediate response from spectators. The notion of ‘blackness’ existing as a result of the scorching sun, something that has blackened previously fair skin, was a common interpretation during the Tudor period. This was demonstrated in popular emblems such as The Impossible Task (figure 3), from Geoffrey Whitney’s 1586 book A Choice of Emblems. Therefore, it is no surprise that this concept was utilised purely to gain a visual reaction as well as to effectively demonstrate the opposing effect of the light of the King. However, there are passages in the masque that go further than just utilising black makeup for special effects. Jonson describes blackness as a ‘defect’ that, when in Britain, will be scorched no more:

Britannia, whose new name makes all tongues sing,
    Might be a diamant worthy to inchase it,
    Ruled by a sun, that to this height doth grace it:
    Whose beams shine day and night, and are of force
    To blanch an Æthiop, and revive a corse.
    His light sciential is, and, past mere nature,
    Can salve the rude defects of every creature.
    Call forth thy honor’d daughters then:
    And let them, ‘fore the Britain men,
   Indent the land, with those pure traces
    They flow with, in their native graces.
    Invite them boldly to the shore;
    Their beauties shall be scorch’d no more:
    This sun is temperate, and refine
    All things on which his radiance shines.

The main purpose of The Masque of Blackness was to show the transformative powers of the Monarch. In the masque, James I is the Sun King, and to represent his radiance and transformative powers the audience must visually witness the metamorphosis of the nymphs. James Loxley describes how ‘light is his currency, and sudden illumination the means by which his force is registered’. The use of black makeup for the Queen and her ladies is multi-faceted, especially when it is discussed with

25 Orgel, p.17.
26 Orgel, p.37.
27 Orgel, p.36.
30 Loxley, p.119.
regards to the developing notion that black Africans were ‘sub-human’. The negative connotation of one skin colour as inferior is apparent in the masque; however, the intention to use this to consciously represent Africans in a malicious fashion is less apparent. It could be argued that it is an effective means of using juxtaposition to represent the King, and Britain, as the superior nation, not only to Africa, but also to Europe. Indeed, the nymphs dismiss Aquitania (France) and Lusitania (Portugal) in their search for the ideal country. The nymphs in The Masque of Blackness are also dressed in ‘regal’, albeit and bright mantle; his front, neck and wrists adorned with pearls; and crowned with an artificial wreath of caine and paper-rush’. Authenticity was not the intended purpose behind Inigo Jones’ designs since he based the costumes on fashions he had seen while visiting Italy, as well as in Cesare Vecellio’s costume books. While not dressed in obvious Western fashions, the characters from Niger were fantastical, clothing; their father Niger is dressed in a ‘blue dressed in finery, indicating their high status (figure 4). It is also known that some structural elements of Jonson’s masques would have been dictated

Figure 4. Inigo Jones, Daughter of Niger, 1605, watercolour on paper. Reproduced with the permission of the Chatsworth Collection.

31 Jonson, p.315.
to him by members of the royal household. Indeed, Anne of Denmark did have an African footman who was represented in Paul van Somer’s 1617 portrait. Therefore, it is possible that the use of black makeup was suggested by the Queen, or perhaps that the intent was rather more focused on effect than outright xenophobia.

However, even if the use of black makeup could be dismissed as just an effective use of special effects, and the intention considered to be something other than to simply represent Africans as ‘sub-human’, the reaction that the masque provoked in individuals such as Dudley Carleton does indeed demonstrate a contemporary disposition towards Africans. Even though the Inigo Jones’ designs reveal the costumes to be regal, the appearance of the women in black makeup was considered ‘loathsome’. It is from the response of Carleton that we can best gauge the effect that seeing white women wearing black makeup had on contemporary audiences. Indeed, the wearing of black makeup seemingly had a negative visual effect. Virginia Mason Vaughan commented that:

> Once the actor donned the mask of a black Moor or a black devil, the face’s emotional range was static. The actor could adopt a variety of poses in hopes that body language would convey different attitudes, but the scope of emotion was more limited than what could be conveyed through facial expressions.

Beginning with Sir John Hawkins’ coat of arms, the visual representation of blackness as being indicative of a ‘sub-human’ nature was to become further standardised throughout English visual culture. For example, in 1636, the little-known masque *Mr Moore’s Revels* again utilises black makeup; however, its use this time directly linked Africans and apes. Interestingly, Matthieu Chapman argues that *Mr. Moore’s Revels*, while also being the first play to represent black Africans and Moorish people on the same stage, is the first play to separate blacks from Moors structurally, representing the Moors as civilised, while classing Africans in the same category as apes. We see this categorisation regularly after the seventeenth century, and it is arguable that this did not change until mid-way through the twentieth century. Certainly, the callousness that developed, partly through ignorance and partly motivated by financial gain, permeated English visual culture, justifying the country’s role in the slave trade and standardising the notion that black skin was ‘sub-human’.

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35 Chapman, p.92.
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‘…all Altars [should] be taken down and clear removed even unto the foundation’:

Edmund Grindal. Social and political doublethink in the Puritan movement.

CRAIG PATERSON

The purpose of this article is to consider the English Reformation, particularly within the late sixteenth century, from an interdisciplinary perspective. By considering the two seemingly unrelated artefacts of the instructions laid out by one zealous Protestant reformer and the effigy of another, I will discuss the apparent hypocrisies and contradictions of the Reformation which present themselves here.

The term ‘Reformation’ is often used to signify a multitude of complicated events and movements which were happening throughout Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, for this paper, ‘Reformation’ is used to discuss the intense debate and conflict surrounding Christianity in an era where traditional Catholic practices started to give way to new Protestant ones. Before studying the detail of the two artefacts that are central to this study, the first section of this article will very briefly outline the change of traditional church practices between Catholics and Protestants that were taking place during the Reformation. The article will then consider my first chosen artefact, which is a list of injunctions against the Catholic church; as proposed in 1571 by the zealous reformer Edmund Grindal, then Archbishop of York.1 Of particular interest to this discussion is Grindal’s insistence on the destruction and repression of religious visual imagery. In light of the discussion on Grindal, the third section of this paper will focus on my second chosen artefact:

the memorial tomb of Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. The tomb was erected in St Mary’s Church, Warwick, after his death in 1588. As an aside, Dudley’s figure lies beside a sculpture of his wife, Lettice Knollys, which was added after her death in 1634. Given that Knollys’ death occurred more than fifty years after Grindal’s agenda, her sculpture is not considered in detail but merely mentioned in passing. The purpose of discussing Dudley’s sculpture alongside Grindal’s injunctions is to show that taking such an interdisciplinary approach to studying the Reformation raises some interesting questions about Protestant distortion of the old system and identifies hypocrisies, not just between Protestants and Catholics, but between the church and the state.

The Reformation in Context

The dominant idea of western Christianity up to the sixteenth century emphasised the importance of tradition. Indeed, Eamon Duffy uses the term ‘traditional’ rather than ‘Catholicism’ to describe pre-Reformation religion.2 Duffy describes late-medieval tradition as ‘tightly knit’ in that it was closely bound up with community life, both in the sense of the actual community, who were present in parish worship, and the spiritual communities affirmed by the veneration of saints and by prayers for the dead.3 Indeed, the observance of particular rituals and the reception of sacraments administered by the church were considered necessary for personal salvation. Saints were considered to be intermediaries between God and human beings, and it was thought that they could answer the prayers of the faithful. After death, it was believed that those who were destined for salvation had to pass into purgatory, a place of trial and cleansing which, for Duffy, is ‘the defining doctrine of late medieval Catholicism’.4 Private devotions reinforced the communal ethos of traditional religion, for example, church buildings provided visual inspiration for religious teachings.

During the sixteenth century, Catholicism gave way to Protestantism. In contrast to the traditions associated with Catholicism, Protestant theory stressed that salvation depended primarily on personal faith rather than participation in the rituals of the church. Furthermore, rather than depending on a hierarchy of priests and bishops, Protestants asserted that one should draw spiritual inspiration directly from God. As such, they argued that ultimate authority lay in the original text of the prayer book, and that ‘preaching was the only way in which Christians should […] receive God’s truth’, rather than through church traditions.5 The concept of purgatory was rejected. Rather, the correct place for purging was ‘here on earth’, because the ‘penance of sins was far more easily done in life than after

3 Duffy, pp.6-7.
4 Duffy, p.8, my emphasis.
death’. It was also reasoned that church buildings had to be much plainer; the colourful rituals and images were ‘whitewashed’ because they were seen as distractions from essential spiritual realities and had to be suppressed. However, the Religious Settlement, signed by Queen Elizabeth I in 1559 allowed the Church of England to retain some traditional features, such as the hierarchy of bishops, to try and unite the country.

**Grindal’s Agenda**

In spite of the Queen’s settlement, during the ensuing decades the church continued to come under attack from both sides: by the Catholics who wished to restore all traditional religious practices; and by radical Protestants, known as Puritans, who insisted that the settlement did not go far enough. One such energetic reformer was Edmund Grindal, who, as Archbishop of York in 1571, drew up a list of injunctions to churchwardens in the north of England. The purpose of this list was to make the Protestant agenda fully explicit. In his instructions, Grindal averred that all images, especially church rood lofts, were to be, ‘taken downe and cleane remooued’ so no part of them should be preserved. Furthermore, clergy were no longer to wear colourful vestments but merely ‘a cleane and decent surples with large sléeues’. In other words, the interior of churches, including the dress of the clergy, should be much plainer, and visual representations of Christian teaching should give way to written ones. More specifically, Christian teaching was now to be communicated through the study of the biblical text; by participation in the prescribed language of the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer; and by preaching. However, implementing such an extreme change was always going to be a long and complicated process: it has been noted that several years after Grindal’s injunctions it had been observed that there had been no amendments of any kind in several parishes. Indeed, as Collinson remarks, ‘It would be naïve to suppose that the archbishop’s purge could in itself have made an immediate and revolutionary change’. Grindal was aware of this, as he wrote in a letter to the Queen in 1576 that it was ‘rather to be wished than hoped for’ that every parish might have a preaching pastor. Rather than instant change, then, it is apparent that Catholic traditions were still very much visible in the parish over a decade after Elizabeth’s coronation.

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7 Duffy, p.xiv.
9 Grindal, p.[15].
10 Grindal, p.[3].
12 Collinson, p.204.
13 Quoted in Collinson, p205.
The implementation of such a controversial theory, though, was met with just as much opposition as support. In some respects, as Collinson explains, ‘Grindal had been deeply respected by his contemporaries, not only for his moderation and pastoral excellence but for learning, judgment, and even that very capacity for [a] resolute government which later observers found wanting’.  

14 However, at the same time, Grindal’s agenda was highly controversial, coming up against stern opposition. Grindal was forced to take action in an attempt to ensure adherence to his instructions by demanding that punishments be handed out to bishops who persisted with ‘survivalism’.  

15 One such example occurred at Gisburn of Craven, where, ‘the curate was quoted as saying before witnesses that “the pope was and is the head of the church”’.  

16 The opposition was not just from Catholics, but also from less radical Protestants. This fact would also suggest that, while radicals such as Grindal strongly desired to root out all Catholic objects and practices and replace them with Protestant ones, many contemporary parish clergies were more reluctant to do so, preferring to combine aspects of both in their religious practice. Indeed, Grindal later found himself suspended from office because he refused to comply with Queen Elizabeth’s instructions to suppress the more radical Protestant orders which she thought would be politically harmful. After receiving numerous complaints, Elizabeth demanded that Grindal ‘convey to his suffragans an order for the “utter suppression” of the “exercises of prophesying”’, which was becoming increasingly popular in the Elizabethan Church.  

17 Grindal’s response to the queen was not only his refusal to ‘assent to the suppression of the prophesying’, but to remind Elizabeth that she was but a mere mortal being in the eyes of God.  

18 As such, Grindal’s comments reject the notion of the divine right of kings, according to which it was averred that the king’s spiritual body transcended the earth and served as a symbol of his divine right to rule.  

19 Indeed, Grindal’s observation is redolent of King Lear, when Lear realises that contrary to the medieval belief in the divine right of kings, beneath his crown and royal clothing he is but ‘a poor, bare, forked animal’ in the eyes of God, just like everybody else.  

20 Grindal, just like Shakespeare, is arguing that no human being, not even the monarchy, has been given such a Godly right.

**Dudley’s Tomb**

In light of the above discussion, the effigy of Privy Councillor to Elizabeth I, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, is an interesting case study (see figures 1&2). He was one of Elizabeth’s most trusted Privy

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14 Collinson, p.16.
15 Collinson, p.203.
16 Collinson, p.204.
17 Collinson, p.16.
18 Collinson, p.16.
Councillors and, like Grindal, championed the Puritan drive to eradicate religious imagery. Dudley, too, tried to convince the Queen to rid the churches of all traces of Catholicism. However, given that, as observed by considering Grindal’s agenda, such theology was concerned with displaying less grandeur inside the church, the examination of a fellow Puritan’s tomb produces exciting results. As William Field describes: the monument consists of four grand Corinthian pillars supporting an ‘entablature [which is] placed over an arch [and] adorned in front with a rich fascia’, formed by cinquefoils.21 Field asserts that above the ‘entablature’ is a grand achievement (the representation of a coat of arms to which the bearer is entitled) in the centre.22 On either side of this achievement, there are pyramidal temples: a male figure is standing before the temple on the right, while a female statue is at the front of the temple on the left.23 Field continues by explaining that ‘just below the arch, on a table of marble’, the statue of Dudley is positioned, ‘clad in armour’, and ‘covered with a mantle’.24 Next to Dudley, is a statue of his wife, Lettice Knollys, who is covered in a ‘coronet and mantle of ermine’.25 The hands of both statues are elevated in prayer and, I observe, each figure is wearing a coronet and robes of state. There are sixteen flags positioned within the arch. On the keystone, there is a cinquefoil ermine.26 In the ‘spandrels of the arch’ is the coat of arms impaling Dudley and Knollys.27 Worthy of note, I would contend, is that, as with the statues, each shield has a crown placed on top of it. The achievement over the entablature displays ‘the arms of Dudley with quarterings impaling Knollys, encircled by the garter, supported by two lions […] and surrounded by a crest and a lion’s head’.28 A cinquefoil ermine is placed over these arms, while at the very top there is a crested bear and ragged staff.29 As well as significant allusions about crowns and coat of arms, the monument contains a substantial amount of gold.

Given the specific detail of gold and crowns associated with this monument, the effigy would appear to celebrate the life of a person or persons of the power, wealth, and status associated with royalty. The statue of Dudley also indicates that this is someone who has achieved the honour and glory of his status through human endeavour on the battlefield. However, a brief character review of Dudley would suggest that rather than reaching glory, Dudley returned home from military employment in the Netherlands, where he led the English support of the Dutch Revolt in disgrace, having ‘proved to be

21 William Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town & Castle of Warwick; And of the Neighbouring Spa of Leamington* (London: Warwick Publishers, 1815) P.122. Subsequent references to this text are referred to as: *An Historical and Descriptive Account*.
22 Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.
23 Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.
24 Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.
26 Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.
27 Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.
28 Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.123.
29 Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.123.
Figure 1: Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick: front view of monument to Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester (died 1588), 2010. Image is courtesy of Roland Turner, under the Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence Agreement.

Figure 2: Warwick, St Mary's church, Robert Dudley tomb detail, 2017. Image is courtesy of Jules and Jenny, under the Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence Agreement. Image and Licence can be viewed at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/78914786@N06/36753395865> [accessed 06 February 2018].
not only an incompetent commander but also a failure in his political role’. Furthermore, he returned in substantial debt having financed the war. In spite of this, as a backer of Francis Drake, he regained some kudos with the Queen for the success of the fight against the Spanish Armada, and was observed riding in grand fashion throughout London ‘as if he were a king’. It is this image of the Earl, rather than the political and financial failure that his tomb represents: rather than functioning as an accurate representation of Robert Dudley’s actual achievements, this effigy might be regarded as a mythical representation of the man that he aspired to be.

The other reason for representing Dudley in such a way might be connected to these new ideas that were developing in the teaching of Christianity. In the first instance, given that the most exuberant Protestant reformers, such as Grindal, argued against visual teachings of religion, the extent to which they followed their own advice is debatable. One final change from Catholicism to Protestantism which is relevant to this discussion is that Protestants reconceptualised work as a duty, benefiting both the individual and society at large. As such, while Catholicism teaches that Catholics would be rewarded for good work, Protestant theory took this idea further. Protestants argued that only those who were predestined to be saved would be saved, but it was impossible to determine who was predestined, and so many of the reformers were ‘disciplined, self-reliant people, with a powerful sense of their elect status and ready to defend their right to make decisions for themselves’. As such, the idea developed that it possible to determine those who were elect by observing their way of life. In other words, hard work, self-control and frugality were considered to be three important factors linked with the elect, and so many Protestants became attracted to these qualities and aspired to reach them.

This assertion brings me back to the Protestant theory of salvation through human endeavour. In the first instance, while it has been observed above that the Puritan movement rejected drawing on visual inspiration for religious teachings, there are strong grounds to suggest that, studying Dudley’s tomb alongside Grindal’s agenda exposes notable hypocrisies. Alongside this destruction of iconic religious imagery in churches was the creation of colourful images of people who had just died, which raises the question as to whether personal humility matched this new-found simplicity in religious observance. On the one hand, given that this wealth and prosperity is what people were expected to

aspire to if they were destined for salvation, Dudley’s tomb can be considered as a religious lesson in salvation through work.

On the other hand, the statue suggests a lack of humility, affording more credit and glory to Dudley than he might have earned. Therefore, given that the representation of the Earl is just as mythical as anything depicted on the rood lofts, it seems appropriate to query why it was acceptable to represent certain human beings in a glorified way, but it was forbidden to present biblical figures similarly. From this perspective, it is possible to argue that the vandalising of decorative religious artefacts in religion while simultaneously decorating tombs of individuals shows a shift in the movement from worshipping God to celebrating human beings and their ‘achievements’. On the other hand, the fact that both Dudley and Knollys are deep in prayer shows that religion is still important in this new and complicated way of thinking. However, the other detail suggests that religious devotion is just one criterion among many which define a good person; it is equally important to possess qualities associated with individual endeavour, such as courage and intelligence. Dudley’s monument is as much a glorification of his life and ‘achievements’, as it is about his devotion to God. Given that this new Protestant attitude placed a greater emphasis on the self and individual endeavour, there is a hint of irony that this tomb is still using visual imagery to teach religion, albeit in a different way. They are the same but different: these monuments are exaggerating human achievements so that others may aspire towards individual success and, thus, ensure that they are one of the elect.

To complicate matters further, although Grindal took pains to remind the Queen that she was but a mortal being in the eyes of God, this tomb’s emphasis on the incumbents’ high status somewhat undercuts Grindal’s assertion. Rather than representing them as biblical figures, Dudley and Knollys are wearing coronets and dressed almost like royalty. This flamboyant representation of the couple sharply contrasts the idea that zealous reformers such as Grindal had for the clergy, who it was argued should wear plain clothes in church. As such, there is higher importance placed on a mortal human than commentators such as Grindal might admit. Dudley certainly looks more significant than a ‘mere’ mortal. Therefore, while Grindal explicitly rejected the notion of the divine right of the monarchy by insisting that the Queen is just like everybody else, this tomb, on some level, suggests that even her counsellor is more powerful than the church clergy. If looked at from this perspective, it is possible to detect a rift between the church and the state. Not only, then, does this representation of Dudley expose the hypocrisy that it is acceptable for those in a position of power to be splendidly dressed in church, but it is arguably hinting that the monarchy, and those associated with them, are worthier of observation than God is.

On another level, due to their lack of religious imagery and emphasis on wealth and human courage and endeavour, the tombs might also assert the importance of capitalism over religion. Indeed, early twentieth-century commentator Max Weber argued that the Protestant work ethic of self-help was
a significant factor in the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie.\footnote{Max Weber, \textit{The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism}. See also: R. H. Tawney, \textit{Religion and the Rise of Capitalism} (London: Pelican/Penguin, 1961).} Although much of Weber’s work itself is open to debate, these tombs do emphasise the importance of an individual’s worldly success, with piety seemingly accorded secondary importance. This theme of capitalism and wealth became increasingly important in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the expansion of the British Empire. The fact that the symbolism of these tombs almost prefigures this later era, I would argue, suggests that, in many respects, they can be interpreted as anticipating the rise of capitalism and colonial expansion.

**Conclusion**

The interdisciplinary nature of this paper has juxtaposed the agenda of one early-modern Puritan, and the tomb of another. It has been observed that during the Reformation, Protestants, particularly the zealous ones associated with Puritanism, sought to replace visual teachings of Christianity and traditions of ritual with the book of prayer. This article has highlighted some of the problems and contradictions associated with this change in philosophy. By discussing Dudley’s tomb alongside Grindal’s agenda, I have raised questions about the destruction of iconic imagery of religion by radical reformers who were happy to display grand images of people who had just died, particularly if such a person was of high social status. As such, this paper is questioning why some images were allowed, and others were not. On the one hand, this political doublethink reflects a new way of teaching religion: the work ethic associated with Protestants is evident here given that the monument is endorsing wealthy and powerful humans, rather than saints. Given that Protestant theology encourages admiration of people who work hard, taking control of their own destiny, it is perhaps not surprising that Dudley has been offered as an example for emulation. On the other hand, I have asserted that, on some level, while the tomb still features some devotional references (the praying), religion and God would appear to be of secondary importance to the splendidly represented person in the sculpture. As such, I have claimed that it might be the case that such tombs show a tension between the church and the state; or at the very least they acknowledge that there are other important factors in life besides religion. Finally, the nature of this study led me to the idea that tombs such as Dudley’s anticipate the rise of capitalism and imperial power.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


III

Unica Semper Avis:

The role of emblems in Elizabethan culture, using the Phoenix as a case study in Nicholas Hilliard’s Phoenix portrait and in the Chequers ring.

MARIONA PONCE BOCHACA

The iconic image of Queen Elizabeth I was an essential part of her authority. The myth of the Virgin Queen was deliberately created to divert the attention from her body natural and sustain such authority as she aged. This article explores the role of emblems in Elizabethan culture and, more specifically, in the creation of the royal image, using the Phoenix as a case study. It analyses the influence of Nicholas Hilliard’s Phoenix portrait in the re-fashioning of the Queen’s image in the 1570s, and the relationship between emblem, context and meaning by comparing it to the enigmatic Chequers ring.

On 15 January 1558, after being crowned ‘with all accustomed ceremonies’ by Bishop Oglethorpe at Westminster Abbey, Elizabeth carried the sceptre and orb to Westminster Hall ‘with a most smiling countenance for everyone, giving them all a thousand greetings’. 1 Ambassadors from the Spanish Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Baltics and Scotland had come to advance suits of marriage on behalf of their respective monarchs, for everyone at the English Court took for granted that the queen should take a husband. 2 After decades of failed heirs, phantom pregnancies and disputed successions, the young queen’s youthful ‘body natural’ promised dynastic continuity and national security. 3 Just four days after Mary I’s death, Gomes Suarez de Figueroa, Count

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of Feria, had written to Philip II: ‘the more I think over this business, the more certain I am that everything depends upon the husband this woman may take’.\(^4\) The idea that Elizabeth might remain unmarried was unthinkable for the Spanish ambassador.

In the 1570s Elizabeth’s advisors, notably Lord Burghley, still pressed her to marry and settle the succession.\(^5\) Her ambivalence about marriage and her unwillingness to name a successor stood as public signs of the fragility of the Tudor dynasty. Indeed, Elizabeth’s unique position as an unmarried Protestant ruler in a male-dominated Catholic world had been responsible for the greatest threats and political tensions of her reign. In 1572, the Ridolfi Plot to murder the Queen of England renewed concerns about the succession and the queen’s mortality, and stressed the need for a new emblematic style of royal representation that diverted attention from the queen’s aging body and sustained her authority in the face of animadversion.\(^6\)

This article examines the role of emblems in Elizabethan culture, and more specifically of the Phoenix emblem, in the re-fashioning of Elizabeth’s royal image in the 1570s. Through the analysis of Nicholas Hilliard’s *Phoenix portrait* and the *Chequers ring*, it will explore the circumstances and contexts in which the phoenix was used to represent Elizabeth, and whether the interpretation of its rich symbolism contributed to the construction of the myth of the Virgin Queen.

Emblem books flourished in the Renaissance and were particularly popular in France and Italy in the 1530s, but it was not until the first decade of Elizabeth’s reign that they came to be published in and introduced to England from the Continent. Books such as Claude Paradin’s *Devises heroïques*, first published in 1551, exercised an enormous influence on literature and the visual arts across Europe.\(^7\) Combining a motto (*inscriptio*), picture (*pictura*), and a brief poem (*subscriptio*), emblems communicated abstract moral, political or religious values in ways that had to be decoded by the viewer.\(^8\) The fashion for heraldry and emblem books in the late sixteenth-century fostered a rarefied, educated audience able to read visual symbols as encodings of values and virtues, privilege and power.\(^9\)

The phoenix was an emblem rich in symbolic meanings applicable to Elizabeth. The sacred bird had long been associated with mythical power, as the ancient Egyptians had considered it a manifestation of the sun god. According to legend, at the end of its long life the phoenix built a funeral pyre of spice-wood in the desert. After igniting it by fanning its wings in the heat of the sun, it plunged

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\(^4\) ‘Simancas: November 1558’, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 1, 1558-1567*, ed. by Martin A. S. Hume (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1892), pp.1-6 (p.3).


\(^6\) Sharpe, p.47.


\(^8\) Bath, pp.10-20.

\(^9\) Sharpe, p.370.
into the fire and was burned to ashes, only to be born again.\textsuperscript{10} A phoenix device [Figure 1] first appears as one of the 118 published in Paradin’s\textit{ Devises Heroï ques}, with the classic combination of woodcut figure and the motto ‘Unica Revivisco’ (‘I alone come back to life’).\textsuperscript{11} The 1557 edition of the same title also depicts the same\textit{ pictura}, yet praises the bird’s uniqueness with the motto ‘Unica Semper Avis’ (‘Only one Phoenix in the world at a time’), and the\textit{ subscriptio} ‘As the Phoenix is the single solitary Bird in the world of its own species. As such are the best marvelous unique, and sparse, things’.\textsuperscript{12}

Yet for all its rarity, the Phoenix emblem was not just Elizabeth’s. In the 1557 edition of his\textit{ Devices}, Paradin attributes it to Eleanor of Austria, sister of Emperor Charles V, and wife of King François I.\textsuperscript{13} A phoenix had also been the\textit{ impresa} of Mary of Guise, French Catholic regent and mother of Mary, Queen of Scots, who paired it with the motto ‘En Ma Fin Git Ma Commencement’ (‘In my End Is my Beginning’).\textsuperscript{14} People who were thought to be extraordinary, like Philip Sidney, were often called ‘a phoenix’, and so were survivors of destructive experiences or religious persecution.\textsuperscript{15} Furthermore, the phoenix also became a symbol of resurrection and immortality in the Christian tradition. In his 1580 book of emblems\textit{ Icones} [Figure 2], religious leader Théodore de Bèze responded to the persecution of Protestants by using the phoenix to represent those who had survived the threat of public burnings: ‘for, if they speak true, death itself remakes the phoenix with the effect that one fire [funeral pyre] is life and death for this bird. Go, O executioners, burn the holy bodies of the Saints. To those whom you want to destroy, the flame gives life’.\textsuperscript{16} Such close association of the phoenix with the Protestant faith favored Elizabeth, who had herself survived the dangers of Mary I’s reign.

In Elizabethan England, the phoenix was essentially female, an element of unique rarity, beauty and distinction.\textsuperscript{17} The rebirth of the phoenix came to be associated with chastity, the only virtue which

\textsuperscript{10} Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant,\textit{ A dictionary of symbols} (London: Penguin, 1996), pp.752-3.
\textsuperscript{13} Eleanor of Austria was already a widow when she married again in France, so this second chance might explain her choice of a phoenix as her device.
\textsuperscript{14} Janet Arnold,\textit{ Queen Elizabeth’s wardrobe unlock’d: the inventories of the Wardrobe of Robes prepared in July 1600}, (Leeds: Maney, 1988), pp.84-5.
it was thought a woman could truly attain. This is key to understanding the appropriation by Elizabeth of a symbol that was in fact one of the most common of all Renaissance emblems. As Dora Thornton argues, Elizabeth’s unique position as a single, female ruler in a man’s world, allowed her to make a strength out of what was then considered a weakness, her gender. In association with her, the Phoenix emblem attained its fullest significance. There could only be one Queen of England, as there could only be one phoenix: unique, eternally youthful, celibate yet ever regenerating its dynasty. Its oneness represented Elizabeth as a ruler, triumphant over death, a political survivor who had lived through a papal excommunication, a life-threatening attack of smallpox, a rising in the North and a Catholic conspiracy to assassinate her. In Britannia, William Camden records that Elizabeth took for her motto, Semper Eadem (‘Always the same’), ‘to hold an even course in her life and all her actions’. Thus the phoenix further emblematized the queen’s steadfastness and constructed the myth that, against all odds, hers was an unchanging regime.

Tudor portraiture was a highly mediated art form, in which the paintings revealed the image that the sitter wanted to convey. From the mid 1570s, Elizabeth’s portraits purposely became emblematic, drawing attention away from her body natural to an eloquent symbolism expressed through jewel and dress, for both had the ability to construct her external, hence internal, frame. Nicholas Hilliard’s Phoenix portrait [Figure 3], named after the jewel in the form of a phoenix that Elizabeth wears on her breast, is the earliest portrait of the queen to indicate any kind of personal iconography. It is an exercise of ‘Renaissance self-fashioning’, where emblematic details have been deliberately included to represent Elizabeth and her rule. Indeed, the phoenix emblem is both literally and figuratively at the heart of the portrait. The face pattern is very similar to Hilliard’s earliest miniature of the queen (1572), which indicates that his remarkable skills as a miniaturist clearly influenced his work on oil portraiture. Hilliard deliberately avoided painting the reality of Elizabeth’ face, and rejuvenated her features by reducing them to a few delicate lines, with no shadows. The portrait effaces the queen’s body natural

18 Thornton, ‘Her Majesty’s Picture’.
20 Pope Pius V issued a bull in 1570, titled Regnans in Excelsis, which declared Elizabeth to be excommunicated and a heretic, releasing all her subjects from any allegiance to her, in Patrick McGrath, Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I, (London: Blandford Press, 1967), p.70.
23 Tarnya Cooper and Antonia Fraser, A guide to Tudor & Jacobean portraits, (London: National Portrait Gallery in association with the National Trust, 2008), p.4.
25 With the matching Pelican portrait, which was painted at the same workshop. Strong, Gloriana, p.81.
26 Sharpe, p.370.
Figure 1. Claude Paradin, *Devises Heroiques*, 1551
© University of Glasgow, Glasgow.

Figure 2. Théodore de Bèze, Ícones, 1580
© University of Glasgow, Glasgow.
and diverts all attention to her symbolic, full-blown costume and jewels, majestic in every detail. The aim is to stress the idea, incorporated into the painting, fixing in the mind’s eye the nature of the queen’s virtues. Such virtues are expressed by the phoenix pendant [Figure 4] and the abundance of pearls on her dress and jewels, signifying ideas of purity and virginity. The Tudor dynasty is represented by the red rose on the queen’s hand and by the heavy collar of jewels of the type seen in portraits of Henry VIII over her shoulders. In early modern England, Crown Jewels had a political function that went beyond their value, so the collar effectively contributes to Elizabeth’s aura of sovereignty and reinforces her position as Henry VIII’s legitimate heir. Thus, in the Phoenix portrait the emblem acts

![Phoenix portrait](image)

Figure 3. Nicholas Hilliard, Phoenix portrait, Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1575, oil on panel, 780 x 610 mm.


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as a vehicle rich in dynastic mysticism, praising Elizabeth’s uniqueness and chastity while asserting the perpetuity of hereditary kingship and royal dignity, without commitment to marriage.\footnote{Strong, \textit{Gloriana}, p.82.}

The same message of dynastic continuity is promoted by the \textit{Phoenix Jewel} [Figure 5]. The queen’s profile is silhouetted in a cut-out construction, chased in the gold to pick out every detail of the queen’s pearls, jewels and dress.\footnote{This jewel was individually tooled, engraved and chased, and probably designed to be worn as a token of loyalty. \textit{Princely Magnificence}, pp.58-9.} On the reverse, the golden phoenix becomes an exact embodiment of the monarch, fluttering out of the flames under the crowned monogram. A garland of enamelled tudor roses and royal eglantine surrounds her like a laurel wreath, a classical symbol of power and victory.\footnote{Roy Strong, \textit{The cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan portraiture and pageantry} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp.68-73.}

The \textit{Phoenix Badge} [Figure 6] depicts a similar phoenix and profile, with a Latin verse by the Master of Requests, Walter Haddon. However, in the medal the emblem is used to express grief over the queen’s celibacy. Unlike coins, which were a strict royal prerogative, medals were not a genre entirely under control, and private subjects could commission them not to flatter Elizabeth but to

Figure 4. Nicholas Hilliard, \textit{Phoenix portrait} (detail), Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1575, oil on panel.

counsel her. The Latin inscription surrounding the medal laments that the queen’s beauty and virtue ‘should not uninjured enjoy perpetual life’ and bewails the fate of the ‘wretched English whose only Phoenix becomes, unhappy fate, the last’, thus subverting the idea of eternity that the emblem was
meant to signify. As Kevin Sharpe argues, ‘how images were received and treated, and by whom, both responded to and transformed their performance of meaning’, and emblems were no different. Therefore, by presenting herself as a phoenix Elizabeth also made herself available to interpretation by those critics of her decisions. Depending on context, the same emblems employed to construct and stage the queen’s image could be also used to subvert it.

Rosemary Freeman argues how persistent and how deep-rooted was the Elizabethan love for emblems and for allegory in all its forms. Allegory was an essential part of life, and its basis was social. The queen’s very clothes and jewelry were symbolic, and, at the time she ascended to the English throne, not only the royal family but also her courtiers shared the Tudor love for magnificence. In 1559, a Venetian ambassador at the state entry for Elizabeth’s coronation in London wrote that her court ‘so sparkled with jewels and gold collars that they cleared the air, though it snowed a little’. And few jewels symbolized kingship and majesty more than rings. In Anglo-Saxon England, a king could be described by the epithet ‘giver of rings’, and make ‘his distribution of rings at a feast in a hall, and the recipient drank to him’. In 1515, at an audience on St George’s Day, the Venetian ambassador was surprised by Henry VIII’s fingers which were ‘one mass of jeweled rings’, since in Italy it was thought bad taste to display so many. Elizabeth shared with her father a remarkable fondness for finger-rings, as they drew attention to her long slender fingers, of which she was proud, and were said to make ‘a display’. Paul Hentzner, in his ‘Journey into England,’ 1598, relates how the queen, after pulling off her glove, gave a Bohemian baron ‘her right hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels, a mark of particular favour’. This magnificence was a vital aspect of Elizabeth’s authority, and something that she deployed very effectively as a tool of governance and power.

Diana Scarisbrick observes that no other personal adornment carried such weight of symbolism as rings. If finger-rings were ‘universal objects supercharged with meaning’, the Chequers ring [Figure

36 Cited in Elizabeth: The Exhibition, p.200.
37 Sharpe, p.25.
38 Sharpe, p.18.
42 Princely Magnificence, p.8.
43 Princely Magnificence, p. 10.
46 Paul Hentzner, Paul Hentzner’s travels in England, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, translated by Horace, late Earl of Orford, and first printed by him at Strawberry Hill: to which is now added, Sir Robert Naunton’s Fragmenta regalia; ... with portraits and views (London: printed for Edward Jeffery, 1797), p. 50.
7] is supercharged with symbols of the Virgin Queen.48 Firstly, rings were proof of identity and symbols of power. Designed as a locket, the ring contains the enamelled busts both of the queen (in profile) and supposedly of her mother, Anne Boleyn.49 Both are shown wearing brooches, the former’s of ruby, the latter’s diamond. Elizabeth’s profile portrait acts as a reminder of her sovereignty, since coining was seen to be a prerogative intrinsic to the crown.50 It also suggests a date of manufacture circa 1575, the same as the Phoenix Portrait.51 Miniatures worn as jewels were mounted in precious frames, which affirmed their value and made an additional statement about the person portrayed.52 The bezel bears the monogram ER (Elizabeth Regina) in relief, the E made of expensive table-cut diamonds and the R of blue enamel. On each side, along the shank of the ring, there is a line of rubies set in gold. The white and red of the diamonds and the rubies, the most prestigious gems, are those of the Tudor rose and thus symbolize dynastic power.53

But, rings were believed to have many ‘virtues’ beyond their beauty and value. Diamonds protected their wearers against ‘enemies, wild beasts, venomous beasts and cruel men’. So, given the dangers faced by Elizabeth, it comes as no surprise that nearly one third of her collection was set with these stones.54 An inventory in the Secret Jewel-house at the Tower of London in 1550 described a ring with a ruby belonging to Henry VIII as ‘a Rubie that the kinge wore at the heling of pore people’.55

Renaissance rings were also a powerful visual marker of betrothal or marriage.56 The luminescent whiteness of both the mother-of-pearl body of the Chequers ring and its single pearl represent femininity and purity (along with power and rank). Their round shape and opalescent coloring evoke the image of the moon and create a connection with Diana, the goddess of chastity.57 Indeed, the exquisite materials in the Chequers Ring, coupled with the rich symbolism of the ring itself, contribute to the identification of Elizabeth as the Virgin Queen. Thus, by choosing these stones and pairing them

49 If the ring was, indeed, an homage to the queen from Edward Seymour, the miniature could be Elizabeth’s portrait as princess. In both The Family of Henry and Elizabeth as Princess the similarities of the face pattern with that of the miniature in the Chequers ring are remarkable, and they still were in the royal collection by 1975.
50 Sharpe, p. 155.
51 The dress and jewels wore by Elizabeth’s portrait in the ring are very similar to those depicted in the Phoenix Jewel and the Phoenix Medal: Principely Magnificence, p. 60.
53 Scarisbrick, Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery, p. 92.
54 Scarisbrick, Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery, p. 90; Principely Magnificence, p. 4.
55 Principely Magnificence, p. 33-4.
56 Aways-Dean, Bejewelled, p. 77.
Figure 7. Unknown, Chequers Ring, c. 1575, mother-of-pearl locket-ring, diam. 175mm. 

Courtesy of the Chequers Trust.

Figure 8. Unknown, Chequers Ring (detail), c. 1575, mother-of-pearl locket-ring, diam. 175mm. 

Courtesy of The Chequers Trust.
with a single pearl, *The Chequers Ring* might also represent Elizabeth’s love for her people and her symbolic marriage to England.\(^5\)

Within the ring, there is a small oval plate of gold, ornamented with a translucent red and green enamel, representing a phoenix rising in flames from an earl’s coronet [Figure 8].\(^6\) Unlike the *Phoenix portrait*, the phoenix in the *Chequers Ring* is not Elizabeth’s symbol but the badge of the Seymour family, granted by Henry VIII to Jane Seymour, his third wife and mother of his only son, after their marriage in 1536.\(^7\) The epitaph inscribed on her royal tomb at Windsor also used the phoenix to create an immediate connection between the birth of Prince Edward and the death of his mother thirteen days later, as only one phoenix could exist at a time.\(^8\) The location of the emblem beneath the bezel suggests that the ring might have been presented by Edward Seymour, son of the Duke of Somerset, as a token of loyalty to Elizabeth. According to Peter Burke, gifts in the Tudor court were ‘a kind of democracy, a way in which the relatively powerless could exert pressure on the powerful’, as the gift was always followed by the request of a favor.\(^9\) Seymour had lost the queen’s favor in 1560 after his secret marriage to Lady Katherine Grey, so the phoenix in the ring – his badge – could act as a reminder of the donor and his good wishes.\(^10\) The ring could even have been a New Year’s gift, as Seymour was sufficiently forgiven by 1576 to carry the sword of State before Elizabeth at the St. George’s day procession through Whitehall.\(^11\)

A contemporary signet ring with the arms of Sir Richard Lee [Figures 9 and 10] also reveals a concealed emblem in green enamel beneath the bezel - a grasshopper, the badge of London merchant, Sir Thomas Gresham.\(^12\) According to Scarisbrick, signet rings ‘served as their owner’s signature or as a sign of allegiance’.\(^13\) Thus, it is likely that Gresham gave such rings as presents to business associates or to those who had done him some service.\(^14\) This suggests that the phoenix in the *Chequers Ring* could also be a message of allegiance to Protestantism, as the phoenix also represented Edward VI.

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\(^7\) Howard de Walden, Thomas Evelyn Scott, Josephet Foster and Thomas Willement, *Banners, standards and badges from a Tudor manuscript in the College of Arms* (London: The De Walden Library, 1904), p. 19.


\(^9\) Princely Magnificence, p. 11.

\(^10\) New Year’s gifts from to Elizabeth’s favorite the Earl of Leicester often incorporated his badge of a bear and ragged stag. Princel Magnificence, pp. 38-40.


\(^12\) Aways-Dean, *Bejewelled*, p. 105.


Figure 9. Unknown, *The Lee ring* (reverse), c. 1544-75, enameled gold and chalcedony, diam. 260mm © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 10. Unknown, *The Lee ring* (obverse), c. 1544-75, enameled gold and chalcedony, diam. 260mm © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
This article has examined the circumstances that fostered an essentially emblematic style of royal representation, and how emblems, and more specifically the rich symbolism of the Phoenix emblem, contributed to make Queen Elizabeth’s image the essence of her authority in tumultuous times. The effacement of her body natural in favor of symbolism was a crucial step towards a new royal image, in which an ageless Elizabeth was, conveniently, no longer threatened by death. In the Phoenix Portrait, Nicholas Hilliard’s unique skills as miniaturist and goldsmith create a symbiosis between the sitter and the emblem, and so Elizabeth becomes the Phoenix. Roy Strong argues that the two-dimensional style and awkward pose render the queen a ‘wooden stylized icon of clothes and jewellery’. However, the portrait might appear iconic and flat precisely because it acts like a personal device that depends on the viewer’s ability to read its symbolic images.

Because of the multiple messages that the emblems could convey, the decoding of their meanings depended on both their context and audience. The high-status of both the Phoenix Portrait and the Chequers Ring suggest that they were intended to be seen and consumed by an educated elite. In the Chequer’s Ring, the supercharged symbolism of finger-rings paired with the phoenix makes such decoding more complex, and unravels different directions as to the artifact’s significance. If in the Phoenix Portrait Elizabeth becomes the jewel, in the Chequers Ring she is the jewel. Although the limits to our knowledge about the ownership of the ring should be acknowledged, its carefully selected materials and exquisite craftsmanship make it an object with profound connections to the Virgin Queen.

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68 Strong, Gloriana, p. 80.
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Weaponry and military equipment often has a role that extends beyond the merely functional. Through a juxtaposition of Shakespeare’s representation of Sir John Falstaff, with an early seventeenth-century rapier, this article explores how weaponry is used not only to communicate a potential threat, but may also indicate the status and even the philosophical and cultural positions of the bearers.

London in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a dangerous city: the routine bearing of arms in civilian life had spread from the aristocracy and gentry to less elevated members of society. The mere possession of a sword was therefore no longer a marker of social distinction. The type of weapon borne, however, could be strongly indicative of social and economic status, and might also suggest the philosophical and cultural stances of its owner. Although there has been some resistance to the forging of such conceptual connections, notably among twenty-first century practitioners of renaissance martial arts, this essay seeks to demonstrate that, during the early modern period, weapons were laden with meaning, and that such meaning was so widely recognised that it could be used as an identifying shorthand in the literature of the period.

The importance of the choice of bladed weapon, whether in military or civilian life, is underlined by the volume of contemporary writing on the matter, wherein one of the most contentious issues was the place of the newly-fashionable rapier. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the rapier (commonly teamed with a main gauche dagger) became the blade of choice for gentlemen,

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supplanting the more traditional sword and buckler.\textsuperscript{3} Any discussion of the emergence of the rapier is complicated by problems of terminology, but by the end of the sixteenth century, the term can be securely attached to long, narrow-bladed swords, particularly suited to the thrusting manoeuvres advocated by continental fencing masters. These weapons were better adapted to individual combat than to the field of battle, where the enemy might well be armoured, and space confined. It has been suggested that the word ‘rapier’ is derived from the Spanish espada ropera, or ‘dress sword’, thus emphasising its importance in terms of display more than its functionality.\textsuperscript{4} Indeed, in England, the domains of weaponry and dress were firmly coupled in royal proclamations which sought to curb excess in both, as Edmund Howes reports:

He was held the greatest Gallant that had the deepest Ruffe and longest Rapier: the offence to the eye of one, and the hurt unto the life of the Subject that came by the other, caused her Majesty to make proclamation against them both, and to place Selected grave Citizens at every gate, to cut the Ruffes and breake the Rapiers poynts of all passengers that exceeded a yeard in length, of their Rapiers, and a nayle of a yeard in depth of their Ruffes.\textsuperscript{5}

The popularity of rapiers had been stimulated by the travels of wealthy young men to Italy, and by the arrival of Italian fencing masters in London, in the 1580s. Men such as Rocco Bonetti and Vincentio Saviolo maintained expensive schools, which attracted the sons of the nobility and gentry, whom they could charge substantial sums for their services.\textsuperscript{6} Predictably, these weapons came to be associated both with these wealthy patrons, and with an ‘Italianate’ style, attracting robust criticism on these grounds.\textsuperscript{7} In the literature of the period, rapiers are often described disparagingly as ‘bird-spits’\textsuperscript{8} and the English fencing-master, George Silver, dismissed them as ‘fit for children, not fit for men’.\textsuperscript{9} Much scholarly opinion maintains that rapiers were exclusively civilian weapons.\textsuperscript{10} While the trend seems to have been in that direction, the testimony of Sir John Smythe, a solider and diplomat, suggests that they were also taken into battle, despite their practical drawbacks:

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{3} Sidney Anglo, \textit{The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe} (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000).
\item\textsuperscript{4} Capwell, p.29.
\item\textsuperscript{5} John Stow, \textit{Annales}, (Continued by Edmund Howes), (London, 1631) p.869.
\item\textsuperscript{6} Stow, p.64.
\item\textsuperscript{7} George Silver, \textit{Paradoxes of Defence}, sig. B1v, (London: Edward Blount, 1599).
\item\textsuperscript{8} As, for example, in Thomas Dekker, \textit{The Shoemakers’ Holiday}, Sc.18, in \textit{Renaissance Drama} ed. by Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2014).
\item\textsuperscript{9} George Silver, cited in Egerton Castle, \textit{Schools and Masters of Fence from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century} (London: [n.p.] 1892).
\item\textsuperscript{10} E.g. Anglo, p.37; see also, ‘Rapier’, \textit{V&A Search the Collections} ([London]: V&A, 2018) <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/o97281/rapier/> [accessed 05 April 2018].
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Rapiers of a yard and a quarter long the blades, or more [. . .], and made of a verie hard temper to fight in private fraies, in lighting with any blow upon armour, do presently break and so become unprofitable. 11

Even within the domain of civilian fights, however, the rapier had its critics, most notably George Silver. Although Silver clearly had a commercially protectionist agenda, he shared Smythe’s concerns regarding the utility of rapiers. He argued that the increasing length of these weapons made them not only difficult to draw, but also hard to manage beyond the formal exercises of the fencing school.12 In addition, Silver observed that the *politesse* of these schools did not apply in the wider world and that ‘many valiant men thinking themselves by their practises to be skilful in their weapons, are yet manie times in their fight sore hurt, and manie times slain by men of small skill, or none at all.’13 The various criticisms of the rapier imply that contemporaries discerned distinct categories of armed civilians: the effete, ‘Italianate’ man, exemplified by Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*, who practised a mannered, choreographed martial art, and his antithesis, the traditional English brawler, such as Falstaff.14

The rapier, then, was a controversial and symbolic weapon, as well as an important part of the ‘panoply’ of the gentleman of fashion and the courtier. A particularly interesting early seventeenth-century example of this type of weapon is held in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. The provenance indicates only that the item was purchased from Bland and Foster, sword cutlers in London, by the future George IV ‘before 1806.’ It is an English rapier although, by tradition, it is said to have belonged to the Emperor Charles VI (1685-1740). Its dating (1600-1625) indicates that he was not the first owner.

The blade has a single cutting edge (hence ‘back rapier’) ending in the relatively fine point associated with swords of this type. Functionally, it is a relatively modest weapon, being 99.5 cm in length, of which the blade represents some 84.6 cm. These dimensions suggest that it would be easy to draw, unlike some of the more extravagant versions, whose blades might be 115 cm or longer. The blade is German and thought to have been manufactured in Solingen, a city famous for the skill of its cutlers, but the richly-decorated hilt is of English manufacture.15

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12 Smythe, p.6.


15 Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 67121, [https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/67121/back-rapier> [accessed 05 April 2018].
Figure 1. Back rapier, c.1600-25, iron and steel, wood, silver wire, silver, gilt, 99.5 cm in length, Windsor Castle © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2018.

Figure 2. Detail of pommel, The Royal Collection Trust, © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2018.
The *ricasso* and top-most part of the sharpened blade are etched, gilded, and inscribed on either side with apposite Latin quotations: ‘*Qui gladio ferit, gladio perit*’ (‘He who wounds by the sword, dies by the sword’)\(^\text{16}\) and ‘*Consilio pollet cui vim natura negavit*’. The first inscription is biblical, while the second is a quotation from a collection of Latin apothegms and can be translated in a number of ways, one of which is ‘he to whom nature has denied strength, gains his ends through craft’.\(^\text{17}\) In translating ‘*consilio*’ as ‘craft’, the motto is framed to acknowledge both the skill of the cutler and that of the swordsman. Having said this, the sentence can also be construed as: ‘He to whom nature has denied strength prevails through good counsel,’ suggesting that the blade might have been owned by an individual with extensive responsibilities.\(^\text{18}\) Both interpretations, however, point to an owner of delicate constitution whose intelligence will be required to supplement the sword, and counter the advantage of brute strength in an opponent. The question inevitably arises as to for whom the message is intended: perhaps the most likely addressee is the bearer himself. The common practice of inscription of the blade emphasises the sword as an extension and a projection of its owner: while the wording may have some invocatory or protective value, a fine etched and gilded inscription announces the wealth and status of the owner.

The development of the swept hilt is thought to have been a response to the decline in popularity of the buckler: as the swordsman no longer had an independent defensive device, some alternative protection was required for the dominant hand. What further distinguishes this rapier hilt, however, is its elegance: both hilt and pommele are lavishly decorated, being encrusted and overlaid with silver and gold.\(^\text{19}\) The decoration takes the form of stylised acanthus plants, from which emerge winged female figures. While such ‘grotesques’ are popular in the decorative arts of the period, the female-acanthus motif seems to recur from Classical times onwards as, for example, on the neck of the Apulian Red-Figure ritual vase shown in Figure 3. No consistent interpretation seems to have been established for these hybrid figures, although it is tempting to postulate the idea of renewal or transition, especially given the funerary associations of the vase. In these images, the individual is presented as the fruit of a much larger and self-renewing organism, making them an apposite, if poignant, reference in relation to a death-dealing, if elegant, artefact. The hilt of the rapier is also counterfeit-damascened, a decorative technique that is seen on many European bladed weapons from the 1530s onwards.\(^\text{20}\) Given their

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\(^{16}\) Loosely based on Matthew 26.52.

\(^{17}\) Dionysius Cato, *Catonis Disticha* 2.9


\(^{19}\) Spielman.

display value, it is perhaps not surprising that, during the reign of Elizabeth I, weapons were covered by the same sumptuary laws that governed apparel. In a proclamation of 1580, it was specified that ‘Damasked’ weapons were to be carried only by ‘a Knight of the order, one of the privie Counsell, a Gentleman of the privie chamber’. Clearly, this rapier, although dating from slightly later than the proclamation, was intended for a person of high social status. It projects for its owner the identity of a cultured, educated renaissance gentleman, capable of exercising intellectual, as well as martial skill.

Rapiers were evolving throughout the early modern period, but retained a cutting edge until the end of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the Italian fencing schools emphasised thrusting, rather

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22 Capwell, p.32.
than cutting manoeuvres and this, together with the trend towards ever longer, narrower blades, prompted royal concern. Elizabeth I’s proclamation of 1562 sought to prevent the use of weapons ‘sharpened in such a sort, as may appear the usage of them cannot tend to defence, which ought to be the very meaning of the wearing of weapons in times of peace, but to murder and evident death.’ This stated, the discourse surrounding rapiers and their bearers is varied: official alarm at their lethality contrasts with the mockery and disdain they provoked in literary and other unofficial circles, and the criticism of their practical limitations by experts such as Smythe and Silver. Furthermore, there appears to have being an ongoing dialogue among fencing masters of the period, in which the detailed method and finesse advanced by the Italian schools was opposed by the ‘manly’ English tradition. Indeed, references in contemporary literature to ‘rapier men’ and ‘sword-and-buckler men’ suggest that the practitioners of each approach formed discrete groups or tribes, each with its own culture. Italian master Vincentio Saviolo, for example, boasted that the advanced skills he taught could offer real advantages against less cultivated opponents, while George Silver’s riposte was that the Italian methods contributed more to fashion and culture than to fighting prowess. It is with some delectation that he relates the defeat and merciful sparing of his major rival ‘Signior Rocco’ [Bonetti] by one Austen Bagger, ‘not standing much upon his skill, but carrying the valiant heart of an Englishman’, using a sword and buckler. For the English master, this represented the triumph of ‘honest’ native violence over continental chicanery.

In contradistinction to Silver’s stout defence of traditional methods, John Florio, an Anglo-Italian author and translator, declared the buckler to be ‘a clownish, dastardly weapon, and not for a Gentleman’. Although his position might seem as partisan as Silver’s, the dramatic literature of the period suggests that Florio’s views were widely held by Englishmen, and Shakespeare uses the sword and buckler to designate ne’er-do-wells and troublemakers. In fact, while there are thirty references to rapiers in the Shakespeare canon, there are only four to the sword and buckler, three of which come from Henry IV, parts one and two. Significantly, the other reference is in Romeo and Juliet (I.i.15), where the stage directions for the entry of the pugnacious Capulet retainers, Samson and Gregory, specify that they are carrying these weapons.

23 Cited in Capwell, p.30.
26 Silver, pp.65-66.
The pairing of sword and buckler was considered old-fashioned, implying that those who still carried them were of modest financial means and socially undesirable, and there was a strong association with ruffians. In Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* which was first staged in 1614, for example, Scrivener, who presents the ‘Induction’, exhorts his audience ‘neither to look back to the sword-and-buckler age of Smithfield, but content himself with the present’.28

By the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, this combination of weapons provided a convenient shorthand for authors, who could rely upon their audiences interpreting it correctly. Shakespeare uses such shorthand as early as the first act in in *I Henry IV*, when Hotspur refers scathingly to his Lancaster rival as ‘that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales’.29 Given this background, it seems fitting that Sir John Falstaff should emerge from his famous ‘triumph’ at Shrewsbury, to make his first appearance in *2 Henry IV*, preceded by his ‘mandrake’ page, who carries his sword and buckler.30 Just as his defeat of Hotspur is illusory, Falstaff’s equipment indicates that his knightly status is similarly questionable, in spirit, if not in fact. This scene has great visual comic potential, as the diminutive page struggles on stage, encumbered by weaponry, followed by his corpulent master, in solemn procession. Falstaff, then, is the ‘living’ vindication of Florio’s disdain for the ‘clownish’ buckler, and it might be speculated that Shakespeare’s familiarity with the linguist’s work influenced his arming of the fat knight.31 In any case, both writers clearly shared the perception that the buckler was not a badge of knighthood.

Given that Falstaff cannot rely on a historical back-story to support his characterisation, he is more exclusively a projection of the language with which Shakespeare endowed him than are the other principal characters in the *Henry IV* plays. Nevertheless, Shakespeare creates for him a personal history, with textual hints that point to his earlier life as a brawler. According to Justice Shallow, Falstaff had been a page in the household of the Duke of Norfolk as a boy, and was thus probably the scion of a prominent local family.32 As Shallow meanders further down the by-ways of his memory, however, he recalls various beatings dealt out by the young Falstaff, and that he was a ‘good back-swordman’.33 A.R. Humphreys, in the Arden edition of *2 Henry IV*, identifies backslashes with fencing practice

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32 *2 Henry IV*, III.2.24.
33 *2 Henry IV*, III.2.24.
undertaken with sticks designed for the purpose, and this might seem to support the notion of Falstaff as a man who has played the role of knight, rather than truly fulfilling that responsibility. However, a ‘back-sword’ is also defined as a sword with a single sharpened edge, as opposed to the broadsword, for example, where both edges are sharpened. Furthermore, this second documented meaning of the word antedates the first by more than a century (1611, compared with 1747).  

Given that 2 Henry IV is thought to have been written before 1599, it seems that the battle-shy captain has a pugnacious past, consistent with the image of a sword-and-buckler man.

It cannot be disputed, however, that from the moment he first appears in 1 Henry IV, Sir John is a knight in decline. He was presumably deemed worthy of knighthood at some stage, even if solely through his inherited social position. Although his origins are gentle, his tastes and activities, mainly drinking and consorting with prostitutes, are coarse and reflect his downward social trajectory. Falstaff’s past, however, challenges the view of him as a coward, suggesting instead an extinguished firebrand and ex-‘swaggerer’ who has become older, fatter and wiser. His sword and buckler position him firmly in the ‘tribe’ of English-style brawlers, albeit as an emeritus.

So strong was the association of bucklers with antisocial behaviour that they have entered the language in a way that reflects how both they and their owners had come to be perceived, by the late sixteenth century. In 2 Henry IV, Justice Shallow fondly remembers his coterie of friends as ‘swinge-bucklers’. The related term ‘swash-buckler’ has persisted to the present day, although perhaps without its sixteenth-century sense of ruffians who announce their arrival by beating their swords on small shields. Bucklers were highly accessible, being for sale at ‘every haberdasher’s’, according to Stow and, thus within the financial range of ‘roarers’ and impecunious knights. These small shields could be attached to the owner’s belt and forming an important part of their visual image, as well as being conveniently placed for ‘swashing.’ A man in the habit of wearing a buckler might well have a taste for violence and certain areas of London, and just outside the city walls, were notorious for the activities of such quarrelsome characters. West Smithfield (about 15 minutes’ walk from Falstaff’s haunts in Eastcheap), for example, was renowned as a ground for brawling to the extent that it was known as Ruffians’ Hall and, more specifically, as ‘the usual place of frays and common fighting during the time that swords and bucklers were in use’. These were pragmatic weapons, designed to preserve the life of the bearer and defeat his opponent, not to cut a dashing figure and conduct an elegant ‘tap for

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35 2 Henry IV, III.2.20.
36 Stow, p.869.
tap, and so part fair’. Indeed, Falstaff uses this last phrase merely to frustrate the Chief Justice and win their verbal skirmish, the only form of fencing in which he will engage. The subtext is that, like George Silver, the fat knight has little time for courtly niceties: both his feigned death at the battle of Shrewsbury and the post-mortem wounds he inflicts on Hotspur in Part One, indicate that he is willing to stoop for his weapons, both metaphorically and figuratively. 

Although the context of the Henry IV plays is military and, thus, the usage of a sword and buckler might have much to recommend it, it is significant that it is only Falstaff’s weaponry is that is specified in such detail. Significantly, when he is dealing with the unruly Pistol at Hostess Quickly’s tavern, Sir John orders his page ‘Give me my rapier, boy’, which he then uses to subdue the ‘swaggering’ ancient. Falstaff may be producing the same blade that he has carried throughout the play but, in his choice of language, he is firmly reclaiming the ground of social, as well as military superior in this tavern brawl, underlining the symbolic value of the weapon. For once, the knight is re-imposing a sort of order in a situation where Pistol has stolen his place as chief disruptive influence, as well as challenging him on the linguistic front: Falstaff is the superior ruffian.

While Sir John may be thought to share some of intellectual traits referenced on the Windsor rapier, his ‘craft’ reflects the improvised and ungentlemanly methods supported by Silver, rather than the courtly ‘dances’ of the continental fencing masters. He is the antithesis of the Italianate Englishman, not only in his weaponry, but also in his habits, attitudes and demeanour. For Sir John, fencing is to be done with language, and within this domain he displays a degree of skill and sheer chutzpah that buys him a place at the table of his social superiors, for a time. In the field of combat, the rules of chivalry, or indeed any other code, have no value: in his own famous words, ‘honour is a mere scutcheon’ and in his unchivalrous feigning of death, he aspires to be ‘the true and perfect image of life indeed’, again mirroring the stance of the English master.

Weaponry may be dismissed as brutish and functional but, while the pen is proverbially mightier than the sword, the latter is certainly not silent in its partnership with the fighting man of the early modern period. The Windsor rapier speaks to the wealth and status and possibly even the stature, or physical robustness of its owner, both through its material qualities, its dimensions and its inscriptions. Likewise, Falstaff’s weaponry is consistent with his déclassé position, with his history as a brawler, and his unwillingness to be constrained by codes of behaviour, just as his linguistic weapons allow him to escape the bounds of his social and dramatic role.

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38 2 Henry IV, II.1.192.
39 1 Henry IV, V.4.110-128.
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41 1 Henry IV, V.1.131-40; V.4.128.
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The significance of honour in late Elizabethan political culture.

ADAM DIAPER

This article explores the potential, latent within late sixteenth-century discourses of honour, for political and moral dissidence. In a letter to the earl of Essex, urging the latter’s reconciliation with the Queen, Lord Keeper Egerton displays an understanding of honour as the monarch’s esteem for a subject in return for loyal service. Conversely, for Essex, honour does not consist simply in obedience, but is the more general reward and recognition of virtue. In notoriously asking, ‘cannot Princes erre’, the earl suggests that care for one’s honour might dictate refusal to comply with a sovereign’s wishes. The extremes to which Essex’s position might hypothetically lead are demonstrated by Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, in which the senators justify their assassination of Caesar in terms of honour.

If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honour in one eye, and death i’th’ other,
And I will look on both indifferently.
For let the gods so speed me as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death. ¹

Few in late-sixteenth-century England, with any experience of aristocratic culture, would have been surprised by the premium that Shakespeare’s Brutus places on the attainment of honour. The ‘reward of virtue’, honour marked out an individual as excellent in his or her particular vocation.²

² In 1586, Sir John Ferne deemed any man, whose occupation was ‘laudable’, capable of acquiring honour - ranging from farmers and merchants to those who practised ‘the art and skill of plays’: John Ferne, The Blazon of Gentrie (London, 1586), pp. 7-8, 69. For Francis Bacon, friend and adviser to the earl of Essex in the 1590s, ‘The winning of Honour is but the revealing of a man’s virtue’: Francis Bacon, ‘Of Honour and Reputation’, in The Major Works of Francis Bacon, ed. by Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.86. Traditionally, noble lineage had been of equal importance, but,
The routes to honour were many, varied and often conflicting. Despite this, honour was not a subjective condition, akin to an emotional state, but was always bestowed on an individual by another or others. Broadly speaking, it tended to reward service to ‘the general good’ rather than purely personal accomplishments or private kindness between individuals. Consequently, the greatest honour tended to be open only to men of standing, who participated in the defence or governance of the realm. Within these broad parameters an individual received honour less for the nature or goal of his activities, but rather for the manner in which he went about them. Central to the maintenance of honour were such moral attributes as faithfulness, honesty and courage. Hence, the system of values associated with honour cannot be described as ideological – it did not specify the creation or preservation of any particular political, religious or social configuration. This allowance for moral autonomy, combined with the ardent ambition that honour inspired and the punctilious standards it demanded, meant that honour had often provided a conducive framework for political resistance. By the late sixteenth century, honour’s oppositional potential was clearly still alive. However, in the highly moralised, increasingly ideological climate of post-reformation politics, honour’s moral autonomy might now prove a liability. Without a unifying moral project, the culture of honour risked becoming toothless against the status quo and vulnerable to the competing aspirations of its keenest devotees.

In the estimation of William Camden, ‘No man was more ambitious of glory by vertue’ than Robert Devereux, 2nd earl of Essex – yet, ‘no man more careless of all things else’. Combining military enthusiasm with political ambition, Essex proved a highly disruptive presence on the Privy Council in the 1590s. Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar clearly reflects the intensifying acrimony and factionalism of fin-de-siècle politics, in which ambitious courtiers continually jostled for position, power and honour. Written in 1599 – ‘the climacteric year in Essex’s life’ – the play has been read convincingly as a


direct warning to the earl of the dangers of his mounting hubris. ⁹ Patronised by Essex’s friend, the earl of Southampton, and a member of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, who regularly performed at court, Shakespeare would very likely have been far better versed in court news and gossip than the average Elizabethan. However, the focus of this study is less the quotidian and contingent aspects of politics in the 1590s, but more the decade’s wider political culture – in particular, what we can learn about the political significance of honour from both Shakespeare’s imaginative text and a set of letters from an early crisis in Essex’s career.

Both Julius Caesar and the epistolary exchange from 1598 between the earl of Essex and Lord Keeper Egerton afford an insight into how an aristocrat’s care for his personal honour might fuel hostility towards authority. ¹⁰ In Julius Caesar members of the Roman senatorial class resent Caesar’s domination of politics as a monopolisation of the means to attain honour in service to the state. According to Cassius, Caesar:

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\text{doth bestride the narrow world } \\
\text{Like a Colossus, and we petty men } \\
\text{Walk under his huge legs and peep about } \\
\text{To find ourselves dishonourable graves.} ¹¹
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Similarly, exclusion from the political process was the prompt for the earl of Essex’s anger that sparked his ‘great quarrel’ with the Queen. During discussions with the Queen in 1598 about whom should be appointed the next Lord Deputy of Ireland, Essex, according to Camden, ‘obstinately perswaded her that Sir George Carew was rather to be sent, that so he might ridde him from the Court, yet could not by perswasions draw her unto it’.¹² The Queen’s intransigence provoked Essex, who ‘uncivilly turneth his backe, as it were in contempt, with a scornfull looke’.¹³ From here the situation soon escalated, the Queen cuffing Essex’s ear and Essex laying his hand on his sword before sweeping from Court.

Essex’s ‘contempt’, incurred simply by the disregard of his opinion on one matter, gives an early glimpse of the crisis that would ensue from permanently preventing the earl from exercising his will freely and honourably in the political realm. Whilst in his letter to Egerton he deems himself to have suffered ‘the vilest of all indignities’ at the Queen’s hand, Essex reserves his greatest outrage for

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¹⁰ Copies of both Egerton’s letter and Essex’s response have survived in various early seventeenth-century miscellanies and letter-books. Their first printing was in John Speed’s History of Great Britaine (1611). The texts of both letters are included as appendices to this article, taken from the 1614 edition of Speed’s History. All references for quotations from the letters are to the appendices. For discussion of the letters’ textual and bibliographical history, see Joel Swann, ‘The second earl of Essex’s “Great Quarrel” and its letters’, Lives and Letters, 4.1 (2012), 133-51.
¹¹ Julius Caesar, I.2.134-37.
¹² Camden, p.493.
¹³ Camden, p.493.
Egerton’s own expectation that, irrespective of whom is to blame for the ‘great quarrel’, Essex should still ‘sue, yeld, and submit, to your soveraigne’.14 This would, apparently, be to ‘serve her as a villaine, as a slave’.15 Just as for Cassius, self-abasement would have been the ultimate dishonour for Essex. Cassius cannot bear that he ‘must bend his body / If Caesar carelessly but nod on him’, while, for Essex, returning to Court would necessitate ‘wearing the false marke of the shadow of honour’.16

Rather than simply dismissing these sentiments as the petulant tantrums of haughty men, unaccustomed to submission, we should try to understand the precise reasons for these reactions. To have cynically abased himself before authority would have been dishonest for Essex, just as it is for Cassius: the latter believes himself and Brutus to be Caesar’s equal (‘I was born free as Caesar, so were you / We have both fed as well, and we can both / Endure the winter’s cold as well as he’);17 and Essex maintains that in his quarrel with Elizabeth ‘my cause is good I know it’.18 After an expression of such conviction, a volte-face would have entailed immediate dishonour, branding Essex as a self-serving sycophant. Unable to convince anyone of his genuine commitment to the good of his country, he would never have been able to attain honour through politics again.

The magnetic appeal of the pursuit of honour is apparent from both Essex’s and Brutus’s rejection of the idea, conceived in adversity, of removing themselves from the political centre. Despite his refusal to return at Edgerton’s behest, Essex was back at Court within two months of his departure. And, whilst Brutus considers abandoning Rome to become ‘a villager’, he remains and assassinates Caesar.19 Brutus presents his actions as motivated by ‘pity for the general wrong of Rome’,20 but his soliloquy in II.1 makes evident that it is opportunities to attain honour that figure most highly in his conception of the ‘general good’. Unable to list any existing examples of Caesar’s ‘abuse of greatness’, Brutus suggests that future injustices are likely, yet still only mentions one, namely that, having ‘attain[ed] the utmost round’ of ‘young ambition’s ladder’, Caesar might now ‘unto the ladder turn […] his back’.21 Brutus’s chief (possibly only) motive for killing Caesar is to advance the political careers of young, honour-hungry men of senatorial class - among whom, of course, Brutus, himself, must be counted.

The earl of Essex had never previously allowed himself to be curtailed by Elizabeth’s displeasure. In 1589, despite having been forbidden by the Queen, he joined Drake’s expedition to

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14 Appendix 2, I.39; Appendix 1, I.34.
15 Appendix 2, I.32.
16 Julius Caesar, I.2.117-18; Appendix 2, I.19.
17 Julius Caesar, I.2.97-99.
18 Appendix 2, I.44.
19 Julius Caesar, I.2.171.
20 Julius Caesar, 3.1.170.
21 Julius Caesar, II.1.18, 24, 22, 25.
Portugal, on which he distinguished himself.\textsuperscript{22} Even in his letter to Egerton, in which he insists on his continued absence from court, he hints at his plans for his own return. Defending himself from Egerton’s accusation that ‘you forsake your country, when it hath most neede of your counsel or helpe’, Essex maintains that ‘no occasion of performance [of his private duty to his country] shall offer it selfe, but I will meete it halfeway’.\textsuperscript{23} The question now, though, was whether the magnitude of Essex’s aspirations would be met with resistance from Elizabeth and the Cecils. The Queen’s refusal to listen to Essex regarding one appointment could not have boded well – especially when viewed in the light of Shakespeare’s presentation of the extreme defiance of authority to which young aristocrats might be driven by their consuming hunger for honour.

The play, in fact, presents one scenario very much akin to that of Essex and Elizabeth’s ‘great quarrel’. In III.1 various senators plead with Caesar ‘For the repealing of [Metellus’] banished brother’.\textsuperscript{24} Implacable, Caesar responds that he remains ‘as constant as the Northern star’.\textsuperscript{25} By this point in Act III, the alternative prospects of self-imposed exile from the political centre and dishonourable subservience have both been rejected; the imperative for honour can only be discharged by violent resistance to authority. Caesar’s refusal to recall Publius Cimber is met with the conspirators’ knives. The similarity between Essex’s impulses in his letter to Lord Egerton and those of Brutus and Cassius in \textit{Julius Caesar} now suggests a conclusion to Essex’s story akin to theirs, thus foreshadowing the events of February 1601. Then, denied the honour of political involvement, military service, and access to the Queen, Essex took action in an effort to repeal his own banishment. Given the destructive potential of the intense will to honour in late-Tudor aristocratic culture, it is surely noteworthy that neither Essex, nor the fictional Brutus and Cassius, finally secured for themselves a lasting, honourable involvement in the leadership of their respective states.

Peter Lake has recently argued that in \textit{Julius Caesar} the conspirators’ failure to hold on to power is fundamentally due to their false assumption that the Roman people value honour as much as they do.\textsuperscript{26} The conspirators’ justification of Caesar’s murder rests on their identification of him as a tyrant. Immediately on Caesar’s death, Cinna proclaims ‘Liberty, Freedom, Tyranny is dead!’ and requests that someone ‘cry it about the streets’.\textsuperscript{27} In response to Brutus’s speech in the forum, in which the people are informed that if ‘Caesar were living’, they would ‘die all slaves’, a member of the crowd

\textsuperscript{22} In Lisbon, while the rest of the English forces withdrew, ‘the noble Essex in the courage of his martiall bloud, ranne his spear and brake it against the Gates of that City: demanding allowed if any Spaniard mewed therein durst adventure forth in favour of his Mistresse to break a staffe with him’: John Speed, p.865.
\textsuperscript{23} Appendix 1, I.19; Appendix 2, I.29.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Julius Caesar}, III.1.51.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Julius Caesar}, III.1.60.
\textsuperscript{26} Peter Lake, pp.465-75, especially p.474.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Julius Caesar}, III.1.78-79.
concludes that ‘This Caesar was a tyrant’. Yet, it is obvious that the substance of Caesar’s alleged tyranny impinges only on the senatorial classes, not on the mass of people. Their low status precludes them from ever gaining the honour attendant on climbing ‘young ambition’s ladder’ and so they have no reason to care whether Caesar ‘turns his back unto it’. Mark Antony reveals this to them, his famous repetition that ‘Brutus is an honourable man’ effectively devaluing the term. Rather than honour, what is of direct concern and relevance to the lives of the plebs is material gain and Anthony shows how, especially by the terms of his will, Caesar’s material generosity demands the people’s love and their retribution of his murder. It is the resulting disorder that forces the conspirators to flee, and which allows Mark Anthony and Octavius to gain a foothold from which they eventually vanquish Brutus’s and Cassius’s forces.

A similar narrative is apparent in the earl of Essex’s actions three years after his ‘great quarrel’. On 8th February 1601, the earl took to the streets of London, appealing for Londoners to join him and march to the court ‘for ayde to defend the queene, Religion and his life’. It was widely known that the earl was popular in London and that his honour was admired and promoted there. In Henry V (1599), Shakespeare imagined how Essex might have been met later that year, had he returned victoriously from Ireland:

> Were now the general of our gracious empress,  
> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,  
> Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,  
> How many would the peaceful city quit  
> To welcome him!  

Even in 1600, after Essex’s disgrace and house imprisonment, prints of a portrait of the earl circulated the capital, in which he was pictured in military dress, on horseback, and identified by the annotation as ‘vertues honour’. Yet, in 1601 no-one rallied to the earl’s side. Like the plebs of Rome, Londoners had little reason to risk themselves to preserve the honour of an aristocrat, especially when Essex, unlike Brutus, did not even try to present his grievances as part of a wider threat to honour in general. Essex and his supporters seem to have been mistaken in assuming that popularity would function in a similar way to the honourable ties of fealty between lord and vassal, where, if the former rebelled

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28. *Julius Caesar*, III.1.22-23, 70.  
against the crown, the latter would follow suit, regardless of any personal grievance. By the late sixteenth century, London was no longer feudal, obligations of legal contract trumping those of fealty.

Whilst there was little incentive for Londoners to join the earl, there were considerable deterrents. Various reports express incredulity that Essex could have been so foolish to have defied the Queen’s authority and to have expected much of London to have done so, too.\(^{33}\) Whilst fear of punishment was likely to have been the chief reason for siding with the \textit{status quo}, the possibility has to be considered of mass, internalised commitment to the value and importance of obedience rather than resistance. The majority of the country would have heard the ‘homily on obedience’ at least once a year, which threatened ‘no less pain than everlasting damnation to all disobedient persons, to all resisters against [...] general and common authority’.\(^{34}\) Obedience, even to the most corrupt ruler, was necessary, as belief in providence meant that his or her rule must have been decreed by God.\(^{35}\) The Reformation’s union of Church and state had rendered England’s a sacral kingship, where there could be little distinction between treason and heresy. In such a context, it became almost impossible for honour to wield the same potency as a language of opposition when looking down the double barrel shotgun of both monarch and God. Rather than the people’s acquisitiveness as in \textit{Julius Caesar}, it was, as Mervyn James has shown, the overwhelming exigency of obedience that in 1601 quashed the pretensions of embattled honour.\(^{36}\)

Egerton’s letter to Essex in 1598 made starkly apparent this opposition between honour and obedience. Despite his friendly concern for Essex, Egerton pulls no punches in stipulating the gravity of Essex’s refusal to ‘humbly […] yeele and submit’:\(^{37}\)

\begin{quote}
You faile in that indissoluble duty which you owe to your most gracious soveraigne. A duty imposed upon you, not by nature or policy onely, but by that religious and sacred band, wherein the divine Majesty of almighty God hath by the rule of Christianitie obliged you.\(^{38}\)
\end{quote}

Specifically, Egerton denies the understanding, critical in honour culture, that the relationship between lord and vassal is reciprocal and, thus, that continued loyalty and service to a lord is only justifiable for as long as the latter upholds the ways of good lordship. For Egerton, ‘betweene [your soveraigne] and


\(^{35}\) ‘good order and obedience’, p.109.


\(^{37}\) Appendix 1, l.32.

\(^{38}\) Appendix 1, ll.19-22.
you there can bee no proportion of duty’.\textsuperscript{39} Whilst Essex accepts his allegiance to the Queen as an ‘indissoluble duety’, he does not see the ‘duety of attendance’ as such, suggesting that Elizabeth has somehow forfeited her right to expect it of Essex.\textsuperscript{40} Indeed, Essex makes clear his reciprocal conception of his relationship with the Queen in his notorious string of questions:

\begin{quote}
When this scandall was given mee, nay when the vilest of all indignities are done unto mee, doth Religion enforce me to serve? doth God require it? is it impiety not to doe it? why? cannot princes erre? cannot subjects receive wrong? is an earthly power or authority infinite? \textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

Refusing to ‘subscribe to these principles’, Essex implies that princes can err;\textsuperscript{42} that through unjust treatment of their subjects they can nullify their subjects’ duty of service; and that their authority falls only within the remit of what is just and right.

Essex’s efforts to deploy the language of honour in defiance of monarchical authority are, however, seriously hamstrung by the fact that, through the course of the sixteenth century, the language of honour was ‘nationalised’ and incorporated into Tudor doctrines of absolute obedience to the monarch.\textsuperscript{43} Henry VIII had vigorously promoted a fresh conception of the monarch as the ‘fount of honour’, whereby honour could be bestowed only by the monarch or his officials and was awarded purely for service to the crown. Hence, in his letter, Egerton can confidently stress, without concern for the earl’s honesty, that ‘there can bee no dishonour or hurt to yeelde’.\textsuperscript{44} Essex, by contrast, espouses an older brand of honour. Rooted in mediaeval notions of Fortune as unpredictable, this prized a man’s ability to stand steadfast against the vicissitudes of life and remain faithful to the people and causes, to which he had committed himself. Thus, Essex not only boasts of his ‘strength and constancy […] in suffering, whatever shall be imposed upon me’, but presents the source of his misery, the Queen, as ‘fortune [who] is blind’, bombarding the earl with ‘violent and unseasonable stormes’.\textsuperscript{45} The classic example of the differences between these two conflicting systems of honour is found in the Pilgrimage of Grace. The earl of Norfolk had no qualms in turning on the rebels, despite previously having promised them an amnesty: ‘I shall observe no part [in] what other might call honour distained’, for, ‘none oath nor promise, made for policy to serve […] mine only master and sovereign, can distain me’.\textsuperscript{46} Diametrically opposed to this was the position of Lord Darcy, a prominent noble amongst the

\text\textsuperscript{39} Appendix 1, ll.34-35.
\textsuperscript{40} Appendix 2, ll.30, 31.
\textsuperscript{41} Appendix 2, ll.38-40.
\textsuperscript{42} Appendix 2, l.41.
\textsuperscript{43} For an account of this process, see Mervyn James, ‘English politics and the concept of honour’.
\textsuperscript{44} Appendix 1, l.37.
\textsuperscript{45} Appendix 2, ll.45-46, 34, 9.
rebels. When asked by the King’s herald to capture the Pilgrimage’s leader, Robert Aske, and send him to London, Darcy refused. Significantly, though, he informed the herald that such an act would be ‘lawful for yow’; it was ‘not for me’ simply because Darcy had previously sworn allegiance to Aske.\(^{47}\) Such relativism clearly allowed room for resistance to monarchical authority by isolated individuals, but it also deprived rebels of any moral absolutes with which to rally mass support for rebellion. The subjectivity of Essex’s justification of his refusal to heed Egerton’s advice – ‘I […] feele more then you’ - presages his appeal in 1601 for Londoners to march with him in order to protect his own life:\(^{48}\) Essex’s reasons for rebellion were too personal to convince the wider community that it might be worth their while to join him and risk punishment, damnation, and dishonour, too. It is noteworthy that Shakespeare’s only play, in which honour stimulates a successful defiance of authority, is one set in a pagan, republican world - where no overarching, moral framework is obviously apparent, nor any entrenched culture of absolute obedience to the *status quo*.

Both these artefacts – a fictionalised, dramatic account of Roman history and a single epistolary exchange from a momentous political career – give testament to the extraordinary importance attached to honour in late sixteenth-century England. In isolation, these texts can only hint at the dangerous extremes to which honour might drive individuals. However, considered in the context of the politics of the 1590s and their tumultuous climax in February 1601, they shine a much-needed light on what to modern historians can seem the incomprehensibly archaic motivations that drove these events and animated so many at the time. Simultaneously, though, the insistent permeation of honour throughout both texts perhaps hints at its approaching crisis. For it to underpin a disagreement between the Lord Keeper and the Earl Marshal shows it to have been a live political topic, and its thematic centrality in a London stage hit suggests a wider public concern. Analysis of both honour’s contested status in Elizabethan culture and its internal inconsistencies suggest that, even at its most dynamic, it was already in decline. In the wake of the Reformation and a century of Tudor stability, the language of honour was far less potent than in its mediaeval heyday. In the 1590s it was already losing ground to Puritanism as the prime vocabulary for political opposition. And, by the mid-seventeenth-century, the latter commanded both the mass appeal and moral authority to launch a far more comprehensive and thorough-going resistance to monarchical rule than considerations of honour ever could have stimulated.

\(^{47}\) Dodds, p.304.  
\(^{48}\) Appendix 2, l.49.
APPENDIX 1 49

The Lord Keeper to the Earle of Essex Jul. 18. An. 1598

My very good Lord. It is often seene, that a stander by seeth more than hee that playeth the game; and for the most part everyman in his owne cause, standeth in his owne light, and seeth not so cleereely as hee should. Your Lordshippe hath dealt in other men’s causes, and in greate and weightye affaires with great wisdome and judgement; now your owne is in hand, you are not to contenme or refuse the advise of any that loveth you, how simple soever. In this order I range myselfe; of those that love you none more simple, and none that loveth you with more true and honest affection: which shall pleade mine excuse, if you shall either mistake, or misconfer, my words or meaning; But in your Lordships honorable wisdome I neither doubt nor suspect the one or other. I will not presume to advise you, but I will shoot my bolt, and tell you what I thinke. The beginning and too-long continuing of this unseasonable discontent you have seene and prooved, by which you may ayme at the end. If you hold still this course (which hitherto you finde to bee worse and worse, and the longer you goe, the father out of the way) there is little hope or likelihood that the end will bee better. You are not yet so farre gone, but you may well returne; the returne is safe, the progresse dangerous and desperate.

In this course you hold, if you have any enemies, you doe that for them which they could never doe for themselves. Your friends you leave open to scorne and contempt; you forsake your selfe, and overthrow your fortunes, and ruinate your honour and reputation. You give that courage and comfort to the forreine enemies, as greater they cannot have. For what can be more welcome, or may pleasing newes unto them, then to heare that her Majesty and the Realme are maymed of so worthy a member, who hath so often and so valiantly quailed and daunted them. You forsake your countrey, when it hath most neede of your counsell or helpe. And lastly, you faile in that indissoluble duty which you owe to your most gracious soveraigne. A duty imposed upon you, not by nature or policy onely, but by that religious and sacred band, wherein the divine Majesty of almighty God hath by the rule of Christianitie obliged you.

For the foure first, your constant resolution may perhaps moovee you to esteeme them as light; but beeing well weighed they are not light, nor lightly to bee regarded. And for the two last, it may bee that the cleerenesse of

49 Cited in Speed, John, *The history of Great Britaine under the conquests of ye Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans Their originals, manners, warres, coines & seales: with ye succession, lives, acts & issues of the English monarchs from Iulius Caesar, to our most gracious soueraigne King Iames* (London: William Hall and John Beale, 1614), p.877.
your inward conscience, may seeme to content your selfe. But that is not enough; these duties stand not onely in contemplation, or in inward meditation: their effects bee externall action, and when that faileth, the substance faileth.

This beeinge your present state and condition, what is to bee done? what is the remedy? My good Lord I lacke wisdome and judgement to advise you; but I will never lacke an honest true heart to wish well, nor (beeinge warranted by a good conscience) will feare to speake what I thinke.

I have begunne plainely, bee not offended if I proceehe so. Bene cadit, qui cadit temporis. Seneca saith well, Lex si nocentem punit, cadendum est iustitiae, si inoentum, cadendum est forunae. The medicine and remedie is, not to contend and strive, but humbly to yeelde and submit. Have you given a cause, and yet take a scandall unto you? then all you can doe, is too little to make satisfaction. Is cause of scandall given unto you? yet policy, duty, and religion, enforce you to sue, yeelde, and submit, to your soveraigne, betwene whom and you there can bee no proportion of duty. When God requires it as a principall duty and service to himselfe; and when it is evident, that great good may ensue of it to your friends, your selfe, your Country, and your soveraigne, and extreame harmy by the contrary: there can be no dishonour or hurt to yeelde, but in not doing of it, is dishonour and impiety.

The difficulty (my good Lord) is to conquere your selfe, which is the height of true valour and fortitude; whereunto all your honorable actions have intended. Doe it in this, and God will bee pleased, her Majestie (I doubt not) well satisfied: your Country will take good, and your friends take comfort by it and your selfe (I mention you last, for I know that of all these, you esteeme yourselfe least) shall receive honour, and your enemies (if you have any) shall be disappointed of their bitter-sweete hopes.

I have delivered what I thinke, simply and truly; and leave you to determine according to your wisdome. If I have erred, it is error amoris, not, amor erroris. Construe and accept it (I beseech you) as I meene it; not as an advise, but as an opinion, to bee allowed or cancelled at your pleasure. If I might conveniently have conferred with your selfe in person, I would not have troubled you with so many idle blots. Whatsoever your judge of this mine opinion, yet bee assured my desire is to further all good meanes that may tend to your good, and so wishing you all honourable happinesse, I rest your Lordshippes most ready and faithful, though unable, poore friende.
APPENDIX 2 50

The Earle’s Answer.

My very good Lord. Though there is not the man this day living, whom I would sooner make a Judge of any question that did concern me, then your selfe: yet you must give me leave to tell you, that in some cases I must appeale from all earthly Judges; and if in any, then surely in this, when the highest Judge on earth hath imposed upon me the heaviest punishment, without trial or hearing. Since then I must either answere your Lordships arguments, or forsake mine owne just defence, I will force mine aking head to doe mee service for an houre.

I must first deny my discouragement, which was forced, to be an humours discontentment, and in that it was unseasonable, and is too long continuing, your Lordship should rather condole with me then expostulate. Naturall seasons are expected here below, but violent and unseasonable stormes come from above: there is no tempest to the passionate indignation of a Prince, nor that at any time so unseasonable, as when it lighteth on those that might expect an harvest of their painefull and careful labours. Hee that is once wounded must feel smert till his hurt is cured, or the part senselesse; but cure I expect none, her Majesties heart being obdurate; and bee without sense I cannot. But then (you say) I may aime at the end. I doe more then aime, for I see an end of all my fortunes, and have set an end to all my desires. In this course doe I anything for mine enemies? when I was present, I found them absolute, and therefore I had rather triumph alone, then have mee attendant upon their Chariot. Or doe I leave my friends? when I was a Courtier, I could yeeld them no fruit of my love to them; now I am an Heremite, they shall beare no envie for their love to me. Or doe I forsake my selfe, because I doe enjoy my selfe? Or doe I overthrow my fortunes, because I build not a fortune of paper walles, which every pufte of winde blowes downe? Or doe I ruinate mine honor because I leave following the pursuit or wearing the false marke of the shadow of honour? Doe I give courage or comfort to the forraine enemies, because I reserve my selfe to encounter them, or because I keepe mine heart from basenesse, thogh I cannot keepe my fortune from declining? No, no, I give every one of these considerations his due right, and the more I weigh them, the more I finde my selfe justified from offending in any of them. As for the two last objections, that I forsake my Country when it hath most need of me, and faile in that indissoluble duty which I owe to my soveraigne: I answere, that if my Country had at this time needed publike service, her majestie that governes it would not have driven me to a private life.

I am tied to my Country by two bands; one publike, to discharge carefully, faithfully, and industriously, that trust that is committed unto me; and the other private, to sacrifice for it my life and carcase which have beene

50 Cited in Speed, pp.877-78.
nourished in it. Of the first I am free, being dismissed or disabled by her Majesty. Of the other, nothing can free me from death, and therefore no occasion of performance shall offer itselfe, but I will meete it half way. The indissoluble duety which I owe to her Majesty is the duetie of allegiance which I will never, nor can faile in; the duetie of attendance is no indissoluble duety. I owe Majesty service of an Earle, and of a Marshall of England. I have beene contented to doe the service of a Clerke, but can never serve her as a villaine, as a slave. But yet (you say) I must give way to time: so I doe, for now I see the storme come, I have put my selfe into the harbour. Seneca saith, wee must give way to fortune. I know that fortune is blind and strong, and therefore I goe as farre out of the way as I can. You say the remedie is not to strive, I neither strive nor seeke for remedy, but I must yeeld and submit: I can never yeeld truth to be falshood, or falshood to be truth. Have I given cause (you aske) and take a scandall? No, I gave not cause to take up so much as Fimbrius his complaint, for I did totum tellum corporis accipere. I patiently beare all, and sensibly feele all that I then received. When this scandall was given mee, nay, when the vilest of all indignities are done unto mee, doth Religion enforce me to serve, doth God require it? is it impiety not to do it? why cannot Princes erre? cannot subjects receive wrong? is an earthly power and authority infinite? Pardon me, pardon mee my Lord, I can never subscribe to these principles: but Salomons foole laughs when he is stricken: Let these that mean to make their profite by Princes faults, shew to have no feare of Princes injuries. Let them acknowledge an infinite absoluteness in earth, that doe not believe in an absolute infiniteness in heaven. As for me, I have received wrong, I feele it, my cause is good I know it. And whatsoever come, all the powers on earth can never shew more strength and constancy in oppressing, then I can shew in suffering, whatsoever shall be imposed upon me.

Your Lordship in the beginning of your letter made your selfe a looker on, and mee a player of mine owne game; so you may see more then I: but you must give me leave to tell you in the ned of mine, that since yiu but see ad I suffer, I must of necessity feele more than you. I must crave your Lordships patience, to give him that hath a creabbed fortune leave to use a carbed stile. But whatsoever my stile is, there is no heart more humble, nor more affected towards your Lordship, then that of your Lordships poore friend.

R. Essex
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VI

Bensalem’s Legal System by Francis Bacon (New Atlantis) and James I (True Law):
Representations of God, kingship, knowledge and peace.

ANDRES FONT GALARZA

This paper compares Bensalem’s legal system in Francis Bacon’s New Atlantis with James I’s True Law tract. Whilst differing in form – fiction and political tract – both artefacts unite in their belief that the people should be ruled by an enlightened, absolutist, legal framework. In addition, this paper also analyses a Simon de Passe engraving that, echoing the aforementioned works, represents an early seventeenth-century Jacobean Britain, marked by royal absolutism, which was justified by God’s delegation of earthly authority to the king. Yet, this absolutism was moderated by a search for knowledge and peace.

Francis Bacon wrote New Atlantis, a utopian moral and scientific tale, around 1624.¹ This period was at the end of Bacon’s life and career as a philosopher and politician.² Bacon was appointed to high legal positions by James I of England and VI of Scotland. New Atlantis tells the story of Bensalem, a happy island inhabited by an old civilisation of chaste, peaceful and obedient people ruled by a monarch and an elite of sages. The people of Bensalem would become Christians shortly after the death of Jesus.³ Remarkably, knowledge is the basis of welfare of Bensalem, whose rulers would guide the population in the management of such knowledge. Bensalemmites acquired knowledge

³ New Atlantis, p.73.
from natural research on the island, or from information obtained in travels to foreign countries.\textsuperscript{4} Additionally, Bensalem’s rulers would provide a Christian and moral orientation for a people who were naturally inclined to virtuous behaviour.\textsuperscript{5} Accidentally, a group of European sailors arrived at Bensalem and witnessed the religious, moral and economic foundations of this unknown island.\textsuperscript{6}

Significantly, Francis Bacon did not complete \textit{New Atlantis} and critics have highlighted that he had not proposed a legal system for Bensalem.\textsuperscript{7} Thus, Bacon’s secretary, Rawley, wrote in the preface to \textit{New Atlantis} that 'His Lordship thought also in this present fable to have composed a frame of Laws […] but foreseeing it would be a long work, his desire of collecting the Natural History diverted him, which he preferred many degrees before it'.\textsuperscript{8}

In 1660, more than thirty years after Bacon’s death, an unknown author published a second part of \textit{New Atlantis}, setting forth \textit{A platform of Monarchical Government}, which intended to complete Bacon’s work with a legal system for Bensalem.\textsuperscript{9} Moreover, James I, Bacon’s long-time patron, had made specific legal proposals of significant importance for the governance of his kingdoms.\textsuperscript{10} Finally, Bacon’s career in the English public sector was a succession of high ranking legal positions at the service of King James I.\textsuperscript{11} This article makes a proposal as to what Bensalem’s legal system was or should be interpreted to be.

Firstly, this article will identify the elements in \textit{New Atlantis} that provide a primary source of leads concerning Bensalem’s legal system. Secondly, it will explore Bacon’s legal thought in a selection of other texts that he authored. Thirdly, this article will examine the fundamentals of James I’s legal ideology that sustained his monarchy and his relationship with his people, through a primary source artefact: James I’s 1598 tract: \textit{The True law of Free Monarchies}.\textsuperscript{12} Finally, this paper will display an engraving by Simon de Passe, which is representative of the legal fundamentals underlying the kingdoms of James I and Bensalem.

\textit{New Atlantis} contains numerous legal elements that are either explicit or implicit in the text. These elements show the reader some fundamental aspects of Bensalem’s legal system. Firstly, its legal

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{New Atlantis}, p.85.
\textsuperscript{5} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.93-5.
\textsuperscript{6} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.63-5.
\textsuperscript{7} \textit{New Atlantis}, p.111.
\textsuperscript{8} \textit{New Atlantis}, p.62.
\textsuperscript{10} James I, King of England, 1566-1625, \textit{The True Law of the Free Monarchies; or The Reciprocal and Mutual Duty Betwixt a Free King and His Natural Subjects in The Workes of the most high and mightie Prince, James ... King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland} (London: Robert Barker and John Bill, 1616).
\textsuperscript{11} Jardine and Stewart, \textit{Francis Bacon}, pp. 159-70, 296, 340-1, 393, 396, 416.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{James’ Workes}, p.10.
culture is inspired by the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures. While it is true that *New Atlantis* makes indirect references to other cultures such as China or the pre-colonial Americas, these references to other non-Western cultural traditions reinforce the superior Western identity of Bensalem. Thus, the Chinese law on foreigners had made China ‘a curious, ignorant, fearful, foolish nation’, and the Native Americans are described as ‘simple and savage’. Therefore, Bensalemites are fundamentally European in culture. In addition, Bensalem takes the monarchy as its form of government. Certainly, *New Atlantis* has very few references to the monarch, and yet, Solamona, a wise king, marked Bensalem’s people past, present and future. Importantly, Bensalem’s monarchs would, shortly after the death of Jesus, become Christian monarchs, thereby adding a divine mandate to their legitimacy, which was vested in the selected people of Bensalem and its monarchs by a heavenly miracle that occurred with the intercession of St. Bartholomew. Therefore, this legal system is founded on Christian values, which would also be a typical feature for a seventeenth century western State. Naturally, the Christian nature of the State has important legal implications as to what the law authorises or not in many aspects of public and private life.

*New Atlantis* depicts a monarchy that neither is representative nor interacts with the elected representatives of the people. Rather, Bensalem is a monarchical theocracy where an elite of wise priests guide, morally and materially, peaceful Bensalemites. Thus, Bensalem is an enlightened, but also despotic, theocratic monarchy. The society is divided into classes, including an absolutist monarch, a college of priests, governors and people.

In civil law, Bensalemites are subject to conservative Christian moral rules with State-supported incentives for marriage and progeny. Thus, Bensalem is a chaste and morally pure society in contrast to the allegedly corrupted and socially disordered old Europe.

Bensalem's economy is essentially a State-driven cooperative process towards the acquisition and management of knowledge. Additionally, Bensalem's economy is protectionist since it is based on restrictive trade laws, protecting its domestic market with a strict enforcement of secrecy laws. Whilst Bensalem does not allow foreign merchants access to the island, it has a design to secretly extract knowledge and wealth from foreign countries. Therefore, Bensalem’s trade policy can be said

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13 *New Atlantis*, pp.78-9, 81-3.
14 *New Atlantis*, p.82.
15 *New Atlantis*, pp.73-6.
16 *New Atlantis*, pp.71, 84-5, 88.
17 *New Atlantis*, pp.71, 74, 82, 88, 95-6.
18 *New Atlantis*, p.87-90, 93.
19 *New Atlantis*, p.93.
20 *New Atlantis*, p.98-110.
21 *New Atlantis*, p.77.
22 *New Atlantis*, pp.82, 77, 85.
to be unilateral. Possibly, the negative side effects of protectionist unilateralism in terms of economic stagnation are moderated by Bensalem’s sophisticated efforts to foster domestic innovation by rewarding individual efforts.\textsuperscript{23} The latter contains the seeds of an intellectual property law policy.

Importantly, Bensalem reserves a strong role for the public sector. The kingdom has a bureaucracy that is made of irreproachably honest civil servants who would never accept a bribe or engage in any inappropriate behaviour against the general interest.\textsuperscript{24} Thus, Bensalem’s State is interventionist not only in the economy, but also in the education and private life of its citizens.\textsuperscript{25} The kingdom can also punish citizens who break the law.\textsuperscript{26}

A corollary of Bensalem’s trade policy is its immigration policy. Whilst generally closed to foreigners, those who accidentally arrive on the island are integrated because they are considered to bring added value to Bensalem’s society.\textsuperscript{27} Against this backdrop, Bensalem publicly funds immigration centres.\textsuperscript{28}

Finally, Bensalem is a uniform Christian community. However, \textit{New Atlantis}'s Jewish character, Jobin, seems to be tolerated because he is valuable to Bensalem, and adjusts to certain tenets of the Christian faith, namely devotion to Jesus Christ. Moreover, Jobin is portrayed as the model Bensalemite: a wise, entrepreneurial, religious and benevolent citizen. Interestingly, Jobin is both a merchant and a lawyer, which is consistent with the customs of this harmonious, happy island where the acquisition of wealth through technocratic management must be combined with a moral-religious foundation, and consensual rules to preserve peace and social order.\textsuperscript{29}

Besides \textit{New Atlantis}, Bacon’s legal texts offer additional valuable information on the legal system that should govern Bensalem. Bacon had a long career as a lawyer of James I, holding key legal positions, such as Attorney-General (1613) and Lord Chancellor (1618).\textsuperscript{30} Unsurprisingly, Bacon’s legal schemes are those of a high-ranking official serving James I because ‘I [Bacon] have been ever your man, and counted myself but an usufructuary of myself, the property being yours:…’.\textsuperscript{31} Consequently, Bacon would support the absolutism of James I including the divine nature of his powers and duties. Thus, Bacon enthusiastically praised James I’s \textit{True Law} tract in \textit{‘The Advancement of Learning’} by paraphrasing him, saying that, ‘Kings ruled by their Laws as God did by the laws of

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\textsuperscript{24} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.65, 67, 69.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.87, 95.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.89, 95, 108.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.82-4.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.67, 71.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{New Atlantis}, pp.91-2.
\end{flushleft}
nature, and ought as rarely to put in use their supreme prerogative as God doth his power of working miracles’. Furthermore, Bacon found the tract to epitomise ‘the duty of a king: a work richly compounded of divinity, morality, and policy [...]’. Importantly, James I and Bacon agree in a patriarchal vision of monarchs who, similar to ‘a Moses or a David, [are] pastors of their people’. Furthermore, Bacon shared his vision of monarchy in the *Essays*:

All precepts concerning kings are in effect comprehend in those two remembrances; “memento quod es homo”; and “memento quod es Deus”, or “vice Dei”, the one bridleth their power, and the other their will.

Interestingly, Bacon had already anticipated the positive value of secrecy that is omnipresent in Bensalem because, he writes:

Government, it is a part of knowledge secret and retired, in both these respects in which things are deemed secret; for some things are secret because they are hard to know, and some because they are not fit to utter. We see all Governments are obscure and secretive.

The unity of religion against the risks of social dilution and civil unrest is a second example where Bacon’s writings are consistent with themes in *New Atlantis*. Thus, Bacon asserted that, ‘Religion being the chief band of human society, it is a happy thing when itself is well contained within the true band of Unity’.

In sum, Bacon’s legal proposals throughout his political and philosophical career are coherent with Bensalem’s constituent legal elements.

Equally, concerning moral matters translated into laws, Bacon had advanced his support for marriage when he praised the policy of King Philip IV of Spain in favour of marriage and procreation as one example ‘Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates’. Bensalem’s *feast of the family* is consistent with Bacon’s vision.

Whilst Bacon worked as a legal advisor within the English common law, he showed his admiration for Roman Law, the roots of most of Continental European civil legal systems. For instance, Bacon appreciated the Roman management of foreigners through the process of naturalisation, *ius civitatis*, that would have facilitated the expansion and control of the immense Roman Empire. In this

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40 Bacon, ‘Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates’, p.125.
regard, Bensalem is ambivalent because the island remained hidden and closed to foreign immigration while it practised a policy of integration of those foreigners who reached Bensalem. In the same vein, the Father of the House of Solomon will authorise the foreigner in Bensalem to share the knowledge that the sailors acquired in Bensalem for, ‘I give thee leave to publish it for the good of other nations […]’.41

Finally, it is relevant to acknowledge the fundamentals of James I’s legal ideology because Bacon could not, given his public functions at the service of James I, contradict his king’s policies. This consistency between king and civil servant is reinforced by Bacon’s personal circumstances surrounding the period when New Atlantis was drafted.42 Indeed, Bacon was trying to win back the king’s favour after he fell into disgrace following his condemnation on charges of corruption. Against this background, Bacon’s legal positions were necessarily predetermined by James I’s institutional legal proposal that was solidly established in the king’s 1598 True Laws tract.43 In addition, Rawley reminded us that Bacon wanted to be effective in his proposals because ‘things therein are within men’s power to effect’.44 Obviously, Bacon could have not been effective if he had gone against James I’s understanding of what the legal system should be.

The above realities are expressed in an engraving by Simon de Passe that depicts James I. This engraving is in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. James I is dressed with all the attributes of an absolutist king, enjoying divine legitimacy. Thus, the crowned king sits on his throne, dressed luxuriously in ermine; his royal jewels include the orb with a cross at the top representing Christ the King governing the globe through his royal representative, and the sceptre expresses the king’s earthly powers. Above the throne is James’s legend, ‘Beati Pacifici’ (‘Blessed are the Peacemakers’), which corresponds with the kings’ aversion to war, and with the remarkably peaceful Bensalemites. Finally, the bottom of the drawing includes the following inscription:

Crowns have their compass—length of days their date—
Triumphs their tomb—felicity, her fate—
Of nought but earth can earth make us partaker,
But knowledge makes a king most like his Maker.45

41 Bacon, New Atlantis, p.111.
43 Additionally, James I representation by Simon de Pass can be found in the frontispiece of the folio publication of James’ Workes (1616) shown in the British Library <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-true-law-of-free-monarchies-by-king-james-vi-and-i> [accessed 08 Jan 2018].
44 New Atlantis, p.62.
Indeed, James I shared with Bacon and Bensalem his passion for the acquisition of knowledge as part of the exercise of power, while despising as ephemeral the fruits of war. For Bacon, ‘Human knowledge and human power meet in one; for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced. […]’. 46

Figure 1. Simon de Passe, James VI and I, 1566 - 1625. King of Scotland 1567 - 1625. King of England and Ireland, c.1620, Line engraving on paper, 24.76 x 17.14 cm, Scottish National Portrait Gallery © National Galleries of Scotland.

In conclusion, Bensalem reveals, sometimes expressly and sometimes implicitly, the fundamentals of a legal system that is consistent with mainstream legal imperatives in early seventeenth century Jacobean Britain. Bensalem’s legal system is not innovative. Indeed, Bensalem is a traditional Christian monarchy where a monarch and established elite find their ultimate authority and powers in God. The rules governing Bensalem’s social and individual life are conservative, namely based in a Christian moral vision that includes the regulation of marriage and family. Furthermore, Bensalem is a hierarchical society where the population is separated by either their public civil or religious functions, or their private roles. However, there is a latent meritocracy in Bensalem stemming from individuals’ research skills that establish incentives and rewards for innovation. Generally, the economics of the island are protectionist and autarchic. Additionally, Bensalem’s population seems to peacefully and harmoniously live in this isolated island under the paternalist rule of an enlightened but despotic elite. Thus, Bensalem’s legal reality is not far from James I’s True Law design, where obedience to the king is natural, given that he is God’s ‘lieutenant’ on earth and a ‘father’ for his people. Consistent with this, Simon de Passe represented the typical legal constructions of royal absolutism that can be applied both to the kingdoms of James I and to Bacon’s utopia. This was a royal absolutism where the potential for tyranny was moderated by policies of peace, cultural enlightenment, and the king's conscience, reminding him of his moral duties towards the people.

47 James, Workes, p.195.
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VII

The Future in the Instant:

How Jacobean attitudes to the supernatural were shaped and reflected in popular print and early modern drama, with specific reference to Browne’s *A New Almanacke and Prognostication* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

SHARON O’CONNOR

This article explores a prevalent discourse of the supernatural in Jacobean England including James I’s influence on cultural assumptions, as seen in the widely-disseminated Daniel Browne’s ‘A New Almanacke and Prognostication for the yeare of our Lord God 1621’ and Shakespeare’s ‘Macbeth’. Prognostication thrived in the space between a contemporary Protestant narrative officially dismissive of the supernatural, James I’s own complex relationship with magic and a long legacy of folklore and superstition. Browne’s mix of common sense and astrological prognostications and the ambiguity in Shakespeare’s use of the supernatural and prognostication in *Macbeth* reflected a society yet to fully accept the Reformation’s strictures on superstition.

Prognostication and astrological determinism should have been included in the rejection of the supernatural that followed the Reformation but were still woven into the fabric of life in Jacobean times; their prevalence is a testament to the social utility they must have carried. Predicated on the belief that the earth and its people are subject to celestial influences (figure 2), almanacs were pocket-sized annual volumes containing predictions of astrological movements and their effects on earth, together with a range of material such as saints’ days and tide times. Costing no more than

of God, of Man, of the Devil.

Figure 1. Triple Episcopacie, 1641, engraving, English School, (17th century), Private Collection, The Stapleton Collection, Bridgeman Images.

tuppence, about the same price as a seat to see *Macbeth* at the Globe, they were the single most popular Jacobean print genre, selling more than 350,000 copies a year.³ It is estimated that one in three households used an almanac, a mass media level of distribution given Jacobean literacy levels. Even the devil was said to consult them (he preferred Coley’s).⁴ *Macbeth* probably had a similar reach. The Globe alone could hold 3,000 people, around 20,000 people a week went to the theatre in London and plays were also performed at court.⁵ While provincial records seldom noted a play’s title, it is assumed *Macbeth* would have toured countrywide.⁶ This widespread appetite for the supernatural necessarily subsisted alongside post-Reformation religious orthodoxies.

Jacobean attitudes to the supernatural were framed by a Protestant theology which stated nothing could happen without God’s permission, and which stressed a dependence on God that precluded looking for help elsewhere.⁷ This dependence rejected the idea that God traced his purposes through the stars, as it suggested constraint: ‘God hath not made the heavens to that end or purpose, that man should learn of them good fortune or ill’.⁸ If God alone could influence the world then the application of prognostication to temporal issues was problematic and should have been abandoned,

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⁶ S. Maclean, ‘Macbeth on tour’ Email to Sharon O’Connor from the Professor of Theatre History at the University of Toronto and the Director of the *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) database.
but this led to some tricky theological knots. For example, if the stars did not affect health then neither should any earthly influences, so taking steps to avoid plague was blasphemous: if your conscience was clear you would be spared. In practice the church’s concept of what was superstitious was elastic and has been summarised as ‘[those things] it disapproved of were superstitious, [those] it accepted were not’. To resolve these inherent inconsistencies, religion forged an uneasy truce: God controlled destiny but celestial objects governed sublunary events. Calvin had decreed that ‘the science of Astrology is honourable’ because ‘all creatures […] are subject to the order of heaven, [the stars] were the beginning and cause of the accidents which are sent here on earth’, thus allowing prognostication to persist. On their side, astrologers agreed that the stars inclined but did not compel. Browne, for example, conflates two psalms to declare: ‘The heavens declare the glories of God, and the firmament sheweth the work of his hand […] when I behold thine heavens, even the works of thy finger, the sonnes, Moone, and the Stars, which thou hast ordained’. Thus, was a model created for people to interact with the supernatural, and both the almanac and the playhouse have relevant affordances.

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9 Thomas, p.55.
11 Ryrie, pp.167-68; Thomas, pp.94-95.
12 Thomas, p.17, 396.
13 Browne, p[.33].
Daniel Browne was a self-described ‘wellwiller to the Mathematickes and sometimes a scholler’. His 1621 *Almanac*, a small, duodecimo volume, comprising forty-eight pages in two sections, is a typical example of the genre and contains a compendium of information including both *theorick*, the astronomical calculations of the planets and *practick*, the astrological interpretation of those measurements, though both terms were used interchangeably at this time. The first section includes the ‘characters’ of the planets, a *kalender* of saints’ days, ‘red letter days’ of notable events, the moon’s phases, moveable feasts, and two pages for each month with space for the user’s own notes. The second section contains astrological prognostications for the weather, agriculture and health and includes ‘favourable days’ for many procedures, from bloodletting to sowing broad beans. Using February as an example: Browne tells us in the calendar section exactly when the sun moves into Pisces and in the concomitant prognostication that ‘Pisces is cold and moist…tending to destruction’. He predicts illnesses will include ‘Cathars [catarrh], Coughs and paine in the heart’. He admonishes: ‘Thinke not on opening veine’, and bids us refuse ‘White meats and foggy fenne-fowles’ (figure 3).

This combination of common sense and astrology is common to Browne’s prognostications: it will not

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14 Browne, p.[1].
15 Browne, p.[45], sig. A'.
16 Browne, sig. B3'.
17 Browne, p.[10].
be dangerous to eat grapes in September, the ‘falling evill’ (epilepsy) will afflict people when the sun is in Aries, Taurus or Gemini, and colder mornings in October ‘do call for warmer apparel’.\textsuperscript{18} To distance himself from any inaccurate prophecies Browne often frames his predictions with equivocal riders: ‘if they bee skilfully applied’, ‘if they be warily chosen’, ‘for a time’.\textsuperscript{19}

Prognostications drive the plot in \textit{Macbeth}. Like Browne’s, some are precise: Macbeth will be king; Banquo’s line will reign (figure 4).\textsuperscript{20} Others have a plurality of meaning including, of course, different interpretations to those Macbeth originally chooses. ‘Macbeth shall never vanquish’d be, until | Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill | Shall come’\textsuperscript{21} is seen to be not an impossibility but a clever military tactic, a camouflage of portable branches. ‘None of woman born | Shall harm Macbeth’\textsuperscript{22} is disambiguated when Macduff discloses his Caesarean section: he was ‘from his

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{macbeth_witches.png}
\caption{Macbeth with witches, show of kings, and Banquo’s ghost, 1709, engraving. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{18} Browne, sig. B3\textsuperscript{v}.
\textsuperscript{19} Browne, p.[12], sig. B\textsuperscript{v}.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Macbeth}, I.3.50, 67.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Macbeth}, IV.1.108-09.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Macbeth}, IV.1.94-95.
mother’s womb | Untimely ripped’. These ambiguities give the prophecies a liminal status; we are never sure whether events can be directly attributed to prognostication or to more commonplace reasons; perhaps this is why the apparitions, rather than the witches themselves, speak them. They also speak to the antithetical space prognostication occupied in early modern culture, a space of both credence and scepticism. Shakespeare’s audiences, used to balancing their religion’s strictures on astrology, their daily use of almanacs, the contemporary treatment of witches, and folkloric heritage, would have been receptive to these multiple valences.

Macbeth’s understanding of the predictions in the play undergoes post hoc re-evaluations, and this tendency to reorganise data to suit a narrative is a common one. We see it in our own daily lives: the dream forgotten until a detail seems to ‘come true’, the horoscope remembered when it seems to ‘fit’. Indeed, both Macbeth and Banquo hear the witches’ prognostications but only Macbeth reacts to them, recognising the dark thoughts that match his own. Just as Browne’s predictions can invite either a rational or a supernatural explanation (that January will be ‘noysome and hurtfull to all seedes’ seems like common sense but may have looked more like divine providence if your neighbour ignored the prognostication while you followed it), so ‘none of woman born’ can seem to denote supernatural control or a riddle of a more prosaic event.

Everybody wanted to know what the future held, from the husbandman to the divinely-ordained monarch, and all levels of society were comfortable interpreting and evaluating prognostication. King James’s interest in the supernatural is well documented: he ‘sought out of certain books a sure way to attain knowledge of future chances’. In 1618 he summoned mathematicians to discuss a comet and then proceeded to predict the Thirty Years War and the fall of the Stuarts, and in Daemonologie, his manual for the supernatural, he identified the power of prophecy and the ability to travel through the air as supernatural indicators. Shakespeare’s witches possibly ‘hover’, but they do not fly, making them less overtly supernatural, more mundane, than Jamesian witches and although Shakespeare valorised them in other ways, they generally appear closer to the modulated supernatural explored in Browne’s Almanac. In the First Folio they are referred to as witches only in the paratext not in the play proper; Shakespeare’s source, Holinshed, represents them as three ordinary women (figure 5); and

23 Macbeth, V.7.46-47.
24 Browne, sig. B3’.
25 Macbeth, IV.1.94-95.
27 Thomas, p.354.
29 Macbeth, I.1.12.
the contemporary astrologer Simon Forman called them fairies or nymphs, not witches. Forman also recognised ambivalence elsewhere in *Macbeth* and concluded that Macbeth’s agency drives the play.\(^{31}\)

For a Protestant artefact, Browne’s *Almanac* contains a surprisingly large number of saints’ days but as well as being useful for dating documents, saints’ days were used for supernatural purposes, e.g. fasting on St Mark’s day was supposed to provide protection against fire or lightning.\(^{32}\) Almost as numerous are the *Almanac*’s ‘red letter days’ (figure 3) which include not only feasts such as Twelfth Night but also significant political events such as the ‘Powder Plot’ and the Gowrie conspiracy, a widely-contested story that James, at risk of assassination, had pre-emptively (and conveniently) killed members of the Ruthven clan, who were said to have used ‘astrological aids’ against him.\(^{33}\) Macbeth too knows that important days are marked in the almanac: when the vision of James’s line appears, he exclaims ‘Let this pernicious hour | Stand aye accused in the calendar!’ \(^{34}\)

Understanding the weather was vital for farming and astrology played its part; an almanac without weather predictions was ‘like a pudding without suet’.\(^{35}\) Celestial calculations form the framework for Browne’s ‘Husbandly elections in planting, grafting and sowing’ (figure 6) and he dispenses advice such as ‘Cut copies [coppice] the first Quarter of the Moone’, or ‘cut vines the Moone well aspect in February’.\(^{36}\)

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32 Thomas, p.35.
34 *Macbeth*, IV.1.148-49.
35 Capp, p.63.
36 Browne, sig. A’.
Middleton stated ‘This farmer will not cast his seed ith’ ground | Before he looks in Bretnor’ and the idea of weather forecasting is taken further in Macbeth where the weather is understood to be in the control of witches. ‘Howe’er you come to know it’ Macbeth asks, ‘Though you untie the winds, and let them fight | Against the churches’. When the witches ask ‘When shall we three meet again? | In thunder, lightning, or in rain?’, Shakespeare’s audience would have readily understood the conflation of prediction and weather, from their own daily attempts to bend the weather to their will.

Meteorological control of a more malevolent nature was familiar to James too. The 1591 pamphlet The Newes of Scotland records the North Berwick witches who ‘did arise such a tempest in the Sea’ that the king almost perished. In Daemonologie, witches can ‘rayse stormes an tempests in the aire’, so it is no surprise that Shakespeare’s witches make their victim’s sea-journey ‘tempest-tossed’. Almanacs only claimed to forecast the weather not control it but the supernatural discourse can still be seen: beware ‘hearbes do wither’ under the influence of Virgo; ‘bid Physicke adiew whilst

37 Browne, sig. A'.
40 Macbeth, I.1.1-2.
41 James Carmichael, The Newes from Scotland (London: [By E. Allde?] for William Wright, 1592), sig. C1'.
42 James I, Daemonologie, (London: Aspley and Cotton, 1603), Bk II, Ch. 5, [p.46].
43 Macbeth, I.3.25.
scorching Syrius uttereth his outrage’. In *Macbeth*, Lennox identifies Duncan’s murder as a collusion of nature, astrology and agency:

The night has been unruly: where we lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,  
Lamentings heard i’ the air; strange screams of death,  
And prophesyings with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confused events  
New hatch’d to the woeful time: the obscure bird  
Clamour’d the livelong night: some say, the earth  
Was feverous and did shake.

The assumption that the heavens have a relational affinity with Macbeth’s deeds is underlined by the pathetic fallacy and personification of nature, and reinforced by Ross’s use of *predominance*, the recognised astrological word for superior influence:

Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,  
Threatens his bloody stage. By the clock, 'tis day,  
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp;  
Is’t night's predominance, or the day's shame,  
That darkness does the face of earth entomb  
When living light should kiss it?

All this is not to say people were credulous about astrology, more that events were understood on a continuum from natural to supernatural as opposed to magic and reason being binary; everything existed in the same realm, as we see in Burton’s division of the causes of melancholy into natural and supernatural, with further subdivisions including ‘from God immediately’, ‘mediately by magicians, witches’ or from the stars ‘proved by aphorism’. People were habituated to celestial analysis and James himself was aware that some people veered towards one or other end of that range, in 1606 he had joked that people had interpreted a pair of eclipses as divine portents, the subtext being that he himself understood these to be uncontentious, naturally-occurring phenomena.

Though prognostication was firmly lodged in the collective conscious and people wanted to ‘know in advance the state of the crops and the price of commodities’, making a direct link between buying almanacs or watching *Macbeth* and a belief in predictions should be avoided. Consumption

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44 Tillyard, pp.35-37; Browne, sig. B4, p.[22].  
46 *Macbeth*, II.4.5-11.  
48 Shapiro, pp.82-83.  
49 Thomas, pp.353-56.
does not necessarily correlate to credence and people may have been comfortable with a more nuanced perspective. We know from the many parodies produced that almanacs were not treated as holy scripture, and their inaccuracies were common knowledge: ‘thou lyest worse than hee that made the last Almanacke’ says one of Chamberlain’s characters.\(^{50}\) Montaigne teased prognosticators by pointing out that they made dozens of predictions, some of which were bound to come true.\(^{51}\) Yet inaccuracy does not seem to have dented their popularity and astrology remained highly salient. Sceptics such as Reginald Scot may reflect a widely-held view: ‘if one of these Prognostications fall out right, then they triumph above measure. If the Prognosticators be found to forge and lye always…they will excuse the matter’.\(^{52}\) Certainly when Macbeth realises there are alternative explanations for the witches’ prognostications he tells Macduff: they ‘palter with us in a double sense’ and his use of the word *palter*, meaning to equivocate or deal evasively, echoes the idea that prophecies are open to interpretation.\(^{53}\) Early modern audiences, believing that it is possible both to foretell the future and that human agency plays a part in events, would have been responsive to this reading.

Evidence that predictions were believed and followed, however, can also be inferred, not only from the extensive sales of almanacs but also because their content was replicated in specialist literature such as agricultural manuals and medical texts.\(^{54}\) First-hand accounts of vernacular astrology were similarly widespread: Arbella Stuart only cut her hair on ‘the sixt day of the moone’\(^ {55}\) and a patient believed that ‘physick’ mistakenly administered during the dog days had caused him to be ‘not well all this summer, the sign in Virgo’.\(^ {56}\) Astrology’s limitations were recognised but, in the absence of any more accurate advice, it was a useful lens.

Intertextual references also testify to the symbiosis of almanac and drama in reflecting the supernatural. Bottom, for example, consulted his almanac to find a ‘good’ night for *Pyramus and Thisbe*.\(^ {57}\) Middleton’s nominatively-determined Weatherwise ‘woos by the almanac’.\(^ {58}\) Jonson’s Sordido, a farmer, uses his almanac to predict grain prices and blesses the day he bought it: ‘Never,

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52 Reginald Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London: 1584), Bk XI, Ch. XXII STC 21864, p.212.
53 *Macbeth*, V.7.50.
54 Capp, p.289.
56 Capp, p.289.
never | laid I a penny better out, than this’. The kind of information found in Browne’s *Almanac* was so much a part of everyday life it would be a surprise were it not to be found in the playhouse; it is certainly present in the ‘diary’ of theatre entrepreneur, Philip Henslowe (figure 7). Amongst his business expenses we find rubrics to cast a child’s horoscope, charms ‘to make a fowle fall dead’ and spells to find things that have been stolen and to cure the ‘falling evill’, the epilepsy that Browne also tries to control. Henslowe mostly used up every available space in his diary, scribbling receipts in corners or jotting notes in between other lines. The pages for spells, however, have much more white space, an attempt at formatting, and neater handwriting perhaps denoting the words have a certain value to him or were intended to be read by others (figure 7).

Early modern plays generally end in a restoration of justice and *Macbeth* is no exception, though it is shaped by a particularly Christian redemption where Malcolm predicts that justice will be done ‘by

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59 Dulwich MS VII, fol. 17r.
61 London, Dulwich College Archives, MS VII, Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe’s Diary, 1592-1609*, fols 017r, 017v, 018r; Browne, sig. B3v.
the grace of Grace’. This reassertion of Christian values does not extend to the supernatural, however; the witches are not punished despite the retributive punishment meted to others, and this lack of resolution leaves the supernatural still present. Like an almanac it is ‘absorbed in the ordinary relations of everyday life’. Given James’s known interest it is unsurprising Macbeth has a pervading supernatural atmosphere; given an audience familiar with ambiguity, perhaps it is equally unsurprising that Shakespeare left that supernatural aspect unresolved, as he leaves the whole question of Macbeth’s agency unresolved.

The ability to foretell the future is always attractive, not least at a time of uncertainty, and a desire for order in a seemingly random world is reflected on almost every page of Browne’s Almanac. So too in Macbeth the supernatural seems to offer hope or protection, at least before disorder descends. More quotidian applications such as using the moon’s phases for journeys on dark nights or using tide tables for transporting goods by sea, show astrology occupying a space in the daily routine. Whether people really had faith or whether prognostications were honoured more in the breach than the observance is difficult to uncover, but it seems that familiarity with almanacs facilitated the representation of the supernatural on the Jacobean stage, and attitudes to magic and superstition in Macbeth reflected an early modern understanding of the supernatural.

Figure 8. Astrolabe to be cut out, threaded and pasted onto a board to facilitate astrological calculation at home, Allestree’s Almanac, 1621. With kind permission of the Governors of Dulwich College.

64 Richard Allestree, A New Almanacke and Prognostication for the yeare of our Lord God 1621 (London: W. Jaggard for the Company of Stationers, 1620), sig. A'.
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A Picture of Pageantry and the Arches of Triumph: dramatic, visual, and literary representations of James I and the new Stuart dynasty through Thomas Dekker’s account of the 1604 Royal Entry and Stephen Harrison’s design for its setting.

MICHELLE CASTELLETTI

Focussing on the printed account of Thomas Dekker’s ‘The Magnificent Entertainment’ and the arches designed by architect Stephen Harrison (immortalised and available to date through William Kip’s engravings) as its primary artefacts, this paper aims to portray the representation of the British Monarchy and the socio-political realities in the late Tudor/early Stuart dynasties, as symbolised through the visual and textual allegorical devices used in the 1604 Royal Entry of King James I, contextualising, and affirming this through the various eye-witness (and other) accounts available. Corroborating the research of several authors and historians, and using sources such as John Nichols’ compilations, as well as the study of emblematic devices in the Early Modern Period, this paper asserts that civic pageantry played an important role in defining the perception of the monarchy by its people, and proposes that said artefacts lead to a reading abounding with undertones relating to socio-economic actualities, religious controversy, foreign policy agenda and the assertion of the throne itself.

1 Full title: The Magnificent Entertainment: giuen to King James, Queene Anne his wife, and Henry Frederick the Prince, vpon the day of his Maiesties triumphant passage (from the Tower) through his honourable citie (and chamber) of London, being the 15. of March, 1603. As well by the English as by the strangers: vvith the speeches and songes, deliuered in the seuerall pageants.
3 Apart from those by Thomas Dekker himself, Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton, other accounts have been acknowledged, including the eye-witness accounts of Gilbert Dugdale, Venetian Ambassador Nicolo Molin and, recently, Spanish Ambassador Juan de Tassí y Acuña, Conde de Villamediana.
5 Title: The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received ThoseHonours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical. by Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).
Figure 1. From British Library (own photo). First page of folio compiled and published by joiner and architect Stephen Harrison; engraved by William Kip, dated 15 March, 1603. (© British Library Board)
SETTING THE SCENE

The End of the Elizabethan Age and the beginnings of a Jacobean Dynasty

The 1603 accession to the throne of King James VI of Scotland⁶ marked the end of the Tudor dynasty. The Royal Entry of 1604 had to display power, unity, prosperity and peace. It had to instil confidence, give reassurance and affirm lineage and succession. The fact that the entry was postponed by such a long time due to the plague, made this progress more pertinent than previous progresses as it gave the various communities, livery companies and the court itself a chance to vet the new king and his work, begin to understand his agendas, and therefore use this knowledge together with the opportunity of the progress to metaphorically comment on economic, religions, and political policy.

Apart from the obvious great joy and celebration exhibited at this procession,⁷ there were other strong connotations and messages by the various stakeholders, such as the 'reminder' by the Dutch merchants at their arch of the importance of upholding the Anglo-Dutch interests⁸ at a time when there was an increasing steer towards peace with Spain, which could, not only affect the trade between England and the Netherlands⁹ (and therefore the economy), but also create religio-political schism, as well as expose the low countries to possible attack.¹⁰

James I was faced with an immediate 'task'. The expectation can be seen in the parliament proclamation 24 March 1603.¹¹ The concept of a union, not just in regal terms, but also in actual fact,

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⁶ By royal proclamation issued on October 20, 1604, King James VI of Scotland and I of England was now King James I of Great Britaine: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/royal-proclamation-declaring-james-vi-and-i-to-be-king-of-great-britain>

⁷ Thomas Dekker: 'The day (for whose sake, these wonders of Wood, cymde thus into the clowdes) is now come; being so earely vp by reason of Artificiall Lights, which wakened it, that the Sunne ouer-slept himselfe, and rose not in many hourses after, yet brinishing with it into the very bosome of the Cittie, a world of people. The Streets seemede to bee paused with men: Stalles in stead of rich wares were set out with children, open Casements fild vp with wo:men. | All Glasse windowes taken downe, but in their places, sparkeled so many eyes, that had it not bene the day, the light which reflected from them, was sufficient to haue made one: bee that should haue compared the emptie and vntrden walkes of London, which were to be seen in that late mortally-destroying Deluge, with the thronged streetes now, might haue believed, that upon this day, began a new Creation, & that the Cittie was the onely Workhouse wherein sundry Nations were made.' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A20069.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

⁸ Including, for example, ensuring the perpetuation of the Treaty of Nonsuch signed by Queen Elizabeth I in 1585 and amended and renewed by Privy Council in 1598.

⁹ Today’s Holland and Belgium.


¹¹ "A general hope was raised in the minds of all your people that under your majesty’s reign, religion, peace, justice, and all virtue should renew again and flourish; that the better sort should be cherished, the bad reformed or repressed, and some moderate ease should be given us of those burdens and sore oppressions under which the whole land did groan.‘ Kenyon, J. (1989). The Stuart Constitution 1603-1688. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
was paramount to this new kingdom’s ideology\textsuperscript{12} and had already been publicly announced in parliament. The unity of the kingdoms within James’ political thinking, is attested by Francis Bacon\textsuperscript{13} and several other writings at the time, including the King’s own first Parliamentary Speech in 1604, as well as via other visual and symbolic means, such as coins minted in 1603-4 and the Union of the Crowns signets.

As several historians and writers have pointed out, such as Dinah Newton\textsuperscript{14} and Robert Lawson-Peebles, this is an unprecedented time.\textsuperscript{15} The monarch is now reigning over three countries (England, Scotland and Ireland), and a municipality (Wales), each with their own ‘political, administrative, social and (often most significantly) religious systems and traditions’.\textsuperscript{16} The entertainment advocated this concept.

The pageantry also hints at the new world, perhaps alluding to underlying political thought, referring to British colonialism; and, possibly John Hawkins’ transatlantic slave trade as well as Queen Elizabeth I’s deportation of ‘negroes and blackamoors' just a few years before, in 1601. On the other hand, Kim Hall argues that any reference to slave trade triangulation must be seen in the light of the ‘esoteric expression of James’ benevolent plans for a passive and needy Africa.’\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} King James I’s lineage included a line to King Alfred who had united the Heptarchy (The unification of the seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Mercia, Northumbria, Sussex and Wessex in the early 10\textsuperscript{th} century) as well as to Henry VII who had united the houses of York and Lancaster.


SOCIO-POLITICAL REALITIES

Politics, Religion, Power, Economy

James’ own concept of the monarch as king by Divine right was made very clear from the beginning, as demonstrated even in his own Basilikon Doron:18 genealogy,19 succession, and divine right to the throne were an imperative. Another important factor in James’ manifesto was his intent for peace and unity, which he immediately set out in his first parliamentary speech.20 This brought the controversial subject of religion into play. The King’s intentions, or leaning towards, a possible peace ‘treaty’ with Spain,21 which would be hugely beneficial to England also on economic terms,22 was seen as the possibility of the creation of unrest and anxiety in the relationships across the Channel.

Beati Pacifici and Rex Pacificus defined the reign of King James. Peace was a strategic and personal vision. James I was adverse to radical or extreme religion. In this way, he did not appease the Puritans, nor the rigid Catholics. As response to the Millenary Petition,23 and the ‘current’ climate, in January 1604, King James convened a four-day conference at Hampton Court to discuss reforms and hopefully reach a consensus on national ecclesiastical policy.24 In his address to parliament as the Head of Church of England, James I confirmed ‘that it would please God to make me one of the members of such a general Christian Union in religion as we might meet in the midst, which is the centre and perfection of all things’.25

18 A treatise, in the form of a letter to his (King James’) son, Henry, on governing and how to be a king.
19 The family tree issued on 26 March 1603 (drawn by antiquarian and parliamentarian, Robert Bruce Cotton) shows the lineage of James (and thus his right to the throne) dating back to King Alfred and the Saxons.
20 Parliament speech, March 1604 ‘The first […] of these blessings which God hath, jointly with my person, sent unto you is outward peace […] which is no small blessing to a Christian Commonwealth, for by peace abroad with their neighbours the towns flourish, the merchants become rich, the trade doth increase, and the people of all sorts of the land enjoy free liberty to exercise themselves in their several vocations without peril or disturbance.’ Bergeron, David M. ‘King James’s Civic Pageant and Parliamentary Speech in March 1604.’ Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies 34, no. 2 (2002): 213-31. doi:10.2307/4053700.
21 The Treaty of London was signed in Somerset House as early as 1604.
22 James I had inherited a stable kingdom from Elizabeth I, however, there were financial difficulties, augmented by the ongoing war with Spain and the rebellion in Catholic Ireland.
23 Reportedly signed by 1,000 clergymen, this was a list of requests and reforms presented to James I by the Puritans.
24 The Symme and Substance of the Conference which, it Pleased his Excellent Maiestie to haue with the Lords, Bishops, and Other of his Clergie, (at which the Most of the Lordes of the Councell were Present) in his Maiesties Priuie-Chamber, at Hampton Court. January 4. 1603. / Contracted by William Barlowv, Doctor of Divinity, and Deane of Chester. Whereunto are Added, Some Copies, (Scattered Abroad,) Visuauory, and Vntrue. (London, 1604) STC 1456.5. The whole conference was recorded and can be read here: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eboo/A04434.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>
SYMBOLISM AND ALLEGORY

The use of the metaphor

Just like Plutarch and Simonides, Thomas Dekker describes poets as those 'who drawe speaking pictures' and painters as those 'who make dumbe poesie'. With this, we have opened the floor to interpretation. The early modern period is replete with emblematica. The use of the metaphor is well-understood. A passion for emblems, imprese, hieroglyphics, mythological manuals and writings such as those of Paradin, Ripa and others, together with a quasi-Platonic rebirth of devices used in medieval chivalry was present across Europe in the Early Modern Period.

Since the 1604 procession took place outdoors, and its speeches and orations not always audible, it was imperative to ensure that the message was strongly present visually. Dramatic continuity was maintained in various ways, such as by linking one arch to the other through different characters, the role of 'messengers' in between arches, as well as by musical interludes from various musicians, including the boy choristers of St Paul's Cathedral. There was also an expectation that the public would decipher the symbolism used. This strong iconographical tradition is further asserted by Dekker’s

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26 Plutarch was one of the first to point out the parallels between the literary and the visual arts, quoting Simonides in calling poetry 'articulate painting' and painting 'inaarticulate poetry'. Plutarch, Moralia, Book IV, ed. G. P. Goold (London: Heinemann, 1999), 347a, p.501. [E.g. Combe, Thomas, The Theater of Fine Devices (London, 1593); Paradin, Claude, The Heroicall Devises of M. Claudius Paradin, (London: William Kearney, 1591); Whitney, Geoffrey, A Choice of Emblemes (Leyden: F. Raphelengius, 1586); Aliciati Andrea Emblematum Liber (1531) – although the latter was not published in England until 1586.

27 The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received those Honours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical. by Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).

28 ibid.


30 Caesar Ripa, Iconologia, or, Moral emblems: wherein are express'd, various images of virtues, vices, passions, arts, humour, elements and celestial bodies; as designed by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and modern Italians: useful for orators, poets, painters, sculptors, and all lovers of ingenuity: illustrated with three hundred and twenty-six humane figures, with their explanations; newly design'd and engraven on copper, by I. Fuller, painter, and other masters: by the care and at the charge of P. Tempest. Published by ReInk Books (2017) <https://archive.org/details/iconologiaormora00ripa>.

31 This was also true of actors and theatre: 'An actor could change from a man into a woman, an adult into a child, an Englishman into a Spaniard, a Protestant into a Catholic, or a king into a pauper by altering his apparel before returning to the stage. And an actor often had to.' : Lublin, R.J. Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture (Ohio: Ohio State University, 2003).

32 The visual element in such civic entertainment was of utmost importance since there was no time to develop a dramatically coherent plot because of the movement of the sovereign or magistrate. Thus characters had to be immediately recognizable, for there was no prolonged lingering at street corners. Hence visual allegory was the pageant-dramatist's chief tool, and he used characters familiar in the allegorical pictorial tradition.' Bergeron, D. Symbolic Landscape in English Civic Pageantry. Renaissance Quarterly, 22(1), 1969 pp.32-37.
account of the sixth arch at Fleet Street: ‘having tolde you that her name was Justice, I hope you will not put mee to describe what properties she held in her hands…’

THE CITY BECOMES THE STAGE

For such Vertue is begotten in Princes, that their verie presence hath power to turne a Village to a Citie, and to make a Citie appeare great as a Kingdome.

This Royal Entry was the finest and most extravagant to date. This was due to many reasons, (including the coming of a new dynasty); however, the flourishing of the arts, the development of intellectualism, the growing understanding of emblematica and the general refinement that occurred during the reign of Elizabeth I, cannot be overlooked. And thus, the arches are saturated with symbolic devices and are lavishly ornate and Baroque, reaching physical proportions never seen before, as attested by Gilbert Dugdale’s eye-witness account.

According to Harrison the whole procession lasted several hours. The majority of the arches were devised by Ben Jonson, with Thomas Dekker responsible for the ones at Cheapside and Fleet Street and Thomas Middleton’s speech at Fleet Street. It is generally accepted that artificer, Stephen Harrison, was the ‘sole Inventor of the Architecture’. However, there are other reports, relating to the ones at Gracechurch Street and Royal Exchange, paid for by the Italian and Dutch Companies, respectively.

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33 *The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical* by Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).

34 ibid.

35 There is a lot of evidence to corroborate this, including records form the Corporation of London regarding costs, the writers themselves (Jonson, Dekker and Middleton), the complexities of the arches and their designs, the actors taking part, and all the print available that immortalised the event thereafter. Bergeron, David M. ‘King James’s Civic Pageant and Parliamentary Speech in March 1604.’ *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 34, no. 2 (2002): 213-31. doi:10.2307/4053700.

36 *Trophies of glory, pageants of that magnificence the like was neuer* Bergeron, D. English civic pageantry, 1558-1642. (London: Edward Arnold, 1971).

37 11am or 12pm till 5pm


39 As pointed out by Peter Ole Grell, there is evidence found at the Royal Library of Belgium (*Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique* or *Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier or l’Albertine*) within the *Beschryvinghe vande Herlycke Arcvs Triumphal ofte Eerepoorte vande Nederlantshe Natie opgherecht in London* in a pamphlet printed in Middleburgh by publisher Richard Schilders containing a report by Simon Ruytinck (Minister to Austin Friars, 1601 – 1621), that the Dutch merchants and communities designed the arches with ‘inventors’ Christopher de Steur and Assuerus Regemorter, painters Daniel de Vos, Pawels van Overbeker, Adrian van Sond and Martin Droeshout, together with engraver William Kip, and, above all, architect Conraet Jansen. This is corroborated by other evidence, such as the report by Dutch historian Emanuel van Meteren. The Dutch arch was reportedly commissioned by Ruytinck, (also a silk merchant), classicist Jacob Cool, and physician and poet Raphael Thorius. Grell, O. *Calvinist exiles in Tudor and Stuart England*. (London: Routledge, 2017).
Never before in any other pageant, procession or progress had such elaborate, majestic arches been constructed.\footnote{Bergeron, D. *English civic pageantry, 1558-1642*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1971).} Although Harrison does not let us know the physical heights and proportions of these arches, there are eye-witness accounts (such as Gilbert Dugdale’s)\footnote{Title: *The Time Triumphant, Declaring in briefe, the arial of our Soueraigne lidge Lord, King James into England, His Coronation at Westminster: Together with his late royal progresse, from the Towre of London through the Cittie, to his Highnes mannor of White Hall. Shewing also, the varieties & varieties of al the sundry trophies or pageants, erected ... With a rehearsall of the King and Queenes late comming to the Exchaunge in London.*} reporting the grandeur of them all, as well as a comment by Dekker on the Dutch Arch where the gate was 18ft high and 12ft wide, and a Dutch pamphlet referring to the 87ft height of the same Dutch Arch at the Royal Exchange. It would be interesting to examine this further to see to what extent, if any, these kind of edifices - just pre-dating the Palladian influence on English theatrical set-design, perspective and architecture - had actually acted as an influence on Inigo Jones’ later sets for court masques.

The main arches were erected in the following spots along the procession:

1 – Fenchurch
2 – Gracechurch Street
3 – Royal Exchange, Cornhill
4 – Cheapside (above the Great Conduit in Cheape, Soper-lane End, East)
5 – Little Conduit in Cheape
6 – Fleet Conduit in Cheape
7 – Temple Street

Most of the arches are imbued with political significance. The Londinium’s symbolism, at the East End of Fenchurch Street, focussed on the monarchy; the Italian Arch in Gracechurch Street on succession, continuity and unity; the Dutch Arch (Royal Exchange, Cornhill) primarily on foreign policy, while the one at Cheapside above the Great Conduit in Cheape possibly showed *Arabia Britannica*. This was followed by two other Dekker arches - one close to the Little Conduit in Cheap,\footnote{This is the arch where all the cities’ dignitaries came to greet the king in person. The metaphor here became reality.} portraying peace and bounty,\footnote{*Hortus Euporiae* is a beautifully domed arch with trellises, flowers and plants springing out of the domes and the arch itself and with representations Chrusos (Gold) and Argurion (silver) and of the music and the liberal arts. The arch is, in essence, a three-dimensional upright garden, metaphorically representing England to its new gardener, King James I. One could hypothesise that this is yet another link to the Divine – Christ the gardener.} and another one above the conduit in Fleet Street, addressing the new world.\footnote{This arch is an interesting one to study as it presents us with a hugely significant disparity between Dekker and Harrison account. In Dekker’s account, *Arabia Brittanica* is the chief figure while in Harrison’s design, this place is taken by Fame. Another disparity is the textual representation (including a description of) the Graces and Hours in Dekker; as opposed to the visual representation of the Four Cardinal Virtues in the engravings. It would be an interesting study to examine the reasons behind these disparities and their significance. Understanding that Harrison would have discussed what the arches were to convey with Dekker and Jonson, as well as the Dutch and Italian communities, although conjecture, it could be possible that although the final arch was not representing all that Dekker had in mind, had written, and was 'performed/spoken (being this one at the Great Conduit was 'his' arch/pageant), he opted to immortalise his intentions at least for posterity via the printing medium.} The last arch
at Temple Bar was devised by Jonson as a representation of the Temple of Janus, portraying power, peace and wealth, with silver dove and olive wreath and laurel crown (Irene), Pluto’s ingot of gold and the god of Mars ‘growling, his armour scattered upon in in several pieces’.

The King as subject and object | The audience as spectator and crowd.

A king is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazingly do behold. There are three main elements to the pageant – the procession itself with main actor (the King and his entourage), the text and visual elements (the arches and the city itself as ‘living backdrop’, as well as the drama and literary texts by Dekker, Jonson and Middleton), the diverse audiences and view-points (ambassadorial, from the king, from the citizen’s point of view). This entry is also one imbued with political connotation and laden with the weight of showing off the monarch and the monarchy, as also seen from the reporting done by the Spanish and Venetian Ambassadors. It is therefore also important to make this a great celebration – thus, the arches built near conduits (which were flowing with Claret wine). It becomes an act of perhaps not-so-subtle diplomacy where the King is showing off the splendour, riches and extravagance of the court to his foreign ambassadors. Harrison even reports 300 children from Christ Church Hospital, near Barking Church-yard, climbing on scaffolding near the tower to watch the parade. ‘It was a spectacle in which was enshrined the mutually-defining entities of people and sovereign. This magnificent display of power, visual splendour and lavishness had diverse audiences – all crucial and therefore targeted in different ways. There already exists the Dekker/Jonson disparity in the

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45 ‘He respecteth all climates and fills all parts of the world with his majestie’ Jonson, from: Bergeron, D. English civic pageantry, 1558-1642, (London: Edward Arnold, 1971).
47 From Basilikon Doron: www.bl.uk/collection-items/autograph-manuscript-of-king-james-vi-and-is-basilikon-doron-or-the-kings-gift
48 Dugdale’s account is a good example of a layman’s eye-witness; however, he does seem to have knowledge and insight. He tries to decipher the symbolism, he offers his own interpretation, and he recognises the Kings Men. An interesting ‘addition’ from Dugdale is the oration of an elderly gentleman. Nichols’ hypothesis is that this could actually be Dugdale portraying himself.
49 Venetian Ambassador Nicolo Molin; Spanish Ambassador Juan de Tassis y Acuña, Conde de Villamediana
50 The Spanish ambassador occupied a stationary position designed to show off to him and his fellow legates the splendour of the Stuart court; from this vantage point he could not see the arches or hear the speeches, which were not his concern: what he saw, and described, is what interested him – the Stuart court, the government with which he was negotiating the peace’. Mark Hutchings & Berta Cano-Echevarría (2017): The Spanish Ambassador’s account of James I’s entry into London, 1604 [with Text], The Seventeenth Century, DOI: 10.1080/0268117X.2017.1335611
51 The arch’s of triumph erected in honor of the high and mighty prince. Iames. the first of that name. King of England. and the siet of Scotland at his Maiseties entrance and passage through his honorable city & chamber of London. vpon the 15th. day of march 1603. Invented and published by Stephen Harrison ioyner and architect: and graven by William Kip.
52 Mark Hutchings & Berta Cano-Echevarría (2017): The Spanish Ambassador’s account of James I’s entry into London, 1604 [with Text], The Seventeenth Century, DOI: 10.1080/0268117X.2017.1335611
understanding of who this entertainment is for, and how it should be read, perceived and therefore related. However, beyond that, there is the display of allegiance towards the new king (i.e. directed to the king as the audience), the acceptance of the new dynasty and this line of succession, the portrayal of power, wealth and extravagance for all the world (empire?) to recognise through the eyes of their respective ambassadors, the show of the monarchy to the different classes – where each would glean what they could perceive (knowledge of the use and meaning of emblematic devises, - or plain, simple fun), the festivity and celebration in general, and the reader’s impression and interpretation through the various printed material made available afterwards, and posterity itself.

King James I was a widely welcomed and accepted King. However, there is a marked difference between the attitude and participation of the monarch in 1559 progress and this one. While Elizabeth I almost became one of the ‘actors’ within the pageant, delivering speeches and speaking to her audience, James I retained a very passive role, sometimes even hurrying through between one device and another. This is discussed at length by both Dekker and Dugdale; and is discussed by historians such as Jonathan Goldberg and David M. Bergeron, who consider this perhaps to be a device used by the king to further the notion of divine right by mystifying the body: 'What he offered was not simply an image of his power, but the power of himself as image'.

It is also interesting to note the focus on Queen Anne in Dugdale’s account and the emphasis played on the importance of lineage and succession even in an eye-witness account, even with regards to the Queen. As noted by Bergeron, also in Dugdale is talk of patronage (perhaps unusual for an eye-witness account?) such as: the Kings Men, as well as the Queen’s and the Prince’s ‘actors' (Earle

53 Ben Jonson: 'Neither was it becoming, or could it stand with the dignity of these shows, after the most miserable and desperate shift of the puppets, to require a truchman [interpreter] or (with the ignorant painter) one to write, 'This is a dog’ or 'This is a hare’, but so to be presented as upon the view they might without cloud or obscurity declare themselves to the sharp and learned. And for the multitude, no doubt but their grounded judgements gazed, said it was fine and were satisfied.’ Trudell, Scott. The Sounds of Pageantry. The Map of Early Modern London. Ed. Janelle Jenstad. (Victoria: University of Victoria <http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/SOUN1.htm> [accessed 01 March 2018].

54 Dekker: To the Reader. Reader, you must understand, that a regard, being had that his Majestie should not be wearied with tedious speeches: A great part of those which are in this Booke set downe, were left unsoken: So that thou dost here receiue them as they should have bene deliuered, not as they were.' Strong, R. (1984). Art and power. Berkeley: University of California Press.


56 Jonathan Goldberg, James I and the Politics of Literature (Baltimore, 1983)

57 'Englandes Triumph, the worthe of women, Anne, Queene of Englande' Here again, is the importance of the eye-witness, who is not only seeing the arches and following the pageantry, but is looking at the overall with the Monarchy as an essential part of the pageant itself. [From Dugdale – found in: The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James: Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical. by Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).
of Worsters and Nottingham, respectively). There is also mention of the constant flowing of wine, as in Harrison’s pamphlet.

Of course, the importance of the visual element is huge – as even mentioned in the texts by Dekker and Jonson. The speeches (just like with the previous big entertainment of Elizabeth in 1559), were sometimes inaudible, omitted, possibly due to time constraints, or so convoluted in the mixture of wine and noise, that did not necessarily deliver the message intended to all. Thus, Harrison’s arches were what everyone would have seen and interpreted.\textsuperscript{58}

There are far too many allegorical links to discuss in just this article, including references to James the writer and philosopher. This article will therefore focus on themes of power, divine right, succession, political agenda, and socio-economic and religious imagery.\textsuperscript{59}

Thus is the framework in which this magnificent entertainment is to be viewed. It is a joyous occasion and a visual spectacle for the people, on the one hand, and a display of allegiance, a means to an end, and propaganda for the livery companies on the other. What is it for Dekker, Harrison and Jonson? Why have these arches been documented so heavily? (a first for a procession). This would be an interesting study to undertake. Perhaps it is as simple as the artists being very proud of their work in what seems to be the most spectacular procession to date. Perhaps there is greater intrigue and meaning that one could uncover. This pageant was also a diplomatic ‘opportunity’ for the ambassadors\textsuperscript{60} and an opportunity of propaganda for the monarchy itself. Just like the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, this was power on display.\textsuperscript{61} It was Britain showing its perception of itself as a superpower empire.

This is the context of this analysis: a pageant, that in reality is not serving simply as entertainment and as means of honouring the king, but, above and beyond that, has political purpose.

\textsuperscript{58} There is also the fact that, we, the readers, are reading in a different context, and are al so aware of all the texts, including those which were not read out etc. We also have the opportunity to analyse and make our own interpretation and reach our own conclusions of the disparity between the printed texts. But we will never know what really transpired and whose account is the definite one. Reality is probably a mixture of all accounts available.

\textsuperscript{59} Although not discussed in depth in this article, Nova Faelix Arabia – the arch at Soper-Lane is another one portraying power and the divine. Dekker describes the Mechanicke Body used in this arch in detail; but, importantly, he describes the exaltation of a young chorister from St Paul’s Cathedral, linking James I to Brutus.

\textsuperscript{60} It is intimated that assigned precedence had not been agreed upon and that therefore some ambassadors were present for the pageant. However, the Spanish account is a hugely significant one. It is the one that gives evidence of the actual entertainment itself - the Royal Procession as the focal part of the whole entertainment; the people’s gaze at the King – and following that, rather than in listening to the speeches. The Spanish Ambassador also points out the seating of Lady Arabella Stuart and the Countess of Arundel’s prominent positioning in the procession. This detail is hugely important to the Spanish Court. They were previously excluded from Elizabeth’s court – and are now back in favour.

\textsuperscript{61} From Spanish ambassador: 'It was perhaps the supreme example in the medieval and early modern world of 'power on display' Mark Hutchings & Berta Cano-Echevarría (2017): The Spanish Ambassador’s account of James I’s entry into London, 1604 [with Text], The Seventeenth Century, DOI: 10.1080/0268117X.2017.1335611
Focus on Londinium and the arches erected by the foreign communities.

1. LONDINIUM at FENCHURCH

![LONDINIUM](image)

Figure 2. LONDINIUM. From British Library (own photo) – architect Stephen Harrison; engraving by William Kip. (© British Library Board)

This device epitomises the use of symbolism and allegory in the early modern period. The arch itself captures 'London'; but it also portrays the interactions between Britain and other countries. The Royal Pageant was a display of power for all to see, including the ambassadors from different countries. It is a historical moment in British culture – (albeit almost a year later, because of the plague), marking the 'changeover' from the Tudor to the Stuart dynasty. It is imbued with subculture undertones. It also shows aesthetics of former ages and ways in which the more distant past is represented in subsequent times. This imperialist mode, already apparent and significant in the title LONDINIUM is particularly relevant in this specific Royal Entry, as King James is now King of Britain. Harking back to antiquity and the times of the Romans, it evokes imperialism and supremacy. The Roman triumphal arches are what King James and his entourage would have passed through. King James I is seen as the new Emperor of Great Britain. Designed by Jonson, this arch was used to symbolise greatness even before

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62 The actual coronation took place on July 25, 1603.
the arch was revealed. The actual arch was covered with a curtain of silk, only uncovered when the King was near enough to see this 'at the rising of the Sunne, all mists [are] dispersed and fled.'

The figure in the middle is Monarchia Brittanica. Beneath her is Divine Wisdom. Genius Orbis is holding a goblet (signifying abundance). There are several more images incorporated (including all virtues conveying the characteristics that monarchy embodied in early seventeenth-century Britain). Of course, there is the whole representation of London on top.

The majestic imperialism represented in Harrison’s arch itself, is complemented by Dekker’s account itself: 'In name of all these Senators, (on whom | Vertue builds more, then these of Antique Rome) | Shouting a cheerefull welcome'. Evoking more ancient Roman imperial imagery is Dekker’s first text, which was supposed to be the first pageant, but was, 'layd by'. The words Camera Regia on Harrison’s arch (as also described by Dekker) refer to The King’s Chamber. Divine Right is explicit in Jonson’s text with phrases such as 'god on earth' and 'godlike race'.

From the very beginning of the pageant, we are immediately shown stability in the prospect of the Prince of Wales’s succession, with references to 'This springing glory of thy godlike race; | His countries wonder, hope, love, joy and pride', blessings for the future.

From this branch, may thousand branches more

Shoote o're the maine, and knit with every shore

In bonds of marriage, kinred, and increase;
and again the assertion of importance of lineage, even with regards to the Queen: 'no lesse a part / In this dayes greatnesse [...] daughter, sister, wife of severall kings: / Besides alliance, and the stile of mother, / In which one title you drowne all your other'.

ITALIAN ARCH at GRACECHURCH

Figure 3. From British Library (own photo): architect Stephen Harrison; engraving by William Kip. (© British Library Board)

71 The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First.
The Italian Pageant, at Gracechurch Street 'tooke vp the whole breth of the Street, of which, the lower part was a Square, garnished with foure great Columns: In the midst of which Square, was cut out a fayre and spacious high Gate, arched, being twenty seuen foot in the perpendicular lyne, and eyghteen at the ground lyne [...]'.

This arch, abounding with the graces of classicism, represented lineage, and portrayed succession and right to the throne, as well as the kingdom’s unity. In the centre, there is a painting of James on horseback receiving the sceptre from Henry VII. Inscriptions validate and accentuate this: 'IACOBO REGI MAGN', 'HENRICI VII ABNEP', and 'HIC VIR HIC EST'.

More links to Virgil and to divine right are found in the text shown in Dekker: Deus nobis haec otia fecit, the image of Apolloas well as the personification of Peace, (holding an olive branch), as an integral part of James’ policy. The recto of this arch is also lavishly embellished and, importantly, mentions the unity of England, Ireland, Scotland and France holding hands and being heralded by a trumpet.

2. DUTCH ARCH at ROYAL EXCHANGE

The Dutch Arch at the Royal Exchange, Cornhill focussed on James I’s role as a 'pan-Protestant European ally' advising the king to 'protect the existing political-religious and economic interests.

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72 From Dekker in: The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical. Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).

73 Unity is also the theme of the sixth arch at Fleet Street: The New World, which, significantly displays the 'new' Royal coat of arms – which now included the Scottish coat of arms – with the lion rampant, and wherein there is a representation of the four kingdoms in an open globe, which, according to Dekker, contained 'states of the land, from the Nobleman to the Ploughman'; as well as 'his Majesties foure kingdomes. ..All of them, in rich Robes and Mantles: crowns on their heads, and Scepters with pensil scutchions in their hands, lined with the coats of the particular kingdomes'. This is further ascertained by Middleton’s speech delivered by Zeal: Contaynes foure Kingdomes by your entrance blest, / By Brute divided, but by you alone, / All are againe united and made One...'

74 'The Great King James'.

75 ‘Great-great-grandson of Henry VII’.

76 'This is who he is'. A direct reference to Virgil’s Aenaid – not only alluding to the king as poet and philosopher, but also re-enforcing the link to a great Caesar. Other textual references include: Tu Regere Imperio populos Iacobe memento, [Hae tibi erunt Artes, Paci [que] imponere morem, ] Parcere Subiectis, debellare superbos;


78 God has bestowed these blessings on us

79 Apollo is god of sun and light. Louis XIV of France is still referred to as Le Roi Soleil. King James I was given this same symbol, but he also identified himself with the wisdom of King Solomon and as a philosopher with the divine right to be Europe’s peacemaker – Beat Pacifict.

shared between England and the Dutch Republic'.

It was of enormous proportions. Just the gate itself is recorded by Dekker as being 18ft high by 12ft wide. Dekker also describes 17 young damsels, attired in their (Low Countries’) clothes, representing the 17 provinces of Belgia. This arch was also a re-affirmance of divine providence. The female figure on the king’s right is winged – again, a reference to the divine. The imperial crown is portrayed with two sceptres – a

Figure 4. From British Library (own photo): architect Stephen Harrison; engraving by William Kip. (© British Library Board)

81 Schofield.
82 The exact dimensions of the Dutch arch – one of the largest, and probably the tallest, of the arches in the series – were recorded in a lavish 1604 folio printed by Richard Schilders in Middelburg for the architect and compiler, Contraet Jansen, in Southwark. Jansen’s Beschryuinghe Vande Herlycke Arcus Triumphal ofte Eerepoorte vande Nederlantshe Natie opgherect in London describes the arch as being eighty-seven feet high by thirty-seven feet wide and twenty-two feet long;
83 Speaker ‘God therefore...holds the Raynes of thy Kingdome in his owne hand: It is hee, whose beames, lend a light to thine: It is hee, that teaches thee the Art of Ruling; because none but hee, made thee a King’ From Dekker in: The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical. Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).
picture of imperial James, flanked on either side with the allegorical figures of Religio and Pietas, as well as Justice and Fortitude. Pyramids emit light – again, perhaps a reference to the Apollo. Of course, there is allocated space for trumpeters and the entertainment itself. Dekker’s description corroborates the Harrison/Kip engraving:

in another Front, advanc’d for the purpose, a square Table was fastened upright, in which was drawne the lively picture of the King, in his Imperial Robes; a Crowne on his head, the Sword and Scepter in his hands.84

The female statue on the top of the arch, pointing towards the sky, and erected directly above the image of King James, is another reference to the divine. The Dutch Arch also put a focus on the Royal Family as a whole, even presenting them all with a cup of gold85 (usually only presented to the monarch), thus underlining the succession.86 beauty of these arches is that they also juxtaposed 'set' with reality, thus creating allegorical tableaux vivant.

84 The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First.
86 Bergson, ‘Civic Pageant and Parliamentary Speech’. Dekker: And that thy Queene, (who is one part of thy selfe) with thy Progeny (who are the second hopes of thy people), may both give to, and receave from thy Kingdome, Im- mortall glory.’
Although there are a few discrepancies between the Dekker account and the Harrison/Kip engravings throughout the pageant, this is perhaps one of the most significant. Dekker fails to mention the two female images on either side of the 17 women. This is significant as these female images are representing Faith (cross and a cup – a reference to the Holy Grail?), and Peace and Hope (a dove and a branch); and therefore are alluding to the possible impending peace treaty with Spain as well as the role of religion and the importance of maintaining the *status quo* with the Dutch protestants, using the pageant to also refer to his predecessor, Elizabeth.\(^87\)


\(^88\) *[that] wee may be sheltr'd under your winges now, as then under hers*' Dekker in: *The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court*: *collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Barons and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical.* Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).
The reference to religion is hugely significant. King James had already presented his thoughts in parliament. Both the Catholics and the Puritans thought they had enough reason for the king to favour them. The other female is represented with two children—a show of succession and stability with the Prince of Wales as heir, perhaps as opposed to the childless Elizabeth?

CONCLUSION

[H]ee that should have compared the emptie and untroden walkes of London, which were to be seen in that late mortally-de- stroying Deluge, with the thronged streetes now, might have believed, that upon this day, began a new Creation, and that the Citie was the onely Workhouse wherein sundry Nations were made. The city as stage. The king as protagonist. The audience and the collective gaze. Have we, as the readers become ourselves the King walking through our own pageant?

For albeit those Monuments of your Loves were erected up to the Cloudes, and were built never so strongly, yet now their lastinnges should live but in the tongues and memories of men: But that the hand of Arte gives them here a second more perfect bbeing.

89 ‘He then proceeded to talk about religion, wishing ’from [his] heart’ that the Christian denominations ’might meete in the middest’ and persecution would end.’ Rhodes, Richards, and Marshall, Selected Writings, 297. Neil Rhodes, Jennifer Richards, and Joseph Marshall, eds., King James VI and I: Selected Writings (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

90 Catholics because of his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Puritans because of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

91 Dekker in: The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical. Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).

92 Harrison in: The progresses, processions, and magnificent festivities, of King James the First, his royal consort, family, and court: collected from original manuscripts, scarce pamphlets, corporation records, parochial registers, comprising Forty Masques and Entertainments, Ten Civic Pageants, Numerous Original Letters, and Annotated Lists of the Peers, Baronets and Knights, who Received Those Honours During the Reign of King James; Illustrated with notes, historical, topographical, biographical and bibliographical. Nichols, John, 1745-1826. [Four Quarto volumes] Publication date 1828. (Posthumous).
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The Hermaphrodite King:
Polysemy and the failure of unity in William Davenant and Inigo Jones’ *Salmacida Spolia*.

DEBBIE HICKS

This article interrogates the presentation of monarchy in Salmacida Spolia, a court masque staged during the escalating political turmoil that culminated in the execution of Charles I. By approaching the work through both William Davenant’s script and accompanying commentary and through Inigo Jones’ scenic and costume designs, the relationship between textual and visual signification will be examined, establishing that semiotic instability discursively challenged and undermined aspects of the Caroline regime, rather than bolstering monolithic royalism. The resultant complexity in signification allowed contemporary spectators to renew their hermeneutical approach - an emancipatory process at odds with the putative pro-monocracy perspective of the work.

A king is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazingly doe behold.  

Despite the extravagances lavished upon Caroline court masques, and the remarkably select number of people permitted to participate in them, the opening night of *Salmacida Spolia* was not sufficiently tempting to lure Robert Reade to court. ‘The mask was performed last Tuesday night’, he wrote to his cousin Thomas Windebank three days after the event, ‘myself being so wise as not to see it. They say it was very good, but I believe the disorder was never so great at any’. Freshly

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devised by the talents of poet laureate, William Davenant, and the eminent polymath, Inigo Jones, the masque had premiered on the 21st January 1640 in the Palace of Whitehall’s Masquing House, a purpose-built salles des fêtes, hastily erected in a courtyard in 1637 as a temporary alternative to the Banqueting House,\(^3\) where the recently painted Rubens ceiling was in danger of irreparable damage from the smoke and condensing perspiration of the assembled court.\(^4\) Reade’s reluctance to attend, and his confided suspicions of turbulence in his absence, signals the political turmoil at the highest level of British government. Charles I’s continued insistence on personal rule without recourse to Parliament was proving an increasingly contentious policy – especially in the face of the rising financial and diplomatic crisis, resulting from his defeat in the first Bishop’s War. As the threat of dissent mounted, Charles needed to validate his authority as divinely anointed ruler. With Henrietta Maria by his side, he assumed the starring role in Davenant and Jones’ latest enterprise, reasserting himself as sovereign redeemer and benevolent king whose love and virtues could unite and pacify his people. Parties known to harbour anti-royalist ideologies were deliberately cast as masquers in an active demonstration of the king’s peace.\(^5\) Yet, the attempt to position the king as a munificent source of harmony, symbolically bolstering royal authority, failed. Performed only twice, Salmacida Spolia was to be the last court masque. Nine years later almost to the day, Charles I was publicly executed on a scaffold erected metres away from where his Masquing House had stood – a violent end to seven years of bloody Civil War.

All court masques existed ‘at the point of intersection between politics and the arts’.\(^6\) Ostensibly spectacular entertainments with a specific political message, they formed part of the ritual of government itself, encompassing both the physical and conceptual dimensions of the court. In performance, they were enacted within the space of government – Whitehall – by and for powerful members of the ruling class. Of all the court masques, none was staged at such a time of political volatility as Salmacida Spolia, and the piece has received significant scholastic attention from those seeking to understand the events that led up to Charles I’s execution. Martin Butler has contributed extensively to this body of research, admirably deposing the popular conception of the court masque as nonsense entertainment to demonstrate that the genre was a thriving political discourse. He concludes, however, that ‘Davenant […] use[d] Salmacida Spolia to articulate the need for a loving accord between king and people and to situate the king in postures of humility and patience’, claiming

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that ‘masque-poets’ failed to realise the full political power of the masque by allowing themselves to be ‘constrained by the governing imperative […] to dispel criticism’ of the king. He is remiss in confining analysis to Davenant’s contribution. *Salmacida Spolia*, as all court masques, cannot be understood by the text in isolation.

This paper will interrogate both the visual and textual presentation of the king in *Salmacida Spolia*, establishing that, rather than being a stable locus encoded with conventional qualities of sovereignty, he exists as a contradictory and complex cipher, signalled here as the ‘king-character’. As this cipher attempts to straddle the intersecting binaries of the classical and the contemporary and the conceptual and the actual, semiotic instability begins to mount, creating a rupture that, although allowing a regenerative hermeneutical approach, is fundamentally incongruous to the putative ideological purpose of the court masque as a vehicle to ‘validate the symbolic authority of the monarch’. The artefacts evaluated are those posterity bequeaths: the pen and brown ink sketches of Inigo Jones, and the printed copy of the script with accompanying explanatory notes and description by Davenant, circulated in conjunction with the performance in 1640.

It is acknowledged that this triumvirate of sources – Jones’ surviving designs, Davenant’s lyrics and words, as performed, and Davenant’s accompanying description – still omit crucial factors that would effect signification in performance: intonation of speech; the idiosyncrasies of the individual masquer in voice or shape; the instrumentation and orchestration of the music, and the acoustics within the Masquing House itself. While a precise comprehension of such semiotic complexities can no longer be understood, a patchwork of signifiers – and how those signifiers might interact with one another – can still be discerned, and usefully analysed.

Fundamental to the court masque is the conceptual and physical participation of the court including, in the case of *Salmacida Spolia*, the king, the ‘fulcrum upon which the action of the masque is turned.’ The piece sees Charles adopt the name and guise of the formidable Philogenes, who is first ‘discovered sitting in the Throne of Honour, his Majesty highest in a seat of gold […] adorned with palm trees, between which stood statues of the ancient heroes’. Philogenes has secured his throne through ‘strength of virtues’, his prowess for overcoming adversity represented both topologically by

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7 Butler, pp.121, 151.
9 Inherited by his assistant, John Webb, and now in the custody of the Duke of Devonshire’s collection.
12 Davenant, p.209, ll.337.
the ‘craggy rocks and inaccessible mountains’ of the mountain pass scene,\textsuperscript{13} ‘the difficult way which heroes are to pass’,\textsuperscript{14} and materially by the treasures that form his golden throne: ‘under parts on each side lay captives bound in several postures, lying on trophies of armours, shields, and antique weapons’.\textsuperscript{15} His worthiness to occupy a position within a symbolic order of classical heroes and kings is asserted through the apparent ease with which he accesses and occupies the space of divinely anointed victor, and the chorus lavish admiration upon him, beseeching him to ‘Accept our wonder and enjoy our praise!’\textsuperscript{16} The conflation of the masquer-king Charles and the fictional-king Philogenes is deliberately threadbare, with the name, traits and costume of the fictitious Philogenes simply being layered atop of the body of the king himself, offering symbolic validation and – in theory – amplifying the kingly qualities already presumed inherent in the figure of Charles. Jones’ \textit{Finished design for a masquer} is probably the final design for Charles’ Philogenes costume, indicated by both the exceptional flamboyance of the garments and the presence of additional flaps of paper, where alternative collar styles could be compared against the rest of the clothing.\textsuperscript{17} Jones etches out the pattern woven into the fabrics and, by reducing or increasing the amount of detail, a sense of texture as fabric changes between doublet and hose, and in the segments of the sleeve. Davenant’s description helps flesh out the colour palette; ‘the habit of his Majesty and the masquers was of watchet, richly embroidered with silver; long stockings set up of white; their caps silver with scrolls of gold and plumes of white feathers’.\textsuperscript{18} While the precise formation and organisation of these colours, and their relationship to texture – and how that texture might appear to change in the lighting conditions of the Masquing House – must be left to the individual imagination, the opulence and luxury of the outfit can hardly be in doubt. Similarly, evident is how conspicuous the figure of Charles himself would have seemed beneath the costume. All the recognisable components of his countenance are openly displayed, with no item from forehead to chest disguising or altering his appearance, and the top half of Jones’ design reflects contemporary Caroline fashions. Only the choice to use hose over breeches hints that Philogenes belongs to an earlier time. Aside from the elaborate headdress, the design of the head and torso almost echoes one of Charles’s Rubens or Van Dyck portraits.

Lindley argues that the court masque genre was Caroline aristocracy displaying ‘itself […] to itself’, but this perspective is reductive in omitting the narcissistic narrative creation inherent in both the textual and visual construction of characters like Philogenes.\textsuperscript{19} This is the court displaying an \textit{idea}

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\textsuperscript{13} Davenant, p.207, l.257.
\textsuperscript{14} Davenant, p.207, l.263.
\textsuperscript{15} Davenant, p.209, ll.310-311.
\textsuperscript{16} Davenant, p.209, l.338.
\textsuperscript{17} Such creative control over attire was, no doubt, reserved for the monarch.
\textsuperscript{18} Davenant, p.209, ll.313-315.
\textsuperscript{19} Lindley, \textit{Introduction}, p.ix.
\end{flushleft}
of itself to itself; a glorified, idyllic vision of quality and purity that lends itself more to the arena of the performance than the realm of the everyday. ‘Philogenes’ does not signify a character performed by Charles, but rather denotes a representational shell, an entity of greater, amplified virtues into which Charles can expand. The process is a conspicuous realisation of Searle’s assertion that live performance is ‘not a pretended representation of a state of affairs but the pretended state of affairs itself’.\(^{20}\) Charles does not become Philogenes, as a twenty-first century actor would become a character, but, rather, he inhabits the site of Philogenes, and both are simultaneously present on the stage. The formation of this king-character is signalled, in the printed work, by near-constant reference to ‘his Majesty’ rather than by the character’s name and, in the costume designs, by scribbled lines ‘for ye:king’. Paradoxically, the attempt to assert the king-character as a stable locus of unquestionable sovereignty and virtue creates tension. As direct comparison is made, the ‘gap between real and ideal must have been only too obvious to spectators’, especially when the king-character is decreed ‘fit to govern [...] and rule alone’.\(^{21}\) In establishing Charles as at once contemporary leader and classical hero, a figure uniting the time-honoured qualities of the honourable ruler, Davenant and Jones present a cipher of kinhood that is flawed, volatile, and full of hubristic humanity.

Notably absent from the surviving scenic designs of Salmacida Spolia are any traces of the fountain of Salmacis itself. Davenant references the Greek legend in the introduction to the published iteration of the masque, setting the scene with the ‘ancient adage’ that ‘Salmacida spolia sine sanguine sine sudore’ [‘Salmacian spoils, got without bloodshed, without sweat’] before describing the ‘famous fountain of most clear water and exquisite taste’ that, once imbibed, quelled the barbarian horde, their ‘fierce and cruel natures [...] reduced of their own accord to the sweetness of Grecian customs’.\(^{22}\) Davenant spells out the imagery he is invoking: ‘the allusion is, that his Majesty, out of his mercy and clemency [...] seeks by all means to reduce tempestuous and turbulent natures into a sweet calm’.\(^{23}\) Thus, the king-character cipher, the symbolic site occupied by Charles in Philogenes’ clothing, also signifies and exudes the mysterious powers of the fountain. The symbiosis is problematic, as Ovid’s Metamorphoses – which deals with the origin and legend of the fountain in detail – reveals:

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\begin{align*}
&\text{I will explain \ the way in which the fountain} \\
&\text{Of Salmacis, whose enervating waters} \\
&\text{effeminate the limbs of any man} \end{align*}
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\(^{21}\) Lindley, Introduction, p.xiv; Davenant, p.209, l.339.
\(^{22}\) Davenant, p. 201, l.59; p.202, ll.70-71; p.202, ll.75-77.
Crucially, the harmonisation that subdues the barbarian horde is conceptualised as a process of effeminisation. Figured as a sort of purification through emasculation, ferocious masculinity is washed away, leaving the feminine signalled by absence. The rhetoric of *Salmacida Spolia* replicates this sense of absence – absence of war, of violence – instead epitomising the effect of the king-character’s presence as tranquility and tolerance. His patience is referenced twice within the same stanza, and he is revered for his ‘mercy’, for refusing to ‘invert imperial arts to question a thought | Nor punish vulgar sickness as a sin’. Directly contradicting the textual suggestion of concord, however, is the visual signifier of violent, exploitative human cost, as Philogenes’ throne is formed of the bodies of conquered rivals. Orgel and Strong have identified a small sketch as part of Jones’ visual design for the masque. The presence of these naked, contorted figures facing away from the spectator as if to signal shame, and to highlight the anonymity of Philogenes’ vanquished foes, creates a sinister counterpoint to the reiterated munificence of the king-character. Tension between visual and textual signifier mounts. If Philogenes inherently possesses and can exhibit the ‘feminising’ characteristics of mercy and harmony, he is also capable of brutal exploitation and violence. A more complex hermeneutic approach is required as the king-character is presented simultaneously as both redeemer and monster, female and male. Semiotic space begins to form in the schism between these binary points, and the powers and motivations of the king-character become flexible and significantly less benign.

The concept of harmony, achieved through the union of male and female, is also evidenced in *Salmacida Spolia* by the participation of Henrietta Maria, who appears as Philogenes’ gift from the heavens and ‘represent[s] the chief heroine’ of the piece. It is notable that the royal pair appear on-stage together for the first time at a critical moment of political volatility, and Davenant’s closing song emphasises their personal alliance as vital for the establishment of peace among their subjects: ‘All that are harsh, all that are rude, | Are by your harmony subdued’. Yet, the union of male and female is not a reconciliation between two representatives of two opposite and disparate categories, as archetypal gender characteristics are demonstrated by both parties. Jones’ designs for the king’s and male masquers’ costumes depict an androgynous creature stood in an open, easy stance, left hand proffered upward while the right – the hand normally aligned with action – is obscured behind. The short-waisted doublet is structured, segregated from the sleeves, as if to suggest a breastplate - but there any military connotation ends. Meanwhile, the queen’s and female masquers’ costumes are Amazonian in theme, and feature decorative swords.

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26 Davenant, p.209, l.329.
27 Davenant, p.209, ll.331-332.
28 Davenant, p.210, l.346.
29 Davenant, p.212, ll.425-426.
30 Davenant, p.210, l.353.
time of the performance, the juxtaposition of phallic weapon and her growing womb would have been evident. Seen together, similarities abound between the male and female masquers costumes: the tendril-like patterns; the doubled nature of the skirt and hose; the breastplate-like upper garment; and the three sections of the sleeve. The headdresses and hair, too, were seemingly worn alike. The decision to favour hose over breeches in the male costume also creates lines of parity with the female counterpart. Despite the textual revelation that king-character and heroine create a consummate and harmonious whole, the visual signification layers a more complex symbolism onto their individual roles, and, in arming the heroine, she becomes implicated in the king-character’s more violent tendencies. So, Salmacida Spolia undercuts its own vision of unity once more, ‘unconsciously suggest[ing] that Charles and Henrietta Maria’s marriage contributed to the nation’s disorder’ – an inversion of the apparent portrayal of consolidation and solidarity.\textsuperscript{31}

Critical to appreciating visual signification in the Caroline court masque is an understanding of contemporary ocularcentrism and its importance to the transmission of knowledge.\textsuperscript{32} John Peacock has identified a central theme of Jones’s stage work as ‘true knowledge […] gained through the medium of visual beauty’, while the concept of an enlightened truth, comprehended instantaneously upon its perception by the eye, bypassing interpretive processing, is similarly invoked by Davenant.\textsuperscript{33} The chorus call upon the king-character to behold the presence of the queen, that ‘by his eyes advance his heart | And through his optic learn to love!’.\textsuperscript{34} The unnamed heroine is granted the ‘most complex and elaborate’ entrance of any court masque as she is lowered from above the stage on a purpose-built cloud machine while carefully crafted lighting effects make her appear to glow as she descends from the heavens.\textsuperscript{35} Her relationship to divinity challenges the authority of the earthly king-character, surrounded as he is by the flesh of man. She is positioned as a frontier vessel through which some transcendent quality can be comprehended: ‘through the casements of her eyes | Her soul is ever looking out’.\textsuperscript{36} Alongside the Neoplatonic assertion of outward beauty, mimicking internal beauty, is a suggestion that within her, or through her, the king-character can discover something greater than himself – a concept at odds with the ostensible presentation of the king-character as almost deified in his perfection, beyond improvement by humanity.

The Caroline court masque was an established method of reasserting the monarchy’s ascendency, both in the allegorical and conceptual content of the dramatisation and in the tangible

\textsuperscript{31} Karen Britland, Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.188.
\textsuperscript{32} The centrality of the visual to Jones’ work was famously the cause of the rift between himself and playwright, Ben Jonson, who believed that the visual elements of the masque could not be interpreted without the text.
\textsuperscript{34} Davenant, p.210, ll.370-371.
\textsuperscript{35} Orgel and Strong, I, p.25.
\textsuperscript{36} Davenant, p.210, ll.377-378.
display of wealth and power. As such, it created a relationship between classical character and contemporary performer that was deliberately transparent. Accordingly, *Salmacida Spolia*’s Philogenes serves as a vehicle for Charles to amplify and perpetuate traits, supposedly inherent to him by virtue of his divinely anointed status. Yet rather than creating semiotic unity between the fictional Philogenes and Charles I, the juxtaposition invites comparison and ultimately signals difference, intensifying cause for enquiry into Charles’ methods and motivations. In an added level of complexity, the king-character simultaneously signifies the apparently harmonising qualities of the legendary fountain of Salmacis. The suggestion that he had the power to unite his peoples without bloodshed is rhetorically and visually expressed as an ability to adopt qualities, deemed to belong to a particular gender role. Yet, the unification of the male and female fails. In the place of balance and stability is chaos and contradiction, as the figure that supposedly exudes peace is propped up by violence. Caroline ocularcentrism exacerbates this sense of semiotic collapse as co-dependent and transient lines of meaning are created between ocular and aural/textual signs, developed by masque-poet and masque-designer in tandem. In performance, this semiotic complexity manifests itself, being at once ‘artificial and hermeneutic […] full of contradictions of attitude, moving constantly between irrational and rational’. Thus *Salmacida Spolia* was not the sole creation of Davenant, but rather an ever-flexing series of signifiers born of Davenant’s words and Jones’ artistry, whose complex and fluctuating interchanges would have necessitated individual interpretation from spectators and participating masquers alike. At its heart the message of *Salmacida Spolia* is not one of straightforward propaganda, bolstering monolithic royalism, but rather a series of discursive contradictions, absences and challenges, that allow for individual regenerative hermeneutical approaches. No wonder Robert Reade was so convinced of the audience’s ‘disorder’.

37 Orgel and Strong, I, p.47.
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The paper examines representations of Tintern Abbey, as part of the Wye Valley, by J. M. W. Turner and William Wordsworth through visual and print mediums. The attempt is to demonstrate that artist and poet alike recognise the significance of the abbey as an iconic structure, which, in my opinion, functions also as host for living beings. In juxtaposition, the abbey and Wye River are material objects, constituting a place of value within its biome for both humans and nonhumans.

My aim in the paper is to discuss the significance of Tintern Abbey in fine art by Joseph Mallord William Turner and its presence in the title of the poem by William Wordsworth. While Turner’s watercolours of the famed abbey have been contextualised in the picturesque tradition as part of landscape art and as a study in architectural structure, my paper is interested more in Turner’s depictions of the structure as a representation of materiality in nature. By the term materiality, I am referring to the ‘quality of being composed of matter, material existence, solidity’.¹ In fine art, on the one hand, materiality is often used in reference to the medium (e.g., watercolour, mezzotint, experimental oil, etc.). However, in the burgeoning field of ecocritical study, on the other hand, materiality is discussed as the tangible substance of inanimate and animate beings within ecosystems, biomes, and the biosphere - the basis for consideration of humanity’s connections in the network of interrelationships. As a corollary to Turner’s art, Wordsworth’s lyrical poem ‘Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798’ depicts a panoramic view of the landscape nestled in the Wye Valley, Monmouthshire,

illustrating what I call neo-material naturalism; that is, matter-based representations of the environs within and around the abbey – such as the ‘mountain-springs’, ‘lofty cliffs’, ‘dark sycamore’, or ‘hedge-rows’ that Wordsworth identifies.\(^2\) My fascination with the loco-descriptive poem concerns the poet’s interest in the Wye River, adjacent to the ruin. Both are material objects that remain part of the landscape. Neo-materialism, reminiscent of Thomas Hobbes’s materialist thought in *The Leviathan, or the matter, form, and power of a common-wealth ecclesiastical and civil* (1651), buttresses my comparative study.

Two articles about Wordsworth and Turner have been published in *The Wordworth Circle*. William Stephenson’s ‘Wordsworth and J. M. W. Turner: A Pairing for Teaching’ (1978) takes into consideration a pedagogical approach to the poet and artist by comparing their mannerism, light motifs, and attention to ruins.\(^3\) In addition, Deborah Kennedy’s ‘Wordsworth, Turner, and the Power of Tintern Abbey’ (2002) features commentary about the paintings by Turner and lyric by Wordsworth as part of the ‘contemplative genre of the ruined abbey poem and to a whole range of eighteenth-century works on medieval ruins of abbeys, including prints and watercolor paintings’.\(^4\) Kennedy’s article discusses the affective power that the iconic ruin evokes as depicted in literature and fine art.

Furthermore, Crystal Lake’s ‘The Life of Things at Tintern Abbey’ (2011) considers, in addition to Wordsworth’s, five other poems about the abbey and suggests that the ruin is a repository for politics and epistemology - a relic of historical information, ‘transmitting intense feelings’ to ‘fill the mind’ with its aura.\(^5\) My study acknowledges and seeks to add to the pedagogical, picturesque, and historical approaches by considering an ecocritical interpretation of Turner’s and Wordsworth’s works, predicated upon the significance of the abbey and river as material objects. Studies about the landscapes, depicted in paintings and poetry, have tended to emphasise the picturesque. In my opinion, they are overwrought and fraught with aporias, reminiscent of William Gilpin’s *Observations on the river Wye, and several parts of South Wales, & c.: relative chiefly to picturesque beauty* (1792), which features the author’s observations through notes and drawings about Welsh landscape. It seems to me that a static view of reality is favoured instead of a dynamic one with activity. Attention to the abbey, emblematized as a ruin, as part of the picturesque ignores the interrelations among species dwelling under its arches. As I hope to show, the abbey is part of its environs, both as a host to nonhuman species and as the object of human observation through representations.

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Turner’s Tintern Abbey: From Sketch to Watercolour

Tate Britain holds Turner’s graphite sketch (Tate Britain D00134, Turner Bequest XII E) and watercolour, titled *Tintern Abbey: The Crossing and Chancel, Looking towards the East Window* (Tate Britain D00374, Turner Bequest XXIII A) from *Watercolours and Studies Relating to the Welsh and Marches Tour* (1794). Though Turner’s sketch is faint with an oil stain at the top centre, the contours and structure of the abbey are still perceptible, featuring his view of the East Window (on the right side of the sketch), as well as the two arches above the nave, which have been covered with foliage. In my opinion, Turner’s sketch does not include embellishment. His sketch is a representation of his fieldwork, based on observation, a drawing created on site, in his attempt to depict the interior of the iconic abbey with its arches covered in foliage – an accident in nature and a natural phenomenon. If there is any slight distortion between the sketch and the subsequent watercolour, it appears in the proportion, as the height of the watercolour (35.9 x 25 cm) is 8.8 cm greater than that of the graphite sketch (27.1 x 25.3 cm). In effect, Turner adjusted the scale of the height to depict the magnitude of the abbey in watercolour, evoking a sense of the sublime in his attempt to show grandeur.6 The depictions of the foliage from the sketch to watercolour remain consistent. The outline of vegetation, clinging to the abbey’s stone pillars and arches overhead, is clear in both images.

Another watercolour, presumably, sold to a patron (not part of the Turner Bequest) is held at the Victoria and Albert Museum (see Figure 1). The watercolour, titled the *Interior of Tintern Abbey*, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1794, based on the sketch at Tate Britain, and displays the same view of the East Window. It appears to me that Turner had been standing in the nave to the right, at the crossing, near the south transept, with the East Window directly in front of him. The focal point of the painting is not, however, the East Window. Instead, the main pillar at the crossing stands prominent with the light coming from the right through the East Window, indicating that it is late morning. Foliage appears at the base of the main pillar, extending into the nave toward the East Window and upward onto the adjoining pillar and along the arch above. The painting is a study in perspective, demonstrating at once the depth of the abbey’s interior (through the repetition of the smaller arches leading toward the East Window) and the sheer volume of the space (despite the removal of the roof), made evident by the diminutive figures in the lower left corner. Though Turner’s depiction of Tintern Abbey is really an architectural study of a draughtsman, employed by Thomas Malton, focusing on an integral pillar, it is evident that Turner’s painting did not only capture the magnitude of the abbey. In addition, Turner’s watercolour of the abbey shows an intrinsic interrelationship between, on the one hand, the inanimate

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gothic structure as host to the foliage amidst its environs and, on the other, humanity, observing the grandeur of its arches. As Turner has revealed, the abbey is a host for nonhuman species.

In addition, the Victoria and Albert Museum holds James Duffield Harding’s watercolour View of Tintern Abbey (1815) based on a sketch made by the painter’s father in 1810 (see Figure 2). Harding, in accord with Turner’s practice, added watercolour in the studio to sketches made on the field, conceivably, to save time, since watercolour would require more effort and time to deploy than a pencil sketch. Turner had once indicated that he could produce fifteen or sixteen sketches in the time it took to finish one watercolour. In Harding’s depiction of Tintern Abbey, however, I infer that the artist (i.e. Harding’s father) is positioned at the crossing of the abbey. The East Window is still in the background, as in the depiction from Turner’s work. Harding’s watercolour illustrates more of the foliage than Turner’s painting. In Harding’s, light engulfs the entire abbey, suggesting that it was midday when Harding filled in the contours. The Harding painting confirms the existence of foliage on the abbey as part of the ruin, evoking the picturesque. By this time, approximately twenty years later, the foliage had grown to an enormous amount, which veiled the gothic pillars on the south side (on the right of the painting). Harding’s painting of the abbey, though, does not depict the grandeur of the structure in comparison to Turner’s watercolour. The Harding painting appears to be somewhat flat, lacking Turner’s depth. However, in 1915, the Office of Works removed the foliage, especially ivy, concerned that its weight might damage the structure. Subsequently, the Office of Works restored and preserved the structure through a ‘severe clearance and consolidation programme’, involving buttressing the South Transept to the right of the nave with steel reinforced concrete beams, set within stonework to solidify the structural integrity.7

As a variant, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford holds Turner’s Transept of Tintern Abbey, Monmouthshire (1795) displayed at the Royal Academy, depicting the North Transept to the left of the nave. The cross-shaped church is highly symmetrical with two chapels on each side, making up the arms of the church. In this image, Turner’s perspective is a view of the North Transept inside the abbey. There is light from the right side, indicating that it is late morning again. Turner has once more captured the foliage, growing on the pillars, arches, and pinnacles of the arches, indicating that the abbey has been a host not only to Cistercian monks and parishioners, but also to flora emanating from its gothic stones. The watercolour is a detailed representation of the architectural structure, signed in the lower right corner with simply Turner. To the left of the signature in the foreground is an open basket with a

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Figure 1. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Interior of Tintern Abbey, Monmouthshire*, 1794, Watercolour, 32.1 x 25.1 cm © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
rake, suggesting that a yeoman farmer is the husbandman, who tends to the foliage emanating from its stones. The farmer stands directly in front of the North Transept, looking outward toward the painter, his diminutive size once again accentuating the Abbey’s immensity. The abbey-as-host supports life for flora and the livelihood of the husbandman, who maintains the abbey, suggesting interconnectedness among the abbey, flora and husbandman stewarding the grounds.

My own observations of Tintern Abbey reveal that practically all the foliage has been removed, except for some pinkish purple wildflowers (i.e. Red Clover or Trifolium pratense), growing on the sill of the East Window. The appearance of the wildflower indicates that seeds have been disseminated by the wind to germinate on the gothic stones. However, the flowers are not the only inhabitants of the abbey. I have observed that house martins have created and inhabited mud nests at the apex of the arches in the abbey (see Figure 3). Gilbert White once observed and recorded the behaviour of house martins in The Natural History of Selborne in Letter 16 to Daines Barrington dated 20 November 1773:

They [house martins] are often capricious in fixing on a nesting place, beginning many edifices, and leaving them unfinished; but when once a nest is completed in a sheltered place, it serves for several seasons. Those
which breed in a ready finished house get the start in hatching of those that build new by ten days or a fortnight.[...]. It has been frequently observed that martins usually build to a north-east or north-west aspect, that the heat of the sun may not crack and destroy their nests.8

In the 1770s, White observed numerous times that martins build their mud nests in locations on an edifice in a ‘sheltered place’, shielded from direct sunlight to preserve the mud’s moistness. Today, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) explains, ‘By the nineteenth century, [house martins] started making use of buildings, allowing them to expand their range. [...] House martins build nests on outer walls under the eaves. Exceptionally they can be found inside roofs or in sheds’.9 As I observed, two mud nests existed in the arch of the abbey, indicating a double brood. Flying repeatedly in and out, they were a testament to the abbey’s continuing function as a host for avian species.

Figure 3. ‘A House Martin Flying from a Mud Nest in the Arch of Tintern Abbey’

Photo Credit Dewey W. Hall.
Did Wordworth and Turner Ever Meet?

There is limited evidence of Wordworth’s admiration of Turner’s work, except for two instances, to my knowledge. One instance occurs in Wordworth’s *A Guide through the District of the Lakes in the North of England* (1835), in which he provides directions for tourists, approaching the Lake District from Yorkshire: ‘Near Hawes, to Hardraw Scar, of which, with its waterfall, Turner has a fine drawing’.10 Turner’s sketch of the waterfall, titled *Hardraw Force* (1816), from Yorkshire 5 Sketchbook (Tate Britain D11547, Turner Bequest CXLVIII 15, 28A) is held at Tate Britain. Alan Hill surmises that Wordworth would have been familiar with Turner’s work through his illustrations published in Samuels Rogers’s *Italy: A Poem* (1830) (Tate Britain D 27518, Turner Bequest CCLXXX). The other instance is a letter from Wordworth to William Boxall, dated 21 May 1846, in which the poet anticipates receiving the second volume of John Ruskin’s *Modern Painters* (1843) and mentions Turner:

I shall be well pleased to receive Mr. Ruskin’s 2nd volume both for its own sake and as a token of your kind remembrance. [. . .] Turner is undoubtedly a man of extraordinary genius, but like many others he has not foreborne abusing his gift. It pleases me to learn that Mr. Ruskin has modified some of his extreme opinions [about] this artist.11

Accordingly, Wordworth expressed an ambivalence towards Turner. While acknowledging the latter’s ‘genius’, Wordworth seemed to censure Turner’s flamboyance (presumably his avant-garde flair as a pre-impressionist), expressing misgivings about Turner’s lack of self-restraint while ‘abusing his gift’. The brief mention of Turner’s work is the sole occurrence in Wordworth’s collected letters, chronicled rather late in Wordworth’s life.

The only instance documented of Wordworth and Turner meeting happened thirty years earlier. They attended a breakfast party hosted by Samuel Rogers in May 1815. In a note from Wordworth’s letter to Boxall, previously referenced, ‘Both [Turner and Wordworth] appear in a painting of the gathering by Charles Mottram held at the Victoria and Albert Museum’.12 Charles Mottram’s portrait, *Samuel Rogers at his breakfast table* (1815), is a large panoramic image depicting literary and visual artists (see Figure 4). Turner stands to the right, admiring the embellished texture on

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a frame with several men around him, while Wordsworth is seated behind with a contemplative gaze, seemingly eavesdropping on Turner’s conversation. The mezzotint includes dark hues, hinting the stately decorum of the occasion, at which distinguished guests admire Rogers’s astute collection. At the time, Turner had been working on *Dido Building Carthage* (1815); Wordsworth had been preoccupied with reactions to *The Excursion* (1814) and publication of *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), referencing Bolton Abbey as the place of sighting the rare doe.

**The Missing Abbey in the Poem**

As careful readers of Wordsworth realise, the irony of a different lyric, ‘Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey’ (1798), is that the poet never mentions the abbey in the poem. The omission is conventionally explained by the notion, that Wordsworth sat under a sycamore at a distance above Tintern Abbey, overlooking the Wye Valley, in which the main natural feature is the river, winding through the landscape. His famous claim during a self-imagined moment of transcendence is that as a ‘living soul’ with an ‘eye made quiet’ through harmony with the environs, ‘we [can] see into the life
of things’. What might these ‘things’ be? The penultimate thing, mentioned in the poem, is the ‘sylvan Wye’, the main motif, meandering through the woods surrounding the abbey. For, it does not seem to be the abbey that Wordsworth turns to during times of distress. After his return from France in 1793, while disillusioned with the Revolution since the onset of Robespierre’s Reign of Terror, the poet sought refuge near the river: ‘How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee / O sylvan Wye’.13

According to Crystal Lake, another reason for the abbey’s omission is because Wordsworth sought to evade the trappings of political history, often associated with Tintern Abbey. Lake mentions the dissolution of the monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII, the rise of the eighteenth-century iron industry, and evidence of enclosure, signified through hedgerows.14 Yet, it is the apolitical Wye, rather than the politicized abbey, that has drawn the poet’s attention. The Wye, as distinct from the abbey, has value as a repository for ‘mountain-springs’ (line 3), as a ‘wanderer’ (line 57), nurturing the woods, and as a marker for a spot of time, where William and Dorothy once stood together ‘upon the banks / Of this fair river’ (ll. 115–16). For Wordsworth now, the river exerts what Nicholas Roe has called the ‘restorative power of memory’.15 Wordsworth writes in his journal: ‘The Wye is a stately and majestic river from its width and depth, but never slow and sluggish; you can always hear its murmur. It travels through a woody country, now varied with cottages and green meadows, and now with huge and fantastic rocks’.16 The ‘sweet inland murmur’ of the Wye beside the silent abbey speaks to the poet.17

In effect, the missing abbey has more to do with Wordsworth’s sense of the environs than the historical. Presumably, hewn from stones indigenous to the region, Tintern Abbey is an organic figure, part of the landscape, playing host to lichen, ivy and house martins. The poet’s purpose is more to revisit the banks of the Wye than the ruin itself. Interestingly, both appear as hosts, emblems of materiality, for nonhuman beings. Here, Wordsworth writes:

We left Alfoxden on Monday morning, the 26th of June, stayed with Coleridge till the Monday following, then set forth on foot towards Bristol. We were at Cottle’s for a week, and thence we went toward the banks of the Wye. We crossed the Severn Ferry, and walked ten miles further to Tintern Abbey, a very beautiful ruin on the Wye. The next morning we walked along the river through Monmouth to Goderich Castle, there slept, and returned the next day to Tintern, thence to Chepstow, and from Chepstow back again in a boat to Tintern, where we slept, and thence back in a small vessel to Bristol.18

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Accordingly, for the Wordsworths, Goodrich Castle was the main destination from Bristol to Monmouth. Tintern and Chepstow seemed to be stops along the way as access points on the Wye River tour.

While sojourners in the past, since 1131, have sought Tintern Abbey for religious purposes, to contemplate the Madonna and Christ child, Wordsworth and Turner had distinct reasons for traveling to the Wye. As part of an architectural study, Turner’s watercolours of the abbey evoked the sublime; for Wordsworth, the abbey became part of his panoramic observations of the landscape. Turner’s paintings feature the abbey as the main figure, rather than the Wye; Wordsworth’s poem focuses on the Wye with the abbey as a marker for his memory. Turner’s watercolours represent the abbey-as-host; Wordsworth’s lyric discusses the Wye-as-repository. The presence of the abbey in one instance marks the trace of the abbey’s absence in the other. In either work, Tintern Abbey stands as part of an intricate ecosystem in the environs of the Wye Valley, very much a part of materiality in nature.
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Disorder and Resolution:

ALEX DEAMER

In this essay I examine the differing attitudes towards disorder and resolution in William Blake’s ‘London’ and William Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’. In particular, I suggest that whilst both poems are united by their scathing critiques of late eighteenth-century society, they present divergent understandings of this environment and the means by which to ameliorate its ills. Where Blake’s poem crystallises the class struggle endemic to an increasingly industrial capitalist economy and the consequent urge for revolutionary action, Wordsworth’s sonnet presents a lost yet unified England that must invoke its Miltonic past as a normative guide.

Published just eight years apart, both William Blake’s ‘London’ (1794) and William Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’ present vitriolic critiques of prevailing eighteenth-century mores. Yet, despite this parallelism, the poems betray distinctly disparate philosophies – the former embarking on an iconoclastic path, deploying no positive metaphysic, or worldview, and the latter calling for a comparatively conservative retreat to Miltonic England, which forms a kind of foundational myth. Whilst both artefacts indict the society that spawned them, then, they also articulate two differing romanticisms. In this essay I suggest such difference is manifest along two primary axes: first, the poems’ conceptions of disorder and society; and, second, their accounts of resolution - that is, their reactions to the former.

Blake’s ‘London’ and Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’ converge most obviously in their accounts of societal disorder – a topos immediately established in their shared use of water tropes. In ‘London 1802’, the speaker states that England has become ‘a fen / Of stagnant waters’, a metaphor indicating
an absence of current or flow, and consequently, an absence of societal direction or purpose.1 Similarly, in ‘London’, we encounter the ‘charter’d Thames’, a phrase that, belying its aural lucidity, is semantically jarring, locating the once free-flowing river within a capitalist lexicon: even nature is commercially managed in Blake’s London.2

Yet, whilst the waters of Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’ remain stagnant for all to see, the chartered waters of Blake’s ‘London’ continue to flow, suggesting that societal disorder is not always consciously apparent, but rather, occurs far more insidiously than Wordsworth’s image implies.3 This reality is magnified in stanza 2 of Blake’s ‘London’, where the speaker outlines the extent of the mental limitations, imposed by a burgeoning capitalist economy:

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear.4

Interestingly, the speaker hears these manacles ‘In every voice’ (emphasis mine), a point reinforced in the following stanza, which bears the acrostic HEAR. Indeed, this same stanza further highlights the aural with its emphasis on ‘cry’ and ‘sigh’. The speaker, consequently, aligns the manacles with the voice and what is heard, which by extension, draws our attention to language – indeed, even a cry is means of communication – thus suggesting a kind of proto-Foucauldian critique, which posits discourse as a locus of power. Indeed, this reading is further supported by the ineluctable anaphora ‘In every’, which, in addition to driving the stanza to a compelling crescendo, reiterates the monolithic, all-pervasive linguistic matrix, which supports and reproduces society’s ‘false consciousness’. For Blake, then, disorder and oppression are woven within the very discourse that his speaker inhabits, whereas for Wordsworth, such phenomena are comparatively visual: we see societal stagnation, we see the dissolution of our ‘English dower’.5

This disparity between notions of disorder deepens as we consider the two poems’ differing conceptions of society. In Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’, we are presented with a homogenous society: it is ‘England’ that needs Milton’s guiding presence, having lost ‘manners, virtue, freedom, power’.6 Hence, the speaker inducts the reader into a particular paradigm of ‘Englishness’, which is underpinned

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3 Blake, l.2.
4 Blake, ll.5-8.
5 Wordsworth, l.5.
6 Wordsworth, l.8.
by difficult notions of national identity and seemingly shared, universal values – there is no evidence of societal division, only societal sickness.

Blake’s ‘London’ offers no such homogeneity. Instead, we encounter three symbols of class oppression: the chimney sweeper, the soldier, and the harlot:

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.7

The church, which should be caring for the orphaned children it exploits, is ‘blackening’, both literally, through the children’s carbon-stained faces, and figuratively, through its growing burden of hypocrisy. And the ‘Palace walls’ are similarly stained, marked by the blood of innocent soldiers – an image suggesting the bloody revolution then occurring in France. Finally, we discover the poem’s third figure, the whore or harlot, who, like the child workers and the soldiers, has been preyed upon, this time by the institutions of marriage and prostitution. The ‘Harlots curse’ is far reaching, capturing the misfortune of her professional circumstance and the children that result, as well as her syphilitic burden, which will return to plague the marriage bed of ‘respectable society’. This point is further entrenched through the quasi-oxymoron ‘Marriage hearse’, a metaphor that not only reinforces the stifling, deathly nature of human institutions, but highlights the dangers to which married men, infected with venereal disease, exposed their wives. This final scene, then, leaves the poem in a state of painful reproduction, where intercourse, birth, and death replicate societal ills ad infinitum. Unlike Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’, then, which is marked only by societal sickness, Blake’s ‘London’ is also marked by societal division – it is a monument to class struggle.

Just as the two poems present differing conceptions of society, they diverge further in their reactions to their environment. In Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’, we find a kind of foundational myth, an idealisation of Miltonic England as a seat of ‘inward happiness’ that will resolve societal woes and, thus, which allows for an aspirational worldview.8 In Blake’s ‘London’, however, we find no such vision, but rather, a condition that compels revolution whilst withholding any more substantive resolution. This is reiterated in the two poems’ differing temporal trajectories, with ‘London 1802’

7 Blake, ll.9-16.
8 Wordsworth, l.6.
continually looking to the past – note the proliferation of past-tense verbs ‘dwelt’, ‘hadst’, and ‘didst’ – and ‘London’, conversely, immersing the reader within the present – ‘I wander’.9 In the former, the ideal society has dissolved with Milton, and must be resurrected. In the latter, however, society has no guiding light, rather it is institutional hypocrisy that compels change – there is no normative model to erect, only the present model to destroy.

This temporal disparity underpins the two poems’ differing epistemologies. In Blake’s ‘London’, the very possibility of knowledge – or at least the credibility of time-honoured ‘wisdom’ – is brought into question. This is reflected in ‘London’s’ iconoclastic trajectory, which results in the destruction of traditional institutions, rather than the advancement of specific values – indeed, the poem comes closest to positing values only in highlighting their absence. The value of freedom, for instance, which, alongside ‘virtue’ and ‘power’, is explicitly coveted in Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’, is never expressly mentioned in Blake’s poem.10 Yet, despite this, the latter’s river imagery connotes liberty, and indeed, its growing absence in the unnaturally ‘charter’d’ landscape – a move that reflects the work’s concentration on the present; it is ultimately concerned with engaging and inspiring the imagination, encouraging the reader to break the ‘mind forg’d manacles’, rather than invoking past exemplars or prescribing a substantive value system.11

This epistemic gulf widens as we encounter the volta to Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’, which in response to the octave’s disorder, crystallises not just the potential for, but the very means to resolution in its eulogistic praise of Milton, who like a sort of Christ figure, forms a model of ethical knowledge:

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.12

The speaker anoints his subject with a holistic series of similes, likening him to a ‘Star’, the ‘sea’, and the ‘heavens’ – not only is Milton a moral paragon, his soul is perfectly complete, it is heaven and earth. Yet, like Christ, we learn that he still travelled ‘on life’s common way’, and thus provides a normative guide that readers must follow in order to salvage England from the stagnant fen it has become.

9 Wordsworth, ll.9-12; Blake, l.1.
10 Wordsworth, l.8.
11 Blake, ll.1-2.
12 Wordsworth, ll.9-14.
In ‘London 1802’, then, resolution is simply a return, a looking back to, and emulating of, what was; whereas in ‘London’, resolution is left to the reader, the poem’s objective is to inspire rather than prescribe. In this sense, then, Blake’s ‘London’ not only denounces the zeitgeist that bred it, but simultaneously empowers the disempowered – those who possess the latent yet revolutionary power to annihilate it.

Whilst both Blake’s ‘London’ and Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’ agree that the then current order is sick, their understandings of this sickness, its origins, and its resolution, are clearly incompatible. In ‘London’, we discover how monolithic institutions, namely the church and the state, are corrupting human potentiality, and in particular, oppressing and exploiting society’s most vulnerable members, symbolised by the chimney sweeper, the soldier, and the harlot. Yet, in ‘London 1802’, society’s fall is linked to the etiolation of these very institutions – the ‘altar’, religion, and the ‘heroic wealth of hall and bower’, the economy, for instance, are not painted as tyrannical forces, but rather, as powers that must be restored to their earlier glory.

Similarly, whilst Wordsworth’s ‘London 1802’ constructs a romanticism of promise, which posits testing notions of national identity underscored by an overt didacticism as the means of resolving societal disorder, Blake’s ‘London’, through its refusal to prescribe anything other than revolutionary action, calls for a proto-Nietzschean transvaluation of values. Rather than retreating to a former idealised society, Blake’s poem refrains from postulating any substantive value system, instead advancing an open romanticism that, although full of rebellious potential, leaves the forging of new values to the reader, thus encouraging the imagination to destruct the ‘mind-forg’d manacles’. Indeed, this division between iconoclasm and conservatism, between autonomy and didacticism, is articulated most pithily in Blake’s ‘Proverbs of Hell’, where we read: ‘The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction’.13

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FREYA GYE

The Circulating Library presents a stereotyped image of the novel reader – young, undiscerning, searching for adventure and, above all, female. *Northanger Abbey* addresses this stereotype, reinforcing through the character of Catherine the perception of the vacuous, voracious reader, while simultaneously putting forward an alternative image of a novel reader who is judicious, reasonable, and, in some cases, male. This article will explore the ways in which the image and the novel present a picture of the novel reader around the turn of the nineteenth century, whether they genuinely reflect the perceptions of society at large, and what light they cast on real novel readers of the time.

The ‘pretty lisper’ in the image entitled *The Circulating Library* is a character that would have inspired little respect in the eyes of many from educated society when the image was published in 1804. The engraving was published in London by Laurie and Whittle, a company that produced engravings prolifically, and depicts a scene familiar to many at the time. Circulating libraries had been popular since the mid-eighteenth century and by the last third of that century they were ‘a major force in publishing’.² They had become, by the turn of the nineteenth century, a place, not only for borrowing and reading books, but also for meeting friends, socialising and being seen in society. They were also commonly perceived to be a significant factor in the proliferation and popularity of novel reading, a practice that was viewed by many with derision.

The Circulating Library clearly reflects and encourages this point of view. The image shows shelves of books, labelled to reflect the genre of the shelf. The shelves, labelled ‘Novels’, ‘Romances’ and ‘Tales’, are almost empty – their books are clearly extremely popular choices among the clientele. In constrast, the shelves for ‘History’, ‘Sermons’, ‘Voyages and Travels’, and ‘Plays’ are full, their books seemingly neglected. The implication is clear: patrons of the circulating library do not read what might be called ‘serious’ books. The text accompanying the image drives the message home yet further:

“Pray, my dear Mr. Page,” cried a pretty lisper, looking over a Catalogue, “will you let me have that dear Man of Feeling, I have so long waited for: Well, this will do for one. Cruel Disappointment, for another. Reuben, or Suicide, highho! No. 1746, I suppose he killed himself for love. Seduction, yes, I want that more than any thing. Unguarded Moments, ah we all have our unguarded moments. Test of Filial Duty, at any rate she puts me to that test pretty often. Mental Pleasures, worse & worse! I’ll look no longer. Oh! stay a moment. Mutual Attachment, Assignation, Frederick or the Libertine, just add these Mr. Page, & I shall not have to come again till the day after to-morrow.”
The young reader lists dramatic, emotion-filled titles, befitting any sensational novel or sentimental romance, expresses her unbridled desire for them, and almost in the same breath dismisses titles, such as School of Virtue, which imply a level of moral instruction that might appeal to conduct writers of the time. The young woman – clearly young enough still to be under the influence of ‘mamma’ – is uncontrolled in her voracious appetite for novels: and she will be back in two days for yet more. The image ridicules this type of (inevitably female) reader, along with the circulating library that facilitates her.

Northanger Abbey was Jane Austen’s first completed novel. It was probably started in 1794 when she was just 19 years old; according to her sister Cassandra’s notes, it was finished around 1799, four years before it was sold to Crosby & Co. for publication. This chronology is corroborated by the novel’s stylistic similarity to Austen’s juvenilia and its references to works published between 1794 and the turn of the century.\(^3\) There is evidence that the book was revised and parts were rewritten before it was finally published posthumously in 1817.\(^4\) Whilst precise dating may, therefore, be impossible, Northanger Abbey is clearly a product of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, a period when, according to Benedict, ‘women were held up as the quintessential novel readers’ in a way that was not true earlier in the eighteenth century or later in the nineteenth.\(^5\)

In some ways, the novel seems to proffer the same message as The Circulating Library and in a similar way. It uses humour to describe and mock Catherine Morland’s conflation of reality with the fiction she reads, which leads her to make questionable and ultimately offensive judgements when she comes to stay with General Tilney and his family at Northanger Abbey, their home. It offers a satirical look at the way in which young women can be overcame by their imaginations as a result of excessive and unguided reading of novels as opposed to serious literature. It is not, of course, an indictment of all novels and their readers: in many ways, it is the opposite. Austen’s comments on reading within this novel, as elsewhere, are nuanced and astute, despite her youth during its composition. However, like The Circulating Library, she uses her art to contribute to the discourse about fiction at the time. Furthermore, both the etching and the text comment on the stereotyped novel reader of the turn of the nineteenth century: she is young and female, driven by a desire for romance and adventure, and is undiscerning in her choices. Yet, is this stereotype, presented particularly starkly in Laurie and Whittle’s etching, representative of contemporary views of the novel reader? And is it, moreover, reflective of the real demographic of consumers of fiction at the time?

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\(^5\) Benedict, p.1.
In many ways, *The Circulating Library* does seem to reflect a widespread view: a review by Walter Scott in *The Quarterly Review* from 1810 expresses surprise at ‘the present degradation of this class of compositions’ – i.e. the novel. The review continues; ‘the elegant and fascinating productions which honoured the name of novel […] these have entirely vanished from the shelves of the circulating library.’6 Scott clearly believes that while novels used to be respectable reading material, ‘modern’ novels, on the whole, are not. This perception is exemplified in *Northanger Abbey*, where Austen uses the oafish character of John Thorpe to express this view: ‘Oh, Lord! not I; I never read novels; I have something else to do […] Novels are all so full of nonsense and stuff; there has not been a tolerably decent one come out since Tom Jones…’.7 Scott’s later review of *Emma* claims that novels are ‘frequently “bread eaten in secret”’, suggesting a similar level of embarrassment over admitting to reading them.8 Other writers of the time went further with their disparaging view of novels: Erickson tells us that ‘objections to novels and novel reading ranged from their dignifying idleness to their encouragement of immorality’9 while Bray asserts that ‘the most widely-held view [was that] novel-reading was dangerous and corrupting’.10

This dim view of the contemporary novel may be related to the rise of women as ‘creators as well as consumers of popular novels’, which led women and novels to be increasingly linked in the social consciousness. As women were almost inevitably less educated than men of a similar class, this led to (often justified) accusations of bad writing from female writers, reinforcing the link between women and disposable, low quality literature.11 As Campbell points out, women novelists were in fact nothing new, but writers like Aphra Behn and Eliza Haywood were not taken seriously at the turn of the century and ‘the contemporary prominence of women novelists was understood – and often decried – as a new development’.12 The proliferation of novels and the rise of the female reader coincided. However, although they were linked – female writers became more prominent partly because there was an increase in female readers, and *vice versa* – the link between them was likely overestimated at the time. Certainly, however, Austen seems to acknowledge the perceived link, as a few chapters on from

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8 Walter Scott, ‘*Emma; a Novel. By the Author of Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, &c.*’ 3 vols. 12mo. London. 1815’, *Quarterly Review* (October 1815), 188-201 (p.188).
11 Benedict, p.5.
Catherine’s conversation with Thorpe, she asserts that ‘gentlemen read better books [than novels].’\textsuperscript{13} The link is also made unambiguously in The Circulating Library, where the association between the female clientele and the empty shelves of Novels and Romances cannot be overlooked.

In particular, writers of conduct manuals and religious writings, such as James Fordyce, William Cowper and Hannah More, held the view that novel-reading was not compatible with what Griffin calls ‘a new ideal of womanhood […] which required young women to cultivate four primary characteristics: piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness’.\textsuperscript{14} Fordyce writes, for example: ‘there seems to me to be very few, in the style of Novel, that you can read with safety, and yet fewer that you can read with advantage’.\textsuperscript{15} More does not hold back when she calls the efforts of novel writers ‘unparalleled fecundity’.\textsuperscript{16} Even the much more liberal Mary Wollstonecraft, while in many ways opposing the likes of Fordyce, felt that women should read ‘those works which exercise the understanding and regulate the imagination’ in lieu of novels.\textsuperscript{17}

‘I shall not have to come again till the day after to-morrow,’ concludes the young reader in The Circulating Library. Indeed, the late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century view of novels as an inferior form of literature likely also has to do with the association of novels with quick, easy reading, widespread availability, and variation in quality. The practice of publishing anonymously ‘both intensified the reader’s curiosity and protected authors and publishers’, and had the secondary effect of ‘permit[ting] publishers to issue novels of uneven quality in a format that suggested they were all equally rewarding to read’.\textsuperscript{18} In addition, the huge rise in the number of libraries meant that books were much more accessible. Without the significant cost of buying the several volumes that typically comprised one title, reading a book only once became viable. The young woman in the etching, it is suggested, will not be required to engage with the books in any serious way, because they are not intellectually demanding; however, equally importantly, she has no responsibility for choosing judiciously, because her subscription to the library allows her to read prolifically and cheaply. Contributing to this perception was the idea that novels and romances were not only corrupting, but addictive: Thomas Gisborne, for example, wrote that ‘the perusal of one romance leads […] to the

\textsuperscript{13} Austen, Northanger Abbey, p.95.
\textsuperscript{18} Benedict, p.8.
speedy perusal of another. Thus, a habit is formed’. This is an ‘anxiety’ levelled at young women specifically, and targets ‘the “disposable” literature of circulating libraries’ in particular, as also represented in the etching.

It appears, then, that there was a reasonably prevalent view that novel readers were young, impressionable and female, and that novels themselves were not respectable reading material for the educated classes. The Circulating Library perpetuates this stereotype, adding credence to John Thorpe’s exclamation that novels are ‘all so full of nonsense and stuff’ and Catherine’s reflection that ‘they are not clever enough for [gentlemen].’

Austen, however, is not so convinced that novel readers are exclusively undiscerning females, nor that those who disparage novels are as averse to reading them as they might seem. John Thorpe is not Austen’s most intelligent or astute character, and it becomes clear that his stated view about novel-reading does not reflect his own practice: Thorpe, in fact, reads much the same literature as the heroine. Austen appears to use the encounter in chapter seven as a wry comment on the uneducated parroting of the general view of commentators, suggesting that, although Thorpe’s view is relatively wide-spread, so is its hypocrisy. Other comments in the novel support this view as well. Austen addresses directly, in her typically witty style, the habit of other novelists of ‘bestowing the harshest epithets’ on their own genre, and of ‘scarcely ever permitting [novels] to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust’. Austen would presumably be equally reproachful of novelists who denied their own contribution to the genre, such as Maria Edgeworth who introduced her novel Belinda as a ‘Moral Tale – the author not wishing to acknowledge a Novel’. ‘I am no novel reader—I seldom look into novels—Do not imagine that I often read novels’, Austen imagines embarrassed, unnamed readers proclaiming. She goes on:

“It is only a novel!” replies a young lady; while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame […] or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language.

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22 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p.34.
24 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p.34.
Austen’s impassioned defence here suggests that the practice of downplaying novel-reading is common, even among novel readers themselves. Though this passage appears in a work of fiction, it rings true as Austen’s own opinion, for, in a 1798 letter to her sister Cassandra, she defensively, if light-heartedly, writes of an acquaintance who assures Austen that her library does not ‘consist only of Novels’: ‘She might have spared this pretention to our family who are great Novel readers and not ashamed of being so;—but it was necessary I suppose to the self-consequence of half her subscribers’.25 Again, here in Austen’s defence of novels, she simultaneously admits that other novel readers may need this reassurance for their own ‘self-consequence’ – in other words, to make it seem as though they are not novel readers at all.

Furthermore, Austen uses Henry Tilney’s character to represent the educated, intelligent, male novel reader, for he tells Catherine in chapter nine that ‘I myself have read hundreds and hundreds of [novels],’ that furthermore, far from ‘[despising] novels amazingly,’ young men ‘read nearly as many as women do’, and finally that ‘[t]he person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid’.26 Austen, at least, does not believe that it is only the ‘pretty lispers’ of Laurie and Whittle’s etching that read novels.

*The Circulating Library* does suggest that the stock of the circulating libraries was varied, although it represents the poetry, plays and non-fiction texts as sorely under-used. In fact, whilst the first part of this representation does ring true (on average library stock was varied, with only 20% being fiction, though the individual figures ranged between 5% and 90%), there is no evidence that novels were the most popular choices from the libraries.27 De Bolla notes that ‘we do not know how many women actually entered into the book-consuming public, nor do we know if it was exclusively women who “demanded” novels’, and even asks whether the myth about voracious female consumers of novels was perpetuated as ‘a screen to hide the fact that men were the most prolific consumers of illicit texts’.28 Emma J. Clery argues similarly that the idea that women made up the majority of the clientele of the circulating libraries was a ‘stereotype’ and a ‘male fabrication’.29 It is true that there were links between circulating libraries and Gothic fiction in particular: for example, because the proprietor of leading publisher of gothic fiction – the Minerva Press – was also the principal wholesaler of circulating libraries to new entrepreneurs.30 That said, although they ‘came to exemplify flawed, female fiction’,

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27 Bray, p.25.
30 Erickson, p.582.
Gothic novels were ‘only one subgenre of fiction’ at the time.\textsuperscript{31} Benedict argues that Gothic novels and other gendered ‘female’ fiction were used to create a prejudice ‘mainly based on fictions about fiction, [reflecting] not the reality of the reading public but a gendered discourse that centred on the novel’.\textsuperscript{32} This discourse of ‘fictions about fiction’ seems to be what Austen is critiquing in her representations of Thorpe and Tilney and their reading habits; social representation of literary culture is highly gendered, but this was not wholly reflected in reality.

The messages put forward by \textit{The Circulating Library} and \textit{Northanger Abbey} now seem very different. \textit{The Circulating Library} intentionally perpetuates the stereotype of the vacuous, voracious young female reader, while Austen’s work gives a vehement defence of the novel and, in places, presents a cutting attack on the hypocritical commentator that disseminates the stereotype. However, the similarities between Laurie and Whittle’s ‘pretty lisper’ and Austen’s heroine Catherine, which were touched upon above, cannot be overlooked. Austen’s comment on Catherine’s adolescent reading habits in the first chapter could as easily be applied to the eager young reader in the etching: ‘provided nothing like useful knowledge could be gained from them, provided they were all story and no reflection, she had never any objection to books at all’ \textsuperscript{33} Catherine’s own effusive exclamations about her latest favourite book, \textit{The Mysteries of Udolpho}, could equally well be included in Laurie and Whittle’s accompanying text: ‘Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it’.\textsuperscript{34}

The difference between the two pieces, and their messages and intentions, comes down to the difference between the two mediums. The etching is, and can only be, a snapshot – it is a satirical look at a moment in time, meant as a disposable, commercial piece of entertainment, reflecting a common view, and not aiming to challenge it. Austen’s novel, however, shows progression and character development, and presents multiple, nuanced views. Katie Halsey calls Austen a ‘resisting reader’ and an ‘appropriative reader’;\textsuperscript{35} she engaged with what she read, often challenging or mocking it in her letters and her fiction. Her novels ‘bear the allusive traces of her own reading,’ as is particularly evident in \textit{Northanger Abbey} with the obvious influence of both the Gothic novels she had read, and Charlotte Lennox’s \textit{The Female Quixote}.\textsuperscript{36} In other words, Austen was an active, engaged, intelligent reader of novels, and this is what she advocates in her writing. Catherine, as an example, grows to understand her own folly and to use her reason over her reliance on fiction, and she is rewarded for her increasing

\textsuperscript{31} Benedict, p.2.
\textsuperscript{32} Benedict, p.3.
\textsuperscript{33} Austen, \textit{Northanger Abbey}, p.15.
\textsuperscript{34} Austen, \textit{Northanger Abbey}, p.36.
\textsuperscript{36} Halsey, p.5.
awareness. On the other hand, Isabella Thorpe is the archetypal frivolous, undiscerning novel reader, and receives no such redemption. There is further evidence for this view in Austen’s letters, where it becomes clear that the Austens are thoughtful, critical readers: of *Arthur Fitz-Albini* by Egerton she says, ‘I expected nothing better […] There is very little story, and what there is told in a strange, unconnected way,’ and on *Clarentine* by Sarah Burney she comments that ‘it is full of unnatural conduct and forced difficulties.’

Indeed, other contemporary sources suggest that, although conduct and religious writers may have condemned all novels, many critics were more discerning in their views, as Austen was. A review of *John de Lancaster* by Richard Cumberland does not praise the novel it writes about particularly highly, but admits to its ‘rank far above the usual stock in trade of the circulating library’. This admission acts both as a reinforcement of the stereotype of *The Circulating Library* and as an explicit public recognition of the fact that some, or even many, novels are worth reading. Stephen and Gifford comment in their review of Edgeworth’s *Tales of Fashionable Life* that ‘the customers of the circulating libraries are so numerous, and so easily imposed upon, that it is of the utmost importance to the public, that its weights and measures should be subject to the inspection of a strict literary police’. They also concede that although she is ‘not perhaps what is called a fine writer,’ Edgeworth still ‘cannot be allowed to the ordinary class of manufacturers of novels’. Again, here is an explicit differentiation between ‘classes’ of novels and novel writers, as well as the implication that novels that vary in quality may make their way into the circulating libraries.

Among the main criticisms and fears about female novel readers was that the unthinking young reader would be ‘drawn inexorably to repeat the fate of that character in her own real life’, and *Northanger Abbey* can be seen as a moral tale, warning young women to guard themselves intelligently against that very thing. Tilney’s scolding of Catherine towards the end of the novel summarises this moral message: ‘Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? […] Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you’. Perhaps this is a warning from a young Austen to other young novel readers. Here is where *Northanger Abbey* and *The Circulating Library* intersect, for each in its own way advises readers to read actively, to choose judiciously and to engage intelligently with their reading.

38 ‘Letter to Cassandra, 8 February 1807’, *Complete Works*, p.120.  
41 Campbell, p.161.  
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PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


This essay explores two artefacts relating to the early history of the East India College at Haileybury and its specific mission in training new civil servants in India. The first of these artefacts is ‘A Letter to Lord Grenville on the East India Company’s Establishment for the Education of Their Civil Servants’ written in 1813 by the Rev. T.R. Malthus, Professor of History at the East India College. The letter reveals the tensions between education and empire and the ambiguity over how best to ‘construct’ the Company official. This letter will be juxtaposed with a newspaper article from 1830 containing a copy of a wood engraving of the College. Published in ‘The Mirror’, the article chronicles the educational progress of the Honourable East India Company’s aspiring civil servants. These artefacts reveal how the education of the imperial official was inextricably tied to imperial expansion in India throughout the nineteenth century.

Writing to the East India Company’s Court of Directors on the 10th of July 1800, Lord Wellesley would urge the Company to establish an educational institution to train recruits for their future careers in Indian administration. As a colonial administrator in India, Wellesley had already founded the training college at Fort William, Calcutta. To consolidate Company power, Wellesley harnessed the importance of education as a way to secure the rapid territorial expansion and growing prominence of the EIC which had begun to ‘dispense justice to millions of people […] and administer a vast and complicated system of revenue’.

1 Lord Wellesley, Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley, 5 vols (London: J. Murray, 1826), I, p.325.
officials or ‘writers’, and ‘Haileybury House near Hertford’ was chosen as the site of the East India College. From 1806 to 1858, there were 1985 admissions to the College and eighty-eight percent of those students ultimately entered the Indian Civil Service. Haileybury graduates would carry out the bulk of work of governing India, as dictated by the British Government, for more than seventy years.

The East India Company or ‘Charter’ Act of 1813 stipulated that no person should be sent to India without having completed four full terms at Haileybury and should receive a certificate demonstrating he had complied with the rules and regulations therein. Haileybury students, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two, were nominated by the Court of Directors and tended to be ‘their sons and nephews and friends’: the scions of Anglo-Indian families who saw the Indian Civil Service as their natural, and lifelong, career. As such, Company Directors had perpetuated a system of patronage and the important debate of how competent such candidates were for the positions within the Indian Civil Service had been largely ignored. The foundation of the East India College, however, did little to assuage the intractable debate on how best to train Company officials and variances of opinion on the College’s function, as well as Company interference in their nominees’ education, lasted throughout the fifty-two years of its existence.

The East India College adopted a curriculum that was wide in scope, covering Classics, Mathematics, Political Economy, History and Law alongside Hindi and regional languages depending on whether a student was headed for one presidency or another. Engaging tutors were held in the highest regard, teaching fostered immense intellectual growth and, from 1839 onwards, The Haileybury Observer was published, testament to the creative talents of its students in poetry and literature. In later years, Oxford’s Boden Professor of Sanskrit, Sir Monier Monier-Williams remarked that ‘the mental training which I gained at old Haileybury was so varied and excellent that nothing at all equal to it […] was to be had either at the University or elsewhere’. Public displays of the College’s success were not uncommon and much needed at a time when the success of its students was inextricably tied to that of the Company. The school was prominent in the public imagination, its progress scrutinised in the Houses of Commons and Lords and its value discussed in newspapers across Britain. The first artefact that this article examines was taken from newsprint.

Figure 1. is a wood engraving of, and commentary on, the East India College. It appeared in The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction on 6 March 1830, evoking both the idyllic,

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4 The Haileybury Observer, A Miscellany by the Students of the East India College (Hertfordshire, Part 1, 1840).
imperial grandeur of the Haileybury buildings created by the architect William Wilkins and the academic excellence that was to be discovered within its walls. More than twenty years on from Haileybury’s foundation, The Mirror’s correspondent writes admiringly of the educational methods afforded to students and the prowess they display, in intellect and creativity. Entry into Haileybury, despite the distinct advantages afforded by patronage, were rigorous and involved an educational test for entrance for all nominees. After 1809, nominees had to submit to an interview before a committee of the Directors where they would be questioned on their ‘character, connections and qualifications’ in order to ascertain whether they were suited for life in India. However, at the time of Haileybury’s foundation, there were no exact requirements set out for ‘British’ education and it left the Company with two predicaments; firstly, how to choose an appropriate education that would befit the role of the Company official and secondly, what form a competent imperial official would take. The debate on education could also not be taken in isolation, or within the simple parameters of pedagogy. Since most of Haileybury’s students had been nominated by the Directors, their parents were likely to be either Company stockholders or have familial ties to the members of the Court and thus exerted influence over their sons’ educational pursuits. The correspondent for the article in Figure 1 appears to have given some thought to the ‘diligence and application’ (ll. 10-11 in the final paragraph of Figure 1.) shown by the students at Haileybury but fails to acknowledge the extent to which patronage had succeeded in only placing nominated students at the College.

The correspondent refers to Haileybury as a College and the use of the term is in itself unsurprising - it was named as a ‘College’ not a ‘School’ from its inception. A reader of this piece in 1830, in a weekly periodical such as The Mirror, would assume that the East India College was a higher educational institution. However, what makes the use of the term interesting is that, in practice, the Court of Directors had fashioned an establishment more akin to a school, with all its trappings. Supporting the idea of a strict disciplinary boundaries, one Company Director, Robert Grant, recommended a period of ‘watchful guardianship’ within which time the ‘pupil can acquire the power to stand’. Evidently, some Company Directors deemed the success of their future administrators in India to be predicated on their ability to handle a school regimen. Discipline was of intense concern to the Company and a primary factor in its decision to base the East India College in England. Reverend T.R. Malthus, one of Haileybury’s tutors, was of the opinion that it was easier to manage the temperaments of young men in England rather than India ‘where suddenly possessed of an unusual

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7 Lowell, p.233.
8 Robert Grant, A View of the System and Merits of the East-India College at Haileybury (London, Kingsbury, 1826) p.72.

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command of money […] they would be tempted to indulgences of all kinds of novel forms’. A former Haileyburian, George Campbell, remembers a school format rather than a college with ‘a routine of classics and mathematics’ that ‘resembled all his previous years of schooling’. This was not simply a question of semantics. Indeed, a collegiate atmosphere may have been more beneficial in moulding these young recruits into men who had the independence and foresight to undertake the task of ruling India. Notwithstanding the merits of these and other arguments, the Directors never managed to quell the debate on how exactly to run Haileybury and this had far reaching consequences on the type of Company official that was employed in Indian governance.

9 T.R. Malthus, Statements respecting the East India College with an appeal to the facts, in refutation of the charges lately brought against it in the Court of Directors (London, J. Murray, 1817), p.52.
10 George Campbell, Memoirs, p.9.
The perpetuation of traditional notions about British governance in India and the Company’s role in bringing law and order to the land continued to inflect thinking on the education of its administrators and nowhere more so than on the question of learning Indian languages. It is striking that The Mirror’s correspondent remarks on the learning of Oriental languages in such a short article, commenting that Indian languages are ‘studied with great success; difficult and indeed almost incomprehensible as they appear at first’. Evidence to the contrary suggests that established notions of British superiority amongst aspiring writers meant that learning Indian languages was a low priority. Debates at East India House from 1809 show that the poor quality of education in Indian languages was a matter of contention. Many commentators felt such a system was ‘injurious’ to their Indian subjects when in 1809 alone, 341 new Company officials would arrive in India ‘to command foreigners with whose language and manners they were utterly unacquainted’. Robert Grant had been adamant that ‘a moderate infusion of Oriental learning’ would not suffice in the arduous task that civil servants faced during their Indian residency and sought more intensive language acquisition. In practical terms, the functioning of the EIC was entirely dependent on the agents that resided in the territory and the education debate was crucial in determining exactly what kind of official the East India Company ultimately wanted in India. Once the agents arrived in India, it became much more difficult to control their activities. Haileybury was the Company’s best chance to inculcate the values they wished to instil in their officials to ensure a long and successful career in India but they failed to decide on their priorities: were practical skills such as language acquisition more important than the development of character? The debate on language acquisition revealed an institution unable to decide upon either its educational format or ultimate aims.

Haileybury was not short of detractors. To understand the defence of the East India College by Reverend T.R. Malthus in A Letter to Lord Grenville on the East India Company’s Establishment for

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11 See Figure 1.
12 Both Robert Grant and Lord Macaulay were critical of the behaviour exhibited by colonial servants under Company Raj. See Eddy Kent’s chapter ‘Corporate Culture in Post-Company Raj’ in Corporate Character: Representing Imperial Power in British India, 1786-1901, (University of Toronto Press, 2014), p.203, for a discussion of Lord Macaulay’s writings on the character of British agents and the ‘notoriety of the nabob, the vulgar and avaricious stock character of British stage drama […] whose ill-gotten fortunes are often represented as a threat to the domestic body politic’. Robert Grant wrote of the necessity of an institution such as Haileybury, which safeguarded against future injury to both writers and the EIC. If writers were not given sufficient training, Grant feared that ‘the probationers would be misled by an evil company, and will prove idle, others will be disobedient; hints of removal will be given, hints of removal will not be taken, open dismissals will follow – grief, disappointment, complaint, recrimination…’. See Robert Grant, A View of the System and Merits of the East-India College at Haileybury, (London, Kingsbury, 1826), p.105.
14 Robert Grant, A View of the System and Merits of the East India College at Haileybury (London, Kingsbury, 1826), p. 60.
15 Eddy Kent, Corporate Character: Representing Imperial Power in British India, 1786-1901 (University of Toronto Press, 2014), p.3.
the Education of Their Civil Servants, we need to look at the criticism levelled against it, by Lord William Grenville. His views were expressed most vociferously in a speech at the House of Lords in 1813. Grenville was of the opinion that Company education should not be undertaken by a separate institution, a view completely at odds with Lord Wellesley who believed that offering Company recruits the opportunity to ‘associate freely in a collegiate atmosphere where they could lay the foundations of private character and public reputation’ was of the utmost importance.\(^{17}\) Many commentators, such as Callie Wilkinson, worked on the premise of a ‘civilizational framework’ whereby British notions of the rule of law, liberty and character building were the foundations upon which an effective agency in India could be built.\(^{18}\) Imbuing ‘Britishness’ into the learning of Company recruits, Grenville’s speech proposed that imperial expansion in India was best serviced through a system of education through schools such as Eton or Harrow, with ‘English manners, and English attachments, of English principles’.\(^{19}\) Grenville’s arguments resonated throughout the decades of Haileybury’s existence and in the imperial world order. This understanding of English values in relationship to imperial constructs was typical. Catherine Hall sums up this understanding in the following terms: ‘one site for the making of those selves was in the formal processes of education: the bringing into being of new subjects and new subjectivities’.\(^{20}\) Colonies such as India were spaces in which to create new societies with a natural order and hierarchy, through which the superiority of the British citizen could be firmly established.

The Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus was well placed to act as defender of the East India College, being one of the most respected political economists of the time and Professor of History and Political Economy at Haileybury. In his thirty-eight-page Letter, Malthus objects to the ‘severe censure’ passed on the College by Lord Grenville and it is in his defence that we see most clearly how Company education was beginning to alter old fashioned ideas of agents as ‘nabobs’ and replacing them with well-versed, knowledgeable Company officials with the skills to become competent administrators in the sub-continent.

The Letter both methodically refutes the charges and assumptions made against Haileybury and highlights the benefits of running such an institution for the overall benefit of Company and imperial rule. Malthus believes that it is the threat of ‘individual agency’ that is of concern, a rogue agent upsetting the imperial order, and so an institution whose ‘foundation must be judiciously laid in England and the superstructure systematically completed in India’ is the best safeguard against such

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\(^{18}\) Wilkinson, p.962

\(^{19}\) Hansard parliamentary debates, first series, 1812-13, XXV (9 April, 1813), col.751.

eventualities. Underpinning all of Malthus’ defence is the fact that the sentiments that Lord Grenville had expressed had consequences and the true character of Haileybury needed to be given due consideration in the public domain.

A recurrent, popular criticism of Haileybury emerges in Grenville’s speech and subsequently in Malthus’ Letter: civil servants, Grenville said, had become ‘a distinct class like an Indian caste’. In fact, much of the Letter focuses on the advantages of constructing such a separate breed of young men intended for Indian administration. Malthus, in his capacity as tutor, evidently disagrees with Grenville’s stance and contends that Haileybury ‘strengthens so much the ties which unite them to their friends and native country that they are too unwilling to leave it’. There is little doubt that the Haileybury project seems to have been destined to create such a disparate colonial class. As seen in Figure 1. and discussed earlier in this article, the system of patronage was strengthened by the Directors’ rights of nomination. Clearly, Company recruits were a separate class apart, being trained in the art of Company administration and given the opportunity because they had been handpicked by those in power. Malthus may have had the best intentions in defending the officials that Haileybury produced but would have had to concede that Haileybury was not in the business of statesmanship, and, in constructing agents of empire, they created ‘instruments not sovereigns’. Company officials were tools in the greater enterprise of Indian administration. In defending the ‘sub-caste’ that Haileybury apparently created, Malthus seems to forget the wider implications of failing to produce a colonial official who might have their own special enclave within British officialdom but would be, nevertheless, alienated from Indian society. It was widely known that Company servants were reluctant to ‘act like rulers’ in India and preferred to rule through Indian intermediaries, simply to preserve the status quo and propagate a non-interventionist stance that would ensure their own financial soundness in the ensuing decades. The East India College, both as a project and institution, would always be called in to question if the fundamentals of Company rule remained imprecise.

Many of the arguments that Malthus makes in his Letter are not only signifiers of attempts to undermine Haileybury, but also the changing face of the Company’s administration in India. Until the early nineteenth century, the East India Company had functioned as a trading company, extracting the most profit for its stockholders and the pattern of ruling ‘in the Indian idiom’ had been preserved, thus

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22 Malthus, A Letter, p.5.
23 Malthus, A Letter, p.18.
24 Kent, p.50.
maintaining Indian culture and institutions.\textsuperscript{26} At the time Haileybury existed, however, education and Christianity had emerged as the more prominent tropes in their ‘civilising’ efforts. Malthus repeatedly remarks that by providing such an education in England, the calibre of recruits had been enhanced and tutors had been ‘informed, at different presidencies in India […] of a marked improvement in the conduct and attainments of the young men who have arrived since the establishment of the college in England’.\textsuperscript{27} From an educationalist’s point of view, Malthus sought to create civil servants with the intellectual capability to make a difference in India. He wanted the antithesis of the Company man that the poet Thomas Love Peacock found at East India House in 1819:

From ten to eleven, ate breakfast for seven  
From eleven to noon, to begin was too soon  
From twelve to one, asked, ‘What’s to be done?’  
From one to two, found nothing to do;  
From two to three, began to foresee  
That from three to four would be a damned bore.\textsuperscript{28}

Malthus wanted to replace these kinds of Company men with civil servants who ‘education will render a very much greater proportion out of a certain number competent to discharge the offices that require talents, information and industry’.\textsuperscript{29} While Malthus would have acknowledged that, over the course of a long career in India, Company officials would have gained vast amounts of knowledge, he believed that Haileybury gave recruits the best possible start in setting the foundations for a deeper understanding and affinity to their role in India. To Malthus, the College represented a means of strengthening the ties between England and the territorial empire, and he recognised that the act of administering the Indian state required men with sound judgment rather than the clerks delineated in Peacock’s poem. It is for this reason he offers this impassioned defence of Grenville’s critique on Haileybury.

Contrary to the imperial image of the early nineteenth century, with its confidence and expansion, the artefacts that this article examines on the Haileybury debate evoke the uncertainty, disquiet and ambiguity over how to administer rule in India, calling into question the fitness of Company directors, the College itself and the officials who undertook daily acts of governance. The College’s many commentators were conscious of unruly indiscipline within its walls and concerned about the calibre of men bound for India. Conversely, the College flourished academically with high standards of

\textsuperscript{26} Catherine Hall, \textit{Making colonial subjects: education in the age of empire}, History of Education, 37.6, p.783.  
\textsuperscript{27} Malthus, \textit{A Letter}, p.34.  
\textsuperscript{29} Malthus, \textit{A Letter}, p.27.
teaching and fostered a sense of camaraderie that lasted far into the careers of many Company men. Both artefacts prompt further questioning related to the attendant anxieties on the character and ability of those men sent to represent Britain in India. Imperial rhetoric engendered an imperial superiority amongst the Britons ruling over the Indian people, but there was a complacency as to the true mettle of the young recruits who were ultimately sent to serve in India. The East India College at Haileybury, in its relatively short existence, brought to light the discrepancy between the immense task of Indian administration and the woefully inadequate training of officials that had preceded its foundation. In the commentary from both artefacts, the narrative of the East India College is both one of the triumph of the Company rule in India and also of uncertainty as to how to secure its future. Despite objections to the function, suitability and concept of Haileybury, the College masterfully led the way in educating an entire generation of officials who ruled India in the early nineteenth century.
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SECONDARY SOURCES


Were the Greek Artefacts, purchased from Elgin, ‘Marbles’ or ‘Stones’?

An investigation of the perceived aesthetic value of the Elgin Marbles through analysis of John Keats’s sonnet ‘To Haydon’ and George Cruikshank’s caricature The Elgin Marbles! or John Bull buying stones at the time his numerous family want bread.

NATALIA DE BLASIO

The controversy of the purchase of the Elgin Marbles in 1816 created many ripples in the artistic and political strata of society. In particular, the opinions on the artistic value of these artefacts ranged from fascination and hence their perception as priceless through to complete disregard, and subsequently a waste of money. References and views on this debate were expressed in many works of the day, including the statues being praised in poetry and mocked in satirical prints. This article will use two examples of the day, John Keats’ sonnet ‘To Haydon’ and George Cruikshank’s caricature ‘The Elgin Marbles!’ to investigate whether at the time of their acquisition these Greek statues were recognized to be an aesthetic treasure.

The Elgin marbles deliberations, regarding their existential aspect of whether they actually were the mesmerizing art they were claimed to be, flared up in the moment these artifacts landed on English soil. They were praised as ‘the marbles’ or belittled as ‘stones’; they were ‘divine’ and ‘second rate’;¹ they were controversial. Debates also extended past the aesthetic deliberations through to considering the value, provenance and the English right to ownership (some of which are still ongoing today). The discussions continued for years before peaking in at the time of their acquisition by the English government in 1816. Powerful opinions were expressed in 1816-7 in

literature, art, political satire, John Keats’ sonnet ‘To Haydon’ and George Cruikshank’s caricature The Elgin Marbles! or John Bull buying stones at the time his numerous family want bread being examples of such. The stark difference in the treatment of the Greek statues in the aforementioned works by the poet and the cartoonist will permit one to gauge the polarity of the debate of whether they were ‘marbles’ or mere ‘stones’.

Both of the works are reactive pieces, produced following the intensive negotiations for the Elgin marble acquisition. Keats wrote the sonnet as an emotional response to seeing the statues in the British museum only days after his visit in early March 1817. 2 This was not a private remark, but a passionate public statement, printed in The Examiner on 9th March 1817, with the intent to re-emphasize the grandeur of ‘these mighty things’. 3 Not only does Keats do this in lauding these masterpieces but he also praises B.R. Haydon, the contemporary prominent painter and public figure and a passionate advocate of Hellenism, for recognizing their splendor. Only a year earlier, the latter wrote in the same publication that the ‘Elgin Marbles [are] above all other works of Art in the world’, attributing to them equivalent importance to art as Newton to Philosophy. 4

The trigger for Cruikshank’s reaction was not an actual experience of the Marbles but the political decision to purchase them. Following the extensive process of inquiry into their provenance and value first by the House of Commons, then by a specially appointed Select Committee on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection of Sculptured Marbles &c, a conclusion was reached acknowledging that they were acquired in a legal fashion and valuing them at £35,000. Following another bitter debate in House of Commons, a vote of 82 to 30 in favour of purchasing the Marbles was cast. Although the artistic acquisition was deemed beneficial to the English nation’s enrichment and education, this was not so clear-cut for the man on the street. Cruikshank captured the mindset in his cartoon, where the exorbitant expenditure on some museum exhibits was considered unjustified, given the year of hunger and poor harvest. While John Bull is listening to Lord Castlereagh’s (Leader of the House of Commons at the time) proposal to purchase the marbles, famished children are tugging on his coat, urging him not to buy the stones, but to give them bread. Half-naked, scrappy, tired and hungry, they represent the common man, left without bread and support and as if in mockery, being offered the grotesque statues instead.

The beauty and aesthetic appeal of the statues was not apparent in the day, and the convoluted perceptions are obvious when comparing the two artefacts. For Keats, they were awe-inspiring. The sonnet was written quickly, skimming the very first impressions that he had, and hence translating it

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2 This came as a part of a two-sonnet composition: ‘To Haydon’ and ‘On Seeing the Elgin Marbles’.
3 ‘To Haydon’ ll.2. The version of 1817 was signed with the initials, ‘J.K.’, only. However, in 1818 the poem was reprinted with Keats’s full name.
into a proclamation of all-encompassing amazement. The impact that the statues had was so overwhelming that in the very first line Keats is brought to admit that he ‘cannot speak’/Definitively of these mighty things’, as the wave of impressions made it impossible to shape an accurate opinion.\(^5\)

Neither did these overcoming emotions permit a close study or recollection of the particular details. Later, this initial reaction was reigned in, as the poet grows more closely acquainted with the Hellenic work, he delves into close detailed observation, as for example in ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, where many rich descriptions such as ‘leaf-fring’d legend haunts about thy shape’, but this closer appreciation occurred only three years after his first visit.\(^6\)

Keats puts himself across as a narrator who feels passionate but diminished by the physical grandeur of the Greek display as well as their perfection. Considering one of the first displays of the statues, captured in the Temporary Elgin Room, the size, high display of the statues on platforms, as well as the unusually high density of Hellenic artifacts to be found in one room would have created a

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\(^5\) ‘To Haydon’ ll.1-2.

formidable show of the Greek gods. To any visitor, they would be ‘mighty’ in their appearance, strong and imposing. However, Keats did not merely find them grand, he found them ‘divine’.7 Their worship demanding demeanor was not only brought on by their perfection but also by the enlightenment and guidance they offered to the arts, like a ‘star in the east’ to Christianity.8 With this line, Keats not only echoes Haydon and his article in *The Examiner* but many other prominent figures such as Cavalier Canova, who in his letter to Elgin characterized the marbles as ‘exquisite knowledge of art’.9

Cruikshank’s cartoon ignores the aesthetics of the Greek statues and their impressiveness. In a manner completely opposite to Keats, the cartoonist diminishes the importance of the statues. He bunches them up together in one corner of the picture, dedicating less than a third of the piece and, therefore, emphasizing their secondary importance. In fact, Cruikshank depicted made up items, and not the actual Marbles, with this demonstrating the lack of particular significance of the Elgin Marbles in the face of any other Hellenic statues. From his point of view, one statue is exactly the same as another and does not deserve his time to be researched and distinguished. Hence, he gives these

Figure 2. Archibald Archer. *The Temporary Elgin Room in 1819 with portraits of staff, a trustee and visitors*, 1819, oil on canvas, 94 x 132.7 cm, The British Museum© Trustees of the British Museum.

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7 ‘To Haydon’, l.11.
8 ‘To Haydon’, l.14.
9 ‘Report from the Select Committee on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection or Sculptured Marbles; &c’, p.68.
artifacts a generic and somewhat derogatory name -‘Stones’. The non-specific word ‘stone’ implies no craftsmanship has been applied to the item, leaving it in the rudimentary natural state that it was, when excavated from the ground. Moreover, it is emphasizing the point of view of a commoner. Removed from the fine world of art and vested in the more immediate needs of survival and food, statues were not marvels, but stones, with little purpose or value to the starving families.

The manner in which the caricaturist chose to depict the statues also emphasizes their lack of exceptional beauty. By adding the comical elements to the statues, Cruikshank mocks the classical cannons of beauty and shifts the importance of the scene away from the display of the artifacts to the commercial negotiations associated with their purchase, that are happening in the forefront. In particular, the caricaturist focuses his efforts on the two of some of the most recognized symbols of Hellenic legends – Hercules and Venus.

The statue of Hercules is stripped of the powerful pose, that was so admired by many artists. He is standing on a disheveled pediment, his drapes missing, his broken off leg supported by a crude rock. This forlorn sight is enhanced by the framing of the scene in such a way as to leave him claustrophobically crammed into the corner. The god is no longer a fearful figure. Rather, Cruikshank chooses to debase him further and use the statues as ground to introduce elements of mockery of Elgin such as removing the nose, to give it the well-known lack of facial feature. He also drew the face to carry a look of impatience, as it looks onto the negotiation discussion and anticipates an outcome, like Elgin, who has been kept waiting for almost six years. At his feet lie remains of a Corinthian column, to remind the onlooker of the destruction he is responsible for.

Venus is also stripped of her distinguishing goddess features of grace and beauty. Frozen with her arm in the air (the other one would mirror this gesture judging by the angle of the shoulder), she is performing a whimsical female gesture, displaying ungodly impatience and dissatisfaction. At the bottom of Castlereagh’s feet stands a fragment of a statue, being human buttocks, facing the head negotiator, to jeer him for his actions. The statue of Hermes surprisingly has managed to maintain all the intricate details, including the caduceus, which tactically hangs over Castlereagh’s shoulder, to reiterate the importance of the commercial interaction that is taking place. Everything about the statues in Cruikshank’s eyes was viewed through the prism of the expense that they presented. He saw no value in them as standalone items, and thus depicts them with little respect, molding them to deliver his utter dislike of the wasteful and mercantile transaction.

Cruikshank’s materialistic approach also comes through in the emphasis on the poor condition of the statues. His depiction of the missing limbs of the statues is a focal point. The gaze of the onlooker is guided by Castlereagh’s hand, towards Hercules’ absent leg, supported by an unrefined block, while cutting across a precarious support for Venus. In the face of the stocky and well-grounded John Bull’s family, they look exceptionally unstable and rickety, begging the question of being worthy of the
requested investment. In doing so, he not only demonstrates their low value, but also brings forth the point of view of the skeptical camp, lead by Mr. Payne Knight who saw them ‘so mutilated [he could] hardly tell’ if they were great sculptures or not.\footnote{10}{‘Report from the Select Committee on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection or Sculptured Marbles; &c’, p.36.}

Although Keats does not overtly touch on this point in his sonnet, the reference to the marbles as ‘most divine’ implies that he only sees the ‘perfect flesh’.\footnote{11}{‘To Haydon’, l.11; ‘Report from the Select Committee on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection or Sculptured Marbles; &c’, p.68.} He also passes the right of judgement over to Haydon, as the one with ‘eagle’s wings’, who in the face ‘brainless idiotism’ recognizes beauty and celebrates it. This therefore implies that Haydon’s opinion is supported by Keats and is in opposition with Payne’s attitude that something is ‘too broken to be of any value’.\footnote{12}{Haydon, ‘On the Judgement of Connoisseurs Being Preferred to that of Professional Men – Elgin Marbles, &c’, p.163.} Haydon, an outspoken critic of Mr. Knight and his appointment as head of the Select Committee for Elgin Marbles, strongly criticized him, stating that it is absurd not to recognize that ‘in the most broken fragment the same great principle of life can be proved to exist as well as in the most perfect figure’. For Haydon, and hence for Keats and the Romantic movement, the artistic value of the statues could never be discussed in relation to their entirety.

The debate of the aesthetic value of the Elgin Marbles also transcended into a discussion regarding their monetary worth and hence the price that they should fetch. As the Report of the Select Committee demonstrates with the variation of potential prices from £25,000 to £60,800 there were few objective guidelines to identify the final value.\footnote{13}{‘Report from the Select Committee on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection or Sculptured Marbles; &c’, p.9.} The numbers proposed were speculative, using as the only fiscal baseline the Townley collection purchased over a decade earlier in 1805 for the British Museum for £20,000.\footnote{14}{‘Report from the Select Committee on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection or Sculptured Marbles; &c’, p.9.} The otherwise proposed offers were solely based on the personal sentiments with regards to the significance of the statues. The lowest valuation was given by Payne, who from the first time he set his eyes on them in 1806 had undermined their importance stating that they were in fact of Roman origin and considered them overrated.\footnote{15}{F.J. Messman, ‘Richard Payne Knight and the Elgin Marble Controversy’, The British Journal of Aesthetics, 13.1 (1973), p. 71.} The hype over the marbles never completely caught up with this aesthetics connoisseur of the 19th century, with him only slightly amending his opinion a few years later to admit that some of the items were first rate. On the other hand, to men of art, it was obvious that in the light of such beauty, the pound value was secondary. \textit{The Times} printed only a couple of weeks after the decision of the Select Committee that ‘price should be no object in comparison to the benefits derived from them [the marbles]’.\footnote{16}{‘London, Saturday, May 11, 1816.’ The Times, 11 May 1816, p.3 <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2119/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TDTA&userGroupName=oxford&tabID=T003&do} And indeed it was not for either Keats
or Haydon, both of whom ignored the financial aspect of the acquisition in the sonnet and article, being enthralled by the aesthetics of the display.

The sum paid however was a point of contention for Cruikshank, the issue resting not in the incorrect valuation of the marbles but the fact that such a payment was executed at all. The marbles in his eyes were not part of ‘the most precious collection’, evoking pride but imperfect stones.17 In the face of a hunger-struck nation, such a transaction therefore was deemed farcical (as hinted at by the leaflet at Castlereagh’s feet of Ministerial Economy of Farce), the message further emphasized by the depiction of hungry children crying that they cannot eat stones but want bread.

Another point of dispute brought up by Cruikshank is the statement that this was a speculative deal between Elgin and the government. In the pinned leaflet at the top right-hand corner of the cartoon he suggests that Elgin specifically travelled to find ‘fragments of stone’ for John Bull. However, Bull is challenging this engagement, especially the commercial aspect of it by disputing the requirement to pay. He, and hence the public that he represents, believe that the marbles were received as a gift and hence the price demanded can only relate to the compensation of the transportation cost borne by Elgin. However, agreeing to this payment would mean that the government is compensating Elgin’s personal expenses from the public pocket for a mission that he devised himself and was not commissioned to execute. The scene is a mockery of the fact that the deal was ever considered, hinting at the irony of the government considering to pay an ‘enormous price for [only] packing and carriage’ for products of a mission that it never commissioned. The stark difference in opinion, between Keats, for whom finances had no relevance to such beauty, and Cruikshank for whom no beauty (especially contentious examples of beauty) were worthy of such expense, demonstrates that the perception of the value of the marbles ranged greatly. At the same time, in the midst of this debate, personal preferences determined the final price. To the arts-driven minority they were divine, to some collectors first class, to the hungry majority mere worthless stones.

The masses were neither aware of, nor interested in, the aesthetic value of the Elgin statues. This is poignantly identified in the cartoon by the fat, discontented woman’s statement: ‘take them back to the Turks’. To her, a representative of the majority of the population, the Marbles had no history, identity, or cultural association. From her perception, the sole point of reference was who sold them in the most recent transaction. Such lack of awareness and curiosity is also a snide remark from Cruikshank towards the enlightenment mission that Elgin claimed to have taken on himself (much in

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line with the Dilettanti and other collector’s ideology of the day).\textsuperscript{18} The cartoonist jeers at the intent to educate the masses, questioning whether it is this extensive, brutish and deep-set ignorance, that men like Elgin are hoping to eradicate. He visually emphasizes the extent of this lack of education by making the character with the most unintelligent face and uttering the ignorant remarks the largest figure in the picture. As per Cruikshank, aesthetics was only relevant to the contented upper class, while the focus of the famished masses lay on their immediate needs.

The acquisition of Marbles spawned many controversies. However, one that is not touched on either by the Keats’ sonnet or by Cruikshank’s cartoon is one of their procurement. Multiple accusations against Elgin were brought forth, reproaching him for pillaging Athens, a cradle of European art, one of the key destinations of the Grand Tours taken. The question was so prominent, that it became one of the four topics for investigation by the Select Committee, indicating that the outcome of this argument lay on the path to agreement to the purchase of marbles. Although the resolution on the matter of this investigation body was in Elgin’s favour, finding him a caring and conscientious procurer of art specimens, some passionate representatives of the literary circles were not convinced. The passion that led individuals like Byron to revere the Greek statues also caused anger with the fact that they were removed from their intended location in the Athenian temples. Byron dedicated entire sections of poems such as ‘Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage’ and ‘Curse of Minerva’ to direct stabs at Elgin’s audacity in removing such treasures, calling his expedition ‘plunderers of yon fane’.\textsuperscript{19}

The marbles were filled with controversy from the moment that they landed on English soil. The opinion of the population split, the passionate men of art considering them a blessing to be had, and the pragmatic middle class, an unnecessary expense on some stones. Perhaps they would have remained as just stones should the European arts community have not constructed their importance. However, their novelty, sheer size and sophistication did not go unmarked, mesmerizing the art inclined audience. The opinion of key figureheads in Europe grew to be supportive, changing the value and desirability of the marbles from tenuous to tangible and rendering the foresightful statement of The Times’ correspondent true: ‘Millions will not buy such a treasure in the future’.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{20} ‘Elgin Marbles’, The Times, 19 April 1816, p.3 <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2119/tda/informark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=oxford&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=&docId=CS51003027&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [accessed 12 Feb 2018].
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SECONDARY SOURCES


Unconventional Subjects:

A very British approach to dealing with extraordinary people considered through a portrait of the *Begum Samru*, by Jiwan Ram, and *The History of Zeb-ul-Nissa the Begum Samru of Sardhana*, a poem by Lalla Gokul Chand.

AMY MARSHALL

*In the early nineteenth century the British were consolidating their position in India and control of the country was expanding. Their expectations of their Indian subjects, and particularly Indian women, were well-formed. There were however few protocols for dealing with those who did not fit the norm. This article considers a specific example of an unconventional subject: the Begum Samru, a female ruler of a large part of North India, explored through a portrait of her which mixes Western and Eastern elements; and a poem about her life constructed on her behalf as a piece of personal propaganda.*

There is a small portrait held in the Victoria and Albert Museum of a person of almost indeterminate gender or race, and who appears mature but of an age that it would be difficult to place exactly. The subject is dressed in Eastern style wearing a woman’s shawl and a mannish turban with womanly hands clutching a hookah - usually only smoked by men. The sitter is wearing rich but not ostentatious clothing and is bejewelled with simple strings of pearls. The work is an example of a 'Company portrait' which is the term used to describe paintings produced by Indian artists, who were sometimes trained by a European artist in Western techniques, made for European buyers, particularly representatives and employees of the East India Company and which are a mixture of western and eastern techniques and stylistic markers.¹ This particular portrait meets that definition and was painted by Jiwan Ram around 1830 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Jiwan Ram, *The Begam Samru*, c.1830, watercolour on paper with gold shell, 10.5 x 8.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Ram, we find, was an Indian artist not only hired by East India Company employees, as was most common, but an artist patronised by Indian royalty including being extensively employed by the subject of the aforementioned portrait, the Begum Samru.2

The Begum Samru (c.1750-1836) was known by many names in different periods of her long life which seems appropriate given the multiple identities she seems to have inhabited. 3 The Begum Samru spent the final, most peaceful third of her life reigning over a kingdom - Sardhana - in the north of India, 85km northeast of New Delhi as an ally of the British.4 Following the British rise to power in the region and their taking of control of Delhi in 1803, and after nearly 2 years of negotiations she was granted the right to retain her kingdom and its revenues in return for allowing the British access to her substantial private army made up of both Europeans and Indians - should the need arise.5 The British for their part were by turn suspicious of, grateful to, and bemused by, this diminutive Muslim-turned-Catholic princess, honorary ‘daughter’ of the Mogul Emperor the Shah Alam, with a reputation as a fearless warrior and for being a great, sometimes cruel, leader. That, as the subject of this portrait, the Begum is difficult to place is purposeful on her part - her adoption of some masculine dress and habits is well documented in contemporary sources - and the uncertainty generated is perhaps reflective of how the British related to a woman who fitted few of the standard preconceptions that the British had of their colonial subjects.

The relative absence of Indian women from the archives and official records has been the subject of comment, and subaltern studies in recent years. Indian women are largely absent from the records and, where present, are often either nameless and/or voiceless. For example Indian women referred to in the records simply as ‘a native woman’, or appearing under an adopted Western pseudonym, is in many cases the only official presence of Indian women in the archives.6 In this way, and in many others, the Begum Samru defied convention. She is present and visible through many means: in the official records through correspondence relating to the affairs of her estate; via the correspondence relating to her negotiation for her retention of her kingdom and, in an interesting transaction which shows the fragility of the balance of power in India at the time - her loaning of 120,000 Rupees to the East India Company when they were in dire financial straits a few short years

2 See Losty. The portrait referenced is listed with the spelling ‘Begam Samru’. This article will use the common alternative spelling Begum Samru throughout.
3 The Begum’s actual date of birth is unknown, estimates vary between 1745 and 1753.
5 The British first accepted the Begum’s offer of allegiance in December 1803, shortly after they captured Delhi in September of that year. The final agreement to grant her ongoing governance over her Kingdom was finalised in August 1805.
after she was confirmed in her *jagir*. The archives show through the contrasts in correspondence between the Begum and colonial points of contact, and the parallel communication between different British officials, the delicacy verging on uncertainty with which she was treated by them. She was unique and so there was no template for how an Indian person of her ilk should be considered and dealt with. Compare, for example, the distrust of General Lake (who closed the alliance in principle with the Begum) to the Governor General: ‘From the intrigues of the Begum and her well known character for craft and dissimulation in political engagement, it appears not unlikely that she may be led to resist …’ and Wellesley reporting to the Court of Directors ‘I have some reason to believe that the Begum is at present in correspondence with some of the Sick [Sikh] Chiefs and that she has it in contemplation to cause disturbances and commit depredations’. with the official letter of grant of her *jagir* from Cornwallis: ‘I have the satisfaction to learn the general tenor of your conduct since you were placed under the protection of the British power has been consistent with the duties of fidelity’.

There is no directly voiced version of the Begum Samru’s life story on record but she is present in other ways beyond official correspondence. She appears in the travelogues, journals and autobiographies of some of her contemporaries; and significantly, her story was told via, a biographical poem in Persian dated 1823 by Lalla Gokul Chand, her Munshi (that is, court secretary, and in this case also court poet). The poem is believed to have been written partly directly from the Begum’s recounting of her story to Chand who worked closely with her during her long life. Through the artefact of the poem the Begum tells, or allows to be told, the story she wanted to be publicly known rather than, as was the case for the majority of Indian women the British would have encountered (or not encountered), being absent or only present in margins and silences. She not only has voice-mediated, but mediated in a manner directed by her - but the tone and content, where what is omitted is as important as what is included, suggests the document can be viewed as personal propaganda and a means for self-promotion.

Poetry was commonly used in the Mogul tradition as a vehicle for eulogising the powerful, and in this case the poem seems to use the poetic form as a vehicle to include more adulatory praise of the Begum and her position than might have been seemly if she was writing herself. It variously and repeatedly claims that she is appointed by God, blessed by the King, and loved by all:

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8 Shreeve, *Dark Legacy*, p.73.
9 Shreeve, *Dark Legacy* p.75.
10 For example, ‘A.D.’, the wife of Colonel Deane, Thomas Bacon, and Major Archer, and aide to Lord Combermere.
When God selects, his purpose to pursue,
A chosen lady, her rewards accrue
In heaven and earth, and people all proclaim,
Throughout the world the greatness of her fame.
Obedient in faith, God’s servant she,
By loving all, beloved all shall be.
The writer says this woman’s fame extends
Through Turkey and Iran to England’s lands,
For Zeb-un-Nissa has no other peer,
She is the chief and the perfect chevalier.
So does her bounty to her people shine,
That many of them think she is divine. 14

These lines, close to the opening of the poem, set up many of the facets of the Begum that she wishes to be believed, borne in mind, and remembered by the audience. In these 12 short lines it is established that: she is Christian; that she claims to be appointed by God (a claim it is perhaps more important to make as she was not royal by birth, and in fact from very humble beginnings); and that she has ‘fame’ – i.e. is well-known and by implication influential throughout the territory and indeed the world. The use of the Zeb-un-Nissa, which was a title granted by the Shah serves as a marker that she was his confidante, and by having ‘no other peer’ within his circle as well as elsewhere has power and access to the King. Finally it states that she is a such a perfect leader that her people are extremely loyal (to the extent of thinking her a goddess) which could carry an implied threat of mutiny if she were to be deposed. While ostensibly using a poetic vehicle to add a touch of artistry, the political agenda that the poem promotes could not be clearer.

Nicholas Shreeve, in his introduction to his translation of the poem from Persian to English, notes that the intended audience was in all likelihood the British. In that light, the message of the poem operates perhaps even more powerfully than her direct voice would have: ‘The writer explains that it [the poem] was written at the request of the British Government, and he as good as tells the reader that part of his decription (sic) is to impress the British with their latest ally’. 15

Although Shreeve speculates that the idea is to impress the British with their ‘latest ally’, the poem was written nearly twenty years after the first accord with the Begum. Lall claims that over the

14 Chand, The History of Zeb-ul-Nissa the Begum Samru of Sardhana, 1.11-18. Zeb-un-Nissa is an alternative name for the Begum Samru, it means ‘ornament of her sex’ and is an honorary title bestowed on her by Shah Alam. It is variously written Zeb-ul-Nissa and Zeb-un-Nissa within the poem and elsewhere.
thirty plus years between the alliance between the British and the Begum being forged and her death the dynamic between the two parties changed.\textsuperscript{16} For around ten years after the accord she was a trusted ally, for ten more a celebrity with an intriguing past, but from then on, roughly when the poem was composed she was less necessary and so treated as ‘a nuisance’ and ‘humoured but kept in her place’.\textsuperscript{17} Contemporaneously, the Raj was in the habit of ‘handsomely reward[ing] British military adventures with immense heritable estates’ unlike the Begum’s which was granted by the British for her own life and was not heritable.\textsuperscript{18} She become more of an anomaly and perhaps less valuable the more the British encroached on the surrounding territory and the surer their hold of the region became. Their treatment of her reflected the devaluation of her power in their eyes, a fact of which she must have been aware. The poem was perhaps then to serve as her reminder as the value she represented to the British as she was increasingly marginalised.

The Begum Samru’s life spanned an unique period in Indian history. This period between decline of the Mughal empire, and the rise of the British was characterised by a chaos of power struggles. Alliances were fluidly made and broken between Mughals, Sikhs, the British, French and Dutch, the Scindia, the Maratha, and various other warring factions as power shifted and circumstances changed. Private armies, often commanded by Europeans were employed by all sides. It is in this context that the Begum Samru came to inherit a mixed race army from her lover/husband.\textsuperscript{19} Although the East India Company had, by the late eighteenth century, been in India for around 200 years, their ambitions and the character of their presence changed over the period as did their approach to interacting with native Indians, broadly shifting from collaboration and attempts at sensitivity to local culture to a more arms-length relationship intended to demarcate the rulers from the ruled. The Begum was an anomaly to many British pre-conceptions: she was a woman who was visible and socialised in mixed Company, unlike the majority of the ‘respectable’ Indian women, whether Muslim or Hindu, that the British would have (not) encountered; she was a female ruler in her own right not on behalf of a male minor as was more common; she was a military leader who appeared to be both feared and respected and who treated her people fairly; and she led a cross-cultural court which for the most part seemed to mix Europeans and Indians easily, as Figures 2 and 3 show.

\textsuperscript{17} Lall, \textit{Begam Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame} p.166.
\textsuperscript{18} Lall, \textit{Begam Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame} p.166.
\textsuperscript{19} Walter Reinhardt was a mercenary who was nicknamed 'Sombre' by his troops which was corrupted to 'Sumroo' or 'Samru' and from where the Begum got her name. It is most likely that Reinhardt and the Begum were not married, and it is certain that he had a wife (and children) pre-dating his relationship with the Begum, however for the thirteen years they were together, she was treated as though she was his wife. The Begum kept his name throughout her life despite many other changes in title and identity and despite his poor reputation with the British as a result of his part in the 'Massacre of Patna'. 177
Figure 2. Muhammad A'zam, *Begam Samru's Household*, c. 1820, Gouache on paper, 45.5 cm x 62.5 cm, Chester Beatty Library Collection, Dublin, Ireland. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin Collection number (CBL In 74.7).
Figure 3. *Begam Samru with her Army*, c. 1825-1826, Gouache on paper, 41.5 cm x 63.5 cm, [Chester Beatty Library Collection, Dublin, Ireland. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Collection number (CBL In 74.6).]
Reforms such as the 1793 Cornwallis Code enforced separation of roles between Company employees and native Indians, as well effectively barring Indians from higher offices. The continued presence, well into the nineteenth century, of a powerful Indian such as the Begum, who, furthermore, was a woman, evoked inconsistent responses, but responses that were, in the majority from those in power, wary. From a ruling class attempting to understand and control a geographically huge and hugely complex society, the imposition of rules, structures and hierarchies was a means by which at least the appearance of control could be maintained. Therefore the presence of people that did not conform with pre-conceptions, hierarchies or rules can be seen as a threat to the very social structures the British were trying to implement. The British ‘frowned on any sign of a counter culture. It is therefore not surprising that the whole colourful story of Sardhana and its princess lost some of its appeal’.  

Particularly in the early years after the fall of Delhi before British power consolidated, she was treated by officials carefully and with varying degrees of warmth. If a thread is to be drawn from the wide variety of British commentary on the Begum - her achievements, her failings, and the fair amount of mythologising that seemed to have accompanied her reputation - it would be to attempt to diminish her importance, and, it could be speculated, by such means, diminish at least the fear of the threat of ‘otherness’ and potential uncontrollability that she represented. Contemporary accounts, such as by Thomas Bacon, refer to this successful commander and battlefield leader as the ‘old lady’ with her ‘old lady’s vanity’ and the ‘notorious Begum’ with her ‘little army’ in her ‘little territory’.  

Representations such as those seen in Figures 2 and 3 would, although of themselves be designed to portray a certain image of the Begum and one which she dictated, show her as controller of a large army and significant, male, and multinational court respectively, and seem to give the lie to this dismissive characterisation. Bacon also relishes the retelling of lurid tales about her life, describes her as untrustworthy and power hungry: ‘Her avarice and love of command […] were insatiable, and being of a heartless tyrannical disposition […]’ and heavily implies that she murdered both of her husbands.

Her gender particularly seemed to cause dissonance for the British authorities. As a woman, and furthermore an Indian woman, it seems to have proved problematic to view and treat her as the powerful person she objectively was. Her negotiation with the British to secure her rights to her estate lasted several years and was politically fraught: she came close to breaking her alliance with the British and forming an allegiance with the Sikhs to the north of her territory as she feared the British were trying to force her off her land without offering an adequate substitute. Although many advisors

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20 Lall, Begam Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame, p.165.  
22 Bacon, p.33.
recognised the Begum would be a valuable ally, Marquess Wellesley, the Governor General of Bengal at the time, procrastinated and refused to close the matter. It has been suggested that ‘there could only be two reasons why Marquess Wellesley so determinedly ignored all this well-informed advice; either he relished the prospect of taking on the Sikhs or he was not prepared to be outmanoeuvred by a woman’.23 Commenting on both her gender and her often cited loyalty to her great patron the Shah Alam, Julia Keay notes: ‘her loyalty was so firmly with the emperor that an East India Company employee observed how strange it was "to see a woman’s arm sustaining the falling empire of the Mogols"’.24 Her uncommon talents, notable in a society which was typically very hierarchical, were the reason for her success and notoriety. Colonel Deane’s wife commented: ‘This woman has an uncommon share of natural abilities, with a strength of mind rarely met with, particularly in a woman’.25

As artefacts in their own right, the portrait and the poem have some points in common, particularly their blending of Indian and European features. The intended audience of each was essentially European, and most likely British and as such they also performed similar functions. Jivan Ram, the maker of the portrait, is one of the few Delhi artists known to paint on canvas in oils in the Western style - although the portrait of the Begum Samru is a watercolour. Some of his stylistic mannerisms have been attributed to the influence of British painters such as George Chinnery and Robert Home who spent time in India.26 His portraits of East India Company employees, and of Indian royalty other than the Begum, use the naturalist style common to European portraits conjoined with the multi-layered, flattened technique of Indian miniatures. There is no definitive record of the original recipient of the portrait, which it is assumed was gifted by the Begum Samru to a British official. General Briggs (1785-1875), who served in India and was a British officer in the army of the East India Company, is shown as the donor of the piece to the Victoria & Albert Museum and could have been the recipient, although there is no mention of the Begum in his memoirs.27 Exchange of portraits was an essentially European fashion, and by Begum Samru’s time the popularity of exchanging miniature portraits was burgeoning and they were particularly ‘exchanged as gifts among royalty or between royalty and high-level political and economic allies’ hence signifying friendship and status.28 There are records of the Begum gifting portraits to other officials: ‘Her Highness … protested a great friendship for his Lordship [Combermere]; sent him her portrait, and insisted on a return of the compliment’.29

24 Keay, p.122.
25 Quoted in John Lall, Begam Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame, p.100.
27 See General John Briggs, Memoir of General John Briggs, of the Madras Army with comments on some of his words and work, (London: Chatto and Windus, Piccadilly, 1885).
This quotation suggests that the Begum may have seen the exchange of portraits as a signifier of alliance, and, given what was the presumably relatively high status of the recipients, a sign of attachment or support. Comments from the British observers seem however to have treated the exchange with far less import. In referring to a portrait by Ram gifted by the Begum, the aide to Lord Combermere when he visited the Begum’s palace in Sardhana comments: ‘my fingers always itched to transform her hookah-snake into a broom, with which adjunct the old dame would have made no bad representative of Mother Shipton’. 30 This treats the exchange less as a sign of solemn political alliance and more in the vein of an unwanted present from an eccentric aunt. In common with various accounts written by later British travellers to India, who viewed attendance at a dinner or party hosted by the Begum as a de rigeur part of any visit, this opinion suggests that the Begum was treated in part as a spectacle and a curiosity:

Nowhere else in Hindustan was there anyone so intriguing as a Christian princess, one, moreover, with a reputation for valour in battle, and a past shrouded in mystery …Curiosity, amazement, and a touch of respect, whatever it was, Begam Samru of Sardhana became an icon of the times who no foreign visitor could afford to miss.31

This treatment significantly diminishes and dismisses her influence and power perhaps because she was, rightly or wrongly, no longer viewed as essential for good political reason, or perhaps because it was too incredulous to British stereotypes that this tiny old lady was a warrior princess and all else she claimed to be.

Both the portrait and the poem considered here can be seen as tools in a political and cultural game being played out between the British and those native Indians who held positions of power in general, and specifically between the Begum Samru and her British allies/counterparts. Each operates at multiple levels. From the British perspective both portrait and poem are familiar forms, with (particularly in relation to the portrait) well understood social and cultural functions. Accounts and analysis agree that the Begum Samru was an astute political player who, depending on one’s point of view, either succeeded despite the handicaps of her low birth, gender, and (until her alignment with Walter Reinhardt her first ‘husband’ from whom she ultimately inherited her army) lack of military experience, or alternatively felt that she consciously used her unconventionality to create space and freedom to project and be the person that best fitted her ambitions:32

30 Losty, p.9. Mother Shipton is said to have been a 16th Century soothsayer and prophetess.
What resulted was a unique form of representation, whose existence cannot be completely explained by the ascendancy of historical events or the pervasiveness of a particular cultural environment. Evidently, the style and artefact of a dominant culture was being imitated and appropriated, but what was also being deliberately aimed at was the entrenchment of her own ‘otherness’.33

In this light, the Begum’s commissioning of the art considered here can be interpreted as attempts to demonstrate her alignment to the British, as at this point in her life they were the dominant political power. It indeed appears that the Begum strategically manipulated aesthetic forms and cultural norms across religious, ethnic, gendered and political divides to advance her own interests. She dressed, by wearing a turban, manfully and smoked a hookah with the men after dinner or durbar rather than retiring with the women:

In later life she still wore a turban. It was not a fashionable affectation but an emphatic statement of her martial past, just like the hookah by her side. Neither turbans nor hookahs were normally favoured by Indian women. They advertised her unique status as one who had transcended her gender to shine in a masculine firmament.34

Her lovers - confirmed and rumoured - and her husband were European and Christian. Her allegiance to Shah Alam and his heir were unwavering, perhaps as recognition that her land, titles and much of her status were owed to him, or perhaps because until a certain alternative power definitively rose, as it eventually did in the form of the British, it was astute to remain loyal to the vestige of the old system. The resistance and continued treatment of her as ‘other’ by the British belies that - whether on grounds of race or gender - and despite her efforts in the art and architecture she commissioned, in the entertainment she offered them, in the company she kept, and in the religion she ascribed to, she was not to be fully accepted. Although the Begum was royal she was, ‘in status, and as a woman, […] an intruder in the exalted company of hereditary rulers’.35 Although she was light-skinned with ‘[…] a complexion very little darker than an Italian’ and a Catholic, she was a native Indian, born Muslim.36 While she was of high status and a most Europeanised Indian possible she was still the ‘other’ to the British and to be kept at a distance as the dismissive comments on her exchange of portraits above would suggest.

In conclusion, the British reaction to both the nature of these artefacts, and their subject can be viewed as a microcosm of wider changes happening in British India at the time, and telling of their pre-conceptions about India and Indians. In a time when the British were attempting to impose structure on Indian society as a means to exercise power and control, their understanding of what was typical for

33 Hingorani, p.61.
34 Keay, Farzana: the Woman who saved an Empire, p.65.
36 Lall, p.101.
Indian society was critical in that endeavour. Therefore there was no blueprint for dealing with people and situations that fell outside of those preconceived ideas, who as such were felt as a threat to power, and represented a risk of losing control. These artefacts represent two kinds of threat both in form and in subject: the portrait particularly is a blend of the Eastern and Western at a time when separation rather than integration was the norm and imposing upon Indian society rather than integrating with it was the *modus operandi*; and the subject is a confusing outlier in almost all facets of her identity. The Begum seems to have made a career of adapting and presenting sides of her identity that suited the political climate. To the British this chameleonic nature was equivocal, and to downplay the threat she was, particularly toward the end of her life, firmly ‘kept in her place’.37

37 Lall, p.165.
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Victorian Appropriation of Medieval Eucharistic Symbolism:
A comparative analysis of St. Giles Cathedral and Goblin Market.

KATERINA KERN

This article considers the manner in which ‘Goblin Market’ by Christina Rossetti and St. Giles Cathedral by Augustus Pugin appropriate Medieval Eucharistic symbolism. It first considers the Medieval elements within ‘Goblin Market’ and the contemporary Anglo-Catholic discussions around those elements. It then considers the Catholic architecture of St. Giles Cathedral, noting the similarities and differences to their Medieval counterparts while positing an explanation. Despite their differences in both form and doctrine, both artefacts reveal parallel trends of Medieval adaptations and desired ends in Victorian England.

Many in nineteenth century England looked to the imagined past for a religious and artistic ideal. The destruction of Catholic practices, iconography, and architecture following the Protestant Reformation incited curiosity and mystery amongst those who grew up amidst the ruins. Artists, architects, poets, and preachers drew from the wealth of knowledge and mystery surrounding Medieval Catholic England to transform and engage contemporary issues. This article will explore two in particular who used Medieval theology to participate in contemporary debates: Augustus Pugin and Christina Rossetti. I will specifically focus on the treatment of Eucharistic symbolism in Pugin’s St. Giles Cathedral and Christina Rossetti’s Goblin Market in order to identify the manner and end of their Medieval appropriations.

Interpretations of Goblin Market vary widely - some interpreting from solely a Christian mythological standpoint, and others from a purely secular or feminist perspective.1 I am not attempting to prove one more valid than the next. I will rather consider solely those, which specifically deal with

the eating motif, and consider the manner in which this motif references a Medieval understanding of the Eucharist. I will consider how Rossetti’s adoption of the Medieval symbol enlightens our understanding of her Victorian Anglo-Catholic context. *Goblin Market* includes various Medieval but increasingly Victorian elements: the Eucharistic sacrifice as feminine, the role of the Second Eve in redemption, the doctrine of the ‘Real Presence’ in the communion feast and a consequently sacramental view of the physical world, and unity of believers through the communal Eucharistic feast. In both form and content Rossetti utilizes Medieval tropes to explore these contemporary religious issues. Much like the Fairy Tales and Medieval folk tales which she emulates she presents and transforms previously existing imagery. Like it’s predecessors, *Goblin Market* contains monsters seeking to lure young children into evil, magical food which has the power to grant and take life, and innocent young maidens whose virtue is threatened.

One of the most discussed elements of this ambiguous poem is the feminine saviour, which appears particularly striking when paired with the erotic elements of her salvific act. After Laura has eaten the fruit of the goblin men she falls into such obsession and melancholy that her sister Lizzie braves the temptation of their fruits herself in order to bring the much-desired fruit home to Laura. Though she has never before allowed herself to be drawn toward the goblin’s fruits, Lizzie walks amongst them and offers to pay for their tempting products. Despite the goblin’s attempts to force food into her mouth, thereby smearing juice all over her face, Lizzie resists their affronts, and returns unbroken (although dirtied and bruised) to her sister. Her words upon returning clearly allude to Christ’s words at the last supper, ‘Eat me, drink me, love me, Laura, make much of me…’ to which Laura responds by covering her sister in kisses while consuming the juice. This narrative, both erotic and Eucharistic, places feminine sacrifice and receptivity at the center of both love and salvation, making this Christological type female.

What is most unique about this salvific figure is her feminine nature as well as gender. As Hill argues, Lizzie saves her sister because of her receptivity and self sacrifice -- even her own metaphorical death. After partaking in the saving juices Laura too falls into her own deathlike sleep. Rossetti writes, ‘is this death or life? Life out of death’. An entirely submissive act alone can save the lost sister; just as the sister fell through eating and submitting herself to the goblins, so too must the saviour submit. Yet, the latter must provide that saving fruit for her sister to again partake; it is not enough to take her

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6 Rossetti, II 524-525.
place. This trope closely alludes to the common Medieval teaching of the Second Eve,⁷ in which Mary is thought to have redeemed the sins of her predecessor, the first woman Eve, by providing Christ through her act of submission in carrying him in her womb.

In addition to placing femininity in the center of the Eucharistic feast, Rossetti’s use of the Eucharist also exhibits a Medieval understanding of sacrament. According to early church doctrine, the sacraments contained the grace of God regardless of the faith of the recipient. Christians in Victorian England argued at length about the extent to which the Eucharist was effectively salvific or symbolic.⁸ In Goblin Market, Laura’s act of disobedience in eating the fruit enslaved her through obsessive desire to the goblins. She could not be liberated without again eating of the same fruit, but in a new form: spilt on the wounds of her loving sister. It is not Lizzie or Laura’s faith which saved Laura but her consumption of the fruit, which Rossetti describes in erotic and deeply physical language, ‘she kissed and kissed and kissed her with hungry mouth’.⁹

Rossetti’s language praises the sweetness of the fruits, the body which bore them, and the love expressed. This glorification of the physical posits a sacramental view of nature, wherein the physical world can both lead one to God and allow one to experience Him. Hill says of this sacramental philosophy, ‘Rossetti is using the body not as a symbol or metaphor but rather as the concrete conduit through which humans understand God. In other words, for Rossetti, humans do not so much transcend the body as they experience the transcendent through it’.¹⁰ This glorification of the physical appears in both the saving power of the fruit and the erotic language in the moment of salvation.¹¹ The form is also in keeping with the Medieval piety narrative which shocked with physical grotesque realism. In these stories, the Host,¹² symbolically portrayed, not only cleanses the individual of his or her own sins, but also unites the whole community.¹³ Most follow a basic form: a sinner has been ostracized from the community and can be restored to unity only through a miracle resulting from the sacred nature of a physical object. Most frequently this sacred object seemed repulsive to the sinner and delightful to the faithful.¹⁴ All of these elements appear in Goblin Market, revealing the iconographic vocabulary from which she drew to express her Eucharistic beliefs. In her attempt to express the physical and

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⁹ Rossetti, 1494.
¹⁰ Hill, p.456.
¹¹ Hill, p.462.
¹² The consecrated bread turned into the body of Christ in Catholic doctrine.
¹⁴ Duffy, pp.120-131.
sacramental qualities of the Eucharist she keeps with the same Medieval tradition which had expressed it earlier.

Christiana Rossetti’s use of these Medieval tropes — the Eucharistic sacrifice as feminine, the role of the Second Eve in redemption, the doctrine of the ‘Real Presence’ in the communion feast and a consequently sacramental view of the physical world, and unity of believers through the communal Eucharistic feast — reflects contemporary religious dialogues. Many amidst Rossetti’s Oxfordian milieu actively sought to return the arts and the church to an imagined Medieval ideal, particularly two groups Rossetti participated in: the Tractarians and the Pre-Raphaelites.15

The Tractarians, lead by Edward Pusey, John Henry Newman, and Robert Isaac Wilberforce, began disseminating pamphlets arguing for a Catholic understanding of the 39 articles in 1833 while trying to remain independent of Catholic worship.16 Into the 40’s and 50’s the teaching began to alter as Newman converted to Catholicism and many young Anglo-Catholics felt drawn to more Catholic devotional practices.17 This led to passionate debates around the doctrine of the Real Presence and Mary. In the 1850’s Pusey both preached and wrote a defense of the Real of Presence of Christ in the Eucharist;18 Rossetti frequently attended Christ Church where Pusey regularly preached and certainly heard his views. Newman also argued as early as 1832 for the late Gothic trope of Mary as the Second Eve.19 By the 1860’s Marian devotion had become common-place in Anglo-Catholic practices, although never in a homogeneous form; dissension around the manner and degree of Marian devotion only deepened as the century continued.20 The Tractarians insisted on the validity of Marian devotion as a fundamental element of the Holy Catholic Church.21

Also, like their Catholic precursors, the Tractarians began sisterhoods which all other Anglicans rejected.22 This celebration of sisterhood, one we know Rossetti admired, allowed women a place to encourage and support each other in a religious context.23 This glorification of sisterhood appears all throughout Goblin Market, from the bond between Laura and Lizzie to the antagonistic qualities of the men. As sisterhoods, both religious and secular, were forming in the Victorian period many women

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16 Hill, p.457; Singleton, p.29.
17 Engelhardt, pp.8-10.
19 Singleton, p.29.
20 Singleton, p.33.
21 Engelhardt, p.11.
22 Engelhardt, p.36.
23 Hanson, p.29.
looked to these communities as a means of independence. The movement combined the femininity of sacrifice, the role of women in redemption, and the communal end of Eucharist; and it lay at the heart of both the Tractarian movement, the Victorian Era, and *Goblin Market*. *Goblin Market* subtly combines both the Eucharistic and Marian controversies, both participating in the conversation and standing as a product of it. The Medieval doctrines and imagery surrounding the Eucharist and Mary provided Rossetti the flexibility to create her own sacramental narrative of the body and feminine salvific tropes.

Also expressing a desire to return to the Medieval, St. Giles Cathedral (1846) mimics the Medieval Cathedrals of England while simultaneously exposing its Victorian origins. The following section will explore the Medieval Eucharistic symbolism which Pugin incorporated in his Neo-Gothic Cathedral, St. Giles. To that end, I will consider only the major elements dealing directly with the Eucharist: the High Altar, chancel, and rood screen. In order to understand Augustus Pugin’s use of Medieval symbolism we must first briefly explore Medieval High altars themselves, focusing on the three afore-mentioned elements. During the Protestant Reformation in England, the old Catholic liturgical elements and iconography were systematically removed from churches and desecrated, effectively making the Catholic Mass, or celebration of the Eucharist, impossible. Due to the resulting absence of extant complete Medieval High Altars, one must attempt to discern the essential elements from pre-Reformation written descriptions, remaining altars and rood screens, and Victorian illustrations. Most of these sources are from the 14th-15th centuries, hardly making them authoritative.

One of the most reliable, Robert Martin, set out in the mid 16th century to describe his church pre-Reformation in an attempt to save that which was lost. He describes in detail the altar of his church, Holy Trinity, and the liturgical practices. Like most Medieval churches, a rood screen separated the high altar from the nave. Most importantly, behind the High Altar a grand retable depicted the scene of Calvary. In his text, Martin frequently lamented the loss of the Crucifix, revealing the impact it had made on him as a child, and the importance of it in the liturgical order.

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25 Specifically, the Gothic ranging from the 12th-15th centuries.
26 The location of the consecration of the Eucharist.
27 The space surrounding the high altar and not accessible to the congregants.
28 The wall dividing the chancel from the congregation with Christ Crucified depicted on the top.
30 Duffy, pp.56-70.
31 The principle section of the church.
33 Duffy, p.70.
Figure 1. Augustus Pugin, *Contrasts or a parallel between the noble edifices of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and similar buildings of the present day; shewing the present decay of taste, accompanied by appropriate text* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1836, Lawrence OP, NewLiturgicalMovement.org), plate 1, p. 100.

Figure 2. Augustus W. N. Pugin, *High Altar at St. Giles’ Roman Catholic Church*, (Cheadle, West Midlands, UK: 1845, Jacqueline Banerjee, The Victorian Web).
Various other Medieval sources relay a similar topos. In a village church in Suffolk from 1340, a similar Calvary scene decorated the wall behind the High Altar, while the churches of St. Andreas and St Albans incorporated Medieval scenes of saints topped with the same imagery. A few other shrines from Belgium and France also incorporate saints in the High Altar, all crowned with the scene from Calvary. One exception from Sweden has been reconstructed, which depicts the Coronation of the Virgin holding the Christ child.

From these sources, it seems most likely that the majority of Medieval High Altars included the Calvary scene, various other saints, and Christ as a focal point. Pugin’s own written work reveals his belief that these motifs were indeed central to the Medieval Church. Pugin drew Figure 1 to compare a typical Medieval high altar to contemporary counterparts. Note the centrality of the Calvary scene and Christ’s suffering, presence of angels above and below, and the Marian narratives to the right and left.

In Pugin’s high altar one sees obvious medieval allusions and diversions. The scene centers around Christ and Mary crowned Queen of Heaven by the worshipping angels. In both the sculpted reredos and bas relief scene before the altar angels alone surround Christ and his mother. Each figure rests inside lancet windows composed of trefoil foils, effectively replacing the mullion: all of which are common, Gothic, architectural elements. Between the arches, richly decorated spandrels lead to an increasingly decorated triforium and clearstorey. This causes the figures to appear placed within a Gothic church of their own, which the viewer has the privilege to glimpse. Surrounding this Heavenly scene, ornate consecutive patterns and bright tones fill the chancel - all guarded by a semipermeable rood screen. Continuing the Gothic trends, the clothing realistically flows as their three-dimensional figures take up actual space.

Despite these Medieval elements, Pugin’s high altar diverges in fundamental ways from the typical Gothic high altar as seen in his own illustration above. In place of Marian narratives Pugin depicts adoring angels, in place of Christ crucified he depicts Mary crowned, and in place of surrounding saints he depicts yet more angels. Considering Pugin’s intense examination of extant Medieval churches one might assume intentionality in these elements. His publications, particularly the image above, reveal his knowledge of the Medieval reredos and the differences between his variation and the antiquated forms.

The Coronation of the Virgin had become popular in the 13th century, but usually filled a side altar rather than a High Altar. After the Reformation and consequent rejection of Marian iconography in England, the scene became too controversial and mostly obsolete. It is notable both that the

34 Kroesen, p.165.
35 Kroesen, p.165.
36 The reredos is the art panel placed behind the high altar.
38 Singleton, p.19.
Coronation scene replaces the Calvary scene, and that Pugin chose this specific scene rather than another from the Marian archive. Why did Pugin select this particular scene, and why place it in such a central and traditionally reserved context?

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England, religious legal reforms and demographic changes led to a tempestuous and fluctuating religious landscape with the Virgin Mary at the center.39 Around the religious landscape, the majority of the Catholics who had remained in England through the Reformation had largely neglected Marian devotional practices in attempts to keep the peace with the Protestant majority. By the mid nineteenth century, even devout Catholics had rejected Marian devotion, not to avoid conflict but because their beliefs had begun to appear far more Protestant

Figure 3. Augustus W. N. Pugin, Chancel at St. Giles’ Roman Catholic Church, (Cheadle, West Midlands, UK: 1845, Jacqueline Banerjee, The Victorian Web).

39 Engelhardt, p.3.
than their continental counterparts. However, as the population of Catholics began to surge in the nineteenth century, the influx of zealous converts began to alter the practices and appearances of English Catholicism; the new converts argued over the role of Mary and Marian devotion. Pugin’s incorporation of Mary placed her within the church once again, and refocused Catholic emphasis on the Mother of Christ as mother to all. As the century progressed, Marian devotion became central to the Catholic life, and icons, rosaries, and Marian literature became increasingly popular.

As one might expect, the Protestant church responded to this resurgence with derision and mockery. However, congregants of the Church of England practiced varying degrees of Marian devotion throughout the Victorian period, originating largely in John Keble’s *Christian Year*, which included Mary as the Queen of Heaven. The Anglo-Catholic movement in particular agreed with Catholic Mariology as the century and conflicts progressed. Amidst this turbulent religious environ, Pugin depicted the Coronation of Mary atop the high altar of this Neo-Gothic Cathedral, thereby aggressively asserting the validity of this Medieval trope and her essential role in the Eucharist. Mary is not only central to the liturgy and visual focus, but she is central to the enactment of the Eucharistic feast, for here alone can the bread and wine be turned into the actual body and blood of Christ through the prayers of the Priest. The faithful would likely have only clearly seen this altar piece when they drew near for the Eucharist as the rood screen intentionally hindered the congregants’ view. The congregant, one might easily imagine, drew near to receive Christ in the Eucharist and saw Mary, Queen of Heaven, ruling with Christ amidst angels; one must have felt that he or she were communing with both Mary and her son.

In many ways *St. Giles Cathedral* appears more Victorian than Medieval. Although Pugin intentionally and accurately incorporated many Medieval elements, it is his choice of elements which is the most telling, revealing more about Victorian values and conflicts than Medieval. Reflecting upon the complex Marian types in the nineteenth century, Engelhardt states, ‘More than any other figure in Victorian England, she captured, mediated, and exemplified the dominant debates, anxieties, and beliefs in Victorian England.’ Although from Anglo-Catholic and Catholic churches respectively, Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market* and Augustus Pugin’s *St. Giles Cathedral* both participate in the contemporary discussions around Mary, the Eucharist, and the Sacraments while celebrating the elements of late Medieval culture and thought which many Victorians were romanticizing. They do so through the symbolically, culturally, and theologically rich vehicle of the Eucharist.

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40 The number of Catholics in Britain increased approximately tenfold through the course of the 1900s: Engelhardt, p.40.
41 Engelhardt, p.47.
42 Singleton, pp.18-22.
44 Engelhardt, p.27.
45 Engelhardt, p.19.
PRIME SOURCES


——— *Contrasts or a parallel between the noble edifices of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and similar buildings of the present day; shewing the present decay of taste, accompanied by appropriate text* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1836).


SECONDARY SOURCES


From St Giles to Marylebone:
The gin mad girl and an MCC Tie.

DAVID ALLEN

This article traces the changing status of gin in nineteenth-century British culture by exploring two artefacts: an image from The Drunkard’s Children and a neck tie from the collection of the Marylebone Cricket Club. Despite their apparently disparate nature, the items combine to relate how the story of gin touches on social status, group identity, and gender politics.

The history of gin ‘is a rise from grime to grandeur, from notoriety to acclaim, from recourse for the desperate to accessory for the fashionable’; its transformation ‘has quite literally been a journey from the slums to the Savoy’. In addition to being a transition from poverty and disreputableness to affluence and desirability, the narrative of gin is also a gendered one, with ‘Ladies Delight’ gradually becoming more accepted as a drink for the fashionable male population. This paper will illustrate this process of change by comparing two artefacts: a plate from George Cruickshank’s folding book, The Drunkard’s Children (1848) and an early tie from the collection of the Marylebone Cricket Club (M.C.C.). Aspects of Hogarth’s Gin Lane (1751) will be used to link the two.

Gin as a problem straddled the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. London was the centre of most gin production in what was essentially an unregulated trade. In 1750, one house in fifteen in the City was a gin shop and Westminster had 1,300 licensed and 900 unlicensed premises. A succession of gin Acts of varying efficacy gradually shaped the industry, and by the 1830s, the slum venues had been replaced by slightly more salubrious and often highly decorated gin palaces ‘on every second

street’. Though modes of production and venues for distribution had become more sophisticated, the impact was the same: excessive levels of drinking amongst the most vulnerable in society.

*The Drunkard’s Children* (1848), was a follow-up to Cruickshank’s earlier picture narrative, *The Bottle* (1847). The latter had tracked the decline of a prosperous family through the father’s abuse of alcohol, culminating in his son and daughter bearing hapless witness to his final incarceration in a ‘madhouse’. Cruickshank now sought to capture the secondary impact of drink upon the children themselves, trapped in their own cycle of disadvantage. The plates tell of how the two protagonists suffer separate degradations following the breakup of their family, with the boy being drawn into crime and dying during transportation, and the girl descending into prostitution. The stage for their demise is again set by alcohol, the first plate in the series being located in a gin shop.

The celebrated artist was no stranger to the dangers of drink. His father had reputedly died following a drinking competition, his brother was a chronic alcoholic, and Cruickshank himself was a celebrated toper in his twenties during which he had developed a love for ‘blue ruin’. The latter was one of several slang names (‘blue ribband’, ‘blue tape’) for gin that made reference to the colour, an epithet thought to derive either from the blue skin colouration that resulted from alcohol poisoning or from the colour of gin produced by amateur distillers, the acidity of which sometimes reacted with copper salts in stills.

By the time that the two series of prints appeared, Cruickshank was a reformed character and particularly zealous supporter of the Temperance movement, his enthusiasm for abstinence over moderation drawing him into conflict with Dickens, for whom he had illustrated a number of works including *Oliver Twist* (1838). *The Drunkard’s Children* was originally designed to end at the seventh plate with the death of the son, but Cruickshank chose to add an eighth and final illustration that has been viewed as one of ‘his greatest concepts’ and ‘great images of nineteenth-century art’. It depicts the final demise of the daughter as she flings herself from Waterloo bridge (Figure 1). The accompanying caption states, ‘The maniac father and convict brother are gone—the poor girl, homeless, friendless, deserted, destitute, and gin mad, commits self murder’. The image is a powerful one. The emotion and movement of the central figure contrast dramatically with the cold and static structure of the bridge, reflecting the disparity between chaos and order which is at the centre of this moral tale.

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679 Williams, pp.87-8.
The bridge’s immovable lines and rectangles help create the illusion of a rapidly accelerating figure, a perception reinforced by the girl’s detached bonnet, her unfettered hair and skirts billowing against the rushing air. She shields her eyes from her own fate and her mouth gapes in a silent scream. In the background is a full moon, a popular emblem of madness, but also a traditional female symbol associated with maturity and pregnancy, perhaps signifying that the gin mad girl was with child.683 If so, there is an inherent irony given the supposed role of juniper in precipitating miscarriages and in gin being the drink of choice for self-induced abortions.684 A series of ship’s masts confirm that her grave will be a watery one and remind the viewer that this scene is taking place in a major centre of commerce and therefore a place of both extreme wealth and extreme poverty. On the bridge itself, two figures reach out in helpless shock, showing a societal concern for the girl’s plight not evident in life.

In this period around five hundred river suicides took place each year in London, some thirty on average from Waterloo bridge alone.685 The bridge is significant in that it is the nearest river crossing to the district of St Giles, an area forever associated with the first gin craze further to the publication of Hogarth’s *Gin Lane* in 1751. At the time, a quarter of the houses in the parish sold gin ‘besides about 82 twopenny houses of the greatest infamy where gin was the liquor drunk’.686 That this was an enduring picture was confirmed by Dickens some eight decades later in *Sketches by Boz* (1839), also illustrated by Cruickshank, in which he described how a new plague of gin palaces now flourished in the ‘filthy and miserable’ area.687

That the figure leaping off the bridge is female is not without meaning. While alcohol abuse was not restricted by gender or age, the drinking of gin by women had become portrayed as a particular problem. At the height of the eighteenth-century gin craze, the spirit has acquired a female identity by virtue of its nicknames, ‘Madam Geneva’ or ‘Mother Gin’.688 Women frequented gin shops and prostitutes often plied their trade from the same venues, the ‘twopenny houses’ referred to above being ‘common lodgings which were also brothels and safe houses for thieves and stolen goods’.689 An inevitable association between femininity, promiscuity, crime and gin therefore became established in the Georgian and Victorian mind. Concerns were also expressed that hard-drinking women were giving birth to enfeebled children by the Royal College of Physicians early in the eighteenth century, long before foetal alcohol syndrome was formally recognised.690 A number of sensational cases, such as

684 Williams, pp.107-8.
686 Uglow, p.494.
687 Dickens, p.214.
689 Uglow, op.cit.
those of Judith Dufour (who murdered her own child in order to sell its clothes for gin in 1734) and Mary Eastwick (who allowed a child in her care to burned to death while she was intoxicated in 1736) had already established the extreme impact that gin could have on women in the public conscience. Gin-raddled hags, such as Diana Trapes in The Beggars Opera (1728) and Sarah Gamp in Martin Chuzzlewit (1844), became almost stock characters in literature. Perhaps most famous of all inebriated females is the woman at the centre of Gin Lane, Hogarth’s image of ‘the city as ravaged desert’. Her bleary drunken eyes focus on her snuff box and her legs are covered in possibly syphilitic sores. Her grotesque figure is bare breasted, suggesting that she has just suckled the child who is now toppling over the rail to its presumed death. Cruickshank’s falling girl is therefore a direct descendant of Hogarth’s falling child (Figure 2), both let down by parents whose ability to function responsibly was significantly impaired by gin.

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691 Ugow, p.495.
692 Williams, p.7.
The gin mad girl’s raised arm exposes her threadbare clothing and points to the fact that drunkenness in general and the consumption of gin in particular was portrayed as a problem of the lower classes. Fielding was one of the first to express concern on this issue:

A new kind of drunkenness, unknown to our ancestors, is lately sprung up among us, and which if not put a stop to, will infallibly destroy a great part of the inferior people. The drunkenness I intend here is [...] by this Poison called Gin.  

Dickens took a similar view a century later when he proposed that drunkenness ‘is the vice of the poor and wretched, and the guilty [...] (but) it is not the vice of the upper classes, or of the middle classes’. As Williams observes, this fallacy is an example of political control and selective reporting as, despite wide-spread outrage about the impact of gin upon the poor ‘the upper classes could continue to get merrily drunk on sherry, brandy and claret without interference as heavy drinking in elite circles never made it onto the political agenda’.  

That gin was particularly accessible to the poor is however beyond doubt. Britain’s early attempts to replicate Dutch genever, a malt-based drink more like fine whisky, produced a potent and foul tipple. Low-quality grain or old potatoes were used to produce a neutral spirit which was then cut

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with sulphuric acid, alum, oil of turpentine or worse; sweeteners such as rosewater and sugar were then added to disguise the typically unpleasant flavour. The resulting product was estimated to be 160 proof and cheap to produce and purchase. To those in poverty it was a panacea that temporarily brought distraction from hardship, created a sense of warmth and silenced crying babies.696

By Cruickshank’s day, more sophisticated distilling techniques led first to the production of Old Tom, a cordial-style drink which was sold in barrels to retailers who would then choose to sweeten it or not, and then London Dry (‘dry’ denoting that the gin was unsweetened). The invention of the continuous still in 1827 allowed for greater quantities to be produced but, more importantly, it also delivered a clean spirit that was free of impurities, had a higher concentration of alcohol in the final distillation, and obviated the need to cut the final product to mask the taste.

As gin itself became more sophisticated, it became increasingly acceptable to and popular with the upper classes, a trend marked by the advent of the elite distillers (such as Gordon’s, Booth’s and Tanqueray’s). It was soon to become a staple in the gentlemen’s clubs of London through popular cocktails such as Gin Punch, Twist and Sangaree, recipes for which were provided in The Gentleman’s Table Guide of 1871.697 While many clubs such as Boodle’s and Brooke’s served a purely social function, others were formed around increasingly popular and organised sporting pastimes, such as cricket. The Marylebone Cricket Club (M.C.C.), founded in 1787, was pre-eminent amongst the latter. Though within a short walk of St Giles and with its own problems of poverty and prostitution, Marylebone was already established as a favoured locale for London’s gentry.698 As such, it was an obvious site for a sporting club catering for their needs.

Amongst the new breed of respectable nineteenth century distillers were John and William Nicholson of the Nicholson company, founded in 1803. The family had been involved in gin production since the 1730s; the earliest bottle label from the company’s collection is shown in Figure 3. In 1854, William Nicholson junior, the son of John, became its chair. Nicholson was a celebrated cricketer who, despite his prowess on the pitch, was arguably more renowned for a series of loans made to the M.C.C. enabling it to purchase the freehold of its Lord’s ground in 1866, thus saving it from developers, and to make further ground improvements thereafter.699

Just as bottle labels act as identifiers, clothing can denote symbolic affiliation to a particular group. Such affiliations can be positive or negative. For example, a requirement that those seeking parish welfare should wear a prominent badge to identify their status and parish of origin on their right

696 Ugow, p.493.
697 Solmonson, pp.78-9.
shoulder was enshrined in the Poor Act of 1697 and only repealed in 1810.\textsuperscript{700} The young gin drinkers in receipt of charity in Gin Lane wear such badges. The initials are hard to identify with certainty and appear inverted, but Williams asserts that they are the ‘SG’ of St Giles (Figure 4).\textsuperscript{701} Though the requirement to wear a poor badge would have lapsed by her time, the gin crazed girl’s ragged clothing similarly acts as an informal badge of destitution.

Signifiers of belonging are of course not restricted to the needy nor to markings of poverty. M.C.C.’s early years corresponded with the evolution of sporting colours in the shape of blazers, caps and ties that enabled the wearer to demonstrate more affirmative associations. The blazer has its origins in the rowing kit of the great British schools and universities, rowing colours having first developed at Oxford around 1805.\textsuperscript{702} The introduction of club colours therefore had clear class associations:

Men’s clothes, at least until very modern times, have been incurably class conscious. All “gentlemanly” clothes are intended to show that the wearer belongs to an exclusive social caste. And what happier method of reinforcing this impression could there be than by wearing a tie which indicated membership of an exclusive club?\textsuperscript{703}

\textsuperscript{701} Williams, p.76.
Whereas the badge worn by the St Giles children and the ragged clothes of the gin crazed girl signified membership of an underclass, early sporting colours often demonstrated membership of an exclusive upper class. Few clubs were more elite than the M.C.C. and, even today, its waiting list stretches to twenty-seven years. Dramatist and amateur cricketer, Frederick Reynolds, joined soon after its formation in the late eighteenth century, his diary reporting that ‘Being unanimously elected, I immediately assumed the sky-blue colour of the club’ (‘sky blue’ coincidentally being another common-use name for gin). Though the exact date is not known, sometime in the 1860s, these colours were changed to yellow and red, the colours of the Nicholson’s gin company, reputedly in recognition of William Nicholson’s financial benevolence. The change was therefore contemporary with the publication of *The Drunkard’s Children*, occurring a dozen or so years after the latter.

While the decision to adopt the Nicholson colours lacks documentary evidence, it has been upheld by succeeding generations of the family and passed into the (possibly invented) traditions of the club. One of the earliest flags in the club’s collection, dating from around 1860, features these colours. The advent of the modern form of neck tie dates back to the 1860s and the earliest available

704 Harris and Ashley Cooper, p.23.
706 Robert Cuphrey, Archive Catalogue, MCC, private email to the author, 3 October 2017.
example of the use of red and yellow in an M.C.C. tie comes from around 1900 (Figure 5). In pristine condition, the pure silk of the ‘egg and bacon’ tie would have contrasted sharply with the rags of the gin crazed girl. Whereas the tie would have been flaunted by its wearers and seen as a sign of affluence and success, the formal and informal badges of the poor were humiliating signifiers of privation and failure. The residents of St Giles would certainly not have been amongst the club’s members, which in the nineteenth century was dominated by the aristocracy. Neither would women, the first female member having only been admitted to Lord’s in 1998.

Both gin and the M.C.C. have been regarded as quintessential indicators of Englishness, so much so that they have almost become caricature symbols of nationhood. The same might be said of drunkenness, something which every British government from the sixteenth century to the present day has attempted to curb. Perhaps the ultimate irony in gin’s dual association with the binge drinking of the poor and the leisure pursuits of the rich is summed up by the fact that the third Lord’s pavilion,

709 Williams, p.25.
built in 1889 and also funded by loans from Nicholson, was colloquially known as ‘The Gin Palace’ (figure 6). In a final link to the gin mad girl, the Victorian era saw a series of suicides amongst famous and not-so-famous cricketers, several of whom played at Lord’s and a number of which involved alcohol as cause or effect.

In summary, *The Drunkard’s Children* can be seen as a ‘Hogarthian progress-as decline’ vignette that demonstrates how the Victorian era, despite dramatic changes in politics, technology and prosperity, created social distress ‘on a scale never before experienced’ and which ‘extracted a high price in human terms’. Whereas Cruikshank’s art portrayed the latter, the M.C.C. tie represents the former: the artefacts comment on each other by their mutual link to the changing status of gin in British culture. By the late nineteenth century, blue ruin had assumed such a position of respectability that its profits could be used to help fund an elitist organisation like the M.C.C. without an apparent hint of societal concern. That a drink historically associated primarily with women should help underpin an exclusively male establishment is a further irony. The tie can therefore be read as an emblem of gin’s transformation as well as of male exclusivity.

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710 Green, p. 88.
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Fallen Woman or Fallen Man?

Representations of moral responsibility, punishment and reward in George Frederic Watts’s painting *Found Drowned* (1848-50) and Charles Dickens’s novel *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5).

SUSAN KNIGHTS

This article will examine gendered representations of moral responsibility by comparing its treatment of fallen women in the above artefacts. George Frederic Watts evinces sympathy and condemnation for the plight of a drowned woman, alone bearing the punishment for her fall from prevalent societal expectations of female behaviour. Charles Dickens appears to go further in challenging the distribution of moral responsibility, inverting the stereotypic trope of the fallen woman by instead punishing a fallen man for his moral failure. Both artefacts, however, remain trapped in the dominant cultural model of the time, with its privileging of the patriarchal home as the best protector of female propriety. They thus re-enforce stereotypic inscriptions of gender. Read together as social documents, they reflect a society in transition, in which attitudes towards morality, class and gender, far from being universal and absolute, were fraught with paradox, uncertainty and ambivalence.

The Victorians were much exercised by perceived essentialist gender differences, advocating separate public or private spheres for men and women even as a burgeoning urban female workforce increasingly complicated strict delineations. Traditionally, women were expected to maintain the highest moral standards, but were disproportionately castigated for falling from the ideal. Sarah Stickney Ellis exemplifies writers who place, unequivocally, the weight of moral responsibility for the health and stability of the nation itself upon women, as she declares, ‘My sisters
[... ] you have deep responsibilities; you have urgent claims; a nation’s moral worth is in your keeping’.¹

Her rallying cry to the Women of England (1843), in her widely read conduct manual, was to use their superior moral courage to ‘assist in redeeming the character of English men from the mere animal [...] into which [...] they are in danger of falling’.² Ellis uses crude binary opposites to inscribe supposed gender characteristics. This idea is typical of the widely held view that what Ellis describes as the ‘delicacy of the female character’³ requires masculine protection. That protection is afforded by the metonymic ideal of the middle-class patriarchal home, headed by an active, economically competent male⁴ whose conduct is moderated by the gentle moral corrective of the ‘Angel In The House’, the embodiment of wifely, feminine virtues.⁵ Ellis acknowledges the existence of a ‘second class of females’ who deviate from the norm through ‘the pecuniary necessities of labour’, and she argues strenuously that they should not be degraded by this necessity.⁶ But the insistence with which she promotes her ideal social structure implies that departure from the safety of the patriarchal family model, whether by choice or economic necessity, represents a danger to properly constituted femininity. If the binary and moral order is thus disturbed, where does the responsibility for the inevitably dire consequences lie?

Those consequences are epitomized by the trope of the fallen woman, a common metaphor in mid-Victorian literature and art, and the binary opposite of the equally clichéd domestic angel. The term was wide enough to cover any female who had sex outside marriage, through to outright prostitution. Watts’ Found Drowned and Dickens’ Our Mutual Friend are linked thematically in challenging societal assumptions about female responsibility for the fallen state, complicating any suggestion that Mrs. Ellis’s moral position was universally accepted. But at the same time, they demonstrate the strength and pervasive nature of Victorian representations of gender, with its lurking assumption that women should conform to the patriarchal ideal.⁷ Both artefacts expose the hypocrisy and unfairness of societal double standards, but they nonetheless remain products of their age, ‘trapped within an ideological theatre where the proliferation of representations, images, reflections, myths [and]

² Ellis, p.103.
³ Ellis, p.104.
⁵ Coventry Patmore, The Angel in the House (London: John W. Parker, 1854).
⁶ Ellis, p.104.
identifications’ hampering any radical interrogation of gender roles and responsibilities. French Feminist critic Hélène Cixous argues that linguistic signifiers - such as head/heart, active/passive, strong/weak - create a hierarchy of gendered oppositions, artificial cultural constructs which code agency, power and control as masculine, but impose a vulnerable, dependent and inferior inscription of femininity. Both Watts and Dickens, Armstrong contends, ‘take a vulnerable feminine body and place in it a state of crisis’ as if to flag up the dangers of non-conformity. In both examples, the image of the female body is ‘dramatized [and] compelled by male agency to conform to a historical idea of woman […] to induce the body to become a cultural sign’, and that sign indicates a femininity in need of protection. Watts and Dickens send a clear moral message, condemning the unjust treatment meted out to fallen women, but they also demonstrate how literature and art form part of a paradoxical Victorian discourse, exposing the fault lines, anxieties and contradictions of that age. Both artefacts subvert, but at the same time re-enforce, the gender assumptions about which Cixous complains: each artefact is carrying the implication that ‘behind every crouched figure of a fallen woman there stands the eminently upright one of the angel in the house’.

*Found Drowned* exemplifies Watts’s challenge to societal injustice, one of four works depicting his dismay at the human suffering brought about by industrialisation and social change. Its sheer size confronts the viewer with the enormity of that injustice, as if compelling engagement and demanding emotional condemnation. Watts uses spatial arrangement, colour, light and shade as indicators of moral temperature. The prone figure of a girl, her arms outstretched in a cruciform pose, gives a strong sense of horizontality, suggesting her actual and metaphorical fall. The folds of her skirt and the dimly lit flow of the river follow the horizontal line. The row of industrial buildings on the far riverbank adds a further layer, as though dark urbanity itself has crushed its victim, culpable in her destruction. A tall, phallic-like building rises vertically in line with the girl’s lower body as if to pierce it, perhaps suggesting that she has been impregnated. The palette is limited to sombre ochres, browns, and blue-greys, in stark contrast to the pale, waxy skin of the dead girl’s face, dramatically illumined by a single star. She is utterly alone in her cold stillness, highlighting her abandonment. The bridge’s arches frame her, suggesting a stony sepulchre, but also implying some shelter or protection, perhaps afforded to her in death, but denied her in life. The girl is unidentified. She is young, still beautiful, plainly

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10 Armstrong, p.108.
12 Nochlin, p.61.
14 Nochlin, p.74.
dressed, her delicately curled hand holding an object, which appears to be a heart-shaped locket on a chain. The imagery suggests a tragic history, hinting at the seduction and desertion of a working girl, driven to suicide in her despair.

Interpretation of the painting is left to the viewer, but both its title, inscribed on the reverse, and the topography, place the scene at Waterloo Bridge, then a notorious location for suicides by drowning. ‘Found Drowned’ was a term used by some coroners to avoid the question of whether or not a death was by suicide, which was a criminal offence resulting in the denial of a Christian burial. Watts painted a smaller version of *Found Drowned*, entitled *The Bridge of Sighs*, which links it both to Waterloo Bridge and to Thomas Hood’s earlier, but much re-printed poem (1844). That poem popularises the plight of a fallen seamstress cast out by society and driven to suicide, alone bearing the ultimate responsibility for her ‘sins’. The poem castigates the ‘sexual asymmetry’ of blaming the woman, using metrical and lexical simplicity and a naïve *abab* rhyme pattern to evince sentimentalised reader response:

Lift her up tenderly,
Lift her with care,

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16 Bills and Bryant, p.114.
17 Nochlin, p.57.
Fashioned so slenderly,
So young and so fair!

[...] 
Owing her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her saviour!\(^{18}\)

It shames the reader into acceptance of Christ’s injunction that ‘he who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her’, insisting that judgment should be left to God.\(^{19}\) *Found Drowned* thus appears to give close artistic expression to Hood’s sentiments.

The girl’s pose suggests that she is a scapegoat, a Christ-like sacrificial lamb, alone bearing the sins of the world, nailed to the cross of societal condemnation. The darkness surrounding her suggests that the greater evil lies in that condemnation, rather than in her own transgression. Only the star, positioned immediately above the dark, sinister tower, and perhaps indicating the moral superiority of enlightenment, lightens her darkness. Starlight bathes her face, carrying the promise of redemption and God’s mercy. But the painting’s stark social realism carries no earthly comfort for the girl or for the viewer. It is dramatic but not melodramatic in its uncompromising finality. Watts did not exhibit it for 30 years, for reasons that are not clear, but when it did appear it provoked some hostile reviews: ‘Bad policy, Mr. Watts, to confront these “curled darlings” with so vital a question. You come too close to home, Sir, to our consciences to be agreeable’.\(^{20}\) What the curled darlings themselves thought goes unrecorded, but the disapproval suggests that Mrs. Ellis’s ‘delicacy of the female character’ needed protection from the harsh realities of female transgression, and that Watts painting had upset this expectation. The criticism itself reflects the tendency to prescribe female behaviour, whether as sinner or scapegoat, social evil or victim, curled darling or fallen angel, by reference to the sort of binary extremes opposed by Cixous.\(^{21}\) *Found Drowned* clearly challenges Mrs. Ellis’s naïve assertion that ‘English society is so happily constituted, that women have little temptation to vice’.\(^{22}\) Watts’s implied seducer remains literally and metaphorically absent, but this highlights the consequences of his moral vacuum rather than that of the girl. But in spite of the eloquence of Watts’s moral message, he remains a man of his time, hinting at traditional perceptions of femininity. His dead girl is aestheticized as the

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\(<http://dbooks.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/books/PDFs/600083865.pdf>\) [accessed 23 Jan 2018].

\(^{19}\) John 8.7.


\(^{22}\) Ellis, p.43.
beautiful, tragic victim of a hostile urbanity, which is inherently inimical to the delicacy of the stereotypic female.\textsuperscript{23} For all the painting’s compelling exposure of societal injustice, there lingers the sense that the angel might not have fallen had she been adequately protected in the patriarchal house, within the safe confines of the dominant social structure.

There were other challenges to sexual double standards. William Acton’s 1857 report, drawing on an earlier report of Ralph Wardlaw, examines the moral and public health aspects of prostitution from a medical practitioner’s viewpoint. Acton strongly condemns male sexual behaviour and societal hypocrisy that punishes women alone, describing as ‘monstrous, un-Christianlike, un-Englishlike’\textsuperscript{24} those who would pass judgment upon a fallen girl: ‘Foolish and shortsighted those who imagine that if they may send forth the scapegoat into the wilderness, they can also, under our dispensation, impose the burden of their sins upon her’.\textsuperscript{25} Wardlaw demands that a seducer be ‘branded as he deserves’.\textsuperscript{26} Their indignation raises the proposition that ‘for every fallen woman, there must be a fallen man’.\textsuperscript{27} The shadowy figure of that fallen man is realised in Charles Dickens’s last completed novel, \textit{Our Mutual Friend}.

Dickens’s novel, like Watts’s painting, is characterised by his own commitment to literature and art as morally transforming forces, a campaigning duty to expose harsh realities as a service to society.\textsuperscript{28} Dickens was himself, for a time, actively involved in a project for the rehabilitation of fallen women and his novel reflects Acton’s insistence upon male responsibility for attacks on female virtue.\textsuperscript{29} It traces the pursuit of a poor, innocent, orphaned working girl by a wealthier, better educated, socially superior male, but inverts the fallen woman trope by depicting not the expected ruin of Lizzie Hexam, but the brutal punishment of her would-be seducer, Eugene Wrayburn. But, for all its subversion, Dickens’s novel ultimately resolves itself in the dominant culture of the domestic sphere.\textsuperscript{30} Beautiful, self-sacrificing, modest, hard-working Lizzie serves as a double caricature, both a vulnerable potential victim and a middle-class domestic angel in the making. Her reward for actually and morally saving her penitent fallen man is a stereotypic marriage, of which Mrs. Ellis would be proud.

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{23} Brian Donnelly, \textit{Reading Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Painter as Poet} (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p.128.
\item\textsuperscript{25} Acton, p.5.
\item\textsuperscript{27} Alexa Craig Faxon, \textit{Dante Gabriel Rossetti} (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), p.67.
\item\textsuperscript{29} Jenny Hartley, \textit{Charles Dickens and the House of Fallen Women} (London: Methuen, 2009).
\item\textsuperscript{30} David, p.7.
\end{itemize}
Dickens, like Watts, uses spatial metaphors through which to explore moral stature. We first encounter Eugene, ‘buried alive in the back of his chair’, declaring that he ‘hates his profession’ and that ‘the word he abominates most is energy’.\textsuperscript{31} His horizontal, lounging, physical and mental indolence reflects his lack of moral backbone. When his friend, Mortimer Lightwood, representing the voice of manly conscience, challenges him: ‘Eugene, do you design to capture and desert this girl? […] Do you design to marry her? […] Do you design to pursue her?’ Eugene evades the questions by joking that he is a riddle to himself and bored with ‘trying to find out what I mean […] I have no design whatever. I am incapable of designs’.\textsuperscript{32} His moral carelessness and irresponsibility reflect the behaviour of the feckless males so vehemently condemned by Acton and Wardlaw.

The sustained downward pressure Eugene piles upon Lizzie echoes his debased conscience and morality. He ruthlessly exploits the power imbalance between himself and his victim, using his social, educational, class and gender advantages to bear down on her vulnerability and innocence, guilt-tripping her into gratitude to him for hiring a tutor to teach her to read. The power-struggle comes to a head in the chapter \textit{A Cry for Help}. Eugene has stalked Lizzie to the paper mill to which she has escaped to evade his attentions. She begs him to ‘respect my good name […] give me the full claim of a lady upon your generous behaviour’, and she beseeches him to be merciful in not forcing her to disclose her love for him, which, as the reader discerns, renders her more vulnerable to his advances. But, as the narrator chillingly records, ‘he was not merciful with her and he made her do it’.\textsuperscript{33} The third person narrative voice thus guides the action, intervening in the dialogue to urge disapprobation for Eugene’s behaviour. The precise moment of Eugene’s moral fall, however, is focalised through him, so that the reader is left in no doubt about his intentions. He coarsely resolves to ‘try her again’ the next day, and soliloquizes ‘Yet I have gained a wonderful power over her […] she must go through with her nature as I must go through with mine. If mine exacts its pains and penalties all round, so must hers, I suppose’.\textsuperscript{34} The scene for Lizzie’s seduction is set and she will be powerless to resist the pressure, another potential victim of the Bridge of Sighs.

But Dickens’s moral mission inverts the seduction-to-fall trajectory by substituting Eugene for Lizzie. Eugene’s punishment is brutal and dramatic. He is violently attacked by a rival, thrown into the river and left for dead, mirroring the watery fate of Watts’s fallen girl. Lizzie, however, rushes to the rescue and, seeing ‘a bloody face turned up towards the moon and drifting away’ uses her skills as a waterman’s daughter to row out, ‘seize it by its bloody hair’ and tow it to shore.\textsuperscript{35} In contrast to Watts’s aestheticised girl, Dickens dehumanises Eugene, using the synecdoche of the bloody face and the

\textsuperscript{32} Our Mutual Friend, p.294.
\textsuperscript{33} Our Mutual Friend, pp.689, 693-95, 702.
\textsuperscript{34} Our Mutual Friend, p.696.
\textsuperscript{35} Our Mutual Friend, pp.699-700.
absence of a personal pronoun to urge on the reader the response of revulsion, which was traditionally heaped upon the fallen woman. Dickens leaves no scope for moral equivocation or pity. Eugene is only allowed to live once he repents, admitting ‘I have wronged her enough in fact: I have wronged her still more in intention’, and that ‘she would have done well to have turned me over with her foot […] and spat in my dastardly face’. He marries Lizzie, gaining Lightwood’s approval as ‘the mark of a true man’. Thus, Lizzie’s virtue is preserved, but Eugene remains maimed as a punishment, ‘resting on his wife’s arm and leaning heavily upon a stick’. Nonetheless, purged by his suffering and redemption, he resolves to work energetically for his angel wife, his moral backbone now totally dependent upon her womanly support. They resolve into Mrs. Ellis’s domestic ideal, each adopting the properly gendered characteristics it implies.

But Our Mutual Friend also raises the suggestion that men might be equally oppressed by strict binary gender expectations which fail to reflect the complexities of human nature. As he equivocates between his role as a gentleman or a cad, Eugene’s interior monologue indicates a ‘failure in masculinity’ to live up to the standards expected of Victorian manhood. The moral confusion of the riddle of Eugene Wrayburn: ‘riddle-me-riddle-me-riddle-me-re, p’raps you can tell me what this may be? […] No, upon my life. I can’t’, is juxtaposed with Lightwood’s voice of conscience: ‘What is to come of it? What are you doing? Where are you going?’ These paradoxes force the reader’s focus onto contradictory aspects of masculine conduct, a refreshing change from focusing on the woman. Dickens’s novel was written at a time when his own moral standing as the upright family man was compromised by his desertion of his wife, Catherine, and his liaison with the young actress, Nellie Ternan. The reader may conclude that, in Eugene’s riddle, Dickens plays out his own unresolved conundrum, his own binary tension between gentleman or cad, ‘celebrant of the hearth’ or fallen man.

Such paradoxes suggest a society in transition, challenging fixed gender assumptions, but struggling to acquire new ones. Dickens, Acton, Wardlaw and, to a lesser extent, Watts, expose the injustice of the prevalent morality, but still recommend the dominant cultural model as a remedy. Acton cites female destitution and economic necessity as the main cause of fallen-ness, but his response is to promote the protection afforded by marriage. ‘Teach them housewifery’, cries Acton, in capital letters, arguing that ‘the duties of wife and helper […] are [a woman’s] real inherent rights […]. My nostrum is marry and colonize, colonize, colonize’. Wardlaw’s answer is to ‘marry; -fear God; - be virtuous;

37 Donnelly, p.106.
41 Acton. pp.182-5.
- be happy’. Similarly, Dickens’s Urania House project for fallen women suggests marriage and emigration as a goal, ‘raising up among the solitudes of a new world some virtuous homes much needed there’. If husbands could not be supplied in Britain, the colonies would provide. More radical solutions to the limited opportunities available to women would be left to others and to a later era.

Mid-Victorian literature and art frequently concern themselves with the position of the individual within society, which necessarily involves a critique of that society, its values and prejudices, uncertainties and inconsistencies. The precise intentions of authors or artists cannot be presumed, but their artefacts can be read as social documents reflecting the pre-occupations of the society in which they were created. Watts and Dickens, Ellis, Acton and Wardlaw represent only some of the many ‘voices’ articulating those pre-occupations, but together they represent a synergy between literature, art and current debate. Together, they create the impression of a dynamic society in a state of flux, in which class, gender, social and moral absolutes were being passionately and energetically interrogated.

The cosy moral attraction of ‘the domestic character of England…the home comforts, the fireside virtues for which she is justly famous’ remained strong. But a re-evaluation of the separate spheres ideology was started, contributing towards the long process of re-adjustment of strict gender and moral hierarchies, which remains a work in progress.

42 Wardlaw, p.91.
44 Ellis, p.6.
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A presentation of the contemporary human condition in Matthew Arnold’s *Dover Beach* and William Holman Hunt’s *Our English Coasts, 1852 (Strayed Sheep)*.

ALEXANDRA MAYSON

More than just lyrically and visually pleasing icons of their age, ‘Dover Beach’ and ‘Our English Coasts’ also invoke the contemporary human condition. Comparison of both artefacts reveals different concerns of consequences arising out of this condition, yet at the same time also reveals similarities in the underlying cause of those concerns. Thus, through discussions of their imagery, metaphor, allegory and revolutionary presentation, the comparison yields a tangible understanding of the human condition in the early 1850s.

Figure 1 - William Holman Hunt, *Our English Coasts, 1852 (Strayed Sheep)*, 1852, oil on canvas, 43.2 x 58.4 cm, © Tate, London 2018.
Both *Dover Beach* (written circa 1851, published 1867, see Appendix) and *Our English Coasts, 1852 (Strayed Sheep)* (Figure 1) (hereafter referred to as *Our English Coasts*) are a product of their time. Borne out of a febrile political environment of which both Hunt and Arnold had some first-hand experience, a political reading of both the poem and the painting is entirely pertinent. What a comparison of both elucidates, however, is something of the human condition of the early 1850s. Religious readings of both underscore the contemporary importance given to the need to save man’s soul. With both religion and politics acting on man as much as the other, an important connection is created between the religious and political readings of both artefacts. Coupled with the Victorian reliance on the past portrayed in a contemporary manner and a revolutionary approach to colour and composition, both *Dover Beach* and *Our English Coasts* reveal each other to be similarly subtle in their communication with the reader/viewer. Thus, by demanding consideration of the deeper meanings of the imagery in each, the human condition is represented not just through surface depictions of sheep, cliffs and the sea, but in acknowledging that there are also tensions bubbling just beneath that surface.

The political situation in continental Europe in the late-1840s was fractious. For example, as Antony Harrison points out, in 1848 revolutions were seen in Sicily in January, Paris in February and Germany and Italy in March. March 1848, moreover, saw the fall of the Austrian chancellor, Clemens Metternich. Aftershocks were then felt throughout the rest of that year and into 1849 with Italy resenting its Austrian occupiers, Germany hostile to Poland and disputing provinces with Austria and Prussia, and Russia looking to war with Europe, in order to defend its hold on Poland, and separately with Turkey. England was also experiencing disrupted social and political change. In England, the 1840s, known as the ‘hungry forties’, fuelled the rise of the ‘Condition of England’ novel such as Benjamin Disraeli’s *Sybil* (1845), Charles Kingsley’s *Yeast* (1848) and *Alton Locke: Tailor and Poet* (1850), and Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* (1848).¹ Upper and middle classes feared working-class insurrection: the long shadow of the French Revolution cast 60 years earlier - arguably perpetuated by the more recent memory of the Napoleonic wars at the turn of the century, the current threat of Napoleon III and other, current, continental political upheaval - was still lingering.² Further, Chartism, now on the cusp of disappearing, had been a genuine mouthpiece for politicised working classes in its prime in the late 1830s and early 1840s.³ Harrison states that Matthew

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Arnold visited the continent in the autumn of 1848 and returned in the spring of 1849, aged 26.⁴ Jan Marsh also states that William Holman Hunt was at a Chartist rally in 1848, aged 21, with John Everett Millais.⁵ Being first-hand witness to this political and social fracture at such a young age situates both Dover Beach (as Harrison suggests⁶) and Our English Coasts as being influenced by the political and social pressures to which Europeans were subject at this politically unstable time.

It has long been suggested that Britain adopted the sea as part of its identity given its victorious naval history, bolstering its perceived status as a powerful island safe from foreign, military interference.⁷ This positions Arnold’s ‘Glimmering and vast’ (l. 5) cliffs of England standing strong after the light on the French coast ‘Gleams and is gone’ (l. 4) as a part of that construction of identity: the extinguishing light of France is easily understood as a political metaphor, as much as a literal description of the lights going out at night when seen from the Kent coast. On a political reading of Our English Coasts, such as taken by F. G. Stephens in 1852 - ‘a satire on the defenceless state of the country against foreign invasion’⁸ - the undefended cliffs articulate a thinly-veiled fear of continental political aggrandisement. This conflicts with the more traditional view of English indefatigability adopted by Arnold. Yet it is suggested that this reading of Our English Coasts is a pertinent one in light of Hunt’s presence at that Chartist rally: it is a presence that indicates a possible ability to see England as less than entirely heroic. Indeed, as ‘J.B’ in the Tate Gallery’s The Pre-Raphaelites points out, some of Hunt’s letters in 1852 contain evidence of awareness of the fear of Napoleonic invasion, notably in his description of the Militia Bill that was being keenly debated in Parliament in the early summer of 1852:

[The Militia Bill] proposed voluntary enlistment, ‘in case of need, to be embodied for the defence of our coasts in aid of the regular army [...] It is denied by military men that these militia regiments will ever be properly qualified to cope with such troops as we may expect an invading force to be composed of’ (The Times, 26 May 1852).⁹

⁴ Harrison, pp.13-14.
⁶ Harrison states that aspects of the continental political upheaval of the late 1840s to which Arnold ‘was witness (if not eyewitness) [...] constitute the political subtexts of both “Dover Beach” and “Revolutions” [another of Arnold’s poems, not for discussion in this essay]’. Harrison, p.14.
⁷ For example, see Cynthia Behrman, Victorian Myths of the Sea (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, c. 1977). However, as the poem deals with Dover, and as the painting was mostly painted in Fairlight near Hastings, East Sussex for example, see Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfeld, Alison Smith (with contributions by Elizabeth Prettejohn and Diane Waggoner), Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), p. 99), the remainder of this essay will use the adjective ‘English’, rather than ‘British’. The evils of doing so are not for this essay.
The conclusion the Tate Gallery offers to this is that the sheep in *Our English Coasts* represent the volunteers.\textsuperscript{10} Certainly, a political reading of sheep on cliffs in painting as a demonstration of England’s defensive weakness is upheld in Edwin Landseer’s *Peace* (painted 1845) (Figure 2\textsuperscript{11}). Allen Staley states ‘Hunt cited *Peace* as a work “of real point and poetry”’.\textsuperscript{12} The defences of Landseer’s Dover coast (acknowledging the pertinence of the geography in light of the subject matter of *Dover Beach*) are shown to have fallen into disrepair - one of the lambs investigates the mouth of an upturned

![Image of sheep on cliffs](image_url)

**Figure 2 - Peace**, engraved by J.Cousen & Lumb Stocks after a picture by Sir Edwin Landseer, published in the *The Works of Sir Edwin Landseer RA*, 1878, steel engraved antique print with recent hand colouring, 25.5 x 19 cm, image courtesy of ancestryimages.com.

\textsuperscript{10} Tate Gallery, p.108.

\textsuperscript{11} The description of fig. 2 is taken from the source of the image: <http://ancestryimages.com/proddetail.php?prod=f4105> [accessed 10 March 2018]. However, the author of this essay viewed a version of the book referred to in the description that was dated 1879, not 1878. The differences between the description of the book in the image and the book’s reference in the bibliography are therefore deliberate.


As Staley goes on to explain, ‘The point of *Peace* was as a pendant to a companion picture of *War* (destroyed: formerly Tate Gallery) […] There are biblical overtones in the imagery: in the figures, who suggest a Holy Family, as well in the sheep, but they enhance the pacific mood of the scene rather than transform it into a vehicle of religious symbolism. We have seen that in 1850 Landseer also exhibited a *Lost Sheep*, appending it to a biblical quotation. However, this picture of a shepherd carrying a sheep had no visual similarity to *Strayed Sheep*, and, as Hunt originally titled his picture, ‘Our English Coasts’, their later similarity of titles is accidental. Landseer’s *Peace* showed the Channel coast near Dover with its defences fallen into disrepair, and *Strayed Sheep* also shows the unguarded Channel coast, whatever else it may mean as well.’ Allen Staley, *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape* (New Haven, Con.; London: Yale University Press, 2001), p.79.

Christies sold a watercolour of this image in 2000. The Lot Essay stated that both the oil original and its companion, *War*, were destroyed in 1928. *War*, it stated, showed the bodies of two cavalry officers and their horses on a ruined farm. The contrast between both was intended to illustrate the dichotomy between the blessings of peace and the horrors of war: <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/english-school-after-edwin-landseer-a-time-1939165-details.aspx> [accessed 10 March 2018].

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cannon, which cannon is almost obscured by the composition of other peaceful sheep, a sleeping dog and a young family apparently oblivious of their proximity to the cliff’s edge. The blitheness of Landseer’s family grouping when considered against the sheep on the cliff’s edge in the Hunt reinforces a political reading of *Our English Coasts*. Whilst the imagery in the Hunt is ostensibly idyllic, just as in the Landseer, Hunt’s painting is in fact a subtle representation of the very real political dangers perceived to lie across the sea, dangers which the stoic cliffs of England are suggested as being less capable of repelling than Arnold would wish them to be.

More than merely open to political readings, however, humanity’s proximity to the religious precipice, where falling over the edge equates to an absence of faith and/or morality, is a common thread in both Arnold’s poem and Hunt’s painting. Arnold directly bemoans the contemporary loss of faith:

> The Sea of Faith
> Was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
> Retreating […]

(ll. 21-26)

The imagery is of an audible, aggressive retreat, actively abandoning the human listener. In Hunt, the vehicle for invoking spiritual instability is his sheep. In Christianity, ‘He shall feed his flock like a shepherd’ (Isaiah 40. 11), ‘All we like sheep have gone astray’ (Isaiah 53. 6) and ‘We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep’ (Morning Service: Book of Common Prayer), to give only three examples, invoke the solidity of the ancient, pastoral profession of shepherd with the image of a defenceless group needing care and guidance. Hunt’s own awareness of ovine religious allegory in *Our English Coasts* can moreover reasonably be assumed given his previous piece, *The Hireling Shepherd* (Figure 3), to which *Our English Coasts* is considered a sequel by ‘JR’ in *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde* through ‘its imaging of wayward, unmarked sheep’.13 In *The Hireling Shepherd*, an allegory of a perceived abandonment by Anglican priests of their congregations, the sheep are scattered - in the cornfield, in the brook, presented at many angles to the viewer and all around the field in the background - whilst the shepherd pursues the disinterested girl.14 The lamb eating unripe apples on her

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14 ‘When [Hunt] […] exhibited the painting at the Royal Academy, he included these lines from *King Lear* as an epigraph: Sleepeth or waketh thou, jolly shepherd? Thy sheep be in the corn;"
lap and the death’s head moth trapped in the shepherd’s left hand (see footnote 14) further indicate that the scene is not harmonious. In Our English Coasts, however, the danger is of a slightly different sort: there is no shepherd at all for the sheep on the cliff’s precipice. As the Tate Gallery observes, Ruskin responds to the concurrent protestant division over doctrine in Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds (1851) by ‘employing the metaphor of Christians as strayed sheep and lamenting the fact that “Christ’s truth” was restrained “to the white cliffs of England and white crests of the Alps”’.15 Whilst for Arnold the cliff image is that of Ruskin’s sheer, chalk face, the cliffs for Hunt contain the added danger of brambles. Significantly, the two sheep closest to the viewer are struggling in the brambles already and the one in the bottom right appears to be being pushed there by the malign presence of the black sheep

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm. [Act III, scene 6]

[In a . . .] letter to [J. E.] Pythian [Hunt] explains that “Shakespeare's song represents a Shepherd who is neglecting his real duty of guarding the sheep: instead of using his voice in truthfully performing his duty, he is using his ‘minikin mouth’ in some idle way. He was a type thus of other muddle headed pastors who instead of performing their services to their flock — which is in constant peril — discuss vain questions of no value to any human soul. My fool has found a death's head moth, and this fills his little mind with forebodings of evil and he takes it to an equally sage counsellor for her opinion. She scorns his anxiety from ignorance rather than profundity, but only the more distracts his faithfulness: while she feeds her lamb with sour apples his sheep have burst bounds and got into the corn. It is not merely that the wheat will be spoilt, but in eating it the sheep are doomed to destruction from becoming what farmers call “blown.”[21 January 1897; London (Manchester City Art Gallery MS.)]” George P. Landow, ‘The Hireling Shepherd’ in William Holman Hunt and typological symbolism (New Haven : Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 1979), <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/whh/replete/hireling.html> [accessed 10 March 2018].

who stares aggressively at the viewer with her orange eyes (Figure 4). With the likelihood of the biblical source of ‘black sheep’ being a known metaphor to Hunt,16 the placement of the black sheep in that position seems deliberate. On this religious reading, the sheep are under pressure from disreputable members of the flock in addition to falling over the cliff into the infernal chaos and isolation of the brambles without the guidance of a shepherd to stop them and/or haul them back and with little chance of release. The same perpetual uncertainty, lack of direction and tangible danger, particularly when considered in light of the poem’s earlier direct statement of decreasing faith, are reflected in the final lines of Dover Beach:

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.17 (ll. 35-37)

Harrison suggests that Arnold was concerned primarily with middle-class men like himself than with the condition of the working classes.18 It is possible, then, to view loss of faith in Dover Beach as a lament on predominantly middle-class faithlessness. By contrast, in Our English Coasts, the possibilities of loss of moral and religious guidance are the problem and, through the connotations of the imagery of the painting, this would appear to be unconfined to just one class of person. Yet, on

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16 The use of ‘black sheep’ to infer a disreputable or unsatisfactory person is recorded as in use by the Oxford English Dictionary as early as 1640, the source of which being the bible: ‘1640 T. Shepard Sincere Convert v. 127 Cast out all the Prophane people among us, as drunkards, swearers, whores, liers, which the Scripture brands for blacke sheepe, and condemnes them in a 100. places.’ See definition of ‘black sheep’ in OED online: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/288486?redirectedFrom=black+sheep#eid> [accessed 10 March 2018].

17 These final lines also recall Thucydides’ account of the Peloponnesian War: ‘In a night battle— and this was the only one fought between large armies in the whole of the war— how could anyone be certain of anything? There was a bright moon, and as happens in moonlight they could see each other as human shapes from some distance, but without any confident recognition of friend or foe. Large numbers of hoplites from both sides were milling about in a confined space.’ Thucydides, and P. J. Rhodes, The Peloponnesian War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.41. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=472103> [accessed 10 March 2018].

With thanks to Dr Dewey Hall for his guidance on this point of reference.

18 Harrison states that Arnold’s ‘goal is to inspire the middle classes to pursue the highest cultural ideals they are capable of embracing, to be models for the lower classes in the same fashion that, traditionally, the “culture and dignity” of the aristocracy has served as a model for them.’ Harrison, p.22.
either basis, the human condition is the axiomatic principle of each. Staley states ‘F. G. Stephens wrote in 1860 that […][[Our English Coasts] was “of men, not of sheep”’.

19 Here, then, the political and religious readings of each of Our English Coasts and Dover Beach cannot be divided. Humanity is under seige from political and moral instability and, as Angus Hawkins argues in Victorian Political Culture, man’s engagement with religion and politics was difficult to separate in Victorian culture. 20 Ignoring one reading is to thus omit a vital part of understanding the human condition in 1850s. Furthermore, Our English Coasts was given the alternative title of Strayed Sheep when it was displayed in Paris at the Exposition Universelle in 1855. Although the Tate Gallery suggests Hunt’s title change was ‘to stress the religious symbolism of […][[Our English Coasts], suggesting its relationship to ‘The Light of the World’[…]’, his major contribution to the show, ‘21 the fact of the change is arguable proof that both readings are inseparable on the basis that the religious reading was felt necessary to be drawn out over the political one for the Exposition. It is submitted that the same is also true of the poem on the basis that ignoring one reading is to prefer the other without consideration of the entire poem and, therefore, of another manifest component of the mid-nineteenth century human condition.

What further situates the poem and the painting in the mid-nineteenth century is the use of the ‘past’ - the invocation of the Victorian reliance on the construction of a mythical past where religious and political certainty assuages contemporary uncertainty. In Our English Coasts, there is the ostensibly timeless, ovine, pastoral idyll. In Dover Beach, Harrison argues that the metaphor of ‘The Sea of Faith’ invokes a medieval past through the image of the girdle. 22 Additionally, as Howard Isham states, Arnold’s reference to Sophocles (ll. 15-16) is to the play Philoctetes, which Arnold had been recently reading. 23 In Philoctetes, the choir sings of Philoctetes’ suffering on Lemnos:

   Alone on this inhospitable shore,
   Where waves forever beat and tempests roar,
   How could he hope or comfort know,
   Or painful life support beneath such weight of woe? 24

This repetitive desolation of island life is recalled in Dover Beach where the same relentless waves and constant noise yield nothing but woe or sadness:

21 Tate Gallery, p.108.
22 Harrison, p.27.
24 Quoted in Isham, p. 268. As described by Isham, Philoctetes had inherited Heracles’ weapons but was isolated on the island of Lemnos by Agamemnon on his way to Troy, before it became clear that Greek victory at Troy was impossible until the weapons of Heracles could be brought to Achilles’ son, Neoptolemus.
[...] the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, [...] 
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in. (ll. 9-10, 12-14)

The reliance on Sophocles (and Thucydides in the final lines) and the medieval girdle image supports Kate Campbell’s assertion that Dover Beach (amongst others of Arnold’s poetic corpus from this period) is about contemporary disconnection: ‘these poems delineate feelings of disunity’ and ‘centre on self-consciousness and separation from the world, under the weight of the representations that overlay it’.25 This ‘self-consciousness and separation’ conveyed through reliance on imagery and language from ancient texts correctly confirms the commitment of the poem to the depiction of the human condition in the 1850s: the ‘weight of the representations’ infer the layers assumed by the contemporary individual as much as they are created by the poem’s imagery and allegory. Indeed, as Campbell states, Arnold produces ‘enduring pictures of modernity and selfhood’.26 Harrison opines that it is ‘typical of Arnold throughout his poetic corpus [...] [that] the text self-consciously elides and therefore mystifies all details that might situate it within any particular historical moment’.27 Yet, arguably, the presence of what Harrison admits is a displacement of anxieties over present political threats ‘by refocusing on the reassuring stability of the classical authors’ situates Dover Beach squarely in the Victorian period with its construction of historical political and religious stability.28 As Hunt’s subtle use of imagery in The Hireling Shepherd, by his own admission, demonstrates his ability to create a painting with many deeper meanings than its outward beauty would suggest, Our English Coasts has to be seen in the same vein. Thus it is clear that both the poem and the painting are directing the reader/viewer to look at more than just the surface imagery and into the, occasionally allegorical, meanings of those images. In doing so, the human condition is given an aspect that suggests there are layers to be found beneath the surface if one would take time to look beyond initial, aesthetic impressions.

This subtlety of presentation arguably compounds the demonstrable misery to which both the poem and the painting declare man to be subject. The sea is the primary allegorical vehicle for this. Sophocles heard the same ‘turbid ebb and flow | Of human misery’ (ll. 17-18) in the Ægean, which we now find in the Northern Sea and which is felt down to ‘the vast edges drear | And naked shingles of the world’ (ll. 27-28). Coupled with the use of the sea to describe the contemporary loss of faith (l. 21),

26 Campbell, p.18.
28 Harrison, p.17.
this sense of repetitive human misery in *Dover Beach* is given double impact, as the infinity of the sea connects both misery and loss of faith in perpetual anguish. Even the opening line - ‘The sea is calm tonight’ - implies the tempestuous potential of the limitless sea and therefore of inevitable storms of woe. In *Our English Coasts*, the sea is beautifully bright and clear, ostensibly containing none of Arnold’s impending doom. Elizabeth Prettejohn points out how sharply in focus the whole painting is, and therefore how it does not ‘ease its way into the depth’ 29 But crucially the sea is the only place where the image disappears into a hazy distance. In this respect, the sea is depicted as being incapable of being given such attention to detail because of its size as much as because of its placement on the horizon. It therefore arguably supports Arnold’s notion of a limitless ocean. More than that, though, Prettejohn points out how unsettling the composition of the painting is: ‘Each time there is an abrupt shift from the sharply delineated edge of the nearer landscape element to a scene much farther off but no less vivid’. 30 She correctly states that ‘the spatial shifts and the overall asymmetry of the composition are disquieting, in keeping with the subject matter, even though the landscape is one of overwhelming plenitude and sun-drenched colour’. 31 In 1883, Ruskin claimed that the painting ‘[…] showed to us, for the first time in the history of art, the absolutely faithful balances of colour and shade by which actual sunshine might be transposed into a key in which the harmonies possible with material pigments should yet produce the same impressions upon the mind which were caused by the light itself’. 32 The consequences of so faithfully reproducing the visual effect of sunlight are inter alia, as Christopher

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30 Prettejohn, p.178.
31 Prettejohn, p.178.
Wood points out, the way the light shows through the sheeps’ ears, lighting even their veins, and the use of so much blue and violet on the fleeces in shadow. Thus Hunt’s use of colour and space is imperative to a more complete understanding of the subtle allusions to contemporary life. Strong pigments were used unapologetically, and the detail and compositional dissymmetry were revolutionary. When combined in a painting of such ostensible pastoral simplicity, this ultimately serves to convey the presence of manifold tensions that lie beneath the idyllic, physical surface - tensions begun in the choice of imagery and continued into the (technicalities of) composition. Moreover, there is a steamer in the top left-hand corner, its dark smoke trail only just visible (Figure 5). As Prettejohn states, this steamer undermines the pastoral idyll: the painting is definitively situated in the mid-nineteenth century and is not the timeless image of sheep in nature that one might assume at first glance. It is thus characteristic of Our English Coasts (as further supported by The Hireling Shepherd) and Dover Beach (particularly on Harrison’s reading) that they subtly and elliptically allude to the troubles of the present. In so doing they suggest that at least some of these troubles are hidden beneath outward form. It is a reasonable extension to then see the human condition being represented as a tense mixture of fear of political and social unrest together with concern at loss of faith and of a moral compass, which tensions are, in part, outwardly invisible yet tangibly present. The reader/viewer is asked to look deeper and understand both the poem and the painting in their contemporary cultural, religious and political contexts. Comparing the way both do this ultimately illumines not only both artefacts, but also the complex, contemporary human condition in the 1850s.

Without the other as a comparison, extracting meaning from Dover Beach and Our English Coasts is a fairly basic task. However, comparing both reveals a concern for the spiritual and social welfare of man as reflected in contemporary politics and religion. This in turn reveals something of the zeitgeist of the human condition in the 1850s. Arnold’s yearning to remain strong amid chaos and loss of faith is contrasted with Hunt’s broader concern with loss of moral guidance. Arnold’s Victorian reliance on medieval imagery and Greek tragedy is comparable to Hunt’s use of sheep and his revolutionary take on the pastoral idyll through his use of composition and colour. Both poem and painting imply chaos outside the imagery they create and both ultimately demonstrate that the political and religious readings belonging to each artefact are inseparable. In Dover Beach and Our English Coasts, imagery of the sea, cliffs and sheep reveal the contemporary human condition as a combination of fearful engagement with politics and religion, whose tensions are often barely concealed under the beautiful front outwardly presented.

34 Prettejohn states that it was William Michael Rossetti’s Spectator notice that pointed out the presence of this steamer - Prettejohn, p.177.
35 Prettejohn, p.177.
Dover Beach
Matthew Arnold

The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanced land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.
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The Thoroughbred and the Swan:
Aristocracy and progress towards wives' equality with their husbands in the mid-nineteenth century.

DAVID DARBYSHIRE

The thoroughbred horse 'West Australian' and Cox's silver automaton swan were brilliant icons of the nineteenth century, the former bred and raced by an English nobleman and the latter purchased by his French actress wife as part of her endowment for the museum that she had begun to build close to their home and her husband's stud in County Durham in northern England. Their relations as a married couple illustrate a tipping point in laws and social attitudes governing marriage and in progress towards the equality of the sexes. This article considers their lives in the context of contemporary English and French society.

‘West Australian' was a living artefact and Cox’s silver swan was a mechanical creation, both reflecting the highest levels of human ingenuity. They were bibelots only available to the richest owners and presented for the appreciation of the widest public, 'West Australian' to the racing public in the 1850s and the swan ever since that period as the emblem of the Bowes Museum. John Bowes, owner of the horse, and his wife Josephine, purchaser of the swan, deliberately made their relationship one of equals in a manner highly unusual at a time when John Stuart Mill could write in 1859 that:

The principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances
to human improvement; and ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.  

On reaching his majority in 1832, John Bowes came into possession of vast estates in the North of England assembled over many generations by his ancestors and which, thanks to the business acumen of his great-grandfather, George Bowes, would provide him with a very large income from underlying coal deposits in good years, but constraining when the coal market turned down. John proved to be a competent steward of his wealth until his death in 1885 and discharged honourably the traditional duties of a great landowner. Thus, he followed his great- and great-great grandfathers as a Member of Parliament, sitting for South Durham for three parliaments as a conscientious representative of his region, although he was never an orator in the House.

One legacy flowing from George Bowes was the stud of thoroughbred horses that he founded at his home at Streatlam Castle and which was developed by John's father, the 10th Earl of Strathmore, so that it was in good order when John took over in 1832. For the next half a century John Bowes built his reputation of being perhaps the most successful breeder of all time, doing so in collaboration with the famous trainer John Scott, known as the 'Wizard of the North', until the latter's death in 1871. Success began with ‘Mündig’, when the horse became the first trained in the North of England to win the Derby Stakes. The summit of John's glory as breeder and owner came when his third and fourth Derby winners triumphed in successive years in 1852 and 1853. 'West Australian', the 1853 winner, also won the classic '2000 Guineas' and 'St. Leger' races, and thus became the first horse thus to achieve the 'Triple Crown', a feat only equalled by fourteen horses since then, and has been judged among the top ten racehorses of the nineteenth-century.  

Benjamin Disraeli opened his novel Sybil by portraying the atmosphere in London's aristocratic clubs on the eve of Derby Day in this period: 'Lord Milford, a young noble, entered in his book the bet he has just made with Mr Latour, a grey headed member of the Jockey Club'. The Illustrated London News picked up the anticipation at Epsom on the day itself among ‘the vast concourse of persons, whose numbers were unparalleled even in the annals of Derby gatherings’. The same article builds to hyperbole:

Here are half a score of the finest horses in the world. [...] West Australian gathered up his fore-feet, and shot them out like lightning. Few things upon the turf have ever equalled that gallop of West Australian's from the

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3 Streatlam Castle, (Barnard Castle: The Bowes Museum, 2017), app. 1, p.56.
grand stand to the judge's chair. It was not running, but flying. [...] Few more exciting races have ever been run than the last hundred yards of the Derby of 1853. 5

In due course, The Times would focus John's obituary on his racing success. 6 He had continued to breed his horses until his death, when the stud was disbursed on 29 October 1885, with all the horses being auctioned by Tattersall for the substantial total of £17,145. 7

John Bowes thus possessed the attributes of an aristocrat engaged in a way of life available only to the richest of his peers, differing within glittering London society perhaps only because he chose to be an active manager of his estates. Behind this appearance, however, there was a complex personality. He evidenced his views at the age of twenty-one by standing for parliament not as a Tory, as his Durham neighbours expected, but instead in the liberal interest, arguing for the Great Reform Bill, religious liberty, abolition of slavery, and prudent national finance. 8 He retained his liberal views throughout his life.

Figure 1. Harry Hall (1814-1882), West Australian with jockey Frank Butler and trainer John Scott, 1853, oil on canvas, 76 x 58 cm. Image courtesy of Rehs Galleries, Inc. NYC

8 Bowes's speeches during his electoral campaign are reported in Charles Hardy, John Bowes and the Bowes Museum (Northumberland: Northumberland Press, 1970), pp.36-40.
The seeds of his difference had been sown seven decades earlier when his grandfather George Bowes died in 1760, leaving his eleven years old daughter, Mary Eleanor, as 'the greatest heiress in Europe'.

She was clever, discerning and well educated by her father to a degree not normally available to girls in the eighteenth century, but she proved to be a poor judge of men, a flaw that would prove disastrous in such evidently desirable prey for fortune hunters. Her first husband, the 9th Earl of Strathmore and John Bowes's grandfather, was not a suitable match for a woman of Mary Eleanor's talents, but after his death in 1776 she encountered a much worse fate. She was seduced by an Irish adventurer, John Robinson Stoney. For ten years until she succeeded in obtaining a divorce, Stoney treated her with outrageous brutality, both physically and mentally, in efforts to gain access to her inheritance, which, fortunately for herself and her children, was protected by an ante-nuptial settlement. His efforts were unremitting and continued until his death, in prison custody for debt, in 1810.

The core of Stoney's case was stated in Mary's divorce proceedings in these terms: 'marriage, by the law of England, gave the husband the whole dominion over the property, and also over the person, of his wife, except as to murder, for by the old law he could not be punished for cruelty to

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Figure 2. Harrison Weir, "West Australian" the winner of the Derby Stakes, 1853, Illustrated London News, 28 May 1953. p. 418.

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her’.¹⁰ Change only came with the passage of the divorce and married women's property legislation of 1857 to 1882.¹¹ Thus, John Stuart Mill, speaking in Parliament on his outvoted amendment to the Franchise Bill of 1867, could still say, 'Now, by the common law of England, all that a wife has, belongs absolutely to her husband; he may tear it all from her, spend every penny of it in debauchery; [...] He can pounce down upon her savings and leave her penniless'.¹² Mary Eleanor was only able to gain her divorce through success in the courts against Stoney and obtaining a private Act of Parliament, possible only for the richest complainants and by way of archaic and highly stressful proceedings. Mary Eleanor was eventually able to live out her life in peace until her death in 1800. However, her son, the 10th Earl of Strathmore, who would turn out to be a good son and brother and a good father to John Bowes, illustrated that external pressures on married life were not only legal, but also social and bound by imperatives of class.

Strathmore had been born in 1769 and was twenty-two when he visited neighbours at Seaton Delaval as a guest at their amateur dramatics. He was enraptured by the beautiful Sarah Delaval, and they became lovers in an affair that lasted until her death in 1800 at Gibside, a Bowes family home in County Durham. They could not consider marriage because she was already married to the Earl of Tyrconnel but, fortunately for them, Tyrconnel seems to have been complaisant. Nine years later, Strathmore again fell in love, this time with Mary Milner, a village girl on his estate, and she became his companion for the rest of his life. The social status that separated them seems to be the reason that they remained unmarried, but they nevertheless lived together as man and wife. She would later give evidence that 'she dined with him always and sat at the head of this table', unless he had company to dinner.¹³ John Bowes was born to Mary in 1811, was recognised by Strathmore and raised as his son. Shortly before his death, Strathmore took steps to assure John's heritage and to protect Mary by marrying her with due formality and by adding a codicil to his will to validate her new rights as dowager Countess of Strathmore.¹⁴ John's birth was thus legitimised by this subsequent marriage, but his position was immediately challenged by his uncle, Strathmore's younger brother. The consequent peerage litigation lasted seven years and was bitter, with John being denigrated as a bastard and attempts being made to devalue Mary, which she rebuffed with dignity. The outcome was that John

¹¹ Matrimonial Causes Act 1857, 20 & 21 Vict., c. 85, being an Act to amend the Law in England and Wales related to divorce and matrimonial causes, and Married Women's Property Acts 1870, 33 & 34 Vict. c. 93, and 1882, 45 & 46 Vict, c. 75, being Acts to amend the law related to the property of Married Women.
¹² John Stuart Mill, Hansard, HC Deb., 18 March 1867, vol. 186., cc.6-94 <hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1867/18/march>. Mill's amendment would have led to the electoral franchise being extended to women. He was outvoted by 196 to 73 votes.
¹³ Hardy, p. 20.
lost the title and the Scottish Strathmore estates but he retained the great wealth of the Bowes inheritance. Strathmore had succeeded in his efforts on behalf of Mary, and in 1831 she went on to remarry to William Hutt, John's tutor at Cambridge and his lifelong friend, who became a distinguished public servant, serving as a Member of Parliament for four decades. In accordance with his social position, John was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, and was then free to pursue a life as a local magnate in the North of England and a breeder of racehorses. This he did, but quickly disclosed other interests, notably in the theatre, seemingly inherited from his father and developed after Strathmore's death by visits with his mother to London and its then vibrant theatrical scene. In 1832, he made his first recorded visit to Paris, where he met and discussed the theatre endlessly another Trinity friend, the novelist W. M. Thackeray, who was then studying art in Paris. They continued meeting regularly in Paris until 1849, when Thackeray wrote about Bowes that 'here he is manager of the Théâtre des Variétés and his talk was about actors and coulisses all the time of our interview'.

John had virtually adopted Paris his home by 1847 and he lived there until his wife Josephine's death in 1874, apart from eighteen months of exile during the Franco-Prussian war and the disorders surrounding the Paris Commune. Even so, Streatlam Castle remained his principle residence and he visited it at least every summer and whenever the business of his estates required his presence, such journeys becoming increasingly practical thanks to the newly launched paddle steamers and new railways between Paris and Darlington.

As time went by, reasons to be in Paris multiplied. A letter written to his solicitor, Thomas Wheldon, records: 'I had a very pleasant journey as I fell in with a little French actress of my acquaintance going the same road'. There is no evidence that she was Josephine Benoît Coffin-Chevalier, but by July 1847 he had met and fallen in love with her. Josephine was the daughter of a petit-bourgeois Paris clockmaker and had been employed since March 1847 as an actress by Nestor Roqueplan, lessor and directeur of the Théâtre des Variétés. In May, John reached Paris in time to see her debut as the leading actress in Mlle. Grabutot. At about this time he agreed to buy 42/44th of the lease of the theatre from Roqueplan, paying him £15,000 in July.

The Variétés was one of a small number at the head of the second tier of theatres ranked immediately below the national houses, and its corps of forty artistes offered comedie-vaudeville

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15 Arnold, pp.169-72.
17 Arnold, p. 182.
18 John Bowes to Thomas Weldon, 11 April 1846 (Bowes Museum Archive, JB/2/1/15/28).
19 Wilkinson, p.156.
20 Hardy, p. 82, and Wilkinson, p.153.
performances to the haut-monde, demi-monde and bourgeoisie of Paris. Its atmosphere was racy, to say the least, as would be graphically described by Emile Zola three decades later in the opening pages of *Nana*. Roqueplan had built audiences up to the theatre's capacity of 1,500 seats and the theatre was profitable, thus seemingly offering a good investment for John. Managing such an establishment and its 150 employees would nevertheless prove a demanding challenge for him, particularly in competition with such Parisian professionals, as portrayed by Zola in the character of Bordenave as *directeur* of the Variétés in *Nana*.

Under the conventions of the time, John's investment permitted him to be *placeur* for leading roles and he duly placed Josephine over the coming four years. Unhappily, his tenure was dogged first by the 1848 Revolution and then by a succession of unfortunate choices as *directeur*, the first of whom was Josephine's dramatic teacher. Unhelpfully in addition, Josephine's talents came under repeated hostile criticism from Charles Mahurel de Fiennes, writing for the journal *Le Siècle*. Over five difficult years, Bowes had to subsidise ever larger losses and he eventually closed the theatre in 1852.

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22 Wilkinson, pp.53-185.
John and Josephine's love nonetheless survived and remained robust until death. Departing from aristocratic conventions, John chose to marry his mistress and introduced her as his wife and hostess to the highest levels of Parisian society, to which his wealth and celebration as a breeder of racehorses qualified him for entry. Such a transition from mistress to wife would have been less acceptable in London, but Paris under the Second Empire was a social melting pot, illustrated once again, but savagely, by Zola in *La Curée*. John's decision at this period was rare although not unique. His English neighbour in Paris, the immensely rich connoisseur and collector, the reclusive 4th Marquess of Hertford, treated Richard Wallace, born in 1818 and thus a contemporary of Bowes, as his son, employed him as his agent and bequeathed him all his unentailed wealth. However, Hertford never admitted his paternity nor married his mother, nor would he allow Wallace to marry his mistress, said to have been a perfume seller in a Parisian boutique, so that their marriage had to wait until Hertford's death. Making another parallel with John and Josephine, Wallace's will, written in November 1890, instructed: 'I bequeath to my dear wife, Amelie Julie Charlotte Wallace, [...] all my estate absolutely,' and hers, in July 1895, directed, 'I bequeath to the British Nation my [...] collection to be styled "The Wallace Collection"'.

On marrying Josephine, John bought in her name a small chateau formerly owned by Louis XV's mistress, Madame du Barry, as their summer residence. They lived there and in his house in Paris as members of high society throughout the Second Empire, with Josephine being a successful hostess

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25 Wills of Sir Richard and Lady Wallace (Wallace Collection archive, AR/34).
and, imitating the Empress, buying her dresses from Worth. She also sought to become a recognised artist, taking lessons as she had done when an actress, but this time from a fashionable painter, Karl-Joseph Kuwasseg. She succeeded well enough to exhibit four times at the Paris Salon in the late 1860s, offering landscapes in the manner of Courbet, her preferred subject and one typically appropriate for genteel female artists.

By 1860 it seemed clear that the couple would be childless, John perhaps being rendered infertile by an 'unfortunate little disease' in the 1830s, and Josephine needed a new project.26 True to her lifetime efforts of self-improvement and the concept of 'moral responsibility' that had been a plank of John's electoral campaign in 1832, they chose to found a museum to promote the cultural education of the population in John's home region of County Durham. In doing so, they echoed the philosophies of the time expressed by Sir Henry Cole when he opened the South Kensington Museum in 1857 and John Ruskin in establishing his St. George's Museum in 1875 for the working men of Sheffield. Education was considered by John Stuart Mill and others to be the key to social progress for citizens not members of elite ranks and of women in particular, so John and Josephine were pioneering social equality. Accordingly, they were not primarily collecting art treasures for themselves and as a bequest to perpetuate their family name, as was more typically the case with benefactors of their rank and as exemplified by Lady Wallace's bequest to the nation.27

John began to buy land near Streatlam from 1865, once more in Josephine's name, to provide a domain for the museum and its encircling public park. Four years later Josephine laid the foundation stone for the museum building, which in due course she would name the Josephine and John Bowes Museum, an 'édifice, massif, impressionant, dans un style "Renaissance française" inspiré à la fois des Tuileries et du l'hôtel de ville du Havre'.28 Josephine, meanwhile, had begun, with John's support, to deploy her good bargaining powers and excellent taste to assemble a vast number of over 15,000 predominantly contemporary artworks from France but aiming to represent the whole of Europe. She continued to collect vigorously, particularly ceramics of which she was an early and distinguished collector, until the early 1870s, when her health, always fragile, finally deserted her. Reflecting the scale and purpose of the collecting, the prices they paid tended to be relatively low, with items typically costing less than ten pounds. One, however, at two hundred pounds, was a notable exception. Visiting the Paris International Exhibition of 1867, they saw a magnificent silver automaton swan, swimming on a lake of glass, likely to have a particular attraction for a clockmaker’s daughter.

The swan had its origins a century earlier. It had been created for the richest customers of the Asia trade in 1772 by an entrepreneur jeweller James Cox and his mechanician, John Joseph Merlin. It is one of the most magnificent survivals of its type, perhaps rivalled only by the Peacock clock bought for Catherine the Great and now in St. Petersburg. The Asia trade went into crisis before the swan was sold and it was therefore included in a lottery of Cox's stock in 1773. The catalogue attached to Act of Parliament that authorised the lottery described it thus: ‘A swan as large as life. It is made of silver, the plumage finely copied, and the whole so nicely and artfully as at a distance to deceive the most accurate observer. [...] It turns its neck in all directions and moving round on each side to the very tail, as if feathering itself’.29 Like Josephine, Mark Twain also saw the swan in working order at the 1867 Exhibition and wrote in almost Cox's own words of a century earlier, while adding, 'I watched him seize a silver fish under the water and hold up his head and go through all the elaborate motions of swallowing it'.30 The swan impressed him so much that it was the only exhibit among the displays that he considered worth recording.

29 James Cox, *A Descriptive Inventory of the Several Exquisite and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewellery Comprised in the Schedule annexed to an Act of Parliament, made in the Thirteenth Year of His present Majesty, George the Third; for enabling Mr. James Cox, of the City of London, Jeweller, to dispose of his Museum by way of Lottery* (London: M. Hart, 1773).
30 Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad; or, the New Pilgrims' Progress* (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Company, 1897), chap. 13, p.124.
The equality with himself that John Bowes established for his wife is clearly reflected by their wills, with Josephine writing in 1871 setting out her bequests:

Whereas I am possessed of a great number of rarities of great value and I am desirous that the same should form one collection and be placed in a Museum and be dedicated to the public and whereas I have commenced to erect certain buildings which when completed to form of the Museum for the preservation of the collection aforesaid.31

John confirmed Josephine's ownership in his own will in 1878 when he bequeathed additional funds both to complete the then unfinished building and to provide an endowment fund for the maintenance of it and of the collection it housed.32

Figure 6. J. E. Watson, Architectural Drawing for the Bowes Museum, 1869. Image courtesy of the Bowes Museum.

The Bowes estates reverted to the Earls of Strathmore on John Bowes's death without an heir. The great houses of Streatlam Castle and Gibside were sold, stripped of all their features and their carcasses destroyed, in the case of Streatlam, or left a roofless skeleton in the case of Gibside. Meanwhile, the Josephine and John Bowes Museum, true to its founders' egalitarian vision, survived to become ranked one of the great smaller museums in Europe and flourishes today as a national repository for the fine and decorative arts.33 Arguably, it reflects John’s wish to erase the social inequality imposed on his mother and grandmother and Josephine’s willingness to live her marriage as a partnership of equals.

31 Josephine Bowes, Will of Josephine Bowes dated July 1875 (Bowes Museum Archive, item TBM/2/1/1-2).
32 John Bowes, Will of John Bowes dated June 1878 (Bowes Museum Archive, item TBM/2/1/1).
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SECONDARY SOURCES


Gazing through the Mashrabeya:
Contrasting the representation of Egyptian women in Islamic architecture, British
nineteenth-century orientalist art and the writings of Aisha Taymur. ¹

AHMED SHOKRI

This essay analyses the contrasting artistic representations of Egyptian women in nineteenth-century Cairo, by examining certain examples of Islamic architecture which was prevalent at that time in the city, and British orientalist paintings of the same period. The essay examines two examples of such representations. First, the British Orientalist imaginings of the private quarters of women in houses, often referred to as the harem, and compares this hyper-sexualised view of Egyptian women to the conspicuous absence of female representation in Islamic art. More specifically, I will study the mashrabeya, which is an intricate window wooden latticework that served in many ways as a means to contain women’s exposure to the outside world, leaving them only small spaces through which they are allowed to gaze. John Frederick Lewis’s 1850 painting, the Hhareem, and the mashrabeya windows from the mansion of Beit al Souhaymi in the old Cairo downtown form the basis of this analysis. Finally, this essay will study some of the poems and writings of Aisha Taymour, the most prominent female Egyptian poet to reflect an aspect of the realities of female Egyptian voices in that period.

All that I had seen before my eyes gazed upon you
My whole existence was all in vain
How can anyone tell me that I had lived at all? ²

Egypt in the earlier part of the Nineteenth-century was a nation in the throes of significant, and accelerated, economic transformation as it began to open its gates to the vast and abounding economic promise of the West. This economic change was not matched by any significant

¹ In acknowledgement and gratitude to Dr. Antony Buxton for inspiring this article and for his enthusiastic and genuine support.
evolution of social interactions in the daily lives of Egyptians. In particular, women remained in many ways subdued because of their gender.\(^3\)

The search for any historically convincing representation of women in Islamic art, as practiced by the Cairo craftsmen in the nineteenth century, would most likely be entirely fruitless. Islamic art is essentially a communal form of expression, rather than an individualistic artistic expression of any one Muslim artist. It is meant to improve on classic tradition and is largely utilitarian. Fine arts and crafts are united to lend beauty to every aspect of daily life; from rugs to lanterns and from mosques to palaces.\(^4\)

It is also certainly true that Islamic art, as a form of religious and theistic expression of the faith, has shied away from the depiction of human form. The reproduction of human and animal forms in an Islamic context can be seen as a creative encroachment on God’s unique creation of all living things. Another reason may be attributed to fear of reverting to pre-Islamic idolatry, where statues of human figures were traditionally worshipped in the Arab peninsula.\(^5\) All of the foregoing may have contributed to the absence of any real understanding of the life of Egyptian women living in nineteenth-century Cairo in the Islamic arts and crafts of the period.

However, there is one example of Islamic design which was ubiquitous in almost all of the Cairo households, and it may well tell a different story. The *mashrabeya* is an exceptionally delicate wooden latticework, which had been traditionally used as screens on the façade of households and within the open courtyards of private and public spaces. A derivation from the Arabic word *mashraba*, meaning the room where drinks are served, it is believed that the purpose of the mashrabeya was initially to store urns of water since the mashrabeya is meant to close off a room while, by virtue of its design, allow the room to remain sufficiently shaded and cool during the long summer heat. Another probable translation of the word is a variation on the word for ‘terrace’, from which the ladies of the house can overlook the streets without being seen.

Practical design reasons to accommodate the Cairo summers aside, the mashrabeya also played an important social role in limiting the physical space which women occupied in publicly exposed places. Respectable women of the household were meant to be hidden from the public gaze, and the intricate design of the mashrabeya, with its limiting of external visual access, served as a perfectly convenient method to keep the women safe from public scrutiny. Even though the women on the other side of the mashrabeya were allowed to gaze at the world beyond their homes, their gaze certainly was

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not returned by any person on the other side of the mashrabeya, least of all by any of the European travelers and merchants increasingly populating Cairo

The fascination that European travellers had had with the Cairo harems has been well documented in fiction as well as in many orientalist paintings. The fact that the harem is by its very nature closed off from the public must have spurred the imaginations of the various European men yearning to access this world beyond the mashraebya. The word harem itself is derived from the Arabic word *haram*, the forbidden. Therefore, the social imperatives that isolated this inner intimate existence from the prying eyes of the increasing numbers of foreigners descending on Cairo, became, themselves, the inspiration for British painters such as John Frederick Lewis to invent his own narrative of the life behind the Mashrabeya.

*The Hhareem* painted by John Frederick Lewis in 1850 during his ten-year stay in Cairo is a visually thrilling example of a British artist who would certainly never be granted access to the private world of a harem in the private residence of the Egyptian upper classes, effectively creating an entire world from his imagination in which the women are, very much like the mashrabeya in the background, part of the ornamentation of the house.
The women in this painting are not just ornamental, they are also very much depicted as highly sexualised commodities in this household. They are clearly complicit in their own and each other’s subjugation, as they welcome another member of the harem. The face of the main lady of the house, seated next to the master, betrays signs of dismay and jealousy of the younger and more physically attractive woman, the new addition to the harem. The fascination, and perhaps sexual intrigue, on the faces of the younger women also speak to the complex emotions that exist in the hearts of the women of the harem who orbit the man of the house in complete submission to all of his desires, entirely as imagined by Lewis.

The *Hhareem* may well be described as a hyper realistic painting that is deeply detailed in its depiction of the objects in the room. Certainly, the beautifully intricate mashrabeysa is almost a replica of the mashrabeysas of Beit Al Souhaymi. It is in contemplating the significance, and the design, of the mashrabeysa that we arrive at the extent to which the mashrabeysas have served as a metaphorical and, in this instance, a literal doorway into two different worlds. First, the public world in which respectable households are meant to be presented to the world. Second, the private world to which no access is allowed and which can only be brought to life if the man of the house allowed access, or if the foreign artist decided to create his own vision of that inner, private world. Certainly, the design of the mashrabeysa mirrored in Beit Al Souhaymi and *the Hhareem* is both aesthetically and practically designed to inspire mystery, and in doing so, further isolates the narrative of the women dwelling...
behind it. It is interesting to note just how static the women are in this painting. They are presented as part of the set piece; they serve a decorative purpose rather than possessing any genuine human particularity. The women in this painting are reduced to beings that are defined by the perceived failings of their sex - sexual permissiveness and petty jealousy - and they are literally flanked from all directions by men who possess, overpower and rule over them. Every aspect of this room seems to reflect metaphorically on the women in the painting. It had been remarked by contemporary critics that the flowers in the foreground of the painting are a representation of the women. 'The girl, a pretty plaything [emphasis added], is herself a flower' and '[e]ach petaled cup is brimful of light and sunshine, and each leaf enjoys the air it breathes.\(^6\)

Lewis’s painting *The Hhareem* followed the traditional style of his Cairo harem paintings, which is one of elaborate perceived realism. This style convinced British Victorian audiences that 'no other painter had depicted the minutiae of Cairene interiors, harem accoutrements, and the traditional garments worn by the harem women in quite the same painstaking detail.\(^7\) This appearance of seemingly realistic reporting via painting serves to create the illusion that Egyptian women really did lead this particular existence in the privacy of their homes. Moreover, Lewis’s painting of the detailed furnishings in the painting created an intimacy that invites the viewer to believe they are no longer in the position of a voyeur, but an active participant in the events taking place inside the room.

Lewis’s own life, as an apparently fully assimilated expat during his long sojourn in Cairo, also lent a certain authority to what Lewis had to say about the Egyptian society and in particular the Egyptian women. This authority, that derives from a British painter who had effectively 'gone native', is a strong example to his Victorian contemporaries on how to exist among foreigners. William Makepeace Thackery’s account of Lewis’s life in Cairo perpetuated the myth of Lewis’s life in Cairo. Thackery was particularly impressed with Lewis’s decision to live in the ‘Arab quarter, away from the expatriate community, transformed from the dandy of the London club, living “a hazy, lazy, tobaccofied life” in the “most complete Oriental fashion.”\(^8\) The desired effect of Thackery’s account was to summon to the mind of the Victorian reader mythological images of the Arabian Nights in which the women played a central role of mystery and desire. This description of Thackery’s entry into Lewis’s home sets the scene explicitly for the reader:

> We made J.’s quarters; and, in the first place, entered a broad covered court or porch, where a swarthy, tawny attendant, dressed in blue, with white turban, keeps a perpetual watch. Servants in the East lie about all the doors, it appears; and you clap your hands, as they do in the dear old Arabian Nights, to summon them. This


\(^7\) Roberts, p.48.

\(^8\) Roberts, p.22.
servant disappeared through a narrow wicket, which he closed after him; and went into the inner chambers to ask if his lord [J. F. Lewis] would receive us.9

Entirely integral to this exercise of bringing to life the mythical East as 'translated' by the Orientalist painter and writer, is the introduction of the female figure as a profoundly unsubtle object of desire that is also, most importantly, voiceless. Very much like the women in The Hhareem, there is no real intention to understand the Egyptian, oriental, women as living human beings with their own desires and characters. They are merely present as part of the scenery that contributes to the myth building of the Orient as a setting for sexual fulfilment that is not available in Victorian society.

The erotic possibilities of this identification are augmented by Thackeray’s description of a woman inside Lewis’s house observing the writer through the lattice screens: ‘There were wooden lattices to those arched windows, through the diamonds of one of which I saw two of the most beautiful, enormous, ogling, black eyes in the world, looking down upon the interesting stranger.’10 The entire narrative entertains an image of Lewis as harem master with slaves at his beck and call, and this allusion to his serving girl encourages the reader to imagine what transpires in the private quarters of the house, which seem veiled in all the mystery of the Oriental harem.11 This description eloquently integrates the mashrabeya as an active ingredient in the British, male narrative of Egyptian women’s lives in nineteenth century. The female presence is reduced to a female gaze, a bodiless presence hidden behind the mashrabeya which exists in opposition to the imposing physical presence of the man in the real world on the streets of Cairo. The women can also conveniently become a body that exists in a confined space which serves a specific purpose in realising the ‘western’ male desires and fantasies of life behind the mashrabeya as exemplified by Lewis’s The Hhareem. The absence of the Egyptian women’s own authentic voice is palpable across the foregoing examples of artistic expression in Egypt and by the British orientalists. It is therefore infinitely easy to rely on the male construct (whether this is the practice of an Egyptian artisan creating a mashrabeya, or a British Orientalist painter imagining the harem in a painting) of the Egyptian women’s lives as the only historically representative record of how women fit in the largely male-led lives in nineteenth-century Cairo.

However, in spite of the culturally limiting circumstances in which Egyptian women existed, nineteenth century Egypt saw the emergence of original creative expression by women who managed to escape the confines of society to write in authentic self-expression directly to readers without having themselves re-interpreted for general consumption. Aisha Taymur (1840-1902) (Figure 3) was an

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9 Roberts, p.22.
10 Roberts, p.22
11 Roberts, p.23.
Egyptian female poet who was born to an affluent Egyptian-Kurdish family. Taymur belonged to the aristocratic district of Cairo, Darb Al Saada, and her father, Ismail Pasha Taymur, was the equivalent of a Minister of Foreign Affairs in the court of the ruler of Egypt, Khedive Ismail.

Taymur displayed early partiality to reading and writing. These tendencies were encouraged by her father who had his daughter tutored in the Quran and the Persian language. She quickly developed a preference for literature, and poetry in particular. Her father’s efforts to encourage his daughter to pursue the more intellectually worthy pursuits of learning, reading and writing were not welcomed by Taymur’s mother. Her mother planned more traditionally recognisable pastime activities for her daughter, which involved housework and embroidery. Taymur rebelled against her mother’s wishes and we are introduced to a sample of Taymur’s eloquent writing from that time of her life which showed a strong tendency to defy the expectations of girls growing up in nineteenth-century Cairo. Commenting on her reaction to her mother’s attempt to interest her in the simple, womanly pursuits of embroidery, Taymur writes:

[My mother] began to seriously pursue my instruction, yet I cannot be taught, and I sought no accomplishment in the skills of women, and I would escape my mother like fishes from the nets. I would enthusiastically attend the meetings of writers without a trace of anxiety, and I found the sound of the pen on paper the sweetest of tunes. I was certain that to join this group would be the greatest of blessings.  

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13 Aisha Taymur, The Effects of Circumstances from Words and Deeds (Cairo: Kotobarabia, [1st ed.: 1888]), p.2. Translated from the original Arabic by Ahmed Shokri.
Taymur’s retrospective of her childhood attitudes to her girlish duty certainly reflected a willingness to oppose the wishes of polite society in a manner that left no room for ambiguity. Unrestricted by merely defending her own attitudes to worthy female occupations, Taymur turned against the arrogance of her fellow men. She engaged in searing social commentary in which she soundly ridiculed the ways of the male-dominated world in which she existed:

The men of vanity have trodden
East and West trampling everything in their paths
They believed that Time will always be their servant
And that He will succumb to all of their whims
Little did they know that He is an Enemy
Like a serpent yearning to its treacherous ways¹⁴

Taymur also thought and wrote often about the concept of love that is felt towards other human beings, and also of love in a religious sense and how it can be articulated to reflect a deep connection to God. This led many contemporary and modern literary critics to consider Taymur as a Sufi poet. The extract below is an example of the tradition in Arab poetry which describes misfortune in love:

All the callous beings were ignorant of all the tonics
That my soul longs to drink and wallow in its drunkenness
They wondered about all the yearning and denial
Suffered by my heart that is full of sorrow
A world separates their thoughts and the secrets of my soul
Only God knows of my deepest desires¹⁵

The imagery of flowing alcohol and its effect on sobriety is traditional in Arabic poetry as an accepted allusion to love. The Sufi poets and practitioners also saw the use of alcohol in poetic imagery as an example of divine love, which is used to denote the absolute devotion to the Creator that is free from any clear headedness.

While Taymur employed traditional poetic devices in her writing of the poem above, the fact remains that she had no reliable precedent in female writing to inspire her own writing. The mere act of an Egyptian woman belonging to a respectable aristocratic family daring to write about love and the less wholesome world of alcohol drinking was highly unusual in nineteenth-century Egypt at best, and highly suspect at worst. Taymur’s dissatisfaction with much of the nature of marital life found its way into her prose. She created particular controversy by presenting her own unique interpretation of certain

¹⁵ Zeyada, p.86. Translated from the original Arabic by Ahmed Shokri.
verses of the Quran which were interpreted by mainstream clerics to reflect greater favour to men in their interactions with their wives:

It would appear that the intention of these young in getting married, is not to preserve virtue and religiosity, but to feed their greed and amass money, and to usurp their women of their property.16

Taymur continues to condemn the irresponsible manner that many women in nineteenth century Egyptian women were treated by their husbands who Taymur described as 'a lion too lazy to hunt, conquered by cowardice'. 17 Women in nineteenth century Egypt were regarded as very much subjects of a great deal of anxiety by the male population. The mashrabeya was a household invention that, physically and metaphorically, was meant to confine women to a specific and limited space. The British orientalist artists, denied access to the secret world of the harem, resorted to expressing an imagined view of this world, which was expressed in their art via an elaborate, seemingly realistic setting which was meant to present a convincing narrative of life in the harem for the consumption of Victorian audiences.

However, when attention and comprehension is given to authentic female voices in nineteenth century Egypt, figures like Aisha Taymur emerge who presented an alternative narrative in which women did not rely on men to relay their own views. This strong Egyptian female emergence in ideas and writings took a much more pronounced form in the very early years of the twentieth century, and it would be interesting to pursue this research further into the new century.

The mashrabeya may have been the centrepiece of the isolation and reduction of women, both conservatively and permissively. The British Orientalist paintings certainly contributed to the creation of an imagined world that heaves with permissive sexuality that provided a sharply contrasting reality of life to Victorian society, by stepping behind the mashrabeya and creating an entirely new narrative. This British Orientalist view collided with the deeply conservative realities of Egyptian women’s life in nineteenth century Cairo which, inspired by a deeply traditional art form, served to also reduce and confine women to a space that shuts them from the world behind the intricate design of the mashrabeya. However, it is only when the Egyptian women ceased to gaze through the mashrabeya and bravely stepped beyond its elaborate confines that they took on their real forms, free from male Egyptian anxieties of inferiority, or a British Orientalist obsessive fantasies, as eloquently expressed by voices such as Aisha Taymur who defied the sexual fantasy and the conservative fear.

17 Taymur, *The Mirror of Meditation*, p.33. Translation from original Arabic by Ahmed Shokri.
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Friend or Foe:
How far were sororal relations depicted positively
in nineteenth-century England?

EMILY LAM

Sisterhood was commonly used in nineteenth century literature as an instrument to achieve a conventional end or to advance a romantic storyline; however, the shifting economic landscape and changing attitudes towards women meant that sisterhood was becoming a seemingly more complex concept, exposing competition and hostility amongst sisters. This paper explores two artefacts centred on sisterhood and suggests that sororal relations in nineteenth century England were portrayed both negatively and positively, revealing a more profound kind of feminism.

In nineteenth-century England, an ‘ever more tightly knit and strongly hierarchical nuclear family’ arose as protection against social instability and the growing dehumanisation and mechanisation associated with the economy.¹ Women had to create at home a refuge for men from the economic trenches and ‘feminine desire’ had to be contained ‘in such a way as to create the home as a sphere of moral perfection so elevated above the predatory struggle of the new economic strife’, with the sister upheld as a ‘sanctum sanctorum of moral virtue’ who had to be ‘enduringly, incorruptibly good’.² However, sororal relations in Victorian texts were depicted as ‘competitive, problematic, and theatrical’.³ Fascinated by differences between women whilst being uncomfortable about any alliances, Victorians exploited the frequently romanticised and domestic device of sisterhood to reveal rivalry, antagonism and sexual competition amongst women. This paper will focus on Christina Rossetti’s...

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‘Sister Maude’ (see Appendix) and John Everett Millais’s painting entitled *Hearts are Trumps* (see Appendix, Figure 1), to examine whether and how these artefacts uncover such rivalry and competition and the extent to which sororal relations were depicted positively in nineteenth-century England.

‘Sister Maude’ utilises the traditional folktale of two sisters fighting over a lover and concentrates on the death of the speaker’s lover; the poem implies such death is due to the speaker’s sister’s destructive jealousy. Rossetti illustrates a negative portrayal of sororal relations, exposing the devastation jealousy between sisters can bring and the darker aspects of sisterhood. The poem’s simple title reinforces its focus on the speaker’s sister, Maude, and sisterhood.

The rhetorical questions at the start of the first stanza immediately alert the reader to the treachery committed by Maude, who told the speaker’s parents about the speaker’s ‘shame’ and ‘dear’, presumably the speaker’s secret love (ll.1-2). Maude’s deceit is emphasised by the perfidious description of Maude, who ‘lurked to spy and peer’ (l.4), as well as the repetition of ‘Who told’ at the start of each of the first two lines and of ‘Maude’ in the third line. The caesura in this stanza’s third line further highlights that it was the speaker’s own sister who carried out such betrayal. The use of the possessive ‘my’ that is regularly repeated throughout this stanza (for example, ‘my shame’ (l.1) and ‘my sister’ (l.3)) stresses the focus on the speaker’s own feelings and the heightened pain from the personal betrayal.

The loss of the lover and the speaker’s anguish are emphasised powerfully, for example through the alliteration and hard sounds in the second stanza (for instance, ‘Cold he lies, as cold as stone’ as the ‘comeliest corpse’ with his ‘clotted curls’ (ll.5,6)). The admiring description of the dead lover as ‘worthy of a queen’s embrace’ (l.8) underlines the speaker’s immense love for him, which helps the reader to appreciate the magnitude of her grief for his passing. The sibilance in the third stanza reinforces the speaker’s hissing-like wrath towards her sister as Maude ‘might have spared’ (l.9) her lover’s soul, the speaker’s soul and her own soul too. The semi-colon at the end of the second line of this stanza emphasises the speaker’s belief that even if the speaker had not been born, her lover would still not have been interested in Maude, which heightens the sense of competition between the sisters.

The poem contains several religious references, mirroring beliefs in society at the time and the gravity of the situation. The fourth stanza reveals that whilst the speaker’s parents may sleep in Heaven or at its gates, her sister will not attain any such sleep ‘early or late’ (l.16) due to her sins (the poem’s regular rhythm is interrupted by the shorter line concluding the fourth stanza, stressing Maude's fate). It is telling that the speaker refers to ‘my’ parents instead of ‘our’ in the last two stanzas, implying that through her betrayal, her sister is no longer part of the family unit; this is reinforced by the colons used at the end of the second line of the penultimate stanza and the fourth line of the last stanza, which physically separate the lines about the speaker’s parents (and the lines concerning the speaker and her lover in the last stanza) from the lines regarding Maude. This further underlines the distinction between
them and that Maude is very different in her sinning, character and destiny. In addition, the semi-colon at the end of the second line of the last stanza also serves to divide up the stanza into distinct sections: the first two lines relate to the speaker’s parents, the next two are in respect of the speaker and her love and the last two lines concern Maude, who is without a partner. This assists in highlighting Maude’s isolation, deviation and dissimilarity from the others.

The last stanza maintains the idea of the speaker’s parents potentially being rewarded in Heaven (accentuated by the alliteration in ‘a golden gown’ and its rhyming with ‘a crown’) and even the speaker and her lover possibly being allowed into Heaven, although the speaker appears to believe that Maude deserves to go to hell due to her awful actions; instead of access to Heaven, the speaker says to her, ‘Bide you with death and sin’ (l.22). The repetition of ‘sister Maude’ stresses again that it is the speaker’s own sister who committed such betrayal and reflects the speaker’s fury towards Maude, echoing the repetition of ‘Maude’ at the poem’s start, which perhaps emphasises the speaker’s dwelling on Maude’s role in her tragedy and that she is unlikely to forgive and forget her sister’s actions. The poem’s use of sibilance subsists into the fourth stanza, which continues to underline the hissing vitriol of the speaker, and the sibilance in the last two lines of the final stanza conveys the speaker’s satisfaction at the vision of her sister in hell, a suitable punishment.

The poem’s regular and strict rhyming pattern (where the even lines rhyme) reinforces its traditional folk source. However, the last stanza is composed of six lines, contrasting with the four lines the other stanzas are made up of. Such irregularity enables increased concentration on Maude and her fate in the two additional lines and underscores Maude’s own irregularity, misdeeds and abnormality as a sister through apparently unsisterly actions. ‘Sister Maude’ depicts a negative and jealous relationship and the desolation resulting from envy, competition and ‘unsisterly’ behaviour amongst sisters. The poem succeeds in portraying opposites, for example, the good of the speaker’s lover versus the evil of Maude and heaven versus hell, which intensifies the negativity surrounding sororal relations that runs through the poem.

Looking at *Hearts are Trumps* by John Everett Millais will facilitate a fuller analysis as to how far sisterhood was represented positively during this period. The favourable portrayal of the stylish twenty-something daughters (Elizabeth, Diana and Mary) of Walter Armstrong conveys a ‘gentle and nostalgic vision of family life’ (accentuated by the delicate flowers in the background and the soft, pastel colours used in the painting, which underscore the femininity of the sisters), which contrasts with and, therefore, emphasises the painting’s insinuation of sisterly competition in searching for a husband, highlighted by the card game and the straightforward title.⁴ The style of the painting evokes the ‘Grand

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⁴ ‘Hearts are Trumps’, Tate <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-hearts-are-trumps-n05770> [accessed 06 Jan 2018].
Style’ work of Joshua Reynolds, which idealised the imperfect, and thus instantly introduces the spectator to the idea that sisterhood is not perfect.\(^5\)

The relatively simple background is kept subdued, adding to the heavy attention on the sisters, particularly Mary (who sits on the right), which enables the spectator to concentrate on them and the messages they convey. Their dresses are very similar, highlighting the sisterly connection between them, but specific details cause Mary to stand out. Mary holds most of the trumps and stares directly at the viewer, which maintains attention on her. One of Mary’s sisters is focused on her cards and the other is gazing at Mary, indicating different views literally and symbolically as well as competition between the siblings. Whilst Elizabeth and Diana have resigned facial expressions, Mary appears to look determined and knowing, with her eyebrows lowered and a slight stern frown, which underlines her competitive nature and the rivalry between the sisters. The sisters wear different necklaces, perhaps to emphasise their differences, but Mary wears the darkest and thickest necklace and is the only one with a headpiece (accentuated by the dark screen behind her, which also helps her contrasting light figure to stand out even more), which again draws the viewer’s eye towards her, as opposed to the other sisters. Mary’s role as the dominant figure in the painting is fortified by her position at the forefront and as the seemingly closest sister to the viewer, with the side-table breaking up the viewer’s eye-line towards the sister opposite Mary.

The cards table appears to be trapping the women’s dresses as their clothing billows around the table legs. This seems to suggest that the sisters and the game they play are entwined and that competition (not only in cards, but also in finding a husband and love) is a significant part of their lives. The sisters also appear to be trapped by their competition and game-playing, and cannot escape. The feeling of imprisonment is reinforced by the enclosing screen behind the women, which also hints of secrets, highlighting the game-playing between the sisters.

The composition appears to be based on vertical lines of direction, for example vertical lines run down the table legs, screen and bodies (with curves, for example of the dresses, delivering variation). This adds to the painting’s straightforward feel. Nothing feels too jarring in the painting, thereby creating a more intimate atmosphere, which underscores the sisterly connection between the women in the painting.

The painting is quite large, meaning viewers need to stand back to allow their eyes to sweep over it, which boosts the scene’s dramatic effect and the drama of games and competition among sisters.\(^6\) The spectator feels he can step into the expanse of space apparently deliberately created in the bottom of the painting (as if he can sit at the table as a fourth player), making him feel involved and that he has a role in interpreting this work; this lends the painting a sense of realism and authenticity.

\(^6\) The frame’s dimensions are 2010 × 2550 × 140 mm.
The painting seemingly reflects the position of women at the time; women had limited rights and privileges and depended on men in many ways, meaning husbands and accordingly husband-searching were important to women, perhaps more than sisterhood. For instance, in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Jane, in spite of her search for identity and family, eventually discards the sisterhood of her cousins (Mary and Diana Rivers) for Rochester, exemplifying that marriage was often achieved at the expense of sisterhood, with a woman leaving her family for masculine security.\(^7\) Tea and its associated equipment (for example, porcelain tea-cups) were in demand during the period. The tea-cup in the painting not only hints at the fashionable status of the sisters, but maybe also, as a symbol of the domestic sphere which was associated with women, of women’s struggle for equality and the vote and of the growing ‘spread of independence’ for women (tea-rooms became popular with women, acting as a safe haven to meet and discuss political plans), signals the shifting position of women in society.\(^8\) The prevalence of Chinese-inspired décor and items continued into the nineteenth century but became less popular, and the chinoiserie of the screen and the porcelain tea-cup in the painting perhaps echoes the changes that occurred regarding women and their status during the period.

It is hard to reconstruct nineteenth-century sisterhood and locate competitive or resentful signs amongst sisters. This is due to effectively individual fictions being produced by sources (such as journals, letters and conduct books) and because of the ‘poverty of historical material on relations between women’,\(^9\) with most women’s letters having only been conserved as a result of their relationship with a male public figure and with very little sociological data existing on sisterly relationships (despite seeing sisters frequently taking on opposing roles within the family in contemporary literature). Nonetheless, particular laws can be useful in indicating how sisterhood was viewed at the time in society. The Deceased Wife’s Sister’s Act, passed into law in 1835 and only repealed in 1907 (despite much protest during the nineteenth century, including common flouting of the law), is deemed ‘an arcane footnote to the progress of English law’.\(^10\) Many historians believe the law, which prevented a widower marrying his late wife’s sister, produced unwarranted controversy;\(^11\) nevertheless, it could be considered a sign of contemporary cultural concerns regarding the family and sexuality, including an endeavour to regulate the relations of sisters and craft a concept of sisterhood. Although the law was apparently founded on biblical taboos, public discussion surrounding it seemed to concentrate on the jealousy between sisters and raised questions focused on this, such as whether sisters are competitors and whether marrying your sister’s widower is an act of betrayal or loyalty to

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her memory. This perhaps affected and reflected relations between sisters whilst alive, and promoted a sense of sisterly competition, which we see in the artefacts this paper examines. Similar sisterly jealousy can be identified in the ‘logic of the law’ in the first few divorces awarded to women by Parliament at the start of the nineteenth century. Despite men, women were not able to obtain a parliamentary divorce on the grounds of adultery. Two of the first three divorces granted to women in England concerned the ‘aggravating’ grounds of ‘incest’ on top of adultery (committed by the husband with the wife’s sister), pitting sister against sister as well as husband versus wife. It therefore appears that the artefacts discussed reflect popular perceptions in society at the time of sororal relations being negatively associated with rivalry, antagonism and envy, chiefly in relation to men.

As we can see from ‘Sister Maude’, sisterhood can be regarded as an artistic convention and a protective framework within which women can fall, as well as a prompt of the evils of women and possibly also female sexuality. As Helena Michie commented, and as evident from both artefacts, sisterhood appears to be ‘a playground, or, more sinsterly, a battlefield...’. Despite apparently undermining female and sisterly unity, the artefacts can be considered to enhance feminist notions of sisterhood and generate a more complex and deeper kind of feminism that acknowledges and encourages differences. Both artefacts depict differences between the sisters, thereby injecting independence, dignity and choice into their relations and allowing the portrayal of female identity through sisterhood, with such sisterly relations providing ‘safe and familiar and familial space’ for the expression of such differences. Furthermore, the competition prevalent in the artefacts and Victorian works in general permits us to appreciate that within ‘the protective idiom of sisterhood’, women could express emotions (like fury) that they were not able to in other relations, notably those with men. The depictions of sisterhood enable the portrayal of a multitude of ‘stereotypically unfeminine feelings and behaviours’.

Considering the artefacts as historical evidence clearly raises various issues. Each can be deemed evidence for the artist’s emotions, people’s opinions of sisterhood at the time and/or the artist’s opinions on sisterhood or of the general feeling concerning sisterhood. Both the poem and painting could be viewed as eyewitness sources; as both artists lived during the period, they could accurately report what transpired and the mood at the time (especially as they are dealing with facts known by most contemporaries), so subsequently we feel we can trust both artefacts as historical evidence. However, since each artefact was created by one person, each may be judged as the artist’s outlook and

13 Michie, Sororophobia, p.20.
14 Michie, Sororophobia, p.17.
15 Michie, Sororophobia, p.21.
16 Michie, Sororophobia, p.21.
thus biased (reiterated by the poem’s first person narrative style). Rossetti’s interest in female relations and friendship can be seen in her years volunteering at a penitentiary, a charitable establishment focusing on the recovery of women who were judged to be ‘fallen’, such as prostitutes.\footnote{‘Christina Rossetti’, \textit{BBC: Poetry} (2014) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/poetryseason/poets/christina_rossetti.shtml> [accessed 20 Jan 2018].} It may consequently be difficult to maintain her poem represents society or general opinion. Nonetheless, it is often argued that a poet’s job is to capture the sentiment at the time, which may assist in counteracting any bias.\footnote{It has been stated that the poet’s business is to examine ‘not the individual, but the species’; see Samuel Johnson, \textit{The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.28.} Furthermore, Millais’s intended audience appear to be members of elite society. For instance, the painting’s backdrop of very ornate furnishings, the luxurious-looking clothing and the well-groomed hair of the sisters betray wealthy belongings and habits that are not representative of the lower classes, and the messages delivered through this artefact are therefore similarly unrepresentative of such classes. Moreover, before being displayed at Tate Britain, Millais’s painting underwent major painting and frame conservation; as a result, the work may be deemed to be not completely by Millais’ own hand and not entirely in his originally-intended state. Its reliability as evidence may be reduced. However, it has been said that the restoration ‘resulted in returning the image to an appearance closer to when it was painted in 1872’.\footnote{‘John Everett Millais's Hearts are Trumps 1872’, \textit{Tate} <http://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/projects/john-everett-millais-hearts-are-trumps-1872> [accessed 10 Jan 2018].} Together, both artefacts reveal, in different ways, how sororal relations were represented negatively in nineteenth-century England. Each artefact negatively exposes the game-playing and ‘treachery of sister against sister in a ruthlessly competitive marriage market’ that existed in the nineteenth century and appears to frustrate any concept of sisterly concord.\footnote{‘Christina Rossetti’, \textit{Poetry Foundation} (2018) <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/christina-rossetti> [accessed 15 Jan 2018].} Nonetheless, the artefacts’ portrayal of sisterhood can be deemed to positively endorse a richer type of feminism that promotes differences and individuality by illustrating the contrasts between the sisters, and sisterhood can be considered to enable women to convey emotions they were unable to in other relationships. Both artefacts thus succeed in reflecting the varying and increasingly complex attitudes of the time (perhaps mirroring society’s growing perception of women as more complex than initially thought) and painting sororal relations in nineteenth-century England both positively and negatively.
APPENDIX

Sister Maude
Christina Rossetti

Who told my mother of my shame,
Who told my father of my dear?
Oh who but Maude, my sister Maude,
Who lurked to spy and peer.

Cold he lies, as cold as stone,
With his clotted curls about his face:
The comeliest corpse in all the world
And worthy of a queen's embrace.

You might have spared his soul, sister,
Have spared my soul, your own soul too:
Though I had not been born at all,
He'd never have looked at you.

My father may sleep in Paradise,
My mother at Heaven-gate:
But sister Maude shall get no sleep
Either early or late.

My father may wear a golden gown,
My mother a crown may win;
If my dear and I knocked at Heaven-gate
Perhaps they'd let us in:
But sister Maude, oh sister Maude,
Bide you with death and sin.
Figure 1. Sir John Everett Millais, *Hearts are Trumps* (1872).

Oil on canvas, support: 1657 × 2197 mm and frame: 2010 × 2550 × 140 mm. © Tate, London. CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported): <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-hearts-are-trumps-n05770>. 
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