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POLYPHONY

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EDITORIAL

This eighth issue of *Polyphony* is the latest contribution to celebrating the innovative and high-quality work produced by our talented peers. With this being the final standard issue that our team will publish, I want to take a moment to praise and thank our wonderful, dedicated team of editors, who have worked incredibly hard this year; *Polyphony*, as a student-led publication, has always emphasised collaboration as one of our key values, and my personal high point of *Polyphony* has been working alongside a group of incredible people.

As always, this issue seeks to broaden perspectives through showcasing a variety of pieces from the disciplines of English Literature, American Studies, and Creative Writing. Opening our issue is Thomas Morris' essay, which explores key erotic moments in *The Atheist's Tragedy* to offer insight into the connection between the apocalypse and illicit sexual practices. We are also thrilled to include Ella Porter's essay, which forces an expansion beyond anthropocentric perspectives to explore the storied and material lives of timber. Venturing into American Studies, we showcase Sarah Taylor's essay, which engages with themes of invisibility, hypervisibility, race and space in various works, to offer a nuanced exploration of space as both oppressive and potentially empowering for Black people. At the centre of this issue is Holly Mannerings' essay exploring meaningful sites of resistance in *The Help*, through a focus on food as a talisman for resisting racism. We also feature Cyrus Larcombe-Moore's striking creative writing piece titled 'Goodbye Rook', which uses a unique form and gentle imagery to track the motif of the Rook growing, moving and developing over the course of the poem. Tying together this exceptional collection is the beautiful art piece designed by Molly Small, which we are delighted to feature as our front cover.

I hope that you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed working on it and I am incredibly excited to see what the future holds for *Polyphony*!

Chloe Butler
Editor in Chief

Spiritual Cravings: Lust and the Apocalypse in *The Atheist's Tragedy*

THOMAS MORRIS, English Literature

Farrer's description of the Biblical apocalypse reads almost as an erotic euphemism. It could be a helpful reading of Revelation's 'final bliss': a vividly imagined, long anticipated, but perpetually frustrated conclusion, which pairs with other more obvious moral connections between lust and the apocalypse. When Heaven purges sinful earth in Revelation, the Whore of Babylon is one of its first penitents, having corrupted the earth with the 'wrath of her fornication'.¹ Her deadly sin of lust holds an innate moral and causal significance in the judgement narrative, adding to the more subtle, perhaps Freudian eschatology first mentioned. *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) is a play obsessed with the prospect of sexual contact, and like Revelation, it is full of cancelled conclusions. This essay will ask two questions: firstly, how does the delay and cancellation of sexual gratification invite comparisons with apocalyptic expectations? And secondly, how might the play's sexual outcomes align with an apocalyptic worldview? Applying Farrer's rule of cancelled conclusions and referencing the moral dictates of the Revelation, I will argue that the perceived threat of apocalypse is challenged by the illicit sexual practices of Tourneur's play.

How, then, is the sex of *The Atheist's Tragedy* apocalyptic? Throughout this essay, I return to three key erotic moments of the play: Levidulcia's sexual transgressions in Act II, Langebeau Snuffe's advances upon Soquette in the churchyard, and d'Amville's attempted rape of Castabella, both in Act IV. In the heavy, drawn-out anticipation of these encounters, we might start to recognise an apocalyptic character, according to Farrer's temporal model. Firstly, the play deliberates over expected sexual conclusions. Levidulcia, whose lust becomes so intense that she will seduce 'the next man' she encounters, is in agony throughout II.5, where her sexual appetite is denied twice over (II.3.66).² After an intense but unsuccessful flirtation with her servant Fresco, she is interrupted by the entrance of another, more promising suitor. Where Fresco falters, Sebastian is 'bold' and 'kisses Levidulcia' immediately (II.5.53SD-54). On both sides, with intense desire, contact is surely impending, before the entrance of Belforest defers it yet again. Levidulcia's yearning is mocked by this charade of interruptions and disappointments, as the promise of fulfilment is broken. As on the marriage bed of Castabella and Rousard, sex is missing when most expected (II.3).

A similar sequence of cancelled conclusions occurs in Act VI. Prefaced by Borachio's gun 'giv[ing] false fire'— a potent symbol of male dysfunction — Charlemont weaves on and off stage, disrupting the licentious aims of Snuffe and d'Amville (IV.3.SD). However, Charlemont would not have succeeded, if not for the extensive

oration which prefaces these encounters. As if savouring the anticipation, d'Amville commends incest, and Snuff, emboldened by his priestly habit, insists on a bold imperative register when addressing Soquette: 'thou shalt profit by my instruction', 'thou shalt try that' (IV.3.46-50). Excited, they thwart the execution and the false priest's prophesies miss their mark. Flirting with Soquette, fumbling with his disguise, and comically cursing 'O, fie, fie, fie', Snuffe has stalled for so long that the opportunity has passed him by (IV.3.67). We might speculate whether they made contact at all, or whether Snuffe managed to take off his beard to kiss. There are several options available to a director to stress this anti-climax, central in a play of exasperated sexual cravings, as on stage, the pair might be leaning into one another just as Charlemont bursts in.

Sex in *The Atheist's Tragedy* is vulnerable to the similar temporal limitations that confine the Christian apocalypse. All but once, sex is deferred, cancelled, prohibited, but always awaited: bound up, like the Last Day, in a fictional future. In Act II, Levidulcia declares herself 'accursed' in her frustration: she and Sebastian have been barred from 'danc[ing] the beginning of the world' (II.5.62-71). They describe sexuality in near-apocalyptic terms as if they are overdue for a kind of divine visitation which seems never to come. Levidulcia then assures Sebastian, 'it shall not be long before I give thee testimony of it' (II.5.73). Perhaps the play is sceptical that her prophesies, like Snuffe's, will come any sooner than Revelation's first promise of apocalypse: 'the time is at hand'.³ Indeed, all other sexual encounters fail to reach a satisfactory conclusion. But unlike Snuff, d'Amville, or Rousard, the lovers are proven right about their sexual destiny. Ceremoniously at the start of Act IV, Levidulcia leads Sebastian up 'into the closet' to consummate the affair, achieving a powerful conclusion (IV.1.62). Unlike the apocalypse, sex is achieved for once in *The Atheist's Tragedy*.

The moral context to these conclusions is crucial for this sex/apocalypse opposition. The play's image of sex is not only dysfunctional but illegitimate. Levidulcia, a champion of lawless sexual agency, wishes to 'clasp with any man' (II.3.62). At each bold flirtatious gesture at Fresco — 'untie my shoe', 'I missed thine ear and hit thy lip' — Levidulcia mocks all Christian and marital expectations (II.5.24-28). Like Babylon, she is a profligate adulterer, drawing multiple men into a web of deviancy. Soquette functions alongside Levidulcia to complete a biblical model of disgraced femininity, as is in Proverbs: 'For a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well'.⁴ As a priest, Snuffe's sin of fornication is deplorable. Falsely ranked, he scorns his chastity and duty to prevent Levidulcia and Sebastian's affair. He symbolises a corrupt church, drawing both on the contemporary archetypes of aesthetic Puritanism and the older concerns of Revelation, wherein Jezebel presumes 'to teach [God's] servants to commit fornication'.⁵ Audiences speculate whether d'Amville — who for Velissariou 'covers all kinds of evil' alone — is a 'devil

or a man', as he attempts a final sin of incestuous rape (97) drawing another into sin and corrupting Castabella.⁶ Sinners and the innocent are united in a thick atmosphere of sexual depravity, institutionalised at Cataplasma's brothel - frequented by prostitutes, priests, and noble ladies alike. This Madelaine would label as a 'dark and vicious place': a generic location unifying lust and penance on the Renaissance stage.⁷ It seems that all sexual sins are rendered in *The Atheist's Tragedy* and within the larger bloody plot, sexuality has a crucial role in depicting a world long overdue for a spiritual cleansing.

If lust is to be vanquished in a post-apocalyptic world, the competing conclusions of desire and judgement are in constant tension. Horrified by d'Amville, Castabella asks:

O patient Heav'n, why dost thou not express
Thy wrath in thunderbolts, to tear the frame
Of man in pieces? (IV.3.62-64)

Why has an apocalypse not yet come? Looming in the background, this is the great conclusion that Tourneur's play awaits: the destruction of a wanton, bloody, atheistic world to make space for a better one. There is a deterministic argument that God does intervene, as in Maus: 'What makes revenge unnecessary in *The Atheist's Tragedy* is the existence of God'.⁸ Perhaps God is responsible for the human interruptions and cancellations that disturb the evil processes. Belforest's 'knock at the door' occurs twice in the play: first in Act II to deter sexual conclusions, and then again in Act IV to punish them (IV.5.42SD). Might 'Heav'n' also guide other conclusions through Charlemont, thwarting Snuffe's plans with Soquette in the same act? Fundamentally, is this the same moral force which brings retribution upon sinners and rewards innocents at the play's end? Alas, this is not the theological focus: God or no God, with the marriage of its two heroes, the conclusion of *The Atheist's Tragedy* is hardly one of complete annihilation. Nor do the deaths of d'Amville, Levidulcia, or Borachio provide a truly apocalyptic conclusion: each transgressor dies by their own hand in acts of 'poetic justice' (Velissariou), whereby evil receives its just deserts' (Maus) without God's help.⁹ The lascivious Snuffe suffers no greater penalty than the loss of title. Perhaps this affirms Maus' diagnosis of the work as an 'anti-revenge play', lacking strong 'retaliation' instead of restored justice.¹⁰ There is an impermanence to these moral conclusions which do little to prevent the resurfacing of the same evils again, compared to an irreversible revelation. It seems God's promise to 'tear the frame/Of man' — not one man, but a world of sinners — is still left unfulfilled.

The Atheist's Tragedy depicts a moral universe where sin meets penalty. Its ending ensures the death of its villains, 'rewards female chastity', and 'reassert[s] state justice' by restoring righteous social order. But sexual and murderous urges must find gratifying conclusions. While the pious and chaste continue to await apocalypse, which promises 'a new heaven and a new earth' delivered from all evil, atheists and sinners are left free to indulge until their deaths, which are also often self-inflicted.¹¹ The play remains mortal, leaving the Last Day in the perpetual future, while humanity continues

in a cycle of sin and punishment. Perhaps lust prevails over doom simply by materialising, turning its back on a final reckoning which seems never to come.

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¹ Revelation 18.3.

² Cyril Tourneur, 'The Atheist's Tragedy' in *Four Revenge Tragedies*, ed. by Katharine Maus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 249-330 (p. 276). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the main text.

³ Revelation 1.3.

⁴ Proverbs 23.27.

⁵ Aspasia Velissariou, 'Neither a devil nor a man', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 20 (2018), 1-20 (p. 6).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷ Richard Madelaine, "'The dark and vicious place': The Location of Sexual Transgression and its Punishment on the Early Modern English Stage', *Parergon*, 22 (2005), 159-183 (p. 159).

⁸ Katharine Maus, 'Introduction' in *Four Revenge Tragedies*, pp. ix-xxxi (p. xxix).

⁹ Velissariou, p. 7.

¹⁰ Maus, p. xxiii.

¹¹ Revelation 21.1.

Thomas Morris English Literature,

Invisibility and Hypervisibility: Race and Space in *Citizen* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

SARAH TAYLOR, American Studies

In Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014) and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), both writers present ideas of racial visibility and invisibility, and how these concepts have the potential to empower and humanise or to dispossess and malign.¹ By engaging with Lefebvre's definition of space as 'a materialization of social being', one can explore how space within stories is used to break and repair the dignity of a people.² Zhao writes that racism seeks 'to establish racial spatial order.'³ For Hurston, this is evinced through the Jim Crow laws of the era, which segregate black and white people. Rankine writes of the racialized reception of Serena Williams, in a field dominated by white commentators and sportspeople, watched by a predominantly white audience. Additionally, Rankine recounts anecdotal microaggressions, which demonstrate how the dignity of a people can be broken, as well as institutionalised racism and police brutality which have resulted in a disproportionate number of black deaths. Though these incidents are malignant, Rankine's lyric form seeks to empower and humanise each individual victim. On the other hand, Hurston has Mrs Turner perpetuating white supremacist ideals which malign and break the dignity of black people. Yet Hurston's characterisation of Janie conveys her as an empowered black woman in certain spaces, but as one who must maintain a public façade to be dignified.

In *Citizen*, Rankine recollects microaggressions which have left herself or other black people feeling dehumanised and undignified to expose how stories can dehumanise. These include incidents of invisibility: 'a close friend who early in your friendship, when distracted, would call you by the name of her black housekeeper' and 'the person that did not see him, has never seen him, has perhaps never seen anyone who is not a reflection of himself' (p.17). The former, particularly with the interjection of 'when distracted' strips the friend of their individuality and autonomy, conflating them with a person whose only commonality is their skin colour. Rankine's use of triadic structure and parallelism in the latter incident gives it greater impact. The boy is both intentionally ignored and unconsciously unseen. Rankine also delves into the idea of hypervisibility, when a mother complains 'because of affirmative action or minority something [...] her son wasn't accepted [into a prestigious college]' (p.13). Here increased accessibility to educational institutions is framed as rendering ethnic minority students hypervisible. There is a sense of blame, and a diminishment of these students' achievements in the woman's tone. In another incident, a neighbour describes 'a menacing black guy casing both your homes [...] your friend, whom he has met' (p.15). This is both a moment of invisibility in the sense that the neighbour fails to recognise the

man they have met before, and hypervisibility in the sense that the man is viewed as a threat or potential criminal. The placement of the adjectives 'menacing' and 'black' beside each other indicate the neighbour's hidden prejudice. Rankine's anecdotes are impactful due to their accumulation and the use of second person, with Ajlani commenting that

the fact that African Americans have been historically denied autonomous personhood renders a first-person point of view a dismissive depiction of the subjectivity of the African American experience.⁴

The direct address to the reader of 'you' and 'your' forces the reader onto the receiving end of the microaggressions, inclining them to consider how each incident has the potential to dehumanise and malign.

Characterisation in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* exemplifies how stories both signify and disempower. Hurston presents the character of Mrs Turner as one who embodies internalised racism. Pattison writes that Mrs Turner 'understands the world predominantly through the lens of racial binaries', in other words through 'racial spatial order.'⁵ Mrs Turner perpetuates white supremacist rhetoric and consciously tries to dissociate herself from other black people, in an attempt to earn the respect of whites, hence dignifying herself. She considers desirable facial features to be 'things [which] set her aside from N*groes.' Yet through this racist rhetoric, she is disempowering other black people. There is a religious undertone to her entire exchange with Janie, as Mrs Turner evokes a preacher of sorts, 'almost screaming in fanatical earnestness' (p.161). The religious implications are more explicitly picked up when Hurston's omniscient narrator adds 'Mrs Turner, like all other believers, had built an altar to the unattainable – Caucasian characteristics for all' (p.165). This coupled with more biblical language ('paradise', 'heaven', 'temple' (p.165) emphasises the pedestal which Mrs Turner has put white people on, portraying them as sacred, compared to 'black desecrators' (p.165). Hurston's metaphors conflating holy spaces with racial identity recalls Pattison's comments that 'identity operates through spatial metaphors of interiority and exteriority.'⁶ It would appear that Mrs Turner believes racial differences exist in both spheres. Interestingly, Janie discovers her racial identity after seeing a photograph of herself amongst white children. 'Ah thought Ah wuz just like de rest' (p.11) she says, supporting Pattison's statement, whilst suggesting ideas of racial otherness. Therefore the religious imagery and spatial metaphors construct binaries that break and repair the dignity of her characters.

Clapp points out that Rankine explores 'ways in which a person's presence fails to result in [...] ethical and political recognition.'⁷ This is evident in the chapter detailing the rise of tennis star Serena

Williams, and the nuances of institutional racism she has endured. Rankine writes, 'no amount of visibility will alter the ways in which one is perceived' (p.24). Here visibility accounts for exposure and achievement. Despite Williams' tennis success, she is still reduced to her racial identity by some, thus supporting Clapp's comment. Rankine reminds readers of Hurston's quote 'I feel most coloured when I am thrown against a sharp white background' (p.25), relating it to Williams' participation in a sport predominantly played and viewed by white people. It is interesting to consider this quote in terms of Williams' 'materialization of social being' on the tennis court, and in the sporting world. The inclusion of Glenn Ligon's *Four Etchings*, which repeats the statement in bold black letters reinforces the pervasiveness of the quote throughout Rankine's writing, with the striking visual effect of the black text against the white page taking on a multi-faceted meaning. Hurston's quote also recalls, on a literal level, the moment where Janie sees herself in a photograph in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. In terms of ethical and political recognition, Rankine makes evident that Williams is always having to prove and dignify herself to her audience. She writes 'It's believed that by winning [Serena] will prove her red-blooded American patriotism and will once and for all become beloved by the tennis world' (p.31). She is held to a higher standard than her white competitors, each action scrutinised more thoroughly. When Rankine references Caroline Wozniacki 'imitat[ing] Serena by stuffing towels in her top and shorts' (p.36), regardless of Wozniacki's intention, she essentially reduces Serena to her outward appearance, thus reinforcing both Clapp and Rankine's points about recognition and perception.

Pattison writes that Janie's 'environment has the power to restrict and liberate, her identity can be seen in potentially empowering spatial terms too.'⁸ This resonates with Janie's actions following the death of her abusive husband Jody Starks. Her hair is a prominent symbol in the novel of freedom and black feminine identity. Hurston describes how Janie 'tore off the kerchief from her head and let down her plentiful hair. The weight, the length, the glory was there' (p.99). Interestingly, this occurs when Janie is alone and widowed, suggesting that independence is the most empowering position for her. The plosive sound and violent connotations of 'tore' suggest Janie has grown tired of being treated as subordinate to her husband, and that she has newfound strength. This sense of frustration is echoed in Rankine's *Citizen*, through the metaphorical asphyxiation described in its first chapter in reaction to the microaggressions it details. Similarly, Hurston's description here resembles the letting go of something burdensome, by using words of measurement like 'plentiful' and 'weight.' Hurston's asyndetic use of triadic structure emphasises this sense of liberation and empowerment in the private spatial sphere, compared to in public. This is furthered when later that night 'she burn[s] up every one of her head rags' (p.101). Yet we see Janie in a restrictive environment when she re-enters the public sphere; she 'starched and ironed her face, forming it into just what people wanted to see' (p.99). This allows her to be perceived as dignified.

Furthermore, Clapp writes that Rankine 'envisions how both lyric, and citizenship, are implicated with, and inflected by, contemporary practices of surveillance.'⁹ The penultimate chapter of *Citizen*

contains scriptural fragments including on the police shootings of Trayvon Martin (p.88) and James Craig Anderson (p.92). Rankine humanises these individuals through her writing, thus creating a work that empowers and uplifts black voices against institutionalised racism. In the script for 'In Memory of Trayvon Martin', Rankine interweaves previous methods of state surveillance of black people with present day, through an internal rhyme 'passage, plantation, migration, of Jim Crow segregation' (p.89) emphasising how embedded institutionalised racism was and continues to be. 'The prison is not a place you enter. It is no place.' (p.89) she writes. A prison essentially deprives one of their basic rights of movement and freedom and is under constant surveillance. Rankine relates this to the daily lives of African Americans: their movements are constantly monitored, and their freedom infringed by stop-and-searches based on prejudice. Prison is 'no place' because it is everywhere. Yet Rankine's references to 'childhood' (p.89) and 'the hearts of my brothers' (p.89) evoke Martin's innocence, as well as the collective mourning and protesting of the verdict on Martin's murder. Although contributing to the familial tone of the script, 'brothers' has been historically used in a colloquial sense among African Americans, suggesting a shared understanding in the event of tragedy. The repetition of 'sky' (p.90) adds a religious undertone, suggesting the innocent Martin is resting in heaven. Therefore, Rankine empowers and humanises a group of people through this method of storytelling.

Hurston's novel, set in an era where Jim Crow laws segregated black and white people, demonstrates how 'racial spatial order' effectively maligns and dispossesses a group of people. In the aftermath of the hurricane, it is revealed that individual burials will be afforded to white people, but black people will be allocated to mass graves. Maner writes that this shows 'the way natural occurrences [...] can be shaped into unnaturally cruel systems of inequity by human agents.'¹⁰ Hurston makes explicit reference to the 'white cemetery' (p.195) and 'black graveyard' (p.195). It is interesting to consider that 'cemetery' is derived from the Ancient Greek word 'koimeterion', meaning 'sleeping place' which gives readers an idea of the gentler and more dignified burial offered to white victims of the hurricane. 'They makin' coffins fuh all de white folks [...] don't be wastin' no boxes on colored' (p.195-6), demand the guards. The verb 'wastin'" effectively dehumanises the black victims, whilst their allocation to a mass grave also dispossesses them, thus supporting Adichie's statement.

In conclusion, both *Citizen* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* demonstrate ways in which stories can malign and break the dignity of a group of people, through microaggressions which render the individual invisible or hypervisible and police brutality in the former, and through Jim Crow laws demanding segregated burials and the internalised racism of Mrs Turner in the latter. However, both Rankine and Hurston convey ways in which a group of people can be empowered and humanised through narrative. In Rankine's case, this is through the powerful lyric form and language used to pay tribute to Trayvon Martin. For Hurston, this is done through the descriptions of Janie's hair as she fully realises herself, although her empowerment is somewhat limited because it takes place in

private rather than in public.

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⁵ Dale Pattison, 'Sites of Resistance: The Subversive Spaces of "Their Eyes Were Watching God"' in *MELUS* Vol. 38, No. 4 (2013) pp. 9-31, (p.22).

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¹⁰ Sequoia Maner, "'Where do you go when you go quiet?": The ethics of interiority in the fiction of Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, and Beyoncé: Feminism, race, transnationalism' in *Meridians*, Vol. 17, No.1, (2018), pp. 184-204, (p.199).

Sarah Taylor American Studies,

From Deluge to Deforestation: The Storied and Material Lives of Timber

ELLA PORTER, English Literature

Humans have been telling stories about trees for centuries. The storying of man's earliest existence features a tree that, as the story goes, he is never to touch, let alone consume or procure from (Genesis 3. 3).¹ Trees have been written into the fabric of the human story from the very beginning of biblical storytelling, and yet, for just as long, they have been telling ones of their own.

Serpil Opperman glosses 'storied matter' as the understanding that matter in all its forms exists as a 'living text'.² It is a conceptual tool that finds a relationship between world and text and fundamentally regards world as text. Led by this approach, we can read matter for its written histories and creative expressions, both legible and hidden, to glean 'new chapters' of the 'earthly story'.³ These chapters, however, can prove challenging. As Opperman identifies, 'storied matter compels us to think beyond anthropocentricity' and beyond the stories we have been consistently telling across centuries.⁴ When we cross-read these physical texts against our own, we are met with immutable incompatibilities, interruptions, and discrepancies, all of which make it difficult for us to continue telling the same stories the same way again.

Trees remain as profoundly and vibrantly storied despite differing time frames and forms. As 'living texts', trees tell a multitude of tales. In their tree rings, they tell century-long narratives of drought and rainfall. In their leaves, they stage annual performances of renewal. Some even attest to instances of co-authorship in the mineralisation of certain petrified woods. However, the refusal to read these arboreal autobiographies persists as we continue to relay and respond to our own accounts.

To consider the stories that humans have written about trees is to understand the reason for such selective reading. Trees have long found themselves rooted in an anthropocentric history of cultivation. By the late fourteenth century, as outlined by Della Hooke, the depletion of England's forests was directly linked to timber extraction, primarily for shipbuilding.⁵ This tale of production continues to unfold today: timber is conceived as a construction material and a sustainable resource. The narrative of timber as 'one of the most environmentally friendly construction materials currently available' confines trees to be a sustainable image of environmental optimism as 'nature's own building material'.⁶ With the ability to capture, store and reduce carbon levels, and the principal appeal of renewability, timber fulfils its role in the story. Nevertheless, an alternative tale of exploitation and destruction remains. In the 2022 IPCC report, timber extraction was identified as a 'direct', 'proximate', and 'visible' driver of deforestation.⁷ The IPCC changed the narrative:

trees are now a 'non-sustainable forest product'.⁸

There is a benefit to controlling this narrative. Humans have storied trees as a sustainable resource to create a sense of security, optimism, and righteousness in their materiality to legitimise their use as an economically and 'ethically' viable product. It is a shaky account that can be challenged by reading it alongside the narratives of over-production, animal displacement, biome instability, and disease spillover recounted daily by trees and forestry across the globe.

I propose to return to 'God's Covenant with Noah' to question the composition and continuance of that narrative of trees as a sustainable resource. What might begin as a narrative curiosity into the untold diversity of the arboreal story emerges as an essential component for formulating a working relationship with trees, both as material and as co-authors of the earth story. However, the stories of trees can only surface once the natural world is accepted and appreciated as text itself: trees can tell stories of their own.

In all its iterations, the Flood narrative is an intensely storied text. As an apocalyptic or threshold event, the Flood carries with it both the extremity of a totalising ending and the momentum of a new beginning. Humans, animals, and plants become fixed with potent literary lives driven by this irrevocable event that places, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen identifies, an increased significance on decisions of inclusion and exclusion.⁹ During such a pivotal moment of rewriting, these choices are critical and have lasting effects.

Despite a frequent understanding of the medieval vision of the ark as an image of community, as noted by Cohen, it is often overlooked as a member of that community of flood survivors.¹⁰ The ark and its wooden body, after all, were also selected to journey through the end times, chosen to be preserved rather than destroyed. Whilst Cohen emphasises the forcefulness of the narrative's exclusions, there is also the silent violence inscribed in the specific terms of inclusion under which certain survivors are saved. Just as some beings are dispassionately left behind, others are brought forward explicitly on the condition that they assume the position of a resource in the post-diluvian world. Animals, who were once fellow survivors, are rewritten as the nourishment to keep the 'seed alive upon the face of all the earth' (Genesis 9. 3), and trees are named timber, gaining with that title the strictly utilitarian role of construction material. These terms in this apocalypse become a 'covenant' between God, Noah, and 'all generations to come': a binding contract that we, too, are written into (Genesis 9. 12).

Clifford Davidson observes that *The York Corpus Christi Plays* (*York Corpus*) contains a flood narrative that is specifically concerned with the shaping of 'collective memory'.¹¹ These medieval

depictions of the biblical story from Creation to Judgement Day were annually performed and richly implicated in both the local community and the material world of the city of York. The plays particularly resonate with York's geography and the residents' lives. While records of flooding go back to as early as 1236AD, it is also an occurrence that persists today, with 'the worst flooding seen in York for a generation' happening as recently as winter 2015.¹² Medieval York's burgeoning crafts trade and artisanal culture further connect the city to the Flood by imbuing the ark's wood with real-world storying.¹³ In this, the *York Corpus* plays offer a unique perspective to portray trees within the context of an authoring community that is at once sensitive to the connections of world and text while also having an investment in the narration of timber as a resource.

The *York Corpus*' rendition of the Flood rewrites trees as timber through a narrative of quashed vitality repeated across the medieval imagination. In etymological accounts from the period, trees are distinctly depicted as material resources through strategic linguistic severances. In Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, this division is marked across volumes. First appearing in Isidore's 'Book XI – The human being and portents', trees have a vitality akin to humans in that they are 'a body that is alive and yet lacks flesh'.¹⁴ Later, they even take on a life of their own in which they energetically 'leap' on high.¹⁵ Only in 'Book XVII – Rural matters', in a section concerned with land cultivation, trees are named 'wood' and are characterised as a 'durable' and 'solid' construction material.¹⁶ In another volume dedicated to construction and shipbuilding, wood is figured so intensely in terms of its ability to be used and destroyed that its previous life as a tree is practically unintelligible.¹⁷

The erasure of arboreal vitality is written with particular efficiency in *York Corpus*. God's command to 'Take high trees and hewe thame cleyne' is the first and only introduction to the ark's material source (l. 73).¹⁸ In just one line, their brief storying as trees end. Their characterisation is limited to a simple description of their height, which is both a far cry from the vitality of Isidore's 'leaping' woodlands and is likely to be a reference included only to ensure a more favourable yield of produce. The sole moment of affective storying of trees appears in the verb 'hewe', a word closely tied to the cutting or dismembering of flesh.¹⁹ It is a fleeting story in which the limited emotional charge pivots on the trees' destruction and future usage rather than the vibrant vitality. In the subsequent two lines, the trees immediately become 'sware [...] burdes' as they begin the remainder of their narrative life in the play as anonymous timber (l. 74-5).

The play's separation of timber from its former life is made explicit through an anonymised estrangement and a decisive emphasis on the tree's afterlife as a construction material. Timber's anonymity in 'The Building of Noah's Ark' originates from Genesis's lack of arboreal specificity (Genesis 6. 14) and the largely ambiguous 'gopher' wood. In this apocalyptic rewriting, the non-identification of timber's lineage becomes weighted. If timber were named during this moment, that specific tree would gain a narrative legacy of its own, one that might even alter its history as a resource. Given a name, it may even tell us something that we might not wish to hear

– something Isidore notes in the Latin name of the fir (*abies*) as it echoes the emphatically vocal *abire*: "go away".²⁰ The impact of this narrative erasure only becomes apparent if we compare timber's material life to the olive tree. A universal symbol of peace in both medieval culture and today, featured on the flag of the United Nations, the olive tree has taken on a narrative life that is profoundly unlike that of timber: hopeful, edifying, vibrant, and named.²¹

In a striking deviation from other surviving medieval mystery cycles, *York Corpus* divides the Flood narrative into two plays – 'The Building of Noah's Ark', performed by the shipwrights and 'The Flood' enacted by the city's fishers and mariners. Through this distinction, remarkable attention is cast on the actual construction of the ark that praises the role of the craftsmen in this artisanal city, demonstrating the play's keen sensitivity to these connections of world and text. Detailed instructions of the process of the ark's construction attest to the skill of the shipwrights' craftsmanship by eliciting a divine validity to their work achieved 'Thurgh techyng of God' (l. 104). Promoting the York shipwrights' work to an audience who are also their customers, an elevated status is also written into the material that they work with: timber's structural reliability and marketability is stressed as it will not 'tywne nor twynne' (l. 99). Yet, another story is written here. As our attention is fixed on the artisanal excellence of the shipwrights and their timber, the tree cut 'cleyne' from the woods is also cleanly forgotten from the narrative. In this process of erasure, we no longer question where this material came from or how it was sourced. What will come of it when the product is no longer needed? By effacing their textual life, *York Corpus* successfully sheds trees' arboreal vitality to offer a more convenient narrative of timber as an expendable resource.

It is a narrative that suits the craftsmen of medieval York who, as Heather Swanson observes, began increasingly importing their materials from the Baltic in the fifteenth century.²² In a habit that we cannot quite seem to shake, this history of importation continues to pose environmental threats today, as seen in the carbon footprint of goods flown in from overseas.²³ For Cohen, '[c]atastrophe seems a fitting punishment for our profligacy'.²⁴ However, in the *York Corpus*, we see how catastrophe can be used to permanently stymie such processes of production and eradication by desensitising readers to the vitality of the material.²⁵ This storying is most ardently delivered at the end of the *York Corpus*' second deluge play, 'The Flood', in which the ark's sealed fate as disposable material is revealed to have been written all along. Once Noah and his family are transported safely through the Flood and find themselves again on dry land, the ark they have relied upon thus far is no longer needed. As the family turn to address their concerns of potential catastrophes to come, the question of longevity returns to the text. Noah's son wants to know if 'this world is empire / Shall evermore laste' (l. 297-8), to which Noah replies that although it will one day be destroyed again in a fire, he and his family are not to worry as 'Ye sall nought lyffe than yore / Be many hundereth yhere' (l. 306-8).²⁶ Concerns of survival are explicitly confined to the limited scope of Noah's family, declaring an indifference to and dismissal of both future human generations, life and material forms existing outside of this temporal safe period. As tonalities of anthropocentrism and

self-interest become apparent, so does the ark's fate. Never intended to be a post-Flood community member, the ark's survival is not conceived on the same terms as Noah's: salvation is revealed to be necessarily temporary. In other words, the text highlights its narration of timber not only as a resource but as an expendable one. Once wet, wood rots when it is left out of the water. No longer useful, the lack of forethought for the ark's post-diluvian existence or inclusion is overt. As Noah discusses his intent to settle and multiply, the last potential use of the ship is rejected; the family does not intend to travel again. The ark's storying as disposable becomes inevitable, and its timber – or the body of the 'high trees' – suffers a second death.

As a survival story, the Flood narrative is useful for understanding the material world and the anthropocentric core of what we call sustainability. *The York Corpus*' deluge plays present this by separating timber from its past arboreal vitality and longevity to write it instead as a viable construction material. As the root of the wider biblical storying of timber as secure, buoyant, and dependable for human survival, it is perhaps only natural that we continue to feel a certain comfort in accepting this material as a sustainable solution during the climate crisis. However, by investigating the explicit connection between world and text afforded by the *York Corpus*, we may find an opportunity to peruse the ease of such a resolution. The story's tracing of the relationship between timber's journey and its real-world production and consumption within a localised scale offers contemporary readers a perspective from which to observe and interrupt intrinsic pathways of environmental thought. By prompting its readers to focus on the composition and purposes of our own environmental stories, the *York Corpus* plays also allow us to become sensitive to the narratives we have drowned. When we read these stories, we discover an infinite stockpile of ones by other silent authors that are yet unread. They might prove challenging, but they might also become the seed to remember what we have forgotten, like the story of an ark that began with a tree that leapt.

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Apocalyptic Thought and Feminine Representation in *King Lear* and *The Revelation of Revelations*

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William Shakespeare's *King Lear*¹ and Jane Lead's *The Revelation of Revelations*² are both texts in which apocalyptic thought and imagery work as a means of constructing and revealing complex representations of female figures. Within these texts women are vilified, worshipped, feared, and sneered at. Both works are particularly concerned with the consequences that defining the female has for society and more importantly, for men. Apocalyptic thought is key to both text's depictions of women. The word 'apocalypse' is derived from the Greek 'apokalypsis', meaning 'uncovering'. Stemming from the *Book of Revelation*, biblical apocalypse means a state in which the world as it is, is destroyed and its inhabitants subject to divine judgement. This state of annihilation can be read as either punishing or absolving humanity. The apocalypse that Jane Lead depicts is a positive, individual, feminized, process. In contrast, the destruction and devastation at the end of *King Lear* leaves only a few men - and no women - standing in a landscape in which 'tragedy assumes the figurations of apocalypse'.³

This essay will argue that Jane Lead presents the apocalypse as a positive process of 'addition' rather than erasure and annihilation, which influences her work's broadly favourable attitude towards women. Women, particularly mothers, are at the forefront of Lead's vision, particularly the goddess of Wisdom (Sophia) who is depicted as second only to God. Coupled with Jane's self-insertion into the narrative as an eyewitness, chronicler, and prophet herself, a narrative begins to develop wherein women are agents of creative production, reproduction, and addition. *King Lear*'s 'apocalypse' meanwhile, concludes Shakespeare's portrayal of Lear's Patriarchy as stricken with disorder, death, and loss. This essay will discuss the ways in which this catastrophic and spectacular 'undoing' of a patriarchal, patrilineal order, articulates anxieties around gender roles. It will unpick the representations of women throughout the play, in order to understand how they are constructed by a male gaze which is ultimately proved to be faulty. Here, as in Lead's work, apocalyptic thought becomes a lens through which the gendered injustices of society are made apparent, even as characters themselves sometimes reinforce these views. In this way, apocalyptic thought acts in both texts as a means of 'uncovering' the female condition.

In *The Revelation of Revelations*, Jane Lead articulates her own vision of apocalypse and fuses her own 'eyewitness' accounts with resplendent biblical imagery. She testifies to the veracity and accuracy of her vision, stating at various points 'I have given a most true and experimental account', 'I have been impulse to open these secret things' and 'I have fulfilled the declaration of the whole mystery'.⁴

Lead speaks declaratively and conclusively, using the first-person and taking complete agency and charge over the narration. She assigns herself the function and status of prophet to describe personal encounters with the divine. The egocentric 'I' recurs throughout the passages; Lead consciously and unabashedly becomes a character within her own narrative, and an important representation of a female creator in the middle of creating. She situates herself in the theological tradition by narrating in first-person, following John, the author of the *Book of Revelation* who she makes repeated references to. In the *Book of Revelation*, John is instructed to 'seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down'.⁵ Lead reveals that the imminency of the apocalypse has caused 'all the seals to melt away, that the secrets contained in the Book might be opened and made known'.⁶ In doing so she ascribes herself a purpose equal to, if not greater and more relevant than, John's. This focus on secrets being revealed and brought out into the open, appears to advocate for an inclusive and transparent apocalypse. Creation and revelation become the liberating core of the apocalypse, in Lead's vision. Lead's authoritative narration is essential in this meaning being communicated, emphasising women as generative and creative beings.

Motherhood is another arena in which women work as agents of production and is a recurrent theme in Lead's apocalypse. Lead describes Jerusalem as the 'Mother-city', signalling it as a site of reproduction and generation.⁷ The feminized 'Mother-City' 'replenish[es] the New Earth and Heavens', and so embodies an ever-generative womb.⁸ In Lead's narration, Jerusalem segues from a concrete, physical place, to a more ephemeral, ethereal 'Wonder-City' made up of the 'pure spirits' of the devoted.⁹ Jerusalem functions as a spiritual womb, (re)producing not just the bodies but the souls of Christians. As the city works as a spiritual generative space, not a physical one, it is able to function with only the 'mother's' participation. This re-enacts a kind of immaculate conception which does not necessitate a mortal male figure. Our attention is drawn instead to mothers, such as in Lead's encounter with Ruth at the Feast of the Goddess. Biblically, Ruth is an archetype of a kind and motherly woman. Julie Hirst identifies Lead's writing as particularly 'gynocentric': at times this focus narrows further, becoming specifically matricentric.¹⁰ Lead also has a particular focus on 'The Virgin', also fused with the figure of Sophia in her writings, and states that humanity will be reborn out of her 'Virgin-Womb'.¹¹ The paradoxical concept of a womb that is able to birth and yet still virginal, unites two female archetypes: the virgin and the mother. Fused in the vision of a 'Virgin-Womb', these represent the Christian ideals of womanhood, as a portal of generation without defilement. Further, Nigel Smith elucidates that 'Sophia gives birth to a spiritualized Jane Lead [...] and she, Jane, in turn gives birth to her visions'.¹² Thus, Lead's

apocalypse visualizes an eternally female and generative spiritual bloodline, in which women are endowed with powerful productive capacities.

Motherhood is an equal preoccupation of *King Lear*: mothers are actively marginalised by the characters of the play, but their displacement articulates anxiety around gender roles. In Coppélia Kahn's exploration of the play, she notes that 'there is no literal mother in *King Lear*'.¹³ Lear's Queen is only mentioned once, a 'conspicuous omission [that] articulates a patriarchal conception of the family in which children owe their existence to their fathers alone'.¹⁴ In a reversal of Lear's conception of a 'Mother-City', Lear's landscape is instead a 'Father-City', in which the mother's role is effaced at best, and vilified at worst. In erasing the mother figure, women become severed from their reproductive and generative capacities. The only reference to Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia's mother, simultaneously rejects the mother status: Lear tells Regan upon greeting her, that 'I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, sepulchring an adulteress' if she should not be glad to see him.¹⁵ Whilst hyperbolic, this outburst reveals motherhood as a vulnerable status, still capable of being excavated, interrogated, and condemned even after death. Further, by disclaiming the mother role entirely, Lear's Patriarchy – and its subsequent disintegration – takes place solely at the hands of men. The 'apocalypse' that takes place in *King Lear* is not just at the tragic end of the play, but is embodied by the ultimately alarming void of the mother figure throughout.

Lear's jibe to Regan also illuminates how frequently motherhood is associated with male anxieties around sex and lineage in the play. In the opening of the play, Gloucester discusses the illegitimacy of his Edmund, who he offhandedly calls 'the whoreson'.¹⁶ Whilst Gloucester acknowledges his role in Edmund's creation, the label 'whore' is readily and derogatorily applied to the mother figure only. Motherhood is presented as a problematic site of sin and disorder, rather than one of generation. When he loses control of his emotions, Lear cries 'O' how this mother swells up toward my heart! Hysterico passio'.¹⁷ The condition of hysteria and emotional disorder manifesting itself physically, has historically been associated with the female. In Early Modern texts, hysteria was called 'the suffocation of the mother', an identification which further situates motherhood as a site of anxiety inducing turmoil.¹⁸ Lear attempts to deny his own emotional outpouring by casting it as feminine.

Male projection onto the feminine is a common theme here. Lear repeatedly describes women through apocalyptic imagery, in an attempt to defer responsibility for the apocalyptic landscape of the play. Whilst Lear's description of Jerusalem privileges the womb and female body, *King Lear*'s misogynistic attacks are obsessively focussed on the bodily and the sexual. In his diatribes, Lear describes female sexual organs through apocalyptic rhetoric. Lear shouts that below women's waists, 'There's hell, there's darkness, there's the Sulphurous pit. Burning, scalding, stench, consumption'.¹⁹ Darkness and fire are recurrent images of the apocalypse: Lear makes these terrifying associations, using misogynistic assumptions such as his comment on the 'stench' of sexual organs, in order to create an impression of total abyss. By condemning the 'burning, scalding'

properties of the vagina, the emphasis is put on the effects that the female body supposedly has on the male. Peter Rudnytsky argues that Lear's 'attempt to combat the threat of female sexuality is subverted by the welling up within himself of the femininity he has repudiated'.²⁰ He suggests that Lear's show of hyperbolic emotion directed towards vilifying femininity, in fact belies his anxiety surrounding his over-emotional state, which is historically viewed as a female condition. Rudnytsky's argument can be taken further and applied to Lear's deployment of apocalyptic imagery. By projecting the apocalypse onto the female, he attempts to sever male responsibility for the chaos and disorder of his world. However, the patriarchal structure that Lear is a core component of, coupled with the problematic absence of 'the mother', means that this projection in fact exposes itself as a reflection of male anxiety.

Whilst Lear projects apocalyptic imagery onto the female, *The Revelation of Revelations* presents the bodily, particularly women's bodies, as mirrors of the soul's condition. Before revelation, the body is perceived as a 'lump of Earth', a 'vile garment' and an obstacle to spirituality.²¹ After ascension though, this burdensome bodiliness is disposed of, transported instead into a 'light, airy, transparent' world of "translated souls".²² Lear's transcendental descriptions are deliberately feminized throughout the text through their associations with female figures: Sophia's 'matter' is similarly made up of 'thin, pure, Airy, Subtlety'.²³ This idea of a pure, incorruptible airiness runs through Lear's descriptions of the Goddess. Lear speaks of the five features of Sophia, each of which contributes to visualising a Christian feminine ideal and working as a guide for mortal women to emulate. Firstly, the Goddess has an omniscient quality of 'Seeing', 'to prevent all violation of virgin-chastity'.²⁴ 'Seeing' clearly goes beyond the bodily, however the phrasing is still rooted to the eyes, suggests that the female body can utilise itself for moral and spiritual aims. This is followed with 'Hearing' ('turned inward, to listen to the sweet voice of her Bridegroom'), 'Smelling' ('the Virgin is in herself an high scented Odour'), and 'Tasting' ('She lives upon spirit of air').²⁵ These qualities can only be experienced through sensory body parts. The final sense is 'Supersensual Feeling', evoked through the intangible ('breath, spirit, fire and air').²⁶ In fusing the corporeal with the impalpable, Lear's apocalypse reveals the female body as a powerful, supra-sensory entity. Even as Lear disclaims the mortal body in other passages, her descriptions still invoke an attachment to it through its feminized, spiritual counterpart. That the apocalypse may take place in harmony with some element of feminized bodiliness, radically figures the female form as a positive entity.

Lear further points towards this connection between gender and revelation by conflating herself with the Woman of the Apocalypse, who is said to be clothed with the sun. Lear fuses her perspective with the biblical figure, stating 'I felt [...] as if all were covered with a Cloud of Sun-heat, giving out light [...] this was also the Bright garment of the Sun'.²⁷ Just as her descriptions of Sophia evoke an ethereal, transcendent quality, here Lear is anointed with brightness and heat. The Woman Clothed with the Sun is typically read as Virgin Mary. Qualities of purity and strength are thus aligned with this

ideal status of Virgin/Mother. Julie Hirst has argued that ‘the importance of androgyny cannot be overlooked’ in Lead’s apocalypse.²⁸ Both the Virgin and Adam are degendered: the Virgin is said to be ‘not limited to male or female; for she may assume either’.²⁹ Whilst described in both implicitly and explicitly female terms, this phrasing casts off gender entirely, which is seen as a restrictive and limiting concept. Despite this, Lead continues to refer to the Virgin as ‘she’ throughout the passages. This in fact radically counters the patriarchal assumption that humanity can be generically described through terms such as ‘man’. If male is no longer the default in an androgenous world, then the categories of gender take on more flexible, inclusive, and descriptive capacities. Lead repeatedly emphasises the apocalypse is a process of ‘revelation of revelations’. Her androgynous (and yet generically female) figures, trouble gender binaries and position this process of troubling as essential to the generation of revelation.

In both Shakespeare and Lead’s texts, women act as representatives (self-selected or otherwise) of the text’s visions of the apocalypse. Lead’s portrays the apocalypse as a process of generation and productive spirituality. As a female creator herself, this process takes on a distinctly feminine configuration. She assigns herself the status of prophet, attempting to place herself within the apocalyptic canon as an authoritative source. Whether this is successful or not, Lead’s perspective expands the potential of apocalyptic thought to be an ideology of feminized creation. Motherhood is presented as form of procreativity, whilst Jerusalem’s womb-like capabilities figure the female body as a centre for spiritual regeneration. The Goddess Sophia, who is described in superlative, ethereal terms, is the mother figure of the mother-city, emphasizing this focus on women and mothers. Gender is thus positioned as extremely relevant to understanding the revelation of the apocalypse. *King Lear* also aligns the female with the apocalyptic: Lear misogynistically imagines the female body as a hellish space. Apocalyptic associations are used as a tool with which to ‘other’ women and their bodies. The mother figure is also rejected and becomes a paradoxically void-like presence in the play. However, Lear’s patriarchy sees these projections of destruction rebound upon it, as it experiences an apocalyptic disintegration. The ‘female’, as conceived by Lear, is exposed as a projection of male anxieties and disorder. The apocalypse finally takes place through the complete unravelling of Lear’s world, and the deaths of most characters. This ‘apocalypse’ acts as a tool of revelation: the seeds of destruction having been planted in the patriarchal order of the play all along. Through the lens of the apocalypse, Lead’s text illuminates the generative potential of the feminine whilst Shakespeare reveals the destructive capacities of the Patriarchy.

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A Dismodernist Reading of *Romance in Marseille*

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Despite being written in 1933, Claude McKay's *Romance in Marseille* was first published in 2020 due to its 'raw language and queer themes', which the original editors viewed as too transgressive for the time.¹ The novel details the movements of Lafala, a stowaway who loses both of his legs to frostbite, through the bohemian city of Marseille. This essay will provide a reading of the text through Lennard J. Davis' theory of 'dismodernism', a model which asserts that we are all disabled due to widespread injustices, oppression and capitalist consumerism. By distinguishing between people with 'impairments' (the physical fact of, for example, a missing arm or leg) from people with disabilities ('the social process that turns an impairment into a negative by creating barriers to access'), a dismodernist reading of *Romance in Marseille* finds that despite his impairments, Lafala is decidedly less disabled than his Quayside peers.² Through his primitivist origins and his newfound wealth, Lafala has the ability to move outside of the 'savage anarchy' of Marseille, whereas his peers universally face these rigid 'barriers to access'.³

Upon receiving compensation from the shipping company where he received his injury, Marseille becomes 'a vastly changed place' (35) for Lafala. He gains 'new power' (35) and begins to surpass the other Quaysiders; Falope asserts that Lafala is a 'different man than before the accident – a better man, a bigger man' (113), directly conflicting with Charlton's claim that 'the vast majority of people with disabilities have always been poor, powerless, and degraded'.⁴ Within Davis' discourse, this becomes an assertion that Lafala faces fewer 'barriers to access' compared to when he was able-bodied, thus defying Charlton's assumptions. Lafala challenges the view that impairment invariably leads to disability, becoming more empowered following the loss of his legs. However, the Marxist view that Lafala avoids disability through his pecuniary gains, is proven through the opposite being the case for his peers; due to their lack of money, they are 'disabled by injustice and oppression' to a greater degree than Lafala. La Fleur 'hates men and only goes with them to make money' (41) and in this way, is severed from her sexuality due to the oppressive nature of capitalist society.⁵ Due to La Fleur's lack of money, she faces restrictions on her identity and is forced into the unnatural position of a lesbian performing heterosexual sex, thus classing her as 'disabled' under Davies' definition due to the social disadvantages she experiences. Black Angel, Lafala's fellow patient in hospital, provides another example of a character who is disabled due to a lack of money. Upon recommending Lafala a lawyer, Angel is promised \$500 as a 'runner's reward' (16). However, due to Lafala's greed, Angel only receives half the promised sum and becomes 'poor, powerless, and degraded', in effect disabled by

Lafala's decision. In this way, the impaired Lafala is also empowered through his ability to oppress others. Through his subversion of Charlton's assumptions, Lafala becomes the oppressor, or disabler, of Black Angel. Maren Tova Linett identifies 'the fragility of the boundary between normal and de-formed' in modernist texts which may certainly be seen through the fluidity of disability in the text.⁶ Black Angel moves from hosting extravagant parties to begging for money, whilst Lafala moves from being legless in a hospital bed to being rich. In both of these examples, McKay presents money as empowering those who have it, reducing 'barriers to access' and increasing the freedom of the holder with the ability to increase and decrease the impacts of disability.

The ability of money to both empower and disable people can be seen not only on an individual scale, but also systematically in Marseille. Dismodernist theory asserts that disability is universal as 'the contemporary body may only be completed by means of consumption'. The clearest example of this in the text is Lafala, who must utilise prosthetic legs so as to have a 'completed' body.⁷ Through the purchase of these legs, Lafala's impairment is virtually cancelled out. La Fleur also completes her body through the consumption of makeup products '[prinking] herself up in style' (30) and even through consuming alcohol so as to socialise more easily. In this way, a Marxist dismodernist reading highlights the fact that both of these characters would be incomplete, or impaired, if they did not have access to money to purchase these products. Lafala feels triumphant in being able to afford the 'barest civilized necessities' (71) which are necessary in the environment of Marseilles. However, he also identifies the fact that in the 'primitive life' (71) of his childhood they were 'superfluous' (71). Michel de Montaigne also identifies the 'blessed state of desiring nothing beyond what is ordained by their [the primitive human's] natural necessities', drawing a contrast between the capitalist culture of excessive consumption and human's natural, primitive state.⁸ In this context, a movement away from modern capitalist culture reduces disability because the body no longer needs 'means of consumption' to be completed. Lafala identifies that he is returning to the jungle with a 'little civilisation' (36) in his pocket and thus inhabits a liminal space between primitive and modern. However, Falope states that 'You can't be primitive and proletarian at the same time' (114) and so, by returning to Africa, Lafala completely eschews modern culture to return to his primitive roots. Stelio Cro posits that the primitive man is 'free from social conventions', which, when placed in discourse with Davis, indicates a freedom from disability.⁹ When disability is interpreted as a social oppression, the removal of society inherently results in the dissolution of disability. Lafala, as a primitive man, is freed from his disability by removing himself from the limitations of his society whereas those remaining, such as Aslima, stay 'in the clutch of social law' (90). The example of Aslima may be the most

potent one to demonstrate the inescapability of disabling capitalist culture; despite her originating from ‘where savagery... meets civilization’ (44), thus allowing her to claim primitive roots, Aslima was raised ‘in a fine spirit of materialistic interest’ (45), displaying her ardently capitalist background. Aslima is not only an economic actor in her society, but, since she was sold as a child, becomes a commodity and thus becomes inescapably attached to McKay’s modern Marseille. This inescapability is further shown through her possession of a yellow identity card which identifies her as a prostitute. By earning money in the capitalist system, Aslima is forced into ‘the clutch of social law’ (90), restricting the possibility of mobility and thus disabling her. Here, Aslima and Lafala present juxtaposing figures of the modern versus the primitive, with Lafala’s primitivity allowing him freedom and Aslima’s modernity disabling her.

Disability is also represented in the text through the environment of the Quayside. Rod Edmond states that ‘biological theories of decline were increasingly applied to social theory’, which can be further seen through the ways in which the Quayside mirrors physical impairment through its dilapidated state.¹⁰ With the ‘sordidness of Quayside... stinking’ (73) and the streets covered with ‘offal’ (73), the Quayside takes on a cadaverous appearance, with the impaired personification of the environment mimicking its disabled inhabitants. Moreover, as a port, a place where trade converges, the Quayside is a distinctly colonial location where there is a ‘menacingly agnostic boundary of cultural differences’.¹¹ For Homi K. Bhabha, the bohemian collective of people from different backgrounds becomes menacing, thus leading to the feverish nature of Marseille. The degenerative and ‘agnostic’ nature of this boundary is seen tangibly through the systemic disability of ‘fever’ (85) ‘shock’ (88) and ‘confusion’ (92). The environment that places ‘chains on your hands and feet’ (102) can indubitably be seen as ‘disabling the colonised’ both mentally and physically, through systemic neurosis and claustrophobic entrapment.¹² McKay’s Marseille exhibits a racist colonial hierarchy where ‘Lafala’s race represented the very lowest level of humanity’ (76), in this way disabling its occupants through oppression. Moreover through ‘categorical differentiation’, McKay presents us with a split society, its lack of unity bringing about prostitution and murder.¹³ The coalescence of ‘the thick scum of life’ (28) necessarily leads to the sickness seen in the very streets of Marseille which the inhabitants are bound to as ‘worshippers, [and] subject creatures’ (62). This very inescapability, the stasis and lack of mobility of the Quaysiders, presents disability as systemic. In fact, despite the ‘categorical differentiation’ of the culture, disability seems to be the sole unifying factor. To return to Davis: the Quaysiders ‘are all disabled by injustice and oppression’, and therefore through his movement away from the ‘oppression’ of Marseille, Lafala moves towards the unseen, and thus fantastical, location of ‘normalcy’ in Africa.

Lennard J. Davis’ dismodernist assertion that ‘impairment is the rule, and normalcy the fantasy’ can certainly be seen in Claude McKay’s *Romance in Marseille*. Marseille is presented as a divided society which oppresses its inhabitants on the basis of class and race, thus imposing a universal impairment.¹⁴ However, despite Lafala’s physical impairments, his escape from the ‘injustice and oppression’

of Marseille allows him to be the most empowered, and thus least disabled character of the text. Through his primitivist origins and his relative wealth, Lafala faces significantly lower ‘barriers to access’ thus enabling him to achieve the ‘fantasy’ of ‘normalcy’ in an impaired world which demonstrates that, at least for the relatively wealthy, mobility is attainable.

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Milo Cooper English Literature,

Manipulating Language and Performing Gender in *Henry V*

ELISE LANE, English Literature

Shakespeare presents his eponymous hero, King Henry, of *Henry V* as a master of rhetoric. Solely through Henry's language and the language surrounding him, Shakespeare fashions him into, as Tom McAlindon asserts, 'a model of Renaissance concepts of manliness' of the 'hard warrior and gentle wooer' and, as I propose, *l'uomo universale* (the complete man).¹ Although Henry fulfils these masculine roles successfully in the eyes of other characters, Shakespeare continually deflates the audience's view of him in highlighting his conscious (at times, failed) performance of them through words, rather than action.

Frank Lovett notes that, as outlined by Castiglione's *The Courtier*, *l'uomo universale* must be a 'master of arts and letters' and of 'the profession of arms', displaying 'abilities in combat, [...] sport (hunting and tennis) [and] parlor games'.² Shakespeare introduces Henry's mastery of 'the profession of arms' through the Chorus:

Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars, and at his heels
(Leashed in, like hounds) should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment.³

Describing him as being 'warlike' and akin to Mars (the Roman god of war) conveys his combat skills. His control over ravaging weapons, although straining through enjambments, is contained by the ellipses of his leash. Shakespeare also attaches the theme of self-conscious meta-theatricality, present in each of the Chorus' speeches, suggesting the performative nature of his masculinity from the outset. He can merely play the part, or 'port', of Mars, assuming his costume and, most importantly, his script. As the Chorus inadvertently reveals, 'Think when we talk of horses that you see them' (1.0.26); we will never see Henry act out these abilities – it is only through words that Henry fulfils these roles, with varying success.

Continuing Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry as the complete man, his prowess in parlor games is militaristic, as we witness through the description that 'when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the sooner winner' (3.7.96-7). His talent for sport lies purely in exploiting its linguistic possibilities, again with militaristic overtones. Scottish invaders are 'coursing snatchers' (1.2.143); the English army, 'greyhounds in the slips,/Straining upon the start', for which 'The game's afoot' (3.1.31-2). Most skilful, however, is Shakespeare's play on tennis in Henry's response to the Dauphin's insult, using an extended metaphor of a tennis match

signifying Henry's invasion of France for the throne:

When we have matched our rackets to these balls
We will in France, by God's grace, play a set
Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
That all the courts of France will be disturbed
With chases. (1.2.261-6)

Shakespeare grabs our attention through rich wordplay and sound repetition – consonance, sibilance and alliteration flood mostly regular iambic and enjambed lines – creating the ricocheting, unrelenting rhythm of match-play as Henry returns the serve. In turning 'Paris balls' (2.4.132), 'famous for their light weight' (2.4.132), 'to gun-stones' (1.2.282), suggesting a comparison of male genitalia, Henry asserts his martial masculinity over the Dauphin's relative effeminacy. Not just a soldier or sportsman, Henry is also 'a wrangler' in 'the courts of France', revealing him to be learned in law – 'a master of arts and letters'. Concerning the legality of his claim to France, for example, he uses balanced legal terminology: 'justly and religiously unfold/Why the law Salic [...] Or should or should not bar us in our claim' (1.2.10-2).

Whereas legal terminology peppers Henry's language, rhetorical devices and reason pervade it. Thus, Shakespeare presents Henry's mastery of letters, an aspect of *l'uomo universale*. Before Henry appears, Canterbury has already gushed about the 'sudden scholar' (1.1.32) and his talent for words, calling us to 'Hear him' 'reason in divinity', 'debate of commonwealth affairs' and 'discourse of war' and 'cause of policy' (1.1.38-45). Henry's first monologue (1.2.9-32) then confirms this description, its first full line containing a neat pair of alliterations: 'learnèd lord, we pray you to proceed'. Shakespeare uses rhetorical appeals in Henry's request for the bishop's plain-speaking: *Ethos*, establishing his justification in religion, 'For God doth know', and history, 'For never two such kingdoms did contend'; *Logos*, using logical conjunctions, 'Therefore'; *Pathos*, appealing to Canterbury's Christianity, 'in the name of God take heed' and 'washed/As pure as sin with baptism', and *Kairos*, urging him to speak now 'For we will hear, note, and believe'. *Anamnesis* and *aetiologia* abound here and elsewhere in Henry's speech, usually preceded by 'therefore', said twenty times by him in the play, double that said by the other characters combined. *Aetiologia* especially becomes a common motif in his language of reason, whether in verse (as in 1.2.300-11, 2.1.79, 3.7.96-7 and 4.7.75) or prose (as in 4.1.142-3, 4.1.200 and 5.2.120-1).

Nevertheless, Shakespeare creates an air of performance around Henry's masculine rationality in the tennis ball speech's highly constructed verse. Beginning: 'We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us./His present and your pains we thank you for' (1.2.259-60),

the plosive ‘p’ alliteration, curt sentences and mostly monosyllabic end-stopped lines convey barely restrained anger. Henry seemingly releases this, climaxing in lines 281-6 using heavy *antanaclasis*: ‘his mock mock out’, ‘Mock mothers from’, ‘mock castles down’; and sound repetition: ‘soul/Should stand sore’ and ‘cause to curse the Dauphin’s scorn’, ending here on a rhyming couplet with ‘unborn’. Suddenly shifting - ‘But this lies all within the will of God’ (1.2.287) - with soft ‘l’s and ‘w’s, Henry thus successfully acts the part of *l’uomo universale*, demonstrating reason trumping emotion, for his onstage audience: the English nobles, French Ambassador and his train. In Henry’s soliloquy (4.1.203-57), Shakespeare most clearly highlights the performative nature of Henry’s Renaissance manliness; gone are the rhetorical devices and logical arguments characteristic of Henry’s authoritative speech to fellow nobles. Instead, it contains thirteen questions, three apostrophes, three half-lines indicating long pauses, two exclamations and anaphora using ‘The’ in a mundane list of majestic objects. In private, when not performing for anyone onstage, Henry seems truly to be the ‘fool, whose sense/No more can feel but his own wringing’ (4.1.207-8), rather than the linguistic force of the well-studied complete man.

At war, Shakespeare has Henry attempt to portray to the common public a different aspect of Renaissance masculinity: the ‘hard warrior’, for whom war is ‘a vehicle of valour’.⁴ In Henry’s first war speech (3.1.1-34), hard, cold imagery prevails: ‘Stiffen’, ‘hard-favoured’, ‘brass’, ‘rock’, ‘Hold hard’, and ‘mettle’ (punning on ‘metal’). Shakespeare links death and violence in war – ‘English dead’, ‘blast of war blows’, ‘rage’, ‘gallèd’ and ‘wild and wasteful’ – to proving oneself virtuous in battle – ‘becomes a man’, ‘bend up every spirit/To his full height’, ‘noble English’, ‘war-proof’, ‘Dishonour not your mothers’, ‘attest’ and ‘show us [...] mettle’. Henry’s ‘hard warrior’ call to ‘close the wall up with English dead’ lies far from his aversion to war’s ‘waste in brief mortality’ (1.2.24) in his appearance as *l’uomo universale*. In war, Henry’s military masculinity is affirmed by dying ‘like men’ (4.3.99) and ‘brothers’ (4.3.60) with ‘abounding valour’ (4.3.104). Shakespeare’s choice of ‘abounding’ recalls the Dauphin’s tennis balls. In transforming them into ‘the bullet’s crazing’ that kills ‘in relapse of mortality’ (4.3.105-106), Shakespeare again establishes Henry’s machismo against the French.

Shakespeare elaborates on this branch of manliness by linking war and sex in Henry’s speeches. Whilst the gentlemen at home ‘hold their manhoods cheap’ (4.3.66), he orders his soldiers to ‘conjure up the blood’ (3.1.7), thus conjuring images of erect phalluses. The siege of Harfleur, with the town figured as female – ‘I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur/Till in her ashes she lie buried’ (3.4.8-9) – becomes a sinister, sexual conquest. The vile, visceral imagery of ‘look to see/The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand/Defile the locks of your shill-shrieking daughters’ (3.4.33-5) commands Harfleur’s and the audience’s attention. Like the Chorus, Henry demands we see action in our mind’s eye, trusting language’s power to violently assert his masculinity. In the ‘blind and bloody soldier with foul hand’ (3.4.34), Shakespeare recalls and compounds previous images of the dog-like ‘fleshed soldier’, ‘rang[ing]’ with sexual ‘liberty’ and ‘bloody hand’ (3.4.11-2) ‘Of hot and forcing violation’ (3.4.21). The ‘shrill-shrieking daughters’ (3.4.35) remind us of the

‘pure maidens’ (3.4.20), ‘fresh fair virgins [and] flowering infants’ (3.4.14), whose locks the soldiers defile. Henry, proclaiming: ‘I am a soldier,/A name that in my thoughts becomes me best’ (3.4.5-6), thus consciously assumes the aggressive masculinity he defines.

Playing the ‘hard warrior’, however, the cracks in Henry’s masculine performance soon show through. Exhorting his soldiers to ‘close the wall up with English dead’ (3.1.2) and fashion their faces into battleships, complete with ‘portage’, ‘brass cannon’ and ‘jutting’ (3.1.10-3), although inspiring, foregrounds conscious construction of outward appearance alongside construction imagery (bodies cementing a wall, ‘jutting’ and ‘base’) and the fabrication of heroic masculinity. Several discrepancies puncture his chivalric bravery for us: his lie, ‘my poor soldiers tell me yet ere night/They’ll be in fresher robes’ (4.3.110-1), after we witnessed Henry argue with Bates and Williams, and his aside, ‘I fear thou wilt once more come again for ransom’ (4.3.128). Both insightful moments are available only to the audience, however, not the surrounding characters. The clearest instance of this results from Henry’s tactical decision: ‘every soldier kill his prisoners’ (4.6.37). After tearing up at Exeter’s account of York and Suffolk’s heroic deaths, Henry’s curt, short sentences on single, end-stopped lines with logical conjunctions (‘But’ and ‘Then’) leading to his conclusive order ‘Give the word through’ (4.7.38), are more characteristic of his role as the universal man of reason and rhetoric. Beginning the next scene, Llewellyn and Gower mistakenly attribute Henry’s order as responding to France’s slaughter of the boys. Shakespeare clearly parallels the vulnerable groups: ‘Kill the boys and the luggage!’ (4.7.1-2) versus ‘kill his prisoners’. Thus, we understand both events to be ‘expressly against the law of arms’, ‘a piece of knavery’ rather than knight-hood. The audience are further disillusioned with Henry playacting the valorous man-at-arms when he enters, immediately lying and modifying his reason for the order to uphold Gower’s view of him as ‘a gallant king’ (4.7.8).

Henry makes his third and final attempt at ‘Renaissance concepts of manliness’ by playing the role of ‘gentle wooer’. Yet his wooing is anything but gentle. To start, Shakespeare diminishes Henry’s power, subordinating him to a student with Katherine as the teacher, as Lance Wilcox points out, and rhetorical complexity, switching to prose.⁵ Thus begins the apparent ‘gentle wooing’, apostrophising her (‘O fair Katherine’) and bashfully asking ‘Do you like me, Kate?’ (5.2.106). Henry’s persistence, speaking English despite Katherine stating she ‘cannot speak your England’ (5.2.102), makes it so that roles soon reverse: Henry ‘will have her learn’ (5.2.255) English and sexuality. Instead of romantic chevalier, Shakespeare places Henry’s language within the male sexual potency of the Harfleur ‘hard warrior’. Her ‘broken English’ (5.2.223) is the ‘breach’ through which he enters her ‘maiden walls’ (5.2.287). His insistence on procreation, ‘What sayest thou, my fair flower de luce?’ (5.2.191-2), mirrors ‘What say you?’ (3.4.42) when urging Harfleur to avoid the rape of its ‘fair virgins’ and ‘flowering infants’ (3.4.14). Henry’s ‘love’ which ‘is blind and enforces’ (5.2.270) also echoes the blind soldier ‘forcing violation’ (5.2.21).⁶

Henry is certainly guilty of ‘forcing violation’ in kissing Katherine. Before broaching the subject, Shakespeare begins almost half of Henry’s replies with ‘No’ or ‘Nay’ and lends unwavering certainty to his musings on their future, ‘Shall not thou and I [...] compound a boy [...] that shall go to Constantinople’ (5.2.188-90) and ‘tis [...] now to promise’ (5.2.194), thus conveying his linguistic dominance. Against Henry’s repeated attempts to force a kiss, Katherine protests in alarmed French, ‘*Laissez, mon seigneur, laissez, laissez!*’ (5.2.228). Succeeding eventually, Henry’s conquest again parallels Harfleur. He ‘stops the mouth of’ Katherine for ‘denying [him] a kiss’ just as ‘hard warrior’ Henry would have ‘Defile[d] the locks of [Harfleur’s] shrill-shrieking daughters’ (3.4.35) for being ‘guilty in defence’ (3.4.43). Both ring of aggressive male dominance – stopping, as in plugging a gap, and defiling a lock, as in jamming a key into it – as punishment for resistance, resulting in the implied silencing of women. Nevertheless, Henry still upholds his ‘gentle wooer’ image as paragon of Renaissance manliness, if not to the actual audience, then to his audience onstage once the French and English nobles return. He proclaims: ‘bear me witness all/That here I kiss [Kate] as my sovereign queen’ (5.2.320-1), and does so on a grand ‘*flourish*’, with no hint of his previous forcefulness.

Shakespeare portrays Henry’s self-fashioning through language in three distinct masculine roles: *l’uomo universale*, ‘hard warrior’ and ‘gentle wooer’. Unlike the characters within the play, however, the audience remain unconvinced that Henry is the paragon of Renaissance manliness, as we are given access to his private moments.

Perhaps Alice, in her broken English, summarises King Henry best: ‘de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits’ (5.2.116). The ‘mans’, or multiplicity of male ideals, he performs through ‘tongues’, or language, deceives those around him within the world of the play, although Shakespeare lights our way to seeing beneath his verbal disguises.

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Resistance and Sustenance: Mammy and Minny Jackson in *The Help*

HOLLY MANNERINGS, American Studies

In the wake of recent events which have created an impetus for self-education on the history of racial discrimination in America many creatives have stressed the importance of not succumbing to the easier digestion of white saviour narratives, which often recreate the systems they are trying to dismantle. Tate Taylor's 2011 film *The Help*, based on Katherine Stockett's novel of the same name, has been met repeatedly with such criticism. The film follows two African American domestic workers in Mississippi, Aibileen (Viola Davis) and Minny (Octavia Spencer), and their white saviour, plucky aspiring journalist Skeeter (Emma Stone). Skeeter dedicates herself to the task of transmitting these maids' voices for her inherently selfish mission of transgressing the limitations of post-war domestic life in her hometown. Articles from the New York Times and The Guardian have dwelled on the 'candy coated cinematography'¹ that presents *The Help*'s 'moral universe' 'in bright cartoonish stroke'.²

The most salient and articulate condemnation of the film comes from a statement released by the Association of Black Women Historians, which appeals to 'Fans of *The Help*' in underlining that the film is not a rounded or accurate depiction of 1960's Mississippi: '*The Help* distorts, ignores, and trivialises the experience of black domestic workers'.³ Not only does *The Help* flatten the rich history of civil rights activism, it also recreates the very views it is trying to dismantle and re-imagine; as The Association of Black Women Historians acknowledges, the film succumbs to 'A disappointing resurrection of the mammy- a mythical stereotype of black women who were compelled whether by slavery or segregation, to serve white families'.⁴ The idea of the revival of the 'mammy' has been the subject of recent food historians such as Erica Fretwell who defines mammy as 'a mythic black woman characterised by her benevolence, acceptance of her racial and sexual inferiority, and maternal devotion to white people'.⁵

In *The Help*, the most obvious fulfilment of 'mammy' is in the character of Minny Jackson, who is objectified by her physical appearance to fulfil mammy's 'big busty proportions'. Minny is also shackled by her social position as a black woman in post-war society to fulfil a domestic role of subservience to her white employers. Whilst many American women had occupied typically masculine jobs in the heavier manufacturing industries during World War Two, the days of Rosie the Riveter were in the past: a woman's place was in the domestic sphere. However, in the insular community of 'super skinny southern belles' detailed in Taylor's film, this image of domesticity and housewifery is propped up by African American maids, such as Minny and Aibileen.⁶ Though *The Help* is undoubtedly guilty of revitalising the well-worn Hollywood stereotype of

the 'mammy', I would argue that Minny's character seems at times to be aware of the trope that she is inhabiting and her comfort in food spaces allows her to transcend this tangible image of benevolence. Moreover, in considering Anne L. Bower's definition of a 'food film': a film that 'clearly depends heavily on food's symbolic power in communicating class structure and social status', we can consider how Minny frustrates post-war food culture by using her culinary prowess not to pander to her white employers, but to transgress her social position, or her 'mamminess'.⁷

Though a foundational aspect of the 'mammy' in the context of post-war food culture is her compulsion to adopt the culinary duties of the white household, in *The Help* Minny's genuine zeal for food culture allows her to break free from the shackles of the 'mammy' myth. Minny is initially very sceptical of the mission Aibileen and Skeeter have embarked upon in the dissemination of black domestic worker's narratives. Minny interrupts a meeting between them in which Aibileen begins to divulge the intimate details of her life as a maid and proceeds to berate Skeeter for the danger she is invoking in the Jim Crow era, demanding of her 'And just what makes you think coloured people need your help?' (approx. 57.46).⁸ This question pertains exactly to the criticism that the film has garnered in relation to white saviorism and the central narrative behind which Skeeter's literary success is the gravitational force. However, Valerie Smith argues that although the film 'depends upon the exploitation of black women's experiences, black women's acts of remembrance constitute sites of resistance within the dominant narrative'.⁹ In the context of Minny's character, the 'sites of resistance' are catalysed by her culinary prowess, which bolsters her to share her narrative with Skeeter.¹⁰ This scene presents a new food space which is not beholden to a power dynamic between 'mammy' and the white housewife. Skeeter and Aibileen share a meal of fried chicken together on Aibileen's kitchen table as they discuss Aibileen's experience working for Elizabeth Leefolt (Ahna O'Reilly). In considering Bower's findings of 'food's symbolic power in communicating class structure and social status' we can appreciate how food acts as a buffer in this scene and works to neutralise the despotism of Jackson society.¹¹ The camera lingers on the kitchen table, showing the two plates of food alongside the notebooks in which Skeeter and Aibileen physically record their narratives. In this way, food is physically embedded in the translation of 'social status' and of the personal narrative of the maids. When Minny emerges into the scene, she re-situates the true danger of Skeeter and Aibileen's endeavour in communicating '[the maids]' perspective'.¹²

Despite 'mammy' being a mythical figure who is 'compelled' to serve her white employers, Minny contextualises the position of black domestic workers by reeling off the detriments of their position. In a sardonic tone, she states that 'we just love not making

minimum wage or getting social security'.¹³ Here, Minny reanimates the idea of the 'mammy' by underscoring the harsh realities of her position under segregation. Moreover, though 'mammy' is continuously characterised by her 'round body' and 'busty proportions', in this scene Minny crosses her arms over her chest as she addresses Skeeter, forcing the focus of the shot away from her body to her face and her words, as she lectures on the reality of her perspective Skeeter so ardently desires to publish.¹⁴ Having reoriented the context of the scene to consider the power structures at large, Minny is motivated to communicate her perspective, using food as a touchstone through which to characterise her experience. She takes a bite of the fried chicken on Skeeter's plate as she begins the narrative, mustering the image of food literally providing her with the strength and courage she needs to transcend the shackles of 'mammy'. The dominant sentiment of the scene is encapsulated by Aibileen: 'Once Minny got to talking about food, she liked to never stop'.¹⁵ Minny uses the articulation of recipes as a lens through which to divulge her human experience. The stove is also a dominant image around which the sharing of stories is centred. Skeeter becomes secondary as Minny directs the movement of the scene, talking rapturously about how she navigates her culinary responsibility. The physicality of the stove reinforces the way in which Minny uses food as a marker of her experiences as a maid. Minny frustrates the myth of 'mammy' as she reappropriates her culinary prowess to transgress her social subordination, rather than to support her white counterparts.

Another way in which Minny frustrates her role as 'mammy' is her ultimate refusal to be 'benevolent' in subordination to her senselessly cruel employer, Hilly Holbrook (Bryce Dallas Howard).¹⁶ She monopolises on both her culinary prowess, a beneficial asset of her habitation of the 'mammy' trope, and on her intimate knowledge of the household she props up in her domestic work. In this way, Minny uses her 'mamminess' as a loophole through which to transgress her subordination in a heinously racist domestic environment. Her ultimate revenge of 'the terrible awful' combines her gastronomic expertise with her exhaustive knowledge of Hilly's racist agenda. Hilly repeatedly enforces racial segregation in both private and public spaces, she focuses her attention mainly on the separation of bathrooms, and encourages others, such as her friend Elizabeth Leefolt, to fashion separate bathrooms for their maids by insisting that 'they just carry different diseases than we do' (approx. 15:14).¹⁷ Hilly's racially fuelled fears are foregrounded when she callously expels Minny from her domestic orbit due to suspicion that she has used the inside bathroom. The scene opens with a single, blue-tinted shot of a raging tornado then immediately cuts to the Holbrook residence in warm, candlelit hue, creating an intimate atmosphere that Minny is embedded in, suggestive of the way in which she is obliged to become furniture in the life of her white employer. The contrast in colour palette also compounds Hilly's cruelty in suggesting that Minny risk her life in the storm (we later learn through a voiceover that 'eighteen people died that night') in order to uphold segregation in a private space.¹⁸ This scene works in the film to mark the inception of Minny's transgression, but also to underline the extent to which Hilly will uphold segregation in her home. Both of these factors compound the effect of 'the terrible awful', a pivotal

moment in which Minny invokes her culinary prowess and intimate knowledge of her employer to exact her revenge.¹⁹

Minny's retribution scene (approx. 1:36:01) opens with the impression that Minny is trying to fit herself into 'mammy's' body, though by the end she has completely frustrated this image. John Egerton discusses the physical appearance of 'turbaned mammies' who present a non-threatening image of androgyny.²⁰ In this scene, the green bonnet Minny wears could be construed as an attempt to conform to the trope that would allow her to go unnoticed in Hilly's reign of terror. Another aspect of the 'mammy' trope that has been explored by food historians is the idea of commodifying the black body. Toni Tipton Martin coined the idea of 'The jemima code': the idea that 'mammy' 'makes and is food for white people, who consume her body through foodstuffs'.²¹ The extent to which the black female cook is subordinate stretches to the desire to literally ingest her body. However, in this scene Minny subverts her 'mamminess' again by bringing this abstract into fruition: she serves Hilly a pie of her own faeces. Minny consistently stretches the boundaries of her 'benevolence' to break free of the shackles of 'mammy'; the 'terrible awful' is the summation of her resistance to 'mammy' as she is able to at once exact a single act of calculated revenge on her morally reprehensible employer, and ultimately transcend the 'mammy' trope which the film attempts to shackle her to.²²

The Help ultimately frustrates post-war food culture as food becomes a vehicle through which to resist the dominant white saviour narrative. Though she is shackled to the 'mammy' trope that the film attempts to place her in, Minny Jackson uses food not to uphold an image of post-war domesticity in deference to her white employers, but as a lens through which to articulate her experience, and to ultimately resist this racist, limiting trope.

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Holly Mannerings American Studies,

Goodbye Rook

CYRUS LARCOMBE-MOORE, Creative Writing

I

Goodbye Rook,
overhead again;
overheard

II

Goodbye little wings,
seen by searching eyes
amongst Scots Pine

III

Goodbye to your silver beaks,
beaks that crank
the air like an amp

IV

Goodbye tail tuft,
fallen from flight,
pulled like a tooth

Cyrus Larcombe-Moore Creative Writing

V

Goodbye Rookery,
spotlight mistletoe
and your reflected light

VI

Goodbye nests,
bundled like babies
in twig blankets

VII

Goodbye chorus caw
in the corvid canopy

VIII

Goodbye trap
Goodbye snare
Goodbye Rook

IX

Hello window from which
I spy your wings. List laden,
cut uneven,
unmistakable wings.

The Alchemical Anti-Apocalypse: Apocalyptic Rejections of Alchemy in *The Book of Revelation* and *The Alchemist*

ALEXANDRA ROBINSON, English Literature

As Charles Nicholl asserts, alchemy has sought ‘transformation’ through a ‘redemptive perfecting process’ throughout history; its prominence in Renaissance England reflects contemporaneous debate around the possibility of material and spiritual refinement through science.¹ This goal, overlapping with the situational transformations inherent to apocalyptic moments, prompted Mark Houllahan’s argument that alchemy and apocalypse were ‘inextricably linked’ and ‘the fulfilment of the alchemical project would result in the apocalyptic transformation of the world’, with alchemical failure therefore constituting an anti-apocalypse.² The divine influence on situational and psychological transformation in the Book of Revelation, however, exposes a further nuance. In depicting ‘transformation’ as God’s power alone, the methods used for this process of ‘apocalyptic alchemy’ must be distinctly holy, and so non-divine attempts at ‘transformation’ are a sacrilege: they ‘[steal and misappropriate] what is consecrated to God’s service’ by trying to harness his power.³ Human alchemy itself is anti-apocalyptic, then, because its impiety consigns it to being merely a counterfeit of God’s successful alchemical process that will always fail to achieve its transformative goal. Some of the derogation towards alchemy in Renaissance England likely emerged from this religious perspective, which manifests significantly through alchemy’s satirical treatment in Ben Jonson’s 1610 play *The Alchemist*. This nuance facilitates this essay’s twofold aim. Firstly, it will argue how Revelation associates apocalyptic transformation, and hence ‘successful’ alchemy, exclusively with God and denigrates any other attempt. Secondly, *The Alchemist* reflects anti-apocalypticism by not only depicting alchemy satirically, but also echoing Revelation in portraying alchemy as a sacrilegious mockery of the apocalyptic reality which is destined to fail.

Alchemical failure does not automatically denote a lack of end product; a failed result may instead simply be a corrupted version. In a biblical apocalyptic sense, it is the transformation into *purity* (that God’s transformation would produce) which is incomplete, thus deeming the practice ‘anti-apocalyptic’. Revelation’s juxtapositions of colour reflect this. As God’s chosen people ‘washed their robes, and made them white’ following their situational transformation ‘out of great tribulation’, Revelation depicts that true apocalyptic transformation is to become visibly pure, reflected through repeatedly describing God’s people wearing white clothing.⁴ The holy product, then, is white and pure. Yet Daniel Merkur’s recognition that ‘iosis’, a part of the alchemical process producing ‘violet-bronzed gold’, is etymologically derived from ‘the dyeing of textiles the colour of royal purple’, thus associating alchemy with *purple*

and its innate artificiality.⁵ As the products of human alchemy overlap with the ‘purple [colour]’ which ‘[array]’ the ‘great whore’ in Revelation, this transformation only produces a corrupted ‘abomination’ greatly inferior to the white purity of God’s.⁶ The colours within Revelation expose non-divine alchemy’s inevitable failure to create purity, but also asserts this failure will always eventually happen, even if alchemy presents itself as ‘pure’, because seeking God’s power is sacrilegious. *The Alchemist* mirrors this scope of ultimate revelation, albeit more conventionally: the impure practice yields nothing. By feigning excitement to be ‘[made] both happy in an hour’ through acquiring their share of Dapper’s supposedly imminent winnings, Face and Subtle construct their alchemy as infallible; Dapper’s subsequent command ‘[b]elieve it, and I will’ signifies their deception has bolstered their dupe’s belief in alchemy transforming his skills to then transform his life.⁷ As they must falsify events to complete their cons, however, such as synthesising ‘[a] great crack and noise within’ for the destruction of their promised Philosopher’s Stone that will produce ‘pure / Silver of gold’, they become exposed as fraudsters, not only incapable of causing transformation, but also claiming to produce ‘purity’, a product that only *God* can make.⁸ Revelation’s teaching implicates this self-misrepresentation is sacrilege, as the only transformation that is infallible and produces purity is God’s; Jonson, then, inverts the apocalyptic scenario through depicting alchemical failure, but *also* retains the blasphemous claims that human alchemy inherently makes.

As true apocalyptic transformation is only possible in the End Times, any premature attempt is destined to fail. Revelation ascribes the authority over when this moment occurs to God, but its significance manifests in its ambiguity: in stating ‘thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee’, the second-person singular pronoun warns every individual that they are both directly subject to God’s will and a lack of knowledge of when apocalyptic transformation will happen.⁹ The vindicated will experience ‘no more death’ and ‘[no] more pain’, but this change directly results from God’s ‘true and righteous [judgements]’, implying that apocalyptic transformation is both situational and eschatological.¹⁰ In *The Alchemist*, it is Lovewit’s ‘sooner than [expected]’¹¹ return and act of disturbing judgements that enable Gerald Cox to argue he is an ‘apocalyptic’ figure, with only his actual judgements themselves being ‘[paradoxically] anti-apocalyptic’, but the play’s wider framing contests this description of Lovewit.¹² If, as in Revelation, the judgements necessary for apocalyptic transformation are bestowed by the same figure who determines *when* this happens, then this would be Subtle, not Lovewit; despite the satirical difference between ‘three hours hence’ and ‘fifteen days’ for the same alchemical product, he nevertheless claims knowledge of when transformation

will be completed.¹³ The dramatic irony of the different given times only heightens his sacrilege: by repeatedly claiming knowledge of when transformations will occur, but altering it for his own amusement, Subtle mocks the ability that Revelation asserts belongs to God. The play's linguistic overlap with revelation further challenges Lovewit's return being apocalyptic. Although Subtle's quoting of Face's initial reasoning for Lovewit's absence, '[w]hile there dies one a week / O'the plague' changes tense to '[w]hile there died one a week' upon Lovewit's return, he still implies the plague is ongoing.¹⁴ Midway through Revelation, the earth endures a tribulation of 'plagues', but this considerably precedes the apocalypse and its transformation.¹⁵ In both *The Alchemist* and Revelation, ongoing 'plague' means ongoing tribulations, meaning Lovewit's return is merely unexpected, *not* apocalyptic. Despite the blasphemous claim that it does, then, human alchemy causes neither apocalypse nor transformation, as Jonson's satire emerges from exposing its 'End Times' façade as simply another day.

Despite coveting the same outcome apocalypse promises, alchemy nevertheless opposes the prerequisites for apocalyptic transformation. To avoid its intended audience misconstruing God's promise, Revelation's rhetoric is distinctly exegetical. God mandates that the holy way to confront 'those things which thou shalt suffer' is to 'overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end', but when John's vision shows Judgement Day, those who have 'overcometh' can 'inherit all things' denoting continued faith in the eventual apocalypse warrants a personal situational transformation.¹⁶ Revelation's exegesis, though, supplements the inference that patience is crucial. By terming steadfast commitment to 'the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus' as 'the patience of the saints', Revelation explicitly clarifies that all of God's chosen people are saints *because* they are patient.¹⁷ Yet if patience is mandatory for apocalyptic transformation, human alchemy's 'redemptive perfecting process' occurring for immediate gain not only opposes God's word, but sacrilegiously tries to rob him of his divine power. Through satire, Jonson's play invokes sacrilegious impatience. Despite initially doubting the legality of Subtle's dupe that the 'pewter you shall buy now' will 'instantly' 'make you as good Dutch dollar', Tribulation's amusement at Subtle's consonance in claiming '[i]t is no coining [...] but casting' denotes his awareness of Subtle's trickery, but his desire for the product outstrips his supposed Puritan values.¹⁸ By accepting the product of this purported instant transformation, Tribulation subverts the divine mandate: he chooses the possibility of 'inheriting things' now over 'overcoming' and waiting for God. Tribulation, moreover, brands himself and Ananias 'saints', but in questioning 'how long time[...] must [they] expect', he reflects their impatience and contradicts the behaviour of Revelation's actual saints, rendering his self-imposed label satirical blasphemy.¹⁹ This, alongside their mere presence at Lovewit's house, ironically extends Mechlowicz Neal's assertion of their '[confidence] in [their] pending deliverance from the earthly realm'.²⁰ Human alchemy would cheat God, so visiting the alchemists alone demonstrates a willingness to cheat God, ensuring the Puritans cannot be chosen for true apocalyptic transformation despite claiming to be 'saints'. Between Revelation

and *The Alchemist*, then, alchemy's sacrilege emerges as its resistance to God's promise that transformation happens if one is patient.

While immortality overlaps as both alchemy's esoteric goal and the result of God's apocalyptic transformation, alchemy's version intends to override God's will. As God commands 'be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life' to avoid '[being] hurt of the second death', the distinction between 'death' and 'second death' signifies that death itself is part of apocalyptic transformation, with ultimate vindication being subsequent immortality.²¹ The vindicated parallel God, who 'was dead' and only *then* 'alive for evermore', thus asserting that initial death itself is holy.²² Revelation, however, asserts immortality is God's gift: his exclusive agency to 'give' eternal life not only reflects his ultimate power of transformation, but also admonishes any other attempt to obtain immortality as sacrilege. Yet human alchemy purposefully dismisses this, with Jonson's satire ensuring its desecration of God is unmissable. Mammon's intent for him and Doll Common to 'renew / Our youth' and 'enjoy a perpetuity / Of life and lust' is doubly immoral: by inviting Doll to 'renew', Mammon claims God's power to bestow a 'crown of life', while the noun 'perpetuity' denotes his desire to bypass death altogether in favour of infinite sexual gratification.²³ Mammon uses alchemy for apotheosis, then, but by foregoing death, intends to supersede even God, His double sacrilege, moreover, culminates in failure reflected by a double pun. His desire fails as '[a]ll the works / Are flown in *fumo*'²⁴ but as George Kauffman argues 'alchemists considered combustion a symbol of death', 'fumo' denotes not only the 'works' death, but also Mammon's obvious incapacity for immortality.²⁵ By attempting to usurp God through bypassing death, a crucial aspect of 'apocalyptic transformation', alchemy's sacrilegious means must always fail, thus deeming it eternally anti-apocalyptic.

As alchemy intends to '[generate] a purer form' of its materials, its esoteric goal must be causing spiritual regeneration *alongside* immortality.²⁶ In stating 'I make all things new' at the apocalyptic moment after 'the former things are passed away', God's transformative power resolves the juxtaposition between corrupted 'former things' and their purified 'new' state.²⁷ This seamless regeneration warrants Houlahan's 'inextricable link' between apocalypse and alchemy, but Houlahan ignores the first-person singular pronoun's significance: as only God can ever possess this power, only he can 'complete' the alchemical transformation. Not even God's vindicated servants will ever acquire such an ability, and thus non-divine alchemy symbolises an attempt to 'steal' God's skill entirely and inevitably fail. By even trying alchemy, then, Jonson's alchemists and their gulls must become destined for a failed apocalypse. Although Mammon's claim the stone will enable him to 'fright the plague / Out O'the kingdom' seems an altruistic intent to relieve London and 'make new' its citizens lives, Revelation's assertion that alchemy requires divinity renders it satirical: Mammon is not God and '[frightening] the plague' is merely a self-serving delusion of grandeur.²⁸ The Puritans, furthermore, entangle alchemy and apocalypse in a comically incorrect manner. By seeking 'restoring', they imply desire for spiritual renewal, but state it 'ne'er will be but by the philosophers' stone', attributing transformative power to

alchemy's product.²⁹ The 'stone' thus replaces God, but Revelation denotes that only God could actually produce it, leaving the Puritans to ironically pursue holy regeneration through unholy, fallible means. As alchemy only succeeds in causing transformation when God practices it, Revelation and *The Alchemist* thereby assert its human version is a mockery and should be mocked: its belief in completing a transformation exclusive to God is nothing more than impious delusion.

The production of gold is integral to alchemy and apocalypse, but the apocalyptic process reprimands alchemy's method of refining base metals as both literally and morally impure. In Revelation, God can transform the 'former things' into 'pure gold, like unto clear glass' because he *is* such gold, as '[he is] the temple of it'.³⁰ Gold thus requires God's holiness to be created in its 'pure' form. Mark Stephens' argument '[creation] belongs to [God] as his treasured possession', then, is furthered: creation is not just a 'treasured possession', but depends on God's holiness as its base material.³¹ Revelation, furthermore, castigates unholy creation of gold. As the Whore of Babylon's 'golden cup' is 'full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication', these abstract nouns oppose the 'clear glass' of pure gold; while holy gold's transparency denotes its divinity, her excessive indulgence in 'fornication' and obsession with the *material*, not its divine creator, besets her gold with deceptive 'filthiness'.³² Human alchemy's desire for gold is thus inherently immoral, in both admiring the material and ignoring how only God produces true gold. In *The Alchemist*, then, Mammon's idolising of gold represents a twofold sacrilege. His initial goal to 'change / All that is metal [...] to gold' ironically separates gold, itself a metal, from other 'metal', but consequently lambastes such other 'metal' as inferior and requiring transformation.³³ If creation is God's 'possession', Mammon discrediting *any* object is blasphemous against both creation and God himself. His repeated insistence on creating 'gold', however, echoes the Whore's idolatrous treatment of the material gold; as he 'cares not for' even silver, his obsession disregards all parts of the process other than its outcome.³⁴ His arrogant idolatry, then, is comedically metaphoric for what Revelation deems non-divine alchemy: an 'abomination' inherently striving to misappropriate both God's power and his creations.

Nicholl's metaphor that alchemy 'sought to penetrate by chemical means' a "shut palace" can be reversed to also suggest how alchemy is condemned to eternal exclusion from the apocalyptic New Jerusalem.³⁵ As the 'holy city', the transformed place for God's people, '[comes] down from God out of heaven' in revelation, it is not only a divine gift, but the chosen access it passively; it surrounds them rather than requiring active 'penetration'.³⁶ If God's people are exclusively passive recipients of situational transformation, alchemists and their customers, through attempting the transformation themselves, must be denied access. Idolatry is also excluded from the apocalyptic New Jerusalem: although God's people 'serve him day and night in his temple'. God nevertheless 'shall dwell among them' to ensure '[no] sorrow', with the place preposition denoting the divine presence transforms the servants' situation into one with no suffering, and that he views them as equals.³⁷ Jonson's play, however, overlaps with both these characteristics to expose

alchemy, and those who use it, as sacrilegious in misappropriating the celestial city. Despite 'the city' in Face's quip that Mammon 'would ha'built / The city new' meaning London, Mammon's apotheosis throughout the play establishes an apocalyptic connection to the city which God creates.³⁸ Yet Mammon's 'city new' is no 'temple' where he 'dwells among' the other citizens; rather, he will 'encounter fifty a night' and buy 'flatterers' there, with the overt innuendo implicating his New Jerusalem is a place where people will worship him *sexually* and submit to his desire for their idolatry.³⁹ As successful alchemy would enable this blasphemous abomination of the New Jerusalem, it cannot be holy. This conclusion is satirically reflected in Jonson's denouncement. The doors the Puritans find 'shut against us' are merely Lovewit's front doors within the play, but they interrelate with both Nicholl's 'shut palace' and the New Jerusalem denying entry to anyone who 'defileth', 'worketh abomination, or maketh a lie'.⁴⁰ Lovewit's house is the 'New Jerusalem' setting for their intended transformation, and the 'shut doors' metaphorically represent their refused access because the city is only accessible *passively*. By resisting God's promised apocalypse and its transformation of society through actively attempting to create the New Jerusalem, alchemists must be denied access to the post-apocalyptic city and damn themselves in the process.

Between Revelation and *The Alchemist*, alchemy is ultimately depicted as anti-apocalyptic because it seeks an apocalyptic transformation that is exclusive to God. Jonson's characters are satirical in ignoring how they will be doubly denied transformation: not only because human alchemy cannot successfully 'transform', but also because their means of seeking transformation morally opposed those who *will* be transformed in God's apocalypse. Alchemy, then, is a mockery of God's will. As alchemy's transformative qualities can be considered parallel to acting, though, the societal impact of plays featuring sacrilegious characters and processes could be studied in the light of the Puritans' 1642 shuttering of theatres nationwide, and questions if alchemy's textual depiction as a sin became lost in the growing prestige of the theatre.

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³² Revelation 17:4.
³³ Jonson, II.1.29-30.
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³⁵ Nicholl, p. 34.
³⁶ Revelation 21:2.
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Narrative Tension in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

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The notability of James Joyce's novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (*A Portrait*), in the genre of experimental Modernist literature, is due largely to the unconventional style of third-person narration employed throughout the text.¹ This essay will consider how the use of an unreliable third-person narrator gives the reader a deep insight into the mind of the novel's protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, in order to argue that Joyce's application of free indirect discourse constructs an ambiguous relationship between narrator and protagonist. Furthermore, I will propose that the tension created by using both first- and third-person perspectives is a reflection of the tensions inherent in the content of the novel; specifically, the internal conflicts Stephen experiences as his character and consciousness develops. Lastly, I will examine how the close link that Joyce fosters between narrative style and content in the novel is further illuminated by the shift to first-person narrative in the final chapter, which is composed of Stephen's diary entries; a shift which I will ultimately argue only serves to reaffirm the inescapability of the limitations and pressures he feels in his native Ireland, even once he has left.

In *A Portrait*, the distinction between the third-person narrative voice and Stephen's own mind is often unclear, with Joyce's narrator not merely describing Stephen's internal thoughts and feelings, but also appearing to adopt his actual language via the technique of free indirect discourse. For example, the syntax of the narration adapts and develops as Stephen grows into adulthood – in the novel's opening, the perspective of the narrative voice is childlike, both with nonsensical references to 'moocows' and the use of simplistic, associative language when describing the 'nicer smell' of Stephen's mother than of his father (p. 5). It may initially appear that the third-person voice is merely detailing the precise stream of thoughts running through the protagonist's mind at that moment, as is often done in the novel form. However, James Naremore rejects the notion that this first page is simply "baby talk", arguing that 'it is far from a realistic stream of consciousness method. It is a suggestive style [...] designed to give us a notion of the way the world appears to the infant consciousness.'² Naremore's reading finds a greater complexity in *A Portrait*'s narration than in the conventional stream of consciousness method; the pseudo-childlike language of the narrator does not directly relate to Stephen's own internal monologue, but rather serves as a component of Joyce's effort to depict how his protagonist thinks, rather than simply what he thinks. The text's narrator seems able to surpass merely detailing Stephen's thoughts and emotions – as is typically done by an omniscient third-person narrator – and to instead convey the very processes of Stephen's mind that cause him to perceive the world in the way he does. The

third-person perspective of the narrator therefore appears intrinsically tied to Stephen's mind and consciousness, possessing an intimate knowledge of the way that he views the world.

However, the syntax of *A Portrait*'s narrative voice does not only imitate that of Stephen, but rather shifts to fit the language of the character on whom it is focusing at any given moment. For example, the opening of Chapter II reads: 'Uncle Charles repaired to his outhouse' (p. 50). The use of the word 'repaired' seems unsuitable in this context, and thus appears inconsistent with the general eloquence of the novel's narration. Hugh Kenner explains this apparent inaccuracy through his "Uncle Charles Principle", which he states 'entails writing about someone much as that someone would choose to be written about.'³ Put simply, the narrative language briefly shifts from representing the language of Stephen, to representing that of the seemingly less-articulate Uncle Charles. Hence, the relation between the third-person narrator and Stephen is briefly obscured; the narrative voice generally appears to be very closely tied to Stephen's own consciousness, and yet these moments of familiarity with the minds of other characters demonstrate its capacity to detach from Stephen on occasion. This problematizes our ability to judge the degree of interrelatedness between Stephen's own perspective and that of the narrator: the idea that the narrator serves as a fixed, perfect representative of Stephen's consciousness is disproven.

The distancing of narrator from protagonist also ties the narrative technique of Joyce's novel to the key theme of its content: Stephen's recurring feeling of disillusionment and distance from various social and cultural spheres and institutions. As David Daiches writes: 'We see the inhibiting home background, the cold oppressive atmosphere of school, the chattering triviality of the university. We see Stephen [...] rejecting one by one his home, his religion, his country, growing ever more aloof.'⁴ As the novel progresses along the course of Stephen's life, we witness what Joyce describes as 'epiphanies': moments of apparent revelation for Stephen, in which he experiences a sense of escape from the pressures of the aforementioned institutions and conventions of his country.⁵ However, as Kenner puts forward: 'The action of each of the five chapters is really the same action. Each chapter closes with a synthesis of triumph which the next destroys.'⁶ Indeed, through regular alternation between moments of exultation and the return of disillusionment, Joyce expresses Stephen's difficulty in achieving the ultimate, lasting triumph that the classic bildungsroman pursues. The struggle of the reader to establish where the separation between the perspectives of Stephen and the narrator lies reflects Stephen's struggle to self-actualise in a society that limits his artistic spirit. In other words, both protagonist and reader experience a kind of proximity-struggle: Stephen in his feeling of distance from his country and culture as a result of his disenchantment with educational and religious institutions – he is 'repelled from the altar' by the 'dull piety' (p. 87) of the Church's

Sunday morning worshipers – and the reader in their struggle to establish the distinction between the novel’s first- and third-person perspectives. Hence, the tension between the first-person perspective of Stephen and the transient, ungrounded point of view of the third-person narrator acts a reflection of Stephen’s own sense of ungroundedness, thus providing an even greater significance to the tensions of the novel’s narrative style.

However, the last chapter of the text presents a shift in narration that displaces the previous tension between third- and first-person accounts. The final section of *A Portrait* is composed of a series of Stephen’s diary entries, positioning him as the narrator of this part of the novel. At last, Stephen’s thoughts and feelings are recounted first-hand, eliminating the question of whether the narration truly reflects his perspective. This formal change coincides with a major change in Stephen’s own life – his decision to finally leave behind his life in Ireland to pursue his artistic development – seemingly implying that the shift to first-person narration is representative of Stephen finally “finding his voice” by escaping the constraints of his old life. However, it is important to consider that Stephen’s own narration is not exceptionally different from that of the third-person narrator, as noted by Zack R. Bowen: ‘while the point of view shifts in the end, the basic perspective of the diary is not radically different from the narrative which prevails in the rest of the book.’⁷ The syntax of narration remains largely consistent with that of the rest of the novel, and the recording and ‘aggrandizing’ of ‘inconsequential things’ carries on as before.⁸ Continuing to read the narrative style of the novel as reflective of Stephen’s character arc, we may take this as a suggestion that, despite the apparent boldness of Stephen’s self-exile, he is misguided in his belief that he has managed to rid himself of his lifelong internal struggles and conflicts; as before, this moment of ‘epiphany’ is destined to collapse back into dissatisfaction and grievance. The shift from third- to first-person narration functions to foreshadow a future for Stephen that Joyce does not make explicit in the text. Hence, we may conclude that the stylistic tension between third-person account and first-person perspective – in conjunction with its withdrawal at the end of the novel – serves to facilitate an alternative reading of the novel’s resolution. In other words, the tension between character and narrator, and its resolution, in Joyce’s novel impacts not only its style, but the way that we interpret its content too.

The tension between third- and first-person accounts of events in *A Portrait* is highly significant to its effect. The ambiguity surrounding the position of the third-person narrator – who seems to possess an understanding of Stephen’s mind and consciousness that exceeds that of a generic external narrator, and yet also has the capacity to detach from Stephen and assume the perspective of other characters within the text – causes us to question the reliability of their account of Stephen and his experiences, and therefore the content of the novel as a whole. Furthermore, the strain of first-person perspective against third-person account is reflective of the struggles Stephen faces in his own life – the continual distancing and re-attaching of the narrator to Stephen’s consciousness parallels the cycle of epiphany followed by re-entrapment by limiting social structures and institutions that the protagonist experiences. Finally,

the ultimate employment and eventual withdrawal of the character-narrator conflict facilitates an alternative, more pessimistic reading of the novel’s seemingly cathartic resolution, thus demonstrating how the stylistic techniques of *A Portrait* can influence our interpretations of its content.

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Milton's Intertextual Reading of Suicide in *Paradise Lost*

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Leonora Leet Brodwin argues that John Milton's eschatology in *Paradise Lost* is constructed around "the final dissolution of Satan [and] of the men and angels he perverted... as contrasted with the exclusive resurrection of the just."¹ Brodwin sees this eschatology as heretical for its opposition to the doctrine of a substantive "eternal torment" awaiting the unholy. Brodwin argues that in the case of suicide, however, Milton maintains this doctrine of eternal torment as a deterrent. This implies that he sees suicide as a uniquely abhorrent sin, reflecting what he calls a "perverse hatred of self" in *De Doctrina Christiana*.² What this essay will argue, however, is that Milton's rejections of suicide in *Paradise Lost* are in fact the greatest expression of this belief in a dissolution and negation of joy. Only through a sympathetic understanding of its motivations, rather than prescriptive Christian doctrine, does Milton create a grounded rejection of suicide in his epic poem. This is best exemplified through an intertextual reading of the exchange between Adam and Eve in Book X concerning Eve's desire to die. Firstly, her wording is echoed in Milton's later work, *Samson Agonistes*, where the problem of suicide is a central theme. In addition, Adam's doctrinal threat of eternal torment draws on Canto XIII of Dante's *Inferno*, where empathy for suicide is emphasised. Finally, their dialogue is a mirroring of Moloch and Belial's exchange in Book II, which shows Milton refuting suicide in both holy and unholy terms. What is made clear in this parallel, as supported by these other intertextual links, is Milton's concurrent rejection of suicide and acknowledgement of its motivations. That is to say, understanding it (within the text) to be caused by a negation of joy rather than an assertion of despair.

Milton assigns the words 'destruction' and 'destroy' in the context of suicide in a way that emphasises that self-destruction is an extension of outward destruction. Eve's despairing plea for death concludes with the line "destruction with destruction to destroy", where the initial "destruction" proposed for one's self threatens a more general, aimless "destroy" by the end of the line.³ Because of this threat, her despair is extended sympathy by neither Adam, the author, nor the reader. Roland Mushat Frye, for example, refers to this line when calling Eve's plea only "more subtle forms of self-centeredness", still acting as "her own god", effectively seeing her suicidal ideation as satanic doctrine.⁴ Despite this, her words are echoed in the relaying of Samson's death in *Samson Agonistes*, which is both hailed as heroic and as "inevitable cause, / At once both to destroy and be destroy'd."⁵ The grounds on which this death can be praised, however, is through the purposeful misappropriation of Samson's motivation for death, where his suicide is interpreted as incidental to his "dearly-bought revenge" (l. 1660), and therefore

not a suicide. Gregory Goekjian calls it a suicide, however, in doing so, he argues it to be "an assertion of powerlessness as absolute power" and, in this way, it is an act of "absolute faith."⁶ The outwardly destructive nature of Samson's suicide is also immediately evident, but is praised for the relief it brings to the Hebrews. In this sense, suicidal ideation and its destructive quality can be seen as remedial in the context of the poem. Jennifer Michael Hecht, for example, sees the catharsis of Samson's death as belonging to those affected by it. Who, after the final line, "all calm of mind, all passion spent," (l. 1758) "the father, the author, and the reader move on and put the suicide behind them." Viewing Eve's despair through this lens, her ruminations on self-destruction appear to be relieving, and originating from a compassionate desire to spare the human race from the same suffering.⁷ Marcia Landy considers Eve's plea in the context of other myths about mothers, wherein her role is that of both the creator and "the destroyer," though this reading is only possible through the affirmation of her compassionate role as mother.⁸ Her despair is understood only as a negation of the joy she once had and, in this way, suicide is not a truly desired end, with the "destruction" she threatens being meant to resolve her despair itself. It is only with a sympathetic understanding of the motivation behind such desire for suicide that one is able to refute it.

Adam does not extend this sympathy, and instead warns her that such an act to "evade / the penalty pronounced" (X ll. 1021-22) could "provoke the Highest / to make death in us live" (X ll. 1027-28). As Brodwin points out, this is a unique example of Milton maintaining "the appearance of eternal torment in this special instance as a specific deterrent against suicide".⁹ The image of "eternal torment" that is drawn on, however, grounds its own theology of suicide in empathetic understanding. Of this extract, Alistair Fowler points to Milton's commonplace book wherein he records Canto XIII of Dante's *Inferno* for literature on "death self-inflicted".¹⁰ In this poem, Adam's notion of having "death in us live" is most clearly paralleled. A. Alvarez qualifies this despair in context of the middle-aged despair that Dante mentions as the very first line of the poem, saying it is a despair "not many steps from suicide", which is grounded by Dante's own admission in line 7 of Canto I that the thought of such despair was "so bitter death is hardly more so".¹¹ If we understand his words to be echoing Dante's theology, however, we once again return to a rejection of suicide that is grounded in a sympathetic understanding for its cause. Beyond a theological rejection, Milton's aversion to suicide is elevated to that of a personal, intimate understanding of the despair which instigates it.

This rejection of a simple theological rejection of suicide becomes most clear when we equate Adam and Eve's exchange to be consistent with the heretical dialogue between Moloch and Belial in Book II. We can take such consistency to reflect even further that Milton's refute of suicide is not on the grounds of a theological

morality, but a reasoned refute grounded in a sympathetic understanding of the despair that causes it. Moloch reflects Eve's desire for self-destruction, though in an inverted sense. Where Eve primarily desires self-destruction, with external destruction being a potential consequence, Moloch aims his destructive intent toward Heaven, with the potential of his own destruction at the hands of God being a welcomed possibility, for he is "at worst / On this side nothing" (II.100-101). The notion of self-destruction being an extension of general destruction is here given a satanic dimension in context of the speaker. We can also affirm this desire for destruction from God is still a desire for suicide, as R.G. Frey illustrates: "the mere fact that he is killed by someone else does not preclude the possibility of his being a suicide."¹² By establishing this desire as a suicidal one, one can more clearly see his despair reflected in Eve. Belial grounds his response to Moloch's suicidal ideation in a sympathetic recognition of the "despair / and utter dissolution" (II.126-27) that motivates it. He ultimately rejects it, however, on the grounds of what misery it would be to lose, "though full of pain, this intellectual being, those thoughts that wander through eternity" (II.147-48). Once again, Milton's special aversion to suicide is grounded in a sympathetic understanding that rejects it on the grounds of its negation of joy. This, too, is echoed by Adam in his response to Eve, as the first part of his response is a refuting of her desire by claiming that it does not come from a substantive "contempt, but anguish and regret / For loss of life and pleasure overloved." (X. 1018-19). What is emphasised through the consistency of sentiments in these two rejections of suicide in *Paradise Lost* is that the despair that motivates it is not itself sinful. Instead it is deserving of sympathetic understanding. It is through this understanding of suicide in the context of Milton's work that one must reject the desire for suicide for it is not a result of a substantive despair, but rather the absence of joy.

If we take Augustine's words on Samson's suicide to be the only theological excuse for its occurrence, that God "had given him special instructions to do this", then, as S.E. Sprott states, a follower of the faith is left to consider suicide as "an occupational hazard of the religious calling."¹³ On such grounds, Milton rejects suicide not solely on theological doctrine, but on a sympathetic understanding of the despair that motivates it along with an understanding that it is a desire stemming from the negation of joy. In this way, suicide can be understood not to be the "exception" in Brodwin's argument on Milton's heretical eschatology, but in fact a crucial facet in which the threat of "dissolution" is most visible. The threat of "eternal torment", in an intertextual reading with *Inferno*, is itself grounded in the same sympathetic understanding that both Belial and Adam initially reject their respective suicidal desires with. The consistency between these two dialogues also emphasises an urgency of such rejection stemming not strictly from Christian doctrine, but grounded in that sympathy above all else.

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Does Antisemitism Provide the Blueprint for Nearly All Conspiracy Theories?

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“Death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE.” — Kanye West, October 8th, 2022.¹

Late on a Saturday night, during one of the more problematic evenings of October, Kanye West (formally known as Ye) tweeted the above quote to his 31 million followers. His account was banned immediately after, with Kanye’s words being branded as the ‘musings of an unwell man.’² Despite this, Kanye had already justified his comments, stating that Jewish people ‘blackball and silence those who act against them’ within the entertainment industry.³ This represents a problematic paradox regarding antisemitism because it portrays Jewish people as both the oppressed and the oppressors. If one were to respond to Ye and point out how his musings were antisemitic, he would respond and say: this is what I mean; you are trying to silence me for speaking out against you. This is what scholars refer to as the ‘self-fulfilling prophecy of antisemitic conspiracy thinking,’ because the theories provide their evidence, which can ‘never be falsified in the eyes of the antisemite.’⁴ This circular belief sets the prejudice against Jewish people apart from prejudices towards other minorities, as it transforms from simply a ‘dislike of those kinds of people’, which is a component of different forms of racism, to a theory about the functioning of how the world works.⁵ Antisemitism becomes a way society can ‘blame its problems on some sinister, string-pulling Jewish cable behind the scenes.’⁶ Indeed, if Kanye had chosen more coded language, like Globalists, Rothschild or Bankers, and to a certain extent, Zionists, there would have been a thin veil of plausible deniability. This is how antisemitic conspiracy theories have prevailed and flourished throughout time - by being everywhere and nowhere simultaneously, utilising euphemisms instead of outright hatred, and making Jewish people the mobile of contempt for various problems. Jewish people can be both communists and capitalists simultaneously, depending on whether you are writing during Tsarist Russia with the Elders of Zion or complaining during the silver epidemic of nineteenth-century America. This adaptability of antisemitism is what facilitates such vast conspiracies surrounding the term, with societal problems being blamed upon the Jewish community as a form of the ‘other’. Many scholars have discussed the nature of conspiracy thinking in America such as Richard Hofstadter, Thomas Konda, and Steven Smallpage - to name but a few. This essay will hope to build on many of the conceptual foundations of these scholars’ work and link it to Antisemitism. The debate tends to be divided on whether antisemitism is solely a European problem. However, this essay will prove that antisemitic thinking is buried deep within the American consciousness and rears its ugly head during economic and socio-political stress. To

better understand this debate, we must first explore the history of antisemitic thinking in both Europe and America and then explore why someone might believe in conspiracy theories before unpacking some prevalent modern-day American examples.

Conspiracy thinking: who does it and why?

A conspiracy is a proposed explanation or circumstance for an event whereas a conspiracy belief is an individual’s acceptance of said belief systems. Conspiracies could be either true or false and, in most cases, ‘contradict the proclamations of epistemological authorities.’⁷ One cannot engage in a conversation about conspiracy thinking without first discussing Richard Hofstadter, who provided ‘one of the essential texts in understanding conspiracy theories’ through his work on *The Paranoid Style*.⁸ Within *The Paranoid Style*, we can begin to understand how and why conspiracy theorists may think the way that they do, as for them, ‘history is a conspiracy, set in motion by demonic forces of almost transcendent power.’⁹ Indeed, *The Paranoid Style* articulates how there is ‘a gigantic yet subtle machinery of influence set in motion’ to create a conspiracy— ‘to undermine and destroy our way of life.’¹⁰ The theorist faces an apocalyptic struggle, where ‘time is forever running out’, and as other scholars have noted, in this knowledge the individual theories becomes one of the ‘few who understands the insidious and overarching might’ of the broader conspiracy.¹¹ The theorists are fighting a losing battle ‘in a hostile world’ whilst the plotters ‘continue to accumulate power, manipulate the media, the education system and other levers of power’ towards world domination.¹² The critical takeaway from Hofstadter’s examination is that *The Paranoid Style* is not an isolated historical event but a way of perceiving the world as a ‘vast and gigantic conspiracy theory.’¹³

Public polling proves the most effective means of gauging conspiratorial thinking; however it leaves room interpretation due to varied questioning. For example, whilst ‘ninety per cent of American Jews’ believe antisemitism is either a ‘severe problem or somewhat of a problem, only twenty per cent of Americans believe it is a severe problem.’¹⁴ With another twenty per cent of the general public deciding that ‘it is not much of a problem at all.’¹⁵ However, when YouGov polled and asked, ‘do you believe that a single secret group of people control world events’, around 37 per cent of Americans said yes.¹⁶ Whilst the second question does not explicitly reference antisemitic thinking, it still has antisemitic connotations, due to the close association many Americans make between ‘globalist elites who control everything’ and affluent Jewish people. The same people may state in one poll that antisemitism is not much of a problem, whilst still believing that the world is controlled by a secret group, and not realise that this itself is holding an antisemitic belief. This

is because the line between conspiracy belief and antisemitism has blurred to an extent of interchangeability. This has problematic implications, given that '63 percent of Americans believe in at least one conspiracy theory,' and are potentially only 'one Google search away from somebody telling [them] that the people behind the problems [they] perceive are Jewish.'¹⁷

This problem-blaming relationship is noteworthy because whilst not all conspiracy theories are antisemitic, it seems that there is always a way to blame Jewish people. We see this happen with QAnon (also known as Jew-ano)¹⁸ and Majorie Taylor Greene, who recently liked a tweet stating that Israel's security service Mossad instigated the JFK assassination and the 9/11 bombings.¹⁹ These examples demonstrate that whilst conspiracy belief may be unrelated to antisemitism, there remains connections between the two due to the psychology behind why individuals may develop conspiratorial beliefs. When people experience extreme powerlessness, they are 'more susceptible' to turning to conspiracy thinking.²⁰ After all, 'believing one's plight is caused by conspiracy can provide a clear explanation for a negative outcome that otherwise seems inexplicable.'²¹ Indeed, Jewish people have continued to be the scapegoat for various societal problems, across many historical moments and cultures, with or without our contemporary understanding of conspiracy theories.

Defining Antisemitism: A Historical Context

Dating back at least two millennia across the globe antisemitism has proven to transcend notions of socio-political boundaries and of racial and spatial differences. Defined as hostility or prejudice against Jewish people, according to the American Jewish Committee, a conspiracy theory becomes antisemitic when a 'belief system blames Jewish people for the world's tragedies.'²² Antisemitism today differs from previous forms because governments do not perpetuate it, but individual antisemites continually rely on stereotypes that have been recorded for centuries. Antisemitism can be traced back to the death of Christ whereby differences between Jewish and Christian thought, regarding sacrificial atonement and the messiah, lead to the 'murder of Christ' - marking the beginning of Jewish persecution across Europe. After the crucifixion, the Roman Empire destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, and the Jews were exiled from the Holy Land; churches across Europe condemned Jews as the agent of the devil and the murderers of God. These accusations were not renounced until the 1960s when the Second Vatican Council official repudiated the charge.²³ However, due to the amalgamated nature of government during this time, many countries restricted Jews for pseudo-political reasons, as Christianity became the dominant religion in Europe. Jewish people were ostracised from civil society, with guilds excluding Jews from most occupations. As a result of being unable to assimilate into Christian society, many Jewish people stuck to their orthodox religious practices, which only caused further alienation.²⁴

This historical moment is an important place to interject, as many of the accusations leveraged against the Jews arose from their original segregation from society. The New World Order conspiracy

theory posits that 'there is a cabal of elites working behind the scenes to orchestrate global events and enslave the global populace.'²⁵ The wealth of certain Jewish families and the perception that Jewish people work in finance work together to 'confirm' this theory for antisemitic conspiracists.²⁶ Kanye West states that Jewish producers in Hollywood silence him, perhaps not knowing that society created Jewish affluence during Jewish vocational segregation. This belief that Jewish people control the world is known historically as 'Judeo-Bolshevism' and has existed in the west for centuries.²⁷ Many scholars have discussed the rise of antisemitism through the 'scapegoat theory', which is how Jewish people in various societies have served as 'convenient targets for the majorities problems.'²⁸ In the Middle Ages, Europeans blamed Jewish people for the Black Plague, accused them of poisoning wells, and understood them as the carriers of disease, resulting in Jewish communities' burning and massacring.²⁹ This theme will emerge across European history; as many other scholars have pointed out, antisemitism, like conspiracy thinking, tends to appear during political, economic and societal uncertainty. Brustein and King struggle to validate scapegoat as a viable theory across all societies; however, it works within Europe and the United States.³⁰ Brustein states that scapegoat fails to inform us why Jews were thwarted as opposed to other minorities during national distress.³¹ Still, I argue that in the United States, this is not the case due to the cultural fear of elitism, which causes antisemitism to be less 'rooted in religion or contempt' but more to do with 'envy, jealousy and fear' of Jewish affluence, and the hidden power of Jewish money.³²

Despite the debate regarding antisemitism and conspiracy theories being an either-or situation, I point to the fact that European antisemitism was essentially imported alongside Jewish migrants into America. Whilst America may not have the same documented history as Europe, the traits that antisemites justify their hatred with seem to emerge in American society immediately following Jewish migration. Jewish communities have existed in America since colonial time with many creating the same European private and civically unrecognised local, regional and sometimes international networks to facilitate marriage and business ties.³³ Indeed, Jewish people 'continued to live like outsiders' and became the target of 'racial tropes' due to their 'religious practice, unique accents and surnames.'³⁴ Many came to 'the land of the free' because of economic hardships and European persecution.³⁵ When they settled, they chose to settle in communities close to one another not only because that is what the Torah teaches but also because of centuries of being forcibly ostracised from mainstream society, which did not end in America.³⁶ Dutch colonial governor Peter Stuyvesant petitioned the removal of Jewish migrants from new Amsterdam because they were 'the deceitful race— such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ.'³⁷ Attempting to disallow entry into the country, Stuyvesant successfully seized Jewish refugees' property and banned them from building synagogues or practising their religion.³⁸

This early example of American antisemitism demonstrates the intertwined relationship between Europe and early colonial America. Suppose we are to understand the United States as being 'founded',

and one uses that term very sparingly by Europeans. In that case, it makes sense that some foundations have been corrupted by centuries-old European antisemitism. This continued to prevail during mass migration between 1881 and 1914 when around two million Jewish people emigrated to America. However, this time they flourished, quickly establishing businesses' and communities. Unfortunately, this only set the stage for 'scapegoat theory' and 'white replacement' during economic despair and political hardship. It was easier to blame the elitist Jewish bankers for the downtown of the economy than comprehend the failures of capitalism.

Antisemitism in Contemporary American Conspiracy Theories

Conspiracy thinking thrives in moments of political insecurity, and after only a mere twenty years post-revolution America proved an ideal breeding ground. Moving into the unknown under a new empire when paired with America's deep-rooted puritan heritage and distrust of European institutions, led conspiracy thinking to thrive.³⁹ The first example of a 'home grown conspiracy' was that of the anti-masonry movement during the nineteenth century, and whilst some scholars insist that this is not antisemitic but rather a distrust of elitism, one is inclined to disagree.⁴⁰ Although mason groups disallowed Jewish people across Europe and America, the few who joined experienced antisemitism from other members which sparked the emergence of Jewish-only fraternity groups.⁴¹ Broader societal perceptions further perpetuated this antisemitism as 'both antisemites and those opposed to free-masonry argued that Jews manipulated Masonic ideology and international connections for nefarious purposes.'⁴² This is perhaps why anti-masonry distrust becomes elevated to new heights, with masonries becoming 'one of the greatest evils.'⁴³ We also see the emergence of centuries-old antisemitic language, as masonries are now 'an engine of satan' with its members being 'enemies of the human race.'⁴⁴ We have, of course, seen how Jewish people have been called these same names for centuries, and the overlap between 'anti-elitism' and antisemitism is striking. Regardless of whether the masons were Jewish, they were charged with being 'the front men for the Jews' who instead 'preferred to remain inconspicuous.'⁴⁵

Secret elitism would become an ongoing theme within American antisemitism, evidenced in the silver conspiracy theory which insisted a 'cabal of coastal political elites and bankers' had driven the demonetisation of silver in the coinage act of 1873.⁴⁶ During this time, banker was a term for Jewish people. The silver theory marked the start of the international money power conspiracy, which targeted 'Jewish bankers in general and the Rothschilds in particular.'⁴⁷ Contemporary discussions lean on centuries-old dehumanisation, debasement and zoomorphism, stating that Money Power hoped to 'fix its tentacles wherever the foot of industry (or oil) treads.'⁴⁸ Tentacles, or the octopus, is an ongoing antisemitic depiction, as seen by the 1938 Seppla cartoon depicting Churchill as a Zionist (See Figure 1)⁴⁹, the lithograph taken from Musée Des Horreurs (See Figure 2), and the Rothschild octopus depicted in Coin's Financial School in 1894 (See Figure 3)⁵⁰. Perhaps the most famous image is that of Standard Oil, which has its tentacles wrapped around

the United States Congress, a state house, and copper, steel and shipping industries (See Figure 4).⁵¹ It should be no surprise that John Rockefeller was Jewish. This antisemitic tentacle imagery has become intrinsically intertwined with anti-elitism and secret society conspiracy theories, making them innately antisemitic by nature.⁵² Most of the silver advocates during the 19th century used Jewish people as 'a rhetorical symbol for the ills of society and an economic system that was beyond the control of the average person,' which is interesting given that this is the same justification given to why people believe in conspiracy theories in the first place.⁵³ Once again demonstrating how antisemitism and conspiracy theories have been used to scapegoat social ills.

Indeed, of all theories during the nineteenth century, only the free silver 'began building an alternate reality narrative'— we see the emergence of the 'double burden of conspiracy thinking.'⁵⁴ This was catapulted to the centre stage by the fraudulent Protocols of the Elders of Zion in 1903 and the New World Order theory, which linked 'Jews and masons in a conspiracy to control the world' with influential industrialist Henry Ford sponsoring the document and supporting the allegations.⁵⁵ The impact of the Protocols cannot be understated, with modern belief in the validity of this document especially worrying. Secret society conspiracy beliefs, such as the Hollywood Illuminati, continue to emerge in present-day. Whilst they perhaps originated before Nazi Germany, many aspects of the Illuminati, Freemasonry, and a global Jewish elite were adopted into the Third Reich's propaganda, which arguably situates them now as antisemitic. Many conspiracy-curious people 'follow the trail of conspiracy articles which disturbingly often leads to the conclusion that our sinister rulers are at least disproportionately Jewish.'⁵⁶ This is not to suggest that all people who believe in the global control of the Illuminati are antisemitic, but when we engage in these discussions it seems perhaps due to centuries-old antisemitism that a disproportionate number of characters involved are Jewish. In other words, European societies blamed the Jews for economic and socio-political failings, so when antisemitism was imported by Jewish and European migration to America, it morphed into some elements of conspiratorial thinking under the new United States nation.

Contemporary antisemitic conspiracy beliefs take the shape of Holocaust denial, white replacement paranoia, and Jewish domination or globalisation. This is best demonstrated by the 2017 far-right Charlottesville protest, with many present chanting, 'you will not replace us! Jews will not replace us!'⁵⁷ More recently, many antisemites pushed theories online that the Covid19 vaccination was a tool for population control, with the Goyum Defense league spreading pamphlets across the US stating that 'every single aspect of the COVID agenda is Jewish.'⁵⁸ Whilst Kanye very explicitly states that his enemy is the Jews, many modern conspiracy theories hide behind the veil of plausible deniability, including president Donald Trump who insisted that 'Hillary Clinton meets in secret with international banks to plot the destruction of U.S. sovereignty' during his 2016 election campaign.⁵⁹ These accusations are marred by controversy, as many believe under Q-Anon that Trump is defending the world from a 'cabal of Satan worshipping child sex abusers.'⁶⁰ Whilst the anti-defamation league states most Q-Anon beliefs are unrelated to

antisemitism, the central architecture of the theory is the same.⁶¹ An April 2021 poll found that 49 per cent of Americans support or believe in QAnon and that the Protocols is an authentic document and that they agree with it.⁶² Moreover, 78 per cent of Americans who agree with Protocols also believe in Q-Anon, which is why Jewish scholars have pushed that the central archetype of Q-Anon conspiracy belief is antisemitic.⁶³ For centuries, Jewish people have been accused of worshipping Satan, child kidnapping, and being secret elites— not too dissimilar to what Q-Anon supporters believe Trump is fighting. Hiding behind conspiracy theories presents the same veil of plausible deniability. Donald Trump did not explicitly reference Jews, nor did the free silver movement; they both said bankers, but we know what they really meant.

Conclusion

It is crucial when discussing conspiracy theories to remember to move from the academic world towards reality. Antisemitism in America does not exist within an online bubble, although it oftentimes congregates there, it has dangerous real-world consequences. Many online trolls post about how George Soros, a wealthy Holocaust survivor, controls global wealth and wants to implement Jewish domination.⁶⁴ He is the online symbol of antisemitic hatred, but in 2018, a far-right agitator sent a bomb to his house.⁶⁵ Whilst he was unharmed, antisemitic hate crimes rose in 2022 across many major cities, with even smaller states seeing a 500 percent increase in the last six years.⁶⁶ Conspiracy thinking has become a vehicle to state antisemitic beliefs without consequence. I want to insist that more should be done to prevent right-wing, Q-Anon conspiracy believers from holding public office in America, but as we are all aware, this type of state censorship will only spur on conspiracy thinking further. It seems that conspiracy thinking will be a problem that America will have to contend with for many more decades, which was only made worse by Kanye's tweet. We have a new generation of children introduced to the antisemitic scapegoat theory, many entering a global recession on the backdrop of a worldwide pandemic, which sets a dangerous precedent for the future of America.

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Isobel dye American Studies,

A Comparative Study of Paratexts in *Utopia* and *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*

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This essay seeks to explore how, in Thomas More's *Utopia* and John Donne's *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (*Devotions*), certain paratexts assert authority over other textual components.¹ *Utopia*'s heterogeneous paratexts perform their encroachment upon the text. *Devotions* develops this relationship, staging conflict between paratextual control and authorial expression. This conflict occurs between the Latin preface and the text's prose sections. Restriction and expression are also in conflict in the form-content relationship of Donne's poetry, further elucidating paratextual control.

Paratextual transitions in early *Utopia* and *Devotions* editions reveal their difference: the rigid boundaries between paratexts in the 1624 publication of *Devotions* performs the authority of the Latin preface over Donne's authorial expression. Donne's dedicatory epistle expresses authorial intent and claims fatherhood over *Devotions*; 'I myself am born a father: this child of mine, this book comes into the world, from me, and with me' (*Devotions*, p.3). This sentence stages a concerted shift from the subjective 'I', given self-conscious reflexivity by 'myself', to the possessive 'mine', and finally the insistently repeated objective pronoun 'me'. Relinquishing subject for object pronouns enacts Donne's desire to become the text's object and for *Devotions* to 'preserve [the] memory' (*Devotions*, p.3) of him. Occurring gradually and painstakingly over an entire sentence, this shift implies resistance against authorial expression. This resistance comes from the epistle's confrontation with the impersonal Latin preface within the publication, which David Novarr notes is an 'arid outline of [Donne's] sickness' without his 'customary wit, drama and imagination'.²

The epistle and Latin preface's verso-recto confrontation in the 1624 publication of *Devotions* establishes an implicit hierarchy of paratexts (Figure 1). The Latin preface interrupts the two-page running head of 'The Epistle Dedicatorie' and truncates it to the one-page 'The Epistle, c.', performing the epistle ceding to the preface's fixed position.³ The epistle's content dutifully responds to this truncation, only running for nine more words on the verso before interrupting itself and shifting to the letter's complimentary close mid-way through a sentence. This complementary close is spread out down the page, enacting the aforesaid desire to distribute the self throughout the text, before coming into direct confrontation with the impersonal Latin preface, an effect emphasised by the close's right alignment. Another early print of *Devotions* in 1638, where the epistle reaches the bottom of the verso, demonstrates greater dissent against paratextual imposition.⁴ Here, the syllabic accumulation in the close between 'Highness' and 'devotedest' (*Devotions*, p. 3)

suggests growth that conflicts with the close's demoted, terminal position on the page. Thus, it is clear how paratextual authority over expression and a conflict between these textual components is performed here.

Donne's attitude towards print – 'actively shunn[ing]' it, according to Richard Wollman – further elucidates why the preface curtails expression.⁵ The preface is a typical print paratext, a contents page, enabling textual navigation through numbered sections. From a Donnean perspective, this different navigation 'multiplies the opportunity for misinterpretation' – Wollman notes that 'publishing in print' does this overall.⁶ Donne's usual 'manuscript transmission' between friends afforded him greater 'authorial control'.⁷ Wollman suggests that Donne values 'little [...] difference between the manuscript and the writer', mirroring his desire to become *Devotions*' object and to 'come into the world [...] with' it.⁸ The preface corrupts this desire, making him the object of a clinical gaze concerned with 'counteract[ing] the disease' and 'administer[ing]' medicines, according to Mary Arshagouni's translations.⁹ This further exemplifies print, conflicting with authorial expression and causing separation 'from the writer's actual voice'.¹⁰ The preface therefore conflicts with authorial expression as a symbol of print.

Utopia's comparatively fluid paratextual transitions perform paratexts encroaching upon the main text. The transition between More's letter to Giles and book one's titular paratexts in Froben's 1518 edition demonstrate this fluidity (Figure 2). The visual 'cinching' of More's letter mirrors Donne's stanza structure in 'A Valediction: of Weeping' ('VOW') in which two central lines are limited to three or four words.¹¹ In the first stanza, one of these confined words is 'Pregnant' (l.7), evoking a fullness that conflicts with the strictures of the stanza form. Continued evocation of abundance seems to resist this confinement; the following lines' cumulative couplet rhyme 'more' ('VOW', l.8) and 'bore' ('VOW', l.9) appears to lead the growth and extension of the lines. The same lines in the second stanza continue this conflict, resisting confinement through the rhyme 'grow' ('VOW', l.16) and 'overflow' ('VOW', l.17).

In *Utopia*, this 'cinching' heralds the 'main text' on the following page and thus represents the threshold between the paratextual and textual. The lack of a complimentary close in the letter hints at the continuation of the former and its encroachment upon the latter. More instead concludes with an abundant affection for Giles that expands out on the page following the narrow 'cinched' section, just as abundance allows Valediction's speaker to transcend restriction. Baker-Smith's edition translates this as, 'Keep me in your affection as you have been accustomed to do, since I'm fonder of you than ever' (*Utopia*, p.15). This edition thus appears to perform

successful passage through the threshold of paratext to text and subsequent encroachment onto the main text via More's interpersonal relationship. More's letter characterises this close relationship as that of co-editors, denying More's actual authorship of the text by stating that he only 'repeat[ed] verbatim' (*Utopia*, p.11) their discussions, and positioning him alongside Giles as merely recording that 'enquire[d] of Raphael' (*Utopia*, p.13). This relationship is therefore characterised by blurred boundaries between authorship and editorship, hinting that the ambiguously heterogenous editorial production of *Utopia* contributes to this fluid boundary between paratext and text, enabling this visual encroachment.

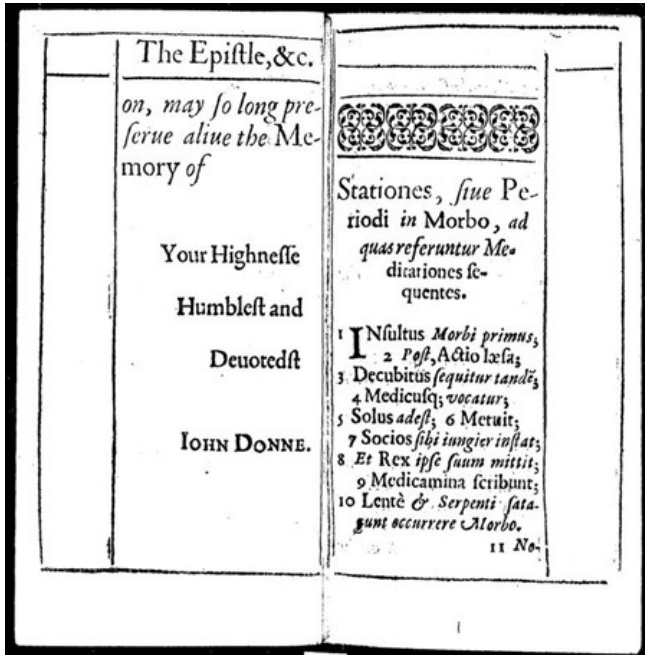
The recto further performs this encroachment, alongside an assertion of authority. The header image depicts Raphael in discussion with More and Giles towards the right, both visualising the discourse of book one and realising the latter two's textual encroachment. More's servant John Clement is on the left as if emerging from the letter on the verso. 'Clement' (*Utopia*, p.12) is first mentioned in the letter and walks towards the discourse of book one embodied by the three figures, thus assuming the role of visually enacting the letter's paratextual encroachment upon the main text. His depicted position and servant status match the conventional status of paratexts – Neil Rhodes notes 'as with other 'para- formations' [...] their situation is one of adjacency and their function auxiliary'.¹² The implicit delegation of the role of paratextual emissary to the social inferior Clement means that the More of the heading image also transcends this supposedly marginal paratextual position. These fluid paratextual transitions thus perform shifting hierarchies; More's letter is first performed as encroaching upon the text before the More of the heading image asserts an implicit authority over this prior textual component.

Paratextual authority is also exerted throughout the text in both *Utopia* and *Devotions*. In *Utopia*, the shift between the Utopian alphabet and 'notes in the margin', both paratexts claimed by Giles, demonstrates encroachment. Analysing what Helen Smith terms 'hierarchies on the page', the paratext of the alphabet positions the key of Utopian characters as vertically superior to the Latin translations below it.¹³ The language not only closely mirrors Latin, however, but also reflects More's idiolect. For example, the Utopian quatrain uses litotes in 'not unwillingly' (*Utopia*, p. 8), which, as Elizabeth McCutcheon notes 'recurs with great frequency in More's book'.¹⁴ Terrance Cave highlights that the Utopian construction exactly mirrors the structure of litotes; 'la (not) and uoluala (willingly) combine to form lauoluala (unwillingly)'.¹⁵ Thus, despite the vertical hierarchy 'on the page', which gives implicit deference to Utopian, Giles establishes an equivalency here between paratextual figures (individual and rhetorical) and the internal world of the main text. Giles' second paratext, the marginalia, adds to this pattern. Here, the marginal glosses actually create 'an impression of adjacency', as Neil Rhodes notes, and thus equivalency on the page.¹⁶ However, this veils the vertical hierarchy that some of them establish. Giles glosses both the Utopian notion of an 'immortal' 'soul' and their principle of being 'generous to yourself' (Giles, p. 80) by comparing it to an emphatically present day Christianity occurring 'these days' and 'today' (Giles, p. 142). Even though *Utopia* is an active society in

the narrative, Giles implicitly relegates it to history and thus claims a temporal superiority over *Utopia*. Thus, deference on the page veiling a claim to adjacency is replaced by adjacency on the page veiling a claim to superiority, enacting a paratextual encroachment that gradually asserts authority over the internal world of the main text.

Devotions' Latin paratext also exerts temporal authority over the main text: the preface is a poem in a regular metre – 'dactylic hexameters' according to Joan Webber – and thus possesses a distinct temporality to the text's Emergent Occasions.¹⁷ This conflicts with and, through its privileged prefatory positioning, threatens to replace Donne's prose contemplations of his sickness. *Devotions* performs resistance against this temporal truncation. In the final sentence of an expostulation, and thus approaching a prayer, both sections paratextually imposed under each subtitle of the preface, Donne invokes increasing degrees of temporal granularity, stating that God renews his mercy 'not yearly, nor quarterly, but hourly, and quarterly; every minute' (*Devotions*, p. 10). This passage's long-windedness through cumulative scaling down of time seems to resist the immediately approaching paratext which confines Donne's expression within a temporality predetermined by the preface. This conflict is also staged between English translations of the Latin subtitles. In a section about the disease's progression, what Arshagouni translates as 'steals on imperceptibly as a snake' and 'hasten to counteract' (Arshagouni, p.207), Donne translates as 'steals on insensibly' and 'endeavour to meet', removing the urgency of the snake metaphor and 'hasten', resisting the paratextually imposed truncated temporality. This conflict between expression and restriction in translation contrasts the ideal of translation constructed by Giles' alphabet which foreruns paratextual encroachment. Such conflict is only evident in *Utopia* in competing paratextual claims for authority. For example, despite Giles taking credit for the marginal notes, Froben's frontispiece (Figure 3) depicts cherubs seizing the margins of the text as if to make an overlapping claim on this privileged textual space.

This essay has sought to argue that *Utopia* and *Devotions* represent different stages in the development of early modern paratexts. *Utopia's* paratexts seem engaged in justifying their positions as novel textual additions in the early decades of print culture. Meanwhile, *Devotions'* paratextual conflicts, emerging roughly a century later, perform how such additions might affect expression.



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Fig. 1. Donne, *Devotions*, printed for Thomas Iones, img. 5.

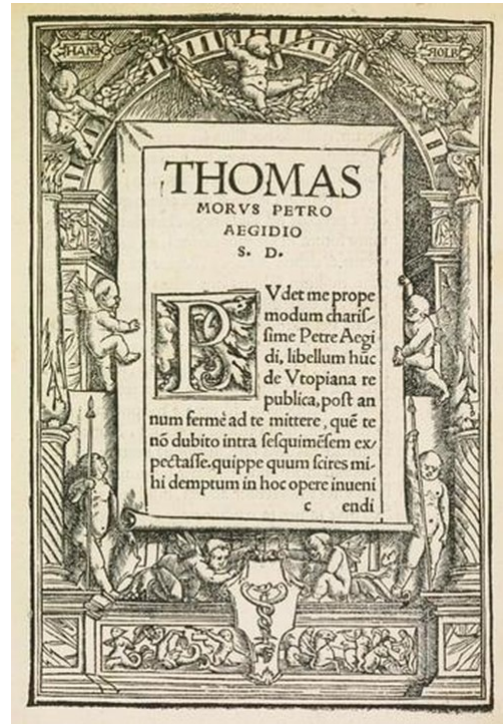


Fig. 3. Royal Collection Trust <<https://www.rct.uk/collection/1086970/utopia>> [Accessed 9 Jan 2023].

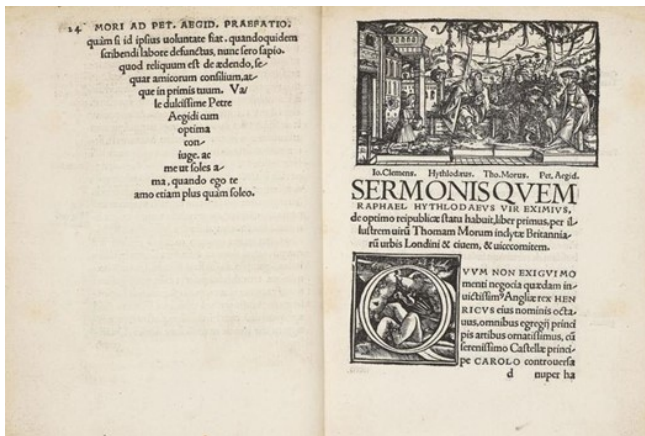


Fig. 2. Royal Collection Trust <<https://www.rct.uk/collection/1086970/utopia>> [Accessed 9 Jan 2023].

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¹⁵ Terrance Cave, *Thomas More's Utopia in Early Modern Europe: Paratexts and Contexts* (Manchester University Press, 2008) p.21.

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