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Introduction

This eighth volume of Vides, the journal of the MSt in Literature and Arts (MLA), commemorates Dr Cathy Oakes, a gifted and inspiring teacher who devised the MLA and directed it from its inception in 2011, and whose module ‘The Role of Wit, Conceit and Curious Devices in Tudor and Jacobean Art and Architecture’ introduced so many students to the diversity and joy of interdisciplinary study. The compilers of this edition of Vides were the last cohort of students to be taught and supervised by Cathy, and to benefit from her unfailing commitment and encouragement. As was said in one of the many tributes that followed her sudden and untimely death in August 2019, she ‘believed utterly in the value of liberal adult education and gave herself wholeheartedly to it’.

The MLA offers graduate students the opportunity to study British cultural history from the mid-fifteenth to the early twentieth century in an interdisciplinary programme that encompasses history, literature, the history of art and architecture, and the history of ideas. The course aims to explore the past through the lens of human creativity, and to inform our understanding of that creativity by studying the context within which it emerged. The image on the cover of this volume of Vides encapsulates that aim, with specific reference to the module that Cathy taught: it is an emblem taken from the sixteenth-century Oxburgh hangings, a series of tapestries reputedly embroidered by Mary, Queen of Scots and Bess, Countess of Shrewsbury, during Mary’s imprisonment in England. This intricate artefact is a rich example of how material objects can illuminate wider historical and cultural events.

The production of Vides by the students in the second year of the MLA has always been an integral part of the course. Each of the twenty-two articles in this volume focuses on two different artefacts that speak to a single theme. The authors have examined, explored, and interrogated their chosen objects to determine what they reveal about a particular aspect of the culture from which they originated. The articles are arranged in chronological order, and while each one draws out thematic links between the artefacts with which it is concerned, the collection as a whole discloses further striking and illuminating connections across the centuries, as this introduction seeks to demonstrate.

Several articles explore British attitudes towards a foreign ‘other’. By examining the critical response to John Frederick Lewis’s The Hhareem, which he argues was influenced by William Makepeace Thackeray’s earlier comic portrayal of the artist himself, Guy Philipps exposes nineteenth-century Western Orientalist fantasies and ideas of social decorum. The blurring of fantasy and reality is also a theme of Mona Opubor’s comparison of the eponymous gemstone in Wilkie Collins’s The Moonstone and a bronze statue of a Portuguese soldier taken by British troops from Benin in 1897. Opubor discusses how, what was in truth the looting of artefacts, played a part in the creation of the Victorian national identity by being represented
as part of a colonial civilising mission. Another imperial narrative is challenged by Eibhlín Inglesby in her comparison of two representations of the Great Irish Famine. Setting Daniel Macdonald’s portrait of a starving Irish family against a descriptive journal kept by two Oxford students, Inglesby probes the British attitude to Ireland by assessing the relative emotive impact of each artefact. Tensions across the Irish Sea are also addressed by Gerard Krasnopolski in his discussion of the first, deliberately exclusive, performance of W. B. Yeats’s *At the Hawk’s Well* immediately prior to the Easter Rising in 1916 and Alvin Langdon Coburn’s photograph of the dancer Michio Ito in a later performance of his role in the piece. Krasnopolski explores the way in which Yeats’s vision, simultaneously internationalist and elitist, challenged British imperialism and sought to articulate Irish identity.

Other contributions reveal the scale of Victorian ambition beyond the colonial stage. In 1872, *HMS Challenger* was stripped of her status as a warship and refitted for the purposes of exploration. Nicholas Pritchard reads Henry Nottidge Moseley’s *Notes by a Naturalist on the “Challenger”* as an attempt to romanticise an imperial endeavour by constructing a medieval quest narrative out of a scientific expedition to fathom the depth of the oceans. Late Victorian scientific innovation is also a topic of Rosalind Janssen’s article, concerned with the experiments of Sir Francis Galton. Janssen’s comparison of a dog whistle invented by Galton in 1876 and two later photographs of the man himself demonstrates both the genius and the horror of Galton’s work as a eugenicist. Another Victorian giant, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, is the subject of Siân James’s contribution: examining Robert Howlett’s iconic 1857 photograph of Brunel standing in front of a Brown, Lenox chain cable, James asks whether Brunel was elevated or shackled by his creations.

The theme of Britain’s image-making in the world is pursued in Hannah Ruddle’s piece on the economic importance of the cotton trade in Victorian Britain and the tensions that arose from the deployment of cotton as a political lever in the battle between Confederate and Unionist sympathisers on both sides of the Atlantic. Domestic attitudes to trade and imports are also addressed by Emma Vickers in her work on the growing popularity of chocolate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Vickers examines the change in the public perception of chocolate, from xenophobic apprehension, to medicinal cure, to sophisticated consumable and status good, and finally to eventual democratisation.

Echoes of Vickers’s piece can be heard in two articles addressing the impact of changing technology on modes of public entertainment in the eighteenth century. Simon Lamoon discusses the introduction of sensation and the Gothic to theatrical performance, which popular satirists saw as leading to cultural decline. Anxiety about cultural decline is also a theme of Louise Lamb’s article on the Jubilee masquerade balls of 1749, in which she analyses fears of moral corruption consequent on eccentricity, lavish costuming, cultural eclecticism and gender non-conformity in a large public space open to all. Links between public
entertainment and public morality are also a theme of Jocelyn Donachie’s comparison of a nineteenth-century bandstand and drinking fountain. Donachie highlights the perceived moral value of design to an ever-expanding urban population. Alison Hegarty’s article, which investigates the funding for the Foundling Hospital in its early years, also touches on issues of entertainment and public morality. Hegarty describes the move from charitable giving, by means of aristocratic patronage of artists such as Handel and Hogarth, to public funding, which proved both controversial and less financially successful.

A theme of Hegarty’s contribution, which notes how it was aristocratic women who first signed Thomas Coram’s petition for the founding of his Hospital, is echoed in Deborah Richards’s article on female epistolary activity in the early modern period. Richards describes ways in which women able to write with their own hand were empowered to achieve a means of articulation and self-representation, capable of being used for political as well as personal ends. Another form of contemporary female agency is touched on in Maria Neary’s study of female recusancy and rebellion during the Elizabethan period; she argues that it can reasonably be assumed that it was the wives and female relations of the leaders of the Northern Rebellion of 1569 who instigated the revolt. Neary also notes the apparent paradox that recusant women’s confinement to the domestic sphere gave them more freedom than men to engage in subversive activity. That observation affords an unexpectedly contrasting connection to Cecily Jenkinson’s contribution, dealing with early nineteenth-century satires on the institution of marriage. Arguing that Jane Austen should be regarded as a satirist comparable to James Gillray, Jenkinson observes that Austen’s adoption of a domestic setting for her fiction restricted the type and degree of satire that she could use.

Equally unexpected connections emerge from a comparison of the articles by Jessica Greaves and Gavin Fiddler. Greaves considers ideas of masculinity in the 1850s, drawing attention to a tension between outward authority and inward anxiety; noting ‘the significant role that both “high art” and material culture play in understanding social history’, she highlights one of the foundational principles of the MLA. Fiddler also addresses male anxiety, this time at the end of the nineteenth century, but in the very different context of female vampirism, whose appeal to readers and viewers alike he suggests presaged the reordering of gender relations that was to mark the century to come. The fact that this volume ranges from early sixteenth-century pew ends in a church in Northamptonshire to late Victorian lesbian vampires serves admirably to illustrate the diversity that is another foundational principle of the MLA.

The pew ends feature in Pen Keyte’s article, in which she begins what is intended to be a detailed study of the Parish church of St Mary the Virgin in Fawsley. Keyte suggests that the previously undiscussed iconography of these carvings can be read as a critical commentary on contemporary religious and political events, thereby creating a connection back to Maria Neary’s analysis of the iconography of the slightly later portrait of the recusant Lady Constable. Religion is similarly the focus of Joelle David’s contribution,
which covers virtually the entire period of the MLA in drawing parallels between the symbolic representation of the transcendent in Martin Luther’s *Confession Concerning the Lord’s Supper* and mid-Victorian fantasy fiction. Kate Vervain’s article is also concerned with a formidable divine, John Donne, but her comparison of two objects through which Donne sought at the very end of his life to shape his posthumous reputation presents a striking contrast to the breadth of David’s timespan. Finally, religious controversy is also at the heart of Paul Shaw’s discussion of Charles Dickens’s celebrated attack on John Everett Millais’s *Christ in the House of His Parents*. Shaw demonstrates the extent to which Dickens’s hostility was rooted in his perception of Millais’s work as displaying Anglo-Catholic Tractarianist tendencies. And Shaw’s article, dealing as it does with the critical reception of a painting first exhibited in 1850, connects back to Guy Philipps’s, the first of the twenty-two pieces discussed here. We very much hope that readers will see further links and connections between those pieces, and in so doing will further the aims of the MLA and thereby honour the treasured memory of Cathy Oakes.
Symbols of transcendence: how religious and fantastic symbols approach the ineffability of God

JOELLE DAVID

The transcendence of a God who exceeds human mediums of representation cannot be documented by the propositional statements of scientific abstractions. It must be gestured at by the language of religious and aesthetic symbols. In this article, I examine the symbol of the Eucharist as discussed by sixteenth-century theologian and pioneer of Protestant thought, Martin Luther, alongside the fantasy symbols of the nineteenth century novel Phantasies by George MacDonald. Through this comparison, I hope to explore how the foundational discourse about the religious symbol has far-reaching implications on the broader cultural view of symbols, so much so that its influence continues to be felt in the fantasy symbolism of nineteenth century literature, which bears strikingly similar features to its precursor.

How can a transcendent God – who exceeds human perception and comprehension – be experienced and grasped by the human mind? How can one represent the ineffability of God without confining it to the limitations of human systems of representation? In this article, I explore how, in the practice of religion, symbols are adopted as mediators between God and humans. Specifically, I examine a symbol that plays a prominent role in Christian liturgy and in the worshipper’s experience of God: the Eucharist. Following the Protestant Reformation, much debate surrounded the nature of this symbol of bread and its relationship to the body of Christ which it signified. Behind these discussions lie larger questions about the nature of symbols and how they relate to the transcendent truths to which they attempt to gesture. I thus examine Martin Luther’s Confession Concerning the Lord’s Supper (1528), which stands at the foundational moment of Protestant belief, and represents some of its most enduring concerns about the relationship between physical symbol and its spiritual meaning. Is the bread an ‘empty vehicle’ of meaning that is dispensable once its meaning is received, or does it have a significance in its own right? Does the religious symbol function in the same way as a mathematical one, whose relationship with its signified is purely arbitrary, or does its form contribute its own quality to the way its meaning is experienced? These discussions fed into the larger cultural shift which accompanied the developments in natural philosophy and the increasingly humanistic views towards nature that were brought about by the Enlightenment. As people started to question the view of the cosmos as a sacramental Book of Nature, in which every plant and rock symbolised a higher spiritual truth described by the Book of Scripture, the relationship between the transcendent and its symbolic manifestations in the world of the flesh remained an issue of much concern.
These changing views towards the nature of symbols thus reached beyond the sphere of religion to make their influence felt in other forms of culture such as literature and art. They continued to do so for centuries to come. In mid-Victorian Britain, where Puritan beliefs held strong sway, the search for symbolic representations of the transcendent continued to be a preoccupation. This was especially manifested by fantasy literature, which concerned itself primarily with alternate worlds which transcend the rules of reality and thus made it a most suitable medium for exploring this theme. One such example is George MacDonald’s *Phantastes* (1858), whose use of fantastic symbolism exemplifies many of the features that Luther suggests are crucial to the way that a religious symbol gestures towards the transcendent. By examining these two artefacts together, I attempt to explore the influence of Protestant theology (as laid out by its original foundational text) on the way that symbols were conceptualised in nineteenth-century literature.

Martin Luther’s *Confession Concerning the Lord’s Supper* (1528) examines the religious symbol of the Eucharist. This was written in response to a raging debate between Protestant and Catholic faith systems as to whether the Eucharist is the actual body itself, or simply a representation of it. At the heart of this debate is what Dorothy Lee terms ‘the difference in the conception of symbol as representing or participating’. The nature of religious symbolism is thus a question of great significance, and Luther’s *Confession* addresses this by proposing a few qualities that define a religious symbol. Firstly, the sign is indispensable to the experience of the signified. In the Eucharist, the bread serves as a concrete and relatable representation of Christ’s giving of his body in sacrificial offering, and it allows believers to participate imaginatively in this by imbibing, assimilating and receiving nourishment from that sacrifice. The bread is both symbol as well as symbolised, being both bread as well as Christ’s body. Secondly, the negative element of this symbol is emphasised. The symbol foregrounds its own inadequacy to fully represent the truths of Christ which transcend physical and finite bounds.

The Word of God clearly explains the message conveyed by the Eucharist: that Jesus sacrificed his life that humankind might receive life. However, even though this truth is already conveyed propositionally, believers are still commanded to partake in the sacraments because the experience of the symbol itself is a crucial part of the meaning that believers are meant to internalise. This is through the personal experience of having all their senses engaged in handling and imbibing the elements. That is why Luther condemns Papists for preventing people from partaking of the elements. He argues that the believers’ participation

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1 Martin Luther, ‘The Confession and the Lord’s Supper’, in *Sermons of Martin Luther* [accessed 1 February 2020].
in these sacraments is central to their faith because it helps them to remember Christ: ‘If we are all to remember the Lord in his Supper we must certainly be permitted to receive both elements, to eat the bread and to drink the cup’.3

Since the symbol is such an essential part of the meaning, the experience of eating the bread is almost inseparable from the understanding of Christ’s body and sacrifice, and it is the chosen ‘form’ by which Christ has ‘pictured’ his message for our understanding. Luther explains it thus:

Christ has shown this to us not only by his own example and by his Word, but he has also pictured it to us in the form of the Sacrament of the Altar, namely, by means of the bread and the wine. We believe that the true body and blood of Christ is under the bread and wine, even as it is.4

Some have interpreted this as a theology of consubstantiation, that the substance of the body and blood of Christ are present alongside the substance of the bread and wine, which remain present. While it is debateable whether ‘under’ refers to Christ’s physical substance being present, what Luther does make clear is that the physical symbols are crucial to allowing the believer to fully conceive of and relate to the transcendent idea of Christ’s bodily sacrifice, and are thus an indispensable part of the message.

Here we see one thing and believe another, which describes faith. For when we hear the Word and receive the Lord’s Supper we have merely a word and an act, yet by it we embrace life and every treasure, even God Himself.5

By the tangible and perceptible (that which they ‘see’ and ‘act’ upon), Christians are required to use ‘faith’ to ‘believe’ in something of which they have not had any empirical experience: ‘God Himself’. Sacraments such as the Eucharist are therefore ‘intrinsic symbols of grace’ which ‘constitute the grace they signify precisely by signifying it’.6 This is because an essential part of God’s grace lies precisely in His relationship with His people and His communication with them. The sacrament, which facilitates this relationship, thus goes beyond merely representing that grace, and participates in constituting that grace itself. The form of the religious symbol, then, is central to the splendour which it radiates forth:

We ‘behold’ the form; but, if we really behold it, it is not as a detached form, rather in its unity with the depths that make their appearance in it. We see form as the splendour, as the Glory of Being.7

There is a kind of unity which makes it impossible to divorce the form of a religious symbol from the transcendent spirit or ‘glory’, which shines forth from its depths.

3 Luther, 3.18.
4 Ibid., 3.32.
5 Ibid., 3.10.
Moreover, another point that Luther makes abundantly clear is that even though the Eucharist is a mandatory and ordained vehicle for communicating the message, it is no more than a medium which plays a secondary and supportive role to the message. Luther argues that the symbols are inadequate vehicles which cannot fully capture that which they gesture towards, which is the completed work of Christ’s dying on the cross: ‘the cup, which pertains to the substance of the sacrament, and fasting, which is an accidental, carnal thing, of no weight at all’. He condemns the papists’ doctrine of transubstantiation, which holds that when the priest performs the ritual, the bread transforms into the very body of Christ Himself, and He performs His sacrificial giving of His body again during this ritual. He explains that ‘the papists err in attributing to the sacrament, that it justifies, ex opere operato, when the work is fulfilled’. Neither the priest’s ritual nor the bread has any power in itself to perform the work of salvation, because these are mere objects which remind us of an act that has already been completed by Christ, ‘prefiguring the true body and blood of Christ’, and reminding us that ‘Christ’s body and blood were given and shed for us’.

A religious symbol, for Luther, is necessarily inadequate. To bestow upon the ritual itself any power would be ‘abominable idolatry’, because it would be wrongly crediting glory to elements for playing a part in the work of salvation. Instead, it functions by declaring its powerlessness and its status as a mere conduit of grace. The taste of the wine on one’s tongue and the feeling of the bread in one’s palm are not fully representative of what that salvation tastes or feels like. They can do no more than point back to the event of Christ’s death on the cross, and the abstract concept of Christ’s giving of his life. Louis K. Dupré explains that whereas all types of symbols have a gap between representation and represented, ‘the religious one emphasises that gap to accentuate how unrepresentable its signified is’ so as to remind us that ‘the signified remains forever beyond our reach’. No symbol, not even a cross symbol, is inherently ‘religious’, because they merely acquire these associations through tradition or a community’s shared cultural ideas. Instead, ‘what makes religious art is its tendency to display the inadequacy of the aesthetic form with respect to its transcendent content’. Thus, Luther’s discussion of the Eucharist is representative of some of the most salient discourses surrounding religious symbols. That is the indispensability of their form to the reception of their meaning, as well as the self-conscious declaration of their inability to fully illustrate that which they attempt to represent.

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8 Luther, 3.16
Such concerns remained at the forefront of Victorian discussion about the way in which the transcendent was to be represented. Against an encroaching modernity, with its structures of empiricism and laws of rationality, much fascination arose towards the spiritual and the ineffable world that seemed to lie beyond the realm of urban existence. One genre that was extremely popular during this period was fantasy; with its language of symbols, its suspension of the laws of the real world and its exploration of alternate realities, it proved a medium well-suited to address these ideas of the transcendent. The symbols of fantasy literature thus played the role of religious sacraments, insofar as they granted imaginative participation in the transcendent. Notably, the two defining features of religious symbols which we have discussed above are fundamental to the fantastic symbol as well.

Just as the believer’s participation in consuming the bread and drinking the wine is vital to their reception of God’s transcendent character, so the reader’s personal engagement in imaginatively journeying through fairyland is likewise central to their experience of the transcendent. Richard Viladesau explains that the ‘intrinsically mystagogical and supra-rational dynamism of theology implies that in its exercise it must also have a “poetic” element”; one cannot know about God solely through ‘scientific’ propositions, but must imaginatively experience him as one would a work of art.11 In the same way, the transcendent world that is symbolised by fairyland cannot be reduced to scientific documentation of what it is actually like, but must instead be gestured at by the richness of fairyland’s landscape and the magic of its heroes and villains. George MacDonald’s Phantastes depicts the journey of its protagonist Anodos into fairyland on the day he turns twenty-one. There, he encounters various characters and events which bear an uncanny resemblance to his own world and are, in many ways, more truthful than his own world. By encountering his demons (and angels), defamiliarized and presented in the new light of fairyland, he is able to learn many truths about them which he takes back to his own world so that he emerges a more enlightened man.

In this narrative, the interactions between the lands of the faerie and of the real symbolise the relationship between the material and the transcendent world. In Anodos’ adventure into fairyland, he frequently encounters fictional narratives in the form of storybooks which mirror his own story, but present it in brighter light, so that he cannot help remarking: ‘Why are all reflections lovelier than what we call the reality?’12 In the fairy-tales, he reads of characters with wings who die to their world and are reborn into the human world with their wings incarnated as arms. When the book comes to an end, Anodos feels as if he has died and awakened from a dream to return to his own world. His own life follows the trajectory of the characters’ lives, when he dies in fantasy land and is reborn into his real world now a mature man.

more ready to take on its realities. The experiences of Anodos are obvious parallels to the reader’s own, because MacDonald declares from the outset that *Phantastes* is a work of fantasy which intends to take the reader on a journey. It also suggests that when the reader finishes the book and exits the world of *Phantastes*, the experience will be akin to awaking from a deep sleep of death and stepping out of a world populated by ‘elves and other children of the night who wake when mortals dream, and find their common life in those wondrous hours that flow noiselessly over the moveless death-like forms of men.’

Nonetheless, even when readers awake from the fictional worlds, they perhaps, like Anodos, continue to live within a dream world from which they have to awaken into the world of the transcendent:

> From dreams of bliss shall men awake
> One day, but not to weep:
> The dreams remain; they only break
> The mirror of the sleep.14

The reader’s engagement with the transcendent, then, hinges upon his act of reading the fantasy and observing the interplay between his and the characters’ worlds. Schlobin describes the fantasy’s *modus operandi* as a kind of invitation to the reader to ‘play the game’ it has set up; it is a challenge to suspend one’s own laws of logic and to take up the rules of this game. Just like the religious symbol whose meaning is intertwined with its form, the fantastic symbol invites the reader to participate in its game in order to experience the transcendent for himself.15 Just as the religious symbol emphasises its inability to represent fully its subject, so the fantasy novel illustrates how neither the real nor the fantasy world is able to capture fully the nature of the transcendent. The fantasy world comes closer to the transcendent in some ways, but often conceals more than it reveals – only speaking in vague shadows and hazy reflections of what the transcendent is like.

While the narrative sets itself up as a mirror of the reader’s own world, and portrays Anodos’ adventures as a parallel to the reader’s own, it also self-consciously acknowledges the insufficiency of all reflections at ever fully representing their subject. Anodos is often unable to finish reading a tale as he is either interrupted or distracted; he often enters so fully into the narrative that he confuses it with is own reality, and also confesses that the limitation of language and of memory render him unable to describe his experiences:

> In the fairy book, everything was just as it should be, though whether in words or something else, I cannot tell [...] My representation of it must resemble a translation from a rich and powerful

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13 Ibid., p. 120.
14 Ibid., p. 130.
language, capable of embodying the thoughts of a splendidly developed people, into the meagre and half-articulate speech of a savage tribe.\(^{16}\)

Like the religious symbol which focusses on its negative element, the fantastic symbol also focusses on describing what the transcendent world is not like, rather than what it is like. Its symbols guide one towards the path, but take their leave at its opening, acknowledging that they can go no further. MacDonald describes his symbols as ‘substantial symbols’ that seek to embody their substance within their signifiers, comparing his symbols to mirrors that present a two-dimensional image of the human form, while also gesturing towards the person whose full character cannot be adequately contained within the frame of the mirror.\(^{17}\) Fantastic symbols provide their readers with an experience of the ineffable whilst also acknowledging that it will always lie beyond its pages, just as the fullness of Christ’s sacrifice lies beyond the bread.

Theology’s treatment of the symbol, as represented by Luther’s pioneering discourse on the operations of the religious sacrament in the sixteenth century, has enduring influence on the broader cultural views towards symbols and their capacity to signify ideas of the transcendent. These ideas continue to hold sway in the nineteenth century and may be observed not only in theology but in other forms of culture such as literature, especially fantasy literature. The fantastic symbol operates in similar ways to the religious symbol, adopting some of the qualities that Luther describes as key to symbol’s ability to gesture towards the transcendent.

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Is Tudor ideology reinforced or undermined by its representation in the artefacts of the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin in Fawsley, Northamptonshire?

PEN KEYTE

The problem which this article seeks to address is the contrasting way in which the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin in Fawsley Village, Northamptonshire, displays and utilises Tudor iconography, and to establish how and why this came about. Tudor iconography is displayed through diverse media in the church, through its alabaster monuments and carved panelling. The meanings of some of the artefacts, for example the 1534 Knightley funerary monument, are more easily read than others, such as the enigmatic carved panels. Finally the article will examine two examples from the carved panels consisting of a fiddling cat, a cow, dog and moon, and attempt to link them to the ancient rhyme about the cat and the fiddle, which, it has been said, is, amongst other things, a reference to Katharine of Aragon, or ‘Catherine la fidèle’.

The rural Midlands county of Northamptonshire owes much of its prosperity to the wool trade and from the Anglo-Saxon period on, the architecture of the county testifies to the wealth and importance of the inhabitants. Private residences still extant include the Elizabethan Renaissance Kirby Hall, the Jacobean mansion at Apethorpe, the late seventeenth-century French-inspired Boughton, Hawksmoor’s stately baroque Easton Neston, and the smaller gems of Sir Thomas Tresham – the Triangular Lodge at Rushden and the New Beild at Lyveden. In a ruined state, but all the more engaging for that, is the small Tudor dower house on the Fawsley estate, with its twisted brick chimneys reminiscent of Hampton Court, and whose historical associations with the Knightley family are relevant to this discussion of the artefacts in the parish Church of St Mary in Fawsley. The county’s religious buildings are equally impressive; All Saints, Brixworth, for example, is described by Dr David Parsons as ‘one of the grandest examples of Anglo-Saxon architecture in England – one might even say Europe’.¹

One such church is the Parish Church of St Mary’s, Fawsley. The village of Fawsley has been synonymous with the Knightley family since the purchase of the manor of Fawsley by the family in 1416, and the Knightley family history is closely connected to the ruling monarchs of the period. The earliest features of the church are the two thirteenth-century bays of the arcades. The church was remodelled several times, and is, as Pevsner describes it, ‘a veritable mausoleum to the Knightleys’ with the earliest of thirteen notable monuments dating from 1516, and the latest from 1856.² Many of the monuments are

² Ibid., p. 365.
outstandingly carved, particularly that of Sir Richard and his wife, wrought in alabaster by Richard Parker of Burton-on-Trent. Though the monument must be contemporary with the iconoclasm such features suffered during the Reformation, it has survived intact. Sir Richard (1455-1534) wears the SS collar, symbol of the victorious Lancastrians. He fought through the Wars of the Roses, survived, and was knighted by Henry VII. It is tempting to think that Sir Richard’s support of the Tudor cause accounts for the survival of his monument; furthermore, there are striking similarities between the Knightley monument and the tomb monument of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York by Torrigiano, which was commissioned by Henry VIII for Westminster Abbey and completed in 1517. Henry VIII followed his father in being adept at self-publicity, aimed at establishing the validity of the Tudor dynasty. An indication of this is the inscription which Henry had engraved around his father’s tomb:

Here is situated Henry VII, the glory of all the kings who lived in his time by reason of his intellect, his riches, and the fame of his exploits, to which were added the gifts of bountiful nature, a distinguished brow, an august face, an heroic stature. Joined to him his sweet wife was very pretty, chaste and fruitful. They were parents happy in their offspring, to whom, land of England, you owe Henry VIII.

It is tempting to speculate that Parker had somehow been made aware of the Westminster tomb monument, since his design for the Knightley monument closely resembles that of Torrigiano’s, albeit on a smaller scale. The effigies are beautifully carved with realistic drapery and minutely detailed accoutrements. Surrounding them at the long sides of the tomb are twelve weepers, representing their four daughters on the north side, and their eight sons arranged in pairs on the south side, under broad, flat ogee arches. The short side at the head of the monument displays the Knightley arms, supported, as in Torrigiano’s design, by angels. The short side at the foot of the monument is flush against a wall to which it has been cemented in, and therefore has no ornament. Henry VIII unreservedly exploits the opportunity for his own self-promotion through the monument to his parents (‘They were parents happy in their offspring, to whom, land of England, you owe Henry VIII’). The Knightleys could be equally happy in their dynastic achievements, since their children are antecedents of, among others, George Washington, the Queen, and David Cameron.
The Knightley monument is completely unambiguous in its message. It is a straightforward memorial to a family, it is utterly clear in its loyalty to the ruling monarch and its pride in dynastic and military achievements. By contrast, the carved panels which now serve as pew ends, are susceptible of no such easy interpretation. They are currently arranged to form the sides of nineteenth-century box pews, but it is not clear what their initial function was, nor where they originated. The plentiful occurrence of linenfold carving suggests a connection with Flanders; and indeed the stained glass supports such a connection, since there are many imported Flemish roundels. However, according to the churchwarden, no proper history of the panels or research into their provenance has been attempted. The current guide to the church dates from 1993 and is cursory in its treatment of the panels, describing them as ‘medieval’, and as giving ‘some insight into domestic beliefs and the attitudes of people at the time’. Not surprisingly in a publication meant for the use of the casual visitor, there is little or no analysis of the iconography, but rather a selective list of what is apparently represented, with no attempt at decoding the significance of each symbol. The author identifies the following panels:

Three wrestlers;
A shield with symbols of Christ’s passion;
A fox preaching to the fowls, which the author interprets as ‘beware of false teachers, especially Franciscan Friars’;
A devil with a spear riding upon a pig, and a unicorn fighting a beast;
The cock crowing, the scourge, the torch, pillar and ropes – an allusion to Holy Week and Christ’s passion;
A cat;
A tree of life with a horned devil behind her – vanity personified;
A man and woman embracing in bed and a pot rack above them;
A fox with a stringed instrument leading huntsmen and a chained bear while another animal eats from a pot;
A skeleton rising from the tomb.3

In fact some of the panels are even more bizarre, enigmatic and intriguing than the above list suggests, and bring to mind comparison with both the emblem books of Alciato, and the marginalia of illuminated manuscripts, in their use of coding and multivalence. However, beginning with the carvings which are susceptible of a more straightforward decoding, the north facing panel on the south aisle is composed of fifteen repeated decorative floral and geometric emblems including trefoils, quatrefoils, double lozenges and ogives. The flower is the Tudor rose; the ogive is the Tudor portcullis. If, as Sydney Anglo suggests, ‘beast and badges … became symbols not of pedigree but of the dynasty itself’, and were not complicated or subtle, but ‘straightforwardly heraldic; and they were for this reason, especially effective’4, it seems likely that the iconography of the carvings is, at its simplest level, part of the drive to establish the validity of the Tudor dynasty, particularly in cases where the property in question had once belonged to someone else. The dynastic hieroglyphs of the Tudors ‘were neither complicated nor subtle; they were straightforwardly heraldic, and they were for this reason especially effective.’5 The whole point of badges was that they were immediately recognisable, and the portcullis, rose, dragon and greyhound appear on all things Tudor, both animate and inanimate, from the lowest household retainer to the highest Garter Knight. So the Tudor badges are on seals and coins, in manuscripts, on designs for royal pavilions, plates, armour, cannon, and above all in chapels and palaces.

What is intriguing about the more figurative carvings currently serving as pew ends is that they do not lend themselves easily to a straightforward interpretation, and occasionally the reading that comes to mind is not only sinister, but potentially critical of established order and hierarchy. As with the emblems of Alciato, it would be helpful to have a transcript that explained the action or message of the image. For example, Alciato’s Emblem book of 1531 opens with a heraldic image of a serpent apparently eating a child; the accompanying text explains that the serpent is actually giving birth to a child, and it references ‘the noble lineage of your clan’. Similarly in Alciato, the image of the lute signifies the necessity for all strings to be present on the instrument in order for harmony to be produced. Images are rarely explicitly of a religious

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5 Ibid.
intent; even the stork, which we know was used in bestiaries as a symbol of the sacrifice of Jesus, is used in Alciato as a device for encouraging human co-operation. The main intention of the emblems and the textual messages seems to be to encourage good governance, social cohesion, and moral behaviour; in this sense the tradition is that of the parable or fable, grounded in civil rather than spiritual dimensions.

Given that the panels are of northern European origin, and their date is likely to be around the time of the Reformation, can we speculate that their sometimes bizarre and uncomfortable images are a commentary not only on the disruption of the civil Wars of the Roses, but also on the Reformation?

What is typical of the culture of the period is the mixing of secular and religious images and references, so that folk lore and myth are evoked alongside Christian ideology and monarchic, dynastic symbols. Again typical is the way in which the deeply serious or spiritual is accompanied and undercut by satirical parallel commentary, as can be found in earlier illuminated manuscripts, and in church grotesques and bestiary books. T. H. White writes interestingly in his commentary on The Book of Beasts of Physiologus that ‘a true symbol is not only a badge: it is a brief sermon, a shorthand way of saying something … a metaphor, a parallelism, a part of a pattern.’ Every possible article in the world, and its name also, concealed a hidden message for the eye of faith before the Reformation. ‘Ask the beast’ Job had said (XII:7) ‘and it will tell thee, and the birds of heaven and they will tell thee’. The meaning of symbolism was so important to the medieval mind that St Augustine stated in so many words that it did not matter whether certain animals existed; what did matter was what they meant: ‘Nos quidquid illud significat faciamus et quam sit verum non laboremus.’

The links between Fawsley and contemporary events surrounding the Tudor Court become more evident as the iconography of the panels is explored. The dragon forms could be a reference to the emblem which Henry VII adopted as king; the cow could refer to the banner of Tarteron ‘bett with a cow’, which was one of the banners he carried to Westminster. The significance of the dun cow is related to its association with Lady Margaret Beaufort and Henry’s claim to the Beaufort line. The dun cow of legend was a savage beast slain by Guy of Warwick, and a huge tusk, probably that of an elephant, is still shown at Warwick Castle as one of the horns of the dun cow. The fable is that it belonged to a giant and was kept on Mitchell Fold, Shropshire. Its milk was inexhaustible, but one day an old woman (or witch) who had filled her pail wanted to fill her sieve (or ‘riddle’) also. This so enraged the cow that it broke loose from the fold and

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7 Ibid.
wandered to Dunsmore Heath, where it was slain by Guy of Warwick. There are clear depictions of the bear and ragged staff, the heraldic device of the Earls of Warwick.

There are many questions raised by these panels. Why, for example, are they not mentioned in Baker’s History of Northamptonshire, published in 1830, in which the author describes in minute detail the monuments of Fawsley Church, including the seventeenth-century funeral monument on the north wall? Come to that, why does Baker not describe the 1534 Knightley monument? One could argue that the panels are a late addition, but that hardly can be the case for the alabaster monument.

A further question arises when one contrasts the unambiguous use of iconography on the funeral monuments with the decidedly obscure images on the panels. Were the carvings on the panels a response to the deeply disturbing effects of the Reformation? The iconography is nothing like as complex or subtle as Holbein uses in The Ambassadors of 1533, but still conveys a sense that ‘the time is out of joint’. One of the few unambiguously Christian references is the pre-Reformation Arma Christi, which appears more than once. Some of the remaining images have, as we have seen, a reference or application to local myth, folklore and legend. Others are of the surprising and shocking nature of the sorts of images that can be found in the marginalia and bas de page of fourteenth-century Books of Hours and other illuminated manuscripts which are designed to disrupt the spectator, forcing him or her to stop and think. Examples of such incongruous images are the urinating man at the bas de page of Jeanne de Navarre’s Book of Hours, the grotesques which combine man, beast and bird in design, and the scatological references in, for example, The Macclesfield Psalter, which exemplify the illustrator’s delight in the rude.

Given such antecedents, it is possible to see that some of the designs on the Fawsley panels are in fact coded comments on contemporary events. So the carving which features a couple in bed beneath their array of pots and pans may actually be a depiction of a charivari or skimmington, where a couple who are perceived as adulterous or contravening assumed gender norms are chased by local people banging pots, pans, ladles, and making what was also known as ‘rough music’.

Could this be a coded commentary on Henry VIII’s relationship with Anne Boleyn, and divorce from Katharine of Aragon? Similarly, the carving described as ‘three wrestlers’ depicts three men in what can be seen as sexual activity; men are portrayed in curious activities, such as licking huge flowers; various creatures are composites of birds and beast and reptiles. A representation of a bird picking out a man’s eye seems to suggest that ‘all is not as it first appears’.
Which brings us to the two panels illustrating in one, a cow, a moon and a dog; and in the other, two cats playing a fiddle, with pots and pans at the base, and an unidentifiable imaginary creature eating out of a pot. Could this be a reference to the rhyme which goes back to the sixteenth century if not before:

Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed
To see such sport
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Figure 2: carved oak panel on the north side of the box pew to the south side of the church, artist unknown, date unknown, but thought to be Tudor, 30 × 60cm (photograph: author’s own)

Figure 3: carved oak panel on the east side of the box pew to the south side of the church, artist unknown, date unknown, but thought to be Tudor, 15 × 60cm (photograph: author’s own)

The remote church of St Mary’s, set as it now is in the middle of fields and a landscape designed by Capability Brown, is both delightful and intriguing, and, as this article shows, would benefit from, indeed, demands, further study.


Baker, George, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton, Volume I* (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1822)


‘No one can serve two masters’: Female recusancy and rebellion during the Elizabethan period

MARIA NEARY

In its literal sense ‘recusant’ means a person who refuses to submit to an authority or to comply with a regulation. In its historical setting, it applies to those who maintained an attachment to the Roman Catholic Church and who refused to attend Anglican services. This article will use a portrait of Catherine Neville, Lady Constable in comparison with the Earl of Northumberland’s confession following the 1569 Northern Rebellion to deduce what we can learn about the life of a recusant woman from the scant material and written evidence that remains.

On 14 November 1569 the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland stormed Durham Cathedral, ripped apart all the Protestant books and celebrated a Catholic mass. Within days six thousand armed men marched under the banner of the Five Wounds of Christ besieging Northern towns. Many of the public participated in the Catholic services, some under fear but others enthusiastically. Across the country reactions were mixed, with some urging others to join the uprising and others fretful and frightened. Elizabeth and her Council mustered an army of fourteen thousand and put up special defences in London. As the Queen’s forces arrived the Earls fled to Scotland and the rebellion amongst the common people quickly died down.

Hundreds of rebels, both amongst the nobility and the common people, died on the gallows with Elizabeth issuing at least seven hundred executions. The North was put under new tight controls in an attempt to secure the Elizabethan religious. In some ways the rebellion of 1569 resembled many of its predecessors quite closely – however the biggest difference lies in the response of the crown.⁴ Although not the first Tudor rebellion regarding religion, the Rising of the North was the most significant domestic threat that Elizabeth faced during her tenure. As such the response and fallout from the rebellion was carefully managed and orchestrated over a substantial period of time so as to try and further engrain Elizabeth’s power in the northern counties.

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¹ Matthew 6. 24.
Northumberland’s Confession

One year after the rebellion the Earl of Northumberland, Thomas Percy, was captured and turned over to Elizabeth who beheaded him on charges of treason for which he issued a full confession and refused an offer to save his own life by renouncing his Catholic faith. Despite his confirmation and seeming acceptance of his own guilt, Northumberland’s confession seems to assert that, before the rebellion, he, the Earl of Westmoreland Charles Neville, the Duke of Norfolk Thomas Howard and Leonard Dacre were themselves resolved not to instigate a rebellion and wished to excuse themselves from the plotting as they were so unwilling. Indeed, this may be Northumberland attempting to protect his fellow recusants who had fled. However, the reasons he gives for reluctance to rebel, such as a small likelihood of success (and therefore the risk of losing their heads) and the credit and favour of their companions seem to be legitimate and well-founded. Furthermore, he is not reluctant in admitting to the rebellion’s aims of restoring Catholicism to England and marrying Thomas Howard to Mary Queen of Scots whom they had hoped to put on the English throne.

Instead Northumberland claims that after the men met to discuss the rebellion and then disseminated to make their own decisions, it was the wives who insisted the men must rise in rebellion. He recounts that Lady Westmoreland, upon hearing of their decision not to rebel, ‘cried out, weeping bitterly and said: “we and our country were shamed for ever; that now in the end we should seek holes to creep into”’.³ He also notes the pressure placed upon him by his servants and households who he says ‘showed unto me afterwards, if I had not turned back at the first time (to engage in the rebellion), some of the others meant me a displeasure’.⁴ Thus upon their instigation, amid rumours of the imminent naming of the new heir apparent, Northumberland claims the rebels were forced to act.

With such a specific and condemnatory quote from Lady Westmoreland it can be reasonably assumed that various Catholic recusant rebels who partook in the rising were urged and encouraged to do so by their own wives and female relatives, along with possibly others from their domestic household. It is suggested that Lady Westmoreland, Jane Neville and Lady Northumberland, Anne Somerset rode out with the rebels to Durham and participated actively in the Catholic mass on 14 November.⁵ Jane Neville was refused a pardon from the Queen for her involvement and lived in virtual imprisonment in Kenninghall, Norfolk.

⁴ Ibid., p. 200.
until her death in 1593. Meanwhile, Anne Somerset escaped to Bruges and lived her life in exile engaging in Catholic plots and surviving on a pension from Philip II until her death in 1596.

However, little else has been documented of other recusant noble women’s involvement and engagement with the uprising and their fates after the rebellion. One such woman is Catherine Neville, later Lady Constable and sister of Charles Neville the Earl of Westmoreland. Women played a substantial role in the recusant movement.\(^6\) Catherine was a known recusant during her life and as a sister of Charles could arguably be one such woman who helped to instigate and encourage such rebellions and plotting. She is said to have spent time herself imprisoned for recusancy at Sheriff Hutton from 1582-84 under the watch of the Earl of Huntingdon, an English Puritan nobleman who was hotly opposed to the Northern Rising and was entrusted by Elizabeth to see that she did not escape at the time of the threatened uprising.\(^7\) Furthermore, in her will she left substantial bequests to known recusants such as her son-in-law Henry Constable and her niece Katherine Gray.\(^8\)

Like many Elizabethan, and particularly recusant or non-conformist women, few other details or documents survive of Catherine’s life or beliefs. The belongings of many recusant families were either burnt as heretical or seized by the Crown. However there is a surviving portrait of Catherine, painted by Robert Peake in 1590, and currently held in Lytes Cary Manor. The portrait (Fig.1) speaks to various aspects of the life of a female recusant during Elizabethan times.

\(^8\) East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Local Studies Service, Exemplification of Will of Lady Katherine Constable widow, DDCC/134/9.
Lady Catherine Constable’s Portrait

The portrait of Lady Catherine is one of the few surviving portraits of any Elizabethan recusant woman. This could be due to the false attribution of the painting, which was believed to be of Bess of Hardwick, ensuring its survival. The portrait was only correctly identified in 1963 upon the discovery of an identical
portrait at Burton Constable Hall. Such confusion could have arisen from the inscription on the portrait; with a date of 1590 and the age of the sitter as sixty, thus implying she was born c.1530. This would certainly cause confusion, as her father was born in 1525, thereby contradicting other records dating Catherine’s birth as 1541. Such mystery and confusion surrounding recusant women’s identities is not unfamiliar. These women would often be forced to live secretive and discreet lives due to the fear of repercussions for their beliefs. Furthermore, women at the time, due to their relative anonymity, would be utilised within the recusant movement to carry out unlawful activities such as hosting Jesuit priests and secreting Catholic objects. Due to the domestic setting in which women existed, they had comparatively more freedom than men to engage in such activities without investigation.

The painting conforms to various aspects of Elizabethan portraiture which are nonetheless interesting when considered in the light of recusant women – both the sitter being alone in the portrait and the completely plain background. Firstly, Catherine is painted alone. Although this is typical for Elizabethan portraiture and certainly conforms to the style of Robert Peake, it is somewhat ironic for Catherine to be viewed in such a light. Within the recusant movement a key role for women was in establishing and maintaining the networks which ensured the continued practice of the Catholic faith in a covert manner. Recusant women used their homes to harbour conservative Catholic priests but moreover used their noble status to establish and maintain recusant networks through marriages and familial connections. Their links to various members of the aristocracy, gentry and government administration were instrumental in their survival during the tightening of the religious settlement. Both of Catherine’s nieces were tried for their work in harbouring recusant networks and particularly Jesuit priests such as John Boste. However, they were both pardoned from hanging, although found guilty, due to their noble connections and rank.

Furthermore Catherine is painted with a completely plain and dark background. This was typical of Peake’s style when painting nobility. However he, and other Elizabethan portrait artists, would often use codified and contextually rich backgrounds to convey extra detail and information about the sitter. In the case of Catherine Neville, the purposefully dark and shadowy background could speak to the anonymity of location that many recusant women used to their advantage. The wives of many involved in the Northern Rebellion found themselves dispossessed and without a home following the trials. This meant they may
rent or live with family connections and many recusant women used this nomadic existence to their advantage in order to evade the authorities and official records of Church attendance. Catherine’s niece was accused of withdrawing from society and residing at properties rented from other recusants, through which she would conduct her Catholic practices. The plain background could further be a deliberate choice by Catherine to avoid exposing any of the Catholic iconography and decoration which may have been present, or in fact hidden, within her living quarters at the time of painting. The removal of Catholic adornment and decoration from the churches - and therefore their restoration - was a key motivation for those involved in the Northern Rebellion of 1569 and thus would likely be a cause close to the Nevilles’ beliefs. This could further be an attempt to prevent the seizure of any assets that she had saved from the Crown’s removal and destruction of many of the families items following the rebellion. Such seizures often financially impacted women more significantly in the long-term than the men who had been arrested or executed.

Unlike the composition of the portrait, Catherine’s clothing is somewhat unusual for a typical portrait of the time. Women in Peake’s portraiture were often painted in elaborate and embellished gowns to convey a sense of their social standing and wealth. Catherine however is painted in a plain black gown. This could be to convey her status as a widow, following the death of her husband John Constable in 1579. However, it could also indicate a wider sense of metaphorical mourning of the Catholic faith. In terms of her Catholic background, such a plain dress could be viewed as surprising, as recusant women often engaged in needlework and the embroidery of vestments as a way of covertly practising their Catholic faith. The making of vestments by the families of recusant women was done as a form of a Jesuit-led meditation upon the Virgin Mary and served both to replace confiscated articles, secure the family wealth through embroidery of high-value jewels and to establish tight connections with Catholic seminaries. Needlework was used as visual rhetoric and as a vehicle through which elite women participated in patronage networks and consolidated their political relations, facilitating their political agency in a female political hierarchy hidden from wider society within which they could not engage. Other aspects of Catherine’s dress, such as her exaggerated arms and shoulder pads, could be a more covert way of her attempting to convey the power and status she held still amongst recusant groups and societies.

Catherine’s head covering is also notable. Again, this is unusual for Elizabethan portraiture and Peake’s paintings. It could once more be a suggestion of Catherine’s status as a widow and reference to her

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16 Kesselring, ‘Mercy and Liberality’.

mourning. However, Catherine’s headdress looks strikingly similar to the coif and veil of a nun. This is then coupled with a ruff collar and sleeves. Such trappings point towards a life not only of mourning but of chastity and religious observance. This could be a reaction on Catherine’s part to the claim that many recusant women who harboured networks within their households engaged in events which were immoral both spiritually and carnally – an accusation which was levelled at her own niece. Such coverings could be Catherine’s attempt at asserting her upstanding morality despite such accusations. Furthermore, it could be Catherine referencing the intrinsic need for female networks within the recusant movement; networks which had often been borne out of, or mimicked in their structures and organisation those of convent life. This could therefore explain why her outfit emulates that of women living in a religious order.

As well as Catherine’s dress and head covering her jewellery is also intriguing. Primarily her necklace which shows a large cross painted on a thin chain. This being the central adornment in the picture undoubtedly points towards Catherine’s confident assertion of her Christian faith. However, the necklace lacks the beads of the rosary or the pendant of the crucifix and instead depicts a much more conventional Protestant cross. It would be unusual for a recusant during this time not to opt for a rosary due to their popularity following the papal bull Consueverunt Romani Pontifices issued by Pope Pius V, which officially established the devotion to the rosary in the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, such endorsement by the Pope meant that owning a rosary was in contravention of Elizabeth’s religious settlement; therefore choosing to be depicted wearing a simpler cross could have been Catherine’s attempt to protect herself and avoid repercussions. The lack of a rosary or crucifix could also allude to the confiscation of such relics which took place following the Northern Rebellion – one of the measures which, after execution and the confiscation of lands and titles, had the most significant impact on the families and households of the rebels.

Catherine’s other form of jewellery appears to be a gold bracelet or bangle on her right wrist. Such material riches would have been unusual for recusant women, who were usually punished financially for their non-conformity. Any movable property a woman brought to a marriage became her husband’s permanently and her land became his for his lifetime. Thus, a wife’s coverture was often compounded and confiscated for the remainder of her husband’s life. Although a wife’s right to inheritance was safe from permanent forfeiture, such right to dower only began at the moment of death and not imprisonment and therefore the wives of northern rebels often found themselves dispossessed. Many men, upon their imprisonment,
attested to concerns for their wives’ provision. Thomas Dorington claimed he had both goods movable and immovable confiscated during his imprisonment which were needed to maintain his wife and children. William Brestock died in Worcester Jail in 1590 leaving his wife and children with no provision. Therefore, life for recusant women amongst the gentry was often financially fraught. Nevertheless, this seems to have been of little concern for Catherine Neville, whose husband remained throughout his life at least outwardly conformist. Therefore she, unlike other recusant women, would not have suffered from forfeiture and confiscation of lands.

Despite the prominent bracelet and necklace one piece of jewellery is notably missing (or at least not visible) from Catherine’s portrait: a wedding ring. The reasons for the lack of any indication of marriage, such as a gimmal ring, could be multitudinous. Firstly, at the time of sitting for the portrait Catherine was a widow and therefore it may not have been deemed necessary to still wear a ring. It may however attest to some sense of disdain or disillusionment within her marriage. Her husband, John Constable, despite reported Catholic sympathies, had refused to join his brother-in-law during the Northern Rebellion. Sir Constable received patronage under Mary I and was put on the commission of the peace in 1555 to fortify the Scottish borders. Despite being omitted from this role in 1562, he was later appointed to the Council of the North by the Protestant Archbishop of York in 1566 through which he gained a place on the succession committee, and later a position as a Member of Parliament. Such outward sympathy with Elizabeth’s settlement, and not simply conformity but imposition of it, could have caused tension between Constable and his recusant wife. The fact that Catherine opted in her will to be buried near her grandmothers and godmothers is significant in that it was near the particular members of her kinship group that she would claim on the Day of Judgement. This could therefore suggest some religious or theological disagreement between herself and her husband. Furthermore her lack of wedding ring following the death of her husband could once again signal her willingness to live in a convent-like existence, with a marriage only to God.

The final notable aspect of Catherine Neville’s portrait is the small book held in her hands. The book shows no inscription but some decoration and could reasonably be assumed to be some religious text or prayer book. Such an object speaks to the motivations of the 1569 rebellion, as destruction of the Book of Common Prayer was widespread in response to the burning of traditional images and books which had been seen as humiliating public penance. Holding what is possibly a surviving Catholic text could attest

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25 Watson, ‘Aspects of religious change, regional culture and resistance in Yorkshire, c.1530-1580.’
to Catherine’s and the recusants’ hopes that Protestantism would be short-lived. Furthermore, the symbolism of a book attests to the wider idea of noble Tudor women using books as a way to manifest their own power and influence. The book-owning tradition of powerful Northern Catholic families is well documented and in particular the women, originating from Joan Beaufort and her daughters Anne and Cecily, who bequeathed and dedicated books to other powerful noble women. Such book-owning tendencies was seen as a specific danger of recusant women since the authorities feared their influence over their households and children in terms of providing religious education. Within a domestic setting women could teach their households their own particular religious beliefs, as seen with the Lollard women. Many of the recusant women who were imprisoned faced charges of educating children in Catholicism. The image of Catherine holding a book could attest to her involvement with such activities amongst the recusant networks in the North.

Conclusions
From the scant surviving written and material evidence regarding the life of Catherine it is difficult to conclude anything decisively about her everyday life as a recusant woman. The role and importance of females in the recusancy movement can be established from the Earl of Northumberland’s Confession, yet from her portrait much more can be inferred about their lifestyles and activities. The portrait speaks of Catherine’s interpersonal relationships both with recusant networks across the North, her family and her husband. Furthermore, it references her moral and religious conservatism and non-conformity during Elizabeth’s Protestant religious settlement. It could also suggest her uniquely female role in hiding Catholic priests and relics, whilst possibly educating and inducting the next generation into the Catholic faith.

Acknowledgements
My thanks and appreciation go to Julie Biddlecombe-Brown, Claire Marshland and Dr Teresa Phipps for their generous help and aid in researching such a challenging topic. I would also like to thank Dr Catherine Rozier for her insightful advice.

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Early modern women’s letter writing viewed through the lenses of portraiture and dramatic text

DEBORAH RICHARDS

This essay will explore the epistolary activity of early modern women through the media of portraiture and dramatic text. It will use two artefacts: the portrait of Mary Neville, Lady Dacre by Hans Eworth, and the text from William Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, featuring the forged letter from Maria to Malvolio. Through these two artefacts this piece will explore the themes of reliability and autonomy in early modern women’s epistolary activity and their influencing factors, namely the mechanical process of writing, and the sending, delivery and reading of letters.

During the early modern period, women’s letter writing fulfilled many objectives. Apart from being a means of private correspondence, letters conveyed news and information, aided business and trade, and provided social interaction. In contrast to the expectations of the modern postal service: autonomy of composition, privacy, and security of delivery; early modern letters were often written collaboratively, and were liable to interception, forgery and miscarriage.1 It is widely recognised by contemporary scholars that ‘early modern epistolarity must be considered beyond the dyadic model of single sender and single recipient’.2

While many women wrote their own letters, it is difficult to ascertain the author with any degree of certainty. Holograph letters were handwritten by the person named as the author, but many letters were not holograph letters, being written by an amanuensis3, scribe or secretary, or even by other family members and servants. While women enjoyed a high degree of control over the texts they authored, the holographic status of a letter could not always be relied upon safe in the belief that the woman wrote it unaided.4 A letter might be dictated by others only requiring a signature from the sender. Sometimes secretaries employed model or standard letters, the forms of which could be adapted to the individual circumstances of a woman’s particular requirements.5 A recent study by the historian Barbara J. Harris supports this observation, questioning whether ‘women composed the letters in their hands or simply copied them from drafts written by others. No definite way of answering this question exists unless the letter itself contains that information’.6 Third parties often had access to letters during composition,

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3 A scribe employed to take dictation, to copy, or to sign a document on another’s behalf.
5 Ibid., p. 83.
dispatch and conveyance, leading to anxiety over delay and interception. The scholar Gary Schneider summarises this doubt as the ‘constant threat of destabilization’.

The dramatic text in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (Appendix) focuses attention on the problems associated with variable authorship and illustrates Schneider’s ‘threat of destabilisation’ by highlighting the importance of idiolect, that is, the specific and distinctive way in which an individual uses language, as a means of recognising authorship and the authenticity of a letter. Maria copies her mistress Olivia’s style of writing and tricks Malvolio into believing the letter is of her hand, ‘I can write very like my lady your niece. On a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands’ (*Twelfth Night* II. 3. 155-156). To achieve this deception Maria would use materials, such as paper, quills, inks and seals in addition to employing a variety of skills, including the ability to write using a quill, composition, and an aptitude for linguistics. Maria is clearly educated and exercises her power and authority in the implementation of this deception. Maria’s impersonation of Olivia’s handwriting dupes Malvolio, who is concerned with the details of the writing on the superscription, ‘By my life, this is my lady’s hand. These be her very C’s, her U’s and her T’s, and thus makes she her great P’s. It is in contempt of question her hand’ (II. 5. 85-88). As the superscription to the letter contains neither C’s nor P’s Malvolio is clearly deluded, relying entirely on his belief in the authorship of the letter, which leads to his ultimate downfall. James Daybell remarks that, in the instance of this letter in *Twelfth Night*, ‘handwriting is not necessarily a singular possession or identity of a person, but rather a commodity that can be faked, an identity assumed’. Malvolio is tricked by Maria’s convincing forgery of Olivia’s hand, the choice of language used, and the personal idiolect of the letter.

This dramatic text illustrates the problematical nature of letters, which are open to authorial interpretation. Malvolio compulsively attempts to interpret the letter, ‘to decode “Olivia’s” *billet doux* with its notorious conundrums: “M.O.A.I. doth sway my life”’. Malvolio wills it to be written by Olivia, and in his delusion becomes caught in a ‘fustian riddle’ (II. 5. 107). His narcissism is a fatal flaw. He begins by trying to ‘make that resemble something in me!’ (II. 5. 118) and ends up finding his name, ““M.”” Malvolio. ““M” – why that begins my name!” (II. 5. 123-4). Malvolio becomes confused by the rhetorical content of the letter, which adds to the destabilising effect, ““M.” But there is no consonancy in the sequel. That suffers under probation: ““A” should follow, but “O” does’ (II. 5. 127-129). The change of metre in the fourth line of the rhyming couplets is a rhetorical device to indicate Malvolio’s confusion.

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7 Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolariety*, p. 83.
Jove knows I love,
   But who?
Lips, do not move,
   No man must know. (II. 5. 95-98)

The change to prose appears to offer Malvolio some solace, ‘Soft, here follows prose’ (II. 5. 138-139). The passage of prose (II. 5. 140-155) forms the main part of the letter, delivered by Malvolio as a speech, in which he is manipulated and cajoled, by flattery and misdirection, into wearing cross-gartered yellow stockings, ‘Remember who commended thy yellow stockings and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered’ (II. 5. 149-150).

While Malvolio is convinced by the hand and idiolect of the letter, he is also certain that it is Olivia’s seal, which was important both to secure the letter from interception and in communicating its provenance. Softened wax, usually red in colour, was used to seal the folded letter and then impressed with a ring seal that left an image in the wax. However, seals could be stolen, or get into the wrong hands, exemplified by Maria’s use of Olivia’s seal to deceive Malvolio. He touches the wax, which is still soft, and mistakenly identifies the impression as the one made by Olivia’s seal, bearing the image of Lucretia, ‘By your leave, wax. Soft – and the impression he Lucrece, with which she uses to seal. ’Tis my lady’ (II. 5. 91-93).

The textual artefact from Twelfth Night exemplifies aspects of epistolary precariousness and vulnerability. Malvolio’s discovery of the letter on the ground, ‘What employment have we here’ (II. 5. 80), illustrates the unreliability of delivering letters in the early modern period. There were constant threats of miscarriage and delay, ‘where carriers had access to letters, miscarriage, interception and information leaks were continual threats, for letter bearers might open a letter, lose a letter, or expose a letter to another’.\footnote{Schneider, The Culture of Epistolarity, p. 22.} A letter might be delayed for several weeks or be intercepted and changed in an act of forgery. In Twelfth Night a letter is used in the treacherous practice of deception and trickery, and this was not an uncommon practice in this period. Apart from ‘the interception or physical manipulation of letters’ texts’,\footnote{Ibid., p. 75.} which involved the composition of the letter, the recipient could be misled by delays in delivery or interception of the post. Interception of the letter by Malvolio is a planned act on the part of Maria; a strategy which emphasises the power of the material letter as a means of negotiation and of exerting control. This fictional letter written within a Shakespearean play serves to show some of the traits of anxiety and unreliability linked to early modern letter writing. The forged letter was written by a woman as part of a stratagem to deceive and outwit Malvolio and, as such, foregrounds features of epistolary uncertainty, namely recognising
authorship, the dangers of miscarriage, interception, forgery, imitation of a seal, and rhetorical misdirection. In *Twelfth Night*, Maria exerted power through nefarious means by playing on the unreliable aspects of letter writing.

As the sole author of her letter Maria had complete autonomy; however, collaborative efforts, particularly when writing business letters or formal petitions, also allowed early modern women autonomy and agency. The second artefact, Hans Eworth’s portrait, *Mary Neville, Lady Dacre*, illustrates the formal act of writing petitions through the symbolism of the painting (Fig.1). Daybell’s study notes that such letters of petition, alongside ‘suitor’s letters, or letters of request (that is requests for favour) account for almost one-third of women’s letters written during the sixteenth century’. The female role in social and political matters is illustrated by these letters of petition, which ‘highlight female mastery of the literary, rhetorical and formal conventions of epistolary form and shed light on the skills, albeit textual and rhetorical associated with the courtiership and the pursuit of patronage’.

A good petitionary letter would combine brevity with the persuasive use of rhetoric. It was essential to keep the reader’s attention so petitions were often written on just one sheet of paper. The unreliability of sending and delivering letters has already been examined using the fictional dramatic text from *Twelfth Night*. Women’s petitions too, were at risk of miscarriage and delay, and were also subject to the unreliability of reading practices. Petitions addressed to monarchs or government officials could be intercepted and read by intermediaries, or read in difficult circumstances, if read at all. There was no guarantee that a letter of petition would reach the addressee, or elicit a response. Letter deliveries were subject to the time constraints and dependability of the letter bearer. The notion of a letter being a private concern between writer and recipient is open to conjecture as many letters were a collaborative effort.

Both artefacts studied in this article share common themes, displayed through different mediums; both show the autonomy enjoyed by powerful women letter writers, both reveal uncertainty and unreliability attached to the sending and reading of letters. However, while the textual artefact shows Maria’s power channelled into forgery and miscarriage, the portrait represents the formal petition writing of Lady Mary Neville in her attempt to influence the decision of government.

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13 Image in Fig.1 is a nineteenth-century reproduction of *Mary Neville, Lady Dacre*, by Hans Eworth. A copy of the original (in colour) can be found at <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/719399> [accessed 24 January 2020].


15 Ibid., p. 229.
The Eworth portrait of Lady Mary Neville, painted circa 1555-1558, is one of several paintings of the period, portraying women letter writers: Johannes Vermeer specialised in painting scenes of middle-class domesticity and featured women engaged in epistolary activity, such as *Lady Writing a Letter With Her Maid* (c. 1670); Gabriel Metsu painted *A Woman Reading a Letter* (c. 1662-5) and *A Young Woman Receiving a Letter* (c. 1658). During the early modern period, portraiture developed from being associated solely with royalty and the Court, to being a valued part of the conspicuous consumption of wealthy families. Newly ‘risen’ families, as well as older established landed classes, sought to develop relations with the Court through patronage of polite portraiture created by Holbein and his contemporaries. There were very few English

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16 Alan Stewart, *Shakespeare’s Letters*, p. 244-47.
portraitists during the sixteenth century but Holbein opened up opportunities for Flemish, German, and Dutch painters from northern Europe, among which one of the most notable was Hans Eworth.\textsuperscript{18} Portraiture was not commissioned solely for aesthetic purposes but also to fulfill a role within a social and political discourse.

The Hans Eworth portrait shows Lady Mary Neville, in a formal setting with a portrait of her late husband, Thomas Fiennes, Baron Dacre in the background. Portraits, such as that of Mary Neville, conveyed messages and details within the composition; setting, costume and colours would all have had their meaning for the semiotically literate of the time. Each component of the portrait is symbolic, its main purpose being to represent and narrate the importance of Lady Mary Neville’s correspondence through petitioning to re-instate her late husband’s title and estate after they were removed following his execution. The half-length portrait, which is an oil painting on canvas, shows Lady Mary Neville seated at her writing table with a quill in her right hand, and an ink pot, a seal and a notebook, wherein she may be taking notes for her petition, are on the table before her. Lady Mary’s left hand holds the place in the book, revealing wedding rings which denote her former and present marital status. The formal portrait is within a sumptuous setting; the tapestry wall covering features a climbing, red Tudor rose and a green velvet curtain hangs behind the chair which is of a red hue with golden, rounded finials. Lady Mary Neville was a powerful woman from an aristocratic family, indicated by Thomas Fiennes’ coat of arms (three rampant lions on an azure background, with a carved inscription), featured to the bottom right of the painting. Lady Mary and her late husband are dressed opulently in black velvet; she in a gown and cap with a fur stole and a flower corsage at her throat which includes forget-me-nots, for remembrance; he is wearing a doublet and hat with a gold trim. The two faces are painted in semi-profile and are set at a similar angle to reinforce the subject matter of the portrait.

Colour is employed as part of the narrative to create atmosphere, show emotion, and to draw the spectator’s attention to various aspects of the portrait. The most striking and most significant parts of the portrait are Lady Mary’s face and hands and the face of her late husband in the portrait on the wall. The pale ivory provides a stark contrast with the black clothing. This portrait was commissioned to tell a narrative, to symbolise Lady Mary’s fight for justice. Her pale face looks serious, determined and emotionless, her eyes gazing beyond her desk as if in thought. She is portrayed as a strong woman; a widow who challenged the Government and won. Her hands, highlighted by their pallor, are employed to hold the quill and to mark the place in her book as she uses her letter-writing skills to petition the Government. Although the portrait was painted some years after Thomas Fiennes’ death, Mary Neville’s black clothing,

representing widowhood and mourning, emphasises her loss and contrasts with the rich, warmer tones of the red and green colours of the background. Many letters were a collaborative effort and it is highly likely that Lady Mary Neville would have received advice in the consolidation of ideas necessary to draft a petition, as represented by the notebook in the portrait. In 1558 Queen Elizabeth I reinstated Lord Dacre’s title and assets, as a result of Lady Mary Neville’s petitioning.

This article shows how two artefacts from contrasting media can address the same topic, and each add to the discourse. It has established that not all early modern letters were written by the sender; not all had bearers that delivered the letter competently and not all recipients were reliable readers. Women’s letters can be broadly categorised as: personal letters to relatives and friends; letters growing out of responsibilities as mothers, wives and widows; and letters of petition to members of government. The text from Twelfth Night is a personal letter which illustrates the view that letters were not necessarily the first choice for communication as ‘too many concerns and anxieties surrounded their materiality – their production, transmission, reception and sometimes their disposal’. Maria’s forged letter highlights epistolary unreliability but also shows the agency that women had to exercise power and control through letter writing. Maria boldly forges her mistress’s hand for her own ends. Lady Mary Neville uses petition writing as a means of taking on the Government and does not rest until her executed husband’s estate and title are re-instated. Her efforts to protect her family show a powerful and resourceful woman. Hans Eworth’s portrait illustrates the power achieved by early modern women in their quests to petition government. Women who could write with their own hand not only exercised control over their correspondence but achieved a means of articulation and self-representation, which could be used for personal or political ends. The two artefacts, literary text and portrait, address the activity of early modern women letter writers and provide an insightful view of their power and autonomy, set against a background of epistolary unreliability.

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20 Schneider, The Culture of Epistolarity, p. 33.
Appendix

Malvolio [takes up letter] By my life, this is my lady's hand. These be her very C's, her U's and her T's, and thus makes she her great P's. It is in contempt of question her hand.

Malvolio [reads] To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes.

Jove knows I love,
But who?
Lips, do not move,
No man must know.

If this fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars I am above thee, but be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them. Thy fates open their hands: let thy blood and spirit embrace them, and, to inure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy humble sloth and appear fresh. Be opposite with a kinman, surly with servants. Let thy tongue wag arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity. She thus advises thee that sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings and, wished to see thee ever cross-gartered – I say remember. Go to, thou art made if thou desir'st to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants and not worthy to touch Fortune’s fingers. Farewell. She that would alter services with thee, The Fortunate Unhappy.

Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou entertain'st my love, let it appear in thy smiling – thy smiles become thee well. Therefore in my presence still smile, dear my sweet, I prithee.

Letter from Maria to Malvolio, forging Olivia’s hand (Twelfth Night II. 5. 85-173)

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The mission of departure: overcoming silence, and the legacy of posthumous image. John Donne’s marble effigy and his final sermon, *Deaths Duell* (1631)

KATE VERVAIN

John Donne (1572-1631) – poet, preacher, and many things in between, spoke in his final sermon: ‘we come into a world that lasts many ages, but we last not’? While life is impermanent, artistic legacies endure; Donne’s poetry in the current era is the subject of much scholarship. His death however would have been little written about some four centuries later if not for the fact Donne conducted a series of final preparations to shape his reputation posthumously. This article considers the changing format, or second life, of two artefacts: Donne’s final sermon, once oratory, now textual, and his marble statue, modelled on a dying, soon to be lifeless body, now a solid representation of his continuing cultural presence and his belief in resurrection.

The statue of John Donne which stands in St Paul’s Cathedral is notable for not only surviving the Great Fire of 1666, but for its provenance in a ritualistic animation of death: a figurative theatre of death enacted by Donne in the weeks prior to his passing. Donne, although on his deathbed, had the impetus to counter the moment he would be silenced by death: his voice may be soon lost but he would permeate his death with a legacy of his own design. Izaak Walton, Donne’s acquaintance and biographer, regales how Donne’s trusted physician, Simeon Fox, suggested to Donne the creation of a valedictory monument. Donne, days from passing, resolved upon the idea. The surprising vigour and precision with which an ailing man conducted the preparatory work for a monument in his likeness is captured in the energy of Walton’s description:

Donne sent for a carver to make for him in wood the figure of an urn, giving him directions for the compass and the height of it; and to bring with it a board, of the just height of his body … then without delay a choice painter was got to be in readiness to draw his picture … in his large study, he brought with him into that place his winding-sheet in his hand, and having put off all his clothes, had this sheet put on him, and so tied with knots at his head and feet, and his hands so placed as dead bodies are usually fitted, to be shrouded and put into their coffin, or grave. Upon

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1 I will refer to the sermon date as 1631, consistent with the given date of Donne’s death as 1631; however the sermon is published with the date 25 February 1630 as the Julian calendar, used in England at that time, did not mark the legal New Year until 25 March.

The ambitious energy was characteristic of Donne (Fig.1), and it was not his only triumph over grave physical impairment. Weeks before his death in 1631, Donne delivered a breathtaking final sermon, performed in front of King Charles I, subsequently remarked upon as though it were his own funeral sermon, and posthumously entitled *Death's Duel*. It would stand to reason that a man who so infused his artistry with discourse upon the challenge of death and resurrection would not vacate mortal life without one final crowning comment upon the subject. Previous near fatal illness in 1623 spawned the *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, and several steps in my Sickness*, a series of meditations in which he grapples with the restrictions of illness and the immediacy of fear pertaining to physical relapse. Impending death therefore, and its menace of silencing, proved highly influential in collating the last thoughts of one of England’s most extraordinary poets.

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Figure 1: Unknown artist, portrait of John Donne, engraved by Pierre Lombart, circa 1622, oil on canvas (St Paul’s Cathedral; © The Chapter of St Paul’s Cathedral)

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3 Isaak Walton, *Walton’s lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert, and Dr. Robert Sanderson* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1884) pp. 74-75.
Whilst both the statue and the sermon text are indelibly a product of Donne’s confrontation of death, the sermon deals with the prospect of transition between this world to the next, and the paradox that particular belief harbours against the notion of human life as a continual ‘living death’ – as a series of deliverances from one death to another, daily, weekly, stage by stage: ‘our birth dies in infancy, and our infancy dies in youth, and youth and the rest die in age’. The sensory legacy of the sermon has its own transition: initial presentation of the sermon hinged on a theatrical element aimed at auditory processing, while latterly the structure of Donne’s rhetoric emerges in a different way: in published form it is readable and therefore repeatable in the mind, inducing a familiarity that in turn reveals technicality not apparent to the ears. The sermon’s true life is, of course, as it is spoken and heard, and in that sense it can only live once.

Figure 2: Nicholas Stone, funerary effigy of John Donne in St Paul’s Cathedral, 1631-32, marble
(St Paul’s Cathedral; © The Chapter of St Paul’s Cathedral)

4 Donne, John Donne on Death, p.68.
The statue found its origin in the same concerns as the sermon, but it is a palpable symbol of successful resurrection. It has developed two functions: as a substitute solidification of Donne’s presence to be left in this world, and to portray his transition to everlasting life. It does not speak to the imagination with quite the same appeals as the sermon, but is steeped in early modern tradition of memorial, honour, individualism and communal morality. It serves as a prolonging of Donne’s artistic and theological legacy in a form that is resolute and visually processed by the mind without complication. In a glorious occurrence of happenstance, the statue proved none more symbolic than by being the single monument to survive the Great Fire intact when the flames hit St Paul’s Cathedral (save some scorch marks to its base). There is something particularly compelling in the statue’s resurrection from the flames that destroyed Old St. Paul’s to its current home in the south choir aisle of Christopher Wren’s restored St Paul’s.

Death pervaded Donne’s life in every way possible: born into a Catholic household, he witnessed the persecution of his brother during the Reformation. Later, the grief he undoubtedly felt when converting from Catholicism to Protestantism during the 1590s was processed in many of his poems. High mortality rates, and the passing of close family, meant that death became a spiritual and intellectual challenge to Donne. His Songs and Sonets are infused with death, as are his prose writings and sermons – although death was a fairly common theme to preach upon. Yet death in his oeuvre was purposeful; it was not an admission of defeat. To confront death, to integrate death into his artistry, was to see past death and thus see past the limits of life.

Discussion of Donne’s end of life, and his infatuation with death in his works, is doubly potent for the reason he led more lives than most. For someone who is perhaps unfairly deemed as obsessed with death, it is hard to imagine a more vivid or successfully regenerative life than the one Donne led. He was master of reinvention, of contraries, and of complexities – some of which do not find understanding even in this day. He was variously a Catholic, a Protestant, a soldier, a Member of Parliament, a poet, a lawyer, and in 1621 gained the Deanery of St Paul’s, obviating his bothersome youth, and securing a reputation as one of the most revered preachers of his time.

Death was not merely a matter of expiration, but a theological complexity and dilemma. Pertinent to Christian death in this era was the immortality of the soul, redemption and resurrection. Orthodox Christian belief in the early modern period understood that upon death the soul would continue to heaven (or perhaps hell), to be later reunited with the body at resurrection. John Carey draws attention to Donne’s predicament in relation to the separation of the soul from the body after death, suggesting that Donne was ‘deeply averse to the prospect of being split up into body and soul, and surviving only in some flimsy
form like ectoplasm’, and that ‘his ego demanded’ he should be as whole in heaven as he was on earth.

The process of bodily death, interment, and the state of the body troubled Donne; on the prospect of putrefaction he writes in a sermon dated 1627:

I shall not be able to send forth so much as an ill ayre, not any ayre at all, but shall be all insipid, tastelesse, savourlesse dust; for a while, all wormes, and after a while, not so much as wormes, sordid, senselesse, namelesse dust.’

Yet this was the same dust of decomposition that in a sermon a year earlier had a more active function: once the dust of buried flesh had nourished grass and creatures, it would be re-collected by God to ‘recompact that body, and then re-animate that man, and that is the accomplishment of all’. The problem for Donne was the inability to be able to comprehend what awaited him; that whilst he could, in this world, conceive, express and endure the mercurial ways of nature, he did not know what ‘degree of glory’ God would bestow upon him in heaven.

Donne wrestled too with the idea that ‘the soul died, or slept, with the body, and remained in the grave until the Last Judgement’. The consensus among Protestant theologians was that the soul (without its body) was dispatched to heaven immediately after death to await resurrection and the reintegration of the body, yet there existed concurrent belief that the soul slept before resurrection. Donne believed both positions variously throughout his career: taking holy orders forced him to adopt the orthodox standpoint that there was immediate separation before resurrection, but there still remained for Donne the problem that the soul could not survive properly without the body.

The body mobilizes the soul; this thought was integral to Donne in creating a structure for his hypotheses. In Paradox XI he writes that, ‘the soul it seems is enabled by our Body, not this by it’; that the perfections of the body feed the mind. He frequently approaches spiritual dilemmas using bodily or architectural tropes either to embolden an argumentative framework or to carry a sentiment. Deaths Duell opens with an analogy based around architectural structure and God as the foundation of our souls: ‘the body of our

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6 Ibid.
8 Donne, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, p. 608.
9 Ibid., p.611.
10 Carey, p.162.
12 Carey, p.162.
13 Donne, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, p.345.
building’, while death is assigned bodily ‘jaws and teeth’. Donne’s work often carries an anatomical semantic currency; in ‘A Valediction: of my Name, in the Window’, for instance, we discover the lines: ‘The rafters of my body, bone/Being still with you, the Muscle, Sinew, and Veine,/Which tile this house …’. In ‘The Dampe’ we find: ‘Will have cut me up to survey each part/When they shall finde your Picture in my heart’. The sustained metaphorical focus on anatomy assigns an athleticism to the rigours of thought; an energetic momentum that may be otherwise difficult to capture. This imagery also links somewhat to Donne’s altered stance on the idea of ‘sleep’ before resurrection: sleep is an impasse; it is simply not active enough for Donne – he doesn’t allow death as inertia in his work.

Donne’s concern with death and its absorption into his artistry should not therefore be viewed merely as morbid fantasy, but as an attempt at mastery of the unknown. The Devotions are infused with frustration that ‘the long and regular work’ of maintaining personal health ultimately meets an insuperable ‘torment of sickness’. The lack of command over the interpretation of such illnesses is problematic for Donne: it is not being able to name or understand the infliction that is almost as agonising as the physical suffering. He writes: ‘But in a minute a Canon batters all, overthrows all, demolishes all, a Sickness unprevented for all our diligence, unsuspected for all our curiositie’. The lessening of control over one’s knowledge and physicality is what particularly troubled Donne: it was, after all, a restriction on the extent of his perspective.

The publication of Deaths Duell shortly after its oration followed the six previous publications of Donne’s sermons in his lifetime, with the wider folio of 156 sermons published posthumously in 1640, 1649, and 1661. Much of Donne’s poetical work is difficult to date with precision as it was seldom published formally; instead Donne distributed the poems in manuscript form among acquaintances and admirers. William Caxton introduced print publication to England in the 1470s, yet for the next two hundred years or so, manuscript publication held superiority in the view of many, including Donne, who proclaimed after publication of the Anniversaries in 1611-1612, ‘Of my Anniversaries, the fault that I acknowledge in my self, is to have descended to print anything in verse’. Whilst no manuscript of Deaths Duell survives, it has

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14 Donne, John Donne on Death, p.63.  
15 Ibid.  
16 Donne, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, p18, ll. 28-30.  
17 Ibid., p.47, ll. 3-4.  
18 Ibid., p.507.  
19 Ibid.  
20 Ibid.  
22 Donne, Letter to George Gerrard, 14th April 1612, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, p.463.
been suggested that Donne did in fact prepare one and intend for its printed publication, bestowing upon that work an afterlife.  

The sermon was not titled by Donne however, but by a publisher: *Deaths Dwell, or, A Consolation to the Soule, against the dying Life, and living Death of the Body* (Fig. 3). The full, extended title reveals that his Majesty’s household termed the oration *The Doctors Owne Funerall Sermon*, a claim repeated in Walton’s biography: namely that Donne ‘had preached his own Funeral Sermon’, enabling the sermon’s reputation which abounds to this day.  

The sermon is thus foremost remarkable in having gained immediate prophetical status, largely due to the congregation’s shock at Donne’s withered appearance and their consternation that the figure standing before them was not wholly present. Walton imagines the collective reaction to the sight of Donne emerging into the pulpit – ‘Do these bones live?’ – and draws upon the congregation’s apprehension to surmise that ‘many of them thought he presented himself not to preach mortification by a living voice, but mortality by a decayed body, and a dying face’.

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24 Walton, p.72.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
Delivered during Lent, 25 February 1631, *Deaths Duell* preaches upon a verse from the Psalms, ‘And Unto God the Lord Belong the Issue of Death’ (Ps. 68: 20). The sermon’s basis evolves around three considerations of that phrase, so that it variously means the deliverance from death, the manner of death, and the processes leading to everlasting life; succinctly: ‘from death, in death, and by death’. Having spent the winter on his sickbed in Essex, Donne resolved to travel to London to fulfil his employment as one of the Lent preachers appointed to attend the king – a position he had kept for many years. Not only had Donne written the sermon in extreme illness, but he had to draw upon the stamina required to deliver it: in addition to memorising the lengthy script, a performative vigour was necessary to animate the speech for sustained visual and aural audience immersion. The early modern sermon developed from classical tradition of oratory and rhetoric, and was imbued with drama and exhortation.

If, as John Carey suggests, Donne’s aim, ‘when he writes about death, is to make it more active and positive than life, and so negate its deathliness’, then it would stand to reason that in animating death, he sought to make a vibrant physicality of death. In one of the most striking passages of *Deaths Duell*, Donne fuses the cessation of life with the beginning of life, deeming birth and death inextricable. Once again using anatomical language, he draws upon our entrance to life to prove his point: the womb is inimical to life, it harbours the threat of death as we have yet to survive gestation; moreover whilst in it, we are even less conscious than when we sleep. The womb does not support life, but rather death itself, for it delivers us from one death to another: ‘in our mother’s womb we are dead, so as that we do not know we live’, so that our ‘birth and entrance into this life is *exitus à morte*, an issue from death’. The womb as receptacle is perilous for if we do not escape it, it will kill us: ‘is there any grave so close or so putrid a prison?’
Donne augments his prison trope further into the speech, drawing upon the inherent contradiction of being discharged from the womb, yet still attached by the cord: the introduction to living sees us manacled like a prisoner. It was an idea that Donne pursed a decade earlier, in a Lent sermon dated 1621: ‘Doth not man die even in his birth? The breaking of prison is death, and what is our birth, but a breaking of prison?’ Yet the idea of ‘the manifold deaths of this world’ as one period of life superseded by another, links strongly not to decay, but to Donne’s own regenerative nature.

If death ‘threatened to turn him into an inanimate object’ then Donne would pre-empt that silencing and prepare for his likeness to be made in stone, securing his endurance as insensate matter at least. Impregnated with the pre-death ‘theatre’ anecdote however, his statue becomes less an inanimate object and more of a living tale. Donne’s white marble statue (Fig.2 and Fig.4) was sculpted by Nicholas Stone – mason to both James I and Charles I – and installed in the cathedral within eighteen months of his death. Funerary monuments in post-Reformation England were an effort to maintain the public image of prominent figures and ensure the continuity of their presence. Whilst manifest in social practices observing

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37 Donne, *John Donne on Death*, p.69.
38 Carey, p.230.
ritual of death, the statues did not function only as a creation of memory, but as a mode of exemplification to remind others of the moral fortitude of the deceased.\textsuperscript{39}

Donne’s effigy in particular is steeped in the message of resurrection, of triumph over death (and of life): he is sculpted – as per his design – rising from an urn. This sculpture partly influenced a seventeenth century mode for funerary monuments to signify resurrection, and like Donne’s, posed in an upright position and shrouded.\textsuperscript{40} In the cathedral, Donne is positioned facing eastward in anticipation of the second coming of Christ. His face is peaceful; it peers out from the winding sheet - a traditional burial dressing which would be tied at the head and at the foot. On Donne’s effigy the upper knot assumes the appearance of a crown.

It was not Donne’s nature to relinquish his passion to the corrosion that precedes death, and to adapt one of his metaphors: ‘It is not in \textit{mans body}, as it is in the \textit{Citie}, that when the \textit{Bell} hath rung, to cover up your \textit{fire}’.\textsuperscript{41} Donne’s desire for success, his desire to understand beyond boundaries, and his desire to prepare for the Last Judgment provoked a study of death not as finite, but infinite. By examining Donne’s later sermons, we review his concluding thoughts formed by a remarkable life; by examining the monument which stands in the place he achieved his earthly glory, we review his afterlife - now four hundred years later.

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\textsuperscript{41} Donne, \textit{Devotions, Meditation XXIII}, \textit{Complete Poetry and Selected Prose}, p.550.


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The English perception of chocolate: from invigorating remedy to exotic indulgence, c. 1660 – 1760

EMMA VICKERS

Chocolate arrived in England for the first time in the middle of the seventeenth century. Though marketed initially as a medical panacea, it was soon enjoyed as a sweet-tasting extravagance. In his treatise, The Indian Nectar (1662), Henry Stubbe promotes chocolate’s curative and stimulating properties.¹ In contrast, R. Brunsden’s trade card (c. 1750-1760) advertises chocolate alongside other high-quality groceries. Together, these objects reflect the trajectory of chocolate as it moved from the medical into the commercial domain, and from the extraordinary to the familiar. Despite these developments, chocolate retained its exotic associations and remained linked to sophisticated and cultured taste. It is this paradox, the increased adoption of chocolate by ever-larger numbers coupled with its powerful connotations of exclusivity, that is explored through these two artefacts.

Treatises, trade cards, broadsheet advertisements, and recipes reveal much about the availability, perception and popularity of chocolate during its first century in England. In 1585 Spanish conquistadors transported the first shipment of cacao beans from Central America into Europe. From Spain, this tropical product proceeded through Italy and France, gaining popularity both at court and with clerics who consumed chocolate drinks while fasting. Unsurprisingly, therefore, this ‘Roman Catholic’ drink was viewed suspiciously by the English when it first appeared during the interregnum in the early 1650s. Nevertheless, once Cromwell’s forces had captured Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655, the English capitalised on their cacao plantations, resulting in a reliable supply of cacao beans to these shores. The first known advertisement for this ‘Excellent West Indian Drink’ appeared in 1657, available at Queen’s Head Alley, Bishopsgate.² In June 1659, another advertisement promoted ‘ready to drink’ chocolate, ‘unmade at easie [sic] rates [which could] cure and preserve the body of many diseases’.³ Therefore, within a decade of its initial appearance, these advertisements demonstrate that chocolate was starting to become a well-recognised exotic drink, identified with medicinal properties, and one that was already being enjoyed both publicly and privately. The English appreciation of chocolate had commenced.

¹ Henry Stubbe, The Indian Nectar, or a Discourse Concerning Chocolata: Wherein the Nature of Cacao-nut, and the other Ingredients of that Composition, is examined and stated according to the Judgment and Experience of the Indians, and Spanish Writers, who lived in the Indies and others; with sundry additional Observations made in England: The Ways of Compounding and Preparing Chocolata are enquired into; its Effects as to its alimental and Venereal quality, as well as Medicinal (especially in Hypochondriacal Melancholy) are fully debated. Together with a Spagyrical Analysis of the Cacao-nut, performed by that excellent Chymist, Monsieur le Febure, Chymist to His Majesty (London: Printed by J.C. for Andrew Crook at the Sign of the Green Dragon in St Paul’s Churchyard, 1662).
² The Publick Advertiser, no.5, 16-22 June 1657.
Chocolate was first sold in coffee houses, then also in more exclusive chocolate houses (mostly huddled around St James’s), before it began to be consumed in ever-larger volumes. It could increasingly be bought in slabs or lozenges in shops, to be incorporated into dishes and drinks in the home. Cookery books featuring chocolate recipes became more commonplace from the 1660s onwards, often aimed at the 'middling sorts’ and gentry. These recipes, along with specialised chocolate utensils and crockery, (including wooden molinillos and cups with mancerina), reveal that chocolate was enjoyed domestically from early on, both as a flavouring and as a beverage. The transition from medicinal to culinary use meant different forms of marketing were required: treatises could explain the properties and effects of chocolate to the uninitiated, while trade cards could promote chocolate to sophisticated households. What is useful to consider first, however, is how the usage of chocolate changed over this period and whether this affected its elitist connotations. The two objects selected to illuminate this are Henry Stubbe’s treatise The Indian Nectar (Fig.1) and R. Brunsden’s trade card (Fig.2).

In many ways, chocolate’s popularity was far from assured, as is evident from the ‘hard selling’ techniques adopted in treatises of the period. Oily, syrupy and bitter, chocolate would have tasted alien to English palates. Less appetising still, the Aztecs, from whom it was adopted, served it cold, spiced with chilli peppers and occasionally blood, so the Italian merchant Girolamo Benzoni was not alone in believing it was ‘more suited for pigs than for men’. Chocolate’s negative association with popery also meant a favourable English reception was unlikely, especially when combined with apprehension about its stimulating side-effects. Even warming the chocolate seemed peculiar to the English, being wholly unaccustomed to hot drinks. Therefore, in order to persuade the English to consume chocolate, it needed to be bestowed explicitly with significant health benefits. From 1650-1700 a wealth of treatises and pamphlets extolling the wonders of this 'drug' therefore emerged, though The Indian Nectar is probably the most exhaustive English account of chocolate of the period. Taken as a whole, seventeenth-century treatises reflect the heated contemporary debate surrounding chocolate – its perceived benefits as much as its imagined dangers. The very publication of these treatises illustrates the need to enlighten an unknowing populace about this peculiar substance.

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4 Chocolate became an increasingly regular ingredient in cakes and baked dishes. Chocolate recipes often included the addition of sweet ingredients, including rosewater and jasmine, and sugar was fairly standard.
5 Molinillos were whisks to stir the chocolate. A mancerina would hold the chocolate cup in place on the saucer and was particularly used to prevent spillage on bedsheets.
7 Chocolate, tea and coffee all arrived in England within a few years of each other.
8 Other treatises that positively promoted chocolate include Thomas Gage’s The English American (1648), William Hughes’s The American Physician (1672), and John Chamberlayne’s The Natural History of Coffee, Thee, Chocolate, Tobacco in Four Several Sections (1682). However, Daniel Duncan’s Wholesome Advice against the Abuse of Hot Liquors, Particularly of Coffee, Chocolate, Tea, Brandy and Strong-Waters (1706), and Martin Lister’s A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698 (1699) both challenged the bolder claims made of chocolate.
The popularity of chocolate as a medical product in this period owes much to the particular context into which it was introduced. Awash with disease and infection, the mid-seventeenth century English population suffered from all manner of conditions, ranging from dysentery and dropsy to scrofula and smallpox or, as Wadsworth translates it, ‘a plague of the guts, fluxes, consumptions [and] cough of the lungs’. In this environment, any ‘drug’ promising respite from relentless ill-health was worth sampling. The Indian Nectar has a multi-stranded structure, in which Stubbe primarily describes chocolate’s medicinal benefits, as well as its nutritional value, assorted methods of preparation and the differences between Spanish and English chocolate recipes. Medically, Stubbe suggests that chocolate is a catholicon, stating
that ‘I have heard and read Discourses of Panaceas and Universal Medicines: and truly I think Chocolata may as justly pretend to that Title, as any’. Elucidating further, Stubbe maintains that there are particular ingredients that can be added to chocolate to cure different ailments, dependent upon circumstances. For example, in ‘cold constitutions’, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves are considered ideal additions; for ‘hot consumptive tempers’ almonds and ‘pistachos’ are recommended; vanilla meanwhile strengthened the heart, and saffron boosted the stomach. For other disorders, Stubbe recommends chocolate concoctions containing ‘Musk’, ‘Ambergrease’, ‘Citron’, ‘Lemon-peels’, and ‘Odoriferous Aromatick Oyls’. He portrays these ‘new exotics’ as ‘legitimate additions to the materia medica of orthodox physicians’. Perhaps more credibly than some of his wilder assertions, (given that it is now known that serotonin and phenylethylamine are both mood-enhancing, and theobromine is a muscle relaxant and cardiac stimulant), Stubbe also claims chocolate obstructs the ‘hypochondriac melancholy’. By highlighting its comprehensive range of curative powers, he indicates that everyone has something to gain from this wonder-drug.

Stubbe also encourages widespread consumption by demystifying chocolate’s effects. He addresses fears about chocolate’s stimulating properties directly, by depicting it as a positive aid to fertility and sex. Stubbe promotes its efficacy as an aphrodisiac, claiming that ‘Chocolata […] becomes provocative to lust’. He even includes a biblical reference to Rachel, Jacob’s second wife, whom he claims would not have needed to purchase mandrake roots had she known of chocolate’s ability to stimulate sexual desire. Here he directs his observations particularly at ‘London Gentlemen’, encouraging them to sample chocolate rather than experimenting with other aphrodisiacs on the market (such as anchovies).

Having established that chocolate is a near-universal remedy, Stubbe also asserts that it is not only a drink but a complete food in itself, thereby increasing its desirability still further. In fact, he criticises Pope Urban VIII who ‘did declare it in discourse […] that it was merely a drink […] yet few believe him infallible’. The cacao nut, Stubbe continues, has the greatest nourishment as all other ingredients are ‘but Spicery […] and serve at best but as a Vehicle to distribute the Cacao nut into the body, and to make it agreeable to the Stomach’. Stubbe endorses it as a naturally wholesome food by claiming that ‘English soldiers stationed in […] Jamaica lived [exclusively] on cacao nut paste with sugar’. To further highlight this point,
he cites Dr Juanes de Barrios, who claimed that ‘after eating chocolate, one needed no meat, bread or drink.'\textsuperscript{18} Stubbe insists that chocolate, if taken twice a day, can refresh anyone who is ‘tyred [sic] through business’.\textsuperscript{19} Rather than appearing overly extravagant in his claims for chocolate, Stubbe helps increase its overall popularity. At the very least, he suggests, it is energy-rich food.

Figure 2: Murray of London, R. Brunsden’s Trade Card (c.1750-60), ink on paper, 19.3 × 15.4 cm (Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum)

Attributed to a later date (c. 1750), R. Brunsden’s trade card (Fig.2) also promotes chocolate, but in a distinctively different way. Chocolate had become familiar to the English by 1750, and so Brunsden’s intention here is to advertise it as enticingly exotic fare, rather than as a ‘new’ product imbued with specific

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 84.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 3.
health properties. Essentially, this trade card is a commercial advertisement, but its design also reveals both the elaborate process behind chocolate’s manufacture as well as the apparent sophistication of chocolate consumers. This richly decorated cartouche is adorned with goods for sale, offering a concentrated yet alluring image. Brunsden’s sign, engraved at the top of the card, is three golden sugar loaves. As the most common symbol chosen by grocers and tea men, contemporaries (including the illiterate) would have identified his business immediately. In this way, the image acts as another form of text. Under the title of ‘The Chocolate Maker’, three vignettes portray men preparing chocolate: roasting chocolate beans, cracking open their shells to extract the cocoa nibs, and grinding these nibs using a horse-powered mill. As with the precise additives itemised in Stubbe’s treatise, the effort involved in preparing chocolate suggests it is a superior and complex product, deserving of appreciation.

When compared, these two sources reveal that the typical usage of chocolate changed over this period: from revitalising remedy to sweet treat. However, increasing both accessibility to, and appreciation of, chocolate did not mean that its connotations of elitism and exoticism were in any way diluted. Even the earlier source, Stubbe’s treatise, reveals that there was always a sense of decorum associated with chocolate drinking. Though the medicinal benefits of chocolate are central to his treatise, it is also notable that he details the appropriate methods for the English to adopt when preparing and consuming chocolate. By doing so, he infers that chocolate-consumption is associated with social prestige, acquiring its own etiquette from early on. Here is the central paradox of chocolate consumption throughout this period: though a wealth of evidence suggests it was becoming an increasingly commercial and mainstream product, its social cachet remained a powerful marketing tool and was fundamental to the way in which the English perceived it.

The expansion of the British Empire and the rise in print culture resulted in increasingly worldly consumers throughout the eighteenth century. Trade cards such as Brunsden’s were designed to appeal to their sense of refinement, particularly when promoting foreign products such as chocolate. Added to this, favourable economic conditions in the early eighteenth century meant prices fell as pay rose in real terms, so more disposable income was available for such exotic purchases.20 As chocolate became more reasonably priced, entirely new groups of consumers emerged. For the rising ‘middling sorts’, and even some artisans, conspicuous consumption was a way to emulate the social elite and to demonstrate their own cultivation. In fact, evidence from Anne E.C. McCants’ ‘Poor Consumers’ reveals that consumption

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of chocolate had spread well beyond the ‘middling sorts’ by 1750, even being devoured by humble tailors. Sidney Mintz cites Austen and Smith who also note the growing chocolate consumption among the less affluent. They argue that respectability was their primum mobile, and this trade card would have appealed to them for this very reason. Brunsden’s message is that consuming chocolate demonstrates one’s gentility, elegance and worldliness. Clearly, the opportunity to enjoy chocolate was now open to all, or at least to anyone who could manage these ‘reasonable’ rates. Though chocolate is still not an essential commodity, Brunsden’s trade card demonstrates that it could be readily purchased - at least in London - from a local grocer. It can now legitimately be described as a mainstream luxury, but it is no longer the extortionate one that Stubbe identifies costing six shillings sixpence per pound.

A more detailed analysis of the author of The Indian Nectar, and some of his blatant references to distinguished figures, reveal Stubbe’s desire to promote chocolate’s kudos from the start. Stubbe (1632-1676) was a scholar and second keeper at the Bodleian from 1657-1659, as well as physician to Charles II and to Lord Windsor, Governor of Jamaica. He gives authority to his treatise by quoting directly from the pre-existing European literature on chocolate, particularly by Antonio Colmenero who ‘authenticated’ his work. By referring liberally to eminent physicians of the day, including Robert Boyle and William Harvey, Stubbe adds further weight to his medical pronouncements. Giving the ultimate social authority to his arguments, he also draws attention to his chocolate-making for the newly-enthroned king. The significance of this royal connection is emphasised in the introduction: ‘Besides the king’s majesty; who alone is so great a promoter and so competent a judg [sic] of merit, that to an Ingenuous Person, there needs no further inducement to deserve’. Stubbe unequivocally highlights the social prestige associated with chocolate through this royal reference. The Indian Nectar can also be viewed as a self-serving piece of propaganda. In writing this treatise from a primarily medical stance, Stubbe stood to gain professionally by promoting himself as the ultimate expert on this universal medicine. He also expected to benefit financially, foreseeing cacao’s potential as a lucrative crop. Personal anecdotes add further credibility to Stubbe’s empirical approach. For example, he claims that chocolate is ‘observed to be more laxative then [sic] binding and […] neither Mr Boyle nor myself (who did eat two pound once, and great quantities on purpose), ever felt any heaviness, or annoyance in the stomach or elsewhere’.

24 Ibid., p. 13.
25 Charles II reigned from 1660-1685.
27 Ibid., p. 33.
with chocolate and his knowledge of pre-existing literature on the subject, buoyed by his influential social and medical connections, meant he was able to establish himself as England’s definitive chocolate specialist.

As has been noted above, chocolate became an increasing feature of the English diet from the late seventeenth century and was now enjoyed by a greater stratum of society. However, the underlying association with decorum remained, as is evident in Brunsden’s trade card. Much more than an aide-mémoire, trade cards communicated the nature, provenance and quality of goods.\(^{28}\) As Maxine Berg explains, their purpose was two-fold: ‘to encourage the consumer to return, and to act as a means of encouraging the dissemination of knowledge about a business from existing to potential customers’.\(^ {29}\) Brunsden’s trade card epitomises many from the period 1720-1770, in that it combines ornate imagery and text in order to tempt consumers. Through the quality of design and the products being sold (including freshly prepared chocolate), Brunsden demonstrates that he is a respectable grocer selling first-rate goods. Trade cards were expensive to produce, in this case designed and engraved by Murray of London, and his high-quality card reflects his fine products. Brunsden, profiting from the ongoing culinary transformation in the domestic sphere, is selling chocolate as a luxuriously exotic product, to consumers cultured enough to recognise it as such.

The enduring sophistication of chocolate is evident in this trade-card’s design. By including the detailed vignettes of the chocolate-making process, Brunsden is keen to show his chocolate is produced on site by professionals: these images are intended to imply freshness and act as a guarantee of high standards – particularly important as eighteenth century chocolate was frequently adulterated by the addition of grain. In fact, chocolate makers such as these would have sharpened their skills considerably since 1723, when imports of fully manufactured chocolate were banned, in order to generate a chocolate-making industry in England. By emphasising the expertise required to make chocolate, Brunsden highlights its remarkability. Furthermore, as Ambrose Heal explains, the trade card as a whole is exquisite, with ‘the lettering […] almost uniformly of a high standard of achievement; the design […] dignified and well-spaced, the ornament well-drawn and the copper-plate engraving […] highly accomplished’.\(^ {30}\) Through the adoption of a rococo design, exemplified by deliberately eye-catching, asymmetric scroll frames, trade cards of the 1750s constructed an aura of European savoir-faire. Here, foreignness implies cultivated taste. As Linda Colley states, acquiring what was foreign was one of the ways in which to proclaim one’s social,


cultural and economic superiority at home. This rococo style, with its emphasis on ‘intimacy, elegance, […] and style’ was perfect for trade cards which were, by their very nature, small-scale yet distinguished. The script, too, enhances the decorous appeal of the image. The combination of different fonts, as well as the blending of upper- and lower-case lettering, adds to the captivating design. Due to the limited space, the written content of the card is necessarily informative: the name and location of the grocer, and the range and quality of his products, are identified. Here, chocolate is sold very much alongside other global goods such as tea and coffee, as well as the numerous other products sold by an oilman. Despite selling ordinary items, Brunsden is appealing particularly to customers who will appreciate the fine quality of his more flamboyant goods.

Not only is the quality of products identified but the range of exotic goods on sale is also revealed in Brunsden’s card. By highlighting particular items, it appears that his leading lines were chocolate, tea from China and Turkish coffee. These sought-after consumables are chosen as representative of the quality of his cosmopolitan establishment. Sourced globally, the provenance of the commodities is a vital part of his message, making the shopping experience more exciting for the customer. Through the creation of such a visually seductive card, Brunsden has essentially ‘invited the buyer into a conversation’. By purchasing, and thereby engaging with, these imported goods, the English consumer is personally participating in this era of rapid imperial expansion. Essentially, Empire is being ‘deployed as a marketing device’ here. This trade card successfully links the foreign with domestic, the cosmopolitan with home-made, with chocolate retaining its sophisticated and superior aura throughout.

So, as the Empire extended its tentacles, a range of novel foods - including chocolate - reached English shores. Initially suspicious, the English needed to be coaxed into sampling chocolate. Once their curiosity had got the better of them, the taste of chocolate - sweetened with sugar (and much else besides) - was naturally appealing. It was even more the case if consumers believed that it could either eradicate their medical woes, or reflect their cultured taste and procure them elevated social status. Chocolate was, therefore, perceived differently at different times, and both Stubbe’s treatise and Brunsden’s trade card reflect the very distinct decades in which they were produced. It is evident from these artefacts that chocolate was successfully adapted and marketed by men like Stubbe and Brunsden, depending upon the requirements, tastes and desires of the English at the time. Indisputably, chocolate seeped into English

33 Oilmen sold everything from cinnamon and hair powder to glue and gunpowder.
35 Ibid., p.156.
36 Stobart, Sugar and Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England p.182 footnote 17.
society from 1660s onwards, becoming an ever-more recognisable and popular product. Whether sold by apothecaries as a legitimate medicine, opportunists as a miraculous panacea, chocolate-house owners as a sociable drink or grocers as a culinary ingredient, it was increasingly purchased by everyone from royalty to soap-boilers. Yet, throughout this process of anglicisation and democratisation, chocolate’s exotic and exclusive associations endured.

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‘Bad taste of the town’: Hogarth satirised eighteenth-century theatre, but the public wanted spectacle

SIMON LAMOON

William Hogarth, Alexander Pope and other social commentators of their age believed there was an intellectual decline in the cultural output of the eighteenth century. Hogarth demonstrated his derision of ‘lowbrow’ entertainment in his satirical engraving Masquerades and Opera, and subtitled The Bad Taste of the Town. For Pope, dullness was a pervasive force in British culture cruelly depicted in his mock epic The Dunciad. Yet this popular culture was often underpinned by some of the Enlightenment’s distinctly ‘highbrow’ philosophical and scientific advances such as the magic lantern, which used sophisticated optical technologies. Using Hogarth’s engraving and an image of a magic lantern, typical of Paul de Philipsthal’s sensational show Phantasmagoria of 1803, as artefacts, this paper seeks to demonstrate that in the name of cultural purity, satirical criticism of the theatre, ignored significant advances in natural philosophy of the long eighteenth century.

And every year be duller than the last.
Till raised from booths, to theatre, to court,
Her seat imperial Dulness shall transport,
Already opera prepares the way.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) in The Dunciad satirically portrays the goddess Dulness [sic] reigning over eighteenth-century culture, and Joel Blair suggests that William Hogarth believed ‘[t]he entertainment was either vulgar or overly sophisticated’. Satire was telling the public that culture and theatrical entertainment in particular was in decline. Hogarth and Pope obviously found plenty to mock and deride with new trends and cultural imports differing in style and content from older English theatrical traditions, such as Shakespeare and Ben Johnson. However, change was almost inevitable. Brander Matthews suggests Puritans had broken off theatrical traditions by closing places of entertainment, and ‘when playhouses opened again after the Restoration, the managers had to gratify new likings which king and courtiers had brought back with them from France’. The satirists are suggesting there is cultural decline, and the biting humour would be lost if there was not some form of prejudice against, in this case, the new, spectacular,

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3 Alexander Pope, The Dunciad, Third Book, 298-301.
5 Brander Matthews, ‘The Drama in the 18th Century’, The development of the drama (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912), pp. 263-264.
and economically lucrative, supposedly damaging intellectual content of theatre. However, by making a wider study of what was underpinning much of the new popular theatre one can see it employs sophisticated technology utilising the latest thinking. To understand Hogarth’s point of view this article will look at his 1724 engraving *Masquerade and Opera* supported by a playbill of Paul de Philipsthal’s *Phantasmagoria* of the latter part of the long eighteenth century. A second artefact, the magic lantern, will be discussed as intrinsic to spectacular and Gothic inspired shows, such as the *Phantasmagoria*. These artefacts illustrate an enjoyment of spectacle by the contemporary theatregoers, and also identifies the technically advanced practices underlying the entertainments. The second part of the discussion will examine some of the Enlightenment thinking and application of theoretical natural philosophy, in particular Sir Isaac Newton’s work on mechanics and optics that underpins theatre technology like automata and magic lanterns. The aim is to demonstrate intellectual advancements were alive and well, and therefore difficult to argue that deterioration illustrated through satire was a good gauge of eighteenth-century cultural change.

William Hogarth’s 1724 engraving *Masquerade and Opera* (Fig.1) tells a story of cultural decline and foolishness through a fictitious London street scene, with buildings framing the picture and structuring the visual narrative. The street forms an irregular triangle in which most of the human action takes place. This comprises a number of separate images or tableaux, which focuses Hogarth’s satirical allusions. Prominent in the centre of the foreground is a hawker shouting ‘waste paper for shops’ with a wheelbarrow full of works by renowned literary artists such as Shakespeare, Dryden, and Ben Johnson. By performing a close reading of the picture one can identify the scrapping of traditional English artistic culture forms a type of visual punchline.
The story is told using architecture and its perspectives, particularly through the lines of the brickwork. These create a vanishing point and focus behind the large banner hanging from the building on the right-hand side of the street. The banner is entitled ‘Opera’ and the picture shows a number of actors arranged with the leading lady raking in coins from two gentlemen as they say, ‘Pray Accept 8000l’. The Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum suggests in its object summary the castrato Senisino is depicted in the banner,\(^6\) and was paid a fabulous annual salary of £2,000 to partake in the new craze for performing Italian opera.\(^7\) This is poking fun at the recently imported Italian Opera. The anti-Italian theme is supported by the ‘The Academy of Arts’, which the V&A concludes is the façade of Burlington House, with statues of Michelangelo and Raphael dominated by the contemporary architect William Kent.\(^8\) Burlington House was

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\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/0-9/18th-century-opera/ [accessed: 10 January 2020].

\(^8\) Ibid.
designed by William Kent who studied in Italy and brought back to England a Palladian neo-classical style.\textsuperscript{9} Hogarth disliked the idea of importing and creating false Italian styles, as Joel Blair suggests Hogarth thought ‘foreign taste leads to imitation of an unnatural style’.\textsuperscript{10} The money and import of foreign taste can be seen as a particular irritant for Hogarth.

Hogarth highlights his antipathy for the money circulating in the London theatre business by drawing attention to two eighteenth-century impresarios. On the left side of the picture, Hogarth positions a man leaning out of the window next to the banner with an ‘H’ on the ledge. The V&A suggest this to be the ‘Swiss entrepreneur John James Heidigger (1666-1749), who promoted masquerades and balls at the King’s Theatre from 1710 onwards’\textsuperscript{11}. Below the banner is a crowd of people being roped into the ‘Masquerade’ by a jester and a devil who holds a money bag inscribed with ‘1000’. Heidiggar was famous for making money; Judith Milhous states profits of £300-500 were possible from the notorious upper-class fancy dress masquerade balls.\textsuperscript{12} On the right-hand side of the picture another crowd is entering a theatre advertising ‘Dr Faustus is here’, with an armed guard keeping order at the door. The V&A describes it is the John Rich (1692-1761) production of \textit{Harlequin Faustus} that opened at the Lincolns Inn Theatre in 1723.\textsuperscript{13} Phyllis Dircks refers to John Rich as a ‘pantomimist and theatre manager’ suggesting his 1723 production of \textit{The Necromancer, or Harlequin Doctor Faustus} at Lincoln’s Inn Fields was in response to John Thurmond’s \textit{Harlequin Doctor Faustus} at Drury Lane\textsuperscript{14}. All of the \textit{Faustus} pantomimes were very popular and is possibly why Hogarth included the armed guard, as Al Coppola describes:

\begin{quote}
[T]he London public had gone absolutely mad for Harlequin Faustus, and the two London patent theaters mounted rival productions of farcical afterpieces loosely inspired by Christopher Marlowe’s tragical history.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

By choosing Rich and \textit{Faustus}, and Heiddiger and \textit{Masquerades}, Hogarth combines two references to ‘cultural decline’. There is also an Italian link between these shows and Burlington House because the pantomimes contained the \textit{Commedia dell’arte} characters such as, Pierrot, Punch, and Scaramouch.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{10} Joel Blair, ‘Hogarth’s Apologia’, p. 266.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1159950/the-bad-taste-of-the-prints-hogarth-william/ [accessed: 10 January 2020].
\textsuperscript{15} Coppola, Al, ‘The Spectacle of Experiment: The Politics of Virtuoso Satire in the 1670s’, \textit{The Theater of Experiment: Staging Natural Philosophy in Eighteenth-Century Britain} (Oxford University Press, Oxford Scholarship Online 2016)
\textsuperscript{16} Listed in the Dramatis Personae of Thurmond, John, and John Rich, \textit{An exact description of the two fam’d entertainments of Harlequin Doctor Faustus; with the grand masque of the heathen deities...} (London, 1724), p. 3.
\end{flushleft}
Hogarth is clearly layering the satirical slights and possibly suggesting decline is now embedded in the culture.

Another form of import to the London theatre scene is represented in the engraving by a sign next to the central banner showing Faux’s ‘dexterity of hand’. The V&A interprets this as referring to Isaac Fawkes (d.1731) the sleight of hand magician.17 Helen Stoddart describes how Fawkes in the early 1700s performed at booths in the Southwark and Bartholomew fairs, and later moved into permanent theatres such as the Haymarket. She also suggests that his successes were not only based on traditional ‘magic’ tricks but also the use of complex mechanisms.18 Stoddart goes on to state that Isaak Fawkes’s sophisticated mechanical devices were made by his collaborator, the clock and automata maker, Christopher Pinchbeck (1690-1732).19 Pinchbeck was a true ‘man of the Enlightenment’ as he was not only a renowned clock and automata maker but he invented an alloy of copper and zinc that resembled gold, and is still known as Pinchbeck gold.20 Hogarth does not directly allude to these automata but mechanical entertainments are specifically advertised for later shows like de Philipsthal’s Phantasmagoria. However, the content of Hogarth’s engraving certainly portrays an antipathy to London’s cultural life in the early eighteenth century and is specifically deemed ‘bad taste’ through its alternative title The Bad Taste of the Town. The phrase is explained to the viewer by a separate adjoining plate that appeared in the 1724 Daily Courant with a verse ‘Could new dumb Faustus to reform the age, | Conjure up Shakespeare’s or Ben Johnson’s ghost, | They’d blush for shame to see the English stage | Debauched by fool’ries at such great a cost’.21 This gives no room for doubt that Hogarth thought the scrapping of traditional literary works with their replacement by poor ‘cultural imports’ was retrograde with the allusions of magical conjuring, pantomime fooleries, and excessive money making are all lampooned as low-brow and untasteful.

The satire and derision of the early part of the eighteenth century did not seem to detract from the continuing popularity of visual entertainments striving for sensation. In 1802-3 Paul de Philipsthal (1785-1828) brought to London his Phantasmagoria, which was a show originally produced on continental Europe.22 A playbill (Fig.2) illustrates the mystical and magical nature of the performance, with de

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19 Ibid.
Philipsthal dressed as a magician conjuring a ghostly woman within a magic circle and seems to fall firmly within Hogarth’s subject for satire.

The associated programme of the Phantasmagoria (Fig.3) expands on the playbill’s words ‘Optical Illusions and Mechanical Arts’. The programme highlights mechanical devices such as ‘the mechanical peacock’ and ‘self-impelled windmill’ similar to the mechanical devices created by Pinchbeck and used by Isaac Fawkes. The programme deliberately promotes in the optical part of the show that it ‘will introduce the phantoms or apparitions of the dead or absent’. Although clearly advertised as ‘optical’ the programme is avoiding informing the audience it is a trick or produced via a machine.

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In 1802, Philipsthal tried to patent what he called ‘meritorious discoveries’ related to his *Phantasmagoria* but the register entry states ‘every person conversant in the very first elements of science will easily perceive, that these meritorious discoveries, as they are called, depend upon the simple and well-known principle of the magic lanthorn’. The descriptions of eighteenth-century popular entertainments showed a continuation of the long tradition of making use of technology to improve performances. The rise of

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early pantomime’s popularity in the 1700s was fuelled by its simple and sensational value, as ‘its emphasis was on spectacle – with clever tricks, rapid scene changes, lavish sets and costumes – and in this respect the role of the ‘magician’, whether Harlequin or Faustus, was paramount’. The ‘clever tricks’ in early pantomime were supported by sophisticated mechanical engineering such as ‘hinged flaps of canvas painted on both sides that switched to reveal new settings; pivots, flying systems, and traps in the stage’. These feats of engineering were not new and had origins in the Greek theatre in particular the ‘deus ex machina’ where gods would appear via the use of a crane or other device to solve an otherwise insurmountable narrative problem. The Romans introduced traps in the stage to enable devils and other residents from hell to suddenly appear on stage.

Although there is a long history of stage technology to support the narrative of the play eighteenth-century impresarios were exploiting technical advances, and trying to own them, because of their popular and sensational effects. The idea that sensation was superseding narrative content instead of supporting it could point to Hogarth’s view that contemporary theatre was killing off the more traditional aspects of plays, which were seen as more literary in content.

The popularity of sensationalism and the ability for shows such as Phantasmagoria to conjure ghosts and demonstrate supernatural powers reflected the late eighteenth century fashion for Gothic Romantism. Gothic became a popular cultural phenomenon particularly in the realm of literature which Carol Davidson suggests was ‘especially vilified as vulgar’. However, this cultural trend also took hold in the theatre, as Jeffrey Cox suggests after 1789 ‘the Gothic would become a truly powerful force on the London stage’. In a similar way pantomime was trading on spectacle and sensation. Jefferey Cox adds the Gothic theatre incorporated shock and wonder but interestingly it was ‘arguably the first form to capitalize fully on evolving lighting techniques, [and] new stage effects’. This growth in what could be termed anti-enlightenment supernatural, illusionistic, and ‘vulgar’ entertainments is following the principles of Hogarth’s illustrated cultural decline.

However, the sensational entertainments were facilitated by the enlightenment’s technical and scientific advances. These scientific practices were noticed by Alexander Pope who, while deriding the dullness in eighteenth-century art, was given to believing that the ability to engage with natural philosophy was a God given gift, and therefore, not a base and vulgar activity, as he highlights in The Dunciad:

28 https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/victorian-pantomime [accessed: 10 January 2020].
33 Ibid.
But oh! With one, immortal one dispense,
The source of Newton's light of Bacon's sense!
Content, each emanation of his fires
That beams on earth, each virtue he inspires,
Each art he prompts, each charm he can create.


It can be seen that Pope was an admirer of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), highlighted in *The Dunciad*, and supported in his unused epitaph for Newton's tomb ‘Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night | God said, ‘Let Newton be’ and all was light.’ Pope was using light as the biblical reference but also illustrating how Newton significantly progressed the natural philosophy of light. This points to the fact that Pope could see there was intellectual advancement happening in the eighteenth century and not just ‘dullness’ that was epitomised by spectacular shows such as the pantomimes, and *Phantasmagoria*.

Newton had been researching and lecturing on light since the 1670s and finally published ‘Opticks’ in 1704. In addition, Newton’s work on mechanics in *Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica* first published in Latin 1687 and later in English in 1726, was bringing a new awareness to the laws of motion and engineering. These advances in science, which were still circulating in the realms of the academicians and nobility, were slowly advancing into a wider arena through public lectures. However, advances were more visible through the creation of scientific instruments such as telescopes and orrery, which were used for the enquiry into the nature of the universe. The orrery were essentially clockwork devices showing planetary positions and movements. One of the most advanced was the 1733 ‘Grand Orrery’ made by a mathematical instrument maker Thomas Wright of Fleet Street for King George II, which showed the movements of all the known planets. John Brooke suggests ‘Newton's philosophy of nature is commonly seen as the apotheosis of the clockwork universe’, and is being directly modelled during the eighteenth century by master craftsmen. One can see that the same fascination for such ingenious mechanical models helping to support the popularity of the automatons displayed by Fawkes and de Philipsthal.

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The spectacular visual ‘Gothic’ elements of the eighteenth-century performances were facilitated through the use of advancements in optics and the magic lantern. In 1668 Robert Hooke suggested: ‘It [a magic lantern] produces Effects not only very delightful, but to such as know the contrivance, very wonderful; so that Spectators, not well versed in Opticks,… would readily believe they were supernatural and miraculous’. Fig.4 shows an eighteenth-century magic lantern as used in phantasmagoria performances, and Fig.5 shows a simple diagram of the internal components of a magic lantern similar in design to the phantasmagoria lantern.

Figure 4: Phantasmagoria magic lantern, late eighteenth century, material: glass, iron and tin plated, Museum inventory number 1916-7. (The Science Museum Group Collection Online, released under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 Licence)  

The main scientific element of the magic lantern is the ability to condense the light from a source e.g. a lamp (‘A’ in Fig.5) by a mirror (‘G’ in Fig.5) and lenses (‘D’ and ‘E’ in Fig.5). It was the work of natural philosophers like Newton and craftsmen like Wright and Pinchbeck that enabled science to be transformed into technology such as automata, orrery, and magic lanterns for sensational entertainments.

Magic lanterns were capable of producing spectacular effects for audiences without the object being obvious to an uneducated audience. The playbill shows a ghostly woman appearing in front of the magician, with no explanation of how this apparition is conjured. Mervyn Heard describes an eyewitness account that the ‘appearance was formed by a magic lantern upon a thin cloth or screen’. There is faint evidence in the playbill image to the existence of a gauze like cloth or screen surrounding the ghost. Paul de Philipsthal wanted to exploit the technology in the cause of entertainment as his attempted patent of his ‘meritorious discoveries’ shows. The patent registrar added to de Philipsthal’s submission that ‘at the Lyceum no attempt has been made to explain to the less enlightened part of the audience, the principles upon which the dilusions [sic] are founded, or the apparatus with which the exhibitions are made’. This illustrates that spectacular entertainments were designed to thrill and surprise and not to educate and

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42 ‘New Patents Lately Enrolled’ in The British Register, (June 1802), p. 488.
improve, which falls inside Hogarth’s and Popes satirical sphere, as there is no attempt to explain the world, just exploit the audiences enjoyment of the visual and Gothic sublime.

Hogarth’s street scene Bad Taste of the Town and Paul de Philipsthal’s Phantasmagoria illustrate a fashion for the sensational. This produced, what the satirists saw as entertainments that were less intellectual than traditional English plays. There seemed to be a consensus among the literary and artistic elite of a perceived decline in the intellectual standards in eighteenth-century entertainment. However, there were hints by Pope and evidence from Enlightenment thinkers that all was not lost in the realm of intellectual endeavour. The publication of experiments and public lectures in Natural Philosophy were becoming more popular but still concentrated in the more rarefied atmosphere of the wealthy and academic. The consequence of publication and widening experience of science allowed a number of entrepreneurs and artisans to take advantage of the mysterious nature of some of the phenomena. This was mainly achieved by engaging practical engineering expertise gained in clock and scientific instrument making and turning it into usable theatre technology. The effects of this theatre technology can be evidenced by the use of the magic lantern in transforming images and light into sensational and exiting experiences. The eighteenth-century entertainments may have appeared to be in ‘bad taste’ as pantomimes and Gothic shows demonstrated intellectual decline to some, but advancements in science and technology were demonstrating an intellectual vitality in being able to produce them.

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Luxury and licentiousness: funding the Foundling Hospital, London, 1739 – 1760

ALISON HEGARTY

A concert ticket from 1750 for a performance of Handel’s Messiah at the Foundling Hospital represents the appeal to private sponsors through music and art. Later, when the hospital is supported through taxation, a pamphlet, Candid Remarks on Mr Hanway’s Candid Historical Account of the Foundling Hospital (1760) expresses resentment at public money being spent on what are seen as the immoral purposes of the Hospital. Ultimately, neither private nor public funding provided a complete answer to the problem of the vast number of unwanted babies in the eighteenth century.

INTRODUCTION

The Foundling Hospital at Coram Fields in London, established in 1739, was in its first decades an enormously popular venture. Its founder, Thomas Coram (1668-1751), the doughty and determined seaman from humble origins, so eloquently portrayed in William Hogarth’s painting of 1740, won over the ladies of the aristocracy with his genuine love and pity for the abandoned babies that he witnessed every day along his walk into the City.¹ Run as a private enterprise on the joint stock model,² the Hospital attracted funding from royalty and from ‘private subscriptions and legacies of benevolent individuals’.³ From its inception, it worked to present itself as a fashionable charity and drew on the generosity of artists and musicians to appeal to wealthy patrons. The elegant architecture, paintings and rococo decoration of its public rooms were the setting for ‘the most fashionable morning lounge of the reign of George II’.⁴

However, as demand grew to accept ever greater numbers of babies, the Hospital was forced in 1756 to seek assistance from the government. Funded through taxation, the General Reception was a radical attempt to admit all babies presented at the Foundling Hospital. However, the task was simply too great and became open to corruption and exploitation.⁵ Resentment and moral outrage against the public financial support of immoral lifestyles were expressed against ‘This F.H. [Foundling Hospital] Idol, which had so long been worship’d’ and the subsidy ceased in 1761.⁶

³ Brownlow, p. 7.
⁵ Brownlow, pp. 10-15.
⁶ David Stansfield, Candid Remarks on Mr Hanway’s Candid Historical Account of the Foundling Hospital (London, 1760), p. 7.
This article will look at two artefacts relating to the Foundling Hospital, a concert ticket and a pamphlet, in order to explore the contrast between the exclusive image needed to attract private donations and the disquiet at the public funding of ‘Vice, Disorder, Licentiousness, Depopulation and Ruin’.7

LUXURY
The ticket (Fig.1) is for a performance at the Chapel of the Foundling Hospital of a sacred oratorio composed by George Frederick Handel. A hugely popular composer, Handel wrote music for Queen Anne, George I and George II, and was responsible for the creation of the new form of music, the English oratorio.8

Figure 1: Arms of the Foundling Hospital with an admission ticket (1750), paper, 19.7 cm × 21.4 cm (British Museum, London; © Trustees of the British Museum)

7 Stansfield, Candid Remarks, p. 10.
The ticket was printed in red but now appears dark brown, with pink-brown in the shading of the picture. On fairly thin buff-coloured paper, rather than thick card, it leaves blank spaces for the date so that the same printing plate could be used over many years without re-engraving. The Hogarth scholar, Ronald Paulson, considers that although the design of the admission ticket is based on Hogarth’s 1747 sketch for a coat of arms for the Hospital (Fig. 2), he himself did not make the engraving.

In his sketch, Hogarth labels the figures ‘Nature’, ‘a Lamb’, and ‘Britannia’. The many-breasted Nature represents the care given to the babies. On the right, Britannia holds the cap of Liberty in her right hand.

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10 Ibid., p. 191.
and in her left, a shield with a Union Jack for the relatively recently united country. The inclusion of Britannia on the ticket demonstrates a pride in national charity, and an appeal to the aristocracy to prove their Britishness by becoming involved in good causes. \(^{11}\) Whilst Foundling Hospitals had been established as religious foundations in Rome in the thirteenth century, in Florence in 1419 and Paris in 1670, this was the first Foundling Hospital in Britain. \(^{12}\) Earlier efforts had included those at Christ’s Hospital in London in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century; proposals by Mrs Elizabeth Collier to King James II in 1687; and by merchants to Queen Anne; or by Elihu Yale or Robert Nelson in 1711. All had founded on the grounds of moral objections and cost. \(^{13}\)

The design of the ticket itself is grander and more baroque than Hogarth’s simple sketch, placing the figures in an elaborate cartouche and rococo frame. It adds the semi-rural setting of the Hospital in Lambs Conduit Fields, with the house on the left perhaps representing home. At the same time, it retains the message of assistance and nurture for abandoned babies. In both the sketch and the ticket, the simple word ‘Help’ in the centre, under the naked baby, constitutes both an aim and a plea.

The intended audience for the event, the upper classes of society, is apparent from the text. Men are asked to come without swords and women without hoops. This was no doubt so that as many people as possible could be accommodated, but the request also indicates the usual style of the anticipated attendees. Tickets were half a guinea each. Presumably, demanding a high set price was considered more profitable than relying on generosity in the collection: the ticket states that one will not be held, in a note bene in small writing at the bottom. It adds that:

Tickets may be had of the Steward at the Hospital, at Arthur’s Chocolate House in St James’s Street, at Batson’s Coffee House in Cornhill & at Tom’s Coffee House in Devereux Court, coffee and chocolate houses being the haunts of fashionable men about town.

The date has not been written on this particular ticket but the first performance at the Hospital took place in May 1749. A report in the Gentleman’s Magazine describes the magnificence of the event.

The Prince and Princess of Wales, with a great number of persons of quality and distinction, were at the Chapel of the Foundling Hospital, to hear several pieces of vocal and instrumental music composed by George Frederick Handel, Esq., for the benefit of the foundation. 1\textsuperscript{st}. The music of the late Fire Works, and the anthem on the Peace; 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Select pieces from the oratorio of Solomon, 

\(^{11}\) Colley, p. 93.
\(^{12}\) Brownlow, p.10.
relating to the dedication of the temple; and 3rd. Several pieces composed for the occasion, the words taken from Scripture, applicable to the charity and its benefactors. There was no collection, but the tickets were at half-a-guinea, and the audience above a thousand. Handel had already written an Anthem for the Foundling Hospital which contained the Hallelujah Chorus, later incorporated into Messiah, and the notes of the British Museum curator relating to this blank ticket refer to the existence of another example ‘completed in manuscript for a performance of Messiah at 12 noon on 1 May 1750’.

So popular were the annual performances of Messiah at the Foundling Hospital, conducted or attended by Handel, that many were turned away. These events raised over £6,000, gave positive publicity for the Hospital and enabled the ‘striking and impressive’ chapel to be completed, upon which Handel donated an organ. The Foundling Hospital’s historian, John Brownlow, writing in 1858, notes that there were so many present at the inauguration that Handel repeated the performance a fortnight later and that ‘upon one of these occasions the audience was conveyed in no less than 800 coaches and chairs’. Sunday services and baptisms in the chapel were an opportunity to see the Foundling children and soon the Hospital had a waiting list for annual subscriptions for seats in the pews and galleries. Handel became a Governor of the Hospital and on his death in 1759, he bequeathed to the Hospital the ‘Fair Copy of the Score and all Parts of his Oratorio call’d the Messiah’ – over a thousand pages of music. This enabled the annual performances in the chapel to continue, which they did until 1777.

Despite this impression of aristocratic leisure and pleasant entertainment, the Foundling Hospital had from the beginning faced the difficulty of reconciling a controversial social problem, namely the rescue of abandoned babies, with its need to attract wealthy and influential donors. For seventeen years, Coram had walked miles every day asking for signatures for his petition to the King for the grant to create a Foundling Hospital. Unfortunately, few wished to become involved. Although the aristocracy were less worried by stigmas of illegitimacy than the ‘middling sort’, it seems that they were nevertheless reluctant to give their support. Eventually, it was the women of the aristocracy who provided the initial signatures and their husbands then followed. Having lent their names to the enterprise, the aristocracy declined any active

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14 Brownlow, p. 77.
16 Brownlow, p. 72.
17 Ibid., p. 78.
18 McClure, p. 72
19 Ibid., p. 71.
20 Ibid., p. 10.
21 Ibid., p. 21.
involvement in its day-to-day organisation, which was left to businessmen and tradesmen,\textsuperscript{22} and artists such as Hogarth.

Already a Governor of two London hospitals and with a keen interest in social justice, Hogarth was involved in the Foundling Hospital from its foundation. It was his design for the coat of arms which was placed over the entrance on the night in 1741 when the Hospital took in its first babies. Together, Hogarth and Handel used art and music to attract influential support for the Foundling Hospital. This necessary aspect of the funding of the Hospital was the justification for the luxurious Court Room, designed by Hogarth and displaying a masterpiece of rococo plasterwork. The room was included from the beginning in Theodore Jacobsen’s design for the Hospital, built between 1742 and 1752, and was hung with paintings donated by renowned artists of the day. Many of the pictures were idealised narrative paintings of compassion being shown towards abandoned babies,\textsuperscript{23} designed to awaken the charitable impulses of the viewers.\textsuperscript{24}

Thus, Coram’s initial appeal to royalty and the aristocracy, together with the draw of art and music as seen in the admission ticket, and the prestige of being the most fashionable place to visit in London, camouflaged the controversial nature of the cause.\textsuperscript{25} It initially made the Foundling Hospital a great success, respectable and almost immune to the criticisms of its aims.

**LICENTIOUSNESS**

Despite the luxury, the approval of the elite and the successful fundraising, the Hospital was never able to meet the demand for places. Numbers were restricted by the health and age of the babies but not by questions of morality. This predictably led to a certain backlash. Rhymes were written suggesting that women need no longer worry about the consequences of loss of virtue: they could simply leave their offspring at the Foundling Hospital and return to further sin.\textsuperscript{26}

*Scandalizade, a Panegyri-Satiri-Comic-Dramatic Poem* by ‘Porcupinus Pelagius’ (1750) is addressed to Coram in the year before his death in 1751:

> But this is not all the Effects of thy Pains  
> The Hospital Foundling came out of thy Brains,

\textsuperscript{22} Colley, p. 61, pp. 95-99.  
\textsuperscript{25} Rodgers, p. 34.  
\textsuperscript{26} McClure, p. 109.
To encourage the progress of vulgar Amours,
The breeding of Rogues and th’increasing of Whores,
While the children of honest good Husbands and Wives
Stand exposed to Oppression and Want all their Lives.  

This verse expresses resentment that, unlike respectable people, the sinful are not obliged to support their own children. Thus, foundlings were stigmatized, not only for their unknown origins but also because they were a financial burden on society. Throughout the country, parishes strove to pass the cost of the upkeep of illegitimate babies to the parents, another parish, or the workhouse, where most died.

This focus on cost over humanity was exacerbated when, in 1756, struggling with the extreme demand on its services, the Foundling Hospital had to ask for Government funding. The Whig Party under William Pitt the Elder, on the brink of the Seven Years’ War with France and possibly with a view to raising future recruits, granted £10,000 per annum but specified that all abandoned children under two months (later extended to six months and then twelve months) must be admitted under the General Reception. The numbers of children in the care of the Hospital soared, as did the numbers of deaths.

Inevitably, once the project was no longer largely funded by private donations and fundraising events such as concerts, but by everyone who was subject to taxation, and as the problems of running the Hospital became more apparent, condemnation grew in letters to, and articles in, newspapers and magazines.

The second artefact considered in this article is one in a series of pamphlets that contributes to the discussion of the Hospital’s funding. With newspapers and periodicals still in their infancy in the eighteenth century, the pamphlet was an effective way of conducting debates and expressing opinions. Pamphlets could be printed quickly and easily, although their distribution was mostly limited to London.

The first to publish was Jonas Hanway, a Governor of the Hospital and well-known philanthropist. His pamphlet, A Candid Historical Account of the Hospital for the Reception of Exposed and Deserted Young Children [...] and including A Letter from a Country Gentleman to a Governor of the Hospital is a comprehensive and robust

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27 Rodgers, p. 36.
28 McClure, pp. 11-14.
29 Ibid., pp. 79-80; Helen Berry, Orphans of Empire: The fate of London’s foundlings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
31 Ibid., pp. 52-53.
32 McClure, pp. 106-112.
account of the history of the Foundling Hospital with suggestions for its improvement. In his view, the
government system was an expensive way of helping an insufficient number of children, for whom care
would be better delivered in a family setting. He wished to restrict support to London children, who would
be brought up in the healthy atmosphere of the country, and eventually contribute to the industrial and
military needs of the nation.

In response to this, on 16 January 1760, David Stansfield writing as C.A., published the pamphlet under
consideration here: *Candid Remarks on Mr Hanway’s Candid Historical Account of the Foundling Hospital* (1760)
(Fig.3). Representative of the popular view and expressed in forthright terms, his pamphlet outlines his
strong objections to the reforms suggested by Hanway, together with his fundamental opposition to the
General Reception. Not reading this until 9 February, Hanway wrote and published a *Reply* by 11 February
1760, with Stansfield publishing a *Rejoinder* on 15 March.

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34 Jonas Hanway, *A Candid Historical Account of the Hospital for the Reception of Exposed and Deserted Young Children to which is added A Letter from a Country Gentleman to a Governor of the Hospital* (London, 1760).

35 Rodgers, pp. 37-38.
Very little is known about Stansfield himself. Hanway certainly knew nothing of him, as he states in the opening paragraph of his Reply:

As I am entirely unacquainted with your name, character, or place of abode, I take this public method to reply upon a subject which is very interesting to us all.

I observe that you have contracted a very strong prejudice against the institution of the Hospital.\(^{36}\)

Stansfield replied to Hanway on behalf of those living in the countryside:

If City Luxury, and City Licentiousness, generate unhealthful Children in Stews and Brothels, and the Foundling Hospital by encouraging those Licentious generating Means increase the Number of unhealthful Children, - Must the Sober and Diligent in the Country, take Care of, and Support such Children?\(^{37}\)

He appears to equate the City with the wealth seen, for example, at the concerts at the Foundling Hospital, and with the immorality that produced the babies cared for there. He suggests that the countryside is immune to such problems, being moral and hardworking. In fact, as Brownlow is keen to assert, the mortality of the foundlings during the General Reception was as much the result of the greater numbers received, and the corruption involved in transporting babies to London, as of inherent ill-health.\(^{38}\)

However, Adrian Wilson’s detailed statistical study supports Stansfield's perception, or 'prejudice', and reveals that there was a particular illegitimacy crisis during the period of the General Reception. He suggests that this was the result of factors including a higher cost of living; the disruptions of the Seven Years War; in London, a rise in illegitimate babies compared with the rest of the country, attributable to changes in marriage and courtship practices; and, Wilson concludes, possibly and in part, the existence of the General Reception at the Foundling Hospital.\(^{39}\)

Stansfield certainly blames the Hospital for the increase in illegitimacy and suggests that exporting London foundlings to the country will serve only to increase debauchery, and to compromise the care given to others in need.

Is this the way to check that torrent of Evil in the City which such a Licentious Carnality threatens? or to restore the Morals which the F.H. has corrupted? [...] wil not granting Public Money, in aid of Metropolitan Parishes, for their Officers confess’d misconduct to Infants, tend to promote farther and greater degrees of misconduct to their other Poor, the Adult and Aged? \(^{40}\)

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\(^{36}\) Hanway, Reply to C.A., p. 3.

\(^{37}\) Stansfield, Candid Remarks, pp.5-6.

\(^{38}\) Brownlow, p.16.


\(^{40}\) Stansfield, Candid Remarks, p. 6.
He is also concerned that in receiving public money to look after their children, the poor would have no incentive to work, with serious consequences for the economy.

\[\text{Wil Poor People work when they may have their Wants relieved without it? Wil Industry thrive, when the Principal Motives (namely their Children) which lead to it, are taken away? Will Commerce and Manufactorys flourish when, for want of these Spurs to Labor none will labor, in the lowest Offices, but on their own terms? can it be expected that these Paupers will struggle with constant Difficulties, under the severest Labor (and which Multitudes do at present struggle with contentedly, even to the end of life) when they have such Commodious Access to Ease and Relief?}\]

Finally, in a Rejoinder to Hanway’s Reply, Stansfield insists that in allowing children to be maintained without recourse to the fathers in question, the Hospital obliges the government to

\[\text{[levy] money upon the Public and upon well disposed Citizens, to save the pockets of Whoremasters and other fornicating Criminals.}\]

The General Reception represented a great opportunity to pursue the ambitions of Thomas Coram. Its plans for branch Foundling Hospitals in the countryside and near universal admission could have led to a state funded national response to the problem of abandoned babies. However, it turned out to be too ambitious in its scope at this time, and unfortunately coincided with an upsurge in illegitimate babies. This led to a significant change in attitude towards the Hospital and an increase in moral outrage at the financial cost of supporting illegitimate children. Its failure left the Hospital with virtually no money, and interestingly, the name given by the Hospital to the last child received under the publicly funded General Reception was Kitty Finis.

CONCLUSION

When the Foundling Hospital was supported from private means, raised by bequests, subscriptions or most conspicuously, the enjoyment by the upper classes of fund-raising concerts of Handel’s Messiah, the Hospital was able to control intake and maintain standards of care. Although the moral objections no doubt remained, they were not urgent. This changed once the funding arose from taxpayers’ pockets, was seen to be at the expense of other state provision and would cause an inconvenience to the countryside or jealousy at apparent exemption from work. Then, the objections to the support of the perceived immorality of the City, so vividly expressed in Stanfield’s pamphlet, took hold. Thus, despite an auspicious

\[\text{41 Ibid., pp. 11-12.}\]
\[\text{42 David Stansfield, A Rejoinder to Mr. Hanway’s Reply to C. A.’s Candid Remarks, (London, 1760) p. 34.}\]
\[\text{44 Brownlow, p. 43.}\]
start, the Foundling Hospital ran across the same issues of cost and morality as the earlier attempts to set up such institutions in England.

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--- Candid remarks on Mr. Hanway’s candid historical account of the Foundling Hospital, and A more useful Plan humbly Recommended, in a Letter to a Member of Parliament. To which is added a rejoinder to Mr. Hanway’s reply to the above remarks. Comparing The New Plan of a Founding Hospital, which is now offer’d by Mr. H.; with the old one of our present Poor Laws. – And pointing out a few of the many advantages, which would result to the community; from the abolition of both. And establishing, in lieu of ‘em, National, or County Workhouses (London, 1760)

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By the mid-1700s, the public masquerade ball had achieved extraordinary popularity and notoriety across London, drawing thousands to the city’s pleasure gardens. The phenomenon met its natural match in two successive earthquakes, believed by some to represent a divine judgement against an increasingly pleasure-seeking society. This article compares two responses to the 1749 Jubilee masquerade balls at Ranelagh Gardens, a venue renowned for its exoticism and glamour. Louis-Philippe Boitard’s engraving wryly presents masquerade as a celebration of English eccentricity and eclecticism, while an anonymous pamphlet attacks it as a dangerous foreign import which had damaged British masculinity and morality. Through considering their language and images, the article explores how and why the Jubilee balls became such a potent social barometer of their time.

On 2 September 1749, Ferdinando Warner, Rector of St Paul’s Cathedral, delivered a sermon to mark the anniversary fast for the 1666 fire, a ‘Judgement upon This City’ still recent enough to strike his congregation with fear. Warner also had other calamities to address: the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), decades of conflict with France, the 1745 Jacobite rebellion which had brought ‘the Calamities of a Civil War to our very Doors’ and, in the countryside, ‘a Contagious Distemper among the Cattle’. The Rector drew a parallel between 1749 and 1666, arguing that the ‘promiscuous Lewdness’ of the earlier period had re-emerged. The sermon was clear: such disasters showed that ‘the Hand of God is stretched out still upon us’.

Moral and religious anxieties such as these were not unusual. Horace Walpole wrote drily to his cousin, Henry Conway, that ‘Between the French and the earthquakes, you have no notion how good we are grown; nobody makes a suit of clothes now but of sackcloth turned up with ashes.’ The belief that loosened morals had contributed to increased divine judgements was widely satirised. Walpole developed his theme, ironising his contemporaries’ superstitions:

A few nights before, two men walking up the Strand, one said to t’other, ‘Look how red the sky is! Well, thank God! there is to be no masquerade!’

As this implies, the masquerade ball had become a dangerous symbol of the degeneracy which Ferdinando Warner abhorred. Introduced to London in the 1720s, its glamour and promise of social freedoms drew

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1 Ferdinando Warner, A sermon preach’d before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and aldermen, of the City of London, at the cathedral church of St Paul, on Saturday, September 2 1749 (London: 1749), 11-19.
thousands to Haymarket, Vauxhall and Ranelagh. Masquerades were the subjects of prints, paintings and advertisements; even their entrance tickets became recognised motifs in novels such as Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740). But they were also used as targets for xenophobic anxieties. For one Victorian commentator, the blame for masked balls lay with ‘the importation of French corruption and immorality, so prevalent in […] the whole reign of George II.’ As Paul Tankard notes, critics argued that masquerades ‘were not a form of entertainment or socializing that suited the English character’. Interestingly, however, the masquerade was also part of the development of a peculiarly English urban culture. As Terry Castle observes, despite their titles, the Jubilee balls at Ranelagh were more English than Italian in design. While they appeared to some a symbol of urban corruption, many of their features were shaped by increasing migration from the English countryside. Crucially, their commercial outlook meant that they were ‘not defined solely by inherited rank’. This social eclecticism was their anarchy and their attraction: they were diverse gatherings which could just as well include the King as a Drury Lane prostitute. For Castle, masquerade balls were also liberating – in particular, they gave women a rare chance to mingle undetected.

Such social heterogeneity is evident in Louis-Philippe Boitard’s *The Jubilee Ball or the Venetian Manner* (Fig 1). In front of the Ranelagh rotunda, figures press together in a medley of costumes, their proximity suggesting the physical crush and excitement of the evening. Their gestures and positioning show how those disguised as nuns, priests, clowns, soldiers and ambassadors were perceived to mix freely with each other. It is as though they were caught in character: moving, gesturing, talking, jostling and competing for attention. Bodies strategically take part in a series of juxtapositions as neighbours wear opposed or incongruous disguises (the monk and the lady, the clergyman and the prostitute). Beneath their costumes, too, lurks an implied opposition between the masquers’ inner selves and their outward dress – a central antithesis which stimulated gender-swapping, class fluidity and intrigue. In a further contrast, the still, mannered background of the gardens contrasts with the dynamic, carnivalesque quality of the ‘masks’, creating a staged image, as masquers in costume become actors twice over, surrounded by a formalised set. In this way, the polite umbrella of Ranelagh seems to shelter and endorse the animation and self-consciousness of masquerade.

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The accompanying text adds sharp satire to the engraving. The title ‘By the King’s Command’ ironically reflects that this scene of subversion was in fact ordered by the reigning monarch George II. The rhyming couplets beneath take the levity of the image and darken it with precise criticism, as though written by ‘a disappointed non-conformist who had not only had his pocket picked, but also lost his umbrella’.\(^7\) The writer derides ‘Foreign follies’ which create ‘motley shapes’ in our ‘warlike Heroes’, commenting on the perceived impact of French and Italian fashions on English masculinity. Lines deliberately juxtapose contraries, from ‘ye Nun the Friar’ to ‘the Turk […] a Christian Dame’, highlighting the obvious irony of these masked liaisons. Deliberately, at the end, ‘Mad Tom’, a popular folk figure, and ‘Punch’, the clown, are sarcastically described as ‘Moral Figures to top the Jovial set’, a remark which undercuts the entire verse. The language chosen by the anonymous writer adds political commentary, exposing royalty as weak and flimsy in its love of pleasure: ‘straw-wav’d sceptre ru…les’. Overall, the text suggests that such behaviour is simply ‘the whole world in miniature’, a state of the nation which cannot be checked. Its voice of dry ridicule complements Boitard’s warm engraving, producing a blended perspective on masquerade, from delineation to production. A purchaser of the print could enjoy the image, or the verse, or both – a hybrid view which is particularly apt for the many-layered ball itself.

This approach to masquerade is paralleled in an anonymous pamphlet, *Jubilee Masquerade Balls at Ranelagh Gardens* (1750), although here the blended voice is created through the author's deliberate ordering of sources. Rather as a Chinese box, the artefact’s introduction and conclusion ‘frame’ five excerpted voices of censure, from Part I, the legal authority of ‘the Presentment of the Grand Jury of Middlesex’ (1729) to Part V, the editor’s concluding thoughts (Fig.2).

The pamphlet, which ran to two editions, builds negative rhetoric through this framed polemic, cohering all into an inexorable chronology against Jubilee balls. In contrast with the engraving’s headline, the editorial begins with an unironic exhortation, taken from King George’s speech to the clergy: ‘Let it be your Business to support and propagate Religion, Good Manners, and Good Order, amongst my People.’

The monarch is therefore set apart to suggest his censure of masquerade – a fact satirically contested in the engraving’s juxtaposition of ‘Majesty relaxed from Cares of State’ with the ‘motley mortals’ he encounters.

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The frontispiece provides a rhetorical structure which underpins the pamphlet’s argument. By placing Bishop of London’s sermon (Part II) after the Presentment (Part I), the editor coheres legal and religious authorities to endorse his criticism and accelerate the urgency of the debate. Their reprinting also acts as a warning unheeded by the masquers of the mid-1700s, as though validating the destruction threatened by the pair of earthquakes felt in February and March 1750. In a similarly apocalyptic vein, the clergyman Philip Doddridge had already drawn an explicit link between Capernaum’s earthquake in 749AD and London’s own tremors in 1749 to suggest that divine retribution was not only justified but part of a biblical plan to reform mankind.9 Like the balls themselves, the earthquakes provided considerable copy, not only for bishops but for satirists. The idea that stopping masquerades would appease God’s wrath received a biting response: ‘Numbers of People do now get their daily Bread by Earthquakes; The clergy preach upon them [...] they discover all Sorts of Wickedness and Debauchery in a Masquerade, which has hitherto passed quite unobserved by them’.10

The parallels between earthquakes and nature, masquerades and commercial artifice form the spine of the pamphlet. In Part IV, the editor adds his own voice to the debate through the deliberately casual but final ‘N.B.’, ‘not to venture to go to Ranelagh Gardens that Day [25 April 1749]’ for fear of being seized and ‘publicly exposed to the World’.11 This framing device, delivered in the tone of friendly guidance, deftly legitimises the words of the public poster, which decrees that ‘if such Wickednesses [masquerades] are permitted, the next shock of an Earthquake may well be dreaded’. The poster juxtaposes the number of masquerade advertisements with the tremors themselves, stating that ‘the very next Week’ there were further announcements in ‘One Paper’. In this way, the poster implies that promotion alone is corrupt enough: the entire commercial venture is criticised as antithetical to morality and natural order. Satirists quickly inverted this line of argument, using the Bishop of London (whose letter forms Part III of the pamphlet) as their prime target. Recounting the 1750 tremors in exaggerated detail, the author describes how the Bishop was the ‘very first Man that was sunk’, for ‘he might have escaped, but his zeal was so great in distributing Copies of his Letter’.12 In this image, fit for caricature, the zealot is consumed by his own mission, killed by the very thing which had made his name. Ironically, then, masquerades and earthquakes had become commercial rivals: each, in its own way, ground-breaking. The debate had entered popular culture and it had political impact, too.

11 Jubilee Masquerade Balls at Ranelagh Gardens, 18.
12 Ibid., 4.
As a foreign import, the masquerade ball attracted increased suspicion. In *Jubilee Masquerade Balls at Ranelagh Gardens*, the origin of the masquerade is firmly planted: ‘it was brought among us by the Embassador of a neighbouring Nation in the last Reign […] there is not a more effectual way to enslave a People’. Like the Swiss impresario Louis Heidegger and, later, the Venetian Teresa Cornelys, this ‘Embassador’, the French duc d’Aumont, received particular censure for promoting the masquerade in England. The Bishop’s language shows how closely critics associated an increase in public leisure with a decrease in national strength. For some, the masked assembly seemed indicative of how English identity was changing as a result of foreign influence: as Tankard observes, ‘The English, it was argued, were candid and open, not naturally calculating or manipulative’. The literal masking of the face ran contrary to the plain-speaking image of John Bull which British propaganda was so eager to promote.

The pamphlet’s Presentment (Part I) also attacks Heidegger who ‘to screen himself’ calls masquerades ‘balls’, arguing that the lack of shame which disguise creates means ‘no one’s Character is responsible’, for maskers are ‘covered from the Eye of the World’. The ability to become someone else, if only ironically, is held up as unnatural and therefore un-English. It also calls for Heidegger, ‘the Contriver and Carrier-on’, to be ‘detected and punished according to law’, showing the extent to which the authorities sought to blame foreign individuals rather than national evolution for changing social behaviour. In Hogarth’s *Masquerade Ticket* (1727), the mere act of holding a masquerade ticket leads inevitably to the corrupt ‘Venetian’ or ‘Italian manner’. The entrance token itself is the subject of this engraving, meta-textually giving the viewer access to a ball. Within it, the exclusive façade which Heidegger’s tickets were designed to create is satirically stripped away, revealing two so-called ‘lecherometers’ (devices which apparently measured sexual inclinations) and a clock face marked by the words ‘Impertinence’, ‘Nonsense’ and ‘Wit’.

In *The Jubilee ball or the Venetian manner*, however, such foreign influence is accepted rather than criticised. On the canvas, Boitard presents an assembled company, as though offering actors for assessment through their shared experience. The body language of the participants and the rhythmic patterning of rhyming verse below suggest the carnivalesque spirit of the event. Boitard’s representation is rich in heterogeneity: the home characters mix with comical and excessively romantic continental symbols such as the ‘Domme with Monstrous Nose’, ‘Cyprian Isle and Venus Court’. All costumes are ridiculous; all contribute to a subversive and openly international company. The ‘motley’ assortment of costumes is ‘free from frowns’: drily, the verse observes that each ‘new Device’ is adopted so quickly in England that France ‘cannot fast enough supply the call’. Here, interestingly, it is English desire rather than foreign plotting which is to

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13 Ibid., 11.
blame for the spread of masquerade, while the ‘gradual displacement of folk communities’ which Castle has observed elsewhere in English pleasure-garden balls is also evident in Boitard’s representations of costume.\textsuperscript{15} There is a blend of British eccentricity and folklore: ‘the humble Plaid’, ‘Mad Tom’ and ‘Punch’: the latter, big-bellied, strides across the canvas, Tom O’Bedlam waves sticks in the air and a kilted Highlander bows to a lady. These are identifiably English and Scottish stereotypes which, following the 1707 Union, were increasingly part of British identity.

A similar sense of universality and cultural eclecticism is captured in Horace Walpole’s description of the same Ranelagh Jubilee ball. In another letter to Conway, Walpole wryly notes that this ‘Venetian manner’ ball had ‘nothing Venetian in it’ but rather, ‘a Maypole dressed with garlands and people dancing round it to a tabor and pipe and rustic music’. Multiple co-ordinating conjunctions lend a tone of chaotic amateurishness to the sentence, suggesting a comical juxtaposition of Italian refinement and clumsy English rusticity. The inclusion of these traditional, Edenic symbols of English country fairs is intriguing: here, the foreign import has been adapted to fit a domestic picture, with ‘natural flowers hanging from tree to tree’.\textsuperscript{16} It also points to a more significant desire to connect with past public rituals and community at a time of new urban expansion. As a pleasure garden, Ranelagh provided an element of hospitality and even identification: there, people could participate in and belong to something greater than their own private lives. It seems that the masquerade was not merely a licentious escape but an attractive bridge between private leisure and public belonging, allowing masquers to participate in something collective while retaining an element of anonymity.

The threat and allure of masquerade were fused in the subversion and controversy of gender roles. In Figure 1, Boitard places a female figure at the centre of his canvas, exactly where an anonymous engraving, \textit{Masquerade for the Venetian Ambassador} (1749) would position Elizabeth Chudleigh, dressed in costume as a near-naked Iphigenia, following her scandalous appearance at Ranelagh the same year. In this second print, the body language of the three central characters, men flanking the white, semi-naked female figure, is almost identical to Boitard’s representation. This surely reflects the heightened infamy of Elizabeth Chudleigh herself, satirically described as ‘tow’ring far, above each pigmy elf’ in a contemporary verse.\textsuperscript{17} (Ironically, in an event attacked so frequently for the subversion of its disguises, it was Chudleigh’s apparent nakedness which attracted public censure.) These prints share a conscious staging of a divisive female presence as central to and almost synonymous with the act of masquerade. However, in \textit{Jubilee

\textsuperscript{16} Randall Davies, ‘English Society of the Eighteenth Century in Contemporary Art’, 32.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{A Poetical Epistle to Miss C_h_y: Occasioned by her appearing in the Character of Iphigenia} (London, T Andrew, 1749), 10.
Masquerades at Ranelagh Gardens, it is anxiety about appropriate displays of masculinity which is most strongly expressed. Dressing up and masking oneself creates ‘Effeminacy’ which will ‘enfeeble’ male strength and heterosexuality; in Part II, the Bishop’s sermon states that the masquerade’s arrival was co-existent with the introduction of the ‘unnatural and detestable Sin of Sodomy’, ‘transplanted from those hotter Climates to our more temperate Country’.\(^\text{18}\) The threat of deviance which masquerade offered – in particular, the allusions which it carried to homosexuality – is unambiguously associated with un-British behaviour. The language circles around questions of nature: England is ‘temperate’ where other countries are ‘hotter’, implying that at home, sexual passions and desires are regulated and protected against what is ‘unnatural’. Sodomy itself is compared to a sapling or seed, ‘transplanted’ – suggesting its otherness and its ability to affect and even supplant native sexuality.

As well as sexual freedoms, masquerades offered the promise of a massed classless experience. Boitard’s image portrays an eclectic though restricted, even exclusive scene, but Walpole writes of their being at least ‘two thousand’ at the Jubilee ball on 26 April.\(^\text{19}\) The 1749 engraving’s text notes dryly that ‘this Scheme makes even Contraries agree’, pointing to masquerade’s illusion of concord and egalitarianism. The opportunity to dissemble above or below social rank carried a frisson of excitement in an increasingly self-conscious and urbanised environment. That this was a temporary measure added to the attraction: at the end of the masquerade, natural order would be restored. In comparison, it is interesting to note that the pamphlet identifies such levelling of hierarchy as a more permanent danger for poorer men, who are liable to ‘fall into the Diversions and Manners of those who are of a superior Rank and Character’.\(^\text{20}\) This suggests somewhat paternalistically that the lower classes are naturally unable to evade the trap of masquerade and that this entrapment will last long after the ball has ended. In some ways, the egalitarian, disguised freedom of the ball exposed grosser social evils, divisions and prejudices.

By 1751, the Bishop of London had acquired a temporary ban on public masquerades. In Walpole’s beautifully weighted sentence, ‘Masquerades had been abolished, because there had been an earthquake at Lisbon’.

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Truths universally acknowledged: satire in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and James Gillray’s *Harmony before Matrimony*

CECILY JENKINSON

This article investigates Jane Austen’s status as a satirist by comparing and contrasting her best-known novel with a caricature print by her contemporary James Gillray. The article examines how satire is used in both works to present perspectives on early nineteenth-century attitudes to marriage. Setting the novel and the caricature print in their social and historical contexts, the article highlights their differences in form and purpose but finds, in this pair of examples, many parallels in the technical means by which the satire is conveyed and in the similar intentions of their creators.

With the exception of her generic satire *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen is popularly thought of as ironic rather than satirical. Nobody, meanwhile, would dispute that James Gillray was a satirist. Yet similar techniques were employed by both Austen and Gillray and for similar ends: wit, caricature, and acute social observation for the purposes of exposing human folly or vice and skewering affectation. There are of course key differences arising from the formal distinctions between the satirical print and the novel, and also from Gillray’s use of satire which was invariably prominent, as against Austen’s which varied in intensity. However, that Austen’s satire is often underestimated is due more to perception than actuality. Women have always been less readily associated with satire than men and in Austen’s case the influential ‘dear Aunt Jane’ narrative promulgated by her nephew from 1869 and the more recent commercial industries built upon saccharine or sexualised interpretations of her novels have contributed to a diversion of attention from her sharp wit to her romanticism.\(^1\) By drawing comparisons with and contrasts from Gillray’s satirical techniques in *Harmony before Matrimony* (1805), this article will sketch out how Austen deployed this weapon in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) to comment on contemporary attitudes to marriage.

Satire is perhaps easier to demarcate than define, ‘cuckoo-nesting’ as it does in different genres and manifesting itself through a variety of devices from irony to caricature.\(^2\) All satirists aim to expose folly or vice by using wit, rather than propaganda, to persuade us of the truth of their perceptions. Writers and critics have used satire for many centuries but the Enlightenment period was a golden one, fuelled by the rise of oppositional party politics and by the genius of some of the most gifted satirists of any era, notably Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, and William Hogarth. This period also witnessed the development to prominence of two new cultural forms: the caricature print, to which satire was fundamental, and the

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novel, to which it could add a distinctive edge. Hogarth had developed the caricature print into an influential tool for social criticism, but it did not acquire its overtly political dimension until the latter part of the eighteenth century under his successors James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson. Gillray in particular became associated with the lampooning of recognisable political and royal figures, but he was also adept at pillorying fashionable society more generally. *Harmony before Matrimony* (Fig.1) is a fine example of this category.

![Figure 1: James Gillray, *Harmony before Matrimony* (1805), hand-coloured etching, 25.6 × 36cm (British Museum, London; © Trustees of the British Museum)](image)

The novel meanwhile remained for much of the eighteenth century an unstable and experimental form which encompassed genres as diverse as travel literature, romance, and philosophical narrative. By the late 1700’s two types had grown enormously popular: the gothic novel and the historical romance. In her own novels – in all of which the theme of marriage is prominent – Jane Austen satirises the sentimentality and sensationalism of much of her contemporary fiction and also the snobbery and materialism of her contemporary society. *Pride and Prejudice* is particularly illustrative of the latter. This article will presume
the reader’s reasonable familiarity with the characters and events of this well-known novel and will therefore proceed to an examination of the less famous *Harmony before Matrimony* before considering similarities and differences between the two.

*Harmony before Matrimony* depicts an exaggeratedly fashionable and cultured young couple singing together in an elegant room. The woman plays the harp, looking over her shoulder at the music book which the man holds open for her. The image features several representations of love. The music book is open at ‘Duets de l’Amour’; pink roses flourish from two vases on the console table; myrtle – sacred to the goddess Aphrodite – grows in the vase half-hidden by the red curtain; a pair of decorative garlands on the wall incorporate the quiver and arrow of Eros and the bridal torches of Hymen, Greek god of marriage.³ The title of the print, too, apparently instructs the viewer on how to interpret the scene, by exploiting the figurative connotation of the word ‘harmony’.

However, other elements undercut this narrative. Most obviously (after the cats, of which more below), the picture over the couple’s heads shows Eros firing a blunderbuss at a pair of cooing doves. The table leg just visible by the red curtain is shaped as a grinning, cloven-hoofed satyr. Satyrs, male followers of the Greek god of wine and ecstasy Dionysus, were part-man part-goat creatures who chased the god’s female followers while in a perpetual state of intoxication and physical arousal.⁴ On the floor beneath the console table, a heart-shaped vase bears the figure of a Greek sphinx, with a female head and breasts (Egyptian sphinxes were traditionally male).⁵ The sphinx was a treacherous creature in ancient Greece; the word means ‘strangler’ in Greek and one of the best-known examples appears in Sophocles’ drama *Oedipus Rex*, in which the famed Theban sphinx kills and devours all those who cannot solve the apparently impossible riddle she sets.⁶ The sphinx is also associated with lust.⁷

The transmission of meaning in this print relies both on the interrelationship between the elements within it and on their association, in the mind of the viewer, with objects or narratives in the world outside. The satire lies primarily in the ironic mismatch between the title and central element of the ‘harmonious’ couple, and the various symbols of disharmony. Taken together, these symbols create a sustained and ominous narrative that the couple’s romance is doomed to be blasted away by the realities of marriage – implicitly

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⁶ Morford, Lenardon and Sham, p. 420.
through the man’s drinking or philandering, the woman’s unreasonable or incomprehensible behaviour, or both. It is a deeply cynical assessment of marriage, yet the success of the print depends upon the fate Gillray predicts for the couple being common enough for his pessimism to be shared, or at least understood, by the viewer. Like all effective satire, then, this example is rooted in recognisable truth. The truth that Gillray is asserting in this case will be further discussed below.

Jane Austen loses no time in introducing satire into *Pride and Prejudice*, in a technique similar to Gillray’s since it consists in the ironic disconnect between that famous first sentence and the actual circumstances portrayed in the novel. The ‘truth universally acknowledged’ (I:I) transpires to be no such thing, any more than the ‘harmony’ in Gillray’s image, but is the delusion of Mrs Bennet and her ilk, since the novel’s two single men in possession of large fortunes prove resistant, for much of the narrative, to proposing marriage to any one of various prospective wives. In isolation, Austen’s opening statement is merely ironic; it is the cumulative effect of this and similar narrative observations which constitutes satire. This is because a heuristic in *Pride and Prejudice* is that when the narrator generalises, the author is being satirical, one of Austen’s targets here being society at large – ‘every body’ or ‘every one’ – as represented by the Meryton neighbourhood with its gossip and socially-homogenised opinions. Another example of this is the narrator’s comment, after Wickham’s fall from grace, that ‘All Meryton seemed striving to blacken the man, who, but three months before, had been almost an angel of light’ (III:VI). The communal U-turn undertaken by the Meryton herd is emphasised by the antithesis of ‘blacken’ and ‘light’, which exemplifies Austen’s use of syntactic balance for rhetorical ends.

In all Austen’s novels the tone of the narrator complements the character of the heroine. Elizabeth Bennet is one of her most resilient heroines, which allows more scope for satire in *Pride and Prejudice*. The shy Fanny Price would be acutely susceptible to the insolence of Lady Catherine, for instance, and to satirise such encounters would create a much darker tone and even risk accusations of crassness. The narrator’s irony in *Pride and Prejudice* is moreover echoed by Elizabeth, who is given a distinctly satirical outlook and who is, like Austen herself, amused by absurdity. The focalising of so much of the novel through Elizabeth’s consciousness, partly by extensive use of free indirect discourse, helps to sustain the satire. When Elizabeth tells Jane ‘The general prejudice against Mr Darcy is so violent that it would be the death of half the good people in Meryton, to attempt to place him in an amiable light’ (II:XVII), the tone is identical to that of the narrator’s comment on Wickham above. Both examples also illustrate Austen’s use of hyperbole, which is another reliable indicator of her satirical intent.

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Austen’s generalising technique emphasises the centrality of the concept of insiders versus outsiders in satire. Appreciating a piece of satire generates the pleasing sense of sharing the satirist’s keen insight, and the wider the target – and it cannot get wider than ‘every body’ – the more gratifying this becomes. Equally satisfying is to appreciate a piece of satire which has been coded so as to make its recognition dependent on sophisticated knowledge – a technique at which Gillray excels. Several elements in Harmony in Matrimony, particularly those which undermine the ostensible meaning of the title and central image, derive from ancient Greek culture. While it may not require a classical education to see the significance of Eros decimating a dovecote with a blunderbuss, the roles of the sphinx and the satyr are more subtle yet equally important to his narrative, so that its full appreciation will elude anyone who does not recognise these allusions. Gillray habitually used classical references in his prints, and indeed Biblical, Miltonian and Shakespearean ones. Such canonical sources lent authority to the statements he was making with his prints, but they also indicate that this was a hybrid form, mixing low and high cultural modes, and by no means accessible to everyone. Gillray’s high-quality prints would moreover have been prohibitively expensive for most, selling for up to 13 shillings a piece at a time when five shillings could purchase a coat. Their collection was therefore the hobby of gentlemen, among whom would have numbered the very types of socially and politically-engaged figures who so often featured in them.

The novel at this time, a still-evolving form, was also characterised by hybridity. Claiming that there is satire in Pride and Prejudice is not the same as claiming that it is a satirical novel. It is a mix of satire and seriousness, romance and realism. One difference between Austen and Gillray is that Austen made no classical or literary allusions. She had of course not been formally educated in Latin or Greek, but she is likely to have absorbed some knowledge of classics through her interaction with her father and her brothers and from secondary sources. However her avoidance of high-culture references would have made her novels more accessible to those beyond the pale of elite education, including women. The audience for novels was expanding with the spread of subscription libraries, membership of which was still however not cheap. These would not therefore have been frequented by the lower classes, most of whom were in any case still functionally illiterate. While novels were often perceived to be read overwhelmingly by

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10 Ibid., p. 10.
11 Ibid., p. 5.
12 Ibid., p. 15.
women this was by no means the case; Austen’s own father and brothers read them and they were increasingly being reviewed seriously – by men – in magazines such as the *Critical Review*.\textsuperscript{13, 14}

Given that the audiences of both Gillray and Austen would have included the targets of their social satires, there is some irony in the apparent inability of such people to recognise themselves. The Prince Regent was said to be great fan of Austen’s despite clues that he may have been lampooned in several of her novels.\textsuperscript{15} But as Jonathan Swift pointed out, ‘Satyr is a sort of Glass, wherein Beholders generally discover every body’s Face but their Own.’\textsuperscript{16} Another explanation is that perception is highly individual, and particularly so when visual or literary content is so equivocal or nuanced that seeing satire in it is arguably subjective. Jane Austen was very conscious of the potential for language to be ambiguous, misleading or misconstrued.\textsuperscript{17} By oscillating between third-person narration and what are sometimes only fleeting whispers of free indirect discourse she could leave it deliberately unclear whose perspective the reader should assume, for instance in the reporting of Darcy’s indifference to ‘all Miss Bingley’s witticisms on fine eyes’ (I:IX). *Harmony in Matrimony* features several ambiguous elements whose interpretation will depend on the viewer. Are the cats on the floor gamballing ‘amorously’ or fighting?\textsuperscript{18} Does the symmetry of the goldfish indicate a balance or a stand-off? Is the book by Ovid which lies open on the round table his *Ars Amatoria* – ‘The Art of Love’ – or his *Metamorphoses* – more disturbing tales of supernatural change and twists of fate? (Even the romantic-sounding *Ars Amatoria* would have been ambiguous in this context, its chapters on sex making it so famously inappropriate for young ladies that Lydia Languish in Sheridan’s *The Rivals* (1775) makes haste to cram her copy ‘behind the bolster’.)\textsuperscript{19} The butterfly in Gillray’s print flutters prettily over the large mirror, but butterflies are connotative of frivolity and mirrors of vanity. A clue to Gillray’s intention regarding this last point is that mirrors also formed part of graphic satire’s figurative vocabulary of vision: prints often featured telescopes, spectacles, eyes etc., symbolising that satire is a lens through which folly and vice can clearly be seen.\textsuperscript{20}

This metaphor was consistent with the Enlightenment correlation between vision and comprehension, evidenced by Swift’s observation above and prominent since Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) which repeatedly compares the mind to an eye. A similar metaphor was adopted by Ronald Paulson in his conception of satire as ‘a house of mirrors in which one theme (or vice) is reflected over and over, with distortion and variations but without essential change’. In *Pride and Prejudice* Austen achieves precisely this by showing us a variety of silly women – Mrs Bennet, Lydia, Kitty, Mrs Philips – and a variety of people made ridiculous by their affectations – Lady Catherine, Caroline Bingley and Mr Collins *inter alia* – and persuading us of their folly.

Mr Collins in particular is subjected to the whole gamut of Austen’s rhetorical arsenal in the interests of satire. Irony: ‘the subject of Lady Catherine elevated him to more than usual solemnity’ (I:XIV); understatement: ‘Mr Collins was not a sensible man’ (I:XV); hyperbole, often channelled through free indirect discourse: ‘he had never met with so much attention in the whole course of his life’ (I:XV), and many more. Most frequently he is allowed to indict himself through his own speeches, such as his spectacularly tone-deaf proposal to Elizabeth (I:XIX), and through his letters, a stunning example being his comment to Mr Bennet following Lydia’s elopement that ‘The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this’ (III:VI). Meanwhile his delusions about his own character and that of his patroness Lady Catherine create a rich and often hilarious source of dramatic irony. Austen employs a similar range of satirical techniques with her other characters whose degree of self-importance is matched only by their lack of self-knowledge, each incidence contributing to a coherent commentary on a society preoccupied with money and rank, so that when we read *Pride and Prejudice* we are left in almost no doubt as to whom we are invited to condemn and whom to love. ‘Almost’, since even here the inclinations and perceptiveness of the reader will colour interpretation. Edward Copeland insists that Elizabeth Bennet is motivated by money and materialism, a view supported by Nicola Watson on the basis that Elizabeth tells Jane she first loved Darcy when she saw ‘his beautiful grounds at Pemberley’ (III:XVII). This demonstrates the danger of isolating Austen’s characters’ statements from their contexts; one might as well take literally Elizabeth’s professed hope of meeting ‘with another Mr Collins in time’ (III:XIII).

Satire does have a history of being misunderstood. Pamphlet-readers were horrified in 1729 when Jonathan Swift suggested in *A Modest Proposal* that eating babies would solve Irish economic problems, and Jane

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22 In Quintero, p. 7.
Austen’s satire does not seem to have been much appreciated in her own day either. Despite women having been early proponents of satire in prose fiction – Delarivier Manley had famously satirised prominent figures of her time – it was persistently regarded as inappropriate for women. Austen herself makes sly reference to this in Sense and Sensibility and Fanny Burney makes great play of it through the character of Mrs Selwyn in Evelina. Public affairs were likewise seen as unfeminine and Austen’s adoption of the romantic novel with the primarily domestic setting as her genre restricted the type and degree of satire she could use. Pride and Prejudice is more Horace than Juvenal; light-hearted ridicule rather than savage contempt, of human frailty and absurdity rather than the dark immorality of specific individuals. Gillray’s tone in Harmony before Matrimony is similarly Horatian, although in his political caricatures his criticism was far more abrasive.

Austen’s genre presented her with another consideration which did not affect Gillray: the importance of not allowing the satire to detract from her audience’s emotional engagement. Sharply-sketched caricatures are therefore countered by well-rounded characters with whom the reader can sympathise and whose narratives also reinforce points made by the satire. For satire always makes a point (although rarely offers a solution). In these examples Gillray’s and Austen’s points overlap in that both criticise the contemporary institution of marriage.

Gillray shows us the fashionable preoccupations of an elegant couple and implies that the pair are utterly unprepared for the realities of wedlock. This was a theme taken up by many contemporary writers who bemoaned the impracticality of an education limited to music, dancing and French for girls destined for marriage. It was reinforced by Gillray himself in a follow-up print entitled Matrimonial Harmonics (Fig.2) and featuring the same couple, in which the woman thumps on a piano and sings loudly, ignoring the kettle which boils on the unattended tea-table, the nanny who holds out her bawling child, and the man, who blocks his ears and buries himself in his newspaper.

Austen’s focus (as well as being on the manifestations and effects of pride, or the want of it) is on the difficulties and humiliations women face in their necessary quest to find husbands. The satirical presentation of this theme through the outrageous behaviour of her larger-than-life characters and through the opinionated rumour-mongering of ‘every one’ is reinforced by realism. This is manifest in the serious

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25 Mary Waldron, p. 84.
handling of such episodes as Jane’s miserable ostracisation by Bingley’s snobbish sisters in London and Charlotte’s depressingly pragmatic attitude to her marriage to Mr Collins, who was ‘neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary. But still he would be her husband’ (I:XXII).

As different therefore as the early nineteenth-century novel was from the caricature print in terms of form, each could be a highly effective vehicle for the conveyance of satire, demonstrating the extraordinary versatility of this witty method of criticism. Gillray and Austen utilised parallel visual and literary techniques to elucidate their similarly clear-eyed perspectives on the issue of marriage. If Austen’s satire is less obvious than Gillray’s, this reflects not only the expectations of her sex and her genre but perhaps also the fact that she did not write ‘for such dull Elves | As have not a great deal of ingenuity themselves’.30

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'A vision of the “Arabian Nights” character':

Two sightings of John Frederick Lewis in Cairo

GUY PHILIPPS

This article considers two representations of the painter John Frederick Lewis in Cairo in the 1840s, one by W. M. Thackeray and one by the artist himself. Thackeray’s comedically fictionalised account portrayed Lewis living a life of eroticised pleasure owing more to the ‘Arabian Nights’ than to reality. That tone was taken up by the reviewers of Lewis’s The Hhareem, who unanimously treated the picture as an Orientalist fantasy rather than an ethnographically accurate account of contemporary Cairo; it is argued that this reception caused Lewis to seek to reshape public understanding of the work when it was next exhibited.

In October 1844, William Makepeace Thackeray, travelling round the Mediterranean as the guest of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, dined in Cairo ‘with our old friend J—, who has established himself here in the most complete Oriental fashion.’ J—’s house is ‘far away from the haunts of European civilisation, in the Arab quarter’. In its porch,

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.

Having passed through the door, Thackeray comes into

a broad open court, with a covered gallery running along one side of it. A camel was reclining on the grass there; near him was a gazelle to glad J. with his dark blue eye [...]. On the opposite side of the covered gallery rose up the walls of his long, queer, many-windowed, many-galleried house. 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. Pigeons were flapping, and hopping, and fluttering, and cooing about. Happy pigeons you are, no doubt, fed with crumbs from the henna-tipped fingers of Zuleikah!

Once he is inside the house,

J— appeared. Could it be the exquisite of the Europa and the Trois Frères? A man – in a long yellow gown, with a long beard, somewhat tinged with grey, with his head shaved, and wearing on it first a white wadded cotton night-cap, second, a red tarboosh – made his appearance and

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1 ‘Mr. M. A. Tirmarsh’ [William Makepeace Thackeray], Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo, by way of Lisbon, Athens, Constantinople, and Jerusalem: Performed in the Steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company (London: Chapman and Hall, 1846), p. 282.
2 Ibid., p. 283.
3 Ibid., pp. 284-85.
welcomed me cordially. It was some time, as the Americans say, before I could ‘realise’ the semillant J. of old times.4

They dine: ‘I asked for lamb and pistachio nuts, and cream-tarts *au poivre*; but J’s cook did not furnish us with either of those historic dishes’.5 And after dinner, Thackeray turns to wonder ‘what were the particular excitements of Eastern life, which detained J., who is a town-bred man, from his natural pleasures and occupations in London’.

It could n’t be the black eyes in the balcony – upon his honour she was only the black cook [...].

No, it was an indulgence of laziness such as Europeans, Englishmen at least, do n’t know how to enjoy. Here he lives like a languid Lotus-eater – a dreamy, hazy, lazy, tobaccofied life.6

When Thackeray published this account in *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* in January 1846, critics and readers had no difficulty in identifying ‘J—’ as ‘a well-known English artist’,7 the ‘aquarellist of distinguished genius’,8 John Frederick Lewis, who had lived out of England since 1837 and in Cairo since 1841. Nor did they have any difficulty in identifying the tone of Thackeray’s account as one of erotically tinged fantasy, rooted in ‘the dear old Arabian Nights’ – stories in which characters dine on ‘lamb and pistachio nuts, and cream-tarts *au poivre*’9 – rather than contemporary Cairo. *The Examiner* began its notice of the book: ‘One should begin as if an Arabian Nights’ Entertainment were going to begin’, and reviewed Thackeray’s account of his dinner with Lewis in the tone in which it was written: ‘We recognise an old friend here; amid a charming mystery of seraglio and servants, and camels and gazelles’.10

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4 Ibid., p. 287.
5 Ibid., p. 289.
6 Ibid., pp. 290-91.
The next sighting of Lewis in London came in 1850, when his watercolour *The Hhareem* (Fig.1), the product of seven years’ work, was exhibited, first at Thomas Griffith’s gallery in Pall Mall, and then at the annual exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water Colours. Although the identification was not made by contemporary reviewers – the first to suggest it was Edmond About, who wrote in 1855 ‘M. Lewis a passé plusieurs années au Caire, et je le soupçonne fort d’être le bey dont il a peint l’harem’¹² – it seems clear that the principal male figure at the left of the picture (Fig.2) was modelled on Lewis himself (Fig.3), just as his wife Marian (Fig.5) was the model for the female figure crouching on the floor at the centre (Fig.4).

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¹¹ *The Observer*, 29 April 1850, p. 5.
Figure 2 (detail of Figure 1)

Figure 3: John Frederick Lewis, *Self-portrait* (detail), pencil on paper, 40.6 × 30.5 cm (Unknown collection; photograph National Portrait Gallery, London)

Figure 4 (detail of Figure 1)

Figure 5: John Frederick Lewis, *Marian Lewis (the artist’s wife)* (detail), pencil on paper, 40.6 × 30.5 cm (Unknown collection; photograph National Portrait Gallery, London)
The most striking aspect of the contemporaneous reviews of *The Hhareem* is that, without exception, the critics chose to see the picture as an Orientalist fantasy derived from the ‘Arabian Nights’ – Cairo, that is, as depicted by Thackeray – rather than as a serious representation of contemporary life in Egypt. *The Literary Gazette* rooted the picture firmly in a familiar English tradition of writing about the East, saying that it represents a voluptuous Orientalist in his sumptuous Hhareem, glittering with artificial splendours, and lapt in the luxuries of the East. Several of his loveliest Sultanas are reclining on musunds or cushions at his feet, looking, as he is also doing, at a black slave, introduced for sale, and being uncovered, for inspection, by her black owner. [...] *sui generis*, a vision of the “Arabian Nights” character – all softness, and richness, and dreamy enervated passion, with every accessory, from the tame gazelle to the narghile, in keeping with the Houris (not dark or ox-eyed?) smothered in their silken and bejewelled voluptuousness. Thomson’s ‘Castle of Indolence’ has been made Egyptian by the artist.14

The same vocabulary appears time and again in the notices. *The Observer* published the first review of the exhibition, informing its readers that the apartment was a ‘luxurious Eastern abode’, ‘richly furnished and highly elaborated’, that the ‘ladies of the harem’ were notable for ‘the languishing expression of their large dark eyes’, that the ‘lord of the seraglio’ watched the slave being unveiled with ‘sensual gaze’, whilst his ‘favourites’ looked on with an ‘expression of haughty languor’.15 Then came *The Athenaeum*: having identified the setting as ‘that mysterious interior which has long been a subject of European curiosity’, it described the ‘wives’ as being ‘just aroused from their enjoyment of luxurious repose’; the ‘favourite’ is ‘voluptuous in form’ – indeed the picture itself is ‘voluptuous – or it would not be true to its theme’. ‘A cat in a similar state of somnolency fills in and gives richness to this mass of Oriental luxury, with its sleepy suggestion.’16 *The Examiner* added ‘sensuous’ to ‘voluptuous’: ‘The expression of the lord of the scene is refined in its intense sensuousness; the two dominant ladies are wonders of voluptuous beauty [...]’. Hardly is anything but the sensuous represented.17 *The Illustrated London News* followed the same path, already becoming well-worn: ‘The lord of the seraglio is seen seated, and surrounded by his women, who lie in Eastern repose at his feet. Wherever the eye rests all is Oriental luxury and ease’; the painter is particularly praised for his depiction of ‘the rich, full lazy eyes’ of the ladies.18 *The Lady’s Newspaper* also focussed on the faces of the ‘favourites’, whose ‘large dark eyes and languishing expression denote the race from which they spring’. The setting is ‘luxurious’:

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14 *The Literary Gazette, and Journal of the Belles Lettres*, no. 1737, 4 May 1850, p. 311.
15 *The Observer*, 29 April 1850, p. 5.
16 *The Athenaeum*, vol. 50, no. 1175, 4 May 1850, p. 480.
17 *The Examiner*, no. 2205, 4 May 1850, p. 278.
18 *The Illustrated London News*, vol. 16, no. 424, 4 May 1850, p. 299.
Everything that elegance and luxury can command are brought together in that gorgeous apartment. Vases of china, of the rarest description, are filled with the choicest exotics of the clime. The carpets of Persia, the silks of China, the marbles of Italy, the perfumes of Arabia, are there in rich profusion.\textsuperscript{19} The \textit{Spectator} condemned the ‘favourite’ as ‘insolent in ease and pampered beauty’,\textsuperscript{20} while \textit{The Critic} told how ‘full and voluptuous of form’, she ‘just lifts her head from her lolling, indolent arm, and gazes with superb eyes.’\textsuperscript{21} Last to be published, \textit{The Art-Journal} described the male ‘young Turk’ as ‘seated in luxurious ease’, ‘attired in the excess of Moslem fashion’; the women next to him are ‘also dressed in the extremity of Oriental taste’ and ‘look languidly’ towards the unveiled slave.\textsuperscript{22}

The language used by Lewis’s reviewers is so similar in its general tone and inspiration to that used by Thackeray in his portrait of Lewis’s ‘dreamy, hazy, lazy’ life in Cairo that it is hard to believe that Thackeray’s apparent confirmation of what was in any event a well-established caricature of Oriental existence did not influence the critical reception of Lewis’s picture. Joan DelPlato has demonstrated the extent to which ‘languor’ and ‘indolence’ were part of the Western characterisation of the women who lived their pampered lives within the ‘luxurious’ or ‘voluptuous’ space of the harem.\textsuperscript{23} The harem that Lewis’s reviewers regarded him as having depicted was a harem that took its inspiration from Western stereotype and fantasy, rather than anything he could have seen during his decade of residence in Cairo. Indeed, the critic of \textit{The Morning Post} was teasingly sceptical about the possibility that Lewis had actually been inside a harem, saying that the painter

\begin{quote}
introduces us at once within the mystic confines of the hhareem –

“Like flies in amber, neither rich nor rare,
The wonder’s how the devil he got there.”

He has been there, however, that’s clear, and he has been indiscreet enough to depict a scene in which few, if any, save himself were permitted to participate.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

The jaunty tone and the (mis)quotation from Pope are surely an indication that the critic’s tongue was in his cheek, and the impression of irony is not dispelled by the way in which he reaffirms his purported opinion as to the realism of the work later in the review: ‘The figure of the Turk […] wants expression; but perhaps the artist’s intention was not to flatter, but to portray him as he was.’

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19 \textit{The Lady’s Newspaper}, no. 175, 4 May 1850, p. 249.
20 \textit{The Spectator}, vol. 23, no. 1140, 4 May 1850, p. 427.
22 \textit{The Art-Journal}, vol. 12, June 1850, p. 179.
24 \textit{The Morning Post}, no. 23832, 29 April 1850, p. 3.
\end{flushright}
Given that the reviewers chose to focus exclusively on the associations of the harem with the erotic fantasies of the ‘Arabian Nights’, it is unsurprising that a further theme running through the first reviews of *The Hhareem* is a professed concern as to the unsuitability of its subject matter. This was first voiced by *The Athenæum* in its notice of the picture when shown at Thomas Griffith’s gallery:

The interior of a hareem, in which a Turkish gentleman is surrounded by his wives, to whom is introduced an Egyptian slave, a recent acquisition, – is the subject of this drawing. They whose fastidiousness may reasonably be shocked by the mention of the subject, will find on inspection that their apprehensions are groundless. A sight of it at Mr Griffith’s [*sic*] satisfies us how completely the painter has triumphed in his treatment over his elements – how he has banished everything like grossness and sensuality.\(^{25}\)

The same periodical (most likely the same reviewer) returned to the point in its review of the exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water Colours in April: ‘The scene is realised in its spirit and in its minute details, – yet so as to give no offence to Western ideas of decorum.’\(^{26}\) Not all critics were so easily reassured, however. Without condemning the picture outright, *The Observer* adopted a particularly fervid Evangelical tone:

Two or three children, almost imbedded in the cushions of the divan, form a feature of this group not the least significant, and not the least pleasant, for they indicate innocence and purity in the midst of sensuality, ignorance and sin. […] [T]he sensual Turk and his self-satisfied favourites – the indignant girl and the brutal eunuch – the children telling of heaven and happiness in the midst of slavery and crime – are each and every admirable as much for their poetry, which is patent to all persons, as for their artistic execution, which can only be known to a few connoisseurs.\(^{27}\)

*The Standard* affected simultaneously not to understand the subject and to disapprove of it: ‘The subject of this picture is not very intelligible; neither is it particularly interesting, nor, perhaps, is it the chastest that could be selected for the pencil.’\(^{28}\) *The Examiner* was more forthright:

[A]s to the choice of subject – the ‘Hhareem’ is, no doubt, as truly delineated as it is in Miss Martineau’s bold and truthful description of it in her Eastern Travels – but is it exactly a theme for an artist of such powers as Mr Lewis possesses? […] [T]he subject is of doubtful taste.\(^{29}\)

*The Lady’s Newspaper* (whose critic, despite the paper’s title, clearly identified as male) had little doubt: ‘[H]owever such subjects may delight the Mussulman of the nineteenth century, they are repugnant to us as Englishmen.’\(^{30}\) Even *The Art-Journal*, which pronounced *The Hhareem* ‘the most extraordinary production


\(^{26}\) *The Athenæum*, 4 May 1850, p. 480.

\(^{27}\) *The Observer*, 29 April 1850, p. 5.

\(^{28}\) *The Standard*, no. 8022, 29 April 1850, p. 1.

\(^{29}\) *The Examiner*, no. 2205, 4 May 1850, p. 278.

\(^{30}\) *The Lady’s Newspaper*, no. 175, 4 May 1850, p. 249.
that has ever been executed in water-colour’, felt compelled to observe that ‘the subject is not worthy of the care with which it has been wrought out.’ Emily Weeks is wrong to say that ‘contemporary critics found nothing morally reprehensible in […] The Hhareem, and spoke of this scene of Middle Eastern polygamy and semi-nudity in only the most glowing of terms.’

What the critics were referring to when they purported to express concern about the subject matter of The Hhareem appears clearly from the language they used in their reviews. The subject was ‘not the chastest that could be selected’; mention of the subject might shock ‘fastidiousness’, or offend ‘decorum’, but it would transpire on inspection that the artist had banished ‘grossness’; the presence of children indicated ‘innocence and purity in the midst of sensuality’. Such terminology indicates that what they specifically had in mind was what the West understood to be the sexual connotations of the harem, which might shock the ‘chaste’, or the ‘pure’, or the ‘fastidious’ – that is, women. The gendered nature of the concern was made explicit by The Illustrated London News:

This is a marvellous picture; such as men love to linger around, but such as women, we observed, pass rapidly by. There is nothing in the picture, indeed, to offend the finest female delicacy: it is all purity of appearance; but, at the same time, it exhibits woman, to a woman’s mind, in her least attractive qualities.

The reviewer does not trouble to explain what he means by ‘a woman’s mind’ deeming the picture to exhibit woman ‘in her least attractive qualities’. He is concerned to emphasise, not the picture’s lack of appeal to women, but its strong appeal to men: his point is not that women pass by the picture, but that men ‘linger around’ it. As this and many other of the (almost certainly male) reviewers make clear by the language they use to describe the picture, men are attracted by it, because it conforms appropriately to the received idea of the mysterious harem as a place of sensuality and voluptuousness populated by sleepy, languid beauties, living lives of luxurious ease whilst awaiting the pleasure of ‘the lord of the seraglio’. At the same time, as the majority of reviewers also make clear, the picture’s erotic charge is sufficiently restrained that it is not – that is, in the judgement of the same men as are so strongly attracted to it – disturbing or even ‘shocking’ to women.

31 The Art-Journal, June 1850, p. 179.
33 The Standard, 29 April 1850, p. 1.
35 The Athenaeum, 4 May 1850, p. 480.
37 The Observer, 29 April 1850, p. 5.
38 The Illustrated London News, 4 May 1850, p. 299.
Very few of these reviewers explain, even by implication, how they have come to the verdict that the picture can safely be viewed by their wives and daughters. The Observer suggests that the picture is redeemed by the presence of a child among the women on the divan – indeed, its repeated assertion that there are ‘two or three children’ is telling, given that The Hhareem in fact contains only one child. (That is not the only misreading of the picture in an apparently subconscious attempt to mitigate the charge of indecency: The Illustrated London News identified the clearly male ‘brutal eunuch’ said by The Observer to be uncovering the shoulders of the slave ‘in the same manner as a stable boy unclothes a horse to show a purchaser his “points”’, as ‘a female attendant’ removing the ‘heavy drapery’ in which the slave was ‘wrapped’, in the manner of a cloakroom attendant). Even more than the child, the presence of the three ‘wives’, all decently clothed (albeit ‘in the extremity of Oriental taste’) and seated by their ‘husband’, must have reassured viewers that this harem, at least, afforded a suitably domesticised safe space. It may be that the feminisation of the scene was what The Literary Gazette was alluding to when it commented: ‘The colouring is most delicate and every feature effeminate, except, perhaps, the masculine figure of the slave-dealer.’

Consciously or unconsciously, The Athenaeum went even further to reassure its readers when it described the subject of the picture as ‘the interior of a hareem, in which a Turkish gentleman is surrounded by his wives, to whom is introduced an Egyptian slave’: the syntax suggests that the slave is being introduced, not to the Turkish gentleman or his hareem, but to his wives, as if this were a Sunday afternoon ‘At Home’ in mid-century Bayswater.

39 The Observer, 29 April 1850, p. 5.
40 Ibid., p. 5.
41 The Illustrated London News, 4 May 1850, p. 299.
42 The Art-Journal, June 1850, p. 179.
43 The Literary Gazette, 4 May 1850, p. 311.
It is surely against the background of the unanimous critical reception of his picture as a work owing more to Orientalist fantasy than to a decade of personal observation of contemporary Egyptian life that one should consider the significance of the lengthy and detailed catalogue note (Fig.6) that Lewis attached to The Hhareem when it was exhibited in Edinburgh in 1853. As Weeks observes, ‘[i]n its precise terminology, ethnographic specificity, and authority of tone’, Lewis’s note is reminiscent of E. W. Lane’s Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians. Lewis assigns all the characters in his painting to specified races and classes; he gives both people and objects their proper Arabic names. The walls of the room in which the scene is set are said to be whitewashed, not because white affords an appropriate backdrop to the profusion of colours and patterns in the picture, but because ‘all old houses’ have such walls; the contrast of the walls with the dark woodwork of the ceilings, whilst artistically pleasing, is more importantly true to life. The two gazelles, one on either side of the picture, which one might think serve a purely artistic purpose by balancing and tying together the two halves of the picture (in the same way as do, for example, the look of the man on the divan on the left towards the slave girl on the right, and the look back at him of the boy standing to the right of the girl) are in fact present because gazelles are ‘the frequent indoor and out-door pets of all classes’ in Egypt. It is hard not to conclude that Lewis wrote the note in order to reassert his

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45 Weeks, Cultures Crossed, p. 81.
own authority, and to emphasise those qualities of ethnographic specificity and precision in *The Hhareem* to which the London critics had paid so little attention in 1850.

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See no evil:
Representations of suffering during the Great Irish Famine

EIBHLÍN INGLESBY

This article will compare two artefacts that portray the events of An Gorta Mór (The Great Irish Famine) of 1845-1852. These comprise a journal written by Oxford students, Dufferin and Boyle, who journeyed to Skibbereen in West Cork in 1847, in their desire to have a personal experience of the reputed condition of the people, and a painting by a Cork Artist, Daniel Macdonald: An Irish Peasant Family Discovering the Blight of their Store (1847). Analysis of these artefacts will interrogate the reasons why the written word was 'allowed' to reveal truths that may have been censored in a visual image. Factors that will be considered as salient are 'objective' representations, intellectual motivation and intended audiences, alongside notions of aesthetic propriety. It will be argued that, although British Victorian society might have considered it acceptable for select audiences to be appraised of 'unfortunate realities', society in general needed to be protected and indeed encouraged in its desire to 'see no evil'.

In 1847, while William Makepeace Thackeray was commencing publication of his satirical odyssey of vanity and greed, two Oxford students in their early twenties embarked upon a very different journey – one far more dangerous to their lives, if not their souls, than that of Becky Sharp. Frederick Hamilton-Temple Blackwood, Baron Dufferin and Claneboye and the Hon. George Boyle, later to become 6th Earl of Glasgow, decided to visit the small market town of Skibbereen in West Cork to assess the situation of the Irish peasants for themselves. These were the same peasants that Thackeray had described as ‘raggedy’ ‘blackguards’ whom he found so ‘disgusting’ that he ‘could not give a halfpenny’ on his travels through West Cork in 1842. Subsequent to their journey, Dufferin and Boyle published a booklet recounting their findings, framed in the form of an open letter: Narrative of a Journey from Oxford to Skibbereen During the Year of the Irish Famine (Fig.1). It gives no indication of their motives but the preface emphasises the desire for their findings to be seen as ‘accurate’ and that they have attached their names to the publication in the hope that they will be a ‘sufficient guarantee for the truth of everything related from ‘personal’ observation.

There had been significant coverage of the Irish famine in the British and Irish press, most notably articles and drawings in the Illustrated London News (ILN) and a letter directed to the Duke of Wellington by a Cork JP, Nicholas Cummins, relaying the desperate plight of Skibbereen which was published in The Times on 24 December 1846. However, the press spoke to various agendas and it may be that the idea of personal

1 ‘An Gorta Mór’ translates as ‘The Great Hunger’.
2 William Makepeace Thackeray, Vanity Fair (London: Punch/Bradbury & Evans, January 1847- July 1848).
5 Ibid., Preface. Original italics.
witness authenticity appealed to earnest young men. With them they took £50 that had been collected from fellow students to donate to Skibbereen funds.

The narrative describes their arrival in Dublin and the consequent journey that progressively revealed increased levels of poverty and distress the further south-west they travelled. Entering Skibbereen they were faced by the worst sights they had hitherto seen, being greeted by ‘nine or ten deal coffins, of which before we had occasionally observed single specimens’ and by ‘numbers of the most wretched beings one ever had beheld, not so much clamouring for alms, as looking on in listless inactivity.’ They sought out the protestant clergyman, Mr. Townsend, who gave them a summary of the bleak situation; ‘the whole population was being destroyed’ and ‘from the frequency of deaths [...] it was found impossible any longer to perform the accustomed rites of the Church.’ He also outlined overwhelming overcrowding in the Union (workhouse) where ‘there were generally three or four in each bed, a man recovering lying between

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8 Dufferin and Boyle, p. 9.
two others in the height of raging fever.’ 11 Because of the overcrowding, many were turned away from the workhouse and were forced to lie on the damp mud floors of their cottages. […] Some had even died in this uncared for condition, and their dead bodies had lain putrifying [sic] in the midst of the sick members of their families, none strong enough to remove them, until the rats and decay made it difficult to recognise that they were human beings. 12

Townsend proceeded to take them on a tour of the locality where they peered into hovels that were deemed to be less likely to be contaminated by infection, but which revealed shocking and extreme poverty. They saw one woman who had been relatively prosperous prior to the famine, crouching near a few embers of fire, ‘drawing her only solace from its scanty warmth; she was suffering from diarrhoea.’ 13 The tour continued to include the graveyard where bodies had been daily thrown in, many without a coffin, one over another […], the survivors not even knowing the spot where those most dear to them lay sleeping. 14 They subsequently witnessed a dead woman being flung onto a cart, covered only by a tattered yellow rag […] not sufficient however to cover the whole length of the figure, or prevent one’s seeing the livid lifeless arms as they hung down swinging and knocking against the ground. 15 The young men subsequently visited the Catholic priest and the local doctor, Daniel Donovan. 16 Both confirmed all that Townsend had told them and what they had witnessed themselves. Doctor Donovan related another highly distressing incident of a couple overtaken by the fever: […] the wife died, and the husband had just enough strength to crawl out and bury her in the garden. […]. The following day one of his neighbours brought back the head of the unfortunate woman, saying, ‘that his dog had brought it home!’ 17

Having seen more than enough to confirm the desperate situation, the students decided to return to Dublin and while the carriage was being prepared, ordered a large quantity of bread to distribute to the poor that they met as they journeyed back. Food was readily available, but peasants could not afford to buy it. The food was to be delivered to the hotel; however, word spread amongst the people who were

11 Dufferin and Boyle, pp.10-11.
12 Ibid., p. 11.
13 Ibid., p. 13.
14 Ibid., p. 15.
15 Ibid., p. 18.
17 Dufferin and Boyle, p. 21.
soon thronging the hotel, ‘to a number of 100 or 200, mostly women. It was a frightful sight […]’. Without a hope of distributing the bread in a fair and safe way they ended up throwing it out of the window:

One can never forget what followed; the screaming, the swaying to and fro of the human mass, as it rushed in the direction of some morsel, […] and above all the insatiable expression of the crowd as it remained unsatisfied and undiminished at the exhaustion of our loaves – for what were they among so many!18

The published booklet ran into three print runs in 1847 and all proceeds were sent to Skibbereen.19 The account is shocking, even to the modern desensitised reader, and yet there is an innocent quality about it. There appears to be no artifice, no stylisation; they describe the dead as those who, ‘lay sleeping’ despite the horrific manner of their interment.20 It could have been a letter written to their families from a Grand Tour, but this tour included hell and was certainly not for consumption by polite Victorian society. As already mentioned, similar descriptions had appeared in the press in the form of articles and letters but were subject to editorial agendas. It appears that the authors of the booklet hoped that their standing as gentlemen would guarantee their honest reportage and their ‘personal’ witness would give an unbiased and ‘objective’ account; as if providing ‘snapshots’ on a documentary shoot. As gentlemen, they appeared to feel it appropriate to render realistic descriptions, which would normally be beyond the scope of polite discussion, in the interests of truth. It may be a testimony to their youthfulness that they did as it was often considered that graphic descriptions turned the reader/listener away, rather than encouraging empathy. It was for this reason that Edmund Burke, though earnestly reporting to the Commons on the Bengal famine of 1770, felt unable to describe what he saw, deciding to ‘leave it to your general conceptions.’21

Nonetheless, where verbal descriptions were ‘allowed’ to straddle the fence of decency, visual representations fell under much stricter codes. Although technically possible, no photographs were taken of the famine victims. Sketches appeared in journals which showed harrowing poverty but stopped at the reality of starvation. These were often accompanied by text that described more accurately.22 As O’Sullivan suggests, this artistic ‘delicacy’ may have been to protect the dignity of the peasants, because the artists lacked the requisite skills to draw emaciation or because there was an unspoken chasm between what could be read and what could be viewed – or indeed for all of these reasons.23

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18 Dufferin and Boyle, p. 22.
19 It has not been possible to ascertain how many copies were published in each print run.
20 Dufferin and Boyle, p. 15.
In 1847 Daniel Macdonald, a painter from Cork, then living in London, exhibited a painting depicting a famine scene at the British Institution (Fig. 2).  

![Figure 2: Daniel Macdonald, *An Irish Peasant Family Discovering the Blight of their Store* (1847), oil on canvas, 83.82 × 104.14 cm, (University College, Dublin, image courtesy of The National Folklore Commission, University College, Dublin)](image)

The painting depicts a family’s devastation at finding the blight in their only food supply. The tableau appears somewhat ‘staged’: the woman in the foreground is ‘theatrically’ overcome by grief and despair, the little dog gazing anxiously at her. Her husband looks desolately into an empty horizon whilst two of the children stare at the blighted crop. An older generation stand at the back; the woman, as O’Sullivan points out, is already shrouded whilst her husband stares out of the canvas. O’Sullivan also suggests that the dwarf like character in the background and the baby on the ground are ‘incongruous’. Another incongruity lies in the robustness of the characters, who look well fed and although the father and small daughter are ragged, the wife is well dressed. The painting was executed well into the famine period but even if set in 1845, the people shown are descending into poverty and not on the brink of subsistence as most were, following multiple smaller crop failures in previous years. Whilst relatively prosperous people

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24 Niamh O’Sullivan, *In the Lion’s Den: Daniel Macdonald, Ireland and Empire* (Quinnipiac: Quinnipiac University Press, 2016), p.127. Macdonald is sometimes referred to in citations as MacDonald however, O’Sullivan’s spelling has been followed in this article.  
25 Ibid., p. 79.
did become destitute, the title refers to a ‘peasant family’. The setting is ‘authenticated’ by a realistic *sleán* (turf spade)\(^{26}\) and a dramatic, picturesque Irish landscape, but the storm clouds are almost upon them.

Macdonald was making quite a name for himself as a London society portrait artist\(^{27}\) and yet he chose to exhibit what must have been a contentious piece at a prestigious venue; O’Sullivan suggests that this was the only work directly depicting the famine painted at the period.\(^{28}\) In Ireland he had gained success in painting scenes from Irish rural life and folklore such as *The Fairy Blast* (1842) and *The Fighter* (1844).\(^{29}\) He was well acquainted with the lives of peasant people and seemingly retained a regard for their plight. There are thus a number of issues worth considering in respect of ‘what is being shown’ in this painting and perhaps more importantly ‘what is not’. It shows a family facing potential starvation, but they remain dignified if distraught. This must be seen against a common British trope of showing the Irish peasant as lazy, brutish, drunken and even simian in appearance.\(^{30}\) Dunne suggests that the young child beside the brown pitcher is a reference to a Gainsborough ‘fancy’ picture thus suggesting something of a lost idyll.\(^{31}\) However, there are darker portents; is the seemingly ‘abandoned’ baby foreshadowing her perilous fate?\(^{32}\) The child and the father are becoming dishevelled. The elderly woman is in funeral garb. The potatoes rot before our eyes as the old man stares accusingly at the viewer and who *is* the dwarf figure? Is he a malignant *pucá* (faerie) enjoying the bad luck that has unfairly befallen them? Before long the beautiful landscape, and they within it, will be covered in the swirling darkness that is entering ‘stage right’. What then does Macdonald leave out? He does not show the wife (or the eldest daughter) in rags. In a society where the female body was covered from top to toe, the degradation felt by peasant women who could no longer cover their nakedness was intense.\(^{33}\) James Mahony was a prolific illustrator/reporter for *ILN* and generally depicted the suffering he witnessed with as much dignity as possible. While his sketches do show children in rags, it was not until as late as December 1849 that he drew Bridget O’Donnel half-naked in tattered clothes.\(^{34}\) Thus it would seem that Macdonald too wished to protect this notional peasant’s dignity and self-esteem, so that she is not thought too degraded to merit sympathy; that she is recognisable as a person and not a semi-human of no consequence. It is perhaps for this reason that he shows no starving or fever-stricken people; no barren landscape, no tumbled down cottage or people dying in ditches and


\(^{27}\) O’Sullivan, *In the Lion’s Den*, p. 33.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., p. 144.

\(^{30}\) Dunne, *Tombs of a Departed Race*, p. 32.

\(^{31}\) O’Sullivan, *Tombs of a Departed Race*, p. 32.

\(^{32}\) Dunne, p. 122 refers to Gainsborough’s *Cottage Girl with Dog and Pitcher* (1785), (National Gallery of Ireland).


the dog remains a cute family pet, not a marauding scavenger. This is not a documentary but is it less affecting for all of that?

Dunne summarises Macdonald’s painting thus:

The family faces starvation, and the picture is a sincere attempt to convey the horror of the situation to English viewers and so elicit their sympathy. Using the conventions of contemporary sentimental painting (and the tradition of depicting ‘the deserving poor’) to achieve this was understandable and indeed essential.\textsuperscript{35}

It was essential it seems for the artist but not for the author. Dufferin and Boyle’s booklet sold out twice and so did not completely repel by its candid descriptions. Was that because readers could not, or did not want to, translate the words into images and devised distancing mechanisms in order to process the information and render it ‘bearable’; readers who were braver than Burke’s audience of the ‘general conceptions’ but not ready to face the ‘witness status’ of the viewer? In the face of visual representation of atrocity, Kozloff argues that, ‘It is not so much in the [artist’s] eye but in that of the beholder that the experience is decisively shaped.’\textsuperscript{36} Berger expresses the relationship between the artist and what he paints similarly:

Every artist discovers that drawing […] is a two-way process […]. When the intensity of looking reaches a certain degree, one becomes aware of an equally intense energy coming towards one, through the appearance of whatever it is one is scrutinizing […]. It is a ferocious and inarticulated dialogue. To sustain it requires faith. It is like burrowing into the dark, a burrowing under the apparent.\textsuperscript{37}

There appears to be a symbiotic relationship between artist, artwork and viewer that is not present in the reading of ‘evidence’ no matter how accurate it is. Gibbons states;

It is true that by putting a human face on suffering and appealing to the senses, images give the lie to the more abstract, statistical accounts of famine […]\textsuperscript{38}

Yet Dufferin and Boyle’s account was not statistical but very personally harrowing and their desire was to reveal the truth. But does it reveal the same truth as Macdonald’s painting or simply reveal it in a different way – in that words are ‘noisy’ while images are ‘silent’? The Skibbereen Heritage Centre contains a detailed and affecting account of the local famine history. It depicts the desperate overcrowding in the workhouse thus: on a wall is a list of names of sixty-seven men, women and children who died between 18 and 30 December 1846. On the floor directly below the list, a black square (less than a metre across)

\textsuperscript{35} Dunne, p. 122. It is important to note that the Irish peasant was frequently described as ‘undeserving’.


\textsuperscript{38} Gibbons, p. 14.
is painted, illustrating the space each inhabitant had to themselves. The scene is presented with a Beckett-like silence. In discussing the ‘ethics of representation’ Gibbons suggests that there is

[…] a need to take account of the spectator in rendering the point of view of the victim. It is this two-way process in the dynamics of vision that is of central importance, for it implies that so far from negating experience, a certain reticence or refusal ‘to show all’ is required if an image is to elicit an ethical rather than a sensational (or even sentimental) response in the end.\(^\text{39}\)

As in Berger’s account of working in darkness, perhaps Macdonald’s reticence encourages the viewer to think for themselves; to let the absences speak for themselves. Mac Suibhne’s title, ‘Subjects Lacking Words’\(^\text{40}\) is illustrative here, for Macdonald’s dignified silence appears to be a truthful medium for depicting a people who had no voice and left no trace, not even a marker for their graves.

It appears that Dufferin, Boyle and Macdonald shared an agenda: to elicit sympathy for the starving peasants and encourage a charitable response, even if a political one was beyond their scope or desire. The students believed that as ‘gentlemen’ their words would be believed, and their status permitted them to reveal what they saw as an ‘objective’ account. It is unclear what ‘success’ the booklet actually had although Dufferin himself donated £1000 to the Skibbereen Relief Fund.\(^\text{41}\) It may be ingenuous to ascribe a deliberately thematic silence to Macdonald’s work because he was undoubtedly pushing the boundaries of the acceptable aesthetics of the period. He would have also wished to sell the painting.\(^\text{42}\) As it happened, it was not particularly well received.\(^\text{43}\) Ultimately the impact of these works may have been more to do with the arenas in which they functioned. Although emphasising a lack of political motive, Dufferin and Boyle’s journal could be read in male discursive society or ‘clubland’ where men of the world could debate current affairs and even admit sympathy, providing the interests of the Empire were not compromised. Macdonald’s painting, however, would be viewed by polite society, which included women, whose sensibilities must not be upset. But there was ever the danger that the subjective response such a painting might elicit would encourage the audience to ‘burrow under the apparent’ and see the evil that lay within.

\(^{39}\) Gibbons, p.13.


\(^{41}\) Kearney and O’ Regan, p. 32.

\(^{42}\) The painting’s provenance is only listed from 1966 when Cecil Woodham-Smith bought it at Christies from a private owner and donated it to the National Folklore Commission. O’ Sullivan, *In the Lion’s Den*, p.130.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., pp. 76-77.
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Millais, Dickens and the ‘idea’ of a picture

PAUL SHAW

One of the earliest works Millais painted under the new Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood banner was later known as Christ in the House of His Parents (1848-9), first exhibited in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1850. It created a critical furor, one of the most virulent attacks coming from Dickens in Old Lamps for New Ones. Dickens is clearly enjoying himself, a rollicking piece of knockabout journalism. Is it worth taking seriously? I want to argue in this article that it is, partly for the light it sheds on Dickens’s attitude to Christianity but equally importantly for what it tells us about Dickens’s views on visual aesthetics.

When Whistler sued Ruskin for the latter’s hostile review of his Nocturne in Black and Gold, in November 1878, it ended up in the law courts with financial ruin, near mental breakdown and a resignation from an Oxford professorship. Dickens and Millais went the other way, moving on from this unpromising start to develop a real professional relationship, and, to some extent, personal friendship, sealed in death.

Two artefacts can spark off each other, and so can two artists. When Millais and Dickens first met, sparks flew, sparks of heat rather than light.

Old Lamps for New Ones appeared in his own periodical, the two-penny weekly Household Words, on 15 June 1850.1 For Dickens, the realism of the portrayal of the Holy Family in Christ in the House of His Parents (Fig.1) verged on the blasphemous. Who were these young Turks who dared to overturn four centuries of artistic orthodoxy and, in the process, produce something so ugly? Raphael gave us beauty where this new-fangled PRB has given us only ‘the lowest depths of what is mean, odious, repulsive and revolting.’ The child Jesus, Dickens went on, is ‘a hideous, wry-necked, blubbering red-headed boy in a bed-gown’; Mary is ‘so horrible in her ugliness, that (supposing it were possible for any human creature to exist for a moment with that dislocated throat) she would stand out from the rest of the company as a Monster, in the vilest cabaret in France, or the lowest gin-shop in England.’

Dickens was not alone in attacking this painting. The Times labelled it ‘revolting’, the Illustrated London News concentrated on the sinister ‘Brotherhood’ implications of the so-called ‘PRB’ (4 May 1850), and Frank Stone launched a major onslaught in the Athenaeum (1st June).2 The Builder wrote of ‘the studious vulgarity of portraying the youthful Saviour as a red-haired Jew boy, and the sublime personage of the virgin a sore-

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The irony of censuring the painter for depicting Jesus as a ‘Jew boy’ is exquisite, and was probably lost on the reviewer.

Dickens’s attack is three-fold: the near-blasphemous depiction of the Holy Family, the focus on the cult of the ugly, and the audacity of the artist and his group in taking revisionism to the point of insolence. Each bears examination. Dickens as Defender of the Faith at first sight seems hard to swallow. He was no enthusiast of organised religion. Virulently anti-Catholic, he had a marked dislike of High Church Anglicans and Low Church Chapel. Dissenting preachers, for Dickens, were a rich source of satirical mockery the line of hypocrites from Stiggins ‘The Shepherd’ in Pickwick Papers to Chadband in Bleak House and Little Bethel in Old Curiosity Shop. Anglo-Catholics, the High Church wing of the Oxford Movement, usually called by him ‘Puseyites’, he accused of preferring internal squabbles about liturgy and vestments to addressing the scandal of the urban poor.

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3 The Builder, 1 June 1850, pp. 255-6.
In March 1843 he wrote:

I find that I am getting horribly bitter about Puseyism. Good God to talk in these times of most untimely ignorance among the people, about what Priests shall wear, and whether they shall turn when they say their prayers.  

In a letter to Daniel Maclise of 30 May 1850, he encloses a copy of *Old Lamps for New Ones*, a week prior to publication, for his friend’s attention:

I feel perfectly sure that you will see nothing in it but what is fair public satire on a point that opens very serious social considerations. If such things were allowed to sweep on, without some vigorous protest, three fourths of this Nation would be under the feet of Priests in ten years.  

It is Millais’s supposed Anglo-Catholic sympathies that riled Dickens, the Tractarian symbolism in the painting as he sees it, Crucifixion, Trinity, Infant Baptism, all smacking of Puseyite sympathies.

Dickens’s own religious views are not easy to characterise. ‘Liberal Christian’ might serve him best, a deep conviction in the ethical and social teachings of Christ but less drawn to the supernatural or theological aspects of faith, and distinctly undrawn to religion in the form of the established churches. Clergymen, for the most part for Dickens, were in a circle of hell all of their own.

Valentine Cunningham, in a shrewd analysis of the distinction between Dickens’s views on Christianity and on Christ, draws attention to the little-known *The Life of Our Lord* that Dickens wrote for his children in the years 1846-9, not published until 1934, sixty-four years after his death. Dickens explains his motive for writing: ‘Everybody ought to know about Him. No one ever lived who was so good, so kind, so gentle, and so sorry for all people who did wrong, or were in any way ill or miserable.’ This is the ‘Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild’ of Charles Wesley’s hymn. Jesus was sent to us as an exemplar of goodness. If we imitate him, the world will be an infinitely better place. Cunningham labels this ‘New Testament Lite, a theology that is ethically generous but also rather vague at crucial places.’ The Gospel According to St Charles is long on social goodness and compassion, short on any theology of conversion or atonement. We must be good, and we attain goodness by imitating Jesus. But what about those who don’t want to be good or who have ‘no power of themselves to help themselves’? If human nature is intrinsically fallen, how is the fall

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5 *Letters*, P6, pp.106-7. The Pilgrim Editors of this volume (Storey, Tillotson and Burgis) suggest in a footnote that Maclise would have been ‘fundamentally opposed’ to the tenor of Dickens’s article, Maclise himself a champion of the PRB without being a member.
8 Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1549), a source Dickens knew well, and quotations from which abound in his writing.
of man to be reversed? ‘There is no original sin in Dickens’s theology… He has no theological rationale of evil.’ If human nature is not fallen, why is there so much evil and suffering?

The pictorial embodiment of Dickens’s Jesus is Holman Hunt’s *The Light of the World.* Begun at the same time as Millais’s *Christ in the House of His Parents,* it was not exhibited until the RA Exhibition of 1854. This is the archetypal Aryan Hero, auburn, nicely shampooed tresses hanging elegantly on his broad shoulders. It plays to our English Christological fantasies, the idealised Anglo-Saxon Jesus, a million miles from Millais’s wounded boy or the presumably Palestinian original.

Barrie Bullen’s *The Expressive Eye* analyses in depth Hardy’s interest in painting and how he brings that visual awareness to the novels themselves. The same story could be told about Dickens, but with many significant differences. Both men were classic autodidacts, in painting as in everything else, but Hardy approached his art education with typically methodical thoroughness where Dickens was more haphazard and cavalier. Partly drawn to London by the International Exhibition of 1862, Hardy visited the National Gallery every lunchtime from his architectural offices for twenty minutes, disciplining himself to a single painter ‘and forbidding his eyes to stray to any other’. As Bullen demonstrates, the novels are consequently infused with references to painters and paintings, and the novels themselves are studies in how we perceive scenes, events and people. *Under the Greenwood Tree* is subtitled ‘A Rural Painting of the Dutch School’, and *Far from the Madding Crowd* is an extraordinary series of verbal paintings and perceptions, a study in how we see anything and everything.

Dickens’s autodidacticism was ferocious but much less planned. He was a more gregarious man than Hardy and numbered many painters among his close friends: Daniel Maclise, Frank and Marcus Stone, William Powell Frith, Augustus Egg and Clarkson Stanfield. He made two visits to Italy, firstly with his family from July 1844 to July 1845, and then again eight years later, October to December 1853. This nine-week jaunt with Egg and Wilkie Collins was a boys’ trip away, an unapologetic treat following the

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9 Cunningham, p. 267.
10 Used as an illustration in *The Life of Our Lord,* p. 122.
11 The original is in Keble College Chapel, Oxford; a later version (1851–6) is in Manchester City Art Gallery. A third version (1900–4) is in St Paul’s Cathedral.
completion of *Bleak House* in August of that year. The first visit produced *Pictures from Italy* (1846), the very title sitting neatly in Bullen’s thesis about Hardy that I would like to extend to Dickens.

In Italy, he dived into galleries and churches, and reacted energetically to the paintings he saw there, very much in the rumbustious style of his piece on *Christ in the House of His Parents*. Tintoretto’s *Assembly of the Blest* is ‘the most wonderful and charming picture ever painted.’

’Titian’s *Assumption of the Virgin* possessed ‘amazing beauty’ and Raphael’s *Transfiguration* was a ‘masterpiece.’

In Bologna, it was the canvases of Guido, Domenichino and Caracci that caught his eye but the Palazzo Te in Mantua was a dreadful disappointment, Giulio Romano’s frescos ‘so inconceivably ugly and grotesque […] monsters with swollen faces and cracked cheeks, and every kind of distortion of look and limb […] immensely large and exaggerated to the utmost pitch of uncouthness.’

Canova’s statues exhibited ‘exquisite grace and beauty’, where Bernini’s were ‘the most detestable class of production in the wide world […] whose attitudes put all other extravagance to shame.’

He claimed no expertise in art criticism – ‘I am not mechanically acquainted with the art of painting and have no other means of judging of a picture than as I see it resembling and refining upon nature.’ He praised Leonardo’s *Last Supper* for its ‘beautiful composition and arrangement’ but censured Michelangelo’s *Last Judgement* for its lack of ‘any general idea, or one pervading thought […] a confusion of naked knotty-bodied figures, sprawling up or tumbling down’ the end wall of the Sistine Chapel.

Correggio’s frescos in the cupola of Parma Cathedral show the Assumption, Mary surrounded by apostles and saints, but Dickens saw only ‘a labyrinth of arms and legs […] heaps of foreshortened limbs, entangled and involved and jumbled together.’

Dickens shared a general mid-Victorian belief in the unity of the arts: the novelist and the dramatist, literature and painting were ‘sister arts.’ In his farewell speech on leaving America, after his second visit there, 2 November 1867, he saluted ‘My brother artists, not only in literature but in the sister arts, especially painting, among whose professors living, and unhappily dead, are many of my oldest and best friends.’

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15 Letter to Forster, 28 November 1853, P7, p. 218.
16 *Pictures from Italy*, ‘Rome’. Because Dickens’s creative work exists in so many different editions, conventionally page numbers are not given.
17 *Pictures from Italy*, ‘Through Bologna and Ferrara’.
18 *Pictures from Italy*, ‘By Verona, Mantua and Milan, Across the Pass of the Simplon into Switzerland’.
19 *Pictures from Italy*, ‘Rome’.
20 *Pictures from Italy*, ‘By Verona, Mantua and Milan, Across the Pass of the Simplon into Switzerland’.
21 *Pictures from Italy*, ‘Rome’.
22 *Pictures from Italy*, ‘To Parma, Modena, and Bologna’.
24 Fielding, p. 371.
That friendship extended to his illustrators, for whom Dickens was a notoriously hard taskmaster. Of his fifteen novels, only two appeared originally without illustrations – *Hard Times* (1854) and *Great Expectations* (1860-1). The first, *Pickwick Papers* (1836-7) ironically started life as Dickens providing text to Seymour’s pictures; but after Seymour’s suicide, and Buss’s disappointing attempt to fill his shoes, Hablot Knight Browne was chosen. This was the start of a profound working relationship over ten novels, Browne choosing the pen named ‘Phiz’ to complement Dickens’s ‘Boz’. For *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5) he turned to Marcus Stone, and for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* to Luke Fildes and Charles Collins. For the five Christmas Books (1843-8) he cast his net wider, to Landseer, Maclise, Leech, Tenniel, Stanfield and others. Q. D. Leavis argues persuasively that the illustrations become less important as the novels mature, Dickens increasingly becoming his own (verbal) illustrator. This thesis resonates with Bullen’s argument about Hardy, that he was his own illustrator, in words, from the outset.

Dickens was always demanding of his illustrators, and this would sometimes boil over into irritation and anger. On 18 July 1846, he wrote to Forster about completing the first monthly instalment of *Dombey and Son*, Chapters I-IV: ‘I think the general idea of Dombey is interesting and new and has great material in it […] The points for illustration, and the enormous care required, make me excessively anxious.’

The key word for Dickens is ‘idea’, sometimes ‘notion’, analogous to ‘impression’ in Hardy, the foundational link between the visual and the verbal. Michelangelo’s *Last Judgement* lacked ‘any general idea, or one pervading thought.’ Visiting the 1855 Universal Exhibition in Paris, he felt strongly that English art did not stand up well against the French: ‘Small, shrunken, insignificant, niggling. The general absence of ideas was horribly apparent.’ Throughout the letters, we read of ‘the great turning idea of the *Bleak House* Story’, ‘a notion of another little story’ [*Nobody’s Story*], ‘I am in the first stages of a new book, [*Little Dorrit*] which consists in going round and round the idea’, ‘a very fine, new and grotesque idea […] has opened upon me’ [*Great Expectations*]. ‘Idea’: the masterplan of the work, the overall conception or aim of the work.

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26 Letters, P7, p.586.
27 Letter to Forster, 11 November 1855, P7, pp. 742-3.
28 Letters, P6, p. 805.
29 Letters P7, p. 200.
30 Letters, P7, p. 571.
31 Letters, P9, p. vii.
Major authorial anxieties centred on Mr Dombey. Dickens asked Browne to send him a sheet of about thirty sketches of Dombey’s head and deportment, so he could choose the one that came closest to his own idea of the character. Forster, in an unrivalled position to know, tells us that Dickens was ‘rarely anything but disappointed’ in the illustrations to his novels, but this perfectionism seemed to draw his collaborators closer to him rather than alienating them. His reaction to Browne’s ‘Paul and Mrs Pipchin’ was not untypical, as expressed to Forster:

I am really distressed by the illustration of Mrs Pipchin and Paul. It is so frightfully and wildly wide of the mark. Good Heaven! In the commonest and most literal construction of the text, it is all wrong […] I can’t say what pain and vexation it is to be so utterly misrepresented. I would cheerfully have given a hundred pounds to have kept this illustration out of the book. He never could have got that idea of Mrs Pipchin if he had attended to the text. Indeed, I think he does it better without the text; for then the notion is made easy to him in short description and he can’t help taking it in.

The idea of Mrs Pipchin, the notion. The ‘idea’ is embodied in the novel’s title and frontispiece, and Dickens laboured long over both. For the title of Hard Times, for example, he sent no fewer than fourteen suggestions to Forster, for him to select his preferred three, Dickens having done the same. Dickens chose Hard Times, A Mere Question of Figures and The Gradgrind Philosophy. Forster’s choices were Prove It, Hard Times and Simple Arithmetic. So, Hard Times it was. Similar agonizing went into David Copperfield’s name. To have the title or name was to have the novel or character firmly in his mind. Once those were secure, the writing out of the story or character was relatively straightforward. The physical evidence for this lies in his Working Notes, the three of four sheets of pale blue paper, 7” × 9”, folded vertically in half, on the left hand a series of tags and phrase. Often these are questions which Dickens subsequently answered himself. On the right side is the Number Plan, 1 to 19/20 for a monthly serial (the last two instalments appearing together), with the titles of each chapter and the main content. The different coloured inks used and variations in handwriting show that he was compiling these Working Notes over some period of time.

‘He wrote a very harsh and hasty criticism,’ his daughter, Kate Perugini, herself an artist, wrote thirty years after her father’s death, referring to his original 1850 Household Words article; ‘a criticism that I have reason

32 The sheet is reproduced in J. Forster and J. W. T. Ley, The Life of Charles Dickens, (London, 1928), pp. 474-5. The original is in the Forster Collection in the V&A.
33 Letters, P4, p. 671.
to believe he regretted publishing in later years. But a letter Dickens wrote to Millais five years after the original article, suggests otherwise. Wilkie Collins, a close friend of both men, brought them together for a reconciliation dinner, which, according to Hunt writing fifty years later, ended in ‘removing all estrangement, and in making Dickens understand and express his sense of the power of Millais’s genius and character.’

But Dickens was sticking to his guns:

Objecting very strongly to what I believe to be an unworthy use of your great powers, I once expressed the objection in this same journal. My opinion on that point is not in the least changed, but it has never dashed my admiration of your progress in what I suppose are higher and better things.

So, who was right, Millais or Dickens? Accusations of Puseyite sympathies seem arcane mid-Victorian squabbles and are probably best left there. For the Master of the Grotesque to object to Millais’s use of the same seems so bizarre it need detain us little longer. He accused Millais’s Virgin Mary of being more at home in the ‘vilest cabaret in France, or the lowest gin-shop in England’, but cabarets and gin-shops abound in Dickens and he adores both. But what of his pivotal word ‘idea’? What is the ‘idea’ of this painting?

When it was first exhibited, its only heading was Zechariah 13:6: And one shall say unto him, What are those wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. The extent to which Zechariah can be read as Christian prophecy has been disputed as far back as the Reformation. Such readings in the mid-Victorian period were held to be particularly Anglo-Catholic and the painting is full, arguably too full, of such typology. The nails, pincers and wood anticipate the Cross; the child’s wounded hand and drop of blood on his foot prefigure the Five Wounds of Christ, the Stigmata; the carpenter’s triangle next to the ladder is possibly Trinitarian; the white dove on the ladder is more certainly the Holy Spirit; the sheep in the background are the Christian flock; Jesus’s cousin John the Baptist holds a bowl of water. The two window openings separate the inner carpenter’s shop from the world outside, a possible echo of Tractarian ‘reserve’, the need to separate the holy from the profane. Mary’s comforting of the injured child is the Mater Dolorosa at the foot of the Cross or the Pietà.

37 Letters, P7, p. 517.
38 The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (1882) has a footnote on this verse: ‘The reference which Dr Pusey and others have seen in this verse to our Lord and to the prints of the nails in His hands is in a high degree forced and arbitrary. It cannot possibly be reconciled with the preceding context, with which the verse intimately coheres. ‘Quidam hoc traxerunt ad Christum,’ writes Calvin, ‘qua dict Zacharias manibus inflecta esse vulnera; sed illud est nimirum frivolum, quia satis constat sermonem prosequi de falsis doctoribus, qui abusi fuerant Dei nomine ad tempus.’ Dickens in league with the Reformation’s Calvin? Interdisciplinary studies throws up some fascinating bedfellows.
39 The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament (2019) has seven chapters devoted to Zechariah, including one on the verses immediately following Millais’s, 13:7-9, by J Randall Price, with an analysis of how these verses are used in the New Testament.
So, what is this painting trying to say? What is its idea? We may reject the whole Dickensian concept of ‘idea’, but to understand it is possibly to appreciate why he reacted against this painting so strongly.

Charles Collins, Wilkie’s brother, married Dickens’s daughter Kate in 1860, five years after the reconciliation dinner. Dickens wanted him as the illustrator for *Edwin Drood*, but Millais, by now a good friend, successfully suggested Fildes would be a better choice. When Dickens died on 9 June 1870, at Gad’s Hill, Kate asked Millais to go down and make a drawing of her father in death (Fig. 2), as Millais had drawn her in life – *The Black Brunswicker* (1860). Sixteen years later, Kitton asked Millais’s permission to include this sketch in his *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*. Millais responded: ‘You are quite welcome to publish the sketch I made after death if you have Mrs Perugini’s permission. She is a very old friend of mine.’

Figure 2: John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Dickens After Death* (1870), pencil on paper, 21.35 × 34.6 cm (Charles Dickens Museum, London; reproduced by permission)

40 Charles Collins was a recent poster boy for the Ashmolean, his *Convent Thoughts* (1850-1) used for the museum’s advertising. Kate married her second husband, Charles Edward Perugini, also a painter, in 1874, the year after Collins’s death.

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Fragile Masculinity: an exploration into the construction of bourgeois male identity in 1850s London

JESSICA GREAVES

This article considers the first scene of the painting Past and Present (Augustus Egg, 1858) alongside a contemporary advertisement for Walter Berdoe: Tailor and Overcoat Maker (1854). Through these sources, the construction of masculinity in Victorian bourgeois society is explored. Masculinity studies is a burgeoning area of research, as traditionally focus has concerned the position of women and the imbalance of power between the genders. These artefacts are used as a lens to examine the changing status of male identity in 1850s London, and the complex balance between outward authority and internal instability.

The field of masculinity studies is indebted to 1970s second-wave feminist scholarship which introduced academic analysis on the basis of gender. Inevitably, the study of masculine history and identity has been considered a contentious subject; gender scholar Eve Kosofosky Sedgwick denigrated the discipline as the ‘vast national wash of masculine self-pity’. However, masculine scholarship is not intended to vindicate privileged patriarchal systems. Instead, interrogation of the cause and mentality responsible provides insight into power imbalance. As feminist studies have highlighted, the oppression of women was acute in Victorian Britain, making the examination of masculine authority all the more necessary. Although, as Herbert Sussman acknowledges, exploration of the patriarchal role demands sensitivity:

for the writer on Victorian masculinities the problem of power and patriarchy calls for a double awareness, a sensitivity both to the ways in which these social formations of the masculine created conflict, anxiety, tension in men, while acknowledging that, in spite of the stress, men accepted these formations as a form of self-policing crucial to patriarchal domination.

Significantly, here Sussman introduces the crux of the subject; that, despite appearances, Victorian masculinity was a fragile combination of outward authority, and internal anxiety. This complex balance – termed by Michael Roper and John Tosh as the dichotomy between ‘psychic fragility and social power’ – is demonstrated in these artefacts.

Although both are visual sources, these two differ in style and purpose. The advertisement for Walter Berdoe (Fig.1) is a commercial artefact from 1854. This engraving advertises two London premises for a tailor and overcoat maker; its purpose is to publicise the businesses in order to attract male clientele.

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4 Adams, p. 3.
By contrast, *Past and Present, No. 1* (Fig. 2) is an oil painting forming one part of a triptych by Augustus Egg. It is important to note that this title has been adopted – it was initially exhibited at the Royal Academy, London in 1858 with the subtitle:

> August the 4th - Have just heard that B - has been dead more than a fortnight, so his poor children have now lost both parents. I hear she was seen on Friday last near the Strand, evidently without a place to lay her head. What a fall hers has been!

Egg’s painting is concerned with a bourgeois household and shows a scene of husband discovering his wife’s infidelity. There is a strong narrative and, unlike the *Walter Berdoe* advertisement, the painting is categorised as ‘high art’. Yet, as the two sources relate to the bourgeois male of 1850s London, careful analysis provides insight into the status and construction of Victorian masculine identity, particularly with reference to the role of the public and private spheres.

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6 Ibid., p. 71.
The Victorian era marks a new chapter in the history of masculinity. The shifts in economic hierarchy introduced in the eighteenth century were expounded through the Industrial Revolution, meaning wealth was no longer the exclusive domain of the landed gentry. Such changes to industry also established the crucial separation between work and home, public and private life. Men of the flourishing middle-class found status defined in terms of economic success. This brought about a changed definition of masculine behaviour, with hard work and self-control considered manly attributes. This was further supported by the prevailing Protestant theology, demonstrated by Thomas Carlyle’s 1843 advocation of ‘The Gospel of Work’, decreeing labour a God-given imperative. The view that disciplined work was manly and should be celebrated was also reflected in the fashion of the economic middle-class, through ‘The Great Masculine

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Renunciation. As the behaviour and dress of the aristocracy was seen in terms of idleness and luxury it was deemed effeminate, and so by contrast, this new class conscientiously adopted sombre, practical and frugal clothing as a statement of integrity and masculinity. Thus, the dress of Victorian male society served as an indicator of status, and masculine identity was constructed based on self-discipline and performance. Having recognised this, the significance of the male outfitters can be appreciated.

When considering the Walter Berdoe advertisement, it must be noted that as these are engravings and not photographs, they cannot be read as exact replicas of the original shops. Instead, the significance of the advertisement lies in understanding the message Walter Berdoe is trying to convey, and thus the customers they are hoping to attract through these means. Examination quickly reveals that the two shops represent, and therefore are targeted at, different clientele. This is readily identifiable by the dress of the customers depicted, the different shop frontages, and the locations listed. The New Bond Street shop is evidently intended for a higher class of customer – this is a Mayfair tailor, there are customers shown in top hats and breeches, and women are also included in the scene. The shop façade is highly ornate, comprising fretwork, stone carvings and arches, whilst the building and the shop window both display an elaborate crest featuring a lion and unicorn.

By contrast, the Corn Hill shop is located in the mercantile district of the city. The façade portrayed is much simpler; using straight lines and geometric shapes, basic light fittings, and the goods for sale are advertised in signs on the windows and stone façade. Whereas the New Bond Street shop was primarily a tailor, this store prominently advertises waterproof overcoats. Significantly, the clientele depicted is exclusively male, and all wear long trousers. The man entering the shop is wearing a bowler hat – a recent invention from 1850, largely considered working-class fashion. The group depicted, and therefore the target audience, is the industrial masculine bourgeoisie. The contemporary celebration of rigour and work is encapsulated by Henry Dunckley’s declaration; ‘Trade has now a chivalry of its own […] the nobility and dignity of industry and commerce.’ In adopting this uniform of modest, pragmatic clothing, the middle-class working man consciously made a statement about his economic and masculine status; publicly identifying himself as a member of this group.

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9 Ibid., p. 163.
10 V&A History of Fashion 1840-1900 <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/> [Accessed January 8 2020].
11 Kuchta, p. 150.
It is interesting that the two separate premises and their different demographics are advertised on the one item. This may simply be a cost-effective measure, but it also may reflect another aspect of the changing Victorian society. At this time social groups and classes were shifting; the accumulation of wealth by the middle-class demonstrated that it was possible to change position within society, and so introduced the concept of the ‘self-made man’.\textsuperscript{12} Similarly, as disciplined work continued to be extolled, the word ‘gentleman’ was redefined, ‘no longer referring to a man of gentle birth, a man of the gentry, but to purely characterological traits.’\textsuperscript{13} Perhaps the simultaneous appeal to both classes in this advertisement reflects the possibility of movement between social groups. Arguably, the New Bond Street tailor is not intended for an upper-class market, but rather functions as an aspirational token for the bourgeois clientele. This would explain the overt declaration of the low prices, as the economic middle-class male took pride in frugality.\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, as Sussman highlights, despite the middle-class denigration of the aristocracy, there remained a contradictory desire to emulate their actions: ‘a desire to employ monetary success to inhabit a preindustrial style’.\textsuperscript{15} If a man was born into wealth he was considered effeminate, whereas a man’s ability to reach the same position through hard work and ambition was deemed ‘the epitome of manliness.’\textsuperscript{16} As such, it is possible that despite appearances, the advertisement for \textit{Walter Berdoe} has been designed solely to attract the custom of the male economic, middle-class market.

A defining feature for the Victorian bourgeoisie was the separation between home and workplace.\textsuperscript{17} This division created a basic gendering: women were defined by their domestic role, while men were characterised by their employment in a public setting. As a result, the public arena came to be viewed as masculine, and the domestic became the feminine domain. Women’s restricted access to the public sphere demonstrates the imbalance of power between the sexes: ‘much of men’s power has resided in their privileged freedom to pass at will between the public and the private.’\textsuperscript{18} Thus, the construction of bourgeois masculine identity is largely defined by their place within the public sphere. The importance of men’s public persona is clearly reflected in the \textit{Walter Berdoe} advertisement, in particular the Corn Hill premises. Here, it is an exclusively masculine clientele that is represented in the public forum of the shop. Furthermore, the clothes for sale are overcoats and riding capes: evidently designed for wearing outside. This is further emphasised by the overt advertising of the waterproof nature of the items sold. The demand for clothing able to withstand the elements truly encapsulates the public nature of masculine identity. Meanwhile, the functional fabric reflects the middle-class championship of practicality and restraint – these

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12 Sussman, \textit{Masculine Identities}, p. 91. \\
13 Kuchta, p. 169. \\
14 Ibid., p. 151. \\
15 Sussman, \textit{Masculine Identities}, p. 87. \\
16 Ibid., p. 91. \\
17 Nead, p. 32. \\
18 Tosh, p. 5. \\
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are not luxury items; they are designed to serve a purpose. In addition, the listing for Walter Berdoe in the advertising sheet (Fig.3) reveals the improvements that the company had made to the waterproofing technique: typifying the Victorian interest in progress and development.

This successful industrial development reflects the newly defined masculine trait of productivity. Furthermore, this listing is part of an advertising sheet for ‘persons proceeding to South Australia’ – the waterproof items intended for those venturing to unknown terrain on the other side of the world. Here, the need to withstand all weather conditions is linked to the traditional masculine characteristics of heroism and adventure. But indeed, the masculine domain of the working world was itself presented in such terms. This is clearly demonstrated in John Ruskin’s Of Queen’s Gardens lecture a decade later. Here, in advocating separate spheres for men and women, Ruskin presents masculinity as pre-determined and universal, describing male character thus:

The man’s power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer and defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention, his energy for adventure, for war and for conquest.

Again, the conventional masculine attributes of strength and courage are used to justify the exclusively male domain of employment. Such presentation of masculinity is also reflected in the simple act of wearing a waterproof coat. This makes an active statement of male character, symbolising the belief that the public realm of employment is innately masculine – a place of exploration and risk, from which women must be shielded.

19 Ibid., p. 6.
The gendering of public and private spheres is readily interpreted as the opposition of male emancipation and female oppression – a view initially expressed through feminist academics.\textsuperscript{21} However, in order to appreciate the complexity of Victorian masculine identity, it is necessary to address the male experience of employment at this time. While an occupation granted greater freedom and status, recent masculinity studies have addressed the challenging working conditions that men faced. As Sussman has identified, the rigorous advocacy of discipline and self-reliance encouraged individualism, rather than community:

This redefinition of masculine identity sees the ideal man within a capitalist society as an essentially self-regarding individual looking only to his own personal well-being: a well-being defined solely in monetary terms.\textsuperscript{22}

John Tosh also notes the alienation faced due to the ‘dehumanized personal relations’\textsuperscript{23} of modernised industry, whilst also addressing the significant social costs of these technological advancements.\textsuperscript{24} As a result, he posits that the workplace was a harsh, unyielding environment from which the working man craved the refuge offered to them by the home:

Home was felt to be the only place where the vulnerability that lay behind the public mask of strength and imperturbability could be shared with someone else.\textsuperscript{25}

Although arguably this declaration is somewhat hyperbolic, it does raise the issue of the public and private personas of the Victorian male, challenging the accepted view that their ready access to the world of work was a symbol of freedom. Instead, the expectation to fulfil this role is presented as a burden, against which men craved domestic sanctuary. Following this interpretation, the working man was actively defined by the very attributes that destabilised him. Yet, despite underlying anxieties, the advertisement celebrates the dress and status of the economic male, and thus reflects the masculine adoption of a public image to disguise internal unease.

Having acknowledged the dynamic of public and private spheres, the role of masculinity and domesticity in Past and Present can now be considered. At the time of exhibition, John Ruskin identified the couple as bourgeois, declaring the man ‘an ordinary husband – employed at some house in the city.’\textsuperscript{26} As such, Egg has depicted the same demographic represented in, and targeted by, the Walter Berdow advertisement. It is therefore reasonable to posit that the figure in the narrative embodies the same attributes and anxieties of masculinity now identified in the economic middle-class male. Significantly, the scene depicted concerns a domestic setting: ‘the fall is literally enacted in a middle-class interior.’\textsuperscript{27} This aspect has predominantly

\textsuperscript{21}Tosh, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{22}Sussman, Masculine Identities, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{23}Tosh, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{24}Tosh, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 54.
\textsuperscript{26}Quoted in Nead, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 72.
been viewed in relation to the woman’s fate. As a wife’s purity was expected to safeguard the home, the adulteress was viewed as a particularly dangerous and abhorrent figure: her transgression having ‘infiltrated the very stronghold of respectability’. In addressing the triptych, Nead identifies the opposition that Egg sets up between internal and external spaces: the woman’s fall sees her cast from the safety of the home to the dangers of the city; ultimately resulting in absolute exposure through homelessness. Although the wife’s fate is extreme, the narrative does corroborate that exposure to the city and public life was a challenge, against which the home provided a sanctuary. Tosh specifies that ‘the heyday of masculine domesticity [was] from the 1830s to the 1860s’, and quite clearly the production of the painting falls within this period. Once the contemporary masculine desire for domesticity has been recognised, the wife’s betrayal is then understood as the destruction of his safe haven. Analysis tends to address the role of the fallen woman, rather than the shame experienced by the cuckolded husband. Employing Tosh’s pronouncement that ‘the home was central to Masculinity’, the wife’s unwomanly behaviour has served to emasculate her husband. In 1828, the Reverend H.C. O’Donoghue declared:

The married man’s self-respect is kept alive by finding that though all around is darkness and humiliation, yet there is still a little world of love at home, of which he is the monarch.

Following this, Past and Present depicts a very threatening scene of treason. In order to fully appreciate the painting and the cuckoldry portrayed, it is crucial to understand the masculine attitude towards the home. The fact that the male desire for domesticity was borne out of anxiety further confirms the unstable foundations upon which Victorian masculinity was constructed.

A fundamental fear of cuckoldry was the risk of raising children of uncertain paternity, as the concept of lineage was crucial to masculine identity. Returning to Walter Berdoe, the inclusion of children with parents outside the Mayfair premises reveals the importance of this subject. The fact that men are shown at a clothing shop with their sons references ‘breeching’: the stage where boys transitioned from wearing petticoats to trousers, and the father was expected to adopt a more active role. Breeching served as a rite-of-passage: the visual indicator of masculinity. This small detail in the advertisement clearly demonstrates the significance of dynasty to the male identity. Following this, it is interesting to note that Past and Present – which alludes to the question of paternity – does not include sons. Inevitably, interpretations have focused on the relationship between the mother and her daughters. Nead readily interprets this as symptomatic of female oppression, highlighting that contemporary medical discourse thought infidelity

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29 Nead, p. 75.
30 Tosh, p. 7.
31 Ibid., p. 2.
32 Ibid., p. 49.
33 Ibid., p. 3.
34 Ibid., p. 4.
was a congenital disease the female offspring could inherit.\textsuperscript{35} The stigmatisation faced is reinforced by Holman Hunt’s declaration in \textit{The Reader} of January 1864: ‘Upon them too, the sin shall be visited, in whispers of pity at the last, for all their years to come.’\textsuperscript{36} Clearly this speaks of the inequality and subjugation of female sexuality as it is only female descendants shown to suffer from this fall. However, Egg’s active decision not to include male heirs in the narrative must also be interrogated. Through their exclusion, Egg simultaneously avoids having to address how adultery would impact on a male child, and also how the father would handle concerns over the parentage of his masculine heir. The very absence of this subject exposes the fundamental anxiety over the matter.

The exclusion of the male narrative is true of the triptych itself, as Egg does not show the husband’s fate following the first scene. The only reference to him lies in the paintings’ subtitle, stating that he has died. Again, this is easily interpreted in terms of the double standard and inequality that women faced, as both mother and daughters are readily presented in full suffering. However, this absence can also be understood in terms of masculine shame. Egg is not prepared to visualise adversity faced by the husband, just as he chose not to include sons in the narrative. As a result, this demonstrates how fears of female sexuality and autonomy were manipulated through oppression of women. Thus, \textit{Past and Present} embodies the dichotomy between ‘psychic fragility and social power’\textsuperscript{37} that constitutes the Victorian construction of masculinity.

The masculine fear – and subsequent subjugation of – female sexuality is well established. Indeed, this is a defining feature of Victorian masculine identity. However, perhaps less commonly acknowledged were the masculine anxieties over the male body and sexual desire. As Sussman has identified, the Victorians understood the male body as unstable and hydraulic; they considered masculinity to be powered by a fluid energy that was ultimately dangerous, unclean and diseased.\textsuperscript{38} And so, as with the treatment of women, this insecurity was also repressed. As women were forced into the mould of feminine respectability, masculine self-regulation took place through disciplined work:

The definition of manhood as self-discipline, as the ability to control male energy and to deploy this power not for sexual but for productive purposes was clearly specific to the bourgeois man.\textsuperscript{39} This presents a new dynamic to the economic bourgeois man identified through the \textit{Walter Berdoe} advertisement. Not only did the workplace cause unease for men through the challenging environment; Sussman’s interpretation posits that the very foundation of their occupation was a desperate attempt at

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Nead, p. 74.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 74.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Adams, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Sussman, \textit{Victorian Masculinities}, p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 11.
\end{itemize}
bodily regulation. Thus, the outward celebration of the disciplined men of industry was underpinned by profound internal anxiety.

Although these sources differ in style and purpose, together they function as a window into bourgeois masculinity in 1850s London. This analysis demonstrates the significant role that both ‘high art’ and material culture play in understanding social history: viewed together, the artefacts provide insight and provoke questions about dress and status; role of the workplace and the home; and fears over sexuality. Whilst masculinity studies may appear to refute feminist scholarship, this is not the intention. The two methodologies should be employed in parallel, enabling fuller appreciation of a subject. Through this examination, the patriarchal figure of the Victorian man presented in feminist discourse, is variously challenged and confirmed through the revelation of significant underlying anxieties. Ultimately, it is this complex dynamic of outward authority underpinned by fundamental instability that defines Victorian masculinity.

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'I alone am hung in chains': Isambard Kingdom Brunel examined through a photograph and the ugly beauty of his industrial world

SIÀN JAMES

Isambard Kingdom Brunel was both man and myth. He left a physical imprint on the nation through his bridges, railways, tunnels and ships and, despite some notorious failures, evolved into a symbol for all that was noble and inventive about the Victorian industrial age. Any assessment of his reputation should accommodate his real, material world and the semi-fictional one created around his memory. This article will analyse Brunel’s historical and imagined ‘selves’ through two artefacts which inhabit both these ‘worlds’ and with which he was closely associated. These are the now-iconic photograph of him by Robert Howlett taken at the launch of the SS Great Eastern in 1857 and iron-ore chain links made by a London-Welsh company, Brown, Lenox which Brunel championed and which demonstrate his life-long passion for resolving real-world engineering problems.

In *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848*, Eric Hobsbawn describes Isambard Kingdom Brunel as an ‘imaginative, sophisticated and daring engineer’ whose ornamental and technically dazzling structures helped Victorian Britain make great Darwinian leaps forward.1 Brunel’s contemporary Samuel Smiles, however, denies him a place in *The Lives of Engineers*, his celebrated pantheon of great industrial innovators, for being ‘the very Napoleon of engineers, thinking more of glory than of profit’.2 Smiles, an exponent of Victorian liberal values, saw engineers as extended expositions of how self-help could advance civilisation, and Brunel, with his frequent glorious disasters, did not qualify. Brunel’s works have, however, clearly benefited Britain with his historical ‘self’ crystallising in the national memory into that of the pugnacious Victorian hero whose failures could be ignored because of the thrill of his triumphs. While acknowledging that his real self has been overlaid with a posthumous persona, this paper will examine Brunel’s reputation through two artefacts; a photographic image (Fig.1) and an iron ore chain link (Fig.2). These objects have physical existences but can also be read as symbols, raising intriguing questions about the authorship of Brunel’s identity and nature of his achievements. Therefore, a central theme of this exploration will be to discover if these objects collaborated with (or resisted) one another in fashioning Brunel, and whether he was elevated or shackled by his creations.

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Figure 1: Robert Howlett, *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* (1857), albumen print, 28.6 × 22.5 cm
(National Portrait Gallery Primary Collection; © National Portrait Gallery, London)

Figure 2: Brown, Lenox iron-ore chain link with cross stud (Pontypridd Museum collection, Pontypridd; photograph, author’s own)
Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859) was a flamboyant innovator who revolutionised public transport by designing and managing engineering ‘firsts’ such as the Great Western Railway, The SS Great Britain and the Clifton Suspension Bridge. He was a self-publicist with a large public following. However, Brunel was also notorious for wasting clients’ money and was, in the view of his biographer Adrian Vaughan, a ‘knight errant’ and a ‘capricious and dictatorial’ bully incapable of creating anything other than on a grand scale. The Engineer observes caustically in its obituary of Brunel that his ‘reputation was largely due to the applications which he had made of the applications of others’.

The photographic historian Rose Teanby notes more sympathetically, however, that he seemed fatally besotted with his engineering projects, ‘often working 18 hours a day’. His early death at 53 years old from a stroke, stress and injuries sustained through work, also suggests his creations controlled him in a personally destructive way.

Brunel’s final project, the SS Great Eastern, provides a dramatic demonstration of a man unable to compromise or marry his genius for innovation with sound commercial sense. The vessel was scheduled for launch on 3 November 1857 at the Napier Yard in London’s Millwall and, in theory, it was a modern wonder. A double-hulled, iron steamship, five times the size of anything built before. It was 211 metres in length, had five engines, seven-metre paddlewheels, a four-bladed screw propeller and could carry 4,000 passengers non-stop to Australia. But like all Brunel’s projects, it was a gamble, as his clients, the Eastern Steam Navigation Company came to realise. It had budgeted £800,000 to build the Great Eastern but its engineer-in-chief, Brunel, was pathologically incapable of simplifying his elaborate and technically demanding designs. The project fell two years behind schedule, the money ran out and the shipbuilder, John Scott Russell, went bankrupt. On 21 October 1857, company secretary John Yates ordered the immediate reduction of ‘our present enormous expenditure’ and the ‘discharge of every person not actually engaged either in preparing for the launch’.

While Brunel’s working life was often chaotic the country was mesmerised by his vision of the Great Eastern. Desperate to reassure shareholders, the ESN.Co.’s directors held open days and 70,000 visitors marvelled

\[\text{‘The Late Mr. Brunel’, The Engineer, 23 September 1859, p. 219,}\]
\[\text{Rose Teanby, ‘Brunel, Hung in Chains: A new look at the story behind the photograph’, PhotoHistorian (Royal Photographic Society), No. 175 (Spring 2016).}\]
\[\text{Vaughan, pp. 234-253.}\]
\[\text{John Yates, letter to Brunel, 21 October 1857, Eastern Steam Navigation Company report book IV, Ref: DM1306/11/1/4, folios 294-295 (Brunel Institute/ Bristol University Library, Special Collections).}\]
\[\text{Angus Buchanan, Brunel: The Life and Times of Isambard Kingdom Brunel} (London and Hambledon, Hants: Hambledon Continuum, 2001) p. 115.}\]
at the gargantuan vessel with the *Illustrated London News* reporting that ‘crowds of persons daily thronged her deck’.\(^9\) Much to the irritation of a highly stressed and overworked Brunel, ‘who watched with anger and despair’, they turned launch day into a ticketed event for 3,000 guests.\(^10\) Few, if any realised the *Great Eastern* was a ‘white elephant’ that would never reach the speeds predicted by Brunel. Usually three-quarters empty, it was converted into a floating music-hall before being scrapped in 1889. But inevitably to the modern mind, the photograph taken at the launch of Brunel is embedded with a sense of doom and heroic poignancy.

Robert Howlett (1831-1858) did not set out to immortalise Brunel but to create images for the *Illustrated Times*’s 24-page special ‘Leviathan’ report of 16 January 1858. Although only 26 years old, Howlett had influential establishment patrons with *The Times* describing him as ‘one of the most skilful photographers of the day’.\(^11\) In 1856, Queen Victoria had commissioned Howlett to create a series of portraits of veterans entitled ‘Crimean Heroes’ and presumably, it was hoped by Brunel and the company, that he would appear heroic by association. Howlett was technically highly skilled and had improved the light sensitivity of the latest albumen silver and wet-plate glass collodion slides that had replaced the delicate, slower daguerreotype. But he also had a ‘modern’ artistic eye and his ‘Brunel’ photograph is still considered ‘one of the first and finest examples of environmental portraiture’,\(^12\) and ‘strikingly untypical’ of the staid studio commissions of the past.\(^13\)

A close reading of the photograph suggests that while Brunel conveys an air of apparent insouciance, the pose has been carefully staged to allow Brunel to ‘speak’ directly to the viewer. He wears a trademark stovepipe hat and his boots and trousers are covered in mud. His hands are stuffed in his pockets and a bag of cigars, ready to replace the one clamped (always) to the right side of his mouth, is slung over his left shoulder. No record exists of any conversation or correspondence between Howlett and Brunel about the portrait. However, between 1854 and 1856, Brunel had issued precise instructions for a set of detailed photographs to record the building of the *Great Eastern*.\(^14\) This offers the intriguing prospect that Brunel, a known show-off, may have been involved in the composition of his own portrait. David White, who has re-created Howlett’s method, believes the now-iconic pose was the third of three, with two earlier poses

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\(^10\) Buchanan, p. 258.
\(^11\) *Illustrated Times*, (Leviathan Number), vol. 6, no. 145, 16 January 1858, pp. 68-86.

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showing Brunel leaning and sitting, being judged as being too casual.\textsuperscript{15} To the art critic Jonathan Jones, the single moment of the final portrait’s creation signals the birth of modern photography; its Victorian swagger and ‘butch accessories’ allowing Brunel a moment of machismo in which to display his authority ‘as he displayed it to the men in the shipyard’.\textsuperscript{16}

If the specific pose creates Brunel as a symbol of Victorian manhood, what transforms his image into that of an enigmatic giant of the age, are the multiple ‘readings’ made possible by the backdrop. The giant checking reel of iron ore chain links dwarfs the single human figure while also inferring a world of enormous power beyond. Monstrously large chains lend Brunel authority by suggesting he is in charge of a monstrously large project for country and Empire. The National Portrait Gallery suggests the photograph places Brunel at the epicentre of the Victorian economic project by giving him ‘control over the vast forces of nature through industrial innovation’.\textsuperscript{17} Rose Teanby meanwhile, sees the image as one of ‘defiance and self-confidence’ and its two distinct halves representing, in human form, the Industrial Revolution. As she puts it, ‘the lower being a common workman with muddied trousers, the upper part, a Victorian gentleman framed by the iron which had been such an essential part of all his engineering triumphs’.\textsuperscript{18}

However, the very breadth of the symbolic power of the chains, renders them open to different, possibly less optimistic perspectives. Jonathan Jones’s comment that these are chains ‘rattling down into hell’,\textsuperscript{19} would perhaps resonate with a contemporary Victorian view. The chains are reminiscent of the one ‘forged in life’ made ‘link by link’, which Charles Dickens used to torment his Jacob Marley in \textit{A Christmas Carol}, and which caused such alarm during his popular readings during the 1850s.\textsuperscript{20} Similarly, Victorian classicists might view Brunel himself as a type of Prometheus. They frequently used the term adjectively for machines, and engineering, and ‘gigantic, world-changing, world-shocking design’.\textsuperscript{21} A more cynical mind might, however, interpret an endlessly reproduced photograph as a visual metaphor for Zeus’s perpetual punishment.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] Rose Teanby, \textit{PhotoHistorian}.
\item[19] Jones, \textit{Guardian}.
\end{footnotes}
Brunel himself, may have seen the chain as symbols of achievement and as shackles because on good days, he described the ship as his ‘Great Babe’, but on bad ones, it became his The Leviathan, after the great Biblical sea-monster. On launch day, he asked George William Lenox, who owned Brown, Lenox, to pose with him, scrawling on the back of one photographic print, ‘I asked Mr Lenox to stand with me, but he would not. So, I alone am hung in chains’. Brunel’s contemporaries may have understood this as gallows humour and a reference to the gibbet where the bodies of murderers were ‘hung in chains’, a practice which ended in 1832 with a repeal of the Murder Act (1751). Teanby believes Brunel was conscious that Execution Dock, where pirates were hung, was only five miles from Napier Yard. It is, however, a curious anecdote because while Brunel may have wanted moral support from Lenox, he had an ‘obsession with his status’, and the chain maker’s appearance would have diluted the image’s heroic symbolism.

Brunel’s relationship with the chain links became symbolic through the photograph but it was originally forged in the real world of engineering. An examination of his working relationships and practices reveals differences between the materiality and symbolism of the chain links. While he was shockingly casual about deadlines and budgets, Brunel demanded precision and solutions to impossible problems from his sub-contractors. This brought him into contact with Brown, Lenox, an iron-ore chain maker with foundries at Millwall (Fig.3) and Pontypridd in South Wales. In 1818, its founder Samuel Brown, (1776–1852), a former naval captain, had patented a design for oval, iron-ore chain links with stay-pins (Fig.5 and Fig.6). These appealed to the visionary in Brunel because they resolved one of engineering’s perpetual problems; how to combine strength with flexibility. Brown, Lenox was a prestigious company with an exclusive contract with the Admiralty to replace the hemp rope cables on its Royal Navy vessels. What distinguished the company from its rivals was its ‘proving’ house where each link was rigorously tested. It also shared Brunel’s calculating management style. In the unromantic world of Victorian manufacturing, Brunel and George William Lenox (who took over the company in 1851) both believed production lines were chains of human activity and weakness would not be tolerated. Brunel was a strict boss even at 21 years old and according to Colin Maggs, he ‘withheld wages for poor performance’. Similarly, Lenox

24 Teanby, PhotoHistorian.
believed, ‘A workman’s wages should not be stinted and then he can afford to be fined if his work is found faulty in the machine. A drunken man should always be got rid of, as a few bad or burnt links put into a cable by him while in a state of inebriety, renders the whole cable doubtful’. 29
Figure 4: Unknown, (British School) Captain Samuel Brown, (1820), Oil on canvas, 134.5 × 104cm (Royal Pavilion & Museums Brighton and Hove; © Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove)

Figure 5: Capt'n. S. Brown's (R.N.) Patent Iron Cables, diagram, scale of sizes, and description (1818), GB214 DBL/61 (Glamorgan Archives; Courtesy of Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff)
The *Great Eastern*’s chain cables would be the largest ever made. Brown’s letter to Lenox of July 1855 (Fig. 7) demonstrates a bossy charm he reserved for respected inventors. ‘I am anxious to hear the result of the proof of your new machine. It is almost as imaginative to me as to you – will you have the products to send me […] on this evening’s post’.  

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30 Isambard Kingdom Brunel, letter to George William Lenox, July 1855, Ref: DBL 100 (Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff).
In March 1857, Brown, Lenox was contracted to provide 400 fathoms of iron-ore chain of 2½ ins diameter, promising to ‘prove’ the links to Brunel’s required strain of ‘not less than 230 tons’. Brunel proved a harsh client. When Lenox told him ‘we hope to be prepared’, Brunel replied sarcastically that he ‘must not qualify it by saying you hope to be prepared’, later threatening, ‘I must have the chains and if you have not the means of supplying them on the terms you undertook – while others have offered to do so – what am I to do?’. Yet on 3 October, a month before the proposed launch, Lenox reported on the impossibility of the task and that the chains were breaking at 185 tons considerably below the standard of the original specification. By then, in poor health and exhausted by having to constantly feed his sea-monster, the Great Eastern, Brunel seemed in no position to argue. But in any case, he had over-estimated the required strain needed as the chains had proved more than adequate for the Great Eastern at sea. The completed chains were taken by canal barge, then coastal vessel to Millwall, where they began their journey into photographic history.

33 George William Lenox letter to Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Brunel’s response to Lenox, ESN Company report book IV, Ref: DM1306/11/1/4, folios 193-194 (Brunel Institute/ Bristol University, Special Collections).
34 Brunel letter to Lenox, 2 July 1857, ESN Company report book IV, Ref: DM1306/11/1/4, folio. 467 (Brunel Institute/Bristol University Special Collections).
35 Proving house reports to Lenox, 3 October 1857, Ref: DBL6 (Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff).
36 Lenox, p. 168.
Ironically, Howlett’s photograph had little direct impact at the time because the *Illustrated Times*, like other newspapers and magazines, used woodcut engravings, made from photographic impressions. Although a limited number of prints were produced as ‘stereocards’ and *carte-de-visites*, it was not until the 1890s that newspapers began reproducing photographs and by then the *Great Eastern* had proved a disaster and Brunel and Howlett were long since dead. All posthumous prints of Howlett’s original have therefore become detached from the moment and place of creation making a shift in meaning inevitable. In Rob Powell’s intriguing analysis, each reproduction of the photograph renders the image ‘increasingly open to more general, and less tangible, meanings’. The underlying ambiguity in Howlett’s imagery may, therefore, have been deliberate. Howlett was an astute photographer ahead of his time who knew Brunel was a complex man and he allowed the viewer to decide ‘who’ they wanted him to be. The semiotic language he deploys chimes with the views of theologian and philosopher Paul Tillich that a symbol ‘points beyond itself’ to something unquantifiable and mysterious, opening up the ‘depth dimension of reality itself’. The image of Brunel and the chain links as representations of Victorian courage and enterprise, certainly do this and their symbolic value has also withstood the passage of time. Yet as symbols, the chains, the stovepipe hat and the cigars, have always been at risk of becoming idolatrous and ‘taken for reality’, becoming poor substitutes for the ‘deeper meaning’ they were originally intended to convey. It is a possible explanation of the transformation of the man into myth.

Like many controversial Victorians, Brunel’s reputation has been reassessed, first, in a sympathetic but authoritative account by Tom Rolt in 1957 which concludes Brunel was ‘the last great figure of the European Renaissance’. This view was later popularised by the art historian Kenneth Clark in his television series *Civilisation*, which suggests Brunel’s engineering achievements mark an era of ‘heroic materialism’ equivalent to the humanitarianism of William Wilberforce and the Earl of Shaftsbury. However, it is still not clear where the ‘real’ Brunel ends, and his ‘representational’ and ‘mythical’ versions begin because they cut across time, co-existing as historical fact and in the imagination of a nation that longs for heroes. If these three ‘Brunels’ exist with a fluid, co-dependency, to what extent has their ‘shape’ been affected by the materiality of the chain links and the imagery of the photograph and who was in charge, the artefacts or Brunel? His spectacular projects exist today, not as museum pieces but as working bridges, tunnels and railways while the emblems of ‘Brunel’s Britain’ captured the imaginations of the 2012 London Olympics crowds in much the same way as the Victorians marvelled at his vision. Brunel liked to

37 Powell, pp. 7-8.
39 Ibid., p. 54.
create, by controlling his material world and the men around him and was conscious, at all times, of his image.\(^4^2\) He acknowledged in his personal diary, ‘My self-conceit and love of glory vie with each other which shall govern me’ and that he wanted ‘to be the first engineer and example for future ones’.\(^4^3\) But Brunel was also a melancholic, possessed by his creations and chained literally and metaphorically to his work. As he admitted, ‘I am addicted to excess, to castle-building and in the wildest, and most impossible’.\(^4^4\) Over a lifetime, these obsessions built into an existential longing also revealed in Brunel’s private thoughts. ‘How painfull’ (sic) it would be to see how every event passed off unheeded’… ‘As on we fly, and nothing to rest a permanent idea or hope on but our prospects in the next world’.\(^4^5\) As physical objects during his lifetime, one could conclude that the artefacts had a limited impact on Brunel’s reputation. The chain links confirmed Brunel’s ‘meticulous’ calculations could be incorrect and as part of a ferocious workload, helped hasten his death. Howlett’s photograph was ahead of its time and could not be mass-produced to Brunel’s advantage until after his death. Yet as timeless symbols the photograph and chain links change everything; their images play with our needy, collective memory, providing Brunel with a refuge through the transformation of a single instant into a form of immortality.

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‘COTTON IS KING!’ Sarah Parker Remond, Manchester and the abolitionist movement in Britain and America, 1859-1861

HANNAH RUDDLE

In 1859, abolitionist Sarah Parker Remond arrived in Liverpool to commence a series of lectures throughout Britain and Ireland, the first free African American woman to do so. Her address in Manchester in September 1859 encapsulates the tensions of an industrial city dependent on slave-grown products in post-abolition Britain. Remond draws on the connections between the textile industry, plantation slavery and Britain’s abolitionist past in an attempt to stimulate support for emancipation in America. Conversely, Union Patriotic Envelope No. 2: Cotton is King!, a North American Union propaganda envelope, satirises the hypocrisy of Manchester’s trade with the slaveholding South to rally support for the Union on the eve of the American Civil War. This article will interrogate both artefacts to provide insight into the complex and conflicting role of Manchester’s cotton industry within British-American transatlantic trade and transatlantic abolitionist discourse. Abolitionists, such as Remond, needed to navigate and intersect shifting economic, political and moral interests to incite support for their cause in an industrialised post-abolition Britain dependent on slave labour.

Sarah Parker Remond was the first African-American female to embark on a lecture tour in the UK. Her abolitionist campaign in the mid-nineteenth century spoke to the horrors of slavery in the American South, aiming to elicit public support for abolition among her British audiences. Between 1859 and 1861, she delivered more than 45 speeches across the UK and Ireland.1 This article will focus on a written account of a lecture given in Manchester in 1859, recorded by the Manchester Weekly Times.2 Alongside this speech, this article will consider a pre-war, pro-Union propaganda envelope from 1861, entitled Union Patriotic Envelope No.2, Cotton Is King!, printed by New York-based manufacturer ‘Stimpson & Company’. Patriotic Envelope… was part of a surge of ten thousand propaganda envelopes printed by the Union and, to a lesser extent, the Confederate States.3 ‘Cotton’ is central within both sources and through it, this article will consider Manchester’s relationship with the American South and cotton’s role in transatlantic trade between America and Great Britain. It will also consider the significance of the textile industry in transatlantic abolitionist discourse.

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KING COTTON AND MANCHESTER

To understand why both sources focus on cotton, we must first consider briefly the significance of the industry to mid-nineteenth century Britain. Across England in 1860, 460,000 textile workers were involved in the trade and between twenty to twenty five per cent of the country were in some way dependent on the industry it provided.\footnote{Sven Beckert, ‘Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War’, American Historical Review, 109.5 (2004), p. 1408.} By 1861, eleven per cent of England’s national income was related to cotton.\footnote{Marika Sherwood, After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade since 1807 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), p. 47.} Despite efforts to increase exports from India, by 1860, eighty eight per cent of textiles produced by British factories were made with US slave-grown cotton.\footnote{Mark Harvey, ‘Slavery, Indenture and the Development of British Industrial Capitalism’, History Workshop Journal, 88 (2019), 66-88 <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbz027> (p. 79). Frenise A. Logan, ‘India—Britain’s Substitute for American Cotton, 1861-1865’, The Journal of Southern History, 24.4 (1958), 472-480 <www.jstor.org/stable/2954674> [accessed 2 January 2020].} Cotton was grown by enslaved workers on American plantations, woven and spun by Lancashire workers, and in turn, workers used their wages to buy slave-grown cotton products.\footnote{Harvey, p. 69.} At the start of the Civil War, the South initiated a voluntary embargo before the Union blockade was implemented, in an attempt to force Britain into intervening on behalf of the
Confederacy, illustrating the belief within the American South of British dependence on their exports.\(^8\) Stockpiles of cotton in Manchester and wider Britain eliminated the immediate threat, but as the war progressed, the devastating consequence of the interruption of trade can be found in the cotton famine.\(^9\) American cotton was so pivotal to the Lancashire textiles industry that without it, the majority of mills were closed and their employees out of work.\(^10\) In 1863, more than 500,000 inhabitants in Lancashire received poor relief, provided with cheap cotton clothing that they had helped produce.\(^11\) Cotton, then, was hugely significant in this period to both the booming industry and subsequent poverty.

Both artefacts speak to the specific significance of cotton to Manchester. In *Patriotic Envelope…*, cotton is anthropomorphised as a monarch, adored by John Bull. The printed poem is titled *King Cotton*, a phrase first coined by James Hammond in his speech to Senate on 4th March 1856.\(^12\) John Bull carries a newspaper marked ‘Manchester’, signalling the city’s role as intrinsically linked with plantation slavery, rebuking any perception of distance. It scorns that through dependence on the industry, Britain does ‘yield’ more to cotton than ‘the throne’.\(^13\) This envelope was printed in early 1861 and encapsulates the centrality of the cotton trade to the South, as well as what will become a fundamental element of the foreign policy for the Confederate government under Jefferson Davies.\(^14\) The aim of the ‘King Cotton’ policy was to withhold cotton, starve Britain’s textile industries of resources and force intervention on behalf of the Confederacy. In this cartoon, Britain and Manchester are presented as subservient to both cotton and the American South. With the Revolutionary War in recent memory, kneeling to a crowned monarch, a remote ruling ‘Lordling’, has inescapable connotations of weakness. Kneeling to monarchs also evokes the complications in the period with regards to the concepts of ‘freedom’ and ‘slavery’. Slave-owning Americans fought for liberation from the perceived ‘slavery’ of British Rule, so too did the Confederacy now seek to free itself from the perceived ‘enslavement’ of Union rule. As John Bull kneels on the body of an enslaved figure, it can be argued that the cartoon presents England as hypocritical and ‘deaf’ towards actual slavery.\(^15\) Cotton’s sceptre is arrowed at both ends, evoking the violence of the industry. This can be considered abolitionist in intention, implying that the moral superiority of Britain’s ‘perfectly virtuous’ abolitionist ‘crusade’ was hollow in the face of profit.\(^16\) It was printed by New York printer company

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11 Beckert, p. 1418.
13 *Union Patriotic Envelope No. 2: Cotton Is King*, 1.5.
14 Policicchio, p. 39.
15 *Union Patriotic Envelope No. 2: Cotton Is King*, 1.8.
‘Stimpson & Co’, ‘in the clerk’s office of the United States for the Southern District of New York’. As this envelope was printed on behalf of a government body, it suggests official approval of its message.

Through ‘cotton! cotton!’, Remond directly acknowledges the potential opposition of her audience towards abolition. Through the lens through which Remond was able to expose the links between England’s industrialisation and the violence behind the commodity. Remond refers to the ‘load after load’ of cotton she witnessed within Manchester, reminding her audience of the origins of imported textiles, and that for the goods which employ Manchester’s workers ‘no money ever reached the hands of the labourers.’

Eric Williams’ *Capitalism and Slavery* famously first posited the thesis that Britain’s industrial revolution was intrinsically linked with the infrastructure, profits and resources of plantation slavery. Yet, Mark Harvey contends that Williams’ argument, which focuses primarily on the West Indies, underplays the role of cotton and the American South. Harvey expands to claim that England was more dependent on slavery after 1833 than ever, in terms of the number of people enslaved to provide for British industry. In addition, the interweaving of Britain and the slaveholding South goes beyond the conventional narrative of a reluctant trading relationship. Britain manufactured guns and weapons used as deterrents on cotton plantations, and munitions exports rapidly increased. Increased industrialisation, it can be argued, fed and supported plantation slavery, alongside plantation slavery providing materials for Manchester and Britain’s manufacturing.

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17 *Manchester Weekly Times* (Manchester: September 17, 1859), Black Abolitionist Archives, Doc. No. 21048, p. 4.
18 Ibid., p. 3.
20 Harvey, pp. 70-80.
21 Ibid., pp. 72 and pp. 83-84.
After having discussed why cotton is pivotal within each source, it's vital to now consider both artefacts in light of abolitionism. To do so, it is important to assess the context in which Remond delivered this speech. Sibyl Brownlee argues that interest in abolition had begun to dwindle by the 1850s. However, lectures remained a popular source of entertainment. Remond was the first free African-American female lecturer in the UK, notably giving lectures to mixed-gender audiences. As such, Brownlee contents that this unique position made her lectures ‘a novelty’.²² Evidence for this can be found in that Remond’s addresses in Warrington were so popular that eventually seat reservations were charged at 6d.²³ Through lectures, Black female abolitionists, such as Remond, asserted their right to speak and engage politically both as women and as Black people. Her lectures followed the tours of Black abolitionist lectures from


²³ Burnett Porter, p. 286.
the 1830s onwards, such as her brother, Charles Lennox Remond, Frederick Douglas and Ellen Craft. Teresa Zackodnik contends that Ellen Craft ‘effectively opened up’ areas of the North to engage in conversations with Black female abolitionists.24 In addition, links established by previous abolitionists within Britain meant that a network of transatlantic connections already existed.25 The Dred Scott ruling in 1857, which said that African-Americans could not be American citizens, also increased the number of abolitionist lectures within Britain.26 Before her arrival in Britain, Remond had lectured within America. In 1858, she expressed ‘an intense desire to visit England, that I might for a time enjoy freedom’.27 This suggests Remond’s perception of England as harbouring more rights for free Black citizens than America, including the North.

Remond introduces herself as an ‘agent of no society’.28 However, it is worth noting that Remond considered herself aligned with the more radical Garrisonian branch of the American abolitionist movement, in favour of immediate abolition.29 She also became a founding member of the Women’s Emancipation Society, so she was connected and engaged with British and transatlantic abolitionist networks, yet outside the confines of a group which controls the content of her lectures. Her work intersects both the abolitionist movement and the emerging women’s rights movement, exemplified by her founding involvement with the Women’s Emancipation Society and her signature on John Stuart Mill’s petition for female suffrage in 1866, alongside her lecturing.30 Furthermore, Remond’s nationality as an American placed her outside of class divides within Britain.31

This speech provides insight into Remond’s abolitionist strategies. It is crucial to understand that Remond was operating within a complex system with conflicting moral, economic and political interests and that racism was ‘well-engendered’ within nineteenth century Britain.32 Remond positions Southern slaveowners as enemies of the working-class, a sentiment appealing directly to working-class industrial Manchester. This is particularly pertinent as within Britain, ‘slavery’ had additional connotations of describing working-class conditions.33 Remond implies understanding of this dynamic in how she describes that ‘poor whites’

24 Ibid., p59.
26 Zackodnik, p. 59.
28 Manchester Weekly Times (Manchester: September 17, 1859), Black Abolitionist Archives, Doc. No. 21048, p. 1.
31 Midgley, Women Against Slavery, p. 141.
32 Sherwood, p. 144.
33 Zackodnik, p. 58.
suffer as a result of slavery. Here, she argues that slavery as an institution causes suffering beyond the enslaved. In doing so, she presents different forms of oppression as linked. This may suggest that Remond felt her audience needed to identify themselves within slavery to be sympathetic. She builds on this alignment through enslaved persons within whose cheeks ‘the lily and the rose vie for predominance’. This tactic could be considered as undermining the specific suffering of Black enslaved persons, yet in 1859, Remond is deliberately challenging the prejudices of her audience and denying them the position of hero. She does so by subverting her listener’s expectations of what a victim looks like, as a Black woman lamenting the suffering of ‘pale’ slaves. This confronts her audience with the reality in that enslaved people are people, like themselves, and not a distant or separate entity. In contrast, the enslaved man depicted on *Patriotic Envelope*... is stereotyped as a caricature, which serves the purpose of satire, rather than acknowledged as representing a real person.

Remond demonstrates a further nuanced understanding of her audiences by tailoring her speeches to each location. In Ireland, her speeches include references to sufferings under the Poor Laws, and in Manchester, drawing on the city’s cotton. In doing so, she demonstrates an understanding of her audience and their potential objections to abolition (‘cotton! cotton!’), as well as employing emotional methods of persuasion such as guilt. For example, ‘With the exception of the Abolitionists, you will find people of all classes thus contaminated’ invites the listener to seek to become abolitionists or else be held responsible. Her explicit linking of cotton in Manchester and suffering on American plantations removes any pretence or degrees of separation and confronts a manufacturing city with their role in the suffering of enslaved people in the South. Remond understands how Britain considers its morally righteous stance, despite the previous two hundred years of slave trading, as she asks ‘Give us the power of your public opinion, it has great weight in America’. Her intention is not simply to educate, but to incite action, and as such presents a tailored emotionally driven argument aiming to entice the listener into involvement with abolition. *Patriotic Envelope*..., in contrast, seeks not to provoke change, but instead to amuse Northern readers and satirize the South.

The impassioned and descriptive rhetoric of Remond’s lecture must be considered in the context of oral delivery. This is not an address to be read quietly, it was instead articulated to command the attention of a busy room, such as through the impassioned repetition within ‘for the slave there is no home, no love,

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34 Harvey, p. 68.
36 Zackodnik, p. 88.
37 Zackodnik, p. 75.
38 *Manchester Weekly Times* (Manchester: 17 September 1859), Black Abolitionist Archives, Doc. No. 21048, p. 3.
39 Ibid., p. 4.
no hope, no help; and what is life without hope?”. As such, the audience in Manchester is implored to generate hope through their actions, causing bondage to ‘melt away like dew’. Her emotive argument is built upon but her statement that ‘men and women are reared, like cattle’, a stance Stanley L. Engleman and Robert Fogel argue is unsupported by historical evidence but instead was effectively used by abolitionists to illustrate the horrors of slavery. This imagery is echoed in the dehumanising description of ‘live chattel’s groan’ within Patriotic Envelope…. She appeals to the ‘British abhorrence’ of the destruction of the family, presenting slavery as a force that splits families apart. Fogle and Engleman note that abolitionist rhetoric, such as Remond’s in this instance, simultaneously presents slavery as rendering the construct of families as obsolete and argues that families are torn apart, both humanising and dehumanising in relation to what serves the particular argument best. Again, this demonstrates Remond’s intention to deliver the most powerful and persuasive address as possible.

Remond seeks ‘especial help’ from women concerning sexual violence. She describes ‘eight hundred thousand mulatto slaves’ as evidence of the sexual exploitation of enslaved women. It is noticeable that she appeals to women for action, as in the 1850s the majority of men’s abolitionist societies were in decline, yet female societies remained active, many with strong transatlantic links. Women, though denied a political voice in nineteenth-century Britain, are appealed to for their political influence, which was demonstrated in the 1830s through petitioning, boycotts and embroidery efforts. As such, women are addressed beyond the domestic sphere of the home, and instead as an emerging political force. Remond asks her audience to ‘raise the moral public opinion until its voice reaches the American shores’. Here, she demonstrates the prevalence of transatlantic connections, in which female abolitionist societies were central. Remond, an American, travelled to Britain in the hope of inciting change within Britain, which will in turn impact on America. Patriotic Envelope…, in contrast, addresses this transatlantic relationship with satire, as though Britain’s great ships are powerless in the face of their dependency on slave-grown cotton. Remond pertains that the question of cotton is an ‘unanswerable one’, yet she asks her audience to put morals above commerce, something that Patriotic Envelope… scorns as impossible.
As opposed to an emotive oral delivery to a crowd, *Patriotic Envelope*… would have been printed to send to an associate or family member, or to collect. The lack of stamp and address suggest that this envelope was never sent and was instead saved as part of a collection. It was printed within a boom in propaganda envelopes triggered by new developments in printing techniques.\(^{50}\) Berry argues that the expansion of the ‘mail’ service made possible the debate around slavery to extend beyond political forums and into homes, highlighting and deepening tensions.\(^{51}\) Propaganda postal envelopes made the ‘mass manipulation of emotion’ easier than ever before, reaching readers at their homes and workplaces.\(^{52}\) Here, a comparison can be drawn with Remond’s strategy of appealing to her audience’s emotions to sway their opinions. Most pro-Union envelopes are explicitly anti-south, not abolitionist. Racist stereotypes are common, and largely the intention was to mock Southerners for their dependence on slavery, as opposed to protesting the institution in itself.\(^{53}\) This is reflected in Union policy at the time, as in 1861 Abraham Lincoln remarked ‘I have not purpose…to interfere with slavery’.\(^{54}\) The enslaved person depicted in the envelope’s cartoon is stereotyped, with the intention of rousing humour as opposed to Remond’s emotional address. *Patriotic envelope*…, despite depicting the horrors of slavery as Remond’s speech does, does not do so out of abolitionist sympathy, but rather to mock England. John Bull’s kneeling on the slave directly contrasts with the noble British opinion Remond appeals to, the British national identity entwined with ‘your Clarkson and your Wilberforce’, and instead presents Britain as bloated and foolish.\(^{55}\) This demonstrates a lack of concern for the enslaved person depicted, who is used as a ‘symbol’.\(^{56}\) The figure is portrayed in a humiliating and degrading position, a victim with no agency, intended to highlight John Bull’s callousness and as such, Britain’s hypocrisy. The Southern states and their relationship with Britain are being mocked, and the intention is not to incite sympathy and abolitionist action, but instead to fan distrust of the South on the eve of Civil War.

*Patriotic Envelope*… incorporates both a poem and a cartoon to depict Manchester as cruel in the face of plantation slavery in the 1850s. This conflicts with Lincoln’s later praise of the ‘sublime Christian heroism’ of Manchester in 1863.\(^{57}\) The reality was far more mixed. The large city reflected many diverse interests, beliefs and political persuasions, and support for abolition, or even for the North during the civil war, did not adhere along set class or gendered lines. The image presented by Lincoln has been powerfully argued


\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. 64.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., pp. 72-74.

\(^{54}\) McPherson, VII.

\(^{55}\) Manchester Weekly Times (Manchester: 17 September 1859), Black Abolitionist Archives, Doc. No. 21048, p. 4.

\(^{56}\) Thompson, Jr., pp 29-30.

by Mary Ellison to be a myth.\textsuperscript{58} There were many pro-abolitionist meetings and lectures in Manchester, such as this one given by Remond, but there was also strong and widespread support for the American South and the Confederacy both before and during the Civil War. Ellison argues that pro-North, or anti-abolitionist meetings were infrequent and ‘contrived’ to present an image of working-class support for the Union.\textsuperscript{59} Even among abolitionists, Douglas Lorimer notes that opposition to slavery did not equate to support for the north.\textsuperscript{60} This tension between Manchester, the North and abolitionism is encapsulated within \textit{Patriotic Envelope…}, which mocks the South’s slavery but does not advocate for abolition, and entwines Manchester with a slave-grown commodity. Abolitionists such as Remond had to operate within these conflicting and shifting stances. Midgely notes that many British papers became more pro-Confederate, and as such arguably more pro-slavery, after the outbreak of war in 1861. There is evidence of suspicion among British abolitionists that Lincoln would not instil emancipation; The Times commented that ‘where he has no power Mr Lincoln will set the negroes free; where he retains power he will consider the as slaves’.\textsuperscript{61} This suggests that in Britain there was not a consensus aligning the North with the anti-slavery cause at the start of the Civil War. Remond, as she declared, was outside the spheres of North vs South and of the class divides within Britain, advocating entirely for abolition among a turbulent and transitional climate.

In conclusion, both artefacts speak to the critical and conflicting place of cotton within mid-century abolitionist discourse. They reflect the complex relationship of mid-nineteenth-century Manchester with the cotton industry and the institution of slavery itself. Sarah Parker Remond broke boundaries in her abolitionist discourse as she confronted the stereotype of victimhood and carved for herself a role that bridged divides within British abolitionist discourse. She was a skilled orator who appealed directly to her audience. \textit{Patriotic Envelope…} also seeks an emotional response, but its intention was to satirise and be collected, as opposed to inciting action. Despite both artefacts drawing attention to the cruelties of slavery, only Remond’s speech can be considered abolitionist. \textit{Patriotic Envelope…} is anti-South, whereas Remond fights firmly against slavery. \textit{Patriotic Envelope…} is part of the pro-Union movement, whereas Remond positions herself as outside both American and English politics. Both artefacts provide insight into the complex and intersecting systems of trade and transatlantic abolitionism that go beyond a one-way relationship and contribute to, transform and in turn are shaped by transatlantic movements. Each artefact signals the diversity of interests at play with regards to cotton, all of which had to be navigated by abolitionists such as Remond in her fight for emancipation.

\textsuperscript{58} Ellison.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 80.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 406.
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Social engineering: an exploration of how a bandstand and a street drinking fountain exemplify the intersection of ornate design and social reform in nineteenth-century London

JOCELYN DONACHIE

This article focuses on two seemingly disparate artefacts: a picture postcard sent in 1906 and a drinking fountain erected with much pomp and ceremony in 1859. The article sets out to show their connection with each other via a range of interwoven topics which throw light not just on the lives of the poor of nineteenth-century London but also on the mindset of those who governed and had concern for the city. Both artefacts interconnect with poverty, alcohol misuse, attitudes to class, shifting ideas of morality and social responsibility. Both intersect with ideals in design and philosophy. This article argues that they act as markers in changing attitudes towards the lives and behaviour of the poor and attempts to gauge how far they might be said to have been successful.

A picture postcard sent to ‘Auntie’ in 1906 portrays a bandstand on Peckham Rye. The format of the postcard, picture on one side and the back divided for message and address with its half-penny stamp, limits its production to between 1902 and 1906 (Fig.1). Postcard collecting was highly popular at that time and the introduction of three or more postal deliveries a day meant postcards provided rapid communication perhaps demanding comparison with modern email. However, it is the picture which is of greater interest here since it depicts something which no longer exists, but which in its time merited a photo and a purchase, suggesting it was considered a thing of beauty or importance.

![Figure 1: Postcard face (Peckham Rye Bandstand) and reverse (published by H. Finch, 79, Peckham Rye)](image)

The bandstand in the picture was built for the 1862 exhibition (Fig.2) which aimed to emulate the success of the Great Exhibition, 1851.

Figure 2: Charles Thurston Thompson, *Horticultural Gardens, South Kensington*, 1862, showing the ‘band house’ under construction. Albumen print, 13.4 × 19.6 cm (Royal Collection Trust; © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020 <http://www.rct.uk/collection/RCIN 2932800>)

Alas, the exhibition was a flop; the buildings were demolished and the contents dispersed. The bandstands were purchased; one was re-erected in Peckham Rye Park in 1889 while its sister went to Southwark. Sadly, both were destroyed in the Second World War; Peckham’s was bombed and Southwark’s melted down for its metal.² The postcard remains to remind us of an object which marks a complex time in London’s social history.

Only three years before the birth of the bandstand, the drinking fountain, the first in London, had been erected outside St Sepulchre’s Church, High Holborn. Built of marble and granite with iron cups on iron chains, it cost £500, paid for by philanthropist Samuel Gurney MP (Figs. 3, 4). An opening speech by Mrs Wilson, the daughter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, suggested that while this ‘pure and wholesome water’ would provide for the material comfort of ‘the poor and hardworking portion of the people’ it would also help them from a moral standpoint ‘as we know from what beginnings intemperance with its attendant miseries, so often arises’.³

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³ Illustrated London News, 30 April 1859.
Thus, the drinking fountain was to fulfil two purposes: to enhance health and to aid morals. Bandstands, as will be seen later, fulfilled the same dual role.
Recognition of the need to provide clean water was the direct result of painstaking research by John Snow, medical practitioner and epidemiologist, who traced the cause of cholera not, as had been thought, to foul air but to contaminated drinking water. Henry Mayhew describes overcrowding and insanitary conditions, the only source of drinking water for many poor people being from the sewers themselves.\(^4\) Cholera had killed a devastating total of 11,661 Londoners in 1853-4; 550 died in just ten days in Soho.\(^5\) The water in that outbreak had come from Broad Street pump, close to St Sepulchre’s, from a source into which sewers leaked and newly erected graveyards drained. *Fun Magazine* later published an acerbic cartoon of death pumping its water to the poor (Fig.5).

![Figure 5: George Pinwell, Death’s Dispensary: Open to the poor, Gratis, by permission of the Parish, woodcut illustration, *Fun Magazine*, 18 August 1866.](image-url)

An astonishing rise in population (1,096,784 in 1801 to about 7,000,000 in 1910)\(^6\) meant more deaths and thus more graveyards. It also meant a rise in demand for housing. The fastidious better-off who, following use of mechanical toilets at the 1851 exhibition, wanted to establish such ‘conveniences’ in their own homes, contributed to the problem.\(^7\) Advertisements in the *South London Times* boast of ‘houses with modern drainage’.\(^8\) Unfortunately, these new toilets were not necessarily attached to adequate sewage

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\(^6\) London 1800-1913: *The Urban Contexts of Crimes Tried at the Old Bailey* [https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/London] [accessed 20 January 2020].

\(^7\) 827,000 are estimated to have used the water closets at the Great Exhibition, 1851: Steven Johnson, *The Ghost Map* (London: Riverside Books, 2006) p. 12.

\(^8\) *South London Times*, 20 September 1898 [https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/] [accessed 15 December 2019].
systems and many drained straight into the Thames, which provided drinking water to the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company. They, in turn, supplied many south London houses as did the Lambeth Company; however, Lambeth drew its water from lower down the Thames. The highest percentage of poverty, and cholera deaths, between 1832 and 1854 was found south of the Thames.9

Victorians had discovered the joys of statistics (the Royal Statistical Society was founded in Cambridge in 1834) and Snow was able to study survey results to establish patterns which he linked to the disease.10 These showed that south London cholera victims were largely drinkers of Southwark and Vauxhall water. He was also able to analyse the water and established the connection between the nature of the disease and its impact on water supplies.

The St Sepulchre’s drinking fountain drew pure filtered water from The New River Company, which, on tasting, Mrs Wilson pronounced ‘excellent’.11 The Metropolitan Free Drinking Water Association was founded. Fountains proliferated across London, and indeed England, paid for by private subscription. The fountain was a marker on the road to a transformed sewage and drinking system. The need to curb drunkenness and promote another sort of purity is a different though connected matter, as Mrs Wilson’s speech at St. Sepulchre’s suggests.12 Extensive patronage of a nearby gin-shop demonstrated the size of the problem.13

Drunkenness was a recurring concern throughout the nineteenth century. Reports of drunken behaviour in London indicate an increase from 973 incidents in 1800 to an annual occurrence mid-century of 30,749 cases, rising to more than 50,000 in the final decade.14 Offenders ranged in age from 15 to 89 years and included many women.15 Different policing and reporting methods and the rise in London’s population surely impacted on these statistics but typically drunkenness concerned the better-off as a cause of working-class criminality and a financial problem. They lamented the money wasted, the loss to commerce and the cost of prisons and poorhouses.16 The Temperance Movement wanted heavy-handed government

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12 Ibid.
15 Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper, 25 September 1892: Report on the increase in convictions of women noting that 95 per cent of the 2,554 women appearing at Camberwell Magistrates’ Court were victims of drink <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 28 December 2019].
16 The Globe, 21 August 1854 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 15 December 2019].
action to curtail ‘this monstrous plague’ by banning sales of alcohol altogether. Others considered higher taxation would help.

However, Mayhew argued forcibly that ‘those in “high places” should look with charity on the frailties of their less fortunate brethren’. His plea for empathy with their ‘misery, ignorance, and vice’ perhaps contributed to the change in attitudes towards ‘the stain of drunkenness’. Scrutiny of the London press and Hansard across the century shows a gradual shift from a punitive to a more nuanced, creative approach. Whereas, initially, drink offences were dealt with by imprisonment, now drunks were seen as having health issues and sent to workhouse or hospital. Politicians started imposing regulation to limit intoxication, transferring responsibility from individual drinker to the purveyors of alcohol. As early as 1840, it was suggested that landlords might be convicted for allowing drunkenness on their property. Ideas were mooted to control drinking hours, cut Sunday drinking altogether, or to limit the numbers of public-houses to one per 300 head of population. Some argued drunkenness was ‘eminently a political question’; others, joining the parliamentary debate via newspapers, proclaimed it ‘our natural sin’ and insisted that men cannot be made sober by an act of parliament. Others again, as with the cholera outbreaks, questioned whether governments should deal with social issues at all, terming it ‘oppressive interference [...] in the enjoyments of the labouring classes’.

Support for government intervention split along party lines with the Conservatives reluctant to disturb the profits of the Licensed Victuallers. Gladstone, believing drink was the curse of the working man, sought to use legislation to encourage sobriety. The 1872 Licensing Act was certainly a legislative attempt at controlling drinking, representing a shift in the government’s role as protector of the peace to one also responsible for health.

Eventually, echoing ideas intimated by Mrs Wilson twenty years earlier, the main focus shifted to the reasons why people drank too much. ‘We should not look at drunkenness as a cause of crime, rather at

17 Islington Gazette, Friday 7 Oct 1870 cites members of The United Kingdom Alliance, a key Quaker temperance organisation. [https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/] Accessed 15 January 2020.
19 Ibid.
22 Hansard, Spirituous Liquors (Retail) Bill (second reading) 17 April 1872, Vol. 210, Sir Robert Anstruther, MP and others.
23 Hansard, Intoxicating Liquors Bill, 8 June 1864, Vol. 175, line 1938, Mr Lawson, MP.
27 Hands, p. 3.
the cause of drunkenness’ argues Reynolds Newspaper in 1878.28 ‘A working man’ proclaimed the Pall Mall Gazette ‘gets drunk because of [...] want of education [...] want of healthy amusement and want of home comforts [...] [and] want of pure liquor to drink.’29 Quietly revolutionary within the patriarchal nineteenth-century upper-middle-class mindset, it suggested that to close pubs when dealing with problems of the working-classes was treating them like a foolish mother deals with children.30 The point was also well made that the well-off also got drunk, in gentlemen’s clubs, but this was not criticised or indeed very public as their servants shepherded them home.31 The pub was simply the club of the poor and provided relatively uncontaminated beverages.32

No one seems to have questioned the right of the sanitary inspectors to walk into the homes of the poor.33 But the fact that they did provides historians with ‘blue books’, reports of dreadful conditions in terms of overcrowding and inadequate water supply, drainage, or refuse collection experienced by many.34 Soho was so overcrowded that it housed 432 people to the acre.35

Charles Booth, social reformer, categorised working people enabling historians to know that an income of eighteen shillings a week was needed to keep a family from poverty.36 He gave accounts of people unable to afford more than a single boot at a time.37 An 1849 survey of sanitation in houses of the labouring classes found excrement piled up in the cellar in one in twenty London houses.38 Edwin Chadwick, head of the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers, ordered that these cesspools be emptied: straight into the Thames.39 William Farr, a doctor, developed weekly statistical returns of deaths by disease, parish, age and occupation.40 He also tabulated deaths by elevation and thus contributed to the belief that cholera was miasma-based since those at higher levels where air was cleaner were less prone. Eventually he also added their drinking water suppliers which provided the starting point for Snow’s research.41

The need for drinking fountains and the need for the poor to have somewhere to go to escape an ‘empty

28 Reynolds Newspaper, 10 November 1878 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 28 December 2019].
29 Pall Mall Gazette, 18 May 1871 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 28 December 2019].
30 Reynolds Newspaper, 10 November 1878.
31 Ibid.
32 The Tablet, 12 September 1885.
34 Government reports, often referred to as ‘Blue Books’.
37 Wise, p. 181.
38 Johnson, p. 115.
39 Ibid, p. 120.
41 Johnson, p. 100.
hearth, a damp floor, and a cold and comfortless lodging, other than a public beer-house, had common roots with the inspiration behind the bandstand. One politician suggested that ‘the way to cope with drunkenness was by [...] raising the character of the working class.’ The seeds sown by the Public Walks Act (1833), which acknowledged the negative impact of city life on country people, began to influence government action.

Peckham Rye Common had already been purchased by Camberwell Vestry to prevent it being built or otherwise encroached upon. Camberwell’s aim, in line with emerging social philosophy, was to provide a distraction from drink and a place to go away from the grime and overcrowding of the London streets. Octavia Hill, co-founder of the Commons Preservation Society (1865) argued that open spaces ‘help to reform habits and morals by encouraging country tastes’.

It is a commonplace that industrialisation in nineteenth-century Britain created urbanisation, overcrowding, poverty and dirt while developing new uses for metals. The catalogue for the Great Exhibition, 1851, demonstrates an imaginative range of metal products. Iron, in particular, provided not just a strong material but a malleable one, capable of being moulded into intricate patterns, many reflecting nature from which town-dwellers were now alienated. This alienation from nature was one of the reasons why parks were advocated by such as Hill’s Kyrle Society who argued for beauty in the lives of the poor. Peckham Rye was one of the many open spaces preserved for posterity as a result.

The purchase of the bandstand erected on Peckham Rye in 1889, initiated by Camberwell Vestry the year after its removal from Kensington, was completed with donations to the Bandstand Committee and the London County Council. It exemplified the new thinking that open spaces, fresh air and music were all morally beneficial. As Captain Knox MP argued:

The poor of the metropolis [have] but few pleasures, and it conduced much to their health to be

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43 In Morning Advertiser, 9 June 1864 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 15 December 2019].
44 Hansard, HC public health debate 21 February 1833, vol. 15, Mr. Slaney, MP: ‘if due outlets were provided, the consumption of spirits would decrease, and mechanics, instead of sitting in alehouses, would rejoice in the opportunity of enjoying the open air.’ <https://api.parliament.uk/historic- [accessed 15 December 2019]>
45 Sexby recounts that in 1864, 32 vans of Wombwells Wild Beast Show occupied the common, so incensing locals that they demanded action from the vestry: Municipal Parks, p. 178.
47 Hansard, HC Public Health debate, 21 February 1833, vol. 15, col. 1051, Mr. Slaney, MP: by 1833 the proportion of people working in towns had doubled <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1833-02-21/debates> [accessed 30 December 2019].
49 Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866 allowed commons to be purchased from the lord of the manor.
50 Sexby, Introduction, p. xix; p. 178.
51 South London Press, Saturday 1 June 1889 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 28 December 2019].
drawn from the miserable streets in which they lived into the parks, and the bands administered to their pleasure.\textsuperscript{53}

Peckham’s bandstand, one of the first in London, was popular. Contemporary reports claim:

The Wednesday evening band on Peckham Rye was a glorious success. All Peckham and his wife was there.\textsuperscript{54}

And, seven years later: ‘Large crowds attend and judging by the applause the music was much enjoyed’.\textsuperscript{55}

John Sexby claims bandstand concerts attracted many thousands of all classes.\textsuperscript{56} Even without formal class-based data, hats, which then distinguished males by class, presumably made his visual assessment relatively accurate.\textsuperscript{57} Although Peckham’s bandstand is remembered only through pictures such as that on our postcard, fortunately it was sufficiently impressive at the time to have been the model for the bandstand on Clapham Common. A drawing of the Peckham original (Fig.6) confirms they are both the same design.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.7\textwidth]{peckham_bandstand.png}
\caption{A drawing of Peckham Rye Bandstand illustrating an article commemorating its opening, \textit{South London Press}, 1 June 1889 (Newspaper image © The British Library Board. With thanks to The British Newspaper Archive)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{53} Hansard, HC Civil Service Estimates, 1 June 1863, Volume 171 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1863-06-01/debates/> [accessed 21 January 2020]
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{South London Press}, 11 August 1888.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, 1 June 1895.
\textsuperscript{56} p. 178.
Victorians emulated classical, renaissance and medieval design but Peckham bandstand, designed by Captain Frances Fowke, who had spent time in India, seems influenced by Indian chhatris (Fig.7). Cast by Potter and Sons in Glasgow, it was the first to exploit the malleability and strength of cast-iron popularised by the 1851 exhibition.

London is full of examples of decorative ironwork, much of it highly painted. It was used in railway stations, entrances to public lavatories, market halls, and, of course, drinking fountains and bandstands. Clapham bandstand’s ironwork is intricate (Fig.8). Recently renovated, the similarity with decorative work at Smithfield market is evident (Fig.9).

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59 Paul Rabbitts, Bandstands (2018) p. 40 (though elsewhere (p. 219) he attributes it to George Smith at The Sun Foundry).

Seen against trees, the idea that foliage-like ornamentation brings countryside into an urban landscape is convincing (Fig. 10).

‘Light and tasteful’ described the Peckham bandstand.\textsuperscript{61} With a zinc-covered wooden dome,\textsuperscript{62} it reportedly had excellent acoustics.\textsuperscript{63} Others were more ornate but, though equally prolific, bandstands did not follow the extravagant fantasy of some drinking fountain design. Even with some of the original decoration now lost, St Sepulchre’s fountain is a relatively simple structure compared with those which rapidly followed such as those by MacFarlanes of Glasgow who pushed ironwork decoration to its limit (Fig. 11).

\textsuperscript{61} Conway, p. 754.
\textsuperscript{62} Conway, p. 215.
\textsuperscript{63} South London Press, 18 July 1889, p. 6
There were complaints about the over-use of ornamentation on fountains. Burdett-Coutts’ 1862 elaborate neo-Gothic fountain in Victoria Park, Bow, cost £1500. Though ‘Temperance is a bridle of gold’ was engraved on its bronze cups, stressing its philanthropic credentials, and Dickens junior termed it beautiful,\(^{65}\) *Building News* called it ‘a monumental and costly erection’ and described another, in Hyde Park, as ‘a pretentious Gothic structure profuse in [...] questionable ornament.’\(^{66}\) Matthew Ridley MP asked, considering ‘the enormous distress which prevailed throughout the country, whether the proposed expenditure [ornamenting a fountain] was decent or becoming?’\(^{67}\) *The Graphic* demanded ‘less of expensive ornament and more of practical utility,’\(^{68}\) and illustrated the difficulty children experienced in reaching the water (Fig. 12).\(^{69}\)

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\(^{66}\) *Building News*, April 21, 1871 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> [accessed 28 December 2019].

\(^{67}\) Hansard, 1 June 1863, Volume 171.

\(^{68}\) *The Graphic*, July 23, 1881, p. 336.

\(^{69}\) Temperatures at this time reached over 90° F: *The Graphic*, 23 July 1881, p. 90.
Ruskin slated all machine-made cast-ironwork as ‘deceitful, false, vulgar’. However, supporters of ornamentation took a view that ‘A nice drinking fountain is likely to withdraw many a thirsty soul from a nasty bar’. It would seem there was a moral value in ornamentation. As Hill insisted, ‘the poor need beauty in their lives’. Increasingly, it was believed that colour and beauty improved morality.

Moral improvement played a huge role in Victorian philanthropic thinking. The concept of ‘rational recreation’ permeated middle- and upper-class philosophy. To improve the lower orders in the interest of abstinence, edification and respectability, art galleries, museums and libraries were opened; parks and bandstands were supported. There was a moral value in fresh air. There was a moral value in open spaces. And there was a moral value in music. Stanley Jevons, writing in 1883, advocates the cultivation of music, especially in parks, as part of working-class recreation. ‘It is well to have places where people may take the air; but it is better still to attract them every summer evening into the healthy, airy park by the strains of music’.

Increasingly health and morals seem to have been conflated with the middle- and upper-classes considering themselves the arbiters of working-class morals. Hill, who created tenements for poor people she ousted from insanitary slums, insisted on ultra-disciplined behaviour from her tenants. Simplistically, it seems industrial engineering and social engineering needed to advance together. ‘Physical regeneration

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70 Rabbitts, Bandstands, p. 102.
71 Illustrated London News, August 7, 1869, p. 54.
72 Whelan, p. 3.
73 W. S. Jevons, Methods of Social Reform and other papers (London: Macmillan, 1883).
74 White, p. 431.
Did drinking fountains and bandstands achieve the aims of the philanthropists who paid for them? Their success might be measured by popularity, proliferation and the achievement of moral reform. Certainly they were well-used and replicated. The opening of the St Sepulchre’s drinking fountain attracted enormous crowds (Fig.13).

![Figure 13: Mrs Wilson opens the drinking fountain at St Sepulchre’s Church, High Holborn. Engraving, London Illustrated News, 30 April 1859 (Courtesy of London Metropolitan Archives with kind permission from The Drinking Fountain Association)](image)

It was the subject of numerous newspaper articles. Subsequently fountains proliferated: within 11 years 140 were available to the public throughout London. Dickens junior claimed ‘some 300,000 people take advantage of the fountains on a summer’s day…’ Bandstands also proliferated: London had at least 49 by the First World War. Success of bandstands in stimulating moral reform, seemingly the chief aim of many philanthropists, is harder to gauge. Jevons speaks of ‘the exhilaration and elevation of mind produced by true music’ adding ‘What some seek at the cost of health, [...] from alcohol, [...] they might obtain innocuously from music.’ Moral and mental health seem to converge. Corkran cites a ‘very ragged woman’ who claims music ‘like makes me forget there’s trouble’. Drunken behaviour at concerts is seemingly absent. The Observer in 1879 reports ‘a large but quite orderly crowd gathered round [...] to appreciate the “concord of sweet sounds”’. There was some fear that, it being Sunday, music would detract from church attendance, and another report suggests those living adjacent to the common were less pleased, but behaviour was not unruly. In 1891 we learn ‘the great crowd behaved well’.

75 Metropolitan Public Gardens Association statement, 1881; Whelan, p. 3.
76 Charles Dickens Jr.
77 Paul Rabbitts, Database of Bandstands – lost and existing, September 2017 <PaulRabbitts.co.uk> [accessed 12 December 2019].
78 Jevons, p. 11.
79 Corkran, p. 158.
80 Buchan Observer and East Aberdeenshire Advertiser, 10 September 1889.
81 Pall Mall Gazette, 29 June 1891.

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Disappointingly, in 1883, Jevons believed ‘crime and [...] drunkenness show no apparent diminution’ despite various initiatives to combat them. He argued forcibly that only holistic and sustained action would have any impact on social reform.\textsuperscript{82} However, Pugh, historian, suggests there are grounds for believing law and order was improved in the 1890s compared with the 1830s but also posits the new police-forces, compulsory education and increasing influence of women as contributing to this.\textsuperscript{83} Other initiatives (art galleries, museums, exhibitions) similarly aimed at providing morally improving recreational activity for the working-classes, could also claim success.\textsuperscript{84}

Throughout the century select committees and acts of Parliament were introduced to improve the organisation of society and relieve poverty. These did not seek to abolish the lower-orders; this was not about social mobility. Although the middle-classes may have pursued gentrification, the belief that God ordained man’s place in the world, ‘the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate’,\textsuperscript{85} was strong. But ornately-engineered drinking fountains and bandstands were small markers in the progress towards workers’ health, sobriety and possibly improved behaviour. By the time the postcard was sent, Londoners, if more regulated than a century earlier, could enjoy cleaner drinking water, better housing, open spaces and parks filled with music.

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\textsuperscript{82} Jevons, p. 6: ‘What is needed among social reformers is a long pull, and a strong pull, and especially a pull altogether.’

\textsuperscript{83} Martin Pugh, \textit{State and Society: A Social and Political History of Britain since 1870} (London, 2008), p. 79.

\textsuperscript{84} Jevons, p. 12: ‘not one person in a million among visitors to the Crystal Palace exhibition is charged with drunken and disorderly conduct.’

\textsuperscript{85} Frances Alexander. Lines from ‘All things bright and beautiful’ Hymn 9 in \textit{Hymns for Little Children} (Dublin, 1848): ‘The rich man in his castle / the poor man at his gate / God made them high or lowly and ordered their estate.’
[accessed 14 January 2020]


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Victorian punitive expeditions:

Orientalist rationalisations behind the looting of colonial artefacts

MONA ZUTSHI OPUBOR

In the Victorian era, notions of civilisation, cultural superiority, and the beneficence of the British in India and Africa came into conflict with colonial art and treasure, indicative of advanced culture and high degrees of civilisation. The Moonstone, a fictional Indian diamond stolen by a rogue and murderous British army officer in a punitive expedition, offers parallels to the Benin Bronzes seized by British troops three decades later. This article explores these artefacts, as well as the complex and contradictory propaganda emerging following these punitive expeditions which celebrated the stolen treasure while simultaneously denigrating its creators.

A punitive expedition is a military campaign mounted to punish an enemy, often stemming from perceived aggression or an insult towards an imperial power. The term ‘punitive expedition’ itself is political, with a clear bias that justifies the actions of the imperial power meting out punishment. Through an analysis of two items seized during punitive expeditions, the Moonstone, a fictional Indian diamond in Wilkie Collins’ 1868 book of the same name, and the Bronze Portuguese Soldier from Benin, taken from Benin City in 1897, this article will examine the context within which British identity was forged during the Victorian era. Brutality and avarice were an ethical dilemma and a source of moral dissonance for the British during the nineteenth century. Despite self-interested motivations, Britons clung to the notion of their kingdom, and later, empire, as selfless actors on a civilising mission to ‘primitive’ peoples. They refused to acknowledge the contradictory evidence of ‘natives’ displaying rich and complex artistic, cultural and religious traditions. Obfuscation and denial led to greed, violence and colonial plunder becoming an integral, though largely unacknowledged, part of British identity creation in the nineteenth century. There are clear differences between an imagined artefact borne of popular entertainment, itself critical of colonialism’s worst abuses, and an actual artefact that stands in evidence of imperialism’s worst atrocities. How do we differentiate, as a matter of historical work, something imagined and something ‘real’ when the imagined provides more solid evidence of historical truth and the real is an expression of fantasy? Fact and fiction blur throughout, with the serialisation of The Moonstone offering a critique of the siege of Seringapatam and the Great Mutiny of 1857, while the outrageous imaginings of British newspapers justified the theft of the Bronze and Britain’s continued possession.

The Moonstone, initially released in short installments in a two-penny newspaper format, was set in 1848, the year of European revolutions, and examines the individual and national responsibility of imperial violence. Although a work of narrative fiction, The Moonstone mixes fact and fiction throughout, with inspiration drawn from a number of historical events including the storming of Seringapatam, the Great Mutiny of 1857, and the famed Koh-i-Noor diamond. The Moonstone is described as a large, flawed, yellow diamond with an appraised value of £30,000, received as a tainted inheritance by Rachel Verinder. The butler Gabriel Betteredge describes the gem, writing:

It was a diamond! As large, or nearly, as a plover’s egg. The light that streamed from it was like the light of the harvest moon [...] this jewel, that you could hold between your finger and thumb, seemed unfathomable as the heavens themselves.

Collins creates a backstory for the fictional gem that begins prior to the eleventh century, with the yellow diamond set in the forehead of a statue of a Hindu deity. Generations pass, with Hindus worshipping the diamond in a golden shrine, with Vishnu himself commanding three Brahman priests to guard it through the ages, prophesying doom to anyone attempting to steal the gem. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, blending fact and fiction, the diamond comes into the possession of Tipu, Sultan of Seringapatam, a historical figure, who orders it to be inlayed in the handle of a dagger and placed in his armoury.

The history of the Benin Bronzes before their seizure in 1897 involves a good deal more speculation, since many of the historical details have been lost or were not recorded. With bronze casting techniques learned from the Ife at the end of the thirteenth century, Benin City metal-casters, working solely for the Oba (king) of Benin, produced a vast array of copper-alloy works between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Benin objects are mostly brass, although there are a few works in bronze. The raw material was acquired through external trade, using bronze imported directly, and in large amounts, from Portugal. The eighteenth century cast-brass figure of a Portuguese soldier with a gun was crafted by the Edo people in what was then called Benin, but now refers to an area in Southern Nigeria (Fig.1). The soldier stands at attention, holding a musket, and wearing a morion with a curved brim, decorated and

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4 Collins, p. xxi.
6 Collins, p. 65.
7 Ibid., pp. 7-9.
10 Ibid, p. 52.
11 Onokerhoraye, p. 305.
12 Ibid., p. 302.
pointed at the front and back. A tunic covers an undergarment with short sleeves and trunks with a cod piece, both decorated to suggest chain mail.13

Figure 1. Unknown artist, Bronze Portuguese Soldier, with gun, 18th eighteenth century, cast brass, 43 × 20 cm (British Museum, London; © Trustees of the British Museum)

The British Museum – where the statue is currently displayed – offers curator comments highlighting an interesting aspect of the weaponry and clothing, suggestive of centuries of contact between Benin and Portugal. The musket that the soldier holds, and the two pistols on his hips, have been identified as seventeenth century flintlocks. However, one of the pistols at the soldier’s feet, is a trade gun and the other of the Ripoll type, both manufactured in Europe in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Also notable is that the costume worn by the soldier does not correspond to the era of the weaponry. This suggests that different source material may have influenced the artist who created the work.14

The figure of the Portuguese soldier and the Moonstone were both seized by agents of the British Army during punitive expeditions, characterised by orgies of violence and avarice, before being brought to

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England as colonial plunder. The violence and theft of the British military and its agents was not well known to the British public. It was often only exceptionally violent encounters that would be widely reported, and then with the worst atrocities omitted. When the British public was made aware of violence, it was generally justified as necessary and heroic.\(^{15}\) An illustration of this is provided in *The Moonstone*, which begins with a mysterious prologue drawn from family papers by a truthful, unnamed cousin of John Herncastle. This cousin documents the brutal conquest of Seringapatam by a squadron of soldiers, under the command of General George Harris. The letter expresses dismay at the ‘plunder and confusion’ of the troops following the conquest, where soldiers ‘committed deplorable excesses’\(^{16}\) and ‘disgraced themselves good-humouredly’.\(^{17}\) The cousin finds Herncastle standing over the bodies of two dead and one dying Indian man, clutching a bloody dagger with a ‘a stone, set like a pommel, in the end of the dagger's handle’.\(^{18}\) With a curse unleashed on Herncastle by the dying breath of Brahman’s guardian, the Moonstone is presumably smuggled into Britain when Herncastle repatriates.

Though fictional, the details of this account and apparent cover-up are consistent with the *modus operandi* of the British authorities during the Victorian era. That the details of this shameful episode are only mentioned in private correspondence is consistent with the propaganda and close management of information, which propped up the myth of selfless and moral British engagement in India. There could be no justification for the manner in which the soldiers conducted themselves and, indeed, it was clear that they revelled in their atrocities. The feelings of pride, security and even superiority reflected by characters in *The Moonstone* stemmed from a lack of awareness. They were led to believe something well short of the truth of the acquisition of the gem. This fictional account seems consistent with what happened following real events, such as with the bronzes.

The overthrow of Tipu Sultan in Seringapatam in 1799, where 8,000 natives were slaughtered but only a few hundred British and sepoy soldiers were killed,\(^{19}\) was famous for its looting and plunder, with British soldiers ransacking the treasury after the Fourth Mysore War.\(^{20}\) Although portrayed in the British press as a vicious tyrant, “Tipu Sultan had in reality spelled grave danger to the East India Company’s plans for expansion”,\(^{21}\) leaving the British public unaware of the commercial agenda behind the punitive expedition. It was in this way that Britain could simultaneously profit from violence, yet continue to claim the ‘moral

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 9.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 10.
\(^{18}\) Ibid.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. ix.
\(^{21}\) Manavalli, p. 74.
high ground’. Many critics believe that Collins used the fictional siege of Seringapatam as a critique for the hysteria generated by the Great Mutiny of 1857. In the decade following the mutiny, the Empire appeared to be disintegrating. With force the only means to contain the spreading insurgency, rebel atrocities and bloody British reprisals were reported from Jamaica to New Zealand.

The causes leading to the punitive expedition in Benin of 1897 share broad similarities with those of the siege of Seringapatam. As with Tipu Sultan threatening the profits of the East India Company, the desire to control trading routes lay at the heart of the conflict with Ovonramwen, the Oba of Benin, and the Edo peoples, with commercial interests hidden from the British public. Benin markets had long been closed to outside trade, but European pressure for commerce increased in the nineteenth century. British officials were frustrated by their inability to break the monopoly on commodities held by the Oba. The Oba ignored the Treaty of 1892, which recognised Britain’s sovereignty, and opened up Benin to trade by members of all nations. In an attempt to dispute trading rights, a naïve and inexperienced soldier, Vice Consul James Phillips, led an unarmed party to the palace. Though lacking authorisation from the Foreign Office, the party persisted despite receiving warnings from royal envoys and Itsekiri middlemen to turn back. On 7 January, believing themselves under attack, Benin soldiers killed all but two of the party. When news reached Britain, some 1700 men were swiftly sent in retaliation, and by 18 February 1897, Benin City was taken by British forces.

The punitive expedition resulted in the seizure of thousands of pieces of artwork which had also been controlled by the Oba. The British troops were astonished by the calibre and quantity of bronze sculptures and ivory carvings, which seemed to contradict the negative reports of Benin, which was considered a ‘city of death’ by the British public (Fig.2). The march of Phillips to the palace was a provocation to the Oba, yet the British troops felt morally justified in launching an attack on the Edo peoples. They stole their historic, treasured art and left the Oba’s palace a burnt shell.

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22 Free, p. 347.
26 Coombs, p. 10.
29 Plankensteiner, Benin Affair, p. 200.
A portion of the artwork was immediately distributed to expedition members according to rank. Some pieces were reserved for the queen, and some were auctioned off in London by the Admiralty. In addition, many pieces of art changed hands in Lagos immediately following the punitive expedition. It is difficult to trace the movements of the Portuguese Soldier figure until 1934, when it was acquired by the British collector, Harry Geoffrey Beasley. His ledger lists the item as ‘A standing bronze figure of a Portuguese soldier with a musket at his shoulder’, along with the code ‘AO’ indicating that he paid £20 for it (Fig.3).
After his death in 1939, the statue of the Portuguese Soldier was donated, along with other works, to the British Museum in 1944.33

Both *The Moonstone* and the press coverage immediately following the Benin expedition proved enormously popular amongst the reading public. Both were fuelled by the boom in print publication during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Benin expedition received mass press coverage in Britain,34 despite not being a major theatre of war in comparison to other African campaigns.35 There were even special supplements devoted to Benin such as the one issued by the *Illustrated London News* on 27 March 1897. This described eyewitness accounts of ‘the remains of human sacrifices and mutilated bodies, as well as the fetish altars covered with human blood’, with the bronzes and artworks dismissed as ‘having the most grotesque appearance’.36 Full-page illustrations, such as ‘The Golgotha, Benin’, represent the horrors of Benin, with a contorted figure seen amongst a mountain of corpses (Fig.4).37

![Figure 4: Arthur David McCormick, The Golgotha, Benin, lithograph, Illustrated London News, (27 March 1897). (Look and Learn/Illustrated Papers Collection; © Bridgeman Images)](image)

34 Goombs, p. 7.
35 Plankensteiner, Benin Affair, p. 201.
36 Goombs, p. 17.
37 Ibid.
To reinforce the stark difference between Britons and the Edo, accompanying illustrations in the supplement depict British soldiers ‘washing, boiling water or tending to the injured’ which, according to Plankensteiner, stressed their ‘self-sacrifice and humanity’. The British public were regaled with propaganda around the national heroism of the expedition and the ‘native’ depravities. Discussion of trade monopolies was omitted from accounts of the raid, with British intervention portrayed as purely altruistic. Likewise, the triggering factors of the campaign of Philips were withheld. The Benin expedition was presented as a civilising mission, with a permanent British presence necessary to stop the slide into savagery. Press coverage of the punitive expedition in Benin therefore reaffirmed self-serving notions of British superiority over the Edo peoples.

As a result of the acquisitions, there were interesting variations in the British perceptions surrounding their Indian and Edo subjects. It can be argued that both peoples are limited and contained within the framework that the scholar Edward Said referred to as Orientalism, implying ‘a European invention […] of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, [and] remarkable experiences’ which ‘has helped to define Europe’. Orientalism was inherently political because it colluded with the imperial project, advancing racial agendas that ‘valued’ white Europeans over other ‘races’. It was a key component in rationalising the greed and violence of colonial looting. Even in the fictional The Moonstone, there appears to be a greater attempt made to understand Indian culture. The ‘White Man’s Burden’ (as Rudyard Kipling famously referred to the interventionist colonialism that necessitated the civilising of ‘sullen savages’ based on British racial and moral superiority) was representative of the colonial approach toward settling foreign territories. Despite anxieties arising from the Great Mutiny, The Moonstone was published within that framework. The last three decades of the Victorian era saw British interventionist policies change. At the time of the Benin expedition, a shift from colonialism to a new imperialism – a method of empire-building involving the seizure and exploitation of foreign territories often for commercial motives – had occurred. The British became committed to expansion and empire building. They grew increasingly dependent on a global economy necessitating new trade routes, with uncooperative prospective partners subject to the
harsh measures experienced by the Oba of Benin. To be one of these colonial holdings meant to be valued less than Britain.

In *The Moonstone*, India is portrayed according to contemporary Victorian ideologies, with the duality of India as a ‘site of colonial terror’, alongside ‘a romanticized India as a predominately Hindu-Brahmanical society’. In true Orientalist fashion, the India of the novel is a timeless land with a pre-historic culture, its greatest glories relegated to history, in opposition to European modernity. In fact, India was a source of great anxiety to the British. The country house of the Verinders acts as a stand-in for Great Britain, contaminated by the Indian gem. As Gabriel Betteridge states, ‘here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian diamond […] Who ever heard the like of it – in the nineteenth century, mind, in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British Constitution?’ The colonial blot, together with involvement in a modern global economy, threatened to destabilise the British national character. Plunder characterised the imperial economy and many feared a loss of British character, resulting from avarice for colonial loot. The diamond brought those fears to a head by showing an India that could be contained. Manavalli argues that in ‘the seamless context of colonial and domestic crime, the looting […] presages the moral disintegration in England,’ with the gem metamorphosing, according to John Reed, into a ‘sign of England’s imperial depredations – the symbol of a national […] crime.’ Melissa Free concludes it is denial of imperial collusion, not the diamond itself, that is the source of all the mischief in *The Moonstone*.

As to how the Indian characters in *The Moonstone* perceive the British and their possession of the diamond, it is harder to discern, as they do not control the narrative. The Hindu-Brahmanical characters do display a single-minded focus on re-gaining possession of the diamond, and disregard both Islamic and British claims of ownership. Free of uncertainties that plague the Western characters, they triumph in the final pages of the novel with a scene of restitution. Here, tens of thousands of Hindu devotees gather to worship the Moonstone’s return to the deity’s forehead after 800 years. The three Brahmans responsible for the return, stripped of caste, nobly sacrifice themselves to permanent exile for their gods. In juxtaposition to this scene of Hindu worship, a comparison can be made with the millions of Britons surrounding the Koh-i-Noor at the Great Exhibition of 1851. This celebrated commercial and imperial plunder in a

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45 Manavalli, p. 67.
46 Collins, p. 38.
47 Duncan, p. 307.
48 Ibid., p. 74.
50 Free, p. 356.
51 Collins, p. xiii.
perverse parody of Hindu religious rites, where *darshan* (sight) of the *murti* (deity’s image) is a fundamental practice of religion.\(^5^2\)

It was challenging for the British to reconcile the discovery of thousands of highly esteemed pieces of artwork, which met European aesthetic criteria indicative of advanced civilization, with their widely disseminated beliefs around the ‘savagery’ of the Edo people. These contradictory attitudes were expressed in an Orientalist manner, emphasising a past glory which was responsible for producing the art and a decayed present. The Edo were portrayed as a ‘degraded race’ or ‘degenerated culture’, a recurring feature of the characterisation of certain colonised peoples.\(^5^3\) Ormonde Dalton praises the artworks as ‘treasures’ that are a new ‘Codex Africanus, not written on fragile papyrus, but in ivory and imperishable brass’\(^5^4\). Yet, he dismisses the Edo as cowardly, thieving fetishists who perform human sacrifice, with the Benin ‘a decadent and incurable degenerate […] city of horrors’.\(^5^5\) Early commentators displayed an inability to believe in or acknowledge an African origin of the artwork. Dalton and Charles Read state that ‘it is strange that among the many examples of bronze casting by native artists no single piece has occurred that can be attributed to their European teachers’, speculating that the Portuguese models were still-to-be unearthed.\(^5^6\)

Three decades later, T.A. Joyce, describing a similar Benin statue of a Portuguese soldier, continues to misidentify the art of *cire-perdue*, or lost wax casting, as originating from early Portuguese travellers, a misidentification common amongst scholars and emblematic of cultural racism and justification.\(^5^7\)

Unlike *The Moonstone*, which was written from a European viewpoint about a colonised subject, the Bronze Portuguese Soldier offers an African viewpoint on Europeans. The first Portuguese (European) contact with Benin is believed to date from 1472, with the use of metals in artworks beginning after the fifteenth century.\(^5^8\) The Portuguese are well represented in the iconography of Benin art, enjoying a privileged position.\(^5^9\) Depictions of the Portuguese in court art are, in fact, a symbol of the Oba’s power and served to strengthen his reputation. This led Eisenhofer to assert that ‘the court at Benin was mainly interested in its own glory when it came to integrating the foreigners in its art’, rendering an outside threat to the social order into a ‘constructive part of Benin’s world-view, […] converted into something favourable’.\(^6^0\)

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\(^5^3\) Plankensteiner, Benin Affair, p. 201.


\(^5^5\) Dalton, pp. 420-1.


\(^5^7\) Joyce, p. 96.

\(^5^8\) Eyo, p. 148.

\(^5^9\) Onokerhoraye, p. 303.

\(^6^0\) Eisenhofer, p. 59.
Edo people use the bronzes as a means of interacting with outsiders and narrating events in their world, which shows their agency. They are not only observed, but they also observe others. Yet, what began in an empowering act of creation ended in seizure by imperial violence.

Is colonial expropriation theft? The answer depends on whether you are asking the coloniser or the colonised. Although the fictional Moonstone was returned to its Hindu-Brahmanical roots, one wonders about all the other Indian objects that remain in Britain, such as the Koh-i-Noor. What of the treasure hauled back by civil servants, nabobs and retired British India Army officers? Nigeria has been agitating for the restitution of the Benin Bronzes since independence in 1960. Yet, more than 1,000 bronzes are currently held in European museums. From as early as the 1890s, curators at the British Museum have rated their artistic merit at the level of the ‘best of Italian and Greek sculpture’, and they have only increased in value.61 The British Museum has recently agreed to temporarily loan some of the bronzes back to Nigerian museums.62 They refuse to return the plundered treasures outright, yet the restitution of cultural treasure should not be relegated to the pages of a novel. As argued in this article, obfuscation and denial led to greed, violence, and colonial plunder becoming an integral, though largely unacknowledged, part of the creation of British identity in the nineteenth century. Despite being the aggressor in punitive expeditions, Britons interpreted these events in a manner that justified their actions and confirmed their moral and racial superiority over the colonised peoples of the Empire. Returning the Benin Bronzes would be a just attempt to reckon with the sins borne of imperialism, and a small but symbolic measure of recompense for the exploitation which characterised that era. This bold step would result in Britain reclaiming its moral standing, in a post-colonial age.

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Francis Galton’s dog whistle and his albino puppy Wee Ling

ROSALIND JANSSEN

Housed in the Galton Collection at UCL are eight curious whistle components, in an original cardboard box, and two framed photographs dated to 1909. One of these photographs shows the eighty-seven year old Sir Francis Galton in his bath chair. Standing beside him is his faithful manservant Albert Giff holding Wee Ling, a pure white albino puppy. Back in 1876, Galton, a prominent Victorian scientist and statistician, had invented a whistle to test the range of human hearing abilities at higher frequencies. He later adapted it to test animal hearing. His discovery from roaming the streets of Berne and other towns, was that only small breeds heard very high pitched notes. However, the darker side is that Galton was an advocate of selective breeding. In turn, Wee Ling was the result of dog-breeding experiments carried out by Galton’s eugenic disciple Karl Pearson. Both men are seen seated together in the second photograph on the day of the puppy’s arrival. As Pearson chillingly wrote: ‘I gave you Wee Ling because we had decided he was the most intelligent’; nonetheless he ‘turned out to be incapable of reproducing his kind!’ Just two years later, as a result of his mentor’s generous bequest, Pearson was destined to become the first holder of the Galton Chair in National Eugenics at what was then University College London. In this article, the contrasting sources – whistle(s) and photographs – are critically analysed by means of an object-based learning methodology. Their stories reveal Galton as inventor, eugenic mentor, and as an ageist and ageing individual.

The end result is an enhanced understanding into the tensions between his inventive genius, darker thinking, and eugenic legacy.

Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) was a Victorian polymath and professional scientist who made foundational contributions as an ethnographer, statistician, psychologist, biologist, meteorologist, and criminologist. He was also an inventor of remarkable instruments. This article engages with his ingenious dog whistle, in relation to eight curious components which are preserved in the Galton Collection at UCL. This seemingly harmless whistle, invented in 1876, is juxtaposed with a two-dimensional visual source: two 1909 photographs of Galton, which reside in the same repository. The first shows him with his albino puppy Wee Ling, and the second with his protégé the statistician Karl Pearson (1857-1936). In 1883, Galton had invented the term ‘eugenics’, which he defined as the breeding of human ‘stock’ to give ‘the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable’.¹ Through advocating selective breeding, Galton was condemning certain people as genetically ‘unfit’ for society, a reprehensible idea which has been widely used since to justify persecution based on class, race, and disability. The aim of this article is to align whistle(s) and photographs as contrasting sources, in order to tease out critical insights into the tensions between Galton’s inventive genius, his darker thinking, and eugenic legacy.

¹ Francis Galton, Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development (London: Macmillan 1883), p. 70 n.
Context, methodology and framework

In 1904, Francis Galton established a Research Fellowship in eugenics at what was then University College London (known officially since 2005 as UCL), and founded the Eugenics Record Office. His obituary writer in The Times records that its holder was ‘to devote his time to studying the agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally’. On his death in 1911, Galton bequeathed the college his personal memorabilia and extensive archive. Natasha McEnroe has given a powerful insight into the challenging nature of this material for the twenty-first century curator and archivist.

As indicated in the acknowledgements, the methodology I have adopted in this article is object-based learning (OBL), a multi-sensory learning experience which encourages a critical use of the senses, in particular, touch, together with sight and smell. UCL has been at the forefront of promoting the efficacy of OBL. Primary research visits have been undertaken to its Galton Collection, Grant Museum of Zoology, and UCL Special Collections.

This article is framed in three sections. The first sets the scene by focusing on Galton as the inventor of a dog whistle. The enigmatic whistle components in the Galton Collection are aligned with a photograph showing an albino puppy. Both sources are then linked by means of Galton’s dog whistle, and his discoveries regarding the superior hearing capacity of small dogs. On the premise that ‘objects illuminate the relationships that created the Museum’, the second section critically examines Galton as Pearson’s eugenic mentor in relation to the selective breeding of dogs for intelligence. The third focuses on Galton as an ageist and ageing individual, in order to deconstruct the hidden faces behind the sources. A final reflection on Galton’s scientific legacy then brings ‘the lives of the objects’ full circle.

1. Galton: the inventor

In 1869 Galton invented a dog whistle, which is still commercially manufactured today (compare Fig. 5). Conveniently housed inside a cardboard box belonging to C. Baker, London’s long established optical and

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5 Most recently, Engaging the Senses: Object-based Learning in Higher Education, ed. by Helen J. Chatterjee and Leonie Hannan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
surgical instrument maker, are eight whistle components: seven in metal and one of reed (Fig.1).² A recent red ink label at the top right of the lid denotes the contents as ‘Galton Apparatus No. 39’. Meanwhile, the inventory for Galt 039 confirms that, on its arrival in the Galton Collection, the box contained only one whistle.³ However, on removing the contents and engaging in a detailed inspection, it was impossible to imagine that they could ever have fitted together (Fig.2). Moreover, the only clearly identifiable item is a complete whistle (Fig.2, top right). This is perhaps not surprising given that an earlier black ink label, written by Pearson and placed on the left side of the lid, references the contents in the plural as ‘Galton’s whistles for testing hearing’. This presents a triple enigma: the function and interrelationship of each element; the precise number of whistles; and who or what might have been having their hearing tested.

Figure 1: Galton’s brass and cane whistles in an original box, 17.5 × 7.0 × 2.5 cm
(Galton Collection, Galt 039; Courtesy of the Galton Collection, UCL)

² The firm of Charles Baker was established in 1765 and traded until 1963.
³ Information provided by Hannah Cornish, Science Curator.
Equally curious is the first photograph in the Galton Collection which shows Galton on the terrace of his rented house at Cobham in Surrey (Fig.3). Confined to his bath chair, and well blanketed from the elements, he looks up from the newspapers on his lap to face the camera directly. Standing beside Galton is his immaculately dressed Swiss manservant. Alfred Gigi holds a pure white puppy named Wee Ling. The enigma is why a helpless eighty-seven year old has agreed to adopt a month old albino Pekingese who, as he was shortly to report, ‘has a horrid temper, and bites with his little sharp teeth and swears in Chinese dog-language’?\textsuperscript{10}

The immediate link between dog whistle and photograph is the apparatus that Galton designed for experimenting with the former, and which was inserted into the end of his hollow walking-stick. Squeezing an Indian rubber ball, connected to tubing placed under the handle of the stick, forced a small amount of air into the whistle and caused it to emit a shrill sound. Galton originally tested out the apparatus at the London Zoo by holding it ‘as near as is safe to the ears of the animals’, and noting if they pricked up their ears. Whereas a blown whistle would have been visible to the animals, Galton’s surreptitious hand operation of his curious invention caused complete surprise. Indeed, Subhadra Das, Curator of the

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11 Also published in ibid., Pl. XXVIII, facing p. 390.
12 Galton, Inquiries, p. 39.
13 Ibid., p. 39.
14 Compare Pavlov’s dogs and the discovery of classical conditioning.
Galton Collection, reports him as having said that there was ‘little to report, except that it certainly annoyed the lions’.

Using a similar walking-stick whistle, he would obsessively walk through the streets of a town and make ‘nearly all the little dogs turn round, but not the large ones’. The experiment appeared proven in Berne, where he ‘tried the whistle for hours together, on a great many large dogs, but could not find one that heard it’. The apparatus, which is never described or pictured, is most likely to be identified as the hollow brass gadget with its coating of peeling black paint (Fig. 2, bottom left). The wider left-hand end could have been inserted into the walking-stick, with the whistle placed into the opposing narrower end. The ingenious rotating handle below would have connected with the ball and tubing. Equally tantalising, and beyond the scope of this article, is Smith and Hannan’s assertion that, as attested by the Kennel Club archive, Galton’s dog whistle was later used as a sometimes controversial device in dog training.

2. Galton: the eugenic mentor

It was Galton’s eugenic disciple Karl Pearson who, on 12 September 1909, had cycled over from Woodcote to Cobham with the albino puppy in the basket on his handlebars. The second photograph, showing the two men seated together, was taken during that visit (Fig. 4). Pictured on the same terrace, Galton now turns away, whereas Pearson’s piercing eyes seem to penetrate directly into the lens of the camera. A month later, in what was a clear deferential reference to the scientific interests of his mentor, Pearson told Galton: ‘I gave you Wee Ling because we had decided he was the most intelligent’ of his litter.

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16 Galton, Inquiries, p. 40.
17 Ibid., p. 40.
19 Pearson, The Life, III, p. 391. Pearson announced the birth of the three sibling albino puppies to Galton on 8 August. He then enclosed their photograph within a cleverly worded letter to Galton dated 10 September. He asked: ‘would Miss Biggs like Wee Ling?’ Eva Biggs, Galton’s great-niece and companion, accepted with alacrity.
A fuller understanding of why Galton might have been attracted to the possibility of adopting an intelligent small dog, necessitates a journey further back in time beyond his 1876 whistle. Arriving in Cape Town in 1850 as a twenty-eight year old at the start of his South African explorations, he ‘had a fancy to take a small dog which could be carried in the waggon all day, and would be wakeful at night’. Galton therefore purchased a spaniel ‘on which I lavished infinite affection, and who rejoiced in the name of Dinah’. Later on, he credited her with more intelligence than the Damara tribesmen in what is now Namibia. Dinah was able to keep track of her new-born puppies more easily than the Damaras could count their cattle. With

21 Ibid., Pl. XXXVI, facing p. 353.
23 Ibid., p. 14.
regards to their respective mental abilities, Galton concluded that: ‘taking the two as they stood, dog and Damara, the comparison reflected no great honour on the man’. It is therefore not surprising that fifteen years later, Galton suggested breeding ‘generation after generation’ of dogs purely for intelligence. By 1899, he was requesting permission from the Kennel Club to take photographs of its pedigree prize winners as a ‘most valuable aid to investigations into the Science of Breeding’.

Pearson had told his mentor: ‘I should like to know where he [Wee Ling] was, if he had to be united in holy matrimony at any time with one of his cousins or half-sisters!’ This is a reference to the dog-breeding experiments, conducted from 1905 on, by Pearson and his collaborators Edward Nettleship (1845-1913) and Charles Usher (1865-1942). Any attempt to follow Galton’s scientific interests in breeding small dogs for intelligence, was entirely tangential to this programme. Instead, using an established Chinese breed, the aim was to produce a ‘new race’ of albino Pekingese dogs.

Over five hundred dogs were produced as a result of excessive inbreeding: father to daughter, and brother to sister, rather than the cousin and half-sister mating implied above. Indeed, only one new stud dog was introduced during the course of twenty-five years. The litters suffered heavy mortality, while photophobia rendered the surviving animals liable to collapse in bright sunshine, and their extreme shortsightedness resulted in clumsiness. Moreover, they were often infertile. Confirming the disciple with the piercing eyes as a more extreme eugenicist than the mentor, Pearson simply declared: ‘the closer the inbreeding the more likely we seem to get interesting results’.

Galton’s deliberate purchase of the intelligent spaniel, who rejoiced in the name of Dinah, led to the birth of her litter in Damaraland. By contrast, the ‘markedly intelligent’ Wee Ling, who had to be returned to his former master after a mere six months spent in Galton’s household, ‘turned out to be incapable of reproducing his kind!’ The subjection of this albino Pekingese to Pearson’s chilling animal experiments recalls the non-consensual violence of Prince Shechem who ‘seized’ the original Dinah, daughter of Jacob, and proceeded to ‘lay with her by force’.

24 Ibid., p. 134.
26 Galton Papers, Pedigree Dogs 1889-1899 GALTON/2/5/9, UCL Special Collections.
30 Pearson and Usher, p. 150.
32 Genesis 34: 2 (NSRV translation).
3.  **Galton: ageist and ageing**

Galton first invented his whistle to test the upper limits of audible sound in human hearing, correctly determining that this was normally about 18 kHz.\(^{33}\) The darker side of the story behind the object is that by 1883 he had discovered *presbycusis*, or age-related hearing loss. He writes that ‘there was a remarkable falling off in the power of hearing high notes as age advanced’, with those concerned ‘quite unconscious of their deficiency so long as their sense of hearing low notes remained unimpaired’.\(^{34}\) In the years leading up to the publication of his *Inquiries into Human Faculty* in 1883, Galton would display his ageism by delighting in ‘an only too amusing experiment’.\(^{35}\) This involved testing the hearing of a group of various ages. The older participants failed to hear the shrill notes, which their younger counterparts could hear clearly, causing them to ‘commonly betray much dislike to the discovery’.\(^{36}\) Moreover, his scientific experiments were misogynistic. Comparing men and women he found that ‘as in every other faculty that has been discussed, the male surpasses the female’.\(^{37}\) Whereas 18 per cent of the males tested could hear ‘the shrillest test-note’, only 11 per cent of females were able to do the same.\(^{38}\)

\[\text{Figure 5: Galton’s brass human auditory whistle, Europe (1876-1920) (Science Museum, 1996-277/2; Courtesy of the Science Museum, London)}\]


\(^{34}\) Galton, *Inquiries*, p. 38.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 38.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 39.


\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 287.
Galton describes making such a whistle from a tiny brass tube ‘whose internal diameter was less than one-tenth of an inch’; a slit was placed at the end (Fig. 5). The brass tube tied around with thread, together with the cane pipe next to it, can be now identified as Galton’s experiments with small human auditory whistles (Fig. 2, third and fourth from bottom left). It is logical to suggest that one relates to a high, and the other to a lower, frequency. Air would be puffed through the tube, coming out at the slit as an audible tone. A sliding plug was then fitted at the lower end of the tube, to be manoeuvred up or down to create different frequencies. Fitting this description is the experimental tiny brass tube and plug (Fig. 2, top left). The sliding plug was graduated so that precise notes could be determined (Fig. 5).

Still to be identified is the curious metal device (Fig. 2, bottom far right). The circular component, which incorporates a screw, appears to derive from a similar instrument (Fig. 2, top centre). Inscribed on one of the long edges of the former are the words ‘Hawksley, London’ (in capitals). It may well derive from Galton’s hydrogen whistle, since he references Mr. Hawksley as the manufacturer of an apparatus to be used in conjunction with a whistle. Designed to test the hearing of insects, this featured a small gas bag for pure or diluted hydrogen, and a squeezable Indian rubber ball which enabled the hydrogen to be used with the whistle. The device itself was connected to the end of Indian rubber tubing, and then laid near the insect. Galton tested the hydrogen whistle alongside his dog whistle at the London Zoo. Finally, the flattened whistle (Fig. 2, second from bottom left) is likely to represent Galton’s ‘largely unsuccessful attempt’ to flatten a piece of brass tube, in order to form a whistle ‘that would be both shrill and powerful, and correspond to a battery of small whistles’.

In turn, the hidden face of the 1909 photographs is that of the ageing Galton, who was by now stone deaf himself (Figs. 3-4). Two years earlier, he had written:

But my strongest sympathy is with the deaf. Had I a fairy godmother, I would petition that every experimental physicist should be made as deaf as I am; until they had discovered a good ear trumpet, and then that as many fairy-gifts should be heaped on the discoverer as should exceed all he should desire, as well as the thanks and gratitude of all whom he had relieved.

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39 Ibid., p. 38.
40 A London surgical instrument maker based at 307 Oxford Street.
42 Ibid., p. 217.
43 Ibid., p. 216.
44 Galton, Inquiries, p. 377.
45 Ibid., p. 280. Back in 1894, the seventy-four year old Galton had been complaining that his deafness constituted a problem at committee meetings.
No longer delighting in the hearing loss of older people, Galton’s age and infirmity precluded him from being the inventor of that sought after effective ear trumpet.47

By identifying each of the stand-alone devices in the box, and teasing out the story behind the two photographs, a discursive lens has been provided into eugenic object stories. The positive and negative faces of Francis Galton have been unmasked. His experimental whistles to test both human and animal hearing, reveal him as a remarkable inventor and obsessive genius. By contrast, his short-term adoption of the albino puppy Wee Ling reveals Galton’s darker thinking as a long-term advocate of experiments into selective breeding. This is epitomised by taking the story behind the two photographs forward and then back again in time. Two years after they were taken, Francis Galton died. While Gifi was rewarded with a mere £200 for his twenty years of devoted service, a £45,000 financial bequest to UCL endowed Britain’s first Chair of National Eugenics. The stipulation was that Karl Pearson was appointed first Galton Professor.48 No wonder that Natasha McEnroe has asserted that ‘Galton’s absolute commitment to his eugenics programme can be seen as extreme even among his contemporaries’.49

Returning to 1909, the two photographs were taken in the same year that Pearson started hosting public lectures on his albino breeding experiments. These were held at UCL’s Galton Laboratory. His co-researcher Ethel Elderton later recalled how dogs had been present in cages, and ‘we had great fun over it all’.50 UCL is now having to openly engage with such controversial legacies. The release of its Eugenics Inquiry report is due to take place in a UCL lecture theatre on 28 February 2020.51 A two hour event, it will be filmed and live streamed. Not surprisingly, the author of this contribution intends to be present in person to hear for herself the findings and recommendations.

Acknowledgements

Hannah Cornish provided generous access to Galton’s whistles. The Galton Collection has recently been rehoused in UCL’s new Object Based Learning Lab, prominently situated off the Octagon. I was the very first research visitor to use this designated space. Chris Hughes allowed me to handle the skull of Wee Ling in the Grant Museum, and provided information on the registration numbers of Pearson’s statistical dogs. Dan Mitchell kindly facilitated my three visits to UCL Special Collections in order to access both the Galton and Pearson Papers.

47 Although the use of ear trumpets dates back to the sixteenth century, their first commercial manufacture was by the London firm established by Frederick Rein in 1800. F.C. Rein and Son ceased trading in 1963, as the first and last such company.
48 Renamed in 1963 as the Galton Chair in Human Genetics.
49 McEnroe, p. 89.
51 Janssen, pp. 249-250.
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A chivalric knight and deep sea dredging;  
or, ‘the everlasting thunder of the deep’

NICHOLAS PRITCHARD

For Britons in the mid- to late nineteenth century the deep sea was starting to take a hold on the imagination. The successful attempt in 1858 to lay a telegraph cable between Ireland and Newfoundland drew political, corporate, and public attention to the seafloor. Scientists, whalers, and explorers focused their gaze downwards to the bottom of the ocean in search of new species, hunting grounds, and stories of derring-do. The most successful deep-sea exploration of the period was the voyage of HMS Challenger; a round-the-world journey which sought to measure and dredge the furthest depths of the ocean. This article works within recent scholarship in literature and science to look at the journal of Henry Nottidge Moseley, a naturalist on board the Challenger, and the vessel’s figurehead, a chivalric knight, in order to examine connections between Victorian deep-sea exploration and the contemporaneous phenomenon of medievalism.

21 December 1872. HMS Challenger had been stripped of the former equipment necessary for her service as the flagship of Britain’s Australia Station. As William J. J Spry notes,

For some months previous to the date of her commission she had been in the hands of the dockyard officials, undergoing great changes both in equipment and internal accommodation, so as to fit her with every possible means for furthering the great work in hand.¹

The ship was turned from a warship into a ship of scientific research; the first major expedition which sought to explore the deep sea. Seventeen guns were removed and towards the forward part of the ship ‘was placed the chemical laboratory for the purpose of analysing and testing the sea-water obtained from the different depths. Here were ranged retorts, stills, tubes of all sizes, hydrometers, thermometers, blow-pipes – in fact, all the usual paraphernalia found in laboratories’.²

Amongst this transfiguration one element remained in place. At the bow, just above the forepeak, tilting a few degrees towards the water was the figurehead; a three-quarter length figure of a chivalric knight in

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² Ibid., p. 8.
armour, helmet, and heavy moustache (Fig.1). Designed by J. E. Hellyer in 1857 for the sum of £10, the figure remained with the Challenger until 1921.3

Figure 1: Hellyer, Figurehead of the HMS Challenger (c. 1857), wood (National Oceanographic Centre, Southampton; © National Oceanography Centre)

Nineteenth century Britain was, of course, a society looking beyond its shores. The rise of medievalism – exemplified in novels like Walter Scott’s hugely popular The Talisman (1825) and, later in the century, in the juvenile fiction of Charlotte M. Yonge4 – sought to romanticise, encourage, and justify the nation’s imperial endeavours. Though most of these projects were carried out on the overland in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, it became increasingly important for oceanographers to map the waterways which provided a route to such colonies. A thoroughly mapped out and ‘known’ ocean meant quicker and safer trips. It also meant, as became clear in the laying of sea-floor cables in the 1850s, quicker communications for trade and political domination. The deep sea, therefore, became an increasingly important focus for scientific study. Science provided a means of establishing order over the ‘natural’ world and turned previously unknown spaces into imperial places ripe for control and exploitation.5

The expedition of the Challenger and the figurehead which, quite literally, led her journey is a pertinent place to begin a discussion on knowledge of the deep sea in nineteenth-century Britain and the contemporary resurgence of medievalism in the metropole. In order to draw parallels between medievalism and Victorian science this article focuses on the journal of Henry Nottidge Moseley, published as Notes by a Naturalist on the ‘Challenger’ in 1879. This publication sits quite happily between

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4 For more on military recruitment in chivalric literature, see Mike Horswell, ‘Creating Chivalrous Imperial Crusaders: the crusades in juvenile literature from Scott to Newbolt, 1825-1917’, in Perceptions of the Crusades, Volume One, ed. by Mike Horswell and Jonathon Phillips (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 28-47.
William Spry’s *The Cruise of Her Majesty’s Ship ‘Challenger’* – a rather more literary text fit for the non-specialist – and the volumes of reports by Thomson and Murray which describe the results of the research in extraordinary length from the various experiments conducted on board. Moseley’s text might be seen to incorporate literary, artistic, and personal reflections whilst also reporting on the experiments conducted by the author and others on board. Any connections between medievalism and late nineteenth-century deep-sea exploration, therefore, are most likely to be found in this text rather than the other two.

A reciprocity existed between the texts produced by persons of science, mariners, and writers of the deep sea. Matthew Fontaine Maury, the author of *The Physical Geography of the Sea* (1855), one of the founding texts for all deep-sea knowledge, spoke to whalers as they tended to stray from established shipping routes. Likewise, Jules Verne, the author of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, spoke to mariners who had previously worked on the telegraph cabling ships before moving to transatlantic voyages. Furthermore, Verne crafted his novel with a copy of Maury’s *The Physical Geography of the Sea* on his desk. Such was the cyclical nature of the intertextual influence at work in these early days of deep-sea exploration. Moseley utilises Maury in order to bring lyrical verve to a section of *Notes from a Naturalist* – that section dealing explicitly with the deep sea – which Moseley himself sees of being of little interest in the general arc of his quest narrative. Moseley believes that, due to the lack of vegetation present on the seafloor, animals at great depths feed from the falling remains of other animals which live closer to the surface. Quoting Maury, Moseley writes: ‘the sea, like the snow-cloud, with its flakes in a calm, is always letting fall upon its bed showers of microscopic shells’. This illustrates one of the major intersections between medievalism and science; the need to construct a quest-like narrative which, seemingly always, relegates the space of the deep sea to an afterthought.

This exemplifies one of the main issues facing writers of the deep sea, such as Moseley. The structural necessity of working within a framework of frontier-facing; the need to build a narrative of ‘never-has-this-been-done-before’ coupled with potentialities of danger and the exotic – from its Latin root of ‘from the outside.’ In the face of these influences Moseley begins to edit his journey. Stories occurring on land or on the top-sea are given precedent over those sections dealing with deep-sea life; the latter parts are put at the end of the journey in a section comprising only 2.7% of the entire journal. This is very little considering the *Challenger*’s role as the first major deep-sea exploration vessel. The relatively small interest

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8 Matthew Fontaine Maury, quoted in Moseley, p. 582.

9 Moseley, pp. 576-592.
in the dredging operations of the *Challenger* is illustrated by the actions of the crew onboard. In the early dredges ‘every man and boy in the ship’ would come to see what the dredging net had brought to witness but ‘as the novelty of the thing wore off, the crowd became smaller and smaller, until at last only the scientific staff […] awaited the arrival of the net’.

Moseley’s account of deep-sea phenomena is pushed aside for a story of top-level (top-soil and top-water) close shave and meetings with populations in confrontation rather than in cooperation. Moseley is, then, a challenger in his actions and attitude – whether to physical endurance, geographically ‘known’ limits, or native populations.

In Britain, Charles Kingsley, a novelist, scientist, and campaigner, began to make connections between medieval chivalric values and the man – for Kingsley it had to be a man – of science, specifically a naturalist such as Moseley, who would certainly have been aware of Kingsley through his writings and also through an acknowledgement by Charles Darwin in the second edition of *Origin of Species* (1861). Kingsley believed in muscular Christianity (though he rejected the term) which appeared as a trope throughout the cultural landscape of our period. Novels such as Scott’s *The Talisman*, John G. Edgar’s *The Boy Crusaders* (1865), and Charlotte M. Yonge’s *The Prince and the Page* (1866) created the archetype of a strong, masculine, Christian man who displayed chivalric virtues. Kingsley feeds into this archetype when detailing his ideal of a naturalist:

> […] he should be brave and enterprising, and withal patient and undaunted; not merely in travel, but in investigation; knowing (as Lord Bacon might have put it) that the kingdom of nature, like the kingdom of heaven, must be taken by violence, and that only to those who knock long and earnestly, does the great mother open the doors of her sanctuary.

The role of the naturalist is to work upon nature with a force more akin to military endeavours than scientific study. ‘Brave and enterprising’ men who must take ‘nature’ by ‘violence’. This, too, is the language of a challenger confronting an opponent – whether that is an opponent in a duel or in a landscape, perhaps even against a landscape.

Figureheads made for naval vessels after 1750 began to represent individual figures rather than groups. The figures represented would often try to work in relation to the ship’s name. In the case of *HMS Challenger* a chivalric knight was chosen. Jousting matches were an integral aspect of the resurgence of

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10 Moseley, p. 578.
12 For more on Kingsley and ‘muscular Christianity’ see Donald E. Hall, *Fixing Patriarchy: Feminism and Mid-Victorian Male Novelists* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).
13 Charles Kingsley quoted in Buckland, p. 185.
medievalism in the long nineteenth century and beyond. The Eglinton Tournament, or the ‘revived Eglinton Tournament’, of 1839 was a jousting competition that sought to re-enact previous such tournaments in what was thought to be their original fashion.\textsuperscript{15} The Earl of Eglinton, serving as Lord of the Tournament, was dressed ‘In a Suit of Gilt Armour, richly chased.’\textsuperscript{16} Most others were dressed in ‘suit[s] of polished steel armour’.\textsuperscript{17} Illustrations of the tournament focus on competition and victory rather than merely displaying costume. For instance, James Henry Nixon’s \textit{The Presentation of the Knight} depicts a victorious knight being displayed to a crowned female figure who looks on from a balcony.\textsuperscript{18}

These various tropes of medievalist representation find their way into Hellyer’s figurehead for the \textit{Challenger}. Hellyer’s knight is clad in Tudor-styled armour, like that worn at the Eglinton Tournament. Stopping three-quarter length down the figure, the base comes to resemble a horse-saddle with red cloth – perhaps representing a caparison worn by knights to signify an allegiance in various forms (Fig.1). A figurehead of a similar design, maker unknown, was made for the \textit{Sir Lancelot} clipper which undertook merchant expeditions to China in the latter half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{19} Like the knight of the \textit{Challenger}, the \textit{Lancelot} figurehead has a heavy moustache, dark hair and blue eyes. His gaze is also slightly upwards as if to mirror the presentation of the knight in Nixon’s \textit{Presentation of the Knight}.\textsuperscript{20} The posture of the figures points us to one of the most significant features of the Victorian chivalric code: the association between violence, courtship, and good manners. For Walter Scott, chivalry saw the marriage between religious zeal and ‘devotion to the female sex.’\textsuperscript{21}

Part of the performance for religious zeal was the taking of the Holy Land and representations of knights in art and literature very frequently portray the chivalric figure ‘saving’ a female companion – often scantily dressed if not completely nude – from an immediate danger. This is exemplified in \textit{The Knight Errant} by Sir John Everett Millais (Fig.2). Millais maintains the chivalric virtues of the knight by casting his glance to the back of the female figure’s head, suggesting an unwillingness to take advantage of the nude woman before him. At the same time, Millais allows the viewer, \textit{voyeur}, to maintain a complete view of the nude figure. This rather disturbing moral double standard allows the artist to celebrate Victorian chivalric values whilst also maintaining the viewer’s male gaze upon the bound woman. Furthermore, the physical power

\textsuperscript{16} Eglinton Castle. Programme of the Procession from the Castle to the Lists, at the Tournament, at Eglinton Castle, Aug. 28th and 29th, 1839 (1839), p. 7.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{18} James Henry Nixon, \textit{The Presentation of the Knight}, pencil, watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 36 × 51 cm (Private Collection, Abbott and Holder JV, Bridgeman Images) <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2170/en/asset/341208/summary>.
\textsuperscript{19} Figurehead of the \textit{Sir Lancelot}, wood, 155 × 68 × 57 cm, Cutty Sark Trust, London <http://figureheads.ukmcs.org.uk/sir-lancelot/>.
\textsuperscript{20} Nixon, \textit{The Presentation of the Knight}.

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belongs to the knight; his instrument of liberation (sword) might just as easily be used as a weapon of domination and threat.

Figure 2: Sir John Everett Millais, The Knight Errant (c. 1870), oil on canvas, 184 × 135 cm (Tate, London; photo © Tate, CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported) https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-the-knight-errant-n01508)

A curious parallel exists between the Victorian naturalist and the chivalric knight in this regard. Whilst appearing to celebrate and have a genuine interest in species, fauna, and the deep sea, the Victorian naturalist approaches their subject with a weapon as much as with a sketchbook. Kingsley’s dictum that nature ‘must be taken by violence’ appears to be true throughout Moseley’s journal. One of the more set-piece moments in his journal takes the form of an encounter between Moseley and a sea-elephant. Coming upon the animals by the Kerguelen Islands, Moseley and Lieutenant Channer attempt to stun the sea-elephant by ‘hammering him on the snout with a stick heavy loaded with lead’ but to no effect. The ‘beast raised its head and opened its huge mouth to the widest, showing formidable teeth and a capacious pinkish gullet, from which proceeded loud and angry roars’. A sense of added danger is created by reference to Anson’s Voyages Around the World which describes the painful death of a sailor from a sea-lion’s bite. After the challenge with the sea-elephant the chivalric tropes continue. Moseley recounts trading a relic from the meeting with a sailor for a sovereign and a bottle of whisky. The character of the sailor is stressed by Moseley who says that, for the sailor, ‘it was a matter of honour with him that he should get a drink for his shipmates out of the proceeds.’ In this singular event, therefore, we see chivalric themes of one-on-one militarism, bravery, and a sense of fraternal moral duty.

It is at the level of the deep sea, however, that the links between medievalism – personified by our chivalric knight figurehead – and Victorian science become rooted in time and place. Increasingly, from the

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22 Moseley, p. 201.
23 Ibid.
24 Richard Walter, Anson’s Voyage Around the World: the Text Reduced (Online: Gutenberg, 2005) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16611/16611-h/16611-h.htm#anson-09> (ch. 9, para. 5 of 5).
25 Moseley, p. 204.
Romantic period onwards, the sea had come to represent an archive; a place to peer into the past of the earth whilst also offering an opportunity to ‘renew’ oneself with the healing powers of the water. The metaphor of the sea as a holder of the world’s history was gendered female. In Roden Noel’s ‘Sea-Slumber Song’, the sea-mother cradles the listener as the poem moves under the surface of the water. The history of the earth, for the scientists on board the Challenger, was theirs, in a sense, for their own discovery – just as in the female nude in Millais’s painting discussed above. As the first major deep-sea exploration voyage, the tomes of research and knowledge produced by HMS Challenger would define the deep sea for future researchers. The creatures dredged from the seafloor were mostly dull to Moseley’s interest. The exceptions, however, were those capable of creating and emitting their own light: ‘sometimes the sea far and wide, as far as the eye can see, is lighted up with sheets of a curious weird-looking light, and wherever the water breaks a little on the surface before the breeze, the white foam is brilliantly illuminated’.

Moseley metaphorically – through writing his journal – and literally writes his name upon these creatures. Pyrosoma must have its surface stimulated in order to emit its light once out of water. To demonstrate this Moseley writes: ‘I wrote my name with my finger on the surface of the giant pyrosoma, as it lay on deck in a tub at night, and my name came out in seconds in letters of fire.’ This act mirrors the signing of an heraldic hereditary on the history of a nation. During the long nineteenth century in Europe, particularly in Britain and France, when industrial workers were creating more and more evidence of their labour upon the surface of the landscape, the wealthy sought more innovative methods of excluding these efforts from memory. One way in which this was done was through a return to, and promotion of, heraldic symbols. What better way to prove your worth than to have it guaranteed by your ancestors? Indeed, one of those taking part in the Eglinton Tournament, the Earl of Craven, was wearing the actual armour worn by his grandfather when he took part at Eglinton as the Knight of the Griffin. When we look at the figurehead on the forepeak of HMS Challenger we can see at its base emblems of heraldic lineage. Moseley’s act is one of possession, rather than simple animation of the properties of pyrosoma. Moseley decides to enact his own self-signifier, his name, upon the creature and then delight in seeing it come to life in bright lights.

28 Moseley, p. 574.
29 Ibid., p. 575.
30 Pierre Nora’s distinction between ‘memory’ and ‘history’ in ‘Between Memory and History: Le Lieux de Mémoire’ in Representations, no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989), pp. 7-24.
31 Girouard, p. 8.
This is a tentative attempt at connecting nineteenth-century medievalism with scientific research. By taking two occurrences on *HMS Challenger* – the figurehead and the writing of Moseley’s journal – it is hoped to demonstrate patterns of thought, hidden prejudices, blind-spots, and structural problems which occur between the two phenomena. Rather unusually, the argument is brought to fruition in the person of the film director James Cameron. This occurs in two instances. Firstly, in his film *Titanic* (1997), which features numerous bearded men rather self-consciously performing acts of chivalry whilst at the same time framing highly damaging depictions of working-class characters (Jack, played by Leonardo DiCaprio) whose only job is to save and then die (rather than the knightly role of save then marry).\(^{32}\) Famously this film also features deep-sea footage of the sunken RMS *Titanic*. Extraordinarily, a founding scholar of modern medievalist studies, Mark Girouard (referenced throughout this article) begins his book *Return to Camelot* with a discussion of accounts of chivalric acts performed on the *Titanic* – some sixteen years before the release of Cameron’s film.\(^{33}\)

The second, but more illustrative example, is James Cameron’s own exploration of the deep sea as portrayed in his film *Aliens of the Deep*.\(^{34}\) As the writer Stacy Alaimo points out, the film shows very little of the deep sea or the creatures that live there and instead decides to focus on the technological dramas which proceed and follow from an exploration into such areas.\(^{35}\) Cameron names this descent vehicle *Deepsea Challenger*\(^{36}\) and, despite various minor acknowledgments towards deep-sea life, the essential theme of the film is the human conquering of the unknown and the ‘pure’ space of the deep sea. The genealogy of *HMS Challenger*’s name, therefore, provides a final insight into how memories of the voyage have been upheld and used. That the memories should converge, in theme and tone, so strongly with Victorian medievalism is cause for further research. Explorations to the deep sea, therefore, were not undertaken by quiet scientists interested only in species, fauna, and oceanography. Imperial projects occurred in the ocean’s depths too. Historical and artistic justifications and motivations for such journeys came in the form of Victorian medievalism. Within ‘the everlasting thunder of the deep,’ as E. G. A. Holmes writes in ‘Liscannor Bay’, ‘there is never silence,’ but, as we have seen, a conquering of the natural world and a science of imperialism and exploitation.\(^{37}\)

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\(^{32}\) *Titanic*, dir. James Cameron (20th Century Fox, 1997).

\(^{33}\) Girouard, p. 4.


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The role of female vampires in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and *The Vampire* by Sir Philip Burne-Jones

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This article is an examination of Bram Stoker’s masterpiece, *Dracula*, and Sir Philip Burne-Jones’s controversial work, *The Vampire* (Fig.1). It is perhaps no coincidence that both were unveiled in the same year (1897). Apart from the eponymous villain, only female vampires dwell in Stoker’s Gothic realm. With a tinge of imagination, Burne-Jones’s work could easily function as an artist’s impression of these creatures and their power over men. This article will argue that these two works present the female vampire as a representation of fears and introspection over the implications of female ascension in the nineteenth century.

Figure 1: After Sir Philip Burne-Jones, *The Vampire* (1897) (Image: Wikimedia Commons)
Even more than a century later, the vampire is one of the most prolific, substantial and discussed entities from European folklore. The dominance of Count Dracula as the quintessential vampire makes it all too easy to conceptualise vampirism as profoundly masculine. Yet, this superficial reading gives way to another side of the vampire mythos. Twenty-six years before the publication of Dracula, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu wrote *Carmilla*, arguably Dracula’s female counterpart among the vampiric echelons. Even in Stoker’s eponymous novel, female vampires play a significant role. It was in *Carmilla* that the uncovering of a monster served as an examination of human nature – a trope of not only vampiric lore but the Gothic tradition.¹ Le Fanu purposefully created a sympathetic vampire by making the reader only aware of the titular character’s vampiric identity in the latter part of the novel. This enabled the reader to focus on her very human cravings for love and companionship.² Female vampires, for all their nefarious traits, command the reader’s fascination by living a life that many have, possibly, pondered but would resolutely refuse to act upon. The literary scholar, James Twitchell, perceptively describes the vampire mythos as one ‘loaded with sexual excitement: yet there is no mention of sexuality. It is sex without genitalia, sex without confusion, sex without responsibility, sex without guilt, sex without love – better yet, sex without mention.’³ In the case of the female vampires, they are certainly liberated from the psychological burdens of sex that have perennially affected human nature. It would be difficult to envision a more acute representation of this than Philip Burne-Jones’s *The Vampire*.

This painting is a conflation of Henry Fuseli’s *The Nightmare* and Henry Wallis’s *The Death of Chatterton.*⁴ If a female vampire is to be interpreted as a metaphor for a corrupted woman then *The Nightmare* (Fig.2) may serve as an insight into that process. The incubus squats on the chest of the woman to assert itself. Dracula, a kindred incubus, performs a similar act in the cases of Lucy Westenra and, to a lesser degree, Mina Harker. In all cases, it is imposed on them by entities whose supernatural strength negates verbal communication as a component of this immoral and forceful seduction. When comparing it to *The Death of Chatterton* (Fig.3), the reclination of the arm is a curious commonality. The difference in the area of exposed neck points to the extent of vulnerability that each object of the painting possessed. Given that Chatterton committed suicide, the more relaxed reclination shows a serene acceptance of his demise, whereas the imp’s female victim is only in deep sleep prior to a transition to her next incarnation. The victim in Burne-Jones’s work may be a fallen artist like his forbear in Wallis’s painting, but the supernatural has now turned its target to the masculine. In this sense, the female vampire, as a type of succubus, represents a Gothic development of the traditional ideas of the male incubus seducing femininity. It is also

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revealing how the dark horse spectates the incubus’s doings. Perhaps the horse represents the collective dark energy of society that enables such horrors. True, there is no etymological link between the nightmare and mare, but the sexual connotations of riding in folklore, not to mention a horse’s sensitivity to the night, may invoke a black mirror of this ordeal.⁵

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Figure 2: Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare* (1781), oil on canvas, 101.6 × 127 cm
(Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Bert L. Smokler and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman, 55.5.A.)

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Returning to *The Vampire*, any questions about the significance of the female vampire will be served by a discussion of its contemporary context. The painting was grudgingly exhibited by Burne-Jones’s eminent cousin, Rudyard Kipling, at the price of writing an acerbic poem of the same appellation; both works focus their fire on Burne-Jones’s infatuation with the actress Mrs. Pat Campbell. Kipling’s poem *The Vampire* can be interpreted as an indictment of his cousin’s folly. The title of this painting and the publication of Stoker’s novel should not be regarded as some cosmic coincidence. It may come as a surprise that Kipling and Stoker were good friends; Burne-Jones’s connection to the latter was as a set designer and aficionado of the Lyceum, which Stoker managed on behalf of his dear friend, Henry Irving. Tellingly, Burne-Jones wrote to Stoker in 1897: ‘As soon as I have a copy [of *Dracula*], I shall beg your acceptance of a photograph of my Vampire – a woman this time, so as to make the balance fair’.

It is easy to forget that there is no critical consensus on Stoker’s attitudes to women. Some scholars have condemned him as a diehard misogynist, while his supporters have regarded him as a subtle ally of the New Woman. Then again, are the female vampires too inconsequential as characters in *Dracula* to be

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7 Jimmie E. Cain, ‘Bram Stoker, Geopolitics and War’, in Matthew Gibson and Sabine Lenore Müller (eds.), *Bram Stoker and the Late Victorian World* (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2018), pp. 149-176, (pp. 149-150).
deemed as an indication of Stoker’s views on women? Arguably, the female vampire’s inhuman power, preternatural strength and undead nature subvert the conventional assumptions one has of the two genders. These female vampires are not vulnerable against most men for their physical power far exceeds theirs. Still, is there an element of truth to Anne Morey and Claudia Nelson’s assessment that ‘the seminal in art and the seminal in sex are identical’.  

The first verse of Kipling’s poem serves its purpose as a literary complement to Burne-Jones’s work and may even advance an answer:

A fool there was and he made his prayer
(Even as you and I!)
To a rag and bone and a hank of hair
(We called her the woman who did not care)
But the fool he called her his fair lady –
(Even as you and I)! 

The female vampire of the painting is bereft of empathy but, in his slumberous surrender, Kipling understands why ‘he called her his fair lady’ despite the incredulity of observers. She also prevails as men do not have a monopoly on lust. Sex is seminal insofar as it is the process by which each generation is created. What makes the female vampire so dangerous to society, particularly nineteenth-century Britain, is the utter repudiation of the procreative elements of sex. Stoker may not have taken this interpretation when crafting his vampires, and it difficult to know what Stoker thought of Burne-Jones’s work. However, his noted views on stagecraft provide a guide to his aesthetic tastes:

The most important part of dress is colour. There is a natural symbolism in colour so perfect as any of the artificial symbols of the old masters […] and this symbolism can be carried to great perfection in theatrical dress. A photograph uncoloured is the truest means of reproducing expression, since it is a mere combination of light and shade, and possesses no power of prejudicing the mind of the beholder, for either good or evil, by the colours affecting his sight, but on the stage everything must be coloured, and highly coloured too, or else it will be absolutely without expression, since mere natural colour is lost in the great blaze of light. 

In the original painting, the female vampire wore a white dress. If she had worn something more colourful then it might have shifted interpretations, but uncoloured visuals tend to compel the human mind to scrutinise further. That said, a world without colours would be an invisible one, and even black and white exist as colours in their own right. A reader creates their own internal play when converting words to images, and more strongly where the lights of paints and stages do not refract through a prism. This brings

us to the question of how a reader may interpret the notorious encounter between Jonathan Harker and the three female vampires in Dracula’s castle.

In Stoker’s Gothic novel, this is the only explicit presentation of lesbian sexual practices. One theory is that it required the sexual interaction of both genders in Dracula to arouse Victorian fears of interbreeding and racial attenuation by colonial encounters. Harker, the young and callow English visitor of the East, wears his physical impotence openly against the sexual assault by Dracula’s vampiric harem, misunderstood by him to be a seduction, when it is a ‘languorous ecstasy’. It bypasses the terms of seduction. His thoughts on them, particularly the fair vampire, whose appearance contrasts to the dark Dracula-esque features of the other two, are particularly telling:

I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning that desire they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down; lest some day it should meet Mina’s eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth.

These three are at ease with promiscuity and are clearly an embodiment of his suppressed but not fallacious sexuality that must be restrained for the sake of society. The novel is at one with the painting and its previously discussed derivatives in acknowledging how sensitive the skin on the neck is. The vampiric kiss can be seen as insatiable hunger for affection and sexual attention that many Victorian writers flirted with and yearned for. The undead credentials of vampires implicitly remind that their aim is to fulfil after death what was impossible in a Victorian idea of a mortal and moral life. As Xavier Aldana Reyes observes, ‘the vampire is inherently connected to sin, but stands as the only real mediator of repressed sexual desire.’ Likewise, Sarah Sceats expresses how ‘female sexuality here combines a highly charged and fearful eroticism with the thrill of the illicit.’ When these assessments are combined, it becomes easier to think of the female vampire as a call to be unburdened by the psychological consequences that nature has judiciously tied around the carnal and even the nobler love that accompanies it. That the fair vampiric lady torments Dracula for having never loved is a forceful reminder that the female vampire functions as a licentious love to compensate for the abatement of love that is inevitable in many relationships.

If we are to entertain Maurice Richardson’s idea that, given Stoker’s formidable academic and sporting prowess at Trinity College, Dublin, *Dracula is plainly an athlete’s phantasy*, then what does that make the female vampire? Arguably, an imagined respite for a life that ignores the ephemeral virtues of youth that would compel a former athlete, or any man with past glories, to retreat to this private history. The male subject of Burne-Jones’s painting has clearly been rendered unconscious and could well be a dreaming of a life he wishes for but cannot possibly want. The female vampire enables man’s fear of an attenuated libido to be petrified, for the undead do not age. Lucy Westenra is a more curious case of this because the reader learns far more about her than the enigmatic group of three that seduced the fiancée of her dearest friend.

Judith Johnson perceptively observes that female readers may see in the tragedy of Lucy Westenra a cautionary tale of the destructive revolt that a woman may wage in retaliation for a man’s domineering ways. Curiously, the vampiric metamorphosis of Lucy Westenra has been represented as a Freudian allegory. Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer’s *Studies in Hysteria* (1893) collated a series of case studies concerning women whose sexual suppression and potential ‘nymphaomania’ (a term coined in the late nineteenth century) were manifested in physical symptoms such as delirium and somnambulism. Arguably, the female vampire serves as a combined manifestation of these vices that stem from a prejudiced conception of womanhood. Victorian readers would be alarmed by Lucy Westenra’s shift from naïve woman-child to a beastly inversion of a good mother. *Dracula* requires vampires to be bigendered like humanity, because the phenomenon of sexuality is predicated on the existence of these two genders. Yet the dominance of men in Victorian social hierarchy compels them to resent what may expose their hypocrisies. It is curious that the last decade of the nineteenth century coincided with a nascent discussion of the emerging ‘New Woman’ who sought independence from this patriarchy and opposed the manacles women bore in most marriages. This knowledge would not have been lost on Christopher Craft when he posed an interesting theory of the slaughter of the nascent vampire, Lucy Westenra:

One might question a mercy this destructive, this fatal […] This enthusiastic correction of Lucy’s monstrosity provides the Crew of Light with a double reassurance: it effectively exorcises the threat of a mobile and hungering feminine sexuality and it counters the homoeroticism latent in the

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22 Ibid., p. 116.
vampire threat by reinscribing (upon Lucy’s chest) the line dividing the male who penetrates and
the woman who receives. By disciplining Lucy and restoring each gender to its “proper” function,
Van Helsing’s pacification program compensates for the threat of gender indefiniteness implicit in
the vampiric kiss.\(^24\)

The existence of the female vampire does indeed beget ‘gender indefiniteness’, as Craft aptly describes it,
and is as strong reminder as any that Victorian civility is a safety valve for its far more unpleasant side.
Keridiana Chez has commented that the encounter between Dracula and Mina has often been neglected
by literary scholars, as an exposé of the ruthlessness of Victorian society in its determination to quell any
potential female rebellion by the most savage means out of a resentment that this empowerment is a sign
of ignoble vengeance.\(^25\) On the other hand, when Dracula tells Mina that she ‘shall be avenged in turn; for
none of them shall minister to your needs’,\(^26\) it may be interpreted as a twisted liberation of a woman in
order to become something new. After all, he wishes to transform her into a female vampire that will serve
him, but will also be infinitely stronger than her male and human guardians.

In conclusion, the general gap in physical strength between men and woman is intrinsically what allowed
men to prevail over women in a social hierarchy. Notwithstanding that the concept of vampires, of either
gender, inverted the Victorian social order. Lucy memorably asked Mina, ‘Why can’t they let a girl marry
three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?’\(^27\) Superficially, this is an enticing musing, but
such social arrangements are ultimately not viable for the majority of humanity. After all, customs exist to
cater and restrain the foibles of the human condition that are more universal than is often given credit for.
This is, perhaps, what makes the female vampire enviable: she is not bounded by the psychological burdens
of heartbreak. Conventional morality is in abeyance and the female represents more than a New Woman
– a novel woman. This suggested idea of women is what connects Stoker and Burne-Jones’s works. That
said, John Sutherland humorously points out that ‘Dracula is one of those novels in which one is always
pressing hard on the imagination’s brake pedal’.\(^28\) Such a warning is even more applicable to a painting like
_The Vampire_ where it is all too easy to exceed any sensible but fluid parameters of interpretation. However,
in the contemporary period, it is difficult to deny the prescience of intimating that a powerful, and probably
irreversible, reordering of gender relations was beckoning.

\(^25\) Keridiana Chez, ‘“You Can’t Trust Wolves No More Nor Women”: Canines, Women, and Deceptive Docility in Bram Stoker’s
\(^26\) Stoker, _Dracula_, p. 268.
\(^27\) Ibid., p. 58.
\(^28\) Quoted in John Sutherland, _Who is Dracula’s father?_ and other puzzles in Bram Stoker’s Gothic masterpiece (London: Icon Books, 2017) p. 49.
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‘A Memory and a Prophecy’:
Images of W. B. Yeats’s *At The Hawk’s Well*

GERARD KRASNOPOLSKI

This article examines W.B. Yeats’s ban on press photography during the first performance of At The Hawk’s Well in Lady Cunard’s drawing room in 1916, contrasting this with a photograph taken from a later performance by world-famous Symbolist photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn.

On 2 April 1916, in an aristocratic drawing room in London, W.B. Yeats and the Japanese dancer Michio Ito staged the first production of *At The Hawk’s Well* – an admixture of Irish folklore and the ritualistic form of a Noh play. The audience for this first performance of the play drew the literary and governing elite present in London at the time – Queen Alexandra, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound. In writing *At the Hawk’s Well*, Yeats claimed that his goal was not to attract masses and galvanise nationalist sentiment in the way that *Catholic Ni Houilihan* had done in 1902 – his last unqualified success in the field of drama. Rather, *At The Hawk’s Well* was self-consciously created as an elite, exclusive piece of theatre:

[…] with the help of Japanese plays […] I have invented a form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way – an aristocratic form […]

In later performances in more conventional venues, Yeats lamented that ‘the muses were but half welcome’, implying that his vision was only properly achieved in this elusive, exclusive setting. When the script for the play was published in *To-Day* in May 1917, it included stage directions that harked back to this original drawing room setting – though, as no photographs of the performance were taken, there was nothing for most readers to look back upon. Indeed, the dismissal of photographers from the initial performance seems to have been, for Yeats, a key part of what made it successful. With pride, he describes how:

We found a newspaper photographer planting his camera in a dressing-room and explained to him that as fifty people could pay our expenses, we did not invite the press, and that flashlight photographs were not desirable for their own sake. He was incredulous and persistent – a whole page somewhere or other was at our disposal […]

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4 *Four Plays for Dancers*, p. 87.
This recollection, together with Yeats’s statement of intent regarding his intention for the play, raises questions about the kind of Irish consciousness Yeats was trying to create, and the extent to which his vision of a cosmopolitan Irish identity meant anything to the members of any audience beyond the rarefied group that gathered for the first performance. Yeats condemns photography as freely as he denigrates the mob, and seems intent on fighting the reproducibility and accessibility implied by the medium of photography, which went against his ambitions:

I want to create for myself an unpopular theatre and an audience like a secret society where admission is by favour and never to many [...] I desire a mysterious art, always reminding and half-reminding those who understand it of dearly loved things, doing its work by suggestion, not by direct statement, a complexity of rhythm [...] a memory and a prophecy [...]5

Yeats’s attitude towards photography affects how we ought to interpret the play, and what it might offer to audiences outside the charmed circle of his initial viewership. His dismissal of photographers can be read as an insistence upon an Irish national identity that escapes capture by lens. Following Adorno’s *Jargon of Authenticity*, Colin Graham has demonstrated how it could be argued that Yeats’s work aimed for ‘the creation of an organism which is ideologically-charged, exclusivist’ and ‘evaluative’, and ‘a way of resisting multinationalism, post-nationalism and any other contortion [...] to the centrality of the nation as a political unit.’6 According to Conor Cruise O’Brien especially, Yeats offers a proto-fascist, deliberately impossible schema of Irish identity, offering only meaningless sacrifice as an end in itself without any kind of national community being left present to reap the benefits of the so-called authenticity for which he strove.7 Seamus Deane goes so far as to cast Yeats’s ‘anti-modernistic spirit’ as responsible for creating ‘the Ireland of unemployment, poverty and social alienation’.8

However, a photograph of Yeats’s collaborator in the production of *At the Hawk’s Well* complicates this notion of his ‘anti-modernistic spirit’. Despite Yeats’s proud dismissal of the newspaperman in April, a photograph of *At the Hawk’s Well* in performance nevertheless survives – specifically of his collaborator, the Japanese dancer Michio Ito, in the full hawk costume prepared by Edmund Dulac, captured by the then-famous American art photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn:

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There are other photographs documenting the creation of the costume, but this is the only visual record of the costume itself being worn in entirety in something like a performance context. Indeed, even in the script for the 1916 performance, Yeats had whittled down his stage directions to simply ‘moving like a hawk […] for some two minutes.’ There is no verbal record of what the dance was like; the photograph is all we have. With his wings outstretched, Ito is likely preparing for or performing the dance that audiences would have seen – he did not improvise his dances, but carefully and deliberately crafted them.

Ito’s mute dance is the dramatic climax of the play. A young Cuchulain, not yet legendary, arrives at a well where an old man is standing vigil. When water flows from the well, drinking it is said to bring eternal life. The old man has been watching the well for years, waiting for the waters to run, but he has twice been tricked by ‘the woman of the Sidhe herself/The mountain witch, the unappeasable-shadow’. After being led astray and returning to damp from where the water had flowed, his chance gone. Angrily, the old man orders Cuchulain away: ‘leave the well to me, for it belongs/to all that’s old and withered.’ Cuchulain refuses. Eventually, the old man is lulled to sleep by a distant song, and Cuchulain is led away from the well by the Sidhe in the guise of Ito’s hawk.
In the 1916 version of the script used in the drawing room performance, the play ends with the old man lamenting that he has been tricked a third and final time, that ‘Accursed dancers, you have stolen my life/That there should be such evil in a shadow.’ In the To-Day version published in 1917, an additional section is added, where Cuchulain returns from his daze to the sound of Eoife’s warrior tribe clamouring in the distance. He goes out to meet them, thundering in the third person: ‘Cuchulain, son of Sualtam, comes!’ In the original, the dance is a magic trap of pure tragedy, deluding young and old to spend their lives waiting for what never comes. In the published version, Cuchulain is still distracted from the waters of immortality, but, ironically, marches off to begin the adventures that form the ‘immortal’ epic cycles that let his name live on. He loses one kind of immortality, but by action surges out to seize another. In both stories, the dance is decisive.

Kevin Riordan has argued that Yeats’s decision to send away photographers of the initial performance was to limit ‘the archival traces’ and to make the performance ‘as fleeting as the drama’s pivotal moment, when immortality will be possible.’ In 1924, Yeats explicitly set up photography as one end of a dichotomy against ‘true creation’, and related both to his hopes for immortality:

No man can create, as did Shakespeare, Homer, Sophocles, who does not believe, with all his blood and nerve, that man’s soul is immortal, for the evidence lies plain to all men that where that belief has declined, men have turned from creation to photography. We condemn, though not without sympathy, those who would escape from banal mechanism through technical investigation and experiment. We proclaim that these bring no escape […]

Yeats sets up photography as antithetical to his enterprise as a poet and a dramatist. By this time, Coburn himself had abandoned photography to live a life of Freemasonry and Druidism in Harlech, Wales; even to one of its most accomplished early practitioners, photography had a tense relationship with literature and visual art in the early twentieth century. But in Yeats’s Ireland, the political situation gave additional context to artistic snobbery: John Tagg, following Michel Foucault, argues that photography was a key means of population control for the British colonial state. Gail Baylis goes further in delineating the condition of Ireland, which he argues ‘served both as a laboratory for testing out modes of visual control – the institutional use of prison and police photography offer instances where it pre-dates its adoption in Britain – and as a site where difference had to be made visible.’

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12 Ibid., p. 175.
13 Manuscript Materials, p. 197.
metropolitan police in Ireland were critically aware of the extent to which secrecy was one of the main weapons that rebels could use in disrupting colonial rule. Edward Jenkinson, founder of the Irish Special Branch, wrote that ‘to beat secret societies' one had to ‘work on secret lines’.18

Yeats was deeply aware of how images could manipulate and be manipulated; Marjorie Howes has argued that by using theatre as an ‘occult ritual’, he could ‘inspire audiences to practical work in the public sphere precisely because [occult theatre] accessed the intersubjective unconscious, instinct and the emotions’.19 In his own autobiography, he claimed that ‘all civilization is held together by the suggestions of an invisible hypnotist – by artificially created illusions’. His dismissal of the cameras can be read as an expression of this anxiety; a desire to maintain control over his own illusions, to remain ‘invisible’. The episode is more than a straightforward rejection of a modern visual art in favour of those that are more ‘authentic’; it can also be read as an anti-colonial articulation of Irish identity. In particular, *At the Hawk's Well* uses a radical inauthenticity to connect Ireland with a narrative of global cultural exchange that transcends the imperial connections of the British Empire, while still maintaining Yeats’s overriding preoccupation with making Irish mythology relevant to the current nationalist struggle. Coburn’s photograph of *At the Hawk's Well* depicts a blisteringly inauthentic melange, giving a visual demonstration of the different layers at work within Yeats’s project: an American photographer depicts a cosmopolitan Japanese dancer who moved freely among the highest social circles in Britain, speaking German with H. H. Asquith at the height of World War One.20 He wears a Greek-style tragic mask and a hawk costume with Egyptian elements, built by a Frenchman, in a play that celebrates Irish folklore, but was written in English.

The photograph is not mentioned anywhere either by Yeats or by Coburn; the exact terms within and circumstances around which it was taken remain unclear. But it was captured after Coburn had produced his best-known publication, *Men of Mark*, and become internationally known as an art photographer. It was also after Coburn had invented the ‘vortograph’ with Ezra Pound, and created some of the first completely abstract images in the history of photography. An American Symbolist and pictorialist, Coburn was aware of how – particularly to colonised peoples – his camera was seen as ‘the evil eye, the magic box which snares the soul’.21 In 1910, helping A. J. Anderson with *The Artistic Side of Photography*, he became interested in Japanese painting, which the book suggested was nearer to photography than any other art

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20 Anthony Thwaite, ‘Three Meetings’ in *London Magazine*, vol. 37, iss. 3 (Jun 1, 1997), p. 27.
because of its impressionistic rendering of gradations of light. In turning his lens to Michio Ito as Yeats’s Hawk, Coburn fills Yeats’s blank in the written script with his own representation of the dance by Ito.

In his autobiography, Coburn claims that ‘for the creation of a picture, vision is of prime importance, and patience, discrimination, and even marksmanship[…].’ This particular photograph of Ito shows him without audience or recognizable location. Our attention is focused entirety on the bird-like stature of his arms and the shape of his body. He has one leg pulled up, reminiscent of the wild birds he apocryphally imitated in public at London Zoo with Yeats while creating this dance. His mask does not quite cover the face, but conceals enough that we have no idea what the dancer looks like beneath, or any idea of his regular stature or appearance. The picture visually challenges us – ‘How can we know the dancer from the dance?’ The image still demands interpretation and commentary, as was Coburn’s aim as a Symbolist. Yeats amassed an extensive collection of photographs of Japanese theatre before writing *At the Hawk’s Well*. For someone seeking to do the same with the Noh-hybrid that Yeats and Ito produced, the photograph gives few answers. The action appears on what Albricht, in relation to Yeats’s poetry, describes as ‘a surface large enough and blank enough to be the mirror of ultimate things’. The dancing figure in this context does not come loaded with recognizable symbols – the heterogeneous grouping makes the meaning of the dance hard to nail down, even with a visual record of what it was like.

This image of mythical Ireland that Yeats, Ito, and Coburn offer is subversive. Such statements of variable identity by a colonised minority are troubling to nation states. Michio Ito, after moving to America, found himself arrested by the FBI after Zeroes bombed Pearl Harbour; though he had committed no crime against the government of the United States, his hearing committee was deeply troubled by his profession and character, describing him as ‘an artist of artistic temperament’ and his ability to move with ease through the highest echelons of European, American, and Japanese society. In America, Ito’s profession, in conjunction with his nationality, allowed the FBI to construct his identity into that of an unpredictable, dangerous character – not criminal, but critically eclectic. J. Edgar Hoover personally recommended Ito’s detention ‘in the event of a national emergency’. Before Pearl Harbour, the American government had already created a case against Ito, and he was not released until after the end of the Pacific War.

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24 Michio Ito: *The Dancer and his Dances*, p. 164.
Ito’s imprisonment for a crime he had only the potential to commit was derived from a judgement by the state regarding the meaning of Ito’s identity as an international Japanese dancer. Performances like that of *At the Hawk’s Well*, which showed how he could ingratiate and integrate himself via art and identity into the favour of London high society, were alarming to the surveillance apparatus of the state. In similar vein, Yeats aimed his ambivalent articulation of Irish identity in *At the Hawk’s Well* at the most elite audience that his influence and reputation could muster – but in dismissing cameras from the event and evading mass scrutiny, Yeats created a work that was harder to interrogate in the same way, both for the British state policing Irish identity, and for nationalists hoping to use his work as part of a stable image of Irish identity that could be used to galvanise armed resistance.

Yeats’s dismissal of photography took place within this battleground for control over images. Yeats cast photography as an art that mistook preservation for immortality. Coburn wrote of the ‘marksmanship’ in his craft. Photography in both cases is about taking shots; killing and stuffing a moment and confusing it for the real thing. But as far as Ito was concerned, photography and his style of dance were a perfect union. In describing his technique, he claimed that ‘I am a sculptor, for I work, and I work over each pose until it means what I would have it mean. If you cry “Stop!” in any place in my dance, you will find that it is a pose that means something.’ Coburn took Ito at his word, freezing an image of what Yeats left deliberately invisible. But our glimpse of the dance gives us no definitive answer to the questions of immortality, authenticity, and identity with which Yeats was battling – it is only one statue, one aspect of what Yeats envisioned as a changing, shifting identity and heritage – one that is chased after, like the Hawk by Cuchulain, and never found.

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Front cover image:

Close view of part of the Marian hangings at Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk.
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