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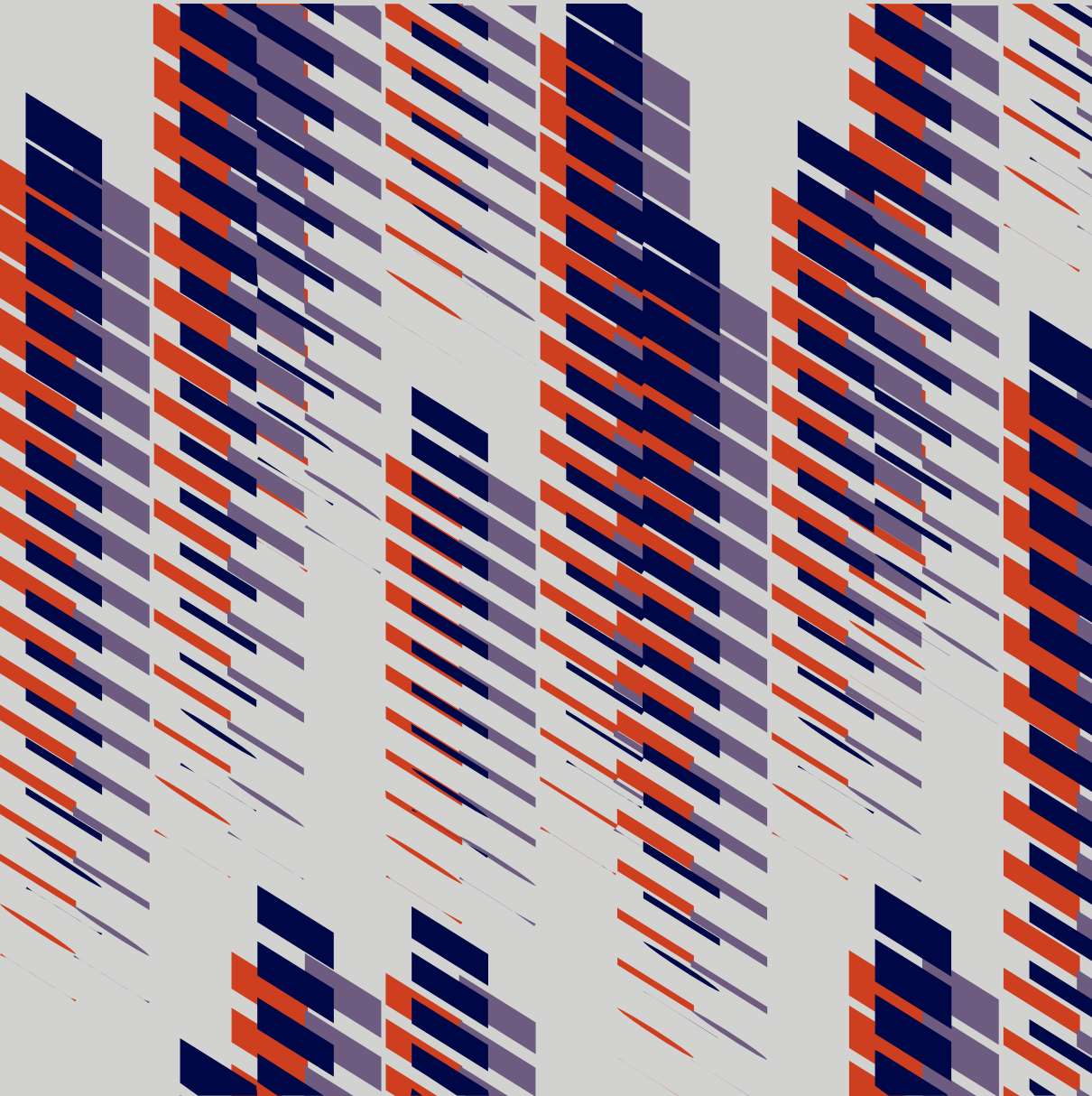

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MISCELLANY

Adaptation in the Eighteenth Century

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An Age of Adaptations: The Eighteenth Century

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Keywords Adaptation. Eighteenth century. Practices. Theories. Interpretations.

Summary 1 Rethinking Adaptation in the Eighteenth Century. – 2 The Essays in This Journal's Monograph Section.

1 Rethinking Adaptation in the Eighteenth Century

In the introduction to a recent collection of essays titled *The Scandal of Adaptation*, Thomas Leitch, a leading authority in the field of adaptation studies, presents the concept of 'scandal' as the key to interpreting adaptation practices and their common reception. Adaptation, whether from novel to film, theatre to television, or across other media, has long been accused of 'betraying' its source, and it is precisely this accusation that renders it scandalous. To adapt means inevitably to adulterate, to contaminate, to bend a text to new historical, social, or medial contexts. Leitch emphasises that audiences and critics react with outrage not simply when adaptations are mediocre, but when they dare to subvert, overturn, or reveal what was implicit, hidden, or repressed in the source text. Scandal, therefore, is not an accidental effect but the very engine of cultural reception and renewal. Leitch insists that there are no 'pure' adaptations: every transposition is a hybridisation that destabilises

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cultural hierarchies, aesthetic canons, and dominant values. For Leitch, acknowledging scandal as the constitutive principle of adaptation means accepting that creativity lies not in fidelity but in the ongoing potential for rewriting, contamination, and even cultural betrayal (Leitch 2023).

Adaptation studies reveal themselves as a field marked by a plurality of definitions and conceptual frameworks. Scholars have approached adaptation not as a single, stable phenomenon but as a multifaceted practice that can be understood in several complementary ways: as a process through which texts, stories, or cultural forms are reconfigured in response to new contexts; as a product, the concrete work that emerges from this process and enters into a network of relations with its sources; and as a mode of reception, in which audiences actively reinterpret and reshape meanings across media and historical circumstances (see Corrigan 2017). These perspectives have been articulated and refined by several theorists in the field. Linda Hutcheon famously described adaptation as both a process and a product while also emphasising the role of audiences and the "pleasures of adaptation" (Hutcheon 2013, 114-20); and other scholars have pushed the field beyond moralistic debates about fidelity toward models of intertextuality and dialogism (for an overview, see Leitch 2017). Together, these approaches connect adaptation studies to broader theoretical paradigms, from biological and evolutionary models of change to debates about intertextual and transmedial frameworks that emphasise circulation, transformation, and cultural negotiation.

Yet, long before the emergence of modern adaptation studies, eighteenth-century literary culture had already developed a rich repertoire of adaptive practices. As Timothy Corrigan notes, the conceptual roots of these discussions reach even further back. Reflections on adaptation can already be traced to the eighteenth century, when Giambattista Vico, in *The New Science*, described the emergence of poetry and myth as a form of adaptive translation of the natural world into human language and narrative (Corrigan 2017, 17). Glenn Jellenik, too, emphasises the importance of eighteenth-century practices and ideas in shaping the modern notion of adaptation. He argues that the category of "adaptation as such"[1] emerged during the early Romantic period, when texts began to be consciously read and evaluated in relation to identifiable sources. In this context, adaptation came to signify the deliberate reworking of an existing text for new audiences, genres, or media, a practice encouraged by

1 Jellenik uses the term 'simple abstraction', borrowing it from Michael McKeon who had adapted it from Karl Marx. It denotes "a stabilization of terminology, the point at which a term becomes a portable, reliable signifier in a culture" (Jellenik 2017, 50).

the rapid expansion of the literary marketplace and the growing circulation of novels and theatrical productions. At the same time, critics began to formulate what would become the dominant framework for evaluating adaptations: fidelity criticism, which assessed an adaptation according to its faithfulness to the source text. Jellenik traces the origins of this critical approach to the debates surrounding George Colman's 1796 play *The Iron Chest*, adapted from William Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams*, and John Litchfield's comparative analysis of the play and its source (Jellenik 2017).

Comparable anxieties about textual borrowing were already visible in the long eighteenth-century literary debates. Literary magazines and scholars denounced imitation or 'plagiarism' to construct literary hierarchies (Brandtzæg 2015). John Ferriar's famous investigation of Laurence Sterne's borrowings in *Tristram Shandy*, published at the turn of the nineteenth century, confirms the suspicious attitude towards novelistic imitation and adaptation. At the same time, those debates illuminate the narrative practices of eighteenth-century novelists themselves. *Tristram Shandy* exemplifies a mode of writing that freely recombines earlier texts while transforming them through irony and narrative self-reflexivity (Keymer 2002). As Richard Terry notes, Sterne's reputation eventually came to embody the paradox that an author might be both a 'plagiarist' and a creative genius (Terry 2010, 159-64). The very 'afterlife' of Sterne's fiction in the many adaptations it inspired illustrates how eighteenth-century texts rapidly entered a wider culture of imitation and transformation. As Mary Newbould's extensive study of *Sterneana* demonstrates, *Tristram Shandy and A Sentimental Journey* generated an extensive body of sequels, parodies, theatrical pieces, visual images, and other cultural responses from the 1760s onwards, revealing how adaptation functioned as a central mechanism through which readers and writers engaged with popular texts, extending beyond simple transtextuality into broader forms of transmedial reception and recreation (Newbould 2016).[2]

Concerns about imitation, transformation, and the relation between originals and derivatives were already central to early modern and Enlightenment criticism. Kamilla Elliott observes how adaptation, which was widely accepted in earlier artistic traditions as a legitimate and productive artistic practice, from the middle eighteenth century onward increasingly came under suspicion as theories of originality,

2 As Ariane Hudelet observes in her discussion of recent screen adaptations of Austen and Sterne, contemporary metafictional works such as Emma Campbell Webster's and Guy Andrews's *Lost in Austen*, or Michael Winterbottom's *A Cock and Bull Story*, similarly play with the conventions of adaptation itself, reflecting on reception, mediation, and the impossibility of producing a definitive or 'faithful' version of a literary text (Hudelet 2012; see also Seager 2018, Nagle 2021, and Monaghan, Hudelet, Wiltshire 2009).

medium specificity, and aesthetic autonomy gained influence. Modern adaptation studies are, in fact, revisiting problems that were already being discussed in the long eighteenth-century criticism (Elliott 2020, 33-88). A particularly visible field for eighteenth-century debates on the role of transformation of original texts was the adaptation of Shakespeare on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage. As Jean I. Marsden has shown, between 1660 and the late eighteenth century Shakespeare's plays were repeatedly rewritten, expanded, or reshaped by playwrights such as Nahum Tate, Colley Cibber, David Garrick, and others, producing many adaptations that altered plots, characters, and endings. Those transformations, far from indicating irreverence toward Shakespeare, reveal a period in which dramatic texts were treated as flexible materials that could be reworked to suit new theatrical conventions and critical expectations (Marsden 1995).

Sharon R. Harrow and Kirsten T. Saxton (2020), too, relocate adaptation within a longer cultural history, by insisting that 'adaptation' is not a late-twentieth-century media phenomenon so much as a persistent mode of cultural production. They begin from the observation that we now live in a conspicuously adaptive environment, made of 'remix culture', transmedial storytelling, proliferating digital genres, alongside revived analogical objects. This emphasis on contemporary practices is counterweighted by a historical claim: eighteenth-century England and France were themselves a "golden age of adaptation", in which texts and forms routinely moved across genres and platforms: classical epics were remade as mock-heroic poems, life writing was refashioned into novels, novels were transformed into plays, and unauthorised sequels started to multiply in the new literary marketplace. What contemporary audiences sometimes condemn as adulteration or contamination (the 'scandal' of adaptation, as we have seen) is, in their framing, also a constitutive feature of eighteenth-century literary culture. This is why, for Harrow and Saxton, the extraordinary modern visibility of eighteenth-century source material – from consumer products and comics to films, streaming series, mashups, fan fiction, theatre, and web serials – does not mark a rupture with the past but constitutes a historical repetition. They underline that certain works from the period have become so endlessly reworked that they function as cultural referents even for readers who have never encountered the 'original'. In other words, adaptation can be understood as a mode of cultural memory, in which repeated retellings can make an earlier narrative structure 'legible' as a shared template, available for reuse and dispute. As Marsha Kinder and Beverle Houston suggest, adaptation may itself function as a form of historical criticism, simultaneously preserving elements of the source, exploiting the affordances of a new medium, and reinterpreting the work for a different historical moment (1977, 484-92).

Thus, Harrow and Saxton's most forceful justification for returning to the eighteenth century is not only aesthetic but also historical: the age supplies archives of modernity that continue to shape Western institutions and imaginations. They list, among other transformations, scientific and technological innovation, revolutions and resistance, capitalistic and imperial enterprises, expanding and contracting regimes of rights, widened access to authorship and reading, and changing accounts of selfhood and the limits of the human (on which see Nussbaum 2003). On this view, adaptation is not only a matter of aesthetic variation but a means of making historical continuities visible: many contemporary adaptations refer to eighteenth-century writing to locate genealogies of present concerns, such as free speech, gender, identity, nationalism, race, rights, sexuality (see Brett, Coker 2020). Harrow and Saxton also align themselves with the strand of adaptation studies that displaces fidelity as the central question of the relationship between source and target texts, as we have seen. Following Hutcheon, they emphasise the need to liberate adaptation from the moral language of infidelity and to treat adaptation as promiscuous, multigeneric, and multilevel, operating not only in literature/film pairings but across a variety of media. Yet, they add a historically suggestive twist: they point out that eighteenth-century writings already demonstrate adaptation as a vital site of scholarly inquiry, implying that some of what modern theory presents as new – especially the move away from purity/fidelity and toward adaptation as a pervasive mode – has a prehistory in Restoration and Enlightenment aesthetic practice (Harrow, Saxton 2020).

Alexondra Hultquist's chapter in Harrow and Saxton's collection locates adaptation as a critical and aesthetic practice *within* the long eighteenth century, where creativity and alteration in translation and adaptation were often taken for granted as necessary for clear communication. Hultquist extends and substantiates Harrow and Saxton's historical framing by showing that, in the long eighteenth century, adaptation (especially through translation) was widely understood as a legitimate form of authorship grounded in purposeful alteration rather than literal transfer. Drawing on Georges L. Bastin's portmanteau notion of "tradaptation" (Bastin 1997, 8), Hultquist treats translation and adaptation as a continuum in which 'faithfulness' often required re-creation: reshaping idiom, tone, incident, and even structure to make a work intelligible and effective in a new linguistic and cultural setting. John Dryden's influential description of translation as 'metaphrase', 'paraphrase' (or 'translation with latitude'), and imitation represented a contemporary framework for understanding adaptation as a spectrum ranging from close rendering to overt re-making (Hultquist 2020, 130-1). This framework reframed 'infidelity' not as betrayal but as method.

Translation discourse is also a discourse of gender and authority. The trope of *belles infidèles* feminises translation/adaptation as aesthetically seductive but morally suspect, revealing how cultural ideas of defect, dependence, and propriety shape what counts as legitimate textual labour. Yet women writers were central adaptors, and Hultquist foregrounds how their prefaces and dedications articulate an alternative standard: the goal is not slavish adherence to the letter but access to the author's 'spirit' or 'soul'. Eliza Haywood, in the preface to *The Virtuous Villager* (1742), rejects "slavish adherence" and argues that translation demands capacity, judgement, and imaginative entrance into the author's mind, making translation an interpretive expertise (Hultquist 2020, 132). Eighteenth-century texts often existed in serial adaptive chains: Behn's *Oroonoko* moved rapidly into stage versions (notably, by Thomas Southerne), and narratives such as *Abelard and Heloise* proliferated across poetry and drama. Together, those examples show how eighteenth-century adaptation became routine cultural production: creative, theory-aware, and openly premised on transformative change. If translation and imitation reveal adaptation at the level of linguistic and textual practice, the circulation of fiction in the eighteenth-century literary marketplace shows how adaptation also functioned as a mechanism of cultural reproduction and expansion.

A closely related emphasis on eighteenth-century adaptation appears in Daniel Cook and Nicholas Seager's 2015 collection of essays, *The Afterlives of Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, which approaches eighteenth-century writing not as a stable set of originals but as works whose meanings and cultural force are continually produced through what they call their 'afterlives'. This notion names a field that is wider than reception in its narrow sense, as it includes the ways texts persist by being taken up, reshaped, and repurposed in new forms and contexts, often through creative transformation rather than passive or critical response. This matters for an argument about eighteenth-century adaptation, because Cook and Seager treat rewriting, imitation, abridgement, dramatic conversion, and other forms of reuse as evidence of a text's ongoing vitality, not as secondary or merely derivative phenomena. Their examples repeatedly show fiction generating a proliferation of "uninvited appropriations" and rival versions (notably, with Richardson's *Pamela*, as we shall see below), while also inviting metaphors of lineage and literary offspring. Southerne, in the dedication to his rewriting of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* for the theatre, imagines the stage as a means of reviving her prose, so that adaptation becomes a mode of cultural promotion as well as transformation. Moreover, they confirm that adaptation works also in terms of cultural memory, when they quote Clara Reeve's statement that "Mrs. Behn will not be forgotten, so long as the *Tragedy of Oroonoko* is acted" (Cook, Seager 2015, 6).

Daniel Cook carries on the argument that the eighteenth century is the age of appropriation and adaptation: he begins from the premise that the long eighteenth century "abounded in appropriative texts" (Cook 2015, 20) and immediately frames that abundance as both cross-generic and cross-medial: Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* is smuggled into bawdier parody (Giles Jacob's *The Rape of the Smock*); unfinished plays are absorbed and re-voiced (Cibber with Vanbrugh's *The Provok'd Husband*); Burney's *Evelina* reworks an earlier, destroyed draft; and works like *Gulliver's Travels* are followed by "Lilliputian verses" in the periodical press (on this, see also Goring 2015). Most tellingly, Cook treats the 'Pamela phenomenon' as a concentrated demonstration of eighteenth-century adaptive energy. Within a year of Richardson's novel, a significant number of rewritings appeared (*Shamela*, *Anti-Pamela*, *The True Anti-Pamela*, *Pamela Versified*), followed by rapid movement across performance forms, as theatrical *Pamela* was adapted again as an opera (see Kreissman 1960). Adaptation here is not a late afterlife but an almost immediate mode of participation in the fiction's multiple meanings and in its market.

Cook connects these practices to the period's unstable author-function. Anonymity and pseudonymity were not exceptions but norms. Marketing frequently employed phrases like "By the author of …", fostering an environment where texts could be easily expanded, modified, and even misattributed. In contrast to the contemporary view of authorship as ownership, fiction consistently defied finality and welcomed sequels, continuations, and editorial contributions. In a competing "economy of scarcity", in which authors imagined their works under threat, adaptations provided an "economy of abundance", in which plots and characters "circulate[d] freely" (Cook 2015, 22). Read in these terms, eighteenth-century adaptation was a contested cultural mechanism that kept texts alive by making them disputable and permanently available for further writing. The competitiveness of this mechanism made the notion of adaptation itself multifarious, multitasking, and inherently ambiguous. This ambiguity is reflected in the "terminological slippage, theoretical unsettledness and methodological uncertainty" of the eighteenth-century appropriative notions, a situation that partly reflected the wide range of adaptive practices characteristic of the period (see Jones, Løfaldli 2015).

A book such as Kevin L. Cope and Samara Anne Cahill's *Citizens of the World: Adapting in the Eighteenth Century* (2015) extends the scope of adaptation beyond textual rewriting toward what Linda Hutcheon describes as processes of "transculturation", in which a story or cultural object moves from one cultural context to another, often changing language, setting, historical moment, and political meaning as it enters a new interpretive environment

(Hutcheon 2016, 145-53). From this perspective, eighteenth-century adaptation cannot be confined to literary rewriting alone but appears as a broader cultural strategy of transformation and survival. As Samara Anne Cahill notes in the preface to the volume (Cope, Cahill 2015, xiii-xxiv), adaptation represents a dynamic negotiation between preservation and innovation, a process through which knowledge and cultural forms remain viable by responding to changing historical and environmental pressures. David Fairer's introductory essay in the same collection situates this dynamic within an ecological and intellectual history of the Enlightenment, arguing that eighteenth-century writers increasingly moved away from earlier theological notions of 'fitness' toward a conception of adaptation as active responsiveness to circumstance. Satirists and artists such as Jonathan Swift and William Hogarth, for instance, challenged the complacent belief in a harmonious natural order by exposing the instability and moral malleability of human society, while georgic and pastoral poetry imagined human labour as a continual process of adjusting to the rigours of nature. In these works, adaptation becomes a form of creative labour: a way of negotiating between continuity and change, between inherited forms and new historical realities (Cope, Cahill 2015, xxv-xlviii). In his concluding essay, Kevin Cope pushes this insight further by portraying the Enlightenment as an age that repeatedly transformed crisis into adaptive creativity. His survey moves across literary forms, architecture, religion, and natural philosophy: the mock-heroic mode, for instance, demonstrates how epic conventions could be adapted to ordinary subjects, blurring the line between parody and formal homage; architectural innovations associated with figures such as Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, and John Vanbrugh show how English architecture adapted classical models to the dramatic dynamism of the baroque and of the new environments; and eighteenth-century reflections on natural disaster and environmental instability encouraged thinkers to view catastrophe itself as a stimulus to new forms of inquiry (Cope, Cahill 2015, 127-50).

Taken in this broader perspective**,** these examples suggest that adaptation in the eighteenth century was not merely a literary technique but a broader cultural disposition, a mixture of optimism and determinism that treated instability, experimentation, and hybridisation as conditions of intellectual survival. Adaptation was rarely a single, isolated act, such as a later text based on an earlier one. More often, it worked as a system: a set of compositional routines and cultural expectations that made writing, reading, and even consuming objects feel like forms of rewriting or repurposing**.** The essays collected in this journal approach these dynamics from various angles, moving from Scriblerian satire to Quixotic reader-education, lexicographical compilation, serial print culture, and

finally the migration of narrative into furnishings. They propose that adaptation is both a practice of textual reuse and an aesthetic-poetic-cultural attitude that structures how knowledge, taste, and ideology circulate.[3]

2 The Essays in This Journal's Monograph Section

This monograph section opens with Judith Hawley's "Petty Differences: Hobby Horses, Pacing Saddles, Cane Chairs, and The Transmission and Transformation of Knowledge in *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* and *Tristram Shandy*", whose subject matter is the Scriblerus Club and its afterlives; continues with Alfredo Moro's "Towards an Enlightened Readership: *Don Quixote*, the European Cervantean Tradition and the Novel of the German Enlightenment", which considers the English Cervantean tradition as it feeds into German Enlightenment fiction; then Giovanni Iamartino's "Adapting and Rewriting in Eighteenth-Century British Lexicography", which relocates adaptation into the period's 'age of dictionaries'; Mary Newbould's "Serialization as Adaptation in Later Eighteenth-Century Magazines and Newspapers: Sternean Sentimental Journeys", which shows how late-century magazines and newspapers made adaptation feel native to the press, with serial fiction beginning in 1770 and flowering through the 1780s; and it closes with Helen Williams's "Literary Adaptation and the Fabric of Colonialism: *Paul et Virginie* on Printed Textiles", according to which the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century are the key periods in which narrative was adapted into domestic objects, such as printed cottons that 'read' like political and aesthetic arguments.

What binds these essays is not only that each explores rewriting, but also how each redefines 'originality' as something born of adaptation. Adaptation is not merely derivative but a technique for critiquing rival knowledges, training readers, packaging authority for new users, meeting the commercial and formal demands of serial publication, and domesticating colonial politics in material form. Together, the essays portray the eighteenth century less as a culture anxiously protecting originality and uniqueness, and more as one that sees creativity as strategic transformation. This change

3 All five essays were originally presented by their authors at the conference "Adapting and Rewriting in the Age of the Enlightenment", organised at Ca' Foscari University, Venice, in November 2024. The conference was part of the Department of Linguistics and Comparative Cultural Studies' programme on Adaptation, supported by the Italian Ministry of University through its 'Department of Excellence' programme. It was curated by the author of this Introduction together with Benedetta Burgio, Magda Campanini, Emma Quiriconi, Alice Tartari, and Erica Vianello.

is sometimes open, sometimes masked as compilation, imitation, editorial improvement, or simply as the medium's affordance.

Judith Hawley's essay begins by narrowing the scale at which we usually imagine adaptation. Her argument does not concern large-scale rewriting but the minute acts of transformation, such as changes in punctuation, phrasing, attribution, or context, which nevertheless recast meaning. These "petty differences" allow Hawley to connect Scriblerian satire and Sterne's fiction as two forms of what she calls copious intertextuality. Both the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* and *Tristram Shandy*, loosely indebted to *Don Quixote*, incorporate a wide range of earlier materials, from Renaissance writers such as Rabelais and Burton to contemporary scientific discourse, transplanting forms of knowledge into comic narrative where their claims to authority can be tested and mocked.

Hawley frames this process through a productive tension between continuity and transformation: adaptation preserves the recognisability of its source while altering its function through recontextualisation. Sometimes the source text changes very little, yet its new placement radically shifts interpretation, a phenomenon she illustrates through Jorge Luis Borges's fictional essay "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*", in which a twentieth-century writer reproduces passages identical to Cervantes's text but acquiring entirely new meanings, because they are written in a different historical moment. The essay thus traces two related adaptive logics. Scriblerian satire works through comic re-attribution, turning scholarly texts or editorial interventions, such as Bentley's 'improvements' to Milton, into evidence of pedantry or intellectual absurdity. Sterne, by contrast, adapts his sources 'in the spirit' rather than against them: through minute modifications, he transforms inherited material into new comic-philosophical arguments.

Ultimately, Hawley shows that such small-scale acts of textual adaptation serve as instruments of epistemic critique. By appropriating and reshaping the language and formats of scientific discourse, Scriblerian writers expose the entanglement of knowledge, authority, and power. An example of this is their treatment of projects such as William Petty's "pacing saddle", a lightweight carriage designed by the seventeenth-century economist and political theorist as part of his wider schemes of 'political arithmetic'. Adaptation thus emerges not merely as literary borrowing but as a means through which eighteenth-century literature absorbs and reconfigures contemporary intellectual practices.

Alfredo Moro expands the frame to Europe, presenting adaptation as both a transnational current and a form of cultural pedagogy. Focusing on the eighteenth-century Cervantean reception, he argues that Quixotism was adapted not simply to depict delusion but to dramatise the dangers of misguided reading. In this perspective,

adaptation becomes a means of cultivating what Moro calls an "enlightened readership": readers capable of recognising narrative mediation, resisting naïve immersion in romance, and approaching fiction with reflective awareness.

Moro develops this argument through the case of Christoph Martin Wieland's *Die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva* (1764), often regarded as a foundational work of the modern German novel. Rather than accepting the idea of a single origin, Moro situates Wieland's novel within a wider European network of Cervantean adaptations, including earlier German works such as Wilhelm Ehrenfried Neugebauer's *Der teutsche Don Quichotte* (1753) as well as French and British influences. English fiction plays a particularly important mediating role in this circulation: writers such as Henry Fielding and Sterne refined Cervantes's narrative strategies – intrusive narration, playful mediation, and self-conscious commentary – into techniques for guiding and correcting the reader's response to fiction. Within this tradition, Quixotism became a narrative device for exploring how readers learn to distinguish imaginative pleasure from critical judgment. Wieland's novel, Moro suggests, operates through a "double educational pattern": while the protagonist learns to overcome his delusive reading habits, the narrative simultaneously trains its audience to read more critically through the metafictional devices Wieland absorbed from the Cervantean tradition of reception and adaptation. Moro's chapter shows how the Cervantean archive functioned on a larger cultural scale: not only as a repertoire of motifs but as a narrative technology for shaping Enlightened reading practices.

After Hawley and Moro have established adaptation as both small-scale technique and transnational tradition, Iamartino expands the field to lexicography. His essay begins from the striking observation that adaptation studies have rarely considered dictionaries, even though dictionary-making is one of the genres most systematically shaped by adaptive practices. Iamartino first revisits the debate over plagiarism and originality, which, as we have seen, lies at the heart of late eighteenth-century theoretical discussions of adaptation. As earlier historians of lexicography observed, the best lexicographers were often "the most discriminating plagiarist[s]", assembling and refining materials drawn from earlier works (Starnes, Noyes 1946, 183). Iamartino reframes lexicographical borrowing not as theft but as compilation. English lexicography developed through cumulative reuse: early dictionaries such as Robert Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall* (1604), Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* (1656), and Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721) provided successive models that were repeatedly expanded, translated, and reorganised. Dictionaries, Iamartino argues, therefore grew by accretion rather than innovation: new works built on earlier compilations, reshaping inherited lexical material for new users.

Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) provides the essay's central case study. Rather than treating Johnson's work as a final authority, Iamartino shows how it quickly entered a dynamic economy of adaptation. Across the later eighteenth century, the *Dictionary* was repeatedly revised, abridged, expanded, and repurposed for new audiences and markets, from Johnson's own revised editions to smaller 'common reader' dictionaries, annotated copies, pronunciation guides, and bilingual lexicons. Johnson's name itself became part of this adaptive economy, functioning as a commercial brand that guaranteed authority even when the text had been substantially altered. Iamartino's essay thus broadens the scope of adaptation studies by showing that eighteenth-century culture did not only adapt stories and genres but also the tools through which language itself was organised, standardised, and taught. Thus, lexicography becomes a revealing model of the century's adaptive logic: cumulative, practical, and deeply invested in transforming inherited material for new readers and new uses.

Mary Newbould's "Serialization as Adaptation in Later Eighteenth-Century Magazines and Newspapers: Sternean Sentimental Journeys" moves the discussion into the world of magazines and newspapers. Its central claim is that serialisation itself constitutes a form of adaptation: each instalment builds on the previous one, while serialised fiction in the press often absorbs and reshapes material already circulating elsewhere. In this sense, the serial does not simply disseminate a finished work but generates an ongoing adaptive process shaped by anonymity, reader feedback, commercial rivalry, and the proximity of fiction to other forms of print such as news, advertisements, and shipping reports.

Challenging the common assumption that serial fiction belongs primarily to the nineteenth century, Newbould shows that eighteenth-century authors such as Richardson and Sterne already exploited serial publication both strategically and aesthetically. Issuing works in instalments could shape narrative pacing and suspense, while also allowing authors to respond to readers' reactions. The press environment intensified this adaptive process: magazines encouraged writing that was simultaneously familiar and new, borrowing recognisable styles or titles while developing them in unexpected directions; widespread anonymity and pseudonymity made authorship fluid, reinforcing the dynamics of extendable authorship described earlier by Daniel Cook, and fierce competition among periodicals fostered practices of imitation, continuation, and piracy.

Newbould illustrates these dynamics through two examples. The first is *A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady*, the longest known serialised fiction in the *Lady's Magazine* (1770-77). Initially modelled closely on Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, the narrative gradually moved away from its source, using Sterne less as a template than as a stimulus

for further invention. The serial form thus turned adaptation into a process of gradual divergence and creative independence. Her second example, Leonard MacNally's journey narrative, inspired by Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, highlights the competitive context of newspaper serialisation. In fact, MacNally's instalments published in the *Public Ledger* were quickly copied and reprinted in rival papers such as the *Morning Herald*. Newbould's essay therefore reveals adaptation not simply as a relation between stable texts but as a process generated by the material conditions of eighteenth-century print culture. If Hawley emphasises minute textual transformations and Iamartino traces cumulative compilation, Newbould shows adaptation unfolding in real time, issue by issue, within a participatory print community where readers, editors, and rival publishers all shape the evolving text.

The final chapter in this section, Helen Williams's "Literary Adaptation and the Fabric of Colonialism: *Paul et Virginie* on Printed Textiles", shifts attention from print to fabric in order to trace the adaptation history of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788-89) across three printed textile designs (c.1795, 1802, 1818). Drawing on Jean-Michel Racault's description of an iconographic tradition that becomes practically autonomous from its literary source, Williams treats these textiles as part of the broader transmedia 'legend' of Paul and Virginie. Her central question is sharply political: as the narrative moves from text to fabric, does it preserve, amplify, or suppress the novel's ambiguous critique of slavery?

Williams argues that such objects must be included in literary history because material adaptations often function as important sites of reception and canon formation. Printed textiles, displayed as curtains, hangings, and upholstery, were encountered in domestic interiors and could be 'read' visually even by those who had not read the novel itself. In this way, they participated in shaping the cultural understanding of the story beyond the printed page. Her analysis focuses on three designs that reinterpret the narrative in distinct ways. The first, produced in Nantes probably around 1795, foregrounds scenes associated with enslaved fugitives and Maroon communities, visually emphasising themes of resistance and freedom. Williams reads this design as aligning the narrative with the revolutionary moment in which abolition had briefly become official policy, while also noting the paradox that the same textile industry was deeply entangled in the economic circuits of empire and the slave trade. A second design by Jean-Baptiste Huet, produced at Oberkampf's manufactory in 1802, presents a markedly different vision. Here the imagery removes slavery almost entirely from view: scenes of pastoral harmony, maternal tenderness, and tropical landscape transform the story into an idyllic colonial tableau, a "settler paradise" in which the violence of plantation society disappears. The third design, produced in 1818, partially restores

the presence of enslaved figures but recasts them within a stable colonial order, emphasising loyalty and service while obscuring the structures of coercion that underpin the narrative.

Williams's essay therefore demonstrates that objects beyond the book can reshape literary meaning. By translating Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's narrative into decorative fabric displayed within domestic interiors, those textiles represented and domesticated colonial experience, integrating the imperial ideology into everyday sociability. Adaptation here becomes tactile, spatial, and political: a process through which narratives are not only read but materially inhabited.

These five essays make a strong claim: adaptation is one of the eighteenth century's most characteristic ways of interpreting and re-creating. It appears in satire's petty textual tweaks and playful re-attributions (Hawley), in transnational genre forms that re-educate readers (Moro), in the accretive compilation of linguistic authority (Iamartino), in the serial press that generates texts through iterative rewriting (Newbould), and in transmedial domestic objects that translate and reinterpret ideology through what they display, and what they omit (Williams).

Together, these studies suggest that adaptation in the eighteenth century was not merely a secondary literary practice but a pervasive cultural logic through which texts, ideas, and objects circulated, transformed, and endured. Thus, the 'scandal' of adaptation appears, from an eighteenth-century perspective, less a scandal than a normal condition of cultural creativity.[4]

4 The author used AI-assisted tools during the preparation of this article for limited stylistic revision and to improve clarity of argumentation. All interpretations, arguments, and final wording remain the author's responsibility.

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Petty Differences
Hobby Horses, Pacing Saddles, Cane Chairs, and the Transmission and Transformation of Knowledge in *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* and *Tristram Shandy*

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Abstract This article considers the relations between literature and science in the Enlightenment by comparing how two intertextual and interdisciplinary texts adapt their sources. *The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* and *Tristram Shandy* are both loose adaptations of *Don Quixote* and treat the pursuit of knowledge as Quixotic quests. A striking feature of the adaptive practice of both Sterne and the Scriblerians is that sometimes the source text is barely changed at all. The difference might be petty. These authors test the definition of adaptation and raise questions about what happens to both the source and the new text when a fragment is adapted.

Keywords Literature and science. Tristram Shandy. The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus. Borges. Cervantes. Rabelais. William Petty.

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1 Preamble

In this essay I am riding one, or rather two, of my hobby horses: the relations between literature and science in the Enlightenment and between *The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* and *Tristram Shandy*.[1] The horsey theme is also a vehicle to transport me through my argument. My argument, it should be noted, does not concern wholesale adaptations of one work in another. However, both of the texts under discussion are loosely based on *Don Quixote* in that they have central characters – and, in the case of *Tristram Shandy*, numerous characters, including Tristram, Yorick, Walter, and Toby – who are embarked on Quixotic quests. The fact is that both texts adapt and incorporate numerous source texts; they are fully intertextual. Indeed, *The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* is one of the many sources for *Tristram Shandy* and they both draw on other Renaissance authors such as Robert Burton and François Rabelais.

Literary adaptation involves the translation or transformation of one work in another; it might involve substantial transformation but there must be some continuity, or the adaptation will constitute an entirely new work. The tension between continuity and change is, then, at the heart of adaptation. A striking feature of the adaptive practice of both Sterne and the Scriblerians is that sometimes the source text is barely changed at all. The difference might be petty. These authors test the definition of adaptation. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe their practice as allusion, borrowing or appropriation. Yet it is useful to include them in this wider discussion of adapting and rewriting in the age of Enlightenment because they raise questions about what happens to both the source and the new text when a fragment is adapted. Does the new version change the old?

A famous short story by Jorge Luis Borges, in which an adaptation which is not really an adaptation, helps clarify what is going on in the *Memoirs* and *Tristram Shandy*. In "Pierre Menard, Author of Quixote", first published in 1939, an imaginary French symbolist poet sets out to compose the original *Don Quixote* – not an adaptation – by becoming Cervantes:

> He did not want to compose *another Quixote* – which would be so easy – but *the Don Quixote*. It is unnecessary to add that his aim was never to produce a mechanical transcription of the original; he did not propose to copy it. His admirable ambition was to produce

1 I have touched on these themes before in, for example, Hawley 2009 and Hawley 2025. *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* was first published in *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose* (1741) but composed jointly over a number of years by a group of writers who included Jonathan Swift, Thomas Parnell, John Gay and John Arbuthnot. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* was published in instalments 1759-67.

> pages which would coincide – word for word and line for line – with those of Miguel de Cervantes. (Borges [1939] 1965, 45)

He becomes Cervantes by fully imagining himself a life in the Spanish golden age. Yet, he decides it is more interesting "to continue being Pierre Menard and to arrive at *Don Quixote* through the experiences of Pierre Menard" (46). By dint of extreme effort, he manages to compose short fragments of *Quixote* and, although they are identical to the original, the narrator of the story pronounces them to be richer in allusion because of the intervening years between the lives of Cervantes and Menard. The narrator is so inspired by the idea of the project that he starts reading Cervantes's text as if it were by Menard and it has much more resonance for him. The point here is that he is not changing the text but reading it as if it had a different author: "the technique is one of deliberate anachronism and erroneous attributions" (Borges [1939] 1965, 51). He urges us to experiment with other old familiar books to see how they can acquire new meanings if we imagine them as written by other people. (Of course, *Don Quixote* itself plays with authorship and Part Two was written in response to a spurious continuation, so Cervantes is certainly not simple-minded about the complexities of authorship and attribution).

A passage that comes immediately before this famous discussion of the *Quixote* in which the narrator describes some of Menard's other projects is often overlooked but it is also relevant:

> Two texts of unequal value inspired the undertaking [i.e. recreating *Don Quixote*]. One was that philological fragment of Novalis – No. 2005 of the Dresden edition – which outlines the theme of *total* identification with a specific author. The other was one of those parasitic books which places Christ on a boulevard, Hamlet on the Cannebière and Don Quixote on Wall Street. (Borges [1939] 1965, 45)

The German aristocrat and polymath, Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg, writing under the pseudonym Novalis, opined: "I demonstrate that I have really understood a writer only when I am able to act in the spirit of his thoughts, and when I can translate his works and alter them in various ways without detracting from his individuality" (Fishburn, Hughes 1990, 142). Novalis and Menard represent two extremes of the practice of adaptation: Novalis communes with the spirit of the author to produce a translation or adaptation which is different from the original; Menard rejects that approach and appropriates both the life and the works of the author to produce something that is the same as the original but means something different. The usual debate in adaptation studies, especially in discussions of film adaptations of novels, is about the fidelity of the

adaptation to the original and thus implicitly the representation of the original intentions of the original author. In the case of Menard's *Quixote*, the text means more if it is appropriated to a different author.

Borges's story is particularly relevant to the texts under consideration because they are fake memoirs about characters who are supposed to be authors. Like Borges's story, the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* and *Tristram Shandy* have slightly deranged narrators who have a complex understanding of the nature of the relationship between author, source text, adaptation and reception. They also play with what happens when (natural) philosophy is transplanted into a fictional context. Both Sterne and the Scriblerians mount a critique of specialised branches of knowledge by grafting them into a literary work. I suggest that, like Borges's narrator who reads *Don Quixote* as if written by Menard, the Scriblerian narrator reads Richard Bentley, William Petty and the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* as if written by their Dunce, Scriblerus. Sterne, however, is more like Novalis. He writes in the spirit of Rabelais and Cervantes and uses their works to critique new targets – William Warburton and John Locke – whom he sees as the enemies of wit.

2 Scriblerian Stalking Horses

Adaptation is not just either faithful or free; it can be critical as is the case in the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*. The *Memoirs* charts the life and researches of a scribbler who is both a dunce and a pedant. A forerunner of both Walter Shandy and Flaubert's Bouvard and Pecuchet, Martin dabbles in numerous sciences. This satire is the most substantial product of a group known as the Scriblerus Club, which met in 1713-14 to ridicule "all the false tastes in learning".[2] Its final fixed form was curated and published by Pope but it developed from Pope's proposal for a monthly journal to be called *The Works of the Unlearned*, "in which whatever Book appears that deserves praise, shall be depreciated Ironically" (Pope 1956, 1: 195; 23 October [1713]). Thus one of its initial aims was to parody regular scientific newsletters such as *A History of the Works of the Learned*. It also adapts the format of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* for satirical purposes.

In the final chapter of the *Memoirs*, the narrator details some of the discoveries and works of the Great Scriblerus "made and to

2 Alexander Pope in conversation with Joseph Spence, Beinecke MS Osborn c463, p. 4. This text differs slightly from the account edited by James Osborn (Spence 1966). This MS was acquired by the Bienecke in 1985, after the death of Osborn. Text transcribed by Steven Karian. I am extremely grateful to him for sharing his research on Spence with me.

be made, written and to be written, known and unknown" (Pope et al. 1988, 18: 165). The narrator promises that in the future, "All these will be vindicated to their true Author" (Pope, et al. 1988, 18: 169). One immediately thinks of Pope's ambition in *An Essay on Man* (1733-34) that he would "vindicate the ways of *God* to man" (1, l. 16). Here vindicate means to justify or clear from criticism and Pope's line alludes to Milton's "justify the ways of God to man". But the term "vindicate" – derived from the Latin *vim dicare*: to make (someone) say (something) – has several senses which are equally relevant to the Scriblerus project. It can mean "To claim as properly belonging to oneself or another; to assert or establish possession (of something) for oneself or another" (*OED.com*, s.v. vindicate, vb.). In this sense, the Mormons retrospectively baptise the dead in order to recruit more members of the Church of Latter-day Saints. The Scriblerians also attribute *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Modest Proposal* to their author, recruiting Swift's works for their wider project.

The process of vindication is launched at the end of the *Memoirs* with a list of

> PIECES *of* Scriblerus (*written in his Youth*) *already published*.
> An Essay on the Origin of the *Sciences*, written from the deserts of *Nubia*.
> Περί ΒΑΘΥΣ: Martinus Scriblerus his *Rhetoric*, or, Of the *Art of Sinking* in Poetry.
> VIRGILIUS RESTAURATUS: Seu Martini Scribleri, summi Critici, Castigationum in Æneidem Specimen.
> *Annus Mirabilis*, or The wonderful Effects of the Conjunction of Jupiter, Mars, and *Saturn*.
> The *Report* of a *Case* in an *Action at Law* concerning certain *Pyed*, or *Black* and *White* Horses.
> Notes and Prolegomena to the *Dunciad*.
> *Bentley*'s Milton. (Pope et al. 1988, 171)

In this list, five works are pieces by members of the club, but one is not.[3] The foreign object is *Bentley*'s Milton, that is, *Milton's Paradise Lost: A New Edition, by Richard Bentley, D.D.* (London, 1732). Richard

3 "An Essay of the Learned Martinus Scriblerus, concerning the Origine of Sciences. Written to the most learned Dr. --- F.R.S. from the Deserts of Nubia", first pub. in *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* [by Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, John Gay and John Arbuthnot], "Third" Volume (1732); "[Peri Bathous]: or, Martinus Scriblerus his Treatise of the Art of Sinking in Poetry", in *Miscellanies*, "Last" Volume (1728, dated 1727); "Virgilius Restauratus", in *Dunciad Variorum* (1729), then in *Miscellanies*, "Third" Volume (1732); *Annus Mirabilis: or, The wonderful Effects of the Approaching Conjunction of the Planets Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn*, by Abraham Gunther, Philomath (1722), attributed to Scriblerus in *Miscellanies*, "Third" Volume (1732); "Stradling versus Stiles", in *Miscellanies*, vol. 2 (1727).

Bentley, scholar, critic, Keeper of the Royal Library, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge and Fellow of the Royal Society, exemplified a new critical and professional mode of textual analysis. The Scriblerians deemed him ungentlemanly both in the rigour of his supposedly scientific treatment of literary works and in his bull-headed manners. Swift crossed swords with him in one of the skirmishes in the War between the Ancients and the Moderns. He depicted the debate about whether the *Epistles of Phalaris* were genuinely ancient in his "Battel of the Books" (1704) (Swift 2010, Levine 1991). In "Virgilius Restauratus", an appendix to Pope's *Dunciad Variorum* (1729) mostly by Arbuthnot, the Scriblerians parodied Bentley's pugnacious and pedantic philology. In his edition of *Paradise Lost*, Bentley corrected what he saw as scribal errors in the text but, in practice, substituted his own inferior readings for those of the master (Bourdette 1980). For example, he "emended" the poignant and stately final lines of the poem:

> They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,
> Through *Eden* took thir solitarie way. (Milton 1674, 333)

And produced this flat-footed piety:

> *They hand in hand* with SOCIAL *steps their way*
> *Through* Eden *took*, WITH HEAV'NLY COMFORT CHEER'D. (Bentley 1732, 399)

Pope, whose own emendations of Shakespeare had attracted the criticism that finally prompted him to publish his *Dunciad*, was certainly a better poet than Bentley, though both editors claimed to be conduits for the original spirit of the author (Walsh 1997). The point of the satirical inclusion of Bentley's *Milton* in the list of works by Scriblerus is that it is so bad that it must be the product of a pedantic or crack-brained dunce. Here, the other senses of "vindicate" come into play. That is, as well as "claim", they also "set free" the work from its original author and punish or avenge themselves on him. Scriblerian satire is a form of justice or of revenge against their enemies.

Before this list of published works, the Scriblerians describe "*the Discoveries and Works of the Great* Scriblerus" in more detail in the final chapter. In doing so, they adapt and elaborate on ways of thinking as well as on specific texts. They allude to numerous

scientific hypotheses masquerading as discoveries in this highly compressed and allusive chapter.[4] This section of the chapter ends:

> His were the Projects of *Perpetuum Mobiles*, *Flying Engines*, and *Pacing Saddles*; the Method of discovering the *Longitude*, by *Bomb-Vessels*, and of increasing the *Trade-Wind* by vast plantations of *Reeds* and *Sedges*. (Pope, et al. 1988, 167)

The term "Projects" has a particular resonance of for Swift, who attacked Projectors who tout their crazy schemes in his *Modest Proposal* (1720) and the third voyage of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). This list exemplifies three Scriblerian techniques of satirical adaptation:

1. Appropriation (assigning a work to a different author).
2. Collocation (lumping together works by different authors).
3. Adaptation or parody of a specific source (in this case the table of contents of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*).

They often make "petty" changes, small adaptations, implying that these supposedly serious discoveries and projects are really not far off the ridiculous.

This list lumps together a number of different projects as if they were merely hobby horses. In fact, one of them (the pacing saddle) is horse adjacent and all are either means of transport or related to the global travel on which Britain's expanding trade and empire depended.[5] The "pacing saddle" was a kind of light weight carriage invented by William Petty in 1676. It probably resembled the later calash or the Tilbury carriage. Petty argued that because it was only two-wheeled and lightweight, it would be cheap to construct and run. Three passengers could be pulled by one horse or two men. Furthermore, the wheels could be removed so the pacing saddle could be converted into a sedan chair. Petty claims he chose the slightly silly name in order to attract attention: "one that will best please those that will smile at inventions" (Lansdowne [1927] 1967, 2: 149).

On the face of it, this seems like a practical invention and a good example of the application of scientific knowledge to the problems of everyday life. Yet people did smile and openly laugh at it. They did so perhaps because one of Petty's earlier inventions, his

4 See Pope, et al. [1741] 1988, 323-49 for Kerby-Miller's discussion of the likely targets of the satire in this chapter.

5 On the perpetuum mobile and flying engine as scientific pipe dreams, see Pope, et al. 1988, 332-4. The Scriblerians mocked some of the attempts to determine the longitude in "Ode, for Musick, on the Longitude", in *Miscellanies*, 'Last' vol. (1728, dated 1727). Sterne alludes to the competition to find a way of determining longitude Sterne [1759-67] 1978, 1984, 3, 29: 255 and 9, 33: 721.

"double-bottomed" ship – another eye-catching name for what was essentially a catamaran – sunk in 1665 with a loss of all 17 hands on board. To be fair, this was in a storm in the Bay of Biscay and many other ships were lost that day. Nonetheless, his plans were scuppered.[6]

Yet he was not targeted by the Scriblerians just because his projects were impractical. More importantly, his methodologies were employed in the subjugation of the Irish, as Swift laid bare in his *Modest Proposal*. Petty was the proponent of a statistical method which came to be known as "political arithmetic" (Lein 1975). The size of populations and thus of labour to be exploited or wealth to be taxed could be calculated by means of the analysis of such things as numbers of households, and numbers of what we have come since COVID 19 to call "excess deaths". This kind of thinking is parodied in Scriblerus's discovery that "The Number of the Inhabitants of London" can be "determin'd by the Reports of the Gold-finders [i.e. latrine cleaners]" (Pope, et al. [1741] 1988, 167-8). Moreover, Petty led the Down survey in 1654, which was used to appropriate lands from native Irish people to give to Oliver Cromwell's troops and supporters. Petty himself benefitted enormously from his survey. He gained three baronies in the west of Ireland and used them as laboratories for his often unsuccessful experiments – this too has parallels in the third book of *Gulliver's Travels*.

The Scriblerians might have read about Petty's scheme in a couple of papers published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 1684-85. The contents for 20 July 1684 include "An Account of some Experiments to be made relating to a Land Carriage: proposed by the Learned Sr. William Petty Knight". We should remember that the *Memoirs* originated in a plan to write a parody periodical. Arbuthnot was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1705 and was familiar with the publications and the internal politics of the society. I assume Arbuthnot is largely responsible for the "Discoveries and Works" section. He must have been digging through back issues to have come up with this scheme. It was old news when the Scriblerians began their work in 1714 and decidedly old hat when the *Memoirs* were published in 1741. Arbuthnot would not need to have read all the articles themselves. We can imagine him turning over dusty copies of the *Transactions* and scanning the front covers because this section of the *Memoirs* appears to have been adapted from the contents pages of the *Transactions*. The brevity of the descriptions of the projects and the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate schemes resemble the table of contents. Petty's pacing saddle is listed in the same paragraph as a

6 https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/~cmi/books/miscWr/experiment.html.

scheme for increasing the trade wind by planting reeds and sedges.[7] This is a parody of a scheme listed in the contents page of another issue of the *Transactions* from the same year: "*Certain Observations of the Midland Salt-Springs, in* Worcester-shire, Stafford-shire *and* Cheshire. *Of the crude* Salt *which grows from the* Stone-powder *dejected by said* Brines *in Boyling. Of the Specific difference betwixt* Sea-salt *and* Common-salt. *A way* (*which seems to be the true Method of Nature*) *of distilling* Sweet *and* Fresh-water *from* Sea-Water, *by the breath of* Sea-plants g*rowing in it. T*h*at this* breath *probably is the* material *cause of the* Trade *or* Tropic-winds. *By the learned* Martin Lister *Dr. of Physick of the University of* Oxon" (20 February 1683/4).

Dr Lister adapted his observation about how the transpiration of plants assists in the evaporation of salt from sea water to a larger theory about how the movement of air they supposedly cause is actually the source of the vast movements of air known as trade winds, vital to shipping. The Scriblerians extract the most ridiculous part of the title. Equally importantly, I think they are adapting the form of the contents pages in this chapter, especially when they come to list Scriblerus's Philosophical and Mathematical works.

After mentioning the perpetuum mobiles, pacing saddles, trade winds, etc., the narrator then provides a numbered list of "a few of his Philosophical and Mathematical Works":

1. A compleat Digest of the Laws of Nature, with a Review of those that are obsolete or repealed, and of those that are ready to be renew'd and put in force.
2. A Mechanical Explication of the Formation of the Universe, according to the Epicurean Hypothesis.
3. An Investigation of the Quantity of real Matter in the Universe, with the proportion of the specifick Gravity of solid Matter to that of fluid.
4. Microscopical Observations of the Figure and Bulk of the constituent Parts of all fluids. A Calculation of the proportion in which the Fluids of the earth decrease, and of the period in which they will be totally exhausted.
5. A Computation of the Duration of the Sun, and how long it will last before it. be burn'd out.
6. A Method to apply the Force arising from the immense Velocity of Light to mechanical purposes.

7 William Petty also appears in the contents page of the 20 December 1784 issue along with an item about Tide-Tables which might have provided inspiration for the Scriblerians: "*Some Queries whereby to examine Mineral waters, by the learned Sr.* William Petty *Knight … A Correct Tide-Table, shewing the true times of high-water at London Bridg* [sic] *for every day in the year 1685. By* John Flamsteed *Math. Reg. and F.R.S*".

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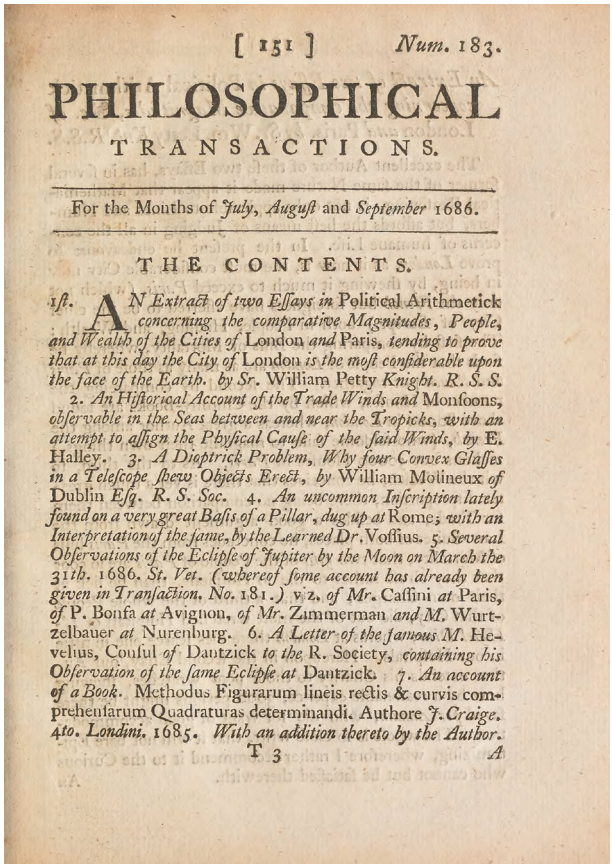
7. An answer to the question of a curious Gentleman; How long a New Star was lighted up before its appearance to the Inhabitants of our earth? To which is subjoin'd a Calculation, how much the Inhabitants of the Moon eat for Supper, considering that they pass a Night equal to fifteen of our natural days.
8. A Demonstration of the natural Dominion of the Inhabitants of the Earth over those of the Moon, if ever an intercourse should be open'd between them. With a Proposal of a *Partition-Treaty*, among the earthly Potentates, in case of such discovery.
9. Tide-Tables, for a Comet, that is to approximate towards the Earth.
10. The Number of the Inhabitants of London determin'd by the Reports of the Gold-finders, and the Tonnage of their Carriages; with allowance for the extraordinary quantity of the *Ingesta* and *Egesta* of the people of England, and a deduction of what is left under dead walls, and dry ditches.

The contents page for the *Philosophical Transactions* July to September 1686 is typical and it lists numerous items of interest to the Scriblerians.



[151] *Num.* 183.

PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS.

For the Months of *July*, *August* and *September* 1686.

THE CONTENTS.

1*st*. AN *Extract of two Essays in* Political Arithmetick *concerning the comparative Magnitudes, People, and Wealth of the Cities of* London *and* Paris, *tending to prove that at this day the City of* London *is the most considerable upon the face of the Earth. by Sr.* William Petty *Knight. R. S. S.* 2. *An Historical Account of the Trade Winds and* Monsoons, *observable in the Seas between and near the Tropicks, with an attempt to assign the Physical Cause of the said Winds, by* E. Halley. 3. *A Dioptrick Problem, Why four Convex Glasses in a Telescope shew Objects Erect, by* William Molineux *of* Dublin *Esq. R. S. Soc.* 4. *An uncommon Inscription lately found on a very great Basis of a Pillar, dug up at* Rome; *with an Interpretation of the same, by the Learned Dr.* Vossius. 5. *Several Observations of the Eclipse of Jupiter by the Moon on March the* 31*th.* 1686. *St. Vet. (whereof some account has already been given in Transaction, No.* 181.) *viz. of Mr.* Cassini *at* Paris, *of* P. Bonfa *at* Avignon, *of Mr.* Zimmerman *and M.* Wurtzelbauer *at* Nurenburg. 6. *A Letter of the famous M.* Hevelius, Consul *of* Dantzick *to the* R. Society, *containing his Observation of the same Eclipse at* Dantzick. 7. *An account of a Book.* Methodus Figurarum lineis rectis & curvis comprehensarum Quadraturas determinandi. Authore *J. Craige. 4to. Londini.* 1685. *With an addition thereto by the Author.*

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Figure 1 Phil Trans, vol. 6, no. 183, July-September 1686. From internet archive. https://archive.org/details/Philosophicaltr16Roya/page/n183

1. *An Extract of two Essays in* Political Arithmetic *concerning the comparative Magnitudes, People, and Wealth of the Cites of* London *and* Paris, *tending to prove that at this day the City of* London *is the most considerable upon the face of the Earth. By Sr.* William Petty *Knight. R.S.S.*
2. *An Historical Account of the Trade Winds and* Monsoons, *observable in the Seas between and near the Tropicks, with an attempt to assign the Physical Cause of the said Winds, by* E. Halley.
3. *A Dioptrick Problem, Why four Convex Glasses in a Telescope shew Objects Erect, by* William Mollineux *of* Dublin, *Esq. R. S. Soc.*

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6. *A Letter of the famous M.* Helvelius, *Consul of* Dantzick *to the* R. Society, *containing his Observations of the same Eclipse at* Dantzick.
7. *An account of a Book*. Methodus Figurarum lineis rectis & curvis comprehensarum Quadraturas determinandi. Authore *J. Craige*. 4*to*. *Londini.* 1685. *With an addition thereto by the Author*.

The list includes papers relevant to the theories of Scriblerus already discussed: one by William Petty on political arithmetic and another by Edmund Halley debunking Lister's theory about grasses causing trade winds. It also includes papers on topics satirised by the Scriblerians in other publications: *The Humble Petition of the Colliers* plays with the use of convex glasses to create heat and fire; fears about the effect of eclipses were exploited in *Annus Mirabilis* and *An Epistle to the Most Learned Doctor W—d—d; From a Prude, That was Unfortunately Metamorphos'd on Saturday December 29, 1722*.[8]

Each issue of the *Transactions* lists a collection of papers on miscellaneous subjects. On the face of it, anything is included, whether of value or not. It is jumbled and appears more so because (presumably to save space), the list is not indented. The Scriblerians, on the other hand, curate their list. Both the appearance on the page and the array of subjects is more orderly. Note the gradual decline from the sublime to ridiculous; the universal ("the Laws of Nature") to the excremental ("the *Ingesta* and *Egesta* of the people of England"). We might read that orderliness as in itself a critique of the miscellaneousness of the projects pursued by Fellows of the Royal Society.

8 *The Humble Petition of the Colliers*, first published as a single sheet in 1716; rpt. Pope et al. [1727-32] 2002, 4: 72-8; *Annus Mirabilis: or, The wonderful Effects of the Approaching Conjunction of the Planets Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn*, by Abraham Gunther, Philomath (22 Dec 1722) is attributed to Scriblerus in Pope, A., et al. [1727-32] 2002, 4: 85; *An Epistle to the Most Learned Doctor W—d—d; From a Prude, That was Unfortunately Metamorphos'd on Saturday December 29, 1722* (1722) describes what supposedly happened to someone affected by the eclipse.

3 Sterne's Hobby Horses

Sterne's adaptation of Cervantes is free in that all his male characters are Quixotic and ride their hobby horses with romantic devotion. His adaptation of Rabelais, however, is often tightly constrained. Both Cervantes and Rabelais are invoked in the course of a quarrel between Sterne and the heavy-handed writer and critic Bishop William Warburton, conducted in private and in the pages of *Tristram Shandy*. Warburton at first admired Sterne's book, which he described paradoxically as "quite an original composition, and in the true Cervantic vein" and, according to Horace Walpole, told "a bench of bishops" that Sterne "was the English Rabelais" (Sterne 2009, 1: 136 fn. 4; 677 fn. 3; 678 fn. 4). Warburton soon turned against him and criticised him (with justification) in correspondence for writing in a manner not befitting a clergyman (Sterne 2009, 2: 686-91). Writing to him in a placatory manner, Sterne claimed: "I shall repent as sorely as ever Sancho Panca [*sic*] did of his following his evil genius of a Don Quixote" (Sterne 2009, 1: 154). Yet, Sterne repeatedly mocked Warburton in Tristram Shandy and in volume five, teased him by inserting a lightly adapted passage from Rabelais in the middle of an argument between Walter, Toby and Yorick about circumcision and polemical divinity.

To explain what a polemical divine is, Yorick reads a description of a battle on horseback, which is calculated to confuse the hobby-horsical old soldiers, Toby and Trim. The next chapter begins in media res with a description of the battle between Gymnast and Tripet. The account is taken almost verbatim from the chapter "How Gymnast very souply [supplely] and cunningly killed Captain Tripet and others of Pichrochole's Men", in Thomas Urquhart's *Rabelais*, a translation that is so free it is practically an adaptation (Rabelais [1532-64] 1750, 1, 35: 295-8).[9] Rabelais's narrator describes how the aptly named Squire Gymnast overcomes the forces of Gargantua's enemy, Picrochole, by dazzling them with a display of crazy leaps on the back of his horse. Yorick's reading begins *in media res* (----"which words being heard by all the soldiers which were there …") and Sterne makes some seemingly minor but still significant adaptations.

First, he omits a passage in which one of Picrochole's captains expresses his fear that Gymnast is a devil in disguise. Second, he changes a preposition: the original describes how Gymnast does a backflip so he faces the horse's tail and cries: "Now, says he, my case goes backwards". Yorick's text reads, "Now (said he) my case

9 New argues in effect that seventeenth-century British prose translations of the key Renaissance writers Rabelais and Cervantes shared the originals' love of freedom by the exuberance of their witty translations (New 1982, 267).

goes forward". Thus, Sterne indicates that he is taking Rabelais's text in a different direction. While Rabelais is attacking bad kings (specifically, he has in mind Charles V's imperial ambitions), Sterne is attacking narrow-minded theologians (i.e., William Warburton). Third, he largely omits a description of a complex manoeuvre called "the miller's pass" in which Gymnast turns "like a windmill" and ends up sitting "after the manner of gentlewomen", that is, side-saddle. Sterne only retains the comparison to a windmill and inserts it into a different sentence. Perhaps he felt the description was complex enough and did not want to complicate it further by playing with gender. Fourth, in the next acrobatic bout, he substitutes the enemy Tripet for Gymnast ("This done, he easily pass'd his right leg over the saddle" becomes "Then (*Tripet*) pass'd his right leg over his saddle") so that what had been a solo display becomes a competition thus a battle that Yorick can use a figure for polemical divinity. There are a couple of other minor changes ("a good seat" in the original is reduced to "a tolerable seat" by Sterne and "he fell to stand with both feet close together" is simplified to "and placed both his feet together") before the passage is cut short before Gymnast's final trick after which he triumphantly cries: "I rage, I rage, devils, I am stark mad; devils, I am mad; hold me, devils, hold me; hold, devils, hold, hold".

Rabelais's devils are distributed throughout *Tristram Shandy*. Melvyn New discovers an allusion to the dispute with Warburton in Sterne's depiction of "*John de la Casse*", the Archbishop of Benevento, who is afraid that "all the devils in hell broke out of their holes" to lead him astray when he is writing (see New 1982, 264 and Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 5, 16: 446-7). The Archbishop of Benevento, devils and Rabelais appear again in the incident which occasioned this whole riff on polemical divinity – that is Tristram's accidental circumcision: "FIFTY thousand pannier loads of devils—(not of the Archbishop of *Benevento*'s—I mean of *Rabelais*'s devils), with their tails chopped off by their rumps, could not have made so diabolical a scream of it, as I did—when the accident befel me" (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 4, 26: 457). Let us remember that the debate about polemical divinity was occasioned by Walter consulting a treatise on Jewish rituals rather than a medical book, which could have brought some relief to his traumatised son. Sterne frequently demonstrates how Walter's (and to some extent Toby's) hobby horses are detrimental to physical and mental health.

Reading often takes place in real time in *Tristram Shandy*. Accordingly, one of the most significant adaptations that he makes to the passage concerning Gymnast and Tripet is that he dramatises the reading of it and does not just imitate it or otherwise incorporate it into his text. Yorick pulls *Rabelais* out of his right-hand pocket, where a clergyman might be expected to keep the Bible or the Book of

Common Prayer, and "read, or pretended to read, as follows" (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 5, 28: 463). (Is he, then, holding a religious text and quoting *Rabelais* from memory?) The reading is first interrupted and then brought to an end by Toby's interjections. (Sterne similarly interrupts the reading of Yorick's sermon: 2, 17; Ernulphus's Curse: 3, 11, and the Tristrapaedia, 5, 31) This changes the appearance on the page – in Urquhart's translation of Rabelais, the text is a continuous paragraph – and turns the narrative into a debate. By introducing Tripet into the action, Sterne had already converted the solo performance into a duet; by inserting Toby into the reading of it, he turns a monologue into a dialogue. Finally, he gives the last word in the chapter to Walter:

> he turned him about like a wind mill, and made above a hundred frisks, turns, and demi-pommadas."—Good God! cried *Trim*, losing all patience, —one home thrust of a bayonet is worth it all.----I think so too, replied *Yorick*.----
>
> —I am of a contrary opinion, quoth my father. (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 5, 29: 463-4)

They each demonstrate their characters in their responses: Trim the simple soldier, Yorick the wryly amused practical divine and Walter the controversialist. Walter is perhaps a figure for Warburton himself; New argues that "William Warburton was for Sterne a primary symbol of the gravity and prudery against which he battled—a symbol of that 'judgment' against which he waged his war of 'wit'" (New 1982, 246-7). Here, Sterne's adaptation, like the Scriblerians', adapts the text and uses it in a different context to mean something different. A more important adaptation of Rabelais in the spirit of the original occurs earlier in *Tristram Shandy* and is again part of Sterne's disagreement with Warburton.

4 The Author's Preface

Tristram's eccentrically positioned Preface (it appears in volume 3, chapter 20) addresses the "Anti-Shandeans, and thrice able critics" (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 3, 20: 228) who claim that wit and judgment do not go together. He directly confronts John Locke, who made this claim his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), arguing that wit consisted of merely the fanciful assemblage of ideas, whereas judgment involved rational discrimination (Locke [1690] 1975, 3, 11, 2: 156; 3, 10, 34: 508). He also has in mind Warburton's warnings that he should exercise his judgment and not be led astray by indecent wit (such as *double entendres*) unbecoming a clergyman (New 1982 and Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 3: 236-53). The Author's

Preface is littered with unacknowledged borrowings from Rabelais (as well as from Swift, Chambers's *Cyclopedia*, et al.). At one point, when searching for a practical analogy to illustrate his sense of the relationship between wit and judgment, he inserts a passage from Urquhart's *Rabelais* in quotation marks to signal that this piece of wit is borrowed:

> I hate set dissertations,----and above all things in the world, 'tis one of the silliest things in one of them, to darken your hypothesis by placing a number of tall, opake words, one before another, in a right line, betwixt your own and your readers conception,---- when in all likelihood, if you had looked about, you might have seen something standing, or hanging up, which would have cleared the point at once,--"for what hinderance, hurt or harm, doth the laudable desire of knowledge bring to any man, if even from a sot, a pot, a fool, a stool, a winter-mittain, a truckle for a pully, the lid of a goldsmith's crucible, an oyl bottle, an old slipper, or a cane chair,"---- (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 3, 20: 235)

Urquhart's *Rabelais* reads: "What hindrance, hurt, or harm doth the laudable desire of knowledge bring to any man, were it from a sot, a pot, a fool, a stool, a winter's mittain, a truckle for a pully, the lid of a goldsmith's crucible, an oil-bottle, or old slipper?"[10] The original reads:

> Que nuit savoir toujours et toujours apprendre, fût-ce
>
> > D'un sot, d'un pot, d'une guedoufle,
> > D'une moufle, d'une pantoufle?… (Rabelais [1532-64] 1913, 2, 16: 43; ellipsis in original)[11]

It appears as if the key phrase is a quotation from a poem or perhaps proverbial. Urquhart has elaborated considerably upon the original, incorporating the verses into his prose and extending the list from five to nine items. Assonance is the first principle of Rabelais's list (sot/pot; guedoufle/moufle/pantoufle). Metonymy might be the link from the first pair to the triplet: "un pot" might bring to mind "une

10 The context in Rabelais does not seem immediately relevant. The phrase is taken from Pantagruel's advice to Panurge that he should consult the Sibyl of Panzoust on the question of whether or not he should marry. Panurge is advised by all sources he consults that if he marries, his wife will be unfaithful to him. I briefly discuss this passage in Hawley 2009, 39.

11 My translation: a sot, a pot, an oil bottle, a mitten and a slipper. M.A. Screech also renders this list as prose: 'a sot, a pot, a mug, a kitten or a mitten'; he retains the principle of assonance in his translation (Rabelais [1532-64] 2006, 471.

guedoufle": a flask or long-necked vial. We can find a logical pattern. Urquhart generates his text from synonyms (hindrance/hurt/harm; sot/fool) and rhyme (fool/stool) but also throws in some apparently random items (a truckle …/a lid …), though perhaps there are puns on Rabelais's dialect which are lost on me.

Most of the changes Sterne makes to his quotation are petty differences of phrasing, spelling or punctuation: "**for** what hinderance, hurt or harm, doth the laudable desire of knowledge bring to any man, **if even** from a sot, a pot, a fool, a stool, a winter-mittain, a truckle for a pully, the lid of a goldsmith's crucible, an **oyl** bottle, **an** old slipper, **or a cane chair**" (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 3, 20: 235; emphasis added). However, this quotation is a Trojan horse into which Sterne smuggles a foreign agent – a cane chair. The addition is a case of metonymy as Tristram is sitting on one (as perhaps is the reader). Outside the quotation marks, he then adds two knobs to this chair, and renders the analogy as explicit as an orator can make it: "----Here stands *wit*,----and there stands *judgment*, close beside it, just like the two knobbs I'm speaking of, upon the back of this self same chair on which I am sitting" (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 3, 20: 236). Having built on Rabelais, he then removes one of his exemplary knobs and then bases his whole argument about the need for both faculties of wit and judgement on his addition and subtraction: "let us for a moment, take off one of these curious ornaments … did you ever see in the whole course of your lives such a ridiculous business as this has made of it?" (Sterne [1759-67] 1978-84, 3, 20: 236) Sterne's wit and judgement or imagination and reason are both deployed in constructing this argument and in adapting Rabelais's great example of the power of irreverent creativity to defeat the force of gravity.

Both Sterne and the Scriblerians can improvise on their sources, and like Cervantes and Rabelais, write in a spirit of copious adaptation (see Cave 1985). While there are similarities in their concerns and methods, we can use "Pierre Menard, Author of Quixote" to think about the differences between their practices of minimal adaptation. Neither the *Memoirs* nor *Tristram Shandy* is quite like Menard's *Don Quixote*: they do not become Cervantes in order to write their Quixotic texts. Rather, the Scriblerians behave like the narrator of Borges's story: they read *Bentley's Milton*, the *Philosophical Transactions* and numerous other texts, as if they were written by Scriblerus. As Borges's narrator argues, he is not changing the text but reading it as if it had a different author: "the technique is one of deliberate anachronism and erroneous attribution" (Borges [1939] 1965, 51). They appropriate in order to satirise and they detract from the individuality of the thinkers they mock by combining their works and also attributing them to a Dunce. Sterne, however, is more like Novalis, in that he could say: "I demonstrate that I have really understood a writer only when I am able to act in the spirit of his

thoughts, and when I can translate his works and alter them in various ways without detracting from his individuality" (Fishburn, Hughes 1990, 142). He very often completely incorporates his sources into his own text. Yet, in the instances discussed here, the quotation marks guarantee the individuality of the source even as his adaptation takes it in new directions. He inserts himself into the original by interrupting or adding to the text but continues in the same spirit. Rabelais is not the target of his satire but the hobby-horsical vehicle of it.

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Towards an Enlightened Readership
Don Quixote, the European Cervantean Tradition and the Novel of the German Enlightenment

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Abstract C.M. Wieland's *Die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva* (1764) has been considered by certain scholars the first modern German novel due to its representational realism, its dialogism, its self-conscious nature. This paper seeks to address this issue, trying to contextualise Wieland's *Don Sylvio* within the wider framework of the European Cervantean tradition, showing how, far from operating in an isolated context, Wieland often recurs to procedures and techniques already developed by other French and British Cervantean authors such as Charles Sorel, Pierre de Marivaux and Charlotte Lennox, but also to other German novels of clear Cervantean scent such as W.E. Neugebauer's *Der teutsche don Quichotte* (1753).

Keywords Comparative Literature. Don Quixote. Cervantes. C.M. Wieland. Enlightenment.

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1 Introduction

In his seminal essay *Entstehung und Krise des modernes Romans* (1955), Wolfgang Kayser claimed that C.M. Wieland's *Die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva* (1764) could well be considered the first modern German novel due to its representational realism, its dialogism and, most importantly, its self-conscious nature, inherited both from Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605-15) but also from his eighteenth-century English successors, Henry Fielding and Laurence Sterne. Precisely, this self-conscious nature promoted a new kind of readership, more distanced and aware of its own reading process (Jørgensen 1976), in an attempt to generate an "enlightened" reader – a "Classical reader", as Fielding poses it in *Tom Jones* (1748) – capable of avoiding the escapist and immersive modes of reading fostered by romances and exemplified by the phenomenon of Quixotism.

In my view, Kayser's thesis needs to be questioned, or at least revised. The notion of the 'modernity' of the novel and its precise date of birth is a fluctuating concept, one which usually wavers depending on the field of expertise of the researcher analysing the phenomenon. What is more, if Wieland's concern with "reading, readers and narratives" (Baldwin 2002, 38) is the defining sign of the modernity of *Don Sylvio*, we may ask ourselves whether this particular trait is really an innovation within the German narrative tradition or, as this paper argues, it owes something to other German and European authors. The purpose of this essay is, therefore, to analyse how Wieland's *Don Sylvio*, far from being the first German novel attempting to educate its readership in an enlightened and critical attitude towards literary texts, belongs to a larger tradition in which the phenomenon of Quixotism is employed to portray young, uneducated and inexperienced readers who must learn how to read texts and, most importantly, their own lives. This tradition, already present in Germany with W.E. Neugebauer's *Der teutsche don Quichotte* (1753) must be understood as a larger, transnational phenomenon in which the Quixotic myth is adapted first by the French seventeenth-century imitators of Cervantes (Sorel, Marivaux) and then by his British (Winstanley, Lennox) and German followers to portray the perils of a 'romantic' education and the need to establish a different readerly attitude towards fiction more in line with the educational objectives of enlightened thought. The goal of these pages is, consequently, to promote a more precise understanding of the transnational currents of adaptation at work in Wieland's *Don Sylvio*, highlighting the decisive role of the Cervantean tradition in

this process.[1] In order to do so, this essay will try to execute a close reading of Wieland's text in order to analyse its relationship with some of the most notable works of the European Cervantean tradition. This comparative approach will enable us to frame Kayser's thesis within a wider, transnational context, revealing how some of the most notable innovations of *Don Sylvio von Rosalva* are, in fact, part of a larger transnational process of adaptation and transformation of Miguel de Cervantes's novel.

2 Novels of Educational Failure, Novels of Readerly Education: The Rejuvenation of the Quixotic Myth

Die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva (1764) is, from its early chapters, a novel presented as an educational story. At the beginning of his work, Wieland dedicates two chapters to the education of his protagonist and his particular psychological traits. If we look at the second chapter of the novel, we can see how the German author situates the narrative focus on the education of Don Sylvio, an adolescent Spanish aristocrat who lives in complete isolation with his aunt in a derelict castle in the province of Valencia. This chapter, significantly entitled "What sort of Education Don Sylvio received from his aunt" offers a very detailed narration of Don Sylvio's educational path. After some basic instruction in Latin and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Doña Mencía, Don Sylvio's aunt, designs for his nephew an education fundamentally based on chivalric and French heroic romances (I,2: 5). This alternative educational path soon awakens Don Sylvio's vocation to "imitate those sublime patterns, whose high deeds and moral virtues had transported him with admiration" (1,2: 6). These imitative tendencies are reinforced by Don Sylvio's own psychological disposition. In fact, the third chapter, entitled "Psychological reflections", offers a very detailed analysis of the Quixotic psyche of the protagonist, which, quite significantly, is magnified not only by his aunt's romantic, negligent education (Wilson 1981, 40), but also by his own excess of sensibility and imagination. In this sense, the analysis of this *mélange* composed by educational failure and a particular temperament becomes particularly interesting, especially as the narrator of Wieland's novel tries to rationalise what in Cervantes' anti-hero proved to be

1 I am taking the notion of "Cervantean tradition" from Pedro Javier Pardo's *La tradición cervantina en la novela inglesa del siglo XVIII* (1997). Pardo understands the concept of Cervantean tradition not only as the amount of works influenced by Cervantes' novel, but also as a common way of understanding novel-writing, not just a superficial way of imitating *Don Quixote*, but one which assimilates the model while enriching it and taking it into new directions (2-3).

sheer madness. Don Sylvio von Rosalva is thus presented not as a deranged, demented, old man, but as a character whose epistemology is the direct result of Doña Mencía's educational notions and a quite particular set of psychological and social characteristics which compose a complex canvas where imagination, literature and Don Sylvio's apprehension of reality are interwoven without the presence of Don Quixote's clear and undisputable madness. Quixotism is thus portrayed as educational failure, not lunacy, for in the case of the young Spanish aristocrat imagination "insensibly blends itself with the sentiment; the marvellous with the natural; the false with the true" (1,3: 7-8). The educational and psychological portrait of the first chapters is soon accompanied by a very detailed description of Don Sylvio's reading habits. Wieland presents his protagonist as an *immersive* reader, one that suspends the necessary readerly distance towards texts and *sees, hears and feels* what he reads (1,5: 12). Don Sylvio's epistemological distortion is, therefore, shown to be a complex phenomenon whose origins lie in the educational alienation fostered by his aunt and in his shortcomings as a reader. The protagonist's deficiencies as a reader subsequently become the pivotal bulwark which supports the peripatetic structure which dominates the first part of the novel, where Wieland establishes a dialogue between his protagonist's literary apprehension of reality and the picaresque world in which the novel is encased, a dialogic conflict between inexperience and maturity, readerly immersion and distance, which could also be understood as an educational process, situating the novel within the orbit of the *bildungsroman* genre.

With the end of the first part of the novel and the arrival of Don Sylvio and Pedrillo to the palace of Lirias at the beginning of the second part, the Cervantean pattern of literary-mediated adventures on the road is closed. Wieland alters the focus, turning from epistemological distortion to the dynamics of socialization. The discussion of one of the interpolated stories of the novel, the History of Prince Biribinker – a *reductio ad absurdum* of all the structural elements of the féeric genre – is employed by Don Gabriel, the clear representative of enlightened thought in Wieland's novel, to test the protagonist's confidence in the historical nature of Biribinker's story. By confessing that the supposed 'history' is the product of his own imagination (IV,3), Don Sylvio is forced to accept his own past epistemological distortions, which are proven to be the result of his particular education, his lack of contact with the external world and his own immersive mode of reading, initiating the dynamics of social reintegration which are culminated with the blatantly romantic triple marriage which marks the end of the novel and signals the end of Don Sylvio's Quixotic adolescence. Don Sylvio, free from the "pernicious effects which the fairies had produced in his brain" (VIII,4: 442) and now capable of reading texts from a safe distance, embarks with

Don Eugenio on a formative tour through Europe, culminating the developmental path of the protagonist of Wieland's work. If *Don Sylvio* began with a very detailed description of the educational failure of Doña Mencia's formative system, its ending highlights the evolution experimented by the young Spanish aristocrat. The Quixotic journey of the adolescent reader of romances and fairy tales progresses towards personal maturity and recognition of the fictional nature of Don Sylvio's favourite readings, transforming Quixotism in an educational problem associated with lack of readerly distance. The rejuvenation of the Quixotic protagonist is, therefore, a key element in the transition from Quixotism as madness to Quixotism as delusional inexperience. Wieland's *Don Sylvio* thus paves the way for similar approaches by nineteenth-century authors like, Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey* ([1798] 1818), Sir Walter Scott in *Waverley* (1814) or Honoré de Balzac's in his serial novel *Illusions Perdues* (1836-43), where the protagonist's Quixotism is also associated with immaturity, educational failure and immersive reading modes.

In his first novel, Wieland not only portrays the educational journey of Don Sylvio, but he also establishes a clear parallelism between Don Sylvio's development as a distanced reader and a certain kind of education for the implicit reader of the novel. As Todd Kontje has pointed out in his study *Private Lives in the Public Sphere: The German Bildungsroman as Metafiction* (1992) most novels of formation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "turn inward upon themselves", turning the avid, extensive readers portrayed in these novels into intensive readers of their own lives and reading habits, thus suggesting an "indirect commentary on successive stages in the transformation of the German literary institution" (6) which signals a clear move from intensive modes of reading to more distanced and critical approaches to texts. In this sense, the fact that most of these works employ central figures characterised as readers is, as Schlaffer (1973, 6) has pointed out, completely natural. By employing the figure of the delusional reader as the protagonist of his novel, Wieland avoids the potential identification of the implied reader with the anti-hero of his novel, thus fostering an introspective analysis of the readerly process and the role which our own imagination plays in it (1995, 71). This process encourages a sort of "Quixotic pedagogy" (Rogan 1981a, 93) which articulates itself not only through the use of a Quixotic figure whose own gap between illusion and reality warns the alert reader in his own readerly process, but also through a set of self-conscious techniques which also point to this crevice in a rather indirect way, in a far more complex and subtle level.

The first of these self-conscious techniques has a clear Cervantean scent. Before the narrative action properly begins, Wieland presents an afterword explaining in certain detail the textual history of the text we are reading. This afterword which, due to the inattention

of the editor of the text, was situated as the preface of the novel, attributes the text to a certain don Ramiro von Z***, a Spanish author who may have been working as ambassador in one of the German principalities. The Spanish text, however, has been translated into German by a friend of the editor, who, trying to overcome the censorship of the Archbishop of T***, which hindered its publication in Spain, decided to translate it and offer it to the editor for its publication in Germany. The editor accepts the proposal, but he never contrasts the translation with the original manuscript, accepting the translator's fidelity to the original blindly (*Don Sylvio*, *Vorbericht*).[2] The postscript or preface is thus employed, as Steven Miller argues, (1970, 137), as *Quellenfiktion* or Source Fiction, establishing a clear dialogue between the author and its potential readership by elevating the illusion of the text's own historicity to an absurd level, indicating, as Wilson asserts, the editor's own unreliability (1995, 25), a clear warning sign for the alert reader.

The novel's narratorial apparatus also offers Wieland the opportunity of introducing a set of extradiegetic agents which, following the example of Cervantes, act as intermediaries between the reader and the text, highlighting the mediated nature of the 'history' presented by the editor. The first readers of the text, as presented in the Postscript-Preface, are those closer to the editor's most intimate circle, and their responses echo the implicit reader potential attitudes towards the text: from indignation and sheer unreflective laughter to a more temperate evaluation of the allegorical nature of the story, displaying, as Claire Baldwin (2002, 41) has convincingly demonstrated, a verbal frontispiece which alerts readers towards the need for self-examination. The use of extradiegetic agents as a self-conscious strategy is not, in any case, circumscribed to the Postscript. In a clear contrast with *Don Quixote*, where Cervantes articulates a very complex network of narrative agents, the other extradiegetic narrative agents involved in Wieland's novel, the translator of the Spanish text and the editor, barely intrude the main body of the history of *Don Sylvio*, but when they do, they do it significantly to highlight blatant anachronisms or to mark the reluctancy of the translator to include certain passages of the text where the Spanish author vents is ire against Republican forms of government (III,5). These extradiegetic agents' intervention becomes a clear signal of the unreliability of the historical nature of the text and the biased and unobjective translating practices of the translator. The weight of the self-conscious nature of Wieland's novel relies, however, in the digressive narrator of *Don Sylvio*, a narrator very

2 Baker does not include the Vorbericht. I am therefore using Jørgensen's modern edition of *Don Sylvio* for Reclam (2001).

much in line with the intrusive narrators of Fielding and Sterne. For Richard Rogan, the narrator's frequent commentaries often destroy the epic illusion of reality upon which less experimental fiction is often based (1981b, 182-3), as he often offers an interested selection of the 'historical' facts he compiles, with numerous examples of deliberate omissions and silences, or reflects on certain aspects of his own narrative practice such as the temporal dimension of his creative process or the literary models he is following, giving the reader a sense of intimacy on his own creative process. Readerly response also plays an important role in the narrative practice of the Spanish author as he usually takes into account his expectations and wishes in order to justify certain narrative pauses or the absence of characters like Pedrillo during much of the second part of the novel (VII,1), revealing how all these narratorial choices correspond with a certain narrative purpose, directly contradicting the proclaimed historicity of the text.

Finally, Wieland also employs certain metaliterary and metafictional strategies on a purely intradiegetic level, revealing the clear fictional nature of the novel. Among these, we may mention the literary ascendancy of certain characters, like Doña Felicia, related by birth to Lesage's Gil Blas (VI,3) or the evident structural symmetries of the interpolated history of Prince Biribinker with the novel in which it is inserted, acting as what Pedro Javier Pardo has defined as a "metafictional mirror" (Pardo 1997, 889). If Biribinker's story is blatantly exposed as pure fiction, its clear thematic and structural parallels with Don Sylvio's own narrative – such as the use of a pseudohistorian, Palaphatus, as the main narrative agent or the fact that Biribinker's story is taken from the sixth book of his chronicles, exactly the same book of *Don Sylvio* in which the interpolation is inserted – reveal the necessary fictional nature of the text read by the implicit reader, who is thus taught the same lesson taught by Don Gabriel to Don Sylvio: readerly caution. In this way, the Quixotic pedagogy at the core of Don Sylvio's educational experience acquires a clear indirect character, inviting the implicit reader, as Jørgensen argues (1976, 4) to consider the more formal aspects of the text and to recognise the literary and fictional nature of Don Sylvio's 'history'.

3 A German Chamaleon: Wieland and the European Cervantean tradition

Although Wieland's *Don Sylvio* plays a key role in this rejuvenation of the Quixotic figure and its association to an educational experience based on romantic readings, we must not forget that the German author reproduces in his novel a Quixotic pattern which had already

been developed by other European authors, French, German and British. In fact, if we trace our steps back to Cervantes' original, one can identify a certain "parabolic curve" (Martínez Bonati 1995, 114-15) in the developmental journey of the protagonist which may be recognised in Don Quixote's experience of disenchantment towards the end of the novel and his subsequent recognition of the fictional character of chivalric romances. The Spanish *hidalgo* is, however, an old man, and dies once he acknowledges his past errors. Speaking about an educational experience may be, therefore, venturesome, as Don Quixote's educational path must be a very limited one without any kind of progression once the knight-errant assumes his former role as Alonso Quijano. Cervantes' novel does, however, offer interesting lessons for the alert reader as his narrative, defined by Wolf as "summa *Illusionszerstörenden Erzählens*" (1993, 490-1) fosters narratorial distance towards the very same text we are reading. Wieland seems to have been very aware of these techniques for, as we have tried to demonstrate in our analysis of *Don Sylvio*, the German author organises a very Cervantean narrative structure where the text is presented as a found manuscript which has to be translated and edited, offering the basis for the – in his case more limited – intrusions of the editor and the translator. Wieland does, however, use a digressive narrator which seems to be inherited by two of Cervantes' most recognizable followers: Henry Fielding and Laurence Sterne, evincing how in his use of Cervantean techniques and motifs the German author does owe both to Cervantes himself but also to his European imitators.

This rather indirect path can be further established if we look at some of the earliest and most notable examples of Cervantean influence in Europe: Charles Sorel's *Le berger extravagant* (1627-28) and Pierre de Marivaux' *Pharsamon ou les Nouvelles Folies Romanesques* ([1713] 1737). In Sorel's text we can find, for the first time in the European Cervantean tradition, a young Quixotic protagonist who bears interesting resemblances to Wieland's Don Sylvio. Louis or Lysis, the son of a rich silk merchant, soon abandons his studies in Law to embark in a pastoral quest with his squire Carmelin after compulsively reading pastoral romances (*El pastor extravagante* I,1: 32). This evident Quixotic plot is, as occurs in Wieland's novel, motivated by certain factors related to Lysis' negligent education. Being an orphan – another similarity with the background story of Don Sylvio –, the protagonist's education is conducted by another merchant who, after sending him to university, witnesses how "instead of books of Law, he acquired those cumbersome books called *novels*" (2023, 32, emphasis added). The similarities with Wieland's novel are not, however, restricted to the educational portrait of the protagonist. As Sorel's text progresses, one can observe certain narrative strategies which give the text a rather self-conscious tone.

For example, Sorel introduces a burlesque interpolation called "the Banquet of the Gods" (II: 334-423) which functions as a pastoral pastiche aiming to degrade and ridicule the predilect readings of the protagonist, very much in line with Wieland's interpolated story of Prince Biribinker. In fact, as occurs in Wieland's novel, the interpolation is followed by a critical examination of the story, which is judged by a tribunal (III: 59-97). The similarities with the critical discussion ensuing the interpolation of Biribinker's story are evident, as both texts offer a metaliterary reflection which is destined both to the protagonists of the novel but also to the implied readers of both texts, establishing a clear double educational pattern.

The French Cervantean tradition also offers another interesting example which evinces a clear affinity with Wieland's text. Pierre de Marivaux' *Pharsamon, ou les Nouvelles Folies Romanesques* depicts the story of another orphan whose negligent education has Quixotism as a result. Educated by his uncle, Pharsamon becomes an avid reader of some Iberian chivalric romances such as the books of *Amadis de Gaula* or even Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. These books give the young orphan "cette noble idée qu'il devoit conçevoir et du bel amour et de la gloire" (I,1: 1-2), making the parallel with the early chapters of *Don Sylvio* quite evident. The romantic education of the protagonist is not, however, the only similarity with Wieland's *Don* Sylvio, for Marivaux' *Pharsamon* also shows an interventionist narrator who deliberately offers multiple evidences of the unreliability of his narration, evincing, as Sorel's *Berger Extravagant*, another example of the double educational pattern which seems to be a constant presence in the early Cervantean tradition in France.

If we direct our analysis to the influence of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in Britain, we can witness another interesting example where Quixotism is portrayed as the result of inexperience and educational failure. William Winstanley's *The Essex Champion* (ca. 1694), the first novel to imitate *Don Quixote* in England, continues the path initiated by Sorel and Marivaux by presenting another young protagonist whose Quixotism is the result of a negligent education.[3] Billy of Billerecay is the young son of Thomasio, an Essex farmer who decides to delegate his son's education to an old maid and the town's tailor. When Thomasio discovers that the tailor cannot read, he decides to entrust the formation of his son to the vicar of Billerecay, who educates his pupil through a list of Iberian chivalric romances including *Palmerin of England, Don Belianis of Greece, The Mirror of Knighthood and* Don Quixote's favourite book of chivalry, Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadis de*

3 For a detailed analysis of Winstanley's novel and its place within the Cervantean tradition, one may consult Pedro Javier Pardo's study for the Spanish translation of the text, published in 2022.

Gaula, first published in English in 1590. Given this education, it is hardly surprising that Billy decides to become a champion of chivalry and embarks on a Quixotic quest with his squire Ricardo, introducing the archetypical Cervantean pattern of adventures on the road which end, rather abruptly, when Billy loses his wits and is finally imprisoned. The rejuvenation of the Quixotic archetype effected by Sorel and Marivaux is thus continued by Winstanley in a rather sombre mode, one that excludes the educational path which other British authors as Charlotte Lennox will follow.

Charlotte Lennox' *Female Quixote* (1752) presents a narrative pattern where another young orphan, Arabella, becomes an avid and uncritical reader of French heroic romances. Her orphanhood and isolation bear a striking resemblance to that of Don Sylvio, especially if we direct our look to the initial chapters where Lennox discusses the education of her heroine:

> From her earliest Youth she had discovered a Fondness for Reading, which extremely delighted the Marquis; he permitted therefore the Use of his Library, in which, unfortunately for her, were great Store of Romances, and what was still more unfortunate, not in the original *French*, but very bad translations. […] The surprising Adventures with which they were filled, proved a most pleasing Entertainment to a young Lady, who was wholly secluded from the World; who had no other Diversion, but ranging like a Nymph through Gardens, or, to say better, the Woods and Lawns in which she was inclosed […] Her ideas, from the Manner of her Life, and the Objects around her, had taken a romantic Turn; and supposing Romances were real Pictures of Life, from them she drew all her Notions and Expectations. (I,1: 7)

The delusional education of the protagonist thus fosters an educational pattern which has led scholars like Pardo (2023) or Borham-Puyal (2013) to speak of a female variant of the novel of education or *bildungsroman,* one that would be further developed by authors like Frances Burney in *Evelina, or, A Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778), Elizabeth Tomlin in *The Victim of Fancy* (1787), Maria Edgeworth in *Belinda* (1801), Mary Brunton in *Self-Control* (1811) or Jane Austen in *Northranger Abbey* ([1799] 1817).[4] These examples offer sufficient evidence about how the developmental journey articulated by Wieland in his *Don Sylvio* may not be as innovative as one may think, especially considering the German author's extensive knowledge of French and British literature.

4 For a more detailed analysis of these novels as female *bildungsromane*, see Borham-Puyal (2013, 519-715).

But what about the autochthonous Cervantean tradition? The earliest examples of German novels influenced by Cervantes follow the path inaugurated by Sorel and continued by Marivaux and even by Charlotte Lennox. In fact, some of these texts, now long forgotten and only considered by specialists in the German reception of Cervantes, reproduce the pattern of deregulated education described above. Such is the case in the anonymous novel *Die wundersamen Abentheuer des in der Welt herumirrenden Neuen Don Quixotte oder Schwäbischen Robinson, Nebst vielen andern sehr anmuthigen Liebes-Geschichten* (The Wonderful Adventures of the world-roaming new Don Quixot, or the Schwabian Robinson, together with other charming love stories) of 1742. This sub-literary novel, despite its misleading title, which may have been introduced for financial reasons due to the extraordinary popularity of Defoe's text in Germany – presents the story of a young Schwabian aristocrat whose orphanhood leads to another example of deregulated education. The laxity of his tutor makes him an avid reader of romances, but in a strange narrative turn, the protagonist starts his Quixotic quest after drinking a love filter, recovering his good sense quite suddenly after some blood-letting executed by a local barber. This rather rough plot is not accompanied, as in the more complex novels of Sorel, Marivaux and Lennox, by a metafictional apparatus supporting both the education of the protagonist and the implied reader. The choice for a deregulated education narrative pattern seems to be influenced by the success of Sorel and Marivaux, and not by a desire to direct the implied reader towards a more distanced form of reading.

This is not, however, the case with the first notable example of Cervantean influence in the German novel. Wilhelm Ehrenfried Neugebauer's *German Don Quixote* (Der teutsche Don Quichotte), perhaps the first explicit Quixotic novel to be written in German, has been defined by Lieselotte Kurth-Voigt (1965) as the first 'modern' novel in German literature, for its bourgeois protagonist, its proto-realism and its radical metafictionality do anticipate Wieland's works in many ways. This work, virtually unknown outside Cervantean research and translated for the first time into any foreign language in 2022, bears some interesting analogies with Wieland's *Don Sylvio*. Its protagonist, Johann Glück is, as Sorel's Lysis, the son of a merchant who, after the decease of his parents, is (un)educated by a greedy uncle who acts as his tutor. As in all the examples mentioned above, the negligent education received by Glück has his interest in French heroic romances as a result, of which he becomes an avid reader (I,1.: 26-7). Glück's lack of distance towards the texts he reads enables the establishment of a Quixotic pattern of adventures in the road with his servant Görge, as they both assume two fictional identities more in line with their passion for heroic romances: The Marquis of Bellamonte and Du Bois. The Quixotic adventures of

Bellamonte and Du Bois come to an end once they encounter another rather Quixotic character who appears in the guise of a Macedonian knight and presents himself as Prince Vardanes of Macedonia (IV,1). This Quixotic doppelgänger, a reader of German Baroque romances who has really lost his mind, narrates his own "history"; an interpolated story which functions as a mirror for Glück's own path and his lack of distance as a reader (IV,2). Despite his Quixotic nature, Glück shows some good sense and makes a rational critique of the predilect romances of Prince Vardanes, finally acknowledging the fictional nature of this genre, but also of the literature he reads. This process evinces the end of Glück's Quixotic adolescence and signals his entrance into adulthood, as the end of the novel clearly demonstrates once the narrator declares that "the chimera had finally abandoned the soul" of the protagonist, now able to follow the healthy path of sound reason (IV,10: 307). This educational pattern is also supported by a Cervantean narratological structure in which the text is also presented as a translation of the French. In any case, as in Wieland's *Don Sylvio* the self-conscious strategies of the novel are articulated through the intrusive narrator or historian, who, in a radical metafictional strategy, decides to enter the narration as a character during the second part, acquiring a dual role as narrator of the story and a character in the story he is narrating (I,15). This and other distancing techniques which are derived from his clear tendency to digression and self-contradiction situate Neugebauer's text at the crossroads of the innovations of the French Cervantean tradition and the double educational pattern which Wieland articulates in his Don Sylvio, thus occupying an essential position within the European traffic for Cervantean adaptations and re-writings which takes place during the late seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. Wieland, who in one of his letters to his friend Zimmermann defined himself as "a chameleon, seeming green when close to green objects, and yellow, when close to the yellow ones, but being neither green or yellow, but transparent" (quoted in Jørgensen et al. 1998, 42), operates exactly in this way, assuming the colours of previous innovations within the European reception of Cervantes in order to give shape to a new product, a kind of novel which would define the German *bildungsroman* and the European novel of the nineteenth century. Wieland's first novel may have been, as Kayser argued, a turning point in the history of German novel writing, but historical breakthroughs are usually the result of a long process of significant transformations, as our analysis of the evolution of the Quixotic pattern in Europe during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries has tried to demonstrate.

4 Conclusions

In *Die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva*, Christoph Martin Wieland builds a narrative structure aiming to educate his potential readership in a distanced, critical mode of reading, completely opposed to the immersive modes of reading fostered by romances. This structure is, as Jørgensen (1976) convincingly argues, quite in line with the goals of the German Enlightenment, which had attacked romance readership as acritical and delusional. Wieland employs a Quixotic character alongside with a very elaborated metafictional narrative network in order to achieve a double educational pattern which reflects not just the education of his protagonist, but also, in an indirect manner, the readerly education of his potential readership. His use of this double educational pattern, which, at first sight, seems quite innovative for the German novel of the first half of the eighteenth-century, is, however, hardly original and seems quite dependent of the European Cervantean tradition, for, as we have tried to demonstrate throughout these pages, Wieland clearly draws on the innovations of Sorel, Marivaux, Lennox and Neugebauer to construct both his Quixotic pattern based on the deregulated education of a young orphan and the use of a metafictional apparatus which reveals the fictional character of the novel through the use of an intrusive narrator and specular interpolations.

More importantly, the use of this educational pattern will be employed by future Romantic and Realist writers who will also draw on the Cervantean tradition. Novels like Jane Austen's *Northranger Abbey* ([1799], 1818), Scott's *Waverley* (1814), Balzac's *Les illusions perdues* (1837-43) or even Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* (1842) all draw on educational journey of young, Romantic protagonists who must come to terms with reality after trying to live a life according to their readerly expectations. The permanence of this pattern well into the nineteenth century speaks clearly of a transnational, transsecular current of Cervantean adaptation, demonstrating, on the one hand, the pivotal role of Wieland's text within this current, but also its dependence towards previous adaptations of the narrative structure created by Miguel de Cervantes in his immortal *Don Quijote de la Mancha*.

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Adapting and Rewriting in Eighteenth-Century British Lexicography

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Abstract This paper proposes to include lexicography among the genres that develop and renew themselves most systematically over time by resorting to textual adaptation strategies. This is particularly evident in the history of English dictionary-making, with the most significant and striking example being Samuel Johnson's lexicographical masterpiece. The paper traces and comments on all the different ways in which the 1755 first edition of his *Dictionary* was adapted throughout the eighteenth century to meet the needs of different categories of dictionary users.

Keywords Adaptation in Dictionary-making. Eighteenth-century Lexicography. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary. Samuel Dyer. Edmund Burke. William Perry. Oxford English Dictionary.

Summary 1 Lexicography as the Art and Craft of Adaptation. – 2 Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* as a Case Study of Adaptation in Lexicography. – 3 The Conclusion, in which Nothing is Concluded.

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1 Lexicography as the Art and Craft of Adaptation

It is somewhat surprising that studies on adaptation, which have undergone significant development in recent years, have neglected lexicography.[1] Indeed, every student of the history of dictionary-making knows that adapting and rewriting – often taking the form of plagiarism – have been the main ways in which the art and craft of lexicography evolved over the centuries:

> in early lexicography, it was common practice – at best judicious, at worst flagrant – to copy from other dictionaries, which was done most often without acknowledging one's sources, or mentioning some minor ones in order to disguise the most influential. D. T. Starnes and G. E. Noyes, the authors of a seminal study on the early history of English dictionary-making, wrote that English lexicography up to Samuel Johnson progressed by plagiarism, that the best lexicographers were simply the most discriminating plagiarists, and that a good dictionary was its own justification, whatever the method of compilation. Compilation, rather than plagiarism, is arguably the keyword here: a lexicographer puts together different pieces of information, and legitimately so, wherever they are found. Lexicography develops by accretion rather than progression; continuity is more important than innovation. (Iamartino 2020, 61)

As a matter of fact, lexicography is a very traditional art and craft, with each lexicographer largely relying on his predecessors' work. This basically meant accretion in the first steps of early modern dictionary-making. See for example the evolution of multilingual lexicography in Europe, which started in Venice in 1477, when the German-born Adam von Rottweil, a former collaborator of Johann Gutenberg, published his *Introito e Porta*, an Italian-German topically arranged wordlist. The *Introito* became the basis of a number of polyglot dictionaries, which came to include up to eight languages, so that, by the mid-1630s, some 90 editions of the polyglot dictionaries derived from the *Introito e Porta* had been published in a number of European countries.

Another relevant example is the birth and early development of English monolingual lexicography in the seventeenth century, the so-called tradition of hard-word dictionaries: these were not meant to include the whole lexical store of the language, but only the most

1 There are references to the art and craft of dictionary-making in neither methodological criticism on adaptation nor pertinent collections of essays, such as Leitch 2017; Fehrle, Schäfke-Zell 2019; Magazzù, Rossi, Sileo 2020; Leitch 2023; Chua, Ho 2023; and Leitch 2025.

difficult words, basically "hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greek, Latine, or French. &c", as one can read on the title-page of *A Table Alfabeticall* of 1604, the first hard-word dictionary compiled by Robert Cawdrey that included less than 3,000 entries. By the time Edward Phillips had published *The New World of English Words* in 1658, the entries had exceeded eleven thousand. The methodology of the increase was explained by another hard-word lexicographer, the barrister Thomas Blount, in the address "To the Reader" of his *Glossographia* (1656):

> I profess to have done little with my own Pencil; but have extracted the quintessence of Scapula, Minsheu, Cotgrave, Rider, Florio, Thomasius, Dasipodius, and Hexams Dutch, Dr. Davies Welsh Dictionary, Cowels Interpreter, &c. and other able Authors, for so much as tended to my purpose.[2]

Hard-word lexicography came to an end in the early eighteenth century, when new developments can be traced in British lexicography. On the one side, the first general (or universal) English dictionaries were published, because the likes of John Kersey and Nathan Bailey – not so much the renowned Samuel Johnson – thought that the ordinary words of English should be included in monolingual dictionaries. They relied on previous English-Latin and English-French dictionaries, with the Latin and French definitions translated into English or replaced by new ones, their own dictionaries thus providing good examples of accretion, adaptation and rewriting at the same time. For instance, in 1755 – the same year when Johnson published his *Dictionary* – a new edition of Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* came out, which contained some 65,000 entries, 20,000 more than Johnson's.

On the other side, the eighteenth-century development of general-purpose lexicography went hand in hand with the production of a

2 Some of Blount's main sources (John Bullokar's *An English Expositor*, another hard-word dictionary of 1616, and John Rastell's *Les Termes de la Ley*, first compiled in 1527 and often revised and reprinted) are not mentioned. More revealing, anyway, is the variety of the dictionaries referred to here: Joannes Scapula was a German lexicographer who published a very successful abridgement of Henri Estienne's *Thesaurus Grecae Linguae* in 1580; John Minsheu was the compiler of the polyglot *Ductor in Linguas* (1617); Randle Cotgrave, John Rider, and John Florio are the well-known authors of, respectively, bilingual dictionaries of French (1611), Latin (1589), Italian (1598, 1611) and English; Thomasius is the Latinised name for Thomas Thomas, the author of a Latin-English dictionary (1587); Dasipodius was the Strasburg schoolmaster and lexicographer Peter Hasenfuss (or Petrus Dasypodius) who published his *Dictionarium Latinogermanicum* in 1535; Henry Hexham was an English soldier, translator, and lexicographer who compiled the first English-Dutch dictionary in 1647; Dr John Davies published a Welsh grammar in Latin, and a bilingual dictionary of Welsh and Latin in 1632; finally, *The Interpreter* was a very influential law dictionary published by the jurist John Cowell in 1607.

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wide variety of typologically-different dictionaries – monolingual, bilingual and multilingual dictionaries, dictionaries of arts and crafts, encyclopedic dictionaries, etc. Indeed, Samuel Johnson was right when, in a letter to Samuel Richardson dated March 28, 1754, he defined his time as "this age of dictionaries" (Redford 1992, 79) – dictionaries, again, largely the result of a never-ending process of adaptation, rewriting and/or translation.

2 Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* as a Case Study of Adaptation in Lexicography

The above observations form the backdrop and framework of the present essay, which focuses on the undisputed masterpiece of eighteenth-century English lexicography, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, compiled by Samuel Johnson and published in London in 1755 as two thick folio volumes. While analysing how Johnson's *Dictionary* materials were updated, adapted and reorganised over time in order to meet the needs of new and different users, some elements will also be offered for a taxonomy of the possible modes of adaptation and rewriting of dictionaries, both past and present.

The different ways Johnson's *Dictionary* underwent lexicographical adapting and rewriting in the second half of the eighteenth century can be listed as follows: (1) Johnson's own revisions of his *Dictionary*; (2) further 'full' editions of to the *Dictionary*; (3) manuscript additions to and revisions of the *Dictionary*; (4) abridged and miniature editions of the *Dictionary*; (5) Johnson's *Dictionary* and pronouncing dictionaries; (6) Johnson's *Dictionary* as a source for bilingual and trilingual dictionaries.

2.1 Johnson's Own Revision of His *Dictionary*

A number of editions of Johnson's dictionary were published in the three decades between 1755 and 1784, when he died;[3] still, the only edition he worked on to improve his work was the fourth edition of 1773.

That his dictionary would need some rewriting, he knew even on publishing it, as the first two paragraphs of his *Preface* to the dictionary make clear:

> It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be

3 See 2.2. below.

> disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.
>
> Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths through which Learning and Genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other authour may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompence has been yet granted to very few. (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 73)

The ideas expressed in these lines – the "writer of dictionaries" is bound "to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise" and "can only hope to escape reproach" – are replaced by the appeal to a more balanced view in the final paragraph of the *Preface*, where Johnson makes clear all the difficulties he had had to face and overcome, before the solemn and rhetorically perfect closing sentence:

> In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the authour, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. […] I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please, have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise. (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 111, 113)

Since praise largely outweighed censure,[4] Johnson was able to describe his work on the fourth revised edition of 1773 in a way that mixes philosophy and practicality:

4 Still, some readers commented on his mistakes (see Rypins 1925; Noyes 1954-55): famously, Johnson defined *pastern* as the knee of a horse, while it denotes that part of a horse's leg between the fetlock and hoof.

> Many are the works of human industry, which to begin and finish are hardly granted to the same man. He that undertakes to compile a Dictionary, undertakes that, which, if it comprehends the full extent of his design, he knows himself unable to perform. Yet his labours, though deficient, may be useful, and with the hope of this inferior praise, he must incite his activity, and solace his weariness. Perfection is unattainable, but nearer and nearer approaches may be made; and finding my Dictionary about to be reprinted, I have endeavoured, by a revisal, to make it less reprehensible. I will not deny that I found many parts requiring emendation, and many more capable of improvement. Many faults I have corrected, some superfluities I have taken away, and some deficiensies I have supplied. I have methodised some parts that were disordered, and illuminated some that were obscure. Yet the changes and additions bear a very small proportion to the whole. The critic will now have less to object, but the student who has bought any of the former copies, needs not repent; he will not, without nice collation, perceive how they differ, and usefulness seldom depends upon little things. (Johnson 1773, *Advertisement*)

The same is found in a letter to Boswell, dated Feb. 24, 1773, just a few days before the publication:

> A new edition of my great *Dictionary* is printed, from a copy which I was persuaded to revise; but having made no preparation, I was able to do very little. Some superfluities I have expunged, and some faults I have corrected, and here and there have scattered a remark; but the main fabrick of the work remains as it was. I have looked very little into it since I wrote it, and, I think, I found it full as often better, as worse, than I expected. (Chapman 1953, 504)

Johnson may have been "able to do very little" but he did it quite systematically. Indeed, his revisions and rewritings could and did involve any feature of the microstructure of the dictionary entries: the most relevant adaptations concern entrywords and definitions, that may be omitted, added, moved, merged into one or split into two; but all parts of an entry – word stresses, grammatical marks, etymologies, citations and citation attributions, and spelling mistakes or typos – are sometimes corrected. In order to provide evidence of Johnson's procedure, a sample analysis of Johnson's rewriting of the entries was carried out by systematically comparing the 1755 and 1773 editions in the A-ALW section of the *Dictionary*, i.e. the first half of the letter A. The results are as follows:

Table 1 Sample analysis of adaptation and rewriting in A-ALW entries

Omitted entries (3)	Abarcy, Absis, Alternate ratio
Added entries (22)	Abstractness, To Accommodate *v.n.*, To Accompany *v.n.*, Accumbent, To Accustom *v.n.*, Aching, Acorned, Adaptness, Additional *n.s.*, To Addle *v.n.*, Adorn *adj.*, Advantageable, Advertent, Aggelation, To Agrise *v.n.*, To Agrise *v.a.*, Albe, Alew, Alimentally, All hallow, Alliteration, Alterage
Moved entries (4)	Abby, Abominable, Admirability, All *adj.*
Merged entries (8)	To Abate 2, Abatement 2, Aberrance / Aberrancy, Abhorrence / Abhorrency, Above / From above, Adolescence / Adolescency
Split entries (4)	To Abide, To Account, To Act, To Adventure

Particularly significant examples include Abarcy, Alternate ratio, and Alliteration:

> D1755: Abarcy, *n.s.* Insatiableness. *Dict.*
>
> D1755: Alternate ratio, or proportion, is where the antecedent of one is to its consequent, as the antecedent of another to its consequent; the very same ratio, in this case, holding alternately in respect of the antecedents to each other, and the consequents to each other. *Chambers.*
>
> D1773: Alliteration. *n.s.* [*ad* and *litera*, Lat.]
>
> Of what the critics call the *alliteration* or beginning of several words in the same verse with the same letter, there are instances in the oldest and best writers, as
>
> Bemoth biggest born. *Milton's Paradise Lost.*

Abarcy is omitted in the revised edition as a purely dictionary word, i.e. simply lifted from a preceding dictionary (as shown by the abbreviation *Dict.*), with no evidence of its real usage found by Johnson. Alternate ratio is evidently omitted because it is a technical term and because its definition had not been penned by Johnson, but it was copied from Chamber's *Cyclopaedia*. Johnson must have thought that it was better to leave it there. Alliteration, instead, represents the addition of a literary term that had escaped him while working on the first edition and which he considered useful to include for his educated readership.

The same A-ALW sample returned the following results when Johnson's revision of his definitions was analysed:

Table 2 Sample analysis of revisions of definitions in A-ALW entries

Fully omitted definitions (4)	Abject *adj*., To Accompany *v.a*., etc.
Partially omitted definitions (26)	Abacus, To Ablegate, Abridgement, To Alien, etc.
Fully added definitions (47)	Abortive *adj.*, Abstracted, To Abuse, To Agree *v.n.*, etc.
Partially added definitions (99)	Abandoned, To Abbreviate, To Abjure, Agriculture, etc.
Moved definitions, from an entry to another (13)	To Account *v.a./v.n*., To Act *v.a./v.n*., etc.
Moved definitions, in the same entry (4)	Aberring, Aggregation, Air (2)
Merged definitions (2)	To Air (2)
Split definitions (1)	To Alarm
Formally modified definitions (19)	Abalienation, Abrasion, Abridgement, Acanthus, etc.
Semantically modified definitions (8)	Above *prep*., Acetose, Act, Adherence, etc.

The following three examples will suffice to highlight how Johnson adapts and rewrites his definitions.

D1775: Abject. *adj*. [*abjectus*, Lat. thrown away as of no value.]
1. Mean, or worthless, spoken of persons.

That rebellion
Came like itself in base and *abject* routs,
Led on by bloody youth goaded with rage,
And countenanc'd by boys and beggary. *Shakesp. Hen*. IV.

Honest men, who tell their sovereigns what they expect from them, and what obedience they shall be always ready to pay them, are not upon an equal foot with such base and *abject* flatterers; and are therefore always in danger of being the last in the royal favour. *Addison's Whig Examiner.*

2. Contemptible, or of no value; used of things.

I was at first, as other beasts that graze
The troden herb, of *abject* thoughts and low.
Milt. Paradise Lost, b. ix. l. 571.

3. Without hope or regard; used of condition.

The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wond'rous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of *abject* fortune thou art fall'n.
Milton's Samson Agonistes.

We see man and woman in the highest innocence and perfection, and in the most *abject* state of guilt and infirmity.
Addison. Spectator, N° 273.

4. Destitute, mean and despicable; used of actions.

To what base ends, and by what *abject* ways,
Are mortals urg'd thro' sacred lust of praise?
Pope's Essay on Criticism.

The rapine is so *abject* and profane,
They not from trifles, nor from gods refrain.
Dryden's Juvenal, Sat. 8.

In the 1773 revision, the first definition of Abject is expanded to "Mean; worthless; base; groveling: spoken of persons, or their qualities", so that it can include the quotation from *Paradise Lost* and, consequently, the second definition is deleted; the original third and fourth definitions, now second and third, are slightly modified to "Being of no hope or regard; used of condition" and "Mean and despicable; used of actions" respectively; finally, the quotations under the last definition are swapped around, so that Dryden's precedes Pope's, because it was part of Johnson's methodology to list illustrative examples relating to a given meaning in chronological order.

D1755: Abridgment. *n.s.* [*abregement,* French.]

1. The contraction of a larger work into a small compass.

Surely this commandment containeth the law and the prophets; and, in this one word, is the *abridgment* of all volumes of scripture. *Hooker, b. ii.* § 5.

Myself have play'd
The int'rim, by remembering you 'tis past;
Then brook *abridgment*, and your eyes advance
After your thoughts, straight back again to France?
Shakespeare's Henry V.

Idolatry is certainly the first-born of folly, the great and leading paradox; nay, the very *abridgment* and sum total of all absurdities. *South's Sermons.*

2. A diminution in general.

All trying, by a love of littleness,
To make *abridgments*, and to draw to less,
Even that nothing, which at first we were. *Donne.*

3. Restraint, or abridgment of liberty.

The constant desire of happiness, and the constraint it puts upon us, no body, I think, accounts an *abridgment* of liberty, or at least an *abridgment* of liberty, to be complained of. *Locke.*

The most evident change in the 1773 Abridgment entry is the addition of a fourth definition "4. Restraint from any thing pleasing; contraction of any thing enjoyed" with its own illustrative quotation: "It is not barely a man's *abridgment* in his own external accommodations which makes him miserable, but when his conscience shall tell him that it

was his sin and his folly which brought him under that *abridgment. South"*. At the same time, since any additions should be balanced by deletions so as not to increase the size of the revised dictionary, the quotation from Shakespeare's *Henry V* is removed. Two further improvements are introduced in this entry: the first definition is rephrased as "The epitome of a larger work contracted into a small compass; a compend; a summary", substituting *contraction* with three different and better equivalents of the entryword; also, the third definition is replaced by "Contraction; reduction" because the phrase "abridgment of liberty" is found in the quotation from Locke, so that defining *abridgement* with abridgement is of course unacceptable.

D1755: ACCORDING. *prep.* [from *accord*.]

1. In a manner suitable to, agreeably to, in proportion.

   Our churches are places provided, that the people might there assemble themselves in due and decent manner, *according* to their several degrees and orders. *Hooker, b. v.* § 13.

   Our zeal, then, should be *according* to knowledge. And what kind of knowledge? Without all question, first, *according* to the true, saving, evangelical knowledge. It should be *according* to the gospel, the whole gospel: not only *according* to its truths, but precepts: not only *according* to its free grace, but necessary duties: not only *according* to its mysteries, but also in commandments. *Sprat's Sermons*.

   How much more noble is the fame that is built on candour and ingenuity, *according* to those beautiful lines of Sir John Denham, in his Poem on Fletcher's works. *Addis. Spect*.

   A man may, with prudence and a good conscience, approve of the professed principles of the one party more than the other, *according* as he thinks they best promote the good of church and state. *Swift on the Sentiments of a Church of Engl. man.*

2. With regard to.

   God made all things in number, weight, and measure, and gave them to be considered by us *according* to these properties, which are inherent in created beings. *Holder on Time*.

Finally, Johnson's rewriting of the entry ACCORDING shows evidence of other kinds of revisions. The word's etymology is now added to a grammatical usage note – "from *accord*, of which it is properly a participle, and is therefore never used but with *to*" – and, as a consequence, the preposition *to* after *according* is now systematically printed in italics. The quotation from Addison's *Spectator* is shortened to "Noble is the fame that is built on candour and ingenuity, *according* to those beautiful lines of Sir John Denham", most probably to make room for another relevant change in this entry: the quotation from

Swift is removed from the first section of the entry and given both a new section and a mark of wrong usage: "3. In proportion. The following phrase is, I think, vitious".

2.2 Further 'Full' Editions of Johnson's *Dictionary*

Between 1755 and the end of the century, apart from the 1773 edition revised by Johnson, a number of 'full' (i.e., unabridged) editions of the *Dictionary* were published, most of them in London and two in Dublin:[5] these editions, apart from the correction of obvious typographical errors, did not introduce any changes. Instead, a further London edition, Harrison's of 1786 (Harrison being the publisher, not the editor) is peculiar in more than one way, because the usual paratextual elements of the *Dictionary* (Johnson's *Preface*, *History of the English Language*, and *Grammar of the English Tongue*) are preceded by an 18-page *Life of Johnson* – the lexicographer had died two years before – and *The Editor's Preface*, as well as Johnson's *Plan of an English Dictionary*, originally published in 1747, where Johnson had detailed his ideas on how a new dictionary should be compiled.[6]

Two passages from *The Editor's Preface* are particularly relevant to the topic of adaptation in lexicography. The 1786 publication

> comprehends the Genuine Original Edition, printed verbatim, without the hosts of typographical inaccuracies multiplied in subsequent impressions: and retains some hundred elucidations injudiciously struck out from all other editions; while it furnishes, in a Supplement of barely three pages, the boasted additional words, not only in the copy bequeathed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose name has been so shamefully prostituted on the occasion, but in all the other editions taken together. (Johnson 1786, *The Editor's Preface*, n.p.)

5 1st edn: 1755, J. & P. Knapton et al.; 2nd: 1755-56, J. & P. Knapton et al.; 3rd: 1765: A. Millar et al. (reissued in 8° format, as smaller and more affordable); 4th: 1773, W. Strahan et al. (revised by the Author); 4th: 1777, J. Mifflin (a copy of the former); 5th: 1784, W. Strahan et al. (published shortly before Johnson's death on Dec. 13); 6th: 1785, J.F. & C. Rivington et al. (4° format); 7th: 1785, J.F. & C. Rivington et al.; 1786, John Jarvis & John Fielding (4°). The Dublin pirated editions were published by Thomas Ewing (4th, 1775) and R. Marchbank (8th, 1798, 4°). For a census of the editions of Johnson's *Dictionary*, Alston 1966, 30-41, is still invaluable.

6 As every scholar of English lexicography knows, the *Plan* documents Johnson's 'dream' of regulating the language in all its aspects, while the *Preface*, written at the conclusion of nine years of work on the dictionary, documents the impossibility of completely ordering the nature of language and codifying it fully in a dictionary, as "these were the dreams of a poet doomed at last to wake a lexicographer" (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 100).

In other words, Harrison's edition is said to have adapted Johnson's original work in two different ways: on the one side, errors to be found in the "impressions" or reprints following the first 1755 edition are corrected by referring back to the first edition; on the other side, all the available additions to Johnson's original wordlist are printed "in a Supplement of barely three pages", thus contributing to the future life of Johnson's masterpiece. The *Supplement*[7] comprises 321 entries, the following ones among them:

> Abstractness. *n.s.* [from *abstract*.] Subtilty; separation from all matter of common notion.
>
> I have taken some pains to make plain and familiar to your thoughts, truths, which established prejudice, or the *abstractness* of the ideas themselves, might render difficult. *Locke*.

> Deflux. *n.s.* [*defluxus*, Latin.] Downward flow.
>
> Both bodies are clammy, and bridle the deflux of humours, without penning them in too much. *Bacon*.

> Fluently. *adj.* [from *fluent*.] With ready flow; volubly; readily; without obstruction or difficulty.

> Hawthorn fly. *n.s.* An insect.
>
> The *hawthorn fly* is all black, and not big. *Walton*.

> Nymphish. *adj.* [from *nymph*.] Relating to nymphs; lady-like.
>
> Tending all to *nymphish* war. *Drayton*.

> Rolling-press. *n.s.* A cylinder rolling upon another cylinder, by which engravers print their plates upon paper.

> Stopgap. *n.s.* [from *stop* and *gap*.] Something substituted; a temporary expedient.

> Wellfare. *n.s.* [*well* and *fare*.] Happiness; prosperity.
>
> They will ask, What is the final cause of a king? and they will answer, The people's *welfare*. Certainly a true answer; and as certainly an imperfect one. *Holyday*.

Another passage from *The Editor's Preface* to Harrison's edition is worth quoting because it suggests that the practice of adapting,

7 The full title of the *Supplement*, which is printed at the very end of the second volume, is *Supplement of Additional Words, Introduced by Dr. Johnson, Subsequent to His Original Edition, from which the Foregoing Work Has Been Literally Reprinted.*

rewriting and publishing new editions of texts "with additions, corrections, and improvements" may only have economic motivations, which are moreover dishonest, if "variations are made merely for the sake of creating a new sale":

> The very common trick of lessening the value of a first edition, by immediately publishing a new one, "with *additions*, *corrections*, and *improvements*," is at best a dishonourable practice, where the *alterations* really deserve to be so called; unless presented gratis, as *Errata*, to the original encouragers of the work, who have even then sufficient difficulty, should their books happen to be bound: but where *variations* are made merely for the sake of creating a new sale, and thus raising fresh contributions on an author's best friends, the first purchasers, it is at once disingenuous, and dishonest, in a very high degree. (Johnson 1786, *The Editor's Preface*, n.p.)

2.3 Manuscript Additions to and Revisions of Johnson's *Dictionary*

An above-quoted sentence from *The Editor's Preface* to Harrison's edition refers to a copy of the *Dictionary* bequeathed to Sir Joshua Reynolds. This is the copy that Johnson in his old age – after the publication of the 1773 revised edition – kept at home to include his own further annotations, comments and additions. After inheriting it on Johnson's death, Reynolds was ready to give it to the publishers of the 1785 sixth edition of the dictionary, the closest competitor of Harrison's edition published in the following year. This copy, therefore, does not only provide evidence of Johnson's never-ending work on the dictionary, but it may also introduce another chapter in the history of the adaptations and rewritings of Johnson's dictionary, that is to say annotated copies. In fact, educated people in those days were ready to read a dictionary from page to page, all the more so if, like Johnson's, it included quotations that could teach and entertain at the same time; some of these readers added marginal comments and notes, often disagreeing with or correcting what the lexicographer had written. Such material can be very interesting because it reveals the dictionary-users' point of view (as opposed to the lexicographer's) in linguistic, literary and cultural matters – something that is often not very easy to access nowadays.

A dozen of these annotated copies remain today.[8] One of them, now in the British Library, was owned by the scholar and mathematician Samuel Dyer and the famous statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke. The largest number of Dyer's notes (90 out of 237) aim at correcting or adding to Johnson's etymologies, i.e. what the lexicographer himself and his critics judged the weakest point in the dictionary:

Jo.: Storied. *adj.* [from *story*.] …
Dy.: Storied. *adj*. From y^e^ Italian *Istoriato*, which signified y^e^ same thing.

Jo.: Battledoor. *n.s*. [so called from *door*, taken for a flat board, and *battle*, or *striking*.] …
Dy.: Battledoor. *n.s*. Probably a Corruption of y^e^ Spanish word *Batador*.

Jo.: Burly. *adj.* [*Junius* has no etymology; *Skinner* imagines it to come from *boorlike*, clownish.] …
Dy.: Burly. Spelt by S^r^ Thomas More *Boorely*, which confirms Skinner's Etymology. V. More's *Life of Rich. III*.

Other annotations add new meanings or even new entries to the *Dictionary*:

Jo.: Speculum. *n.s.* [Latin.] A mirrour; a looking-glass; that in which representations are formed by reflection…
Dy.: Speculum. Also a Surgeon's Instrument for probing Ulcers &c.

Dy.: Catgut. A String made of y^e^ Intestines of Animals.

Dy.: Tundish. n.s. A provincial word for a Funnel: "Why should he die? / For filling a bottle with a Tundish." Shakesp. *Measure for Meas*.

Unlike Dyer, what Burke was most interested in was the current usage of words, not their history. As a consequence, he often labels Johnson's entries with the abbreviation "n.i.u.", for not in use:

Jo.: To Mucker. v.n. [from muck.] To scramble for money; to hoard up; to get or save meanly:
a word used by Chaucer, and still retained in conversation.
Bu.: n.i.u.

8 See Considine 2021. The following examples of Dyer's, Burke's and Malone's annotations are taken from Iamartino 1995 and 2018, which can be referred to for a more detailed discussion.

Also, in a fairly large number of cases, Burke adds Johnson's entries a usage note expressing disapproval: for example, Lorn is labelled as "obsolete", Moraliser as "doubtful", Citess as "bad", Moneyworth "low style", and To reduce. *v.a.* 5 as "not a good usage".

On Burke's death, the Dyer-Burke's copy was given to Edmond Malone, the Shakespearian scholar, who also annotated his own copy of Johnson's dictionary[9] between 1808 and 1811. Malone's notes were meant to improve or correct Johnson's spellings, etymologies, or definitions, add more pertinent quotations, etc. Malone's work is not unlike Dyer's and Burke's, but it is much more extensive: all in all, nearly 3,000 notes. The following examples show how Malone copied but also added to Dyer's and Burke's notes (Catgut), improved on Johnson's entries by modifying definitions (Candlewaster) or providing an earlier first quotation (Amenity, Comfortable), and also added new entries (Chopper):

Dy.: Catgut. A String made of y^{e} Intestines of Animals.
Ma.: Catgut: n.s. 1. A string made of the intestines of animals. 2. A species of linen with wide interstices.

Jo.: Candlewaster. *n.s.* [from *candle* and *waste*.] One that consumes candles; a spendthrift. […]
Ma.: Perhaps rather a drunkard; one who passes the night in drinking & thus consumes candles.

Jo.: Amenity. *n.s.* […] Pleasantness; agreeableness of situation.
If the situation of Babylon was such at first, as in the days of Herodotus, it was a seat of amenity and pleasure. Browne.
Ma.: The word is older than Browne. It is found in the Astrologyster, by J. Melton, 1620: "the amenitie, neatness, elegance and splendour of the place did so tickle and delight my senses, &c".

Jo.: Comfortable. *adj.* […] 3. Dispensing comfort; having the power of giving comfort.[…]
Ma.: Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress. Shakspeare. A. Well

Ma.: Chopper: n.s. A butcher's cleaver: now more frequently used than cleaver.[10]

9 It was a copy of the three-volume Dublin quarto edition of 1775.

10 This is one of Malone's annotations that Henry John Todd included verbatim in his 1818 revised edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*. In the *Introduction* to his edition, Todd acknowledges his debt to Malone (Todd 1818, 1, iii), as he had been given Malone's annotated copy of the *Dictionary* by James Boswell the Younger – a further instance of the never-ending story of rewrites and adaptations in lexicography.

2.4 Abridged and Miniature Editions of Johnson's *Dictionary*

The editions of Johnson's masterpiece referred to and commented on so far – usually published as two folio volumes and sometimes as quartos – are 'full' because they include all the quotations – well over 100.000 – that Johnson listed to document the evolving meaning and usage of words. But these editions were very expensive – the first one cost £ 4.10 – thus out of most readers' reach. That is why, alongside the publication of the 'full' editions, an even bigger number of abridged or "abstracted" editions came out – a very clear instance of adapting a text to the cultural needs and economic possibilities of a lower but wider target readership, i.e. less educated and less well-off dictionary-users. If the ECCO (*Eighteenth-Century Collection Online*) database is to be trusted, a dozen abstracted 8° editions[11] and thirteen miniature editions of the *Dictionary* came out before the end of the century, quite often by the same firms that published the full editions.

In order to understand how the big, learned *Dictionary* was adapted for different readerships, both quantitative and qualitative analyses must be carried out, because the reduction and compression of the lexicographical text can be achieved in different ways, as a comparison between its first and last abridged editions published in the eighteenth century will clearly show. The first abridged version of the *Dictionary* was edited by Johnson himself and published as a single volume, usually referred to as the "abridged octavo edition", in 1756, just one year after the original work; the last one was printed in 1799 as a joint undertaking by a large number of London booksellers.

A purely quantitative analysis of the first two pages of the original 1755 dictionary and the abridged editions of 1756 and 1799 shows the increased number of entries in the latter editions – obviously, the result of a reduction of some kind:

> Jo.1755: (folio edn, first 2 pages) from A to Abatement, 27 entries
> Jo.1756: (abstracted 8° edn, first 2 pages) from A to Abjectedness, 61 entries
> Jo.1799: (abstracted 8° edn, first 2 pages) from A to To ablactate, 69 entries

11 The London editions "Abstracted from the Folio Edition" in ECCO (see Gale Cengage Learning, at `https://www.gale.com`) include the following: 1756, J. Knapton et al.; 2nd: 1760, J. Knapton et al.; 4th: 1770, W. Strahan et al.; 5th: 1773, W. Strahan et al.; 6th: 1778, W. Strahan et al.; 7th: 1783, W. Strahan et al.; 8th: 1786, J.F. & C. Rivington et al.; 9th: 1790, J.F. & C. Rivington et al.; 8th: 1792, A. Millar et al.; 10th: 1794, T. Longman et al.; 11th: 1799, J. Johnson et al. To these, three editions published in Scotland must be added: 8th: 1792, T. Brown et al. (Edinburgh) and W. Anderson (Stirling); 10th: 1792, James Duncan & Son et al (Glasgow); 11th: 1797, Tho. Brown et al. (Edinburgh). For a comment of the abstracted editions, and especially the first one of 1756, see Dille 2005; see also Hailey 2005.

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Comparing the entries Abject in the 'full' 1755 edition (transcribed in 2.1 above) and in the later abridged editions clarifies what the adaptation procedure basically consists in:

> Jo. 1756: Abject. a. [*abjectus*, Lat.]
> 1. Mean, or worthless. *Addison*.
> 2. Contemptible, or of no value. *Milt*.
> 3. Without hope or regard. *Milt*.
> 4. Destitute, mean and despicable. *Dryd. Pope*.
>
> Jo. 1799 Abject. a. [*abjectus*, Lat.]
> 1. Mean; worthless; base. *Addison*.
> 2. Being of no hope or regard. *Milt*.
> 3. Mean and despicable. *Dryd.*

Both abridged editions dispense with illustrative quotations, only the authors' names are retained. The reason why is explained in Johnson's *Preface* to the 1756 *Dictionary* – a completely different text from the original one:

> VII. To the words, and to the different senses of each word, are subjoined from the large dictionary the names of those writers by whom they have been used; so that the reader who knows the different periods of the language, and the time of its authors, may judge of the elegance or prevalence of any word, or meaning of a word; and without recurring to other books, may know what are antiquated, what are unusual, and what are recommended by the best authority. (Johnson 1756, *The Preface*, n.p.)

The first two paragraphs of the same text make clear the rationale for the adaptation and rewriting of the folio edition for a different readership:

> Having been long employed in the study and cultivation of the English language, I lately published a dictionary like those compiled by the academies of Italy and France, for the use of such as aspire to exactness of criticism or elegance of style.
>
> But it has been since considered that works of that kind are by no means necessary to the greater number of readers, who, seldom intending to write or presuming to judge, turn over books only to amuse their leisure, and to gain degrees of knowledge suitable to lower characters, or necessary to the common business of life: these know not any other use of a dictionary than that of adjusting orthography, or explaining terms of science or words of infrequent occurrence, or remote derivation. (Johnson 1756, *The Preface*, n.p.)

Johnson argues here that he is the right person to compile the abridged dictionary adapting it to the needs of "the greater number of readers" exactly because he authored a dictionary that could compete with the famous Italian and French models. Then, after briefly commenting on the defects of the existing dictionaries of "common" readers, Johnson concludes:

> For this reason a small dictionary appeared yet to be wanting to common readers: and, as I may without arrogance claim to myself a longer acquaintance with the lexicography of our language than any other writer has had, I shall hope to be considered as having more experience at least than most of my predecessors, and as more likely to accommodate the nation with a vocabulary of daily use. I therefore offer to the publick an abstract or epitome of my former work.

Relying on his experience as a lexicographer and man of letters, and now focusing on "a vocabulary of daily use", Johnson renounces entries describing less common or obsolete words. Thus, from the section corresponding to the range from A to Abatement in the first edition, the following entries disappeared from the 1756 abridged dictionary: Ab, Abacke, Abactor, Abaisance, To Abalienate, Abalienation. To Aband, To Abandon over, Abandoning, Abannition, Abarcy, Abased, and To Abate [in horsemanship]. Johnson's selective approach was usually adopted verbatim by the editors of all subsequent eighteenth-century "abstracted" dictionaries, with the sole exception of the 1799 edition. Indeed, the 69 entries in the first two pages of this latter work are not numerically very different from the 61 entries in the 1756 edition, but they are the result of a completely different adaptation process: while all the illustrative quotations are removed in the 1799 edition as well, it retains all the entries from the 'full' 1755 *Dictionary*, even those eliminated by Johnson himself in the 1756 *Dictionary* and, accordingly, by the other editors in the following abridged editions; instead, some space is saved by reducing a few definitions and explanations here and there. Therefore, although this work is advertised on the title page as "The Eleventh Edition, corrected and revised; With considerable Additions from the Eight Edition of the Original", this claim actually conceals a process of 'mechanical' adaptation, that neglects the choices made by Johnson to adapt his masterpiece to a new type of dictionary users, and is limited to purely formal interventions.

The 'physical shrinking' of the dictionary as a book – from folio to quarto to octavo – and of its contents – focusing on the basic linguistic information – is further carried out in the so-called miniature editions, whose book format is duodecimo. By cross-referencing the bibliographic data contained in Alston (1966, 37-8), with the editions

reproduced in the ECCO database, two conclusions can be drawn: first, Johnson's miniature editions are a publishing product that appeared in the last decade of the eighteenth century;[12] second, the lexicographical tradition of these works is difficult to reconstruct because they are texts of poor quality and economic value, and therefore not worth treasuring from one generation into another.

The title-page of the earliest among the available miniature copies of Johnson's dictionary, published in1795,[13] announces what the reader will find in it:

> Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language in Miniature. To which Are Added, An Alphabetical Account of the Heathen Deities; and A List of the Cities, Boroughs, and Market Towns in England and Wales. Embellished with a Portrait of Dr. Johnson. Second Edition. London: Printed under the Inspection of the Literary Association, and Sold by John Creswick, and Co, Agents to the Society. 1795.

However absurd the joining of a small lexical dictionary with such encyclopedic material as a list of heathen deities and cities and market towns, with their distances from London, may seem,[14] two paragraphs from *The Advertisement* make clear the adapting and rewriting process carried out to compile this miniature dictionary and also highlight its main target readership:

> Small as it appears in Compass, this little Dictionary contains in Substance the quintessence of Lexicography; it is, in fact, Johnson's Dictionary in Miniature, adapted for every Purpose as a Book of Reference. It is copious in Contents, though small in Volume. Its component Materials are judiciously selected, and accurately arranged; with this superior Advantage – that the more obsolete Excrescences of Johnson, and other eminent Lexicographers, are here exchanged for many additional scientific and literary Terms not current in their Time.
>
> The Size of this Dictionary renders it peculiarly adapted for the Pocket; and as every Word that might give Offence to Delicacy has been omitted, it will be found particularly acceptable to Female Readers. (Johnson 1795, *Advertisement*, n.p.)

12 More are found in the nineteenth century, as shown in Vancil 2006.

13 Alston (1966, 37) mentions a London edition of 1794 because it was listed in Lichfield library catalogue but it could not be found and examined by him. From 1795 to 1800 a miniature edition of Johnson's *Dictionary* was published in London every year.

14 The 1797 edition of the miniature dictionary compiled by the Rev. Joseph Hamilton, M.A. Master of the Academy of Hemel Hemsted, Herts, even includes "a concise Epitome of the most remarkable Events during the French Revolution" (Hamilton 1797, title page).

2.5 Johnson's *Dictionary* and Pronouncing Dictionaries

Johnson's *Dictionary* could do very little to keep under control and guide the pronunciation of the language. Since the days of his *Plan* he had become very well aware of this, as attested in a couple of passages from the *Preface*:

> In settling the orthography, I have not wholly neglected the pronunciation, which I have directed, by printing an accent upon the acute or elevated syllable. It will sometimes be found, that the accent is placed by the authour quoted, on a different syllable from that marked in the alphabetical series; it is then to be understood, that custom has varied, or that the authour has, in my opinion, pronounced wrong. Short directions are sometimes given where the sound of letters is irregular; and if they are sometimes omitted, defect in such minute observations will be more easily excused, than superfluity.
>
> […] sounds are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength. (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 79, 105)

It is therefore almost paradoxical that Johnson's work provided the foundation and material for the later dictionaries of William Perry (ca. 1747-ca. 1808), a relevant figure in the British tradition of pronouncing dictionaries.[15] His *Royal Standard English Dictionary* of 1775 had a wordlist of more than 28,000 entries, largely based on Johnson's. Over the next three decades, apart from further editions of this dictionary, Perry also published other dictionaries, typologically different but still somehow related to Johnson's masterpiece. In fact, his 1795 pocket dictionary called *A General Dictionary of the English Language; To which Is Prefixed a Comprehensive Grammar* was later reprinted twice without any changes except for the title

15 On Perry's life and works see Sturiale 2006, 2014 and 2023. Although the first dictionaries indicating the pronunciation of sound (rather than simply marking accentuation) were all published after 1755, none of them shares Perry's reverence for Johnson. Yet, late in the century, in both Britain and North America, some dictionaries were compiled by merging together lexicographical materials from Johnson's and the most successful pronouncing dictionaries. This is best seen in Thomas Browne's 1800 compilation – a lexicographical adaptation to the highest degree: *The Union Dictionary, Containing All That Is Truly Useful in the Dictionaries of Johnson, Sheridan, and Walker, the Orthography and Explanatory Matter Selected from Dr. Johnson, the Pronunciation Adjusted according to Mr. Walker, with the Addition of Mr. Sheridan's Pronunciation of Those Words Wherein these Two Eminent Orthoepists Differ. The Whole Designed to Present to the Reader, at One View, the Orthography, Explanation, Pronunciation, and Accentuation of All the Purest and Most Approved Terms in the English Language*. For a useful survey of early pronouncing dictionaries, see Beal 2009.

page, which redefines the pocket dictionary as *Dr. Johnson's General Dictionary of the English Language. Enlarged by the Addition of Several Thousand Words, Selected from the Most Approved Authors: To which is prefixed A Comprehensive Grammar* (Perry 1802 and 1806) – Johnson's name being nothing more than a promotional tool and a quality guarantee. More interesting is Perry's final work as a lexicographer, *The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary* of 1805,[16] as the first two paragraphs of its *Preface* do not only reiterate Perry's debt to Johnson but they also show how tradition and innovation, copying and adapting, are part and parcel of the history of lexicography:

> The following sheets, containing the only synonymous vocabulary ever offered to the public, would have possessed superiour excellence, and have insured general approbation, if, fortunately, they had been undertaken and executed by that luminary of learning, the late Dr. Samuel Johnson, from whose folio Dictionary of the English language, we are proud to acknowledge, the materials for this arduous undertaking have been purposely selected.
>
> To the philological, critical, and other interesting observations of the above learned author, we have superadded two exclusive advantages to our publication; the one – as a *synonymous*, the other – as a *pronouncing* nomenclature. The *former* is new and unique; the *latter* is on an approved plan, effected by characteristic types, after the manner of the Royal Standard English Dictionary, published by the author upwards of twenty years since, which has passed through ten editions, each consisting of ten thousand copies. (Perry 1805, v)

16 The full title runs as follows: *The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary; In which the Words Are Deduced from their Originals. Their Part of Speech Distinguished, their Pronounciation Pointed out, and their Synonyma Collected, which Are Occasionally Illustrated in their Different Significations, by Examples from the Best Writers; Extracted from the Labours of the Late Dr. Samuel Johnson; Being an Attempt to Synonymise his Folio Dictionary of the English Language. To which Is Prefixed an English Grammar.*

2.6 Johnson's *Dictionary* as a Source for Bilingual and Trilingual Dictionaries

The last type of the ways in which Johnson's masterpiece was adapted to new uses and users concerns the cases in which his monolingual dictionary was used to help compile bilingual or trilingual dictionaries.[17]

The first example of such an adaptation dates back to 1760, five years after the publication of Johnson's *Dictionary*, when Giuseppe Baretti published his bilingual Italian-English and English-Italian dictionary in London.[18] As a matter of fact, this dictionary is not an original compilation, but the revised and corrected edition of Ferdinando Altieri's bilingual dictionary of 1726-1727 in the version edited by Evangelist Palermo and published in 1749. For the English-Italian section of his work, Baretti uses Johnson's *Dictionary* to adapt, correct and supplement Altieri's entries and wordlist, as the following examples show:

Al. 1749: Piazza, s. [a broad, open place, as a market place] *piazza*, s.f. *luogo spazioso circondato d'edifici*.
Jo. 1755: *Piazza*. *n.s.* [Italian] A walk under a roof supported by pillars. […]
Ba. 1760: Piazza, s. [A walk under a roof supported by pillars.] *portico da passeggiarvi sotto; voce pretta Italiana, addattata* [sic] *stranamente dagl'Inglesi.*

Al. 1749: Salmagundy, s. [an Italian dish of several sorts of good meat] *intingolo*, *manicaretto*, s.m.
Jo. 1755: Salmagundi. *n.s.* [It is said to be corrupted from *selon mon gout*, or *sale à mon gout*]
A mixture of chopped meat and pickled herrings with oil, vinegar, pepper, and onions.
Ba. 1760: Salmagundy, s. [a mixture of chopped meat and pickled herrings with oil, vinegar, pepper, and onions] *strana vivanda usata in Inghilterra a* [sic] *fatta di carne cotta sminuzzata, di aringhe salate con olio, aceto, pepe, e cipolle*.

Jo. 1755: Arietta. *n.s.* [Ital. in musick] A short air, song, or tune.
Ba. 1760: Arietta, s. [in music] aria, arietta, canzone, di una strofa sola.

17 In a way, this procedure reverses what happened at the beginning of the century, when bilingual dictionaries could provide the basic wordlist of the first general dictionaries: see the end of section 1 above.

18 Critical analyses of this dictionary can be found in Iamartino 1990 and 2021, as well as in Iamartino, Berti 2023. The examples given here below are taken from these essays.

Jo. 1755: Cockfight. *n.s.* [*cock* and *fight*.] A battle or match of cocks. […]
Ba. 1760: Cock-fight, s. [a match of cocks] *Battaglia de' galli. Barbaro passatempo del* Popolaccio d'Inghilterra.
Jo. 1755: Tory. *n.s.* […] One who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the church of England: opposed to a whig […]
Ba. 1760: Tory, s. *colui che in Inghilterra aderisce o pretende aderire alle antiche leggi e all'apostolica Gerarchia della chiesa Anglicana. Il suo opposto chiamasi* Whig.

Due to the fame Johnson acquired with his lexicographical masterpiece, the example set by Baretti was followed by other compilers of bilingual dictionaries, in Europe and beyond, in the eighteenth and the following century.[19] The most relevant, eighteenth-century example is the bilingual English-German dictionary compiled by Johann Christoph Adelung (1732-1806) and published in 1783, limited to the section A-J, to be completed with the K-Z volume in 1796. The debt to Johnson is acknowledged on the title page and early in the preface or *Vorrede*, both texts specifying that the German lexicographer referred to the revised and corrected edition of 1773, although improvements of various kinds were derived from other sources:

> *Neues grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Englischen Sprache für die Deutschen; vornemlich aus dem größern englischen Werke des hrn. Samuel Johnson nach dessen vierten Ausgabe gezogen, und mit vielen Wörten, Bedeutungen und Beyspielen vermerhrt*. Von A bis J. Erster Band ([Adelung] 1783, title page)

> Die Engländer besitzen ein sehr vollständiges Wörterbuch ihrer Sprache, mit welchem sie der noch lebende Hr. Samuel Johnson beschenkt hat, und von welchem die vierte vermehrte Ausgabe zu London 1773 heraus kam, die in zwen starken Bänden über 28 Alphabet in groß Fol. ausmacht. ([Adelung] 1783, iii)

One has to move back from Germany to England again to finally trace the use of Johnson's masterpiece for the compilation of a trilingual dictionary, and a pocket dictionary at that! As stated on its title page, Ferdinando Bottarelli's *The New Italian, English, and*

19 As they were published in the nineteenth century, two other bilingual dictionaries that refer to Johnson's masterpiece are not analysed here: the *Dictionnaire général Anglais-Français* by Alexandre Spiers published in Paris in 1846; and *A Dictionary in English and Bengalee* compiled by Ramkamal Sen (1783-1844), Treasurer of the Bank of Bengal and Secretary of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, who used Henry John Todd's 1818 revision of Johnson's *Dictionary*.

French Pocket-Dictionary of 1777 was "Carefully compiled from the dictionaries of La Crusca, Dr. S. Johnson, the French Academy, and from other dictionaries of the best authorities". A teacher of French and Italian in late eighteenth-century London, Ferdinando Bottarelli was able to 'squeeze' the biggest and most authoritative folio dictionaries of his day into three small duodecimo volumes, each of them having the wordlist in one language and the equivalents in the other two. This, as he affirmed in the *Preface* to *Volume 1. Containing the Italian before the English and the French*, "will sufficiently answer every purpose of the Traveller, or Student" (Bottarelli 1777, iii). It is appropriate and, arguably, significant, to conclude this overview of the various ways in which Johnson's folio masterpiece was adapted, during the eighteenth century, to the different needs of different categories of users with Bottarelli's triple compilation: on the one hand, it is probably the most extreme adaptation and rewriting of Johnson's masterpiece – from folio to duodecimo volumes, from a monolingual to a trilingual dictionary; on the other hand, it recognises and celebrates 'Dictionary Johnson' as the British counterpart of the Italian and French academics – the strongest reason why his very successful compilation could be adapted to serve a variety of educational and publishing purposes.

3 The Conclusion, in which Nothing is Concluded

Repeating here the title of the final chapter of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* is not only a fitting tribute to the lexicographer who was also a literary critic, a poet and a writer, but also suggests that the art and craft of dictionary-making is a never-ending endeavour of rewriting and adaptation. This is true in general terms, and also with specific reference to Johnson's *Dictionary*, which was first revised and then replaced by other compilations in the nineteenth century, but continued to exert its influence by providing material for subsequent lexicographers, even though its methodology was criticised and at least partly superseded. As has been rightly highlighted,

> In the nineteenth century, Johnson's Dictionary was revised and somewhat enlarged by H. J. Todd in four volumes (1818), a version that, in its various editions, continued to prove popular; it was eventually enlarged further by Robert Gordon Latham as late as 1886-70. Only the dictionaries of Charles Richardson and Noah Webster (who both explicitly defined themselves against Johnson) competed effectively during this period with Johnson-Todd. (Reddick 2009, 171-2)

Despite these latter lexicographers' critical and ideological rejection of Johnson's work in the first half of the nineteenth century, and despite the fact that the 'founding fathers' of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) set out in the second half of the century to create an innovative dictionary based on scientific principles – indeed, it is no coincidence that the OED's original title was *A New English Dictionary*[20] – the influence of Johnson's *Dictionary* on the development of English lexicography has never waned, and it is still present in the online third edition of the OED, being currently revised. As a matter of fact, an automatic search on the OED website reveals that almost 1,200 quotations from Johnson's *Dictionary* still help to illustrate the meanings of as many words; in addition, over 600 definitions and over 250 etymological notes in the OED online refer in one way or another to Johnson's masterpiece. There is really no end to adaptation and rewriting in dictionary-making.

20 On the history of the OED see, among others, Mugglestone 2005, Gilliver 2016 and Ogilvie 2013. Richardson, Webster and the OED are focussed on by Michael Adams, Edward Finegan and Peter Sokolowski, and Sarah Ogilvie respectively in Ogilvie, Safran 2019.

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Serialization as Adaptation in Later Eighteenth-Century Magazines and Newspapers
Sternean Sentimental Journeys

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Abstract Eighteenth-century magazines and newspapers were fecund sources for fiction, printing both existing works and new material: serialization thrived, a form of adaptation that took inspiration from already successful works to invoke familiarity while developing in new directions, conditioned by the distinctive nature of these publication venues. Here, two adaptations of Laurence Sterne's fiction, serialized in magazine and newspaper outlets, illuminate Sterne's reception, wider adaptive practices, and the unique contexts of a publication environment characterized by aesthetic imperatives and commercial rivalries.

Keywords Adaptation. Serialization. Magazines. Newspapers. Laurence Sterne.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Never-Ending Stories: Serialization in Magazines, Newspapers, and Sterne's Fiction. – 3 "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" in the *Lady's Magazine*. – 4 "A Sentimental Excursion" in the *Public Ledger* and the *Morning Herald*. – 5 Conclusion – or to Be Continued?

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1 Introduction

The blue-green paper covers of Charles Dickens's serialized novels have acquired something of a fetishistic quality, a material embodiment of the paradoxical transience and endurance of so-called ephemeral publications (Gibson, Grener, Goodenough 2022). The cover designs of each magazine issue, incorporating images by renowned illustrators, coupled with the text of now canonized fictional works, possess collectors'-item status, confirming connoisseurship of the material object but also of what it apparently signified in Victorian culture: moralistic self-restraint brought readers to regulate their eagerness for the next instalment of an engrossing story by patiently awaiting its scheduled arrival. Scholars of eighteenth-century literature are nonetheless keen to point out that the nineteenth century did not have the purchase on serialization, and that the enduring association between that period and serial fiction testifies to an imbalanced, perhaps nostalgic perception of what Nicholas Seager calls "constructions of the Victorian outlook, a culture allegedly attuned to deferred gratification – in economics, religion, sex, and light reading" (Seager 2015, 112). Serialization constituted not only the reading experience but the compositional and publication practices of major eighteenth-century prose fictions, including *Clarissa*, *Sir Charles Grandison*, and *Tristram Shandy*. As Thomas Keymer argues, the strategy was as much aesthetic as financial; authors such as Richardson and Sterne used the dissemination of their work in parts to cull reader feedback, partly so as to shape what came next (2000, 38). Serialization is a form of adaptation, each new instalment building on and developing the last, an adaptive process that is rendered more complex when the serialized fiction absorbs and reconfigures work already published elsewhere.[1]

Comparable questions to those characterizing book serialization pertain to the vast terrain of fiction found in eighteenth-century periodicals, magazines, and newspapers. Their publication environment was nonetheless distinct: anonymity and pseudonymity, while prevalent on the book market (Orr 2017, 15; Raven 2003, 141), ran particularly rampant in the more fluid context of these press publications.[2] Serialized works in these venues could appear at

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2 The differences between types of "press publication" should be borne in mind: periodicals carried essays, using a fictional eidolon ("Mr. Spectator"), and dominated the century's earlier decades; magazines, most popular mid-century onwards, were more miscellaneous; newspapers, important throughout the century, mixed news, politics, advertisements, and fiction. Serialization existed across all forms. Keymer 2002, 116-17; Batchelor 2022, 15.

both regular and erratic intervals, over extended periods of time, sometimes indefinitely. Letters pages supplied a public forum for readers' responses, sometimes to serial fiction itself, which were occasionally acted upon. Fictional pieces printed in the press shared space with a considerable quantity and variety of other types of content, both factual and fictional, grave and gay, which vied for readers' attention. Many new items mingled recognizable styles of writing with innovation, often by adapting existing materials, whether generic traits or specific works. Laurence Sterne's *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-67) and *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) were extensively adapted in a variety of forms from 1760 onwards, but his fiction seemed particularly mouldable to the generative processes of serial fictions which both mimicked and exaggerated Sterne's own compositional methods, and his works' relationship with serial publication.

Here, two serialized adaptations of Sterne – printed in the *Lady's Magazine*, and in the *Public Ledger* and *Morning Herald* – illuminate the role of serialization in Sterne's creative reception, and in eighteenth-century adaptation more generally, and how both thrived within the unique print environment provided by magazines and newspapers. They also expose the vulnerability of these materials: individual issues were subject to destruction, mutilation, or reuses that rendered their contents illegible – as Tristram finds when he loses his "remarks", stuffed into the pocket of his travelling chaise, discovered by the chaise-vamper's wife, and recycled as curling papers ("papilliotes") for her hair (Sterne 1978, 2: 639-41): both the scraps of paper and the witty sentiments are entirely lost on this woman's head. Paper is a precious material that, like many truly precious things, can be discarded too readily as "waste" (Friant-Kessler 2014, 215-18). The fragile pages of a magazine or newspaper, while perhaps once considered merely ephemeral and disposable, are no different; they hold their own fetishistic charm – and, as we will discover, to lose an individual issue is potentially to lose one instalment of a serialized fiction, in this case disrupting the process of recovering and reconstructing Sterne's reception history as figured through adaptation.

2 Never-Ending Stories: Serialization in Magazines, Newspapers, and Sterne's Fiction

The serialization of fiction was not new when mid-century novelists came to use it, and nor was its association with press publications. From the early decades of the eighteenth century onwards, periodicals and newspapers printed excerpts from already published fiction, often over successive issues – a developing practice that, as Nicholas Seager suggests, "reflected and enhanced the novel's growing appeal,

as newspapers helped to widen and democratize the readership for fiction" (2015, 112). From 1760 onwards, however, periodicals, newspapers, and increasingly popular magazines provided venues for entirely new fictional works (Keymer 2002, 124-5). Tobias Smollett is typically credited with having produced the first fiction specifically for publication in this venue: "Sir Launcelot Greaves", serialized in the *British Magazine* from January 1760 to December 1761 (Mayo 1962, 276-9; Keymer 2002, 129-32). Recent scholarship nonetheless promotes the almost concurrent appearance of Charlotte Lennox's "The History of Harriot and Sophia", in all eleven issues of her own periodical, the *Lady's Museum*, from March 1760 until February 1761; like Smollett's narrative, published in 1762 as *The Life and Adventures of Launcelot Greaves*, it soon appeared in book form as *Sophia* (1762), with only minimal changes (Schürer 2008, 32-3, 201-4; Buckley 2025, 154).

These two works pioneered some of the key features of serial fiction exclusively written for magazine publication, which allowed it to flourish in ensuing decades. Each instalment is a self-contained segment that possesses independent integrity, but which builds in links to the subsequent part to secure readerly comprehension and engagement, cliff-hangers being an obvious connective tool between the end of one instalment and the beginning of the next (Keymer 2000, 42; Buckley 2025, 160-2). Serialization, in this way, is a form of self-adaptation, in that it evolves with the production of each new part by picking up from the last. It also underlines the significance of context to the adaptive process: every instalment of "Harriot and Sophia" sits alongside other items in each issue of the *Lady's Museum* – essays, translations, musical settings for songs, poems – which shape the reader's reception of the novelistic piece. Fragmentation juxtaposes with completeness: the serialized instalment is part of a greater whole in the individual periodical or magazine issue, but its completeness is deferred until the final part and, potentially, the novel's transition into book form – a type of further self-adaptation to which we will return. Each issue of a periodical or magazine is likewise aesthetically complete, at the same time that this completeness is partly contingent on the promised appearance of a subsequent issue – and, eventually, on gathering all issues to form the bound volumes whereby many readers created unique personal libraries (DiPlacidi 2018, 272-3). Dickens's collectors are far from original.

Press publications relied on these interactions between temporality and spatiality. They allowed authors to experiment with length – space was circumscribed, but a serial instalment could nonetheless range from a few hundred words to over a thousand – and also to exercise a non-committal approach towards self-continuation. While enterprises such as Smollett's and Lennox's were conceived as attaining some form of completion, after 1760 a significant proportion of serialized

fiction in magazines and newspapers tested readers' credulity that they would ever reach a conclusion: the promise "*To be Continued*" often remained unfulfilled. Suspense was stretched, too: magazines typically printed serials at regular intervals, but newspapers played fast and loose with the gap between instalments, enhancing the element of surprise. We cannot assume all readers desperately anticipated the next part of a serialized fiction, given that these publications offered many attention-drawing items; some evidently awaited more, though, especially when a serial appeared to be winding up, awakening the sadness that can accompany the sense of an ending. "*Angelina*", one *Lady's Magazine* reader in the 1780s, wrote to its editors that, as the serialized *Adventures of Ella Worthy* "seem[ed] to draw to a conclusion", she strongly wished "that the author of that *inimitable* work would again exert her genius in favour of the admiring public, who, thro' the last two years, have been *charmed*" with her compelling narrative (*Lady's Magazine* 13, April 1782, n.p.).

Smollett's and Lennox's writerly development through serialization, apotheosed in book publication, like Dickens's, partly revolved around their recognizable authorial identities: Smollett was known to be the editor of the *British Magazine*, and responsible for its contents;[3] the *Lady's Museum*'s title-page declared it was "by the author of the Female Quixote", and *Sophia* was published under Lennox's name (Schürer 2008, 42). By contrast, many subsequent serialized fictions were published anonymously or pseudonymously. They nonetheless perversely acquired a pseudo-named identity when they adapted the work of an already known writer, perhaps inadvertently attaching an "-ana" label that submerged one creative identity with another (Goring 2023, 182). The fluidity of authorship that press publications exercised with particular vigour played an important part in literary reception as configured through adaptation. Sterne's name provided a firmly embedded authorial root in this context, serving as an identifier (not always fairly) for many unnamed pieces that seemed similar to his in adopting characteristic traits and mannerisms, reusing characters' names, and mirroring Sterne's formal methods, including episodic fragmentation and serialization.

Tristram Shandy and *A Sentimental Journey* intrigued readers, then as now, for their seeming open-endedness: many of *Tristram Shandy*'s stories are interrupted or half-told, creating a sense of ambiguity reinforced by the conversation-closing – and opening – "cock and bull" joke of the work's final volume (Sterne 1978, 2: 809; Keymer 2002, 100). *A Sentimental Journey* pseudo-concludes with a memorable cliff-hanger, Yorick's hand reaching out across an aposiopesis to reach

3 See, for instance, an advertisement for the *British Magazine* as 'by T. Smollett' in the *Whitehall Evening Post*¸ 2164, 29-31 January 1760, 4.

an "END" – of which type, we are left uncertain (Sterne 2002, 165). Fragmentation is similarly characteristic of Sterne's fictive mode: *Tristram Shandy*'s chapters are of irregular lengths that vary the pace of narrative delivery; *A Sentimental Journey* consists of episodic fragments that mirror the stages of a journey that halts at various locations en route in an abstracted temporal sequence (Hardie-Forsyth 2021, 104-5). Serialization, too, is built into both works: *Tristram Shandy*'s sentimental account of the death of decayed soldier Lieutenant Le Fever is repeatedly broken off, a series of new chapters announcing "*The Story of* LE FEVER, *continued*", as if to mimic the "*To be Continued*" formula familiar from serialized fiction in the press (the episode, in fact, was reprinted numerous times in newspapers and magazines as a condensed excerpt). As Keymer comments, Sterne is less interested in directly parodying "individual serial works, as opposed to the generic conditions they all expose" (2002, 132-3). Indeed, the serial publication of *Tristram Shandy* in five instalments, which appeared at irregular intervals over seven years – and the prospected second instalment of *A Sentimental Journey* (interrupted by Sterne's death) – are undoubtedly related to the wider, diffusive culture of printing prose fictions in parts (Keymer 2002, 98).

The sense of incompleteness in Sterne's fiction, or at least of partial completeness, combined with the relation between his works and serialization, created an inviting opportunity for numerous readers to intervene in and continue Tristram's or Yorick's narratives, or seemingly to conclude them. Additions to *Tristram Shandy* emerged even while composition was still underway (Keymer 2002, 105): spurious volumes appeared in the breaks between instalments – a "vol. III" and a "supplement" in 1760, a "vol. IX" in 1766. The case for *A Sentimental Journey* was different; Sterne's death on 18 March (shortly after the publication of volumes I and II on 27 February) being widely advertised, a subsequent instalment could not be expected. But readers sustained the impulse to intervene: the first continuation, claiming to be volumes III and IV of Yorick's unfinished work (now "completed" by his friend, "Eugenius"), was published in early 1769, another "Continuation" appeared in 1788, and a "Sequel" in 1793 (Gerard 2007, 124-5). Indeed, sequels and continuations rub against each other among gap-filling Sternean adaptations, destabilizing the distinctions Gérard Genette, for one, sought to establish between them:

> When a work is left unfinished by reason of the death of its author or some other cause of final abandonment, continuation consists in finishing the work in the author's stead, and can only be the work of another. The *sequel* performs an entirely different function, which in general consists in exploiting the success of a work that in its own time was often considered complete, and in setting it into motion again with new episodes. (Genette 1997, 162)

Both sequels and continuations appeared simultaneously during Sterne's lifetime and subsequently; they were joined by serializations – between "types" of which it is similarly "impossible in practice to sustain firm distinctions", Keymer asserts (2002, 112 fn. 1) – all collectively participating in the success, commercial and aesthetic, associated with Sterne's work.

Sterne's adapters tessellated subsequently created terminological distinctions in the methods they adopted for realizing their creative ambitions. The fragmentation and serialization associated with magazines and newspapers made them highly suitable venues for printing "new" fictional ventures part-modelled on these formal qualities in Sterne's writing, alongside its narrative and stylistic traits, characters, and humour. Serialized Sterneana was often not designed with the narrative arc striving towards completion found in "Launcelot Greaves" or "Harriot and Sophia": its creative purpose belonged to the school of make-it-up-as-you-go-along – at which Sterne proved an appealing master. An interplay between anonymity and pseudonymity underscored Sterne's "-ana" presence, reinforced by references, allusions, and recycled Shandean names, including in comic essay series printed in both magazines and newspapers. The majority of Sterne-inspired serialized fiction nevertheless adopted the sentimental journey mode, incorporating both sensibility and comic humour, drawing equally on *A Sentimental Journey* and *Tristram Shandy*. The two examples discussed here, from the *Lady's Magazine*, and from the *Public Ledger* and *Morning Herald*, display traits that unify serial fiction and adaptation: printing in parts; proximity to and distancing from the ostensibly original source-work; additions and alterations; recontextualization; and ambiguous authorship (Elliott 2020, 204-6). The publication environments in which they appeared – marked by proprietorial rivalries and prevalent copying –fundamentally shaped these works' creation and reception (and, vicariously, Sterne's), while their subsequent survival has been jeopardized by the fragility of these ephemeral paper materials.

3 "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" in the *Lady's Magazine*

Of the two magazines carrying the *Lady's Magazine* title in this period, it is the second, longest-running version (from 1770 to 1847) that published the lengthiest known work of serialized fiction (at around 270,000 words (Mayo 1962, 586)), which began life (at least) as a Sternean adaptation. The first instalment of "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" was published in the magazine's maiden issue, in August 1770; it last appeared in April 1777. The *Lady's Magazine* was a storehouse for fiction, entirely new, translated, and adapted; most was

sent in by reader-contributors. This "Sentimental Journey" was the magazine's flagship piece, intended to encourage readers to buy the next issue, a plan which apparently succeeded given the magazine's endurance and this serial's seven-year life-span. Modern critics have tended to be less enthusiastic about this journey narrative: Robert D. Mayo, in his still-referenced 1962 study *The English Novel in the Magazines*, declares it is "difficult to understand how any pleasure could be derived" from this "tedious" and "affected" work (1962, 241). Batchelor, although more moderately recognizing its appeal as a fictional "travelogue", critiques its "tenuous" plotting (2022, 50). Paul Goring, however, convincingly argues that "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" deserves a less dismissive approach for what it reveals about Sterne's creative reception, adaptation more generally, and the unique environment magazines provided for both through publishing such serialized fiction (2020, 68-9).

The female narrator of "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" travels around Britain by coach, meeting quirky characters and accidents alike in a manner reminiscent of Smollett's novels (Batchelor describes this as a "picaresque serial" (2022, 49)) – although *Humphry Clinker*, in which the coach journey model is memorably used, did not appear until 1771, a year after this journey's first instalment. The story is broken up into sometimes very short, episodic moments, each identified by the name of a place ("Henley"), character-type ("The Groom", "The Ploughman"), thing ("The Pin") or event ("The Fall"). Although Batchelor finds a lack of coherence in this "patchwork of textual fragments" (2022, 50), their brevity and disruption mimic the stop-start movement of the journey, and they congeal to form a greater whole within each instalment and across the work's parts.

That both *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* were in the author's mind is evident in numerous allusions, parodic passages, and typographic features. In September 1770, the narrator compares her chaise to "the *desobligeant* mentioned in my uncle YORIC's [sic] *sentimental journal*" (*Lady's Magazine* 1, September 1770, 50-1). The family connection (adopted by numerous other imitators) re-emerges in her account of a dream, in which "the angel of death" calls her "Thou relation of the celebrated Yorick" (52). The narrative nevertheless incorporates several typographic features, including an extensive array of dashes and asterisks, which also recall *Tristram Shandy*. In October 1770, the narrator describes a burlesque scene in which a splendid dog named Nero accidentally knocks over his master, the landlord of the inn, who bloodies his nose in the fall. She modulates sympathy with the landlord with even greater admiration for Nero, whose reaction to the accident invokes contemporary attitudes towards animal affect, as Sterne, too, had explored (Ridley 2021, 58-9). Dashes frame the dialogue, and enhance the narrator's sentimentalized juxtaposition of reason and feeling, as the landlord summons the dog:

> Come ye here Nero!––come here I say––The dog approached him with some signs of fear.
>
> If I understood his tremors, he told his master, that he had hurt him by accident, and that he was sorry for it––A tear started from his eye, and ran down his cheek–– (*Lady's Magazine* 1, October 1770, 100)

There is scope here, of course, for ironic satire of the inflated animal sympathy often found in sentimental fiction, but this expressive dog, who communicates through body language, seems to inspire sincere sententiae: "How universal is the principle of benevolence? said my heart.––––If even the brute creation express it in such lively terms; what must we think of cruelty in a human form?" The stark contrast between the animal's "benevolence" and human "cruelty" is underscored by the dog's name, Nero, and that of the landlord's foolish servant boy, Tom, details that may not have escaped an audience fed on a diet of Hogarthian graphic satire. Nero's visible feeling certainly impresses his master, who relents, and "patted him with great affection on the head". He is now better disposed to receive his wife's ministrations, exciting the narrator's "sentimental reflection" that women improve the market stock of humanity: "How much does our sex refine the nature of the male! Without us, they may be valuable; but with us they are more so" (100).

Dashes, as found in this episode, along with asterisks (which sometimes fill whole paragraphs), mix with moments of more remarkable typographic play that evoke Sterne's experimentalism (Goring 2020, 89). In June 1771, the narrator finds a fragment of paper on which several phrases are still legible (recalling *A Sentimental Journey*'s "The Fragment" (Sterne 2002, 134-9)); she reflects how, although "They say, maxims and proverbs are the wisdom of the vulgar", such sayings often convey much moralistic sense (*Lady's Magazine* 1, June 1771, 501). She adds:

> But my uncle Yorick has foretold these things, in his hieroglyphical prophecies, where he says:
>
> †*†§†‡*††*†‡‡†‖† †‖‖ †‖‖ †‖* †‖‖† ‖§† †††
>
> ‡‖‡¶ ‖†¶‖ ¶¶* ‡†¶‡ ¶¶ ¶§§‖‖‡
>
> As the very learned Scriblerus has explained those passages––But I had almost forgotten the subject matter of the debate. (*Lady's Magazine* 1, June 1771, 502)

The humour of exaggerating Sterne-like typographic play – and of naming Yorick, rather than Tristram, as its source – is compounded

by the literary anachronism of identifying Martinus Scriblerus as the proleptic interpreter of Sterne's "hieroglyphic" text, before breaking off mid-sentence, Shandy-style. Indeed, earlier in this instalment, a short episode titled "The Digression" muses on the frustrations of delaying the onward progress of a story, of too much open-endedness, and novelty-grabbing motivations. "I have sometimes have been half angry myself with my uncle Yorick for his tales without end", she writes, but adds (recalling Keymer's point about Sterne's parody of generic trends in serialized fiction, rather than specific examples) that "it was a received maxim a great while ago, That the longer a reader of a story was kept in suspence with regard to the unravelling of the plot, it was so much the better". The contemporary joke was common enough, that Sterne frivolously rambled on in *Tristram Shandy*, while sustaining "a long suspence" between instalments, to keep himself famous (and perhaps fed): "And thus the author not only exercised his readers [sic] patience but also their wit in finding out a conclusion to what perhaps he never intended to conclude; and merely by saving trouble, purchased fame and reputation" (*Lady's Magazine* 1, June 1771, 501). Ironically, the critique of "Yorick" implicates serialized fiction such as this, too, as complicit in the potentially never-ending propulsion of a tale delivered in parts.

Narrative inventiveness (including such visual quirks), indeed, was needed to sustain interest over an etiolated period. The longevity of this "Sentimental Journey" suggests a degree of success, although some critics are quick to point out that apparently it was eventually curtailed on account of readers' wishes (Mayo 1962, 358; Batchelor 2022, 49). But in August 1770, at least, this "Sentimental Journey" was clearly a major selling point for the newly established *Lady's Magazine*: it was adorned with an illustration (costly to commission and execute), and showcased the aesthetic modes, narrative styles, and tonal qualities that the magazine wished to advertise to its first readers. Its importance can also be gauged by its centrality (along with "The Pyrenean Hermit", another serial fiction) in a legal dispute that erupted not long after the magazine's establishment (Batchelor 2022, 65-6). George Robinson and John Roberts acquired the *Lady's Magazine* title from founder-proprietor John Coote in early 1771, to the objection of John Wheble, the magazine's original publisher. Wheble continued to publish his own rival *Lady's Magazine*: two versions ran concurrently from April 1771 to December 1772 (Roberts unexpectedly died in January 1772, leaving Robinson as sole proprietor (Batchelor 2022, 46-8)). For several months, then, different versions of "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" appeared concurrently in these parallel *Lady's Magazine*s (Batchelor 2022, 68-9). Wheble's August 1771 issue, for instance, opens with "The Rescue" and a cluster of sentimentalized episodes, while Robinson

and Roberts's begins with "Oxford", part of the route its traveller pursues (Goring 2020, 76-9).

The legal battle embroiling the *Lady's Magazine* reveals significant movements in approaches towards intellectual property – and the ambiguities of creative control concerning serialized fiction, and anonymous publication. The case was judged by Lord Mansfield in July 1771; although he ruled in Robinson and Roberts's favour, he concluded that, while they had the right to publish the magazine they had purchased, there were no legal grounds for preventing Wheble from producing his own version, too (Batchelor 2022, 63-7). A transcript of the trial was reprinted in the July 1771 issue of Wheble's *Lady's Magazine* under the title "An Account of the Trial at Law, respecting the Right of Property in the Publication of the LADY'S MAGAZINE. With Observations on the same" – an act of self-vindication reinforced by copious animadversions that annotated the text. As they reveal, the most intriguing point of the dispute and its ambiguous resolutions rested on "the thorny issue of who owned the right to publish new parts of an established serial" (Goring 2020, 76) – a fluidity of ownership over creative material that serialization made all too liquid. Could a work started by someone else, even one published in serialized instalments that could (theoretically) have been written by another, legitimately be continued elsewhere by a different person? If serial fiction is considered as a form of adaptation, in which each new instalment leads on from its predecessor and, effectively, adapts it in new directions, then there was nothing to prevent Wheble from producing a continuation of an already published work, even while it was technically still in the process of being created and printed by someone else. That, indeed, had been the case for Sterne himself, given the numerous sequels, continuations, and supplements that inflated his "original" texts.

Whether originality was attached to ideas, to existing publications, or to future ones rippled beneath the prosecution's case. The counsel for the plaintiffs, Mr. Dunning, argued that Wheble had illegitimately appropriated the "Sentimental Journey", which was "begun in the original numbers, and had been continued in the last number"; however, a footnote protests:

> † This Sentimental Journey was another imposition, as far as it respected the original author. It was said to be written By a Lady; but unless a short Parson's long petticoats entitle him to that appellation, there was no Lady in the case. The Sentimental Journey in Wheble's Magazine is indeed really written By a Lady, and that one of the first distinction in literature. (*Lady's Magazine* 1 appendix [2], July 1771, 44)

The question of authenticity rests here both on gender and on anonymity: it seems to matter whether the title of the fiction, as apparently written "By a Lady", is strictly truthful (Goring 2020, 99n15); Wheble's version is supposedly more genuine, being "really written" by a woman, a claim that must nevertheless be taken at face value without the validation of knowing who that distinguished "Lady" is. The cloak of anonymity, which could be lifted to confirm Wheble's assertion, is left draped, as if, strangely, to confirm its legitimacy.

Dunning argued that Wheble "has thought proper to find out authors", but that Robinson and Roberts "have thought proper to find out the ideas of the original author, and they have continued the Sentimental Journey, and they have been so kind as to continue his novel of the Pyrenean Hermit" (45). The central issue of intellectual property, then, was complicated by uncertainty not over who the "original author" was – their existence as a physical body – but whether someone else could legitimately develop the "idea" they had begun (Brewer 2013, 195; Vareschi 2018, 130), as Dunning claims Robinson and Roberts were able (and even "kind") to do. The legal right belonged to those who owned the publication venue where that idea was first pursued. The question-and-answer examination of John Johnson, the printer, nonetheless strives to assert continuity not only in ownership of the magazine's title, but in who authored the apparently legitimate "Sentimental Journey" (Batchelor 2022, 65):

> Q. The Sentimental Journey was received from Mr. Coote?
> A. That was from Mr. Coote; the beginning of the story I had from Mr. Coote.
> Q. Whom did you continue to print for?
> A. For Robinson and Roberts.
> […]
> Q. Was the continuation of the stories in the same hand writing?
> A. I have reason to think they were in the same hand writing as the former. (46)

The handwriting seems to confirm authenticity; but then, if the legitimate "Sentimental Journey" only "continued" the initial author's ideas, and the "original author" herself was irrelevant, then the "continuation" need not be by the same hand. In fact, the crux of the judgment – and Wheble's resistance – rested on whether a person could legally produce a "Continuation of the Original": it is, a footnote argues, "casuistry worthy the superior abilities of the Bench" to argue that Wheble could legitimately "continue the work left off by Coote, and yet [had] no right to call it a continuation of the work originally begun by him" (52). The very existence of magazines – produced by "magazine-mongers" – relied on far more nefarious practices than

Wheble was accused of, the annotator claims, for "It is well known, that though a compiler, and perhaps an author may be employed to furnish matter for Magazines, the much greater part of such matter is absolutely pirated or stolen from other books, and prints" (52). Reproductive activities of all kinds were the stock-in-trade of these fast-flowing publications. The absurdity of the matter is conveyed in the closing footnote, which mock-marvels that, while the defendant's character was defamed, he was dismissed "with only nominal damages" (one shilling), "and told that he may lawfully go on to do the very thing, for which he had been prosecuted" (52).

Creative material, especially when published in such a venue – and even more so when serialized over multiple issues – swam in a pool of commonality, where it could be gathered, reformulated, and repurposed (Vareschi 2018, 143). For Batchelor, this created a collaborative, virtual "print community" in which readers "imagined themselves to be active participants" (2022, 52). Magazines allowed scope for readers' feedback, for one thing; in the December 1770 issue of Wheble's *Lady's Magazine* a correspondent offers "*A* HINT *to the Author of the* SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY" (1, 219-20) in the form of an additional chapter;[4] the January 1771 issue carries the journey's next official instalment, and a letter from the author in reply (1, 259). Magazines provided space for such back-and-forth exchanges, which could shape the future course of a serialized work in response to feedback – including parodic amplifications of the "original" idea. The pleasurable, playful nature of these "community" interactions nonetheless strains against the vicious antagonism of the court room concerning who held rights over the magazine's creative material – its ideas, even – and so over its financial interests. Encouraging "our fair patronesses" to buy, read, and write both empowered and patronized a predominantly female audience whose contributions fuelled commercialism under an illusion of holding shares in the creative commons.

Even if adaptation did inspire a sense of participatory connection with other creators and materials, it also pushed a drive towards independence, enmeshing recognizable origins and desirable originality. "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" gradually moved away from its ostensible source text. Although the borrowed title indelibly linked the serial to Sterne, as did some of its contents, notably in earlier instalments, later issues pulled away from this originating point to forge their own path. This journey narrative possibly became

4 These pages are missing in the *Eighteenth Century Journals* (Adam Matthew) digitized version of the Library of Birmingham copy; they can be found in the *Google Books* version of one of two copies held in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. On different copies, see Batchelor 2022, 257 fn. 50.

the work of a different author or even of multiple hands, anonymity signalling the unknowability of authorship, especially of such a long-drawn-out piece. Goring argues that, whoever the author was, (possibly) she increasingly strove to show that Sterne provided a prompt for sentimental "embellishment", but not "a model to copy", as "she sought to distance her writing from Sterne and to eschew the idea that it was imitative" (2020, 70). Serial publication allowed such self-adaptation to thrive, and for a work to "evolve" (as Goring phrases it) over time and the space of the magazine's pages to become something distinct.

Although "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" seems to have disappeared unceremoniously in April 1777, confirming some modern-day critical evaluations that it became too tedious to go on, not all readers agreed. Even at a temporal remove, some seemed to want more: the prefatory address "To our Correspondents" of October 1782 mentions that "*M. H.* whispers her wish of the *continuation* of the *Sentimental Journey*" – but, in this buyer's market dominated by sales, "she will excuse us when we intimate that it was *dropped* on account of the desire of *many* Correspondents" (*Lady's Magazine* 13, October 1782, n.p.). While Keymer challenges "John Sutherland's somewhat jaundiced definition of serialization as a publishing method followed 'usually for commercial convenience but occasionally for art'" (2000, 38), such an approach seems, in this context at least, to be in part true.

4 "A Sentimental Excursion" in the *Public Ledger* and the *Morning Herald*

Periodicals and magazines have typically dominated discussions of later eighteenth-century novelistic serialization in press publications; but newspapers, while less obvious vehicles for publishing fiction, carried numerous items of poetry and prose, translated, adapted, and entirely new, including serialized works (Seager 2015, 112). Newspapers also inhabited an equally, if not more rampantly, commercialized context of proprietorial rivalries, piracy, and sales. A Sterne-inspired journey narrative anonymously written by Leonard MacNally and first printed in the 1780s in the *Public Ledger* reveals many comparable points with "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" in the *Lady's Magazine*, but also newspapers' distinctiveness as vehicles for serial fiction. Equally, it exposes the fragility of these paper materials in a particularly cruel way for the present discussion: the crucial issues of the *Public Ledger* on which it hangs – from 1780-83 – seem to be entirely missing. This is a rare gap in the Burney

Newspaper Collection held at the British Library (and digitized);[5] I have not been able to locate them in other institutional holdings, either. Therefore, what follows cannot be watertight, but – with some irony, in an account of serialization – it opens the potential for a second instalment if these materials ever resurface, attached to the head of a chaise-vamper's wife or otherwise.[6]

Leonard MacNally (1752-1820) – an Irish grocer, actor, playwright, barrister, newspaper editor, political activist, and even political informer (Rigg, Evans 2004) – was a Sterne enthusiast: he authored one of the only eighteenth-century dramatic adaptations of *Tristram Shandy*, a two-act afterpiece first staged at Covent Garden in 1783. This "Sentimental, Shandean Bagatelle" enjoyed some success, given its repeat performances, contemporary reviews, and transition into a printed playtext (Taylor 2019-21). MacNally's most accomplished Sternean adaptation, however, had already been published in 1781: the prose narrative *Sentimental Excursions to Windsor and Other Places, with Notes Critical, Illustrative, and Explanatory*. Sterne is directly identified as a source, and *Tristram Shandy* is a recurrent metafictive reference. Shandy-style humour dominates the narrator's "excursion" to Windsor, during which several new encounters exercise his persona as a traveller alert to the ironies – and clichés – of his journey and its written description, not least through the suggestive connection he forms with a fellow-traveller named, aptly in the Sternean context, Maria.

Sentimental Excursions, like "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady", exemplifies adaptation's capacity to draw off a recognizable source but also to absorb others, and to repurpose its materials to fit new times, places, and contexts – including its publication environment. MacNally's journey narrative demonstrates with drama equal to the *Lady's Magazine* example the flexibilities, and dangers, of printing serial fiction in the press. An Advertisement inserted at the beginning of *Sentimental Excursions* informs readers that it had already been published in instalments in the *Public Ledger*, but it also declares with some indignation that this material had simultaneously been copied from that newspaper into the *Morning Herald*. Borrowing between newspapers was common in this period, but MacNally's

5 *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection*, Gale and the British Library, `https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=BBCN&sw=w&u=cambuni&v=2.1&pg=BasicSearch&it=static&sid=bookmark-BBCN`.

6 Missing items seem to bedevil studies of Sterneana that rely on ephemeral materials, as Paul Goring describes of a pamphlet clinching a dispute about Samuel Paterson's *Another Traveller!* (1769), which the *Critical Review* had accused of being a Sternean imitation; the only known copy is presently lost, somewhere at large in Glasgow University Library (Goring 2022, 274-5).

declaration strikes at a particularly hot iron given the competing identities of these titles.

The *Public Ledger*, founded in January 1760 by John Newbery, was originally believed to be a Ministry organ, but later became recognized as an Opposition paper under the editorship of several well-known Irish figures, including (from around 1765) Hugh Kelly (Bataille 1985, 523-4), and MacNally himself at some point in the 1780s, although it is not clear when (Bataille 1985, 527; Ferrero 2005, 167-8). This newspaper had long demonstrated an interest in Sterne, in playfully imitative adaptation, and in serialization; it published Oliver Goldsmith's "Letters from a Chinese Philosopher" from 1760-1, while a series of letters from "Tristram Shandy" to "Bob Busby" printed in 1760 adopts Sternean traits and satirically comments on his work (Bandry 2002, 313-14). The *Morning Herald* was founded in November 1780 by Sir Henry Bate Dudley, whom Bonnie Ferrero describes as "flamboyant", and Hannah Barker as "notorious" (Ferrero 2005, 165; Barker 1998, 63). He had earned his reputation as a provocative journalist partly through his attacks on the Duke of Richmond, who represented the Opposition during Bate Dudley's editorship of the *Morning Post*: he was duly tried for libel and imprisoned for a year in 1781 (Barker 2004). Between the trial and sentencing (delayed by disruptions to the judicial system caused by the Gordon Riots) Bate Dudley was dismissed from the *Morning Post* and founded the *Morning Herald*, which generally maintained an anti-Opposition stance (and corruptly received government money), although it was mostly opportunistic in its political targets (Ferrero 2005, 166; Barker 1998, 63).

Newspapers' political allegiances in this period were fluid, and even unscrupulous; indeed, as Barker argues, "The need to maintain extensive distributions meant that newspapers were dependent not upon political patronage, but upon their appeal to readers" (1998, 4), bringing titles to compete for attention. Serialized fiction, mixing familiarity and innovation, was one way to encourage readers to buy the next day's or week's copy. The Advertisement to *Sentimental Excursions*, therefore, jabs at newspapers' commercial as much as political rivalries, and at the theft-based nature of the virulent recirculation of material – recalling the attack on "magazine-mongers" in the annotations to the transcript of the *Lady's Magazine* trial. Given the rapidity of newspaper production and the scale of circulation, adaptive processes visible across other domains in this period – including illegitimate copying – were amplified and speeded up.

The natural thing to do at this point would be to compare the two versions of "A Sentimental Excursion to Windsor", as it was printed in the *Public Ledger* and the *Morning Herald*, in a similar manner to the *Lady's Magazine* rival versions, to observe likenesses,

differences, and hence adaptive practices, and to plot a timeline of what appeared when and where. Both newspaper serializations could then be compared against the *Sentimental Excursions* book version to reveal what, if any, changes were made, as with *Launcelot Greaves* or *Sophia* and their earlier serializations. However, that will be impossible as long as the relevant copies of the *Public Ledger* remain lost. What we can do, though, is to juxtapose instalments of "A Sentimental Excursion" in the *Morning Herald* with *Sentimental Excursions* to try to grasp something of how newspaper publication conditioned serialization, and of MacNally's creative, self-adaptive process in moving from newspaper to book.

Nine instalments of "A Sentimental Excursion to Windsor" were printed in the *Morning Herald* between April and June 1781 (there may be others, as yet unidentified). Their content reappears in *Sentimental Excursions*, confirming that this is the same story; but, whereas Lennox made only limited changes to *Sophia*, MacNally seems to have taken the opportunity of book publication to expand significantly on his creative enterprise, at least as far as we can assume similarity between the *Public Ledger* and *Morning Herald* versions. The first instalment of "A Sentimental Excursion" begins "in the month of May" with the journey from London to Windsor (*Morning Herald*, 139, Wednesday, 11 April 1781, 3). The book, however, adds a pre-chapter in which the narrator explains the motivation for his trip – social distractions, and ennui: "I Read and read, but could not retain a word of what I read. – –So many friends flowed in upon me daily to breakfast, and so many friends to carry me out to dine […]. I must cut off, said I, the *entail* of these engagements, and become master of my own time" (MacNally 1781, 1). A Sternean allusion ("cut off the entail" appears in *Tristram Shandy* (Sterne 1978, 1: 241)) is almost seamlessly woven into this opening.

The book's second page presents the first of many lengthy footnotes (here, on legal discourse and literature): as the subtitle to *Sentimental Excursions* indicates, numerous "notes" of various kinds swarm across the volume's pages, displaying a breadth of learned (sometimes facetious) references, political commentary, and social satire. These do not feature in the newspaper serialization: the shorter space accorded to its instalments encouraged concision, but the book capitalizes on expansion. MacNally also enlarges descriptions of characters and places, the story-line, and metanarrative discussions. A game of "travelling piquet" added in *Sentimental Excursions*, for instance, implicates the narrator and Maria in a euphemistically erotic way of passing the time. As Tristram says of the alluring Janatone at Montreuil: "—L— help me! I could not count a single point: so had been piqued, and repiqued, and capotted to the devil" (Sterne 1978, 2:590). Indeed, MacNally's game is interrupted by "A Digression" in which the narrator pursues an imaginary dialogue with a devil, who

tells him that his master "has shewn your *excursions* to some critics, who all agree it will never sell without an *introduction*" (58).

The subsequent chapter duly brings us the "Introduction", mirroring the unexpected appearance of *Tristram Shandy*'s preface in volume 3 (the work's second instalment); indeed, as the author acknowledges, "It will be said I have imitated Sterne" (MacNally 1781, 59). The "Introduction" (missing from the newspaper version) thus engages directly with its literary origins and its anticipated critical response within wider reviewing culture. A footnote comments:

> As the Reviewers, from the quantity of literary drudgery they are forced to go through every month, cannot possibly have time to read *the whole* of every book they give an opinion on; it is probable our author introduced his *introduction* in this place, in hopes the reviewers would not read so far.––Next month will shew whether the reviewers have reached his *introduction*; indeed the probability is, that they will not peep farther than into the title page.–––
>
> ANONYMOUS. (MacNally 1781, 59)

This provocative acknowledgement of the realities of reviewers' practices (hundreds of publications were assessed on an ongoing basis: skim-reading must have been the friend of even the most conscientious hack) emphasizes the temporality of writing, publishing, reading, and reviewing – the laboriousness of the process largely outweighed by rapidity, in the churn-churn of new materials, new reviews. There is, too, an ironic edge to the anticipation of "Next month" – will *Sentimental Excursions* earn a review? (it did) – given the novel's earlier, serialized incarnation, where more erratic periods of anticipation tested the newspaper's readers.

Consciousness of temporality in relation to space (there were only so many words accorded to a newspaper serial, after all) both binds and differentiates the versions of this story in the *Public Ledger*/*Morning Herald* and in *Sentimental Excursions*. Besides adding new material in the book version, MacNally introduces paragraph breaks to temporize the reading experience; the tightness of the newspaper column did not allow for much largesse. Wondering about the identity of the mysterious Maria in "Windsor. The Inn", printed in the *Morning Herald* on Wednesday, 23 May, the narrator ponders on a number of possibilities, all listed in the breath of a few, compacted lines (no. 175, 3); the book's page could be more generous, and allow for some Sterne-like listing:

> Who is she?
> Whence came she?
> Who is her father?
> Who is her mother?
> Who are her brothers?
> Who are her sisters?
> Has she any brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, or cousins?
>
> These questions I put deliberately to myself, stringing them together in succession, as the facetious *Sancho Panza*, the laugh-and-be-fat-sub-hero of *Don Quixote*'s adventures, strung his proverbs. (MacNally 1781, 81)

The list reformulates the phrasing in the newspaper version but exploits mise-en-page to emphasize the anaphora, vertically "stringing" out the "succession" of words horizontally compressed in the newspaper's column. The quip about Sancho Panza is an addition, fleshing out MacNally's field of reference – both to Cervantes and to *Tristram Shandy*, which alludes to *Don Quixote* more than once. Sterne, indeed, is central to chapters found in both newspaper and book versions titled "TRISTRAM SHANDY" and "A SHANDEAN CONVERSATION", which broach seemingly missing content in Sterne's fragmented work, and provide another reminder about the value of paper as more than merely waste: Maria hands the narrator *Tristram Shandy*'s "blank chapter" (intended for Widow Wadman's portrait) on which to inscribe Sterne's undelivered chapter on "button holes" (*Morning Herald*, 192, 12 June 1781, 3; MacNally 1781, 166).[7]

Both newspaper and book versions align in projecting the work's polemic aims and its engagement in contemporary political issues, reinforcing the role that recontextualization plays in adaptation. In a chapter titled "Slave Trade" the narrator, Maria, a veteran military captain, and the spinster Miss Verjuice collectively express horror at "the plunder of the human species" (MacNally 1781, 219) – a topic of energetic public debate during this period (Carey 2005, 187), motivating anti-slavery sentiments found in other examples of Sterneana around this time (Lew 2019-21). The book's chapter develops the *Morning Herald*'s shorter "Slave Trade" episode of 18 June (no. 197, 3); in *Sentimental Excursions*, the conversation expands with an impassioned speech by the captain concerning "the unhappy NEGRO", divested of his "native liberty", separated from family and friends, and sacrificed to the "*avarice*" of European commercial interests (MacNally 1781, 223).

7 Unfortunately, the typographically intriguing follow-up, "The Button-Hole", is missing from the available newspaper issues.

On 23 June, however, the *Morning Herald* printed a short episode entitled "The Extinguisher", which brings the erotic subtext to a climax: the narrator, alluding to *Othello*, tells how he "*put out the light*", plunging Maria and himself into ambiguous darkness: "––––AND THEN!!!–––" Although the paper promises that the story is "*To be Continued*", the next we hear of "A Sentimental Excursion" in the *Morning Herald* is an advertisement printed on Monday, 25 June for *Sentimental Excursions to Windsor, and Other Places* – that is, MacNally's book version of his *Public Ledger* newspaper serial, pillaged by the *Morning Herald*. Besides being a seemingly brazen confession, in promoting a book from which it had been pre-filching, the *Morning Herald*'s advertisement usefully summarizes the book's chapter headings – an additional check-list for spotting any differences between versions. The list ends with "The Extinguisher", the final chapter of *Sentimental Excursions*, which is the same as that printed in the *Morning Herald*'s apparently final instalment, although the book version adds a cluster of ironic questions, facetiously answered in footnotes (MacNally 1781, 249). The conclusions, then, seem to correlate.

However, on Thursday, 5 July the *Morning Herald* printed a column titled "A Sentimental Journey to Windsor (*Continued*.)". This is the first of twelve instalments of a new sentimental excursion, but which continues the thread of MacNally's story. Of course, it is possible that MacNally himself developed his excursion in the *Ledger*, which was appropriated anew by the *Herald*. We cannot verify one way or the other on the current evidence. What we can observe is how the new narrative develops the "Sentimental Excursion" storyline, using its characters and existing threads, and deploying the potential of serialization as adaptation to retain familiarity with the earlier instalments – and with the book – but also to evolve its own new course. The extended excursion demonstrates, too, how newspapers served as fecund organs for disseminating increasingly agitated public and political debate surrounding the Slave Trade (Carey 2005, 157-9), as it elaborates on Abolitionist themes already found in MacNally's original narrative. The final instalment appeared on 24 October 1781, just a month before the widely deplored murder of 132 enslaved people aboard the slave-ship *Zong* on 29 November (Walvin 2011, 95-6).

The first instalment of the *Monthly Herald*'s continuation of "A Sentimental Excursion", printed on 5 July, picks up where both newspaper and book had left off:

> ––And then!––––––What then? though the *candle* was *extinguished* to illustrate a passage in Shakespeare for Maria––Maria lighted the candle––the candle went out––and then!––what then?––we were in the dark a second time––I can blow it in, said Maria––but it would not do–– (*Morning Herald*, 212, Thursday, 5 July 1781, 3-4)

The innuendo echoes that of several continuations of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, which take Yorick's pendant "hand" to unabashedly erotic places. But, after this suggestive opening, the narrator falls into a "REVERIE" that pursues much more serious matters. Alluding to his forthcoming profession at "the bar" (which makes MacNally himself a candidate for authorship), the narrator muses on his earlier conversations about the Slave Trade with the captain, whose "account of the planters [sic] cruelty had possession of my whole mind". He pursues what we can describe as a white saviour fantasy, in which he will "procure a *Negro* boy" and "give him the best education" at university before entering "an Inn of Court". The narrator himself "will rise in my place in the senate, and present a petition from the Negro slaves in the West-Indies and America, praying emancipation, and the rights of nature", but it will be "my *Negro*" who performs the coup de grace: he will "appear at the bar, as the advocate for the rights of the children of Africa" – decked out in "his native ornaments" and nearly naked for dramatic effect. "The NEGRO'S SPEECH" is subsequently given a chapter of its own, in which this imaginary character eloquently describes the pillaging of African nations, the physical and psychological cruelty of slavery, and the immense loss of life across the Middle Passage – the slave effectively ventriloquizing his master's voice. In the subsequent instalment of 9 July, the House of Commons, moved by this speech, introduces "a resolution against the slave trade" and establishes a bill that is passed by both Houses, "without opposition", and which received royal assent "before I awoke" – an act blessed by a heavenly angel, who declares that "the horrors of war" and all natural disasters in the West Indies will be ended from now on (*Morning Herald*, 215, Monday, 9 July 1781, 3). The dream concludes with two bishops undertaking to "convert the Negroes enslaved by us, to Christianity", as missionaries in both America and Africa.

The excursion subsequently pursues its route through several instalments, focussing on the narrator, Maria, and the captain, and including several digressions (on "Cuckolds", drama, and Montesquieu) and a poetic "Elegy to My Watch", stolen by a "little Gypsy".[8] It is with Maria's first-person narration, her gradually revealed life story an ongoing thread of this continued excursion, that the *Morning Herald*'s episode of 24 October concludes: "But let me first inform you who this friend was", a revelation anticipated in a next instalment that, apparently, never appeared.

8 *Morning Herald*, 250, Saturday, 18 August 1781, 3; *Morning Herald*, 264, Tuesday, 4 September 1781, 2.

5 Conclusion – or to Be Continued?

The final twist comes in 1783. In August, the *Morning Herald*, still under Bate Dudley's editorship but now in the political turmoil of the 1783-4 constitutional crisis (Barker 1999, 63), printed "A Sentimental Excursion" – yes, another one, which spanned thirteen instalments until October that year. Is this another sequel to the earlier "Sentimental Excursion(s)", fully flexing the muscles of serialization as adaptation (and not least of readerly memory)? This possibly new excursion bears similarities to its predecessors, formally and tonally. But it also reveals a fundamental quality of this type of journey narrative: serial publication allows such fiction to expand with infinite variety, working on tried-and-tested formulae and recognizable traits to render them appealing, but in which points of origin become increasingly hard to trace. Repetition, with innovation, was the stock in trade of serialized fiction – especially when printed in self-generating ephemeral magazines and newspapers – and, whether "A Sentimental Journey, By a Lady" or "A Sentimental Excursion to Windsor", it could potentially go on forever, new creators developing old "ideas" in different venues.

Perhaps MacNally had greater writerly ambitions in publishing his more elaborate, and more artistically challenging *Sentimental Excursions*, and left his serial's continuation to other hands; according to the memoirs of the Irish actor John O'Keefe, who knew his contemporary personally, "Tired with literary fagging, Mac Nally went [from London] back to Dublin, and pursued his profession as a barrister. I was told he excelled all his contemporaries in keen and sarcastic wit" (1826, 1: 45). But the newspaper world in which MacNally's journey narrative was first seeded – like that of contemporary magazines – nevertheless continued to supply what its readers seemed to want: a little light fiction, perhaps well-written, providing some thought-provoking diversion amid the slurry of news items, advertisements, and lists of ships, stocks, race horses, and more. Magazines and newspapers alike supplied perhaps the most fertile terrain for adaptive practices to flourish in this period: their adept handling of the potentialities of serialized fiction provided an adroit selling-tactic and a creative opportunity, and, perhaps, some welcome light relief in the cycle of news and of commerce, which exercises a darker serial recurrence of its own.

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Literary Adaptation and the Fabric of Colonialism *Paul et Virginie* on Printed Textiles

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Abstract This paper analyses three different textiles printed with illustrations from Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788), produced in 1795, 1802, and 1818, by at least two different manufactories: Petitpierre et Cie in Nantes and Oberkampf in Jouy-en-Josas. In following the adaptation history of *Paul et Virginie* across textiles, and against the rapidly shifting political landscape of Revolutionary France, this article demonstrates the degree to which Bernardin's novel could be presented in vastly different ways, from abolitionist to proslavery, testifying to both its longstanding appeal and the ease with which it could be mobilised toward radically different political agendas.

Keywords Literary textiles. Printed fabrics. Empire. Paul et Virginie. Literary adaptation. Slavery. Toiles de Jouy. Toiles de Nantes.

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1 *Paul et Virginie*, a Bestseller

While the story of Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* might be familiar to some French readers, the novel is less famous outside of France, and even there, for a long time it fell out of favour.[1] As Jean-Michel Racault has demonstrated, few eighteenth-century novels have had such success and influence and yet been so infrequently read. Recently, the work of Racault (1986) has encouraged a resurgence in interest in this complex and curious text (15). It was a print phenomenon from the eighteenth right through to the nineteenth centuries; alongside Voltaire and Rousseau, Bernardin was one of the most frequently reprinted Enlightenment authors (13). Not least of *Paul et Virginie*'s attractions is the fact that its printed tradition extends into other media. Racault writes,

> La constitution d'une tradition iconographique se développant à partir des premières illustrations du roman, naissance d'un mythe littéraire de *Paul et Virginie*, voire d'une 'légende de *Paul et Virginie*' devenue pratiquement autonome par rapport au texte générateur, et dont il serait intéressant d'interroger les fonctions sociales et idéologiques ainsi que les points d'ancrage dans l'évolution historique. (22)
>
> It would be interesting to examine the constitution of an iconographic tradition developing from the first illustrations of the novel, the birth of a literary myth of Paul et Virginie, or even of a 'legend of Paul et Virginie' which has become practically autonomous from the source text, and whose social and ideological functions as well as its points of reference in historical evolution.

Building upon Racault's suggestion, as well as the important bibliographical work of Paul Toinet (1963), this paper examines *Paul et Virginie* designs across three printed textiles between 1795 and 1818. In following the adaptation history of *Paul et Virginie* across textiles, this paper analyses the degree to which the story became either more or less abolitionist as the designs wavered from the original narrative, at the same time as these transmedia decorative images fostered a broad cultural understanding of the work as a foundational work of French literature.

1 I am grateful to the anonymous readers of this piece and to the delegates and organisers of the conference, *Adapting and Rewriting in the Age of Enlightenment* (2024), at Università Ca' Foscari, at which a preliminary version of this work was first presented, for their support of and comments on my work. This piece is indebted to Brycchan Carey for his encouragement and for his helpful suggestions to improve my understanding of the politics of the period. Any errors are my own.

Such an approach to literary adaptation, which builds upon Linda Hutcheon's foundational scholarly framework by embracing the material culture of commercial and industrial interventions (Hutcheon 2013; Elliott 2020), helps us to better understand but also self-consciously craft a literary history which takes into account the popular cultural phenomena which contribute to canon-formation. It takes as its basis an appreciation of different modes of access to culture, and the diverse literacies of a period in which not all readers were readers of text. As Lisette Lopez Szwydky (2020) has taught us, material cultural adaptations served as "equal or sometimes even primary sites of cultural engagement" (9). In the case of *Paul et Virginie*, the printed matter of various media that circulated in the wake of its publication contributed to ideas around the novel which have been mobilised towards particular political moments.

This paper traces the history of *Paul et Virginie* printed textiles from 1795 to 1818, when they appeared in three different designs. The first design was produced by Petitpierre et Cie of Nantes in around 1795 **[figs 1-2]**. The second was designed by Jean-Baptiste Huet for Christoph-Philippe Oberkampf's manufactory of *toiles de Jouy* in 1802 **[fig. 3]**. The third was another Oberkampf design of 1818 **[fig. 4]**. Reading the textiles against the original text, each other, and the rapidly shifting political landscape of Revolutionary France, this article demonstrates the degree to which Bernardin's novel could be presented in vastly different ways, from abolitionist to proslavery, testifying to both its longstanding appeal and the ease with which it could be mobilised toward radically different political agendas.

2 The *Paul et Virginie* Phenomenon

Paul et Virginie first appeared within Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Études de la nature* (1788) and then soon after as a standalone work (1789). Set in Île-de-France, now Mauritius, where Bernardin had been based in the French administration from 1768 to 1771, the tragedy portrays an idealised island community where human nature seems inherently good because insulated from socially constructed European prejudices, or 'civilization'. It follows two children, Paul and Virginie, brought up together as siblings by two single mothers, who come to fall in love. Amidst the parents' social and class-based concerns about the pair's marriage (Virginie is of noble lineage whilst Paul is illegitimate), Virginie is reluctantly sent to Europe to secure her inheritance, and on her return dies in a shipwreck. Bernardin had been a pupil and follower of Rousseau, whose influence is palpable in the work's concerns with nature, society, and education.

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The novel was immediately translated into English, first by Jane Dalton, as *Paul and Mary, an Indian Story* in 1789, and again in 1795 as *Paul and Virginia* by Helen Maria Williams, a recognised supporter of abolitionism since her 1788 verse, "A Poem on the Bill Lately Passed for Regulating the Slave Trade". Williams's edition, with accompanying illustrations, was printed by John Hurford Stone in Paris, at his radical Imprimerie Anglaise, where he had also printed the work of Thomas Paine (Dalton 1789; Williams 1795). Composed whilst Williams was imprisoned during the Reign of Terror, her translation included her prison sonnets and became the standard English edition (Kennedy 2002, 122). There were multiple unauthorised and pirated editions produced on both sides of the Atlantic, but the Williams version was that which helped to establish the work as an international bestseller (Bidwell 2011).

The novel was a sensation. It was excerpted in newspapers (David 1986, 240), adapted into popular operas by Rodolphe Kreutzer in 1791 and Jean-François Le Sueur in 1794, and presented in the form of a comic opera by James Cobb for the London stage in 1800. A *Paul et Virginie* ballet ran in Paris from 1808 to 1828 (Calè 2007). The novel also inspired such texts as François-René de Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801) and *René* (1802), Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), and George Sand's *Indiana* (1832). In Mauritius, Georges Azéma's *Noëlla* (1874) reclaimed the characters as a foundational myth in the collective imagination of the Indian Ocean and Mascarene Islands (Zatorska 2018, 169, 181).

Paul et Virginie was widely illustrated throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by the leading artists of each moment (David 1986, 239). As Racault argues, "ce roman est quasiment né illustré" (this novel was almost born illustrated) (240). Or, at least, the illustrated edition of 1789 and Williams's illustrated translation of 1795 both testified to whilst also perpetuating the success of the text: investment in engraved images was a considerable financial risk and so usually only undertaken for works already established as popular. The illustrations for *Paul et Virginie* transformed the text from one originally intended for an elite literary audience to one that appealed to young readers and those with limited literacy (240). Many editions re-illustrated the same scenes, producing what Valérie David has called '*L'hypericonicité*' (hyper-iconicity), meaning that the images themselves refer back to a whole history of illustrated editions of the work (237).

Prints of *Paul et Virginie* were also produced for display around the home, as in Jean-Frédéric Schall's series of six aquatints (1791). One of these, *L'adolescence de Paul et Virginie – Ile-de-France*, engraved by Augustin Legrand, became the most-repeated image of the novel, exemplifying David's *hypericonicité*, since it saturated the print market and became immediately recognisable or archetypal.

Based on a passage from the novel, the image shows the children sheltering beneath Virginie's skirt during a downpour, unconscious of any impropriety. Bernardin was intricately involved in the commissioning of images for his works, additionally providing the artists with feedback, so can be argued to have helped shape the reception of his work as it began to unfasten from the text in the cultural imagination (Jongeneel 2020, 44).

Else Jongeneel has attributed the appeal of these decorative prints to "la religiosité et de la morale 'naturelle' de l'idylle de Saint-Pierre" (the religiosity and 'natural' morality of Bernardin's idyll) (43). But their appeal was in no small part due to the beauty and perceived exoticism of its location and the adaptability of its narrative to the 'noble savage' motif which remained popular throughout the nineteenth century (Cussac 2021). Illustrations of *Paul et Virginie* proliferated at a time when progressive voices were making themselves heard in relation to the transatlantic slave trade. The French antislavery movement had gained momentum with Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des loix* (1748) and Denis Diderot's contributions to the *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772). Building upon this foundation, Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *L'An 2440* (1771) and Guillaume-Thomas Raynal and Diderot's *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes* (1774), promoted and justified rebellion (Labio 2004, 675). Jacques Pierre Brissot and Étienne Clavière co-founded *La Société des Amis des Noirs* (the society for the friends of black people) in Paris in 1788. Brissot, its secretary, was a friend of Williams, who joined his political movement, the prorevolutionary *Girondins* (Kennedy, 90; 213). Williams's translation furthered Brissot's strategy for the *Amis des Noirs*, which included the publication and translation of abolitionist literature (Seeber 1937, 160-72). By and large, the *philosophes* tended to consider slavery as an economic necessity and simply criticised its extreme abuses rather than seeking its abolition. Bernardin, meanwhile, had views which were difficult to pin down, alternating at times between admonition and accommodation, but he was considered more progressive than many of his fellow thinkers (Labio 2004, 675). The values of his text were widely seen to be pro-revolutionary and antislavery, though as the novel was adapted across media, its original radicalism became diluted.

3 Paul et Virginie en Toiles

Copperplate printing on textiles was a recent innovation in revolutionary France, until which point patterns were created using hand-printed wooden blocks. As a new technological practice, it had emerged in Ireland in 1752, England from 1755, then made its way to Switzerland and France from around 1763 and certainly before 1774 (Brédif 1989, 52). Cotton and linen became new media for the

transmission of images already fashionable on paper (Eaton 2014, 112). The kinds of printed patterns available for textiles increased with the advent of copperplate technology. Because of copperplate's propensity to produce finer lines than those printed from wood blocks, human figures began to be possible on textiles in ways which lent themselves to storytelling on fabric. Even when roller printing seemed to transcend copperplate printing as the most efficient way of achieving seamless printed patterns on fabric, copperplates continued to be used to print complicated human scenarios perhaps due to the difficulty of capturing such movement and detail with the mechanical punch (Brédif 1989, 131). This led to the invention of what we now call '*toiles de Jouys*', a term for cotton or linen printed with usually monochrome designs (often in red, blue, or black, upon a cream ground) depicting peopled historical or mythological pastoral scenes. They are so called because they were first produced in 1760 at the manufactory of Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf, at Jouy-en-Josas, in France. Rival factories producing similar designs were established at cities like Rouen and Nantes.

Political themes on printed textiles were common but they were also a risk, because current affairs moved so quickly, and investment in fresh designs and the engraving process could only be returned after several years of printing (Gril-Mariotte 2009, 179). Patterns had to remain in fashion long enough to turn a profit. Many textiles were designed and produced during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries depicting literary scenarios or commemorating literary greats. Predominantly used for soft furnishings, and particularly bedroom hangings, *toiles de Jouy*, especially literary *toiles*, promoted a literary and pastoral aesthetic that idealized nature and society for the purposes of comfort and relaxation.

Literary fabrics include many versions of *Les Fables de la Fontaine* (Fables of Fontaine), first printed between 1770 and 1772, and then in a new design by Oberkampf manufactory's Jean-Baptiste Huet in 1805, against a background of Diana and Venus.[2] Literary textiles could also be commemorative, as with Huet's *Le Tombeau de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (the tomb of Jean-Jacques Rousseau), after Jean-Mchel Moreau le Jeune, produced by Gorgerat Frères et Cie in Nantes from 1778-83.[3] By necessity, textile designs based on literary works reflected what investors predicted, rightly or wrongly, would be the most longstanding popular texts of the moment. This prediction was

2 Huet, J-B. (c. 1805). *Les Fables de la Fontaine*. Roller print on cotton in bister, with block print in yellow. Musée Oberkampf. 977.20.

3 Huet, J-B. (after 1778). *Le Tombeau de Jean Jacques Rousseau*. Furnishing fabric. Art Institute Chicago. 1976.63a-c. https://www.artic.edu/artworks/50413/le-tombeau-de-jean-jacques-rousseau-the-tomb-of-jean-jacques-rousseau-furnishing-fabric.

in no small way based upon the text's illustration history and sales of its printed images. In turn, literary textiles ultimately helped to shape and perpetuate the reception of the titles they depicted. *Paul et Virginie*, a hugely popular moral tale set in a beautiful landscape, because it seemed to be amenable to adaptation upon the rapidly changing contemporary politics of revolution and slavery, was a literary work that simultaneously tapped into even as it transcended the global politics of the period, meeting two of the main goals of contemporary *toiles*.

The Petitpierre et Cie manufactory of Nantes (known as Favre, Petitpierre et Cie from 1802 to 1818 between Favre joining and Petitpierre leaving the business) produced their *Paul et Virginie* printed cotton possibly as early as 1795, taken from or inspired by the 1788 edition (Gontar 2013). A black-printed fragment is held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (the Met).[4] Fragments of a red-printed version are held by the Victoria and Albert Museum (the V&A) in London **[fig. 1]** and in a private collection. The same pattern printed in polychrome survives at the Musée des Salorges, Nantes, France **[fig. 2]**. Whilst it is unattributed, it appears to be the same design as that produced by Petitpierre et Cie and so likely of the same manufactory. All are dated in their respective catalogues as circa 1800.

Figure 1 Favre, Petitpierre et Cie, *Paul et Virginie*. c. 1800. Printed cotton, 30 x 25 cm. Private Collection

4 Favre, Petitpierre et Cie. (Early 1800s). *Paul et Virginie*. Linen. 149 x 93 cm. The Met. 26.233.15. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/221845.

Figure 2 French School, *Illustrations of incidents from the novel Paul et Virginie*. c. 1800. Printed cotton or toile de Nantes. Musée des Salorges, Nantes

These textiles, capitalising upon the novel's immediate success, are likely to be the earliest fabric representations of Bernardin's novel. They attempt to capture some of the novel's key moments, such as the children sheltering beneath Virginie's skirt. The shipwreck scene is a conglomerate image that includes rescue attempts from the shore, Paul jumping into the sea, and the recovery of Virginie's corpse. The central and largest image is one that combines several moments within the text: it shows Virginie's mother fainting at the news of her death, supported by Madame de la Tour, and surrounded by a crowd. The remainder of the design is concerned with what is arguably the central moment of the children's coming of age: Virginie's intercession for a runaway slave.

It is worth revisiting this episode, which is the children's first real encounter with slavery outside of their home. The children live in an idealised and unrealistic household structure. The family's enslaved workers, Domingue (named after France's largest Caribbean colony, St. Domingue, which would erupt in revolution within years of the novel's publication) and Marie, his wife, are unquestionably affectionate and faithful. From the perspective of their enslavers, Domingue and Marie occupy a liminal space between staff and family members. The family speak to them, and about them, with a kindness which is belied through the implicit power structure that devalues their humanity and their contributions to family life. This unrealistic depiction of servitude suited ameliorationist discourses, but its legitimacy is called into question when the children are exposed to other modes of living on the island. In Bernardin's novel, Virginie meets an escaped enslaved woman and, after providing her with a meal, and acting from the perceived naturalness of her own family structure, she returns the woman to her master. This is the first indication that perhaps the world that Bernardin depicts is not such an oasis for a natural and innocent childhood. Virginie, accompanied by Paul, is frightened by the plantation owner, who wields a stick as he listens to her entreaty, and as soon as he has agreed to pardon the woman – only, indeed, because of his attraction to Virginie – Virginie runs away in fear, unconsciously mimicking the flight of her enslaved companion.

Virginie has little time to reflect upon her actions, as the youngsters soon become lost in the forest. Between themselves, the children discuss what has happened, with Paul asserting that he would have fought the man if he had refused Virginie's request to pardon the slave, little knowing that the master's words were superficial. Virginie's response is full of concern for Paul, but shows little for the returned woman:

> 'N'aie pas peur', lui disoit-il; 'je me sens bien fort avec loi. Si l'habitant de la Rivière-noire t'avoit refusé li grace de son esclave, je me serois battu avec lui'.
>
> — 'Comment', dit Virginie, 'avec cet homme si grand et si méchant? A quoi l'ai-je exposé? Mon Dieu! Qu'il est difficile de faire le bien! il n'y a que le mal de facile à faire'. (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre 1789, 35)

> 'Don't be afraid', he told her; 'I feel very strong when I'm with you. If the inhabitant of the Black River had refused to pardon his slave, I would have fought with him'.
>
> 'How', said Virginie, 'with that man, so tall and so wicked? What did I expose him to? My God! How difficult it is to do good! Only evil is easy to do'.

Virginie is conscious that she has risked both of their safety in this errand, but seems more concerned about the dangers to which she briefly exposed Paul than about the future of the woman who sought her charity.

Virginie's refrain ("Oh, qu'il est difficile de faire le bien!" – Oh, how difficult it is to do good!) demonstrates how even acts intended to be good can be evil (47). And yet she remains naïve as to the outcome for the woman whom she forced to return. The closest she comes to regret is through examining the impact of her actions upon herself and Paul, as they find themselves hungry and with blistered feet:

> Il ne faut rien faire, pas même le bien, sans consulter ses parens. Oh! J'ai été bien imprudente!; et elle se prit à verser des larmes. (44)
>
> You shouldn't do anything, not even good things, without consulting your parents. Oh! I've been very imprudent! And she began to cry.

The lesson that Virginie takes away – that she should not have acted without her parents' consent – underlines her concern for her own loved ones whilst she continues reluctant to critically engage with her own family's participation in the system that enables the plantation master's cruelty.

The children are eventually discovered by the enslaved Domingue who, with the help of the family dog, learned of their visiting a plantation by the Rivière-noire:

> C'est là où j'ai appris d'un habitant, que vous lui aviez ramené une négresse maronne, et qu'il vous avoit accordésa grace. Mais quelle grace! Il me l'a montrée attachée, avec une chaîne au pied, à un billot de bois, et avec un collier de fer à trois crochets autour du cou. (46)
>
> It was there that I learned from a local that you had brought him a runaway slave, and that he had granted you her pardon. But what a pardon! He showed me her, tied up, her feet chained to a wooden block, and with an iron collar with three hooks around her neck.

Whilst Domingue criticises the treatment of the Master, he also subtly questions the children's expectations of pardon from a plantation owner, though his lesson falls upon deaf ears.

With sore feet, the children rely upon Domingue and a group of passing maroon men, who, having seen the children's intercession for the fugitive, offer to help carry them home. While the maroons profess gratitude to the children for their intended kindness to the

fugitive, their version of events again underscores its consequences by referring to the 'mauvais maître' (cruel master):

> Bons petits blancs, n'ayez pas peur; nous vous avons vu passer ce matin avec une négresse de la Rivière-noire; vous alliez demander sa grace à son mauvais maître. En reconnoissance, nous vous reporterons chez vous sur nos épaules. (48)
>
> Good white children, do not be afraid; we saw you this morning with a Black woman from the Black River; you were going to ask her cruel master for her pardon. In gratitude, we will carry you home on our shoulders.

The maroons' opening gambit – a plea to not be afraid – reflected the current political situation whereby maroon communities were the 'the principal danger feared by colonists' in Île-de-France (Allen 1999, 35). The colonial society of the island depended upon *détachements* or patrols dedicated to capturing or killing maroons (35). In a sense, the children had imitated the civil forces at play elsewhere in their island community, only to find that their safety is undermined by the white slave master and literally upheld by outlaws, an outcome that upturns the seeming naturalness of the social order that they have come to accept. Domingue and the maroons enact a double return, first ensuring that the children mentally revisit their actions, whilst also returning the children home, a willing return to a loving family that differs widely from the experience of the female fugitive. The maroons model for the children a real, unambiguous, act of good.

The children's escapade does not lead to their questioning of the status of their own enslaved workers, Domingue and Marie, nor to more explicit condemnations of slavery within the text, but this episode of misplaced virtue functions as a correction of Virginie's naivety ahead of her coming of age. Virginie's journey to secure pardon for the escaped woman is repeated throughout the narrative, first through Domingue's search for the children, which leads him to the plantation where it took place, and later through Paul's nostalgic retracing of their childhoods across the island after her drowning. This repetition within the text, a subtle but stark criticism of slavocracy at work on the Île-de-France, reveals how far the scene, central to the children's coming of age, is also central to the narrative itself.

The 1795 textiles conform to this reading. They depict the moment that Virginie pleads with the slave master to pardon the runaway who is, on these textiles, depicted as male rather than female. The transformation of the fugitive's gender is a design choice embedded in cultures of propriety. Mary Favret and Marcus Wood have argued that visual depictions of naked enslaved women being violently abused served as a form of pornography in this period, with black female

bodies becoming what Wood calls 'the side of terrible anxieties and repressions involving white sexual confusion and guilt about the slave trade' (Favret 1998; Wood 2000, 161). Eschewing references to gratuitous male-on-female violence is one of the ways in which this textile sanitises the message of the novel for domestic display. Given the notable absence of Marie from the fabric, however, the main reason may have been an avoidance of the aesthetic cultures of representing female enslaved workers, a shorthand for which was toplessness. Changing the gender of the fugitive from female to male enabled the scene to be depicted without risking lewd interpretations. This adaptation thereby removes the intersectional violence at play in the original text, whereby Virginie, though threatened by the plantation owner's ogling misogyny, is saved by her white femininity.

We also see the children's return home across two scenes. The first depicts Paul satisfying Virginie's hunger through acquiring a cabbage from a tree. The second shows Virginie being carried home on an apparatus of branches by two maroons. In the novel, both children are carried home, by four maroons, and are accompanied by Domingue, who is absent from the fabric. The two maroons feature a further twice across the fabric. First, the designer places the maroons at the scene of the intercession, though in the novel they remain unseen. Second, they appear in a dance which has no source in the text. The fabric designer includes this extra scene for the men beyond their recorded presence in the novel. This enhances their significance to the story whilst conforming with a white audience's expectations for a 'noble savage' decorative design.

Whilst the umbrella and the shipwreck images bookend Bernardin's novel's main trajectory of innocence in nature thwarted by contact with Europe, the textiles represent the narrative between those moments – and the children's personal growth – as dependent upon and shaped by their co-living with people of colour. The textiles emphasise freedom over slavery, since the people of colour in the design are all fugitives or maroons. The only obviously enslaved person featured is the escapee that the children naively returned to a plantation only to be brutally punished, and who serves as the central character in the main moral lesson of their childhood, albeit one from which they seem not to benefit. Virginie's tragic death is foregrounded on the textile through the shipwreck and her recovered body, but the tragedy of the unnamed fugitive, female in the text, male on the textiles, is also afforded space.

The central scene, whilst indulging the grief of the bereaved parent, supplies a cosmopolitan scene of support from people of diverse heritage, one specially adapted for the textile. In the novel, the narrator and Domingue are the only people present at Madame de la Tour's faintings fits. The 1795 textiles seem to merge the fainting of the mother with Bernardin's description of the reception of Virginie's funeral pall:

> Lorsqu'elle fut arrivée au lieu de sa sépulture, des négresses de Madagascar et des Caffres de Mosambique, déposèrent autour d'elle des paniers de fruits, et suspendirent des pièces d'étoffes aux arbres voisins, suivant l'usage de leur pays. Des Indiennes du Bengale et de la côte Malabare, apportèrent des cages pleines d'oiseaux auxquels elles donnèrent la liberté sur son corps; tant al perte d'un objet aimable intéresse toutes les nations, et tant est grand le pouvoi de la vertu mal- heureuse, puisqu'elle réunit toutes les religious autour de son tombeau! (209-10)
>
> When she arrived at her burial place, Black women from Madagascar and Kaffirs from Mozambique placed baskets of fruit around her and hung pieces of cloth from nearby trees, according to the custom of their country. Indian women from Bengal and the Malabar Coast brought cages full of birds, which they set free on her body; so much does the loss of a beloved person concern all nations, and so great is the power of unfortunate virtue, since it unites all religious people around her tomb!

Virginie's death prompts in the novel the coming together in equality of many people living across the island, in a sentimental scene of shared values. It is free Malabar women (i.e. from Kerala in India) who tend to Virginie's body:

> Nous portâmes le corps de Virginie dans une cabane de pêcheurs, où nous le donnâmes à garder à de pauvres femmes malabares, qui prirent soin de el laver. (205)
>
> We carried Virginie's body to a fisherman's hut, where we entrusted it to poor Malabar women, who took care to wash it.

In the central image on the *toile de Nantes* and Petitpierre et Cie fabrics, the women of colour on the left of the image wear fine dresses and jewellery, indicating their free status. They may represent women with Malabar, Madagascan, or Bengali heritage, in line with some of the places mentioned in the text. Meanwhile, the status of a boy on the right, the only male figure of colour in that image, and the only man without a jacket, remains unclear. In the red-printed textile there is a subtle difference in the shading of the skin of the woman closest to Marguerite and Madame de la Tour: her skin tone is decidedly darker than in the polychrome version, creating an image that displays equal numbers of white women and women of colour **[fig. 1]**.

As of 1795, the year in which these textiles were likely produced, antislavery had become government policy, since in France, under Robespierre's leadership, slavery had been abolished in all French colonies by the Law of 4 February 1704. Even after Robespierre's

demise, the Convention continued to pursue antislavery policies. The 1795 textile adaptations of *Paul et Virginie* print and carefully curate scenes from Bernardin's text in ways that align with the current political climate. They look to the margins of this text, emphasising the importance of people of colour to the narrative, bringing them centre stage. The *Paul et Virginie* textiles of 1795 represent in their largest and main vignette a community of collective mourning comprising people of colour and white European settlers in a spirit of equality, representing Bernardin's text in a distinctly antislavery light. Whilst the scene does not exist in the text, it remains within the bounds of the descriptions of the wider island community that Bernardin provides when painting the image of the impact of Virginie's death.

4 Oberkampf Revisits *Paul et Virginie*

When Oberkampf designer, Jean-Baptiste Huet, produced his *Paul et Virginie* textile in 1802 **[fig. 3]**, he worked from the same images that were available to the unidentified designer of the Petitpierre et Cie fabric: those that appeared in the edition of 1789 (Gril-Mariotte 2009) and the Schall aquatints of 1791. However, the effect is quite different.

Figure 3 Jean-Baptiste Huet, *Paul et Virginie toile imprimée*. 1802. Furnishing fabric, 74 x 94cm. Bibliothèque Forney, Paris

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The design is red-printed on a white ground, with the largest image portraying Paul and Virginie's shared parenthood by two single mothers in an idealised pastoral scene with the pet dog, Fidèle, after Schall. Smaller scenes of the storm and the shipwreck feature between, as illustrated by Moreau le Jeune and Joseph Vernet's *Le Naufrage de Virginie à l'Île de France* (1789), respectively. Like the Petitpierre et Cie fabric above, the images are scattered across the fabric in a placement that fosters a sense of the pastoral, emphasising the lush foliage evident in Bernardin's novel and known to thrive on the island.

The Oberkampf textile was produced at a turning point in the French administration's approach to slavery in their colonies. In France, slavery was abolished in 1793, following a series of ruses by Léger-Félicité Sonthonax in 1793 to secure the allyship of Toussaint Louverture in his bid to recapture colonies from the British (Dubois 2004, 154-5). In 1801, Louverture captured Saint Domingue, abolished slavery, and installed himself as its governor, only to have Napoleon attempt to re-establish slavery there the following year. The Haitian Revolution would eventually succeed in 1804 but slavery would not be abolished until 1848 (Davis 1975). 1802, then, had seen slavery reinstated on the back of abolition, through serious violence and bloodshed. The *Paul et Virginie* story, with its setting in a slave economy, and its reliance upon the characters Domingue and Marie, could not but prompt consideration of the current political climate in relation to the transatlantic trade in people.

The Oberkampf textile presents Bernardin's narrative in a completely new light: it entirely omits people of colour. Whilst the V&A information page for the fragment explains then novel's debt to the tradition of 'the noble savage', you would not know from this textile that the story dealt with slavery. The *toile*, printed with various scenes including *Paul and Virginie*'s shared infancy on their mothers' laps, the popular motif of the pair walking beneath Virginie's skirt during a rain shower, and the rowing boat rescue of the shipwreck, omits people of colour, most pertinently the figure of Marie, who originally featured in the foreground of the central image of the women with their babies taken from Schall, with Domingue present, too, in the background. These pictures, distributed around the fabric with watery scenes between, emphasise the island setting of the narrative, and turns a colonial enclave into a settler paradise. The centrality of slavery to the story is belied by this design: a whitewashed literary textile for white households.

But this is far from an island utopia. Bernardin's novel is heavily overshadowed by both sexual shame and the spectre of slavery (Kirkley 2011, 107-8). The children's mothers either eloped or bore children illegitimately, a fact that determines the naming of Virginie and their exile to the island. The very setting of the novel locates the narrative in empire. Mauritius had been renamed the Île-de-France after its

annexation in 1715, since when colonial administrators, including Bernardin himself, had been posted there to rule it until 1810, at which point it changed hands to the British. Paul and Virginie's families are dependent upon the enslaved labour of Marie and Domingue within an economy that was highly suspicious of maroon activity (Allen 1999, 35). And yet no people of colour feature on the Oberkampf textile. They are erased from the narrative, Marie and Domingue cropped out of the central image, perhaps in response to the reinstatement of slavery in 1801: this was a rapidly changing political landscape and one that textile designers may have wondered how best to navigate.

The 1802 fabric by Oberkampf was so successful that a new, monochrome, design was launched in 1818 **[fig. 4]**, featuring detailed vignettes in regular shapes against a patterned backdrop, creating a gallery-style effect reminiscent of the print rooms popular in English and Irish historic houses from 1750 through to the early decades of the nineteenth century (Box 2021), perhaps indicating the fabric's intended appeal to cross-Channel customers. Its launch followed Bernardin's luxury 1806 edition of the text, with new illustrations, and coincided with the first publication of his *Complete Works*, published from 1818 onwards. By this point, more images were available than ever, and the Oberkampf designers had the opportunity to craft a new visual narrative for Bernardin's text.

However, whilst new illustrations were available to draw upon, the 1818 textile repeated many of the key scenes we have already seen.

Figure 4 Oberkampf Factory, *Paul and Virginie Furnishing Fabric*. After 1818. 51.1 × 84.8cm. The Art Institute of Chicago

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The fabric can be read both horizontally and vertically. It repeats three key scenes from the novel in large almond-shaped frames, one across each of three columns, each of which has a small rectangular image beneath it. The pictures are joined together along the horizontal plane by decorative garlands, though the order of the images defies chronology. The almonds in the left column repeat the image of the children's discovery by Domingue after getting lost, between small rectangular images of Paul tending to Virginie's blistered feet. The central column repeats the image of Paul praying on Virginie's tomb in the large almond, whilst his discovery with the narrator of her body fills the small rectangles between. The final, third, column represents the childhood of Paul and Virginie, placing the famous petticoat umbrella image in the large almond (it seems that a *Paul et Virginie* textile could not be a *Paul et Virginie* textile without this image) and the nursing image in the smaller rectangle. As with the Petitpierre et Cie textile, the image of the children's infancy omits the enslaved Marie and Domingue, though the dimensions of the space would certainly allow for their inclusion. This either indicates adaptation upon adaptation or a deliberate excision of those characters from the design.

Whereas the 1802 fabric dispels slavery from a settler Eden and, in doing so, mutes the antislavery message of the original text, Domingue remains present in the 1818 fabric, retaining his integral role in the narrative, and is named in the caption for the illustration of his rescuing the children. He also features, head in hands, in the image of Paul at the tomb. The 1818 Oberkampf design is less inclined to completely ignore slavery than the 1802 fabric, but its vision of the story conceals the reason for the children needing to be rescued. Rather than confronting viewers with the horrors of plantation cruelty by depicting the escapee and her punishment, the textile represents Domingue as a loyal enslaved worker simply bringing a basket of provisions to the children. His basket is repeated in the central image, demonstrating his role as a provider and as essential to the settlers' survival and wellbeing. The 1818 Oberkampf design unambiguously represents slavocracy as a vital, even idealised, component of the island paradise.

As Hélène Cussac has argued, decorative arts adaptations of *Paul et Virginie* 'imagined the French colony as a version of Eden, even if the novel itself was concerned to show Eden compromised by corruption' (Cussac 2021). The degrees to which these three textile designs either elide or tackle slavery is vastly different. Changing with imagined public opinion, the textile designs cater for a clientele at first deemed to be against slavery, then either abolitionist or deluded, before attempting to accommodate the trade in people with a vision of an island utopia, just as French politics wavered between abolition, slavocracy, and accommodation.

5 The Fabric of Slavery

Literary fabrics function as merely a small group of a series of polite, at times political (nationalist and colonial) and cultured products emerging from the textile trade. Printed fabrics produced excerpted versions of illustrated texts, repurposing book illustrations, recomposing narratives, and presenting them in new ways. Tom Mole (2017) demonstrates that tracing the web of reception 'makes visible the range of media operating in the nineteenth century, the omnivorous ways in which cultural consumers moved among them, and the sophisticated strategies cultural producers developed for negotiating between them' (19). In this case, analysing the adaptation of *Paul et Virginie* across textiles reveals the ways that these cultural producers developed new story arcs that first examined the most challenging element of the text, then denied the very presence of slavery in the Île-de-France, and later accommodated it within an image of a tropical Eden.

Paul et Virginie textiles added another facet to what had become a sensory and social experience: *Paul et Virginie* was a multimedia phenomenon, in textual, visual, aural and textile formats. The *toiles* brought the text more firmly into the domestic sphere, enabling readers to style their homes based on the literary, artistic, and musical trends of the day. The fabric may have prompted readers to recall specific passages, pieces of music, or works of art that continued to proliferate. Recognition of the narrative was a primary attraction for such textiles, underpinning their cultural kudos. Objects beyond the book shaped and advanced literary meanings far beyond the printed text. The new surfaces, material qualities, placements and uses of these objects transplanted the literary text into new contexts, adopting the values of the new medium, location and its associated socio-cultural currency. With these fabrics, *Paul et Virginie* became truly tactile. They provide another plane along which to analyse the text's representation of enslaved labour.

The purchase and use of such products was, of course, a kind of conspicuous consumption, which highlighted isolated, decontextualised, literary moments. The meanings of these printed objects are manifold: they have their own inherent meanings as objects, in their use value and display, they carry meanings through their adapted images, and they also recall earlier renderings as well as the original literary text. The multimedia products printed with *Paul et Virginie* illustrations domesticated colonial endeavour within the sociable interior. Whilst decorating the home with the 1795 designs would demonstrate a realist reading of Bernardin's text, signifying an abolitionist or progressive political ideology, to decorate the home with the Oberkampf fabrics of both 1802 and 1818 was to display versions of, and potentially demonstrate an uncritical

preference for, Bernardin's text without its teeth. The 1802 design sidelined the antislavery rhetoric of Bernardin's novel altogether, whilst the 1818 textile promoted a Republic comfortable, even cosy, with the traffic in people.

As the debate about abolition continued in France, *Paul et Virginie* continued to be culturally relevant, the subtlety of its antislavery message proving useful to both sides of the case. The uses and placement of these products can present some slightly different meanings. In the form of decorative textiles, the 1795, 1802, and 1818 designs would have been prominently displayed in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century home, as curtain fabric or as drapery and hangings for beds, in bedrooms that were considered less private than they are today and, especially when tastefully decorated, appropriate for receiving visitors. In textile form, printed fabrics were 'a lightproof, tactile, and undulating version of the fragile copperplate prints' from which they were adapted (Lee 2022, 62). Such drapes turned sleeping areas into darkened islands that literally shut out the reality of slavery even by appropriating its main exports. As Gontar tells us, bed draperies were expensive and attractive items, and printed textiles in that context provided stimulating matter for debate and discussion within the 'personal yet open setting of the nineteenth-century bedchamber or parlour'. And as she points out, there is no doubt of its use in households built upon wealth accrued through the very trade it denounced (Gontar 2013).[5]

As Marshall McLuhan famously argued, the medium is the message: the cotton also has a story to tell. Building upon this position, Lucas has described the ways in which, firstly, a printed engraving that represents a scene from a novel can be read in accordance with or in divergence from the original narrative. Second, the reading of that same image on a textile, for instance, could be very different to the story print tells upon paper: 'The media and context in which the illustration occurs renders the image open to quite different readings' (Lucas 2003, 139). As Maire-Laure Ryan (2004) points out, different media, in this case, books, freestanding prints, textiles, "are not hollow conduits for the transmission of message but material supports of information whose materiality, precisely, 'matters' for the type of meanings that can be encoded" (1-2) (see also Rippl 2015, 8).

The cotton fabric itself speaks of empire. The cultivation and manufacturing of cotton by Europeans was a seventeenth and eighteenth-century innovation of global capitalism that depended upon exploiting (under)paid labourers in India (Beckert 2014). The

5 Traite des Nègres, ca. 1825, Frédéric Etienne Joseph Feldtrappe (French 1786-1849), mulberry-on-white roller-printed cotton signed "E. Feldtrappe", 101 x 33 inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund.

Compagnie des Indes (the French East India Company) had occupied Mauritius, calling it Île-de-France, from 1721 to 1767, during which time it served as a centre for trade, as well as a naval base and plantation colony. Being situated strategically between Europe and India, Île-de-France facilitated the trade in cotton and textiles from India, which it either shipped onwards or exchanged with agricultural produce grown by enslaved people removed from Madagascar, Mozambique and West Africa (Gottmann 2016).

Although cotton was not widely produced by enslaved labour until after the invention of the cotton gin in 1793, after which it was rapidly adopted by plantations in the United States, Bernardin nevertheless depicts cotton a product of the slave economy in his novel. Domingue plants "des cotonners sur les hauteurs" (cotton plants on the higher ground), which Marguerite and Madame de la Tour spin for the use of their family, saving the rest for Paul to trade overseas in preparation for his marriage (Bernardin 1789, 15, 54, 96). Bernardin also captures the trade in textiles in the narrative. When Virginie receives money from her aunt to prepare for her journey to Paris, merchants bring their wares to her humble cottage:

> Ils déployèrent au milieu de ces pauvres cabanes, les plus riches étoffes de l'Inde; de superbes basins de Goudelour, des mouchoirs de Paliacate et de Mazulipatan, des mousselines de Daca, unies, rayées, brodées, transparentes comme le jour, des baftas de Surate d'un si beau blanc, des chittes de toutes couleurs et des plus rares, à fond sablé et à rameaux verts. Ils déroulèrent de magnifiques étoffes de soie de la Chine, des lampas découpés à jour, des damas d'un blanc satiné, d'autres d'un vert de prairie, d'autres d'un rouge à éblouir; des taffetas rose, des satins à pleine main, des pékins moëlleux comme le drap, des nankins blancs et jaunes, et jusqu'à des pagues de Madagascar. (110-11)

> Amidst these humble huts, they displayed the richest fabrics of India: fine dimity from Gudelour, handkerchiefs from Pellicate and Mussulapatan, Dacca muslins – plain, striped, embroidered, clear as day – Surat baftas of such beautiful white, calico of every colour, including the rarest, with sand-colored backgrounds and green branches. They unfurled magnificent silk fabrics from China: lampas with intricate cut-outs, damasks of satiny white, others of meadow green, others of dazzling red; pink taffetas, full-hand satins, soft pekin as fine linen, white and yellow nankeens, and even pagues from Madagascar.

Virginie is no ordinary consumer, however, selecting fabrics for everyone in the household except herself, and having to take gifts back to ensure she had sufficient provisions for her journey. Whilst

Bernardin takes care to identify the origins of each fabric in the story, by the time his novel was published many such fabrics touted on Mascarene trade routes would have been produced in France. In a reversal of geography, the centre of global textile production had shifted from South East Asia to Europe, with ports like Nantes taking a considerable share of what was a lucrative trade (Dobie 2010, 93). Cotton was printed and finished in Nantes, before being exported to the colonies as stock (sometimes to dress enslaved people, with cloths intended for the plantation economy, called 'Guinea cloths') or as currency in exchange for enslaved people, who were then sent to labour in French colonies, and so on (Gontar 2013). Cotton, silk, and printed textiles continued to use orientalised names (as in the case of '*indiennes*' and 'chintz', from the Hindi *chīṃṭ*) even when produced in the West, retaining what Madeleine Dobie has described as their 'exotic Eastern aura', as the colonial contribution to the European textile industry remained masked behind an exotic aesthetics of terminology and design (93).

At the same time that *indiennes* and *toiles* were traded for people, the *Paul et Virginie* fabrics of 1795 identified the plight of enslaved people. As was the case with the 1825 textile, *Traite des Nègres* (Slave Trade), by Frédéric Etienne Joseph Feldtrappe, a more explicitly abolitionist printed cotton design, such textiles reflect 'moral ambiguities that were perhaps conveniently ignored' in the places in which they were manufactured (Gontar 2013; Brédif 1989, 131). The seemingly progressive design of the 1795 textiles in their centring of a multi-ethnic community coming together upon the death of Virginie could have been simply a commercial ploy to appeal to a market for antislavery commodities. After all, Petitpierre et Cie, the Nantes manufactory that produced the red *Paul et Virginie* fabric, also produced Guinea cloth, producing and distributing a tool intended for the perpetuation of human trafficking and which, as Gontar argues, 'served as a means that allowed others to subjugate and exterminate individuals and their culture' (77). Particularly in the case of the Oberkampf textiles, the fabrics inscribed the power imbalances of empire upon a colonial commodity.

6 Conclusion

The variants of *Paul et Virginie* fabric that circulated around Europe and were displayed in homes from 1795 through to the nineteenth century show diverse ways of reading Bernardin's novel. As Catherine Labio has demonstrated, the reception history of *Paul et Virginie* can be considered a 'barometer of changing attitudes towards slavery' from its publication to the nineteenth century (Labio 2004, 675). Textiles emblazoned with illustrations of *Paul et Virginie* not only

reflected the owner's literary sensibilities but also carried with them notions of empire and difference. The earliest *toile de Nantes* presented an inclusive colonial society, whilst the first Oberkampf fabric whitewashes Bernardin's story. The final Oberkampf design, from 1818, went some way toward reinserting people of colour into the tale, but without any of its nuance regarding the evils of the traffic in people. Through the shared motif of the shipwreck and the children's idealized childhood, all three designs portray a beautiful landscape at the threat of European civilization, despite the novel itself additionally portraying colonialism as an internal and unavoidable danger. The textiles' differences suggest that what seemed to be at stake for manufacturers of *Paul et Virginie* printed fabrics was the degree to which the novel's colonial context was perceived to be a desirable aesthetic for interior design. But even whilst the 1802 Oberkampf textile edits out the histories of people of colour from the Île-de-France story, the fabric itself does not lie, its raw materials produced and circulated within an empire dependent upon unequal labour.

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Miscellany

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Decoding Forgetting: A Semiotic Reading of Memory in Thomas Hardy's "Tess's Lament"

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Abstract Thomas Hardy's "Tess's Lament" (1901) has often been read within the context of Victorian societal norms, particularly concerning women's challenges. While commonly examined alongside Hardy's novel Tess of the d'Urbervilles, this paper takes a different approach; it examines the verse's signs and symbols rather than focusing solely on historical and social contexts. Through a semiotic lens, this study aims to uncover the underlying meanings by dissecting the words and exploring the philosophical foundations of Hardy's work. Contemporary theories of signification by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes are emphasized, along with Nietzsche's metaphorical dimensions, Laura Mulvey's gaze theory, and gender perspectives from Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler are also explored. Eventually, the analysis reveals how Tess embodies philosophical aspects throughout the narrative, offering a deeper appreciation of the complexities in Hardy's work through the hidden meanings within the expressions.

Keywords Thomas Hardy. Tess. Gaze. Semiotics. Social conventions. Memory. Forgetting.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Critical Review. – 3 Theoretical Framework, Semiotic Approach in Reading Hardy's Verse. – 4 Reading "Tess's Lament". – 5 Conclusion.

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1 Introduction

Thomas Hardy's poem "Tess's Lament" was composed in the collection *Poems of the Past and Present* (1901), and it was published after his novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The six five-line stanzas of the poem are recounted by the narrative voice – Tess – who seems to depict an overflow of thoughts. In the first lines of the poem, a sense of melancholy and a desire for her disappearance is expressed by the speaker, whose memories take her thoughts back to the cheerful moments in the past – back when she used to live on the farm with the male character (a husband or a lover). The moments of courtship are portrayed in the second stanza of the verse.

Eventually, the language of the third and fourth stanzas shows the male character's departure and absence, which seem to result from the speaker wronging or betraying him. Later, and in the last stanzas, Tes's expresses her envy towards the "dairymaid" who has taken her place on the farm. And once more, she expresses her wish that her life would end. On a general level, the verse presents the concepts of memory, time, life, and death, which are entangled with problems of love, home, marriage, family, and betrayal, that is, shifting external and internal conflicts.

The speaker appears to be drowning in her recollections and wishes they could all be forgotten. The verse opens with a general expression of these sentiments, followed by a flashback to a cheerful time and an association embraced by love and passion. Tess's thoughts eventually take her back to a series of images between past and present times. The language in the text shifts temporally, moving between past recollections and the immediate perception of reality. As the narrative voice moves with the flashback, she goes through a stream of happiness and love to regret, guilt, loneliness, and sadness.

These emotions shape Tess's thoughts, which take the form of a lament with all its immediate connotations of sorrow, grief, and mourning. The lament presents several entangled concepts, memory and forgetting in particular, through which it questions social conventions. These concepts are intertwined through Tess's voice; it recalls past days and expresses regret for things she has done and despair over her current situation. Therefore, she wishes her life would come to an end, and she could disappear from sight: "I would that folk forgot me quite, forgot me quite".

2 Critical Review

Critical readings of the poem frequently associate its titular character with Tess, the central figure in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which was published in 1891, approximately a decade before the

poem appeared. Hardy's tragic novel tells the story of Tess, a country girl whose misfortune leads to her downfall. Tess appears to be an innocent rural girl from a poor family; her father sends her to their relatives to work there. Eventually, the relative's son, Alec, after many temptations, finally rapes her, and later she gives birth to a boy, who dies very young. After a long time of hardship, she leaves the place and turns to work somewhere else. However, she meets the one whom she worships, Angel Clare. At first, Tess seems unable to tell him about the tragic story of her life, but very soon after their wedding day, she reveals everything. Clare does not forgive her and leaves her, and Tess then spends a long time working on the farms. Most obviously, misery and poverty are depicted in the novel, which ends with the death of Tess, after she is charged with murdering Clare.

The language of the work also brings out several other themes, such as social class distinctions, love, and social traditions (Rao, Yuan-yuan 2018, 71).

Since the name "Tess" is repeated in the verse, critics have read the poem through such lenses and given the same interpretation to both the novel and the verse. Several critics find a direct relationship between the poem and the novel. Knoepflmacher (1990), for example, claims that the character of Tess in the poem is taken from the novel. In brief, the poem and novel complete each other in terms of having the same story of the same character – Tess – who seems to be a farm girl and the representative female voice whom Hardy has presented in his works to portray gender issues during the nineteenth century (1058). Paulin (1975) also suggests that the verse completes the novel, in the way Tess's memories with Angel are depicted in the lines "he watched me to the clock's slow beat -/ loved me, and learned to call me Sweet" (155-6). Paulin argues that Hardy's novels and poems are annotations to each other. And Irwin (2000) goes even further, claiming that the verses are the same stories and are parallel to the works of fiction (24). Giordano points out that Hardy's character Tess in both the novel and the poem is depicted as miserable and subject to the cruelty of life; the speaker's voice is presented in the verse, and she recounts the novel's plot. Giordano asserts that Tess wishes to disappear because she is faced with difficult choices in life that lead to her downfall (Alexander 1985, 91).

In short, for most critics, Hardy's character in the poem appears to be guiltless and pure, and not responsible for what she encounters. However, a semiotic reading shows that the verse presents an antithetical conclusion.

3 Theoretical Framework, Semiotic Approach in Reading Hardy's Verse

This essay takes a reflective approach to analyzing Hardy's "Tess's Lament". Setting aside conventional interpretations that rely on historical or biographical context. Instead, it draws on both Roland Barthes's and Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic perspectives to dissect the poem's language and uncover the layered meanings in each line. By doing this, the study opens up new theoretical pathways for reading the text. In essence, the analysis concentrates on linguistic structures, metaphors, and the more subtle or concealed messages embedded in the poem. In his *Elements of Semiology* (1967), Barthes writes:

> In his *Course in General Linguistics*, first published in 1916, Saussure postulated the existence of a general science of signs, or Semiology, of which linguistics would form only one part. Semiology, therefore, aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention, or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification. (9)

In other words, Barthes's semiotics is based on Saussure's explanation that language is a pure sign system that consists of both signifiers and signified – words and their meanings (Marklemon 2015); for Saussure, language is made up of signs, which integrate their signifiers (the image, the word, or the sound) through an arbitrary association to their meanings or the concepts.

Barthes's "The Death of the Author" (1967) explains that the unknown voice in a literary work causes the loss of every origin, so it is unclear who is speaking in a text. The narrative voice in a poem, therefore, cannot be identified: it is confusing to know whether it is the poet himself speaking or multiple characters in the text (142). According to Barthes, at the moment of producing a literary text, the author finds his death, and the reader is born: "the death of the author" is a metaphor to show that there is no reference to biography in the literary text, and there is no need to put some blood into it to understand the meanings of the words.

Barthes goes deeper as he investigates the meanings of words and the semiotic system, and in his *Elements of Semiology* (1964), he explains "denotation" and "connotation", referring to the literal meanings and the deeper level of the significations of the signifiers. In a semiotic analysis, it is understood that language is made of a system of significations which consists of three elements: "words are the expressions (E), and they are related (R) to the content (C)"(1967,

89). This relation seems to be the same arbitrary system that has been coined by de Saussure, relying on social conventions. A connotation is a system of signifiers and signifieds, in which each time a new sign is added to the system, a new concept or content is created (1967, 91). Therefore, the signifiers offer more than one signified, and that depends on the context provided by the surrounding signifieds.

Hardy's verses present codes, metaphors, tones, and hidden meanings, and the only way to understand them is to open up the expressions and seek their etymological meanings, as well as the relations between the signifiers. For example, in "Tess's Lament", which the critics have related to the novel, seeing Tess as a victimized woman, the signifiers in the lines: "t'was I who made the blow to fall/ on him who thought no guile" show another layer of signification: that 'Tess' has 'wronged' the 'male character. The expressions connote the words' arbitrary relation to the content:

"t'was I who made the blow to fall" – E1	= signification of the system1
Tess has done something – C1	= signification of the system1

"On him who thought no guile" – E2	= signification of the system 2
The man is innocent – C2	= signification of the system 2

4 Reading "Tess's Lament"

There are several ways in which the title can be read: "Tess's lament" may suggest the state of regret for something she has done or grief for someone or anything she has lost. However, the name "Tess" etymologically elicits the concept of a harvest – the time of collecting crops. Thus, the name may refer to autumn, when leaves fall from trees, marking the end of summer and leading to the coming season – winter. In a semiotic sense, it seems to evoke the concepts of time, memory, and forgetting. As explained through Barthes's semiotic system:

"Tess" – E1	= signification of the system 1
Harvest – C1	= signification of the system 1
"Tess's lament" – E2	= signification of the system 2
Forgetting the memory – C2	= signification of the system 2

Above all else, the sense of forgetting through time is presented in the first verse by the female speaker, Tess, who seems to be addressing her words to a male character, to "folk", and to herself. Simultaneously, the language is addressed to the audience: both the

society and the male character in the poem. Tess wishes to note down her memories for her implied audience (Wolf 2014), who are the future readers:

> I would that folk forgot me quite,
> Forgot me quite!
> I would that I could shrink from sight,
> And no more see the sun.
> Would it were time to say farewell,
> To claim my nook, to need my knell,
> Time for them all to stand and tell
> Of my day's work as done not to be recalled;

The term "folk" (E1) denotes people in general, particularly the surrounding ones, such as family, relatives, neighbors, or society (C1). In terms of Barthes's semiotic system, the word in this context also connotes the Other's half (C2) of Tess (E2), which is depicted through the perception of others. Hence, the verse is based on three parts of the narratee: Tess, the male character, and the folk. The narrative voice "would", in other words, wishes to be forgotten (by others): she might be in a state in which she wants them to leave her behind, to neglect her, or even to slip her from their memory forever. Tess's wish to be invisible from others' visions suggests that she is looking for isolation; she wants to grow smaller and smaller or to be invisible from the sight of others, to disappear from the reach of others' eyes and escape from the gaze of society, which reflects power and control (Roof 2007).

The gaze here suggests the curiosity of society, gender dominance, or any other means of control. Laura Mulvey, in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", explains how women are the object of the male gaze in cinema and photography (1975, 14-16) referring to Lacan's theory of the "mirror stage", in which a child stands in front of a mirror and experiences self-reflection, which is the beginning of the self-recognition (1975, 17). From this standpoint, Tess appears to see the reflection of herself through not her actual eyes, but from the eyes of the "folk". Furthermore, her wish not to see the sun anymore suggests two desires; literally to lose her sight, or metaphorically, to fade away for eternity, or to die. At this stage, it is not obvious whether she is writing down her memories or if it's merely an interior monologue.

Tess's desire for the sun to be hidden from her sight suggests a wish for "death", because the "sun" which gives light and heat to living creatures, is generally a metaphor for life. In this sense, her aspiration for "death" becomes deeper as she wants to hear the sound of the ring or the "knell" coming from the bells. Meanwhile, she demands to be in her "nook" (E1), a word which on the literal level denotes a corner, a shelter, a hole, or a box (C1). In addition, it

could be read metaphorically (E2), it may refer to a small dark place or a grave (C2).[1] In this regard as well, Tess seems to be expressing her final moments when she sees her "day's work as done". That is to say, her role in life has become unnecessary. She has reached this point in her lifetime, and she needs to be isolated from everyone else. This seems to be related to de Saussure's sign system, as he defines it as a social convention. The verse seems to be echoed with the sound of every statement whispered – starting from the sound /f/ as it is started from "I would that folk forget me quite,/ Forgot me quite!", and continuing with the voiced /s/ in "from sight and no more see the sun".

The repeated voices in the line introduce the readers to the sound of the whisper, such as the phoneme /n/ in "to claim my nook, to need my knell", and the voiced /t/ in "time for them all to stand and tell". The bell seems to have the same echo as the language moves through the sound and its repetitions. Apparently, there is a whisper of the last moment of death before "shrink[ing] from sight".

The duration between the lines emphasizes the narrative voice's pause from one expression to another, the regret and the slow or low voice depict the moment when Tess compares her life in two different circumstances, her current situation and the past days – that construct both memory and forgetting within her. The verse seems to show the concept of forgetting in general, and at this stage, it appears to be in terms of visibility: not to be seen, to disappear, or to fall away – evoking the image of falling leaves in autumn. The evocations seem to provide essential elements: time, light, and sound. These terms may represent life and the way Tess wants to alienate herself from it. She appears to be making herself a bridge between life and death. This line also suggests de Saussure's 'social conventions' – the agreements and rules which are constructed semiotically around her by society. As he explains that there is a mental relation between expression in language, a word or signifier, and its possible meanings, concepts, or the signified (2011, 67).

In a nutshell, meanings are conveyed through an arbitrary relation between the object and the language, whether it's written or spoken. From this viewpoint, the term "folk" in the poem signifies a society in general, and the social conventions by which Tess appears to be influenced by others to follow traditions and rules that have been set to shape the identity and separate right from wrong. The "time for them all to stand and tell/ of my day's work as done", points to the idea of a funeral, where Tess wishes, if there was time, to say

1 Throughout the analysis, (E1) (C1) and (E2) (C2) will be used to refer to the first and the second levels of significations (denotation and connotation), which are based on Barthes's semiological system of signification.

goodbye to them and disappear. In short, social norms are depicted through language, and they seem to play the role of choosing Tess's destiny. In addition, the pronoun "them" describes the "folk"; here Tess emphasizes referring back to the society with whom she shares her moments. She seems to be controlled by the gaze of society, and she sees herself through the eyes of others. Her recollection then takes her thoughts back to her earlier days:

> Ah! dairy where I lived so long,
> I lived so long;
> Where I would rise up stanch and strong,
> And lie down hopefully.
> 'Twas there within the chimney-seat
> He watched me to the clock's slow beat -
> Loved me, and learnt to call me sweet,
> And whispered words to me.

The "dairy days" evoke Tess's recollection of the early experiences working on the farm, and the memory of using the churn stirs pleasant feelings in her, reminding her of a time when she used to wake up with hope. Brighter days are depicted through moments when she would "rise up stanch and strong", while her nights are recalled with a sense of optimism and trust – she used to "lie down hopefully", filled with faith. Through these descriptions, the dairy farm is described as the opposite setting to the "nook". The farm seems a symbol of life, while the nook appears a representation of death. At this point, I would shed light on de Saussure's notion of social convention and its integration into the sign system. Tess's recollection also evokes de Saussure's theory, as memory is closely tied to social norms. The delineation of these characteristics serves to establish the notion that Tess is reminiscing about a prior phase of her existence during which she was engaged in the production of dairy commodities, reflecting upon her erstwhile state of contentment, resilience, diligent labor, and hopeful repose. Her thoughts seem to take her back to the atmosphere, described in an image of the fireplace and the season of winter. The "chimney-seat", a warm place, seems to be related to the sun, which evokes a sense of life: it is where the male character "watched her". Tess describes the male gaze (Mulvey 1975, 14-16) observing her, "he watched me to the clock's beat", and its power seems to control her recollection of the past, so she fails to escape from the shadow of those days. And this gaze is not only the male character's but also the gaze of other people (folk) looking at her.

Thus, Tess seems to be dominated by the male character's gaze, which, in various ways, has constructed her identity; the act of watching here is panoptic because it creates the kind of "power relation" that Foucault describes in his "panopticon". However,

beyond the concept of power, the image also seems to convey a sense of a romantic relationship. This can be seen in the way he watches her and whispers to her, through the time that is implied by "the clock's slow beat". Similarly, the passage of time appears to decelerate intermittently, or within specific chapters of her life journey. The "clock" appears to play a key role in indicating the times at which both remembering and forgetting occur. Eventually, Tess recalls the whispering of his voice as he spoke to her in words that made her happy. The striking feature of this language is the repetition of expressions across different contexts; for instance, the whisper is depicted in two places within the poem: once with a sense of darkness and loneliness (C1), later with a companion and love (C2).

Several paradoxes are presented within the language; for instance, the shift from being hidden or small to being strong and hopeful, and the change from loneliness to being accompanied by the man and being told words of love by the fireplace. The terms evoking this lead the reader to the previous part of the stanza in which the exclamation mark "ah!" provides the sense of both pain and pleasure. On the one hand, the pain seems rooted in the recollection of those days; on the other hand, it can be depicted through the connection of the words "strong", "hopefully", and "sweet". To put it differently, there is a contradiction in both senses. Hence, the shift back and forth appears to strengthen the struggles of forgetting and memory of the past, and this conflict raises the theme of love that is depicted in the verse in various ways, as the speaker seems to recall the past days, she expresses her love for them, for the farm, and for the one who used to "[love her], and learned to call [her] sweet, and whispered words to [her]". The male character's whispers echo in her thoughts. However, those recollections appear to be an obstacle, in which all those delightful memories have become like poisonous and sticky plants, in which she is entangled, and she cannot move forward. Tess uses the plants as a metaphor to depict her life and to show the comparison between her present time and the past.

For instance, the other side of love is depicted in the verse that causes the speaker's current situation – suffering and loneliness. That is to say, Tess confesses to something that she has done through the expressions "was I who made the blow to fall/ on him who thought no guile", and this shows the concept of deception. As it's explained through Barthes's semiology, the second system of signification adds a deeper level of connotation; Tess admits that she has wronged him. As a result, she is left behind; the male character seems to be gone. The signifiers "and now he's gone, and now he's gone" appear to indicate Tess's melancholy after the departure of the male character. Concisely, the other side of love is depicted, in which she is left behind with sorrow and regret. The social conventions seem to arise from Tess's need for love and identity; the relationship that is embraced

with passion is a set of signifiers through which it is expressed in "[words of love]". In short, through the language, he has told her words, and through the language, she remembers them. Besides that, the absence of the male character seems to destroy Tess's identity and individuality, for when reconstructing them, Tess seems to be in a struggle because of the social norms and ideology in which she cannot be on her own without the male character, the one who recognizes her. Since all social norms are constructed through language, Tess's past and present are a collection of memories produced for a reason she is striving to find her identity:

> And now he's gone; and now he's gone; […]
> And now he's gone!
> The flowers we potted p'rhaps are thrown
> To rot upon the farm.
> And where we had our supper-fire
> May now grow nettle, dock, and briar,
> And all the place be mould and mire
> So cozy once and warm.

The male character seems to be lost, has left, or might be dead. The recurrent expressions "and he's gone, and now he's gone/and now he's gone!" emphasize that he is away from Tess. Furthermore, the sound of /gɒn/, in the repeated expressions 'and now he's gone', may represent the clicking sound in the "clock's slow beat". The sound plays a key role in the speaker's thoughts once again. Apparently, all those events and memories are still there, and she can often hear those voices. Tess launches into a comparison between her situation and various plants through both rhetorical devices – ekphrasis and prosopopeia – for instance, the ekphrasis works through the expressions "and where we had our supper-fire/ may now grow nettle, dock, and briar/ and all the place be mould and mire" in which Tess describes the setting, and the plants are metaphors for depicting the theme of love.

Semiotically, the "flowers" suggest multiple explanations: on the one hand, they seem to be a symbol for conveying a message that cannot be spelled out, like silence or a whisper.[2] On the other hand, she compares herself to those flowers in the sense that they were once potted with love and passion (C1). However, they were also thrown away and became rotten on the farm, which seems to be a metaphor for her dead body in the dark "nook", or to be rotten deep in the muddy ground (C2). Moreover, those flowers are compared to

2 *Flowers Meaning and Symbolism* (2014), *FTD.com*, https://www.ftd.com/blog/flowermeanings-and-symbolism.

their relationship because they refer to a particular type of plant characterized by color and a pleasant smell, and which also conveys a sense of protection and love. They, therefore, express the senses, which also seem to be connected to the idea of voiceless words that are spilled out by the speaker or written. Roses also carry the meaning of "bitterness or devotion" (Boeckmann 2020), and this provides the sound of the whispers that have been depicted earlier in the stanza.

The flowers are potted, yet they might be "thrown", suggesting they are being tossed away, rotten, or ruined on the "farm": the scene seems to depict the environment of a farmhouse. That is to say, the setting is in the country, which suggests the flowers lack recognition once potted: they are thrown away without attention and thus forgotten. Once, the roses were potted and alive, while in the present, they are rotten in the mud. These associations are similar to those seen in previous expressions, where Tess's situation has been changed, from being strong and hopeful to the state that she is left in of misery and melancholy; and this seems to be the result of being forgotten or neglected. Despite that, the term "supper-fire" appears to provide the same sense of "chimney-seat" (C1) from Barthes's semiological system of signification; it also connotes the meaning of the "sun" that provides enthusiasm and tenderness of love, devotion, and life (C2). In general, the expression and the need or the wish for life is expressed through "fire", because it suggests the heat and light that bring the sense of hope and love again.

However, Tess continues to repeat the divergent descriptions of plants, which are related to death; the expression "may now grow nettle, dock, and briar" indicates the plants that all cause pain and allergy, and she uses them as metaphors for exasperation or disgrace.

Furthermore, prosopopeia functions in the verse in the way Tess presents the male speaker: he seems to be absent, but the memory from the past "he watched me to the clock's slow beat" leads the reader to adopt that "whisper" from him, though in the present time, and Tess merely speaks in his absence. She shifts the statements from the recollection of the pleasant days to the consequences of that love affair:

> And it was I who did it all,
> Who did it all;
> 'Twas I who made the blow to fall
> On him who thought no guile.
> Well, it is finished --past, and he
> Has left me to my misery,
> And I must take my Cross on me
> For wronging him awhile.

The opening words of the stanza suggest a sense of blameworthiness. Another way of saying this is that Tess seems to see herself as convicted for what happened, through her repetition of the expression "and it was I who did it all". In light of that, she makes a huge shift from loneliness to guilt. She describes the male character as being innocent, which is to say, she depicts herself as the one who "made the blow to fall", for which she proposes different explanations – she might have been unfaithful to him, or she may have deceived him:

"Has left me to my misery" – E1	= signification of the system1
Tess is left alone – C1	= signification of the system1

"For wronging him awhile" – E2	= signification of the system2
Tess has wronged him – C2	= signification of the system2

Literally, the words: "twas I who made the blow to fall" seem to denote the meaning of hitting him with something (C1), while from a metaphorical level, semiotically, it also connotes the idea that Tess has disappointed him in one way or another (C2). After a pause, she changes her thoughts from being a sinner to being a victim, and this suggests the destruction of her identity.

İn terms of de Saussure's sign, the signifiers: "well, it is finished--past, and he left me to my misery", suggest that Tess is restricted to the past, with its bitter-sweet memories which control her present time. Her repetition of the term "past", which is connected to time, implies that it plays the role of authority over everything around her, so its evocations enhance the concepts of social conventions. The speaker's identity is another factor entangled in their relation; eventually, the male character's departure leads to the misrecognition of Tess's individuality.

Guilt and victimization, life and death, light and darkness – these are the forces between which Tess is lost, slipping within and beyond them. She symbolizes herself as Jesus Christ in terms of crucifixion, she seems to be lost for being guilty and a victim, and also she appears to be perplexed for being forgotten and ignored by others, and also for letting others forget her. As a result, she appears to feel guilty. However, since the term "cross" symbolizes crucifixion or death, she then shows her sacrifice for the social conventions, in the same way that Christ was crucified and died by taking on and representing the sins of others (Coleman 2020).

The term "cross" thus enhances the ideas of death, as it is repeated in the lines "to claim my nook, to need my knell" in which the speaker appears to indicate the action of dying in both places. In this way, Tess seems to condemn herself for being sinful at one point and then a victim, thereby providing the contradictory idea once again. She then

emphasizes "wronging him", which can mean abusing or corrupting him. The idea at this stage seems to be related to the previous line: turning the flowers into nettles and dock implies that she is unable to return to those days, nor to keep moving. In the same way, Tess plays the role of both the reprehensible or guilty one and the sufferer. The verse continues with the recollection of Tess's wedding day:

> How gay we looked that day we wed,
> That day we wed!
> "May joy be with ye!" all o'm said
> A standing by the durn.
> I wonder what they say o's now,
> And if they know my lot; and how
> She feels who milks my favourite cow,
> And takes my place at churn!

The speaker's thoughts seem to move back here again to the recollection of the past times – to happy days, as her attention takes her back to the day of their wedding. At that time, they were joyful, and everyone was "standing by the durn", but the expression refers to the doorpost: the term "durn" is a euphemism for "darn" and etymologically refers to something that is damned or cursed. Thus, this reference can be explained in two different ways: on one hand, the door that leads to the house is "so cozy once and warm", referring to their marriage (C1); on the other hand, it can be seen as an entrance to hell that she is suffering from (C2). This paradoxical evocation appears to dramatize the influence of the social conventions as it's explained by de Saussure, indicating that there is irony for those who wish them happiness, because that door can be an entrance to unhappiness in their new life after marriage. In this sense, the language conveys the idea of shifting from life to death, or from love to misery.

Tess appears to be drowned in the recollection of their wedding: the expression "how gay we looked that day we wed", refers to the concept of marriage, which is a process constructed by society; the wedding day is one of the ceremonies that is undergone through communities as a common feature. The striking point within the statement is the word "looked", which seems to evoke the external appearance of the individuals, put on to satisfy society – were they really happy? Or did they only appear to be delighted at their wedding? Plainly, Hardy's character is questioning all the standards and rules on which our perception of reality relies. Tess appears to show that those norms have two sides in terms of their impact on oneself: on the one hand, gathering in the ceremonies may bring a sense of happiness; on the other hand, she questions, "I wonder what they say of now". To put it another way, society and social conventions

play their part in causing her suffering because of what she feels after what she has done. Put simply, language presents a riddle in which individuals are entangled, and through the sign system, this riddle invites readers to decode the underlying narratives:

"How gay we [were] that day we wed" – E1	= signification of the system1
They were delightful – C1	= signification of the system1

"How gay we [*looked*] that day we wed" – E2	= signification of the system 2
They weren't delightful – C2	= signification of the system 2

Moreover, those sociocultural traditions shape Tess's identity not only culturally but also in terms of gender. The way she appears to struggle with those recollections from the old days shows her attempt to find herself, and the memories of the male character are another factor by which she finds herself as a woman who has been given the concept of love culturally, and who needs to be told words of love. The idea can be thought of in terms of the concept of gender issues discussed by Judith Butler in her "Gender Troubles": Butler's analysis explains how the concept of gender is constructed by social conventions, as binary views are created by leading individuals from the early stages of childhood to learn and follow what society believes are masculine and feminine behaviours (2006, 29-30). Moreover, Butler explains that both feminine and masculine genders are performative acts. That is to say, they are things that people do: how they ought to behave, and what they wear to make them appear as different genders. For instance, the collection of memories that Tess holds in her thoughts, such as sitting by the fire and working on the farm, or the way the male character calls her "sweet", are restrictions and expressions of a social system that shapes Tess as a woman.

Like Butler, Simon de Beauvoir, states in her *The Second Sex* (1949), that "one is not born, but rather becomes, woman": this illustrates that woman is the sex that has been given her identity culturally and she is brought up through a set of rules that constructs her in such a way that she believes that she is different from men, and dependent on them. De Beauvoir thus states that "as long as the temptations of the facility remain", that is to say, the emotional and financial needs that women are being forced to starve for, they will find their identity within the opposite sex (Beauvoir 2010, 15-16). From this perspective, Tess seems to be lost in the absence of the male character.

The expression "how gay we looked that day we wed", evokes the concept of the gaze, by which, through observation, Tess and her partner appear to be joyful among the "folk", that is, once again conforming to the social traditions, since conventionally, brides are required to be delighted at their wedding.

Consequently, the speaker appears to wonder what they might say if they know about her "lot", a word that suggests several meanings, such as choice or chance (C1). Here, it seems that Tess is questioning whether they would feel sympathy for her or be ashamed of her (C2). Obviously, the pronoun "they" is related to the "folk", the community that set the rules and the norms for Tess, the people who cause her happiness and her misery. They are also the ones who have constructed her identity, giving her recollections that have complicated her thoughts and shaped her perceptions.

Tess then shifts her focus to a milkmaid who has taken her position on the farm, and she wonders how "she feels who milks [her] favourite cow/ and takes [her] place at churn". That is to say, the ekphrastic scene offers a clear picture of a rural girl working at the dairy. She describes this picture in terms of the female gaze, and Tess observes the country girl who works on the farm, with a gaze that does not evoke sexual desire but rather the sense of envy, that is constructed by social conventions.

Tess's longing for her old workplace and memories of romantic moments pulls her back into reverie. Despite her joy in recalling their wedding, societal expectations shape her memories, causing inner conflict. Tess wishes to forget these constraints yet desires to preserve them, hinting at her quest for identity. This appears to be constructed by the slipping between both forgetting and memory; as Nietzsche says in his *Untimely Meditations*:

> The ability to forget or, expressed in a more scholarly fashion, the capacity to feel unhistorically during its duration. He who cannot sink down on the threshold of the moment and forget all the past, who cannot stand balanced like a goddess of victory without growing dizzy and afraid, will never know what happiness is – worse, he will never do anything to make others happy. (1997, 62)

The key to finding happiness is not to forget the past, but rather to accept the present circumstances without comparing them to past events. To put it another way, Tess appears to compare her current situation to the time when she used to work on the farm and sit by the fire with her partner. Nietzsche provides a metaphor for this through the example of a cow that doesn't feel pain as a result of forgetting: on the metaphorical level, the cow seems to be similar to Hardy's character, Tess, who appears to be a country girl (C1), and the image of her milking the cow (C2) brings her happiness. To put it another way, the cow here can be seen as a metaphor for her past days back at the churn, in terms of happiness. The speaker appears to be motionless or passive in the present situation, as she continues to remember all of it:

It wears me out to think of it,
To think of it;
I cannot bear my fate as writ,
I'd have my life unbe;
Would turn my memory to a blot,
Make every relic of me rot,
My doings be as they were not,
And what they've brought to me!

Tess appears to be implying here, in her last words, that she is done with accepting her "lot" to be "writ": she is not strong enough to tolerate her fate. The expression "would turn my memory to a blot" suggests the black spot of the stain of ink on a piece of paper covering the space where memories are written: here she once again wishes to have her life undone, and to be omitted from everyone's thoughts. However, despite her attempts to "have [her] life unbe", paradoxically, she seeks to forget her memories, yet by maintaining them, she holds on to an identity constructed by her past. The way this kind of forgetting takes place, in general, is explained by Nietzsche using the example of a "leaf": as a child sees different examples of leaves, and draws its shape in its memory, the specific different shapes of leaves are drowned in the memory and forgotten through time as the child grows up and becomes an adult, leaving only a general concept which keeps only the outline of the original shapes (Murphy 2001, 30-3). In brief, Tess's forgetting of specific memories gives her the illusion that she cannot find her identity, and it creates a general sense of loss for her, yet traces of the original experience remain.

Tess seems to have the general concepts of love and domestic life in her memory, which have shaped her identity and controlled her present situation; the social conventions around these concepts have directed her to a certain path. To put it another way, she seems to be unsure of herself, whether to seek the old days and hope for them to be brought back or to forget them and disappear for eternity. Thus, social standards are the primary issues that determine the other aspects in her life. Tess blames everything around her for causing her misery: apparently, her "fate" is to be written, and it cannot be reversed, so this is why she wishes that her life would be undone: she wishes not to have existed, to be invisible to everyone else's sight, as she expresses that in the first stanza. She goes even further with the wish to make every "relic" or every part within her rotten, evoking the concept of "rot" in the previous stanzas, which also points back to the image of the pure and lively flower she used to be, active and bright. Eventually, she became rotten like those plants which were thrown away; this points to her death, since through death the corpse becomes musty and rots. She "would" or she wishes that her memory

would turn to a "blot": on the one hand, this suggests obliteration, being blown out, or put out and extinguished.

In essence, Tess desires to liberate herself from memories that confine her, aiming to start anew by forgetting and hoping others will forget her actions, though she fails. This desire also suggests a fresh beginning, transforming memories into written symbols. The poem initially seems like a monologue, but it reveals that Tess is writing her diaries. The title indicates Tess as the speaker, gathering memories like autumn crops. She symbolizes each fallen leaf, once vibrant on the tree, now solitary and fading.

Tess's recollections of the past show that the concept of time is vital to the poem. The way she remembers those days that cannot be brought back seems to be the cause of the sorrow of her present moment. As Nietzsche (1980) says, correlating happiness and the passage of time:

Whoever cannot settle on the threshold of the moment, forgetful of the whole past, whoever is incapable of standing on a point like a goddess of victory without vertigo or fear, will never know what happiness is, and worse yet, will never do anything to make others happy. (Kaufmann 1980, 9)

The passage of time seems to collect the memories of the events Tess has been through, and she seems to be lost in the illusion of time's duration; her thoughts cling to past incidents, and she finds her present situation shaped by the past.

The concept of time functions in various places and different ways; for instance, the expressions "would it were time to say farewell/ time for them all to stand and tell" imply that Tess's regret for her life brings her to her conclusion, in which she wishes to vanish for eternity since her former life has faded away. The memory of the past when she used to "[live] so long" takes her thoughts back to that time and "how [they] looked that day [they] wed". The days of the dairy and the time of their marriage seem to be converted into a stream of thoughts that she lives with. For example, the passage of time seems to be the cause that has turned the "flowers" into sticky plants, "the flowers we potted p'rhaps are thrown to rot upon the farm", and the evocations of "where we had our supper-fire, may now grow nettle, dock, and briar" signify the changes which occur within time. The differences between past and present tenses indicate the distinction between these two situations throughout the poem.

5 Conclusion

Hardy's "Tess's Lament" is a broad exploration of various notions related to social conventions. These social conventions imprison Tess through memory and forgetting – she wishes to forget and

disappear from everyone's sight. Her memories of the days back on the farm block her path, and they are depicted through metaphors of sticky plants. The social conventions are constructed through the gaze – Tess's gaze on her image, the male gaze, and society's gaze are forming her identity. However, she shows readers that she is guilty rather than a victim, and her sin is tied to her actions and decisions. This semiotic analysis of the text shows that the poem is the reverse of the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and from this perspective, the verse shows the concept of "feminist existentialism". In addition, the poem reveals a hidden side of Victorian women, one that differs from the literature review. My semiotic reading shows readers that Hardy's poem can be read as a critique of the nineteenth-century social context through the lens of gaze, power relations, and social conventions.

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The Echoes of Young Kazuo in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

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Abstract In his 2005 novel *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro symbolically presents the 'young Kazuo' as a fading, distinctly Japanese part of himself that he left behind when he moved to England at the age of five. Rather than imagining an alternative life, as John Freeman suggests, the novel mourns the disappearance of Ishiguro's purely Japanese self – a childhood memory gradually dissolving. Kathy mirrors this fate; her inevitable disappearance mirrors that of the young Kazuo. Through parallel structures in the novel and across Ishiguro's body of work, I argue that Kathy embodies the young Ishiguro who is destined to fade from memory.

Keywords Japaneseness. Memory. Originals and Shadows. Author's Implication. Geographical Moves. Alliterative Names. The Young Kazuo.

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1 Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) tells a shocking story about a group of clones, or in my interpretation, fading shadows separated from their originals, who donate their organs and are waiting to die.[1] The story begins with the main character, Kathy, who is over 30 years old, looking back on her childhood spent with other children in an institution called Hailsham, and her past, which gradually awakens her to a secret. In order to look back on the past, memory is an important question, and Ishiguro has mentioned the importance of memory on several occasions. In an interview in Stockholm on 6 December 2017, during the week he received the Nobel Prize for Literature, he was asked, "Memory, guilt and delusion are recurring themes in your work—why?" to which he replied: "I was always very interested in looking at individuals who struggled with their past and memories" (Ishiguro 2017b). In his Nobel lecture entitled *My Twentieth Century Evening and Other Small Breakthroughs*, he again referred to the question of memory: "I'd often written about such individuals struggling between forgetting and remembering" (Ishiguro 2017a, 25). An interview with writer and journalist Hope Whitmore of Barnes and Noble about *The Buried Giant* (2015) was entitled "Kazuo Ishiguro: The Kingdom of Memory", and in this interview, he said that *The Buried Giant* was also about memory (Ishiguro 2017c). In the 2006 French translation of *Never Let Me Go*, titled *Au près de moi toujours* (2006), the theme of the work is presented on the back cover as "la perte de l'innocence, l'importance de la mémoire" (the loss of innocence, the importance of memory).

Kazuo Ishiguro's approach to the theme of memory is not unlike Marcel Proust's famous madeleine and memory scene in Ishiguro's favorite book, Marcel Proust's *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu I: Du Côté de chez Swann* (1988). Proust's madeleine moment ("Petites Madeleines", Proust [1917] 1988, 44) is an explicit trigger for a flood of memories, described in great detail. If there is such a device as 'madeleine' in Ishiguro's work, it is a voiceless velar plosive consonant /k-/ at the beginning of his first name, Kazuo. Ishiguro is such a music lover that he wanted to be a musician when he was young, so it is not surprising that he is interested in sound.

The method of analysis adopted in this study is the principle of equivalence, a concept rooted in Roman Jakobson's poetics and equally reflected in Ishiguro's prose. This principle reveals two overarching elements that transcend not only *Never Let Me Go* but Ishiguro's entire literary spectrum. The first is the fact that many episodes in the text are equivalently parallel. The physical journeys of the main

1 This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 17K02831.

characters within the narrative are fraught with common, adverse consequences. The second is a phono-lexical pattern in which the names of central characters, such as Kathy, begin with the phoneme /k-/. Within the framework of these two parameters, this article argues that Ishiguro intended *Never Let Me Go* to convey his lament that his pure Japanese youth, left behind in Japan, will inevitably fade away.

2 Theoretical Framework: The Principle of Equivalence in Prose Texts

The methodology used in this paper is the same as that employed by Roman Jakobson in his "Linguistics and Poetics", and consists of finding parallel functional similarities in Ishiguro's prose work *Never Let Me Go*, as realized in the text. This approach is taken because Jacobson's equivalence principle is an appropriate principle for capturing the characteristics of a literary work. The identification of such characteristics is not always a major concern of studies of literary works, since traditional methods of analysis tend to treat the language used in literary works in the same way as natural language. Literary language, unlike natural language, involves a separation between the author and the narrator. Thus, Charles Bally's analysis of the linguistic domain encompassing "vocabulaire, syntaxe, sons" (Bally [1913] 1965, 74), seen as an extension of the study of natural language, seems inadequate for elucidating the intricate semantic nuances inherent in a literary composition. In the search for a pragmatic meaning of natural language that goes beyond the limits of formal linguistic analysis, Wilson and Sperber argued that the meaning that requires the least effort of interpretation on the part of the addressee is most likely the secondary meaning that the addresser intended to convey (Wilson, Sperber 2002, 260). However, this pragmatic approach is also inappropriate for interpreting literary texts. In a literary work, the character who ostensibly delivers the message is not the true addresser of the text; rather, it is the author hidden behind the character who is the ultimate addresser of the text. Unlike the search for pragmatic meaning in natural language, a viable method of discerning the author's intended message to the reader is to engage in a cross-reading of several works written by the same person. This kind of intertextual analysis reveals the functionally common features between different elements in the text, such as those that we find in the phonemic network. The common presence of these elements stronger suggests that these elements are the messages that the author, as the final addresser, has hidden in common in each of his works.

The concept of phonemes based on the idea of functionally identical value can be traced back to Baudouin de Courtenay (Jakobson,

Halle 1971, 22). Jakobson actively used the principle of equivalence realized in sound units in his analysis of poetry, as exemplified in his "Linguistics and Poetics". Within this paradigm, variants are stored as equivalent along the paradigmatic vertical axis of Y and realized repeatedly along the syntagmatic horizontal axis of X, which represents the text. Michael Toolan claims that the 'repetition' of equivalent units "lies at the core of verbal art" (Toolan 2008, 1). Similarly, Masanori Toyota emphasizes the role of repetition in literary texts, stating that it shapes the writer's distinctive stylistic features:

> The management of repetition is one of the requirements of the craft of writing and it seems to reveal writers' distinctive stylistic characteristics. (Toyota 2018, xxxii)[2]

Claude Lévi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, adopted the concept of functional similarity from phonology and incorporated it into his mythological research, thereby introducing this concept into the field of mythology studies (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 206-31). This raises the question of whether such methods can be applied to literary texts, particularly prose, which lie between sound-oriented poetry and meaning-oriented mythology. Even if it is not possible to pursue well-defined systems, such as those found in phonology and mythology, it is plausible to explore and identify equivalent units within the text in order to unravel the author's intentions in his works.

In seeking to deduce the author's intended message to the reader through an analysis of equivalence in prose, the focus of such an analysis must naturally go beyond phonological units to encompass linguistic units at higher levels. This goal of linking units above the level of linguistic sounds in a functionally equivalent network was substantially furthered in M.A.K. Halliday's "Categories of Grammatical Theory" (1961), which established the groundwork for his systemic functional linguistics (SFL) framework. Halliday applied this linguistic theory to analyse the language and style used in William Golding's *The Inheritors* (Halliday 1971). While Halliday's primary focus is on the author's linguistic and stylistic choices, this analysis indirectly sheds light on the author's intentions and what the author is trying to convey to the reader. Halliday notes that Golding uses the transitivity and process types to characterize the Neanderthals as embedded in the physical world rather than reflecting upon it.

Not much has been done to approach the theme of a literary work from the textures woven by the units of the Hallidayan linguistic

2 I am grateful to Masanori Toyota, Professor Emeritus at Kyoto University, for his illuminating talks on alliteration in English at the Modern English Circle regular meeting.

system. Not only that, but the analysis of literary works also requires a close examination of higher-level units, such as the unit called episode, but this too has not been done much. One of the few valuable examples of macro-analysis of such episodes can be found, for example, in Todorov's analysis.

Todorov analysed *The Swan-geese* in his "The 2 Principles of Narrative" (1971), concluding that in classic fairy tales like this "the situation of equilibrium at the beginning" (Todorov 1971, 39) is disturbed, but in the end "the re-establishment of the initial equilibrium" (Todorov 1971, 39) is realized. Thus in "Cinderella" Cinderella's stepsisters and stepmother prevent her from attending the royal ball, leading to her desperate situation, an episode that disrupts the initial equilibrium and drives the narrative towards the restoration of equilibrium.

However, Todorov's analysis of *The Swan-geese* is not an analysis of a group of works by a single author. What emerges from his analysis is a structural framework of a general fairy tale, as was done in Propp's analysis of folk tales. Few, therefore, have applied the concept of functional similarity to the analysis of individual works, let alone prose. In this sense, this analysis of *Never Let Me Go*, though modest in scope, contributes exploring functionally equivalent values in a single text and from which I try to deduce the author's intentions.

When the principle of equivalence, which began with the discovery of phonemes, is applied to a literary work in prose written by a single author, the following steps are taken. If three things resembling themes in the form of A-B-C, A-B-D and A-C-E are found in each of the three works by the same author, then the most plausible main topic shared by the author in all three works is A, a common denominator that can be interpreted as the author's implication, traditionally referred to as 'theme'. These A1, A2 and A3 in three different works manifest different variations in these works, but they are derived from a common invariant, A. The remaining elements, labelled B to E, correspond to what William Downes calls "ghost implicatures" (Downes 1984, 326-7). In other words, these elements are false implicatures. Only by reading several works by the same author in a cross-sectional way can a common denominator A emerge, and from this common denominator A we can now infer a specific meaning as an invariant, for example the latent meaning that Ishiguro quietly put into *Never Let Me Go*. An intertextual reading of the works of different authors will reveal characteristics indicative of a period or genre, while an intertextual analysis of the works of the same author will reveal the hidden implications of the author woven between the lines. It is important to read several works by the same author intertextually, as the interpretation of only one work can lead to the misinterpretation of many false implicatures as important.

In Ishiguro's works there are two significant parameters that characterize them, namely the negation of the geographical movement of important characters and the fact that their names have a voiceless velar plosive /k/ sound at the beginning of their names.

3 Two Distinctive Parameters of Equivalence in Ishiguro's Works

Two interrelated equivalent units, or distinctive parameters, common to Kazuo Ishiguro's works were briefly discussed in the introduction. One is the geographical movement of the main characters within the story, which is accompanied by a negative ending, as if to imply the negation of movement. The second is the identical initial sound of the main characters' names.

Relocations of characters, which ultimately have negative consequences, feature in his major works. In *The Unconsoled* (1995), the renowned pianist Ryder abandons his world travels to return to his European hometown. This denial of further international movement leads to surreal, disorienting events that leave Ryder lost. Ryder's encounter with Christoff, an up-and-coming local pianist, shows how Ryder might have become a less famous artist had he not left his hometown, but more remarkably, Christof's current state is presented in relation to what he would have been without Ryder's world travels. The narrative then ends with Ryder taking a tram ride through the city and returning to his seat on the tram for breakfast. This has the underlying implication of being an affirmation of short distance move, but also a denial of larger geographical move:

> I filled my coffee cup almost to the brim. Then, holding it carefully in one hand, my generously laden plate in the other, I began making my way back to my seat. (Ishiguro 1995, 535)

Similarly, in *When We Were Orphans* (2000), detective Christopher Banks returns to Shanghai, where he remembers living peacefully with his parents as a child, to investigate their wartime disappearance. This attempt to reconnect with his origins is something he would not have had to do if he had not been separated from his parents in the first place. In "Crooner", which opens *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* (2009), Tony and Lindy Gardner's singing career requires constant travel between cities until their momentum falters. Their departure from their hometown not only fails to bring success, but also costs them the chance to put down roots and have children. In *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), Ono Masuji's son Kenji, who could also be called his young self, would not have died had he not left Japan and stormed through a minefield. And in *The Buried Giant*,

a rootless Celtic couple's move to their current location is linked to the non-existence of their son, a Celtic boy who died long ago.

In Ishiguro's works, names beginning with the same /k-/ sound, such as "*K*athy-*K*eiko-*K*azuo", recur in different works, providing the second parameter that distinguishes his works from those of other writers by being related to the first parameter discussed above. These names sharing the /k-/ sound are paradigmatically equivalent and appear in a syntagmatic context, either within the same work or across Ishiguro's various works. In *The Unconsoled*, the name of the young pianist Christoff, who Ryder would have been had he stayed in his birthplace, also has a /k-/ sound; in *When We Were Orphans*, Christopher Banks, returning to his birthplace of Shanghai, also has a /k-/ sound. In "Crooner", the names of the two main characters are Tony Gardner and Lindy Gardner: the surname Gardner begins with the sound /g-/ (a voiced velar plosive), which is faintly reminiscent of a group of names beginning with the sound /k-/ (a voiceless velar plosive), not to mention the sound that opens Gardner's professional name, "crooner". Ono Masuji's young son Kenji, who left his native Japan and was killed in a minefield in Manchuria, far from Japan, also has this sound. The Celtic boy with this sound has already died, left behind. It is fair to say that these names with the /k-/ sound, which play an equivalent role in Ishiguro's works, rhyme alliteratively. In instances of foot-rhyme, where the rhyme is positioned at the end of a word and holds a fixed place within a stanza, it presents not only a phonetic likeness but also a meaningful semantic and syntactic aspect, as noted by Michio Masui in his analysis of Chaucer's rhyme words (Masui 1989, 269). Roman Jakobson also explicitly states that phonological similarity leads to semantic fusion in his analysis of William Blake's "Infant Sorrow" (Jakobson 1962, 322-44).

Jakobson's parallel equivalence approach limited his analysis to short works of poetry, and he defended his approach by arguing why he had limited himself to the analysis of short poetic texts:

> The only restriction that I have allowed myself to place on the selection of texts regards their length […]. The simultaneous synthesis accomplished by the immediate memory of a short poem plainly determines its structural laws and distinguishes them from those which underlie the network of lengthy poems. Such poems, similar in some principles of their construction to long musical compositions with leitmotifs running through the work, offer a separate theme that I try to outline in examining diverse specimens of epic genre. (Jakobson 1981, 770)

Memory limitations make it difficult to structure at the phonological level in longer literary works such as narrative poetry and prose. In longer texts, the challenge is to find correspondences between

linguistic units, such as rhymes or morphemes, unless guided by a higher structure. This need for higher-level guidance applies not only to individual long poems, but also to the correspondence between linguistic units in prose or across multiple prose texts. Finding units of equivalent semantic value, such as episodes, is crucial to ensuring equivalence in what Boase-Beier calls the "semantic content of individual words" in longer texts:

> Repetition, however, does not just involve recurrence of sounds. It may also rest on an equivalence of syntactic structure or of the semantic content of individual words. (Boase-Beier 1994, 405)

In other words, certain episodic, thematically important words rhyme, creating a state of what might be called alliteration, in which they are felt to be psychologically close, even though they are physically far apart. In the rhyming chain of words '*K*athy-*K*eiko-*K*azuo', a certain connotation emerges that transcends the boundaries of Ishiguro's individual works.

In what follows, I begin my discussion of equivalence in Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*, a text in which the two types of equivalent units can be identified with relative clarity. I begin with an analysis of this work because it is structurally relatively easy to discover the two kinds of equivalent units mentioned above, and therefore it is convenient to extend the 'ladder of inference' for discovering equivalent units from this work to seemingly mysterious stories such as *Never Let Me Go*.

The first parameter concerns the geographical movement of the main characters and how it is negated in *A Pale View of Hills* and *Never Let Me Go*.

3.1 First Parameter: Geographical Movement and its Negation in *A Pale View of Hills* and *Never Let Me Go*

I have noted in the previous section that *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) is of great importance in providing insights into the author's intentions in his later works. The story of *A Pale View of Hills* is as follows. After the death of her Japanese husband, the protagonist, Etsuko, starts a new life in Britain with an English husband and her eldest daughter, Keiko, the child of her former Japanese husband. However, soon after their arrival in Britain, Keiko commits suicide. Later, Etsuko's English husband dies and when she tells Niki, the child of her English husband, that she wants to sell their current house and move to a smaller one, Niki is against the idea:

> "I was just thinking the other day," I [Etsuko] said, "perhaps I should sell the house now."
> "Sell it?"
> "Yes. Move somewhere smaller perhaps. It's just an idea."
> "You want to sell the house?" My daughter [Niki] gave me a concerned look.
> "But it's a really nice house."
> "But it's so large now."
> "But it's a really nice house, Mother. It'd be *a shame*."
> "*I suppose so. It was just an idea, Niki, that's all*." (Ishiguro 1982, 183; italics added)

If the negation of movement, expressed in the phrase "It'd be a shame", is a feature specific to this work, the implications of the negation of movement remain at the level of the characters and the narrator. However, if it is a common feature that we can find in Ishiguro's other works, then the denial of movement can be considered one of the author's general themes.

Niki, born in Britain to a British husband and Etsuko, does not choose to leave her current home in London to live with her mother Etsuko, or Etsuko, following Niki's advice, does not choose to move from her current residence. Settling down in one place was something she had experienced in Nagasaki before leaving Japan. From this, it can be argued that *A Pale View of Hills* presents a positive portrayal of Etsuko regaining her peace by refraining from further movement within Britain.

As opposed to Etsuko, who had travelled a long way, the second protagonist, Sachiko, was denied an international move because she could not fulfil her dream of marrying an American man and going to the USA. As a result of being denied the long-distance move, Sachiko did not lose her daughter Mariko. As they prepare to leave for America, Mariko wants to take her kitten with her, and after being scolded by her mother Sachiko, she runs away from home. She is found lying on a riverbank, as if to show that she is on the verge of death. Sachiko gets angry with the kitten and puts it in a box and throws it into the river. As mentioned previously, Sachiko's plans to move to the USA are thwarted, and this failure to move and Mariko's escape from death occur in parallel. However, Sachiko and Mariko do make one small move, which seems to coincide with the relatively small sacrifice of the kitten in the river. They move from Nagasaki in western Japan to Kobe in central Japan. By replacing large moves with smaller ones in this way, the author seems to be affirming the value of settling down in one's present place, which does not involve any sacrifice. Consequently, Niki's words below, as she urges her mother not to move, seem to convey a certain meaning implied in the text as a whole, beyond her own intention as a character.

In discussing *Never Let Me Go*, it is worth noting a difference in narrative perspective: *A Pale View of the Hills* is told from the perspective of Etsuko, the mother who lost her daughter Keiko in the course of her life, from the perspective of the original from which Keiko was created. *Never Let Me Go*, on the other hand, is told from the perspective of Kathy, a clone created from the original. You could say that the story is told from the perspective of a kind of 'daughter' in search of her 'mother'.

Also in *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro employs the geographical movement of the cloned characters as a narrative technique to underscore that such movement is closely paired with their tragic fates. Over the course of the novel, Kathy, Tommy, Ruth and the other clones each make key moves that act as turning points, disrupting their equilibrium and initiating new tragic phases that show one-way steps toward death.

The first major move occurs when Kathy, Tommy and Ruth leave Hailsham, where they are safe as long as they stay there, to live in the Cottages. The children of the novel, clones brought up in a remote boarding school, are unaware that they are destined to be organ donors, but they gradually come to realize the truth. At a certain age the children leave the boarding school for the first time in their life and move to other institutions called the Cottages, the White Mansion or Poplar Farm. From there, one after another, they are called upon to donate their organs, with the exception of one of the carers, Kathy H., who is given a reprieve from donating for a while, and who looks after the other donors. After all, moving away from the boarding school leads to sacrifice, i.e., the donation of organs, so if there were no move, there would be no sacrifice.

Next comes another small move: Kathy and Tommy's visit to Madame and Miss Emily in Littlehampton. This geographical move brings them face to face with the truth of their existence, revealing the sacrifices and limitations imposed on them. The visit itself does not have any particularly negative consequences, but its role in making them aware of the tragedy that awaits them is in keeping with the narrative structure of Ishiguro's works.

The third move is the relocation of donors to recovery centers. As the donors complete their donations, they are moved to recovery centers, signifying a geographical move toward the final stages of their lives. This transition embodies the negative outcome of their entire existence as they approach their 'completion', a euphemism for death. Each subsequent move for Tommy's donations further deteriorates his health, leading to his own 'completion'. In *Never Let Me Go*, these moves lead to the inevitable end that awaits these characters as the 'shadows' left behind by their originals.

As the story progresses, Kathy takes on the role of "carer" and travels long distances to care for the donors as they go through the

donation process. Kathy's visits to the recovery centers as she travels around the country are linked to the donors moving into these centers and moving closer to their 'completion'. Her constant movements then become mechanisms for bringing other clones closer to donation and death. Nothing, then, is more obviously linked to the death of the shadows of the originals than the geographical movements of Kathy.

In sum, the geographical movements of the characters in *Never Let Me Go* serve as powerful narrative devices that underscore the first central themes of loss and the acceptance of an inexorable fate on the part of the 'shadows'. These movements, which symbolize the shadowy, transient young lives of the clones until the inevitability of disappearance, play a central role in shaping the novel's first thematic parameter.

Here are some of my thoughts on Hailsham. There is a scene in *Never Let Me Go* where Kathy looks back on Hailsham with nostalgia:

> There have been times over the years when I've tried to leave Hailsham behind, when I've told myself I shouldn't look back so much. But then there came a point when I just stopped resisting. (Ishiguro 2005, 4-5)

Kathy's reflections show a complex emotional attachment to Hailsham that goes beyond mere experience or memory. Speculatively, one may detect a faint echo of Hiroshima in the name Hailsham. Hiroshima is a place name that resonates with Ishiguro's hometown of Nagasaki. By depicting Ruth's search for her original, Ishiguro implies that Kathy also has her original. Given Ishiguro's use of this indirect allusion technique, and given Ishiguro's technique of using the names Keiko and Kathy to indirectly allude to his own Kazuo, which rhymes with them, one might cautiously suggest a phonetic echo between Hailsham and Hiroshima, and even as an indirect allusion from Hiroshima to Nagasaki. Thus Kathy, leaving Hailsham for her own destiny to fade away, is a mirror image of Ishiguro leaving Nagasaki. Both are destined to fade away. Ishiguro mourns his own lost past through imaginative fiction. Kathy's grief echoes Ishiguro's in the following interview:

> *the Japan that existed in my head* might always have been an emotional construct put together by a child out of memory, imagination and speculation. And perhaps most significantly, I'd come to realise that with each year I grew older, *this Japan of mine* – this precious place I'd grown up with – *was getting fainter and fainter*. (Ishiguro 2017a, 13; italics added)

This theme of belonging to a place and lamenting the loss of that sense of belonging appears not only in *Never Let Me Go* but also in

other works by Ishiguro, and the fact that the same theme appears in such an intertextual way in other works suggests that this theme is not just the narrator's but the author's own. Kathy from *Never Let Me Go* embodies this grief for his vanishing young Japanese self, which he surely had in Nagasaki.

3.2 Second Parameter: Characters with a /k/ Sound at the Beginning of their Name Denying their Geographical Moves

The second parameter refers to the main characters with the sound /k/ at the beginning of their names who deny or try to deny geographical movement.

In both *A Pale View of Hills* and *Never Let Me Go*, there is a tragic protagonist whose name begins with a /k/ sound: *K*eiko and *K*athy, and their tragedies are linked to some relocations of these characters away from their homeland or the place where they were born and raised.

In both novels, there is a relationship between the originals and their copies, with the younger copies (Keiko and Kathy) destined to be left behind and sacrificed for the benefit of the originals (Etsuko and Kathy's original). In *A Pale View of Hills*, Keiko's relationship to her mother, her original, is obvious. In *Never Let Me Go*, on the other hand, Kathy is interested in her own original, although this is only hinted at in the description of a woman who appears to be the original of her friend Ruth ("Ruth's possible", 138):

> But she just kept walking, a dozen or so steps ahead, then went in through a door—into 'The Portway Studios' […]. But now, in that gallery, the woman was too close, much closer than we'd ever really wanted. And the more we heard her and looked at her, the less she seemed like Ruth. (Ishiguro 2005, 159-61)

In Never *Let Me Go*, Ruth, Kathy and their friends follow a woman they believe to be Ruth's original into an art gallery called "The Portway Studios" (159). However, after observing the woman's conversation with the gallery owner and her appearance, Ruth begins to doubt whether she is her original or "possible" (138). The significance of this passage lies not in whether the woman is Ruth's original, but in its implication that Ruth – and, by extension, Kathy – has an original. It introduces the possibility of the existence of Kathy's original and her perspective on her original.

Whether the story is told from the perspective of the mother, Etsuko, or the clone, Kathy, it seems that Ishiguro's intention is to convey to the reader the theme of a disappearing young self of

pure Japanese, a memory-self formed in Japan, as a Japanese child. As time passes, the fading young Kazuo, or Ishiguro's pure young Japaneseness, is "completed" in *Never Let Me Go*. He will never "go to America", "become" a film star, or "work in supermarkets", as Miss Lucy's talk to the children about their impending fate shows (80), and just as Kathy somehow knows that "none of us could have babies" (72), Ishiguro as a pure Japanese boy too is suddenly denied his future at a certain point in his life. Kathy and Tommy visit Madame Marie-Claude, a co-founder of the school, who tells them that she remembers Kathy dancing and singing with a pillow pressed against her. This image of Kathy "with a pillow to stand in for a baby" (71) embodies the young Kazuo who, as a pure Japanese, has no hope for the future:

> And I saw a little girl, her eyes tightly closed, holding to her breast the old kind world, one that she knew in her heart could not remain, and she was holding it and pleading, never to let her go. (Ishiguro 2005, 267)

Tommy, a close friend of Kathy's, also exhibits a sense of defiance against his predetermined fate. Takahiro Mimura's interpretation of Tommy's act of painting in 2018 is revealing. Mimura claims that Tommy's attitude of continuing to paint while awaiting his final sacrifice quietly conveys his belief that people should resist social oppression for as long as they live. In other words, through Tommy's obsession with painting, Mimura comes to see it as a "means of resistance against the system of power" (99). I want to locate this resistance within the author's grand design realized in *Never Let Me Go*, beyond his individual works. In *Never Let Me Go*, the /t/ sound in Tommy's name represents his explicit resistance to the fate of those represented by the /k/ sound in Kathy, Keiko, and the young Kazuo: all of whom are destined to fade away at a young age. Tommy appears to be resisting the fate presented by Kazuo Ishiguro, which is depicted as a chain of /k/ sounds linking his characters. Tommy's distinct form of resistance is evident in the fact that, whereas Ishiguro depicts his characters' fate through words, Tommy expresses his resistance to that fate through a different art form: painting.

Towards the end of the narrative, Kathy takes on the role of a "carer", a responsibility that requires her to travel around the country to look after donors. Her journeys often involve travelling considerable distances, such as her visit to a farm in Norfolk to look after a donor called Laura. Regardless of the distance traveled, each of Kathy's journeys highlights the poignant reality that young donors are losing their lives and gradually fading into oblivion. At the 97th meeting of the Modern English Circle on 15 March 2020, held at Kyoto University, Masanori Toyoda, Professor Emeritus at Kyoto University, commented on my talk on *Never Let Me Go*, advising

me to focus on the initial sound of Kathy's occupation, "carer". It is noteworthy that the term "carer" also begins with a voiceless velar plosive consonant /k-/, although it is not a character's personal name. Toyota's observation supports my argument that Ishiguro has created a deep connection between the initial sound /k/ and the mobility of individuals, emphasizing the thematic significance of the movement of the character who possesses the sound.

Does the idea of resisting one's fate to disappear mean for Ishiguro an obsession with his vanishing younger self? The existence of such an obsession seems to be confirmed by the alliterative association between some of the characters in his works and Kazuo as a pure Japanese boy.

It is partly true, as the extract from the Nobel lecture shows, that Ishiguro was concerned with "the Japan that existed in my head" (Ishiguro 2017a, 13). However, given the relationship between the original and its young copy, he seems to be interested in the relationship between his present self and the purely Japanese self in the past, that he was before he came to Britain. This commitment to his young self can be seen in the alliteration of the following sequence of names. In other words, the following three have the same functional position in his grand design, indicating their functionally equivalent relationship to each original (Kathy's original, Keiko's original, i.e., her mother Etsuko, and Ishiguro now):

*K*athy —	*K*eiko —	*K*azuo
/k-/	/k-/	/k-/

To this could be added Mariko's *k*itten (/k-/), which was described earlier as a small sacrifice. However, this kitten dies without growing up, so there is no adult cat to look back on this kitten from the future.

In Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989), there is another instance of a character whose name begins with the sound /k-/, echoing Kazuo, and in which the change of place is negated. Miss Kenton (now married and known as Mrs. Benn), who once worked alongside Stevens in the same mansion, never leaves her new home, and Stevens, the butler, never leaves the mansion where they worked together (both instances of negated movement):

Miss *K*enton
/k-/

This suggests that Stevens, like Ishiguro who now lives in Britain, is at peace in the manor house where he works as a butler. Stevens' life is quiet, but without the shadow of his youth, for he is no longer in the

company of Miss Kenton, with whom he spent his youth, and has only memories of her. The direction of the narrator Stevens' gaze towards Miss Kenton mirrors that of Etsuko towards her daughter Keiko in *A Pale View of Hills*. Miss Kenton, who represents Stevens' younger days, alliterates the names *K*athy, *K*eiko and *K*azuo, and could be said to be a variant of an invariant called the 'young Kazuo'.

4 Conclusion

By analyzing Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* using the principle of equivalence described above, this paper has revealed the author's deep fascination with his own diminishing Japaneseness. In order to substantiate a sustained preoccupation with his fate, I have drawn attention to two parameters. These are the negative geographical movements of the main characters and the /k-/ consonants that their names share, like alliteration. And since these two parameters are present not only in *Never Let Me Go*, but also intertextually in Ishiguro's other works, it can be inferred that they are responsible for the author's implication that the author wants to convey. What they suggest is that the main characters whose names alliterate with "Kazuo", Ishiguro's first name, appear in a context where geographical movement is seen as a source of lament, and that this may be what Ishiguro wanted to imply. In fact, what Ishiguro is implying is his lament for the fate of his young self that accompanies his move from Japan to Britain.

After the death of the Celtic boy in *The Buried Giant*, many wondered what Ishiguro's next novel would be like. I had predicted the existence of a protagonist whose name begins with the sound /k-/, and this long-awaited novel was published in 2021 under the title *Klara and the Sun*, as I had predicted. The narrative opens with a newly created AI doll uttering the phrase "When we were new" (Ishiguro 2021, 3). Klara, a humanoid and artificial friend for human children, serves as the narrator of the story. In this story, the young Kazuo no longer exists. He is reborn as an AI child.

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"A Romantic in Sirius" Virginia Woolf's Post-Wordsworthian Autobiography

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Abstract This article explores the influence of Wordsworth's spots of time on Woolf's moments of being. Building on an early review by Edwin Muir that highlighted *Mrs Dalloway*'s deep engagement with Wordsworth's poetic vision, it examines two key aspects of *The Prelude* that Woolf may have inherited: the transcendental and anamnestic quality of remembrance and the epiphanic nature of recollection. These elements contribute to a reassessment of Woolf's impressionism, understood as the complex foundation of her aesthetic vision. Situating moments of being within Romantic autobiography, the article considers how they reflect the self's attitude towards memory, and it also shows how Woolf first developed epiphanic recollection in her 1920s novels and impressionism in her 1920s short fiction. She later reframed both strands in her autobiographical writings.

Keywords Romantic poetry. Modernist autobiography. Moments of being. Spots of time. Literary impressionism.

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For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts.
(Eliot 1941, 44)

1 Introduction

Despite the notorious anti-Romantic sentiment that pervades Anglo-American Modernism, William Wordsworth's poetic voice emerges as a particularly significant echo in Woolf's autobiographical writings. Woolf enjoyed a familiar and untroubled relationship with the literature of the early 19th century,[1] a feature also apparent to her contemporaries, who often remarked upon it when assessing her work. In 1928, Raymond Mortimer, for one, called Woolf a "romantic poet" (Mortimer 1995, 309), and even Lytton Strachey, one of Bloomsbury's least ardent admirers of Romantic poetry, while speaking of *Jacob's Room*, labelled her as

> very romantic – which alarms me slightly – I am such a Bonamy. Once or twice I thought you were in danger of becoming George-Meredithian in style – or was that a delusion? Something of the sort certainly seems to me the danger for your genre. But so far you're safe. You're a romantic in Sirius, I fancy – which after all is a good way off from Box Hill. (Strachey 1975, 93)

Despite its provocative tone, the passage does not constitute a rebuke. Woolf herself notes that her friend has "put his finger" on "the spot – romanticism", which she describes as the aesthetic result of her "effort of breaking with complete representation" (Woolf 1975, 586). The choice of Sirius is not casual. In classical myth and ancient astronomy, Sirius is the Dog Star and the brightest star in Canis Major, long associated with the "dog days" and a feverish brilliance. Its Greek name *seirios* ("glowing", "scorching") stresses intensity

1 See, for instance, Fernald's interpretation of Lord Byron's role in Woolf's fictional treatment of personality and impersonation (Fernald 2006, 118-69). For other explorations of Woolf's allegiance with Romanticism, see Harris 2010 and Beer 1993. While several studies address Woolf's connection with her early nineteenth-century poetic forebears primarily in terms of 'loans' and 'debts', this article aims to offer a broader discussion of Wordsworth's agency in Woolf's aesthetic treatment of memory. I pursue this argument through a historicising outlook indebted to J.M. Rabaté's encouragement and to his account of Romantic affiliations within broader debates on modernism (Rabaté, Spiropoulou 2022, 10-11).

rather than detachment. Yet Sirius is also a fixed point at an immense remove: sharply visible, but beyond reach. Strachey's "Romantic in Sirius" thus suggests a Romanticism that is radiant and potentially overheated, yet displaced to a distant, stellar plane. In other words, held at a critical distance from the "earthbound" Romanticism of Jane Austen's Box Hill.

Among the many possible threads, I follow the insight of Edwin Muir, who, in an early review, remarked upon the affinities between Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and the poetry of Wordsworth. Muir noted that *Mrs Dalloway* represented a milestone in the history of the British novel because it achieved a singular and untried mixture of literary registers, eventually configuring itself as

> less akin to anything else attempted in the novel than to certain kinds of poetry, to poetry such as Wordsworth's, which records not so much a general judgment on life as a moment of serene illumination, a state of soul. What nature is in The Excursion, London is in Mrs Dalloway, a living presence, a source of deep pleasure. (Muir 1975, 184)

Despite the distinctly post-Victorian tone of Muir's review, his insight is sharp. In his reading Wordsworth appears here as a revolutionary aesthetic innovator, especially in his capacity to capture personal moments and to establish a deep connection with the living world. The literary affordances granted by his poetic example should be accounted for in any exploration of Woolf's 'poetic prose', which is too often reduced to a personal animadversion against a male-dominated poetic tradition. Woolf, much like George Eliot before her (Mann 1980), demonstrated a great facility in absorbing and adapting Wordsworth's example to her own purposes and is thus to be considered one of the most generous and subtle agents in Wordsworth's afterlife in the English tradition.

As a Romantic in Sirius, Woolf could draw openly on Wordsworth without compromising her modernist commitments, incorporating Wordsworthian themes of elevated memory and revelatory recollection into her autobiographical work.

2 Autobiographical Wordsworth

Reappropriating Wordsworth in Woolf's era was not a casual nod to a bygone poet but a deliberate, subversive engagement with a vast body of Victorian criticism. These Victorian and Edwardian mediations matter because they shape the available Wordsworth for Woolf: what she inherits is not only the poet, but a critical tradition that has already framed him as ethical authority, philosophical

mind, and autobiographical prototype. Wordsworth had undergone successive phases of acceptance, rejection, and mystification – phases a twentieth-century writer could hardly ignore when drawing inspiration from his legacy. Cast alternately as a rebellious, rural, and visionary, by 1850 he had secured his status as one of – if not *the* – preeminent English poets of his age.

By the century's end, he had accrued the gravitas of a philosophical poet (Cronin 2015, 63), due in part to the interventions of Woolf's father, Sir Leslie Stephen. In his essay "Wordsworth's Ethics", Stephen opposed Matthew Arnold's moral idealism and instead celebrated Wordsworth's philosophical acuity, his capacity to articulate "the deepest truths" (Stephen 1907, 129). A notable facet of this philosophizing was the privileged role granted to childhood: it was precisely the "mysterious efficacy" of the poet's "childish instincts" (143) that, according to Stephen, endowed him with unique power.

From the posthumous publication of *The Prelude* in 1850 to its first critical edition by Ernest de Sélincourt in 1926, yet another essential aspect emerged: Wordsworth's foundational place in the genealogy of autobiography (Marcus 1994, 35-7). An autobiographical Wordsworth had already been adumbrated in Walter Pater's essay "Wordsworth", later included in *Appreciations*. There, Pater underscored the "bold trains of speculative thought" (Pater 1910, 53) that permeate Wordsworth's poetry, with a particular focus on the recurrence of "sudden memories" and "strange reminiscences and forebodings" (53) throughout his oeuvre. Crucially, Pater illuminated the self-reflexivity of Wordsworth's poetic consciousness – its power to shape and reconstitute outer reality (54) – a process he famously theorized in the "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*, where he defined aesthetic experience as the refining of "rough reality" into "a tremulous wisp constantly re-forming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression" (Pater 1980, 118). In this sense, Pater's reading of Wordsworth functioned as a practical instantiation of his aesthetic criticism (Wong 2018), and stands as one of the most nuanced reconfigurations of Romantic legacy at the fin de siècle (Mahoney 2023).

For Woolf, deeply invested in the interplay between memory and self-fashioning, these ideas resonated powerfully. In her late-1930s autobiographical turn, she drew on the Wordsworthian practice of capturing singular, revelatory instants – "spots of time" (Wordsworth 2008, 565, 1. 258) – capable of illuminating the self episodically, even as she distanced herself from the sentimentalism often associated with Romantic recollection. By absorbing Wordsworth's poetics of interiority and temporal disjunction, Woolf adopted a model of life-writing that – despite its nineteenth-century provenance – retained a potent formal novelty. Seeking a mode of expression centred on the "ecstasy of experience, rather than […] the fruit of experience"

(Saunders 2010, 32), she remained alert to the temporal and philosophical experimentation of Wordsworth's autobiographical verse (Sherry 2015, 61). Wordsworth's poetic innovation thus became a vital and conscious intertext for Woolf's redefinition of biographical form in the late 1920s and, more radically, for her own self-writing in the following decade.

A Sketch of the Past, Woolf's unfinished autobiographical experiment, was undertaken at Vanessa Bell's urging amid the psychic strain of World War II and Woolf's own ambivalence about autobiography as a male-dominated genre (McIntire 2008, 150). Despite these tensions, Woolf evidently felt liberated to venture into the terrain of personal narrative. Her foray into autobiography, though belated, stands as one of her most daring life-writing experiments, as it allowed her to transpose into self-reflection the techniques previously honed in the writing of the lives of others (152).

Wordsworth, despite his symbolic association with patriarchal authority, was one of the few male poets with whom Woolf maintained an untroubled intellectual rapport – especially, as Emily Kopley documents, after her father's death (Kopley 2021, 67-106). She referred to *The Prelude* as "one of the greatest works ever written" (Woolf 1975, 469), and in the summer of 1940, Wordsworth's poetry became, by her own admission, a kind of "drug" (Woolf 1985, 295). In one diary entry, she revels in Book VII of *The Prelude* and transcribes the following passage:

> The matter that detains us now may seem,
> To many, neither dignified enough
> Nor arduous, yet will not be scorned by them,
> Who, looking inward, have observed the ties
> That bind the perishable hours of life
> Each to the other, & the curious props
> By which the world of memory & thought
> Exists & is sustained (Woolf 1981, 247-8)[2]

This record is significant on several fronts. First, it confirms that Woolf was reading the 1850 posthumous edition of *The Prelude*. More importantly, her selection of this particular passage suggests a keen responsiveness not merely to the events recounted – such as

2 Wordsworth's actual verses read: "The matter that detains us now may seem | To many neither dignified enough | Nor arduous; and is, doubtless, in itself | Humble and low; yet not to be despised | By those who have observed the curious props | By which the perishable hours of life | Rest on each other, and the world of thought | Exists and is sustained" (Wordsworth 2008, 480, ll. 489-96). Despite Woolf's preference for the 1850 edition, I have decided to quote the 1805 edition as it is now the standard in Wordsworth studies.

Wordsworth's entry into London – but to the metapoetic reflections embedded within. The lines she isolates foreground the poet's own theorization of autobiography as a form of transcendental awareness, sustained by the interconnection of temporal fragments through memory.

This Romantic *Streben* – a striving for spiritual unity – animates the autobiographical impetus of *The Prelude*, even as the poem's fragmentary nature resists the finality it seeks. *The Prelude* is, in fact, only a proemial gesture towards *The Recluse*, the masterwork Wordsworth never completed. Like Woolf's *Sketch*, *The Prelude* remains a fragmentary life-writing project – perpetually provisional, feeding upon its own textual past as material to be reworked (Wilner 2015, 147). Both works evince a tension towards an "enigmatic mode of totality", which becomes a distinctive "way of inhabiting the language" (148) of autobiography – particularly in a cultural moment, such as Modernism, when self-narration was often met with scepticism or disdain (Marcus 2016, 298).

3 Romantic Memory

The Prelude's focus on the act of remembering, rather than on the remembrance itself, might explain Woolf's decision to shape her autobiography in diary form, a practice that she had been engaged in all her life. With its inherent fragmentariness and discontinuity, this form mirrors Wordsworth's "spots of time" in their being isolated moments that stand out in themselves, and not for their immersion into a cohesive flow. Wordsworth, in this respect, echoes a wider tendency of European Romanticism elevating fragments as the aptest products of an ontological friction "between the desire for unity and the recognition of the difference" (Rajan 2000, 231).

Because of their immediacy, "spots of time" offered an alternative to the stereotype of autobiography as a narcissistic narrative act of self-scrutiny, characterised by an egotistical superfetation of intimate foibles. Later critics found this procedure compelling because it reshaped life-writing: it preserves the cradle-to-grave frame, but grants priority to singular instants with exceptional illuminative force. This emphasis on the instant implies a model of literary creation as a rhapsody of subjective embryos – a precursor, albeit an imperfect one, to modernist fragmentary poetics (Janowitz 2017, 479). In *The Prelude*, the spots of time become harbingers of a "renovating Virtue" (Wordsworth 2008, 565, l. 260), and they eventually nourish and repair the mind burdened by "trivial occupations, and the round / Of ordinary intercourse" (565, ll. 263-4). Wordsworth describes their power as follows:

> This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
> Among those passages of life in which
> We have had deepest feeling the mind
> Is lord and master, and that outward sense
> Is but the obedient servant of her will.
> Such moments worthy of all gratitude,
> Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
> From our first childhood. (565, ll. 269-76)

Woolf's *Sketch* likewise concentrates the attention of the prospective reader on singular accidents of special significance and presents her remembering self as constructing a vision of the past as a fragmentary thread of "ecstasies and raptures" (*MB* 82),[3] all prompted by a peculiar psycho-physical condition Woolf describes as a "shock" (*MB* 84). Although not systematic, Woolf tries to clarify the sensation and value of such experience:

> I only know that many of these exceptional moments brought with them a peculiar horror and physical collapse; they seemed dominant; myself passive. This suggests that as one gets older one has a greater power through reason to provide an explanation; and that this explanation blunts the sledgehammer force of the blow. I think this is true, because though I still have the peculiarity that I receive these sudden shocks, they are now always welcome; after the first surprise, I always feel instantly that they are particularly valuable. And so I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer. (*MB* 84)

Woolf concludes with the hint at a proper philosophy, whose core idea was that "behind the cotton wool is a hidden pattern" conjoining "all human beings", eventually metamorphosing "the whole world" into a "work of art" (*MB* 85). These figures under her own cotton wool carpet she labelled "moments of being" (*MB* 83), and described as some unexpected jolts suddenly striking the conscious mind and the unaware body, provoking a sensation similar to bodily pain. Although initially traumatic, these moments represent the prime motor of her writing, as she avows they triggered a desire to find an explanation, "to make [them] real by putting [them] into words" (*MB* 85).

The epistemology behind Woolf's moments has been outlined by Gabrielle McIntire as consisting of "an emotional blow […] disrupt[ing]

3 *A Sketch of the Past* was written under the solicitation of Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell, and never actually finished. The text is taken from the collected edition put together by J. Schulkind in the 1970s under the title of *Moments of Being*. Further references to Woolf's autobiographical writings are to her edition and cited parenthetically as *MB* followed by page number.

the ordinary flow of perception" and providing sentient beings with "a brief moment of illumination" through which they become able to "know who we are" (McIntire 2008, 167). Moments of being bear significance not by virtue of their content, but of their ability to ignite the creative act and to process past traumas, presenting themselves as both a physical response to the disturbance and a means of explanation of being itself. This medicinal quality echoes Wordsworth's concept of the "renovating Virtue", and conversely suggests the importance of integrating a post-Wordsworthian perspective to Woolf's autobiographical endeavour in her *Sketch*.

As Aleida Assmann has illustrated, Wordsworth's recuperative paradigm is configured as a modern take on the classical *anamnesis* (Assmann 2011, 100), that is, a creative process partly distinct from mere remembrance on the basis of its ecstatic and mystical nature. *Anamnesis* treats recollection as a solemn retrieval of memories capable of restoring the "wound of time" through something like divine possession. Wordsworth stages this in "Tintern Abbey", where remembrance lifts the "burthen of the mystery" and lets him "see into the life of things" (Wordsworth 2008, 133, l. 49). In *The Prelude* he recast a similar experience as a "sentiment of Being" that although "lost beyond the reach of thought | and human knowledge" resists and "liveth to the heart" (Wordsworth 2008 402-3, l. 420, ll. 422-3).

This paradigm, devoid of a certain amount of overt mysticism, represents a further point of connection between the psychophysical situation experienced by Woolf during her moments of "sudden violent shock" (*MB* 84) and Wordsworth's own in his "gentle shock of mild surprise" (Wordsworth 2008, 444, l. 407). Even before the *Sketch*, in *Reminiscences*, a text written between 1907 and 1908 and addressed to her nephew Julian Bell, Woolf seemed prone to describe reminiscing as a passive yielding to a force that positively possessed the remembering mind, thus producing a written memory out of a mystical process of conglomeration. In *Reminiscences*, the space under the nursery is redolent of a dark "mystery" (*MB* 1). Virginia and Vanessa drift "like ships in an immense ocean" (*MB* 2), where sounds, colours, and smells arrive through "impersonal things" (*MB* 2) that possess "innumerable associations" and the power "to flood the brain in a second" (*MB* 2). These moments, which Woolf describes as the "pinnacles of life" (*MB* 10), are clearly an early attempt to single out what she would later define more precisely as the moments of being.

Via her own version of anamnesis, Woolf is also designing a cult of childhood: a recuperative paradigm of what, borrowing Wordsworth's phrase, we might call "chance collisions and quaint accidents" (Wordsworth 2008, 390, l. 617), which a maturer self is able to call forth "to impregnate and to elevate the mind" (l. 624). These "gleams like the flashing of a shield" (l. 164) in *The Prelude* may be read as an imagistic template for Woolf's later emphasis on sudden illuminations

wrested from the flux of experience. This early Romantic attempt, however, is marked from the outset by a form of disillusionment that recalls the only partially attainable achievement of remembrance in "Tintern Abbey", at least as it appears to Wordsworth in 1798. Just as Wordsworth, before the more emotionally invested and openly autobiographical *Prelude* composed decades later, expresses some reserve about the possibility of fully attaining the very "life of things" (133, l. 49), so Woolf is explicit in her acceptance of the limits of autobiographical writing when she observes that "[w]ritten words of a person who is dead or still alive tend most unfortunately to drape themselves in smooth folds annulling all evidence of life" (*MB* 8).

It is only with the later autobiographical attempt of the late 1930s – after a lifetime of formal experiment in prose and, as I have argued elsewhere, a calmer accommodation of Freud's lesson (Bugliani 2020)[4] – that Woolf sounds genuinely confident about the possibility of writing down her own past. At this stage she diverges from Freud in a crucial respect. Where Freud's psychoanalytic project excavates in order to unearth gloomy, obscure buried traumas, Woolf's aesthetic investigation of the past does the opposite. It foregrounds, and aims to celebrate, the radiance and formal intensity of the moments she recovers. Her reluctance fully to acknowledge her relationship with "the Austrian" suggests a selective appropriation of psychoanalytic discourse rather than straightforward discipleship (see *MB* 116; Woolf 1985, 248). In Woolf's early years, memory functions less as a continuous narrative faculty than as a principle of selection: it sifts fragments and returns them as charged intensities. Read alongside Wordsworth's Romantic practice, this becomes a mode of reappropriation that refuses the more defensive anti-Romantic and

4 On Woolf's ambivalent engagement with Freud – at once marked by proximity, through the Hogarth Press's role in publishing his work, and by persistent reservations about psychoanalytic "dissection" – see Abel's account of Woolf's creative reworking of psychoanalytic motifs (1989) and especially Gabrielle McIntire's recent account of Bloomsbury as both "receptacle" and "conduit" for Freud's ideas in Britain, not least through the Woolfs' Hogarth Press, which became the first English-language publisher of Freud and of the *International Psycho-Analytical Library* (2025). As critics have noted, her engagement is therefore less that of a straightforward disciple than of a writer who selectively appropriates psychoanalytic concepts and debates (Kleinian as well as Freudian) into an aesthetics of illumination, memory, and ethical "unknowing", rather than into a clinical project of uncovering buried trauma (Sklar 2023).

anti-Victorian gestures often associated with modernist polemic.[5] As Alexandra Harris puts it, the past returns "not as a series of authoritative texts, but as a remembered store of phrases and ideas, altered by each owner and still evolving" (Harris 2010, 134), and thus her liberal assimilation of Wordsworth's could easily transcend the limitations of her Modernist milieu.

This post-Romantic reconfiguration of memory as a vital, aestheticized, and psychically reparative act opens the door to understanding Woolf's literary experimentation as a continuation – not a rejection – of Romantic epistemologies. Just as Wordsworth's "sentiment of Being" evokes the durability of affective impressions beyond intellectual grasp, so Woolf's moments of being disclose an enduring substratum of felt experience that animates her fiction and life-writing alike. Their shared sensibility – centred on intensity, intermittence, and embodied perception – suggests a continuity of philosophical concerns about selfhood and temporality rather than a clean break between literary epochs.

Woolf's reticence towards monumentalizing the self – her recurring fear that writing "annuls all evidence of life" – recalls Wordsworth's own paradoxes surrounding poetic self-display. In both, autobiography becomes less an act of self-construction than an ongoing negotiation between presence and absence, memory and loss. Thus, Woolf's *Sketch* may be read not only as a modernist experiment, but as a continuation of a Romantic poetics of memory, filtered through the techniques and tensions of twentieth-century prose.

4 Epiphanic Memorials

This attraction to the illuminating power afforded by such moments aligns with one of Modernism's most enduring legacies: the celebration of the epiphanic power of memory. Modernist epiphanies furnish yet another direct link to Wordsworth, as his poetical model has long been identified as the prototype for the representation of that phenomenon in literature, most notably by Morris Beja (1971, 32-8)

5 Early twentieth-century anti-Romanticism crystallised around conservative figures such as Irving Babbitt, the Harvard New Humanist moral philosopher, and T.E. Hulme, the poet-critic who opposed Romantic 'spilt religion' with a rhetoric of classical limit and restraint. Their polemics against Rousseauist individualism and emotional excess helped shape the climate in which male High Modernists (above all Pound and Eliot) fashioned ideals of impersonality, discipline, and formal austerity in explicit opposition to a caricatured Romanticism (see Hadjiyiannis 2018 for an overview of this complex field). An exemplary exploration of T.S. Eliot's own ambivalent stance is made by Michael O'Neill (2007, 61-83).

and Wim Tigges (1999, 14-16). In subsequent studies of modernist epiphany, Woolf has usually been treated only in passing, and often without any direct connection to Wordsworth. A more recent foray into the matter by Nigel Fabb has highlighted the corporeality of epiphanies, a distinctive trait which further strengthens the Wordsworth-Woolf line, as opposed to its traditional analysis as a purely transcendental and thus abstract elevation (2022, 87).[6]

What is interesting about Woolf's case is that her absorption of Wordsworth for her 1930s autobiographical endeavour was thoroughly prepared by creative explorations of the emergence and significance of isolated temporal intensities in her 1920s fiction. At that point, borrowing a phrase from a poem by Thomas Hardy revolving around a "strange mirror" capable of absorbing human thoughts and of "making of man a transparency" (Hardy 2001, 96), she would term those episodes "moments of vision" (Woolf 1987, 145). She employed the same expression in reviewing Joseph Conrad's ability to fill his novels with special instants which were still, at that stage, insufficient "to serve as well as steady lamplights to illuminate the ripple of life" (Woolf 2008, 232).

The very phrase 'moments of vision' elicits a meditation on the difficulty of seeing through the life of things, and bears at least some instinctive similarities with Wordsworth's meditations. Hardy's poetry forcibly conjoined the concept of moment with that of memory, and consequently yoked together the figure of the artist and that of the retriever of past experiences in a manner that creatively avoided the risk of narcissistic self-centredness. In "Modern Fiction", Woolf turns the exploration of the moment into a kind of report on the "luminous halo" that breaks across experience and disrupts the uniformity of "gig-lamps" (Woolf 2008, 160). She nonetheless binds this aesthetic project to remembrance. Reflecting on the composition of Mrs Dalloway, she describes the "tunnelling process" by which she retrieved the past "in instalments" (Woolf 1978, 272). One of the novel's most celebrated segments – Clarissa's recollection of her past love for Sally Seton – translates this concern into narrative form and is, in fact, instrumental in articulating an early version of the moments of being. In Woolf's words:

6 This is also notable in Woolf's case, since her 'moments of being' are consistently characterised as physical in their earliest phase**.** James Joyce in *Stephen Hero* linked these moments to the banality of everyday life and its "vulgarity of speech and gesture" (Joyce 1963, 211), marking the whole phenomenon as recognizably post-Wordsworthian. Despite extensive secondary literature on modernist epiphany, there remains a noticeable lack of sustained investigation into Woolf's specific adoption and reworking of Wordsworth's concept. Avrom Fleishman's seminal study gestures towardsthis connection (Fleishman 1975, 227), but more in-depth analyses of Wordsworth's shadow and Woolf's reconfiguration of it are often treated as milestones within a wider discourse rather than as central objects of inquiry (see, for example, Lee 1986, 22).

> It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. (Woolf 2000, 27)

Rather than this dazzling milieu, in *A Sketch* the moments seem to coagulate around gloomy experiences of death, a situation again aligning with *The Prelude*, where death often becomes the core of a spot of time. The first example that Wordsworth gives of a spot of time in Book XII revolves precisely around the experience of loss. Young William, on an ordinary Christmas day, on a "day | Stormy, and rough, and wild" (Wordsworth 2008, 567, ll. 357-8), waits in vain for his father's return. The apprehension of his death fatally imprints on the scenery a sentiment of appeasement that he is ever after able to summon in the event of a storm. Nature thus becomes a sort of mystic mediator, able to rekindle memories in the best tradition of Proustian involuntary memory. A similar equation is depicted in *A Sketch*, when Woolf recounts her first acquaintance with death – specifically, the suicide of Mr Valpy, an acquaintance of the Stephenses in St Ives. The impact of such news is reported by Woolf not *per se*, but through the proxy of an epiphanic moment in the garden at night, "walking on the path by an apple tree" and gazing "at the grey-green creases of the bark" (*MB* 84). The episode, fictionally reframed in *The Waves*, centres the aesthetic experience around the same apple tree, whose leaves become "fixed in the sky" while "the mood glared" (Woolf 2011, 17). Thus, like Wordsworth's storm, the apple tree becomes a recurrent symbol, capable of reenacting and reviving the original feeling.

When shifting to her mother's death, Woolf resorts to another objectual catalyst – this time an inanimate object – to catalyse the shock of her realisation. Rather than occurring in the vicinity of the corpse, the moment takes place outside the mourning house in Hyde Park Gate 22, and precisely in Paddington Station. Virginia, upon meeting her brother Thoby returning home for the funeral, is struck by the incomparable brilliance of the public station's glass dome, in contrast to the gloom of her house. This moment, discussed by Hermione Lee, turns on the archetype of the reflecting glass – an object Woolf, like the Romantics, repeatedly "travestied and altered" (Lee 1986, 19) until it becomes a gateway to emotion and recollection rather than a device of faithful reflection. Julia Stephen is transfigured into architectural terms as "the very centre of that great Cathedral space which was childhood" (*MB* 93). Her presence seems to disseminate itself across the glass, presenting the young

Virginia with glowing colours that "impressed and exalted" her and, more importantly, reactivated the shock of bereavement – "unveiled and intensified […] as if a burning glass had been laid over what was shaded and dormant" (*MB* 103). The ceiling of the train station retains a similar function to the apple tree in the Valpy moment, as Woolf's unconscious mind fuses it with the very feelings stirred by her mother's death, in a manner very similar to how young Wordsworth fatally coalesces the sight of a "Gibbet-mast" (Wordsworth 2008, 566, l. 291) where a convict had been left to die. The gibbet, like a beacon on the summit of the hill, revisited many years later, rekindles a past intensity, and once on them "fell | The spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam" (567, ll. 322-3); the poet feels the need to "enshrine the spirit of the past | For future restoration" (ll. 342-3).

The gibbet and the beacon, more than for their mnemonic value, are explored by Wordsworth as symbols of the elusive communicability of inner experience. This epistemological challenge is showcased in the same passage, when young Virginia is seen conversing with her sister Vanessa in Hyde Park, in a scene that revolves around the moment of consciousness when Virginia feels she has grasped the meaning of a poem for the first time. Albeit unnamed, the poem comes from *The Golden Treasury*, an anthology where the Romantics held pride of place. Woolf's description of internalising the poem's message echoes the reflective imagery in her Paddington Station episode. She describes an inner metamorphosis that

> made me suddenly develop perceptions, as if a burning glass had been laid over what was shaded and dormant. Of course its quickening was spasmodic. But it was surprising – as if something was becoming visible without any effort. […] for the first time I understood the poem (which it was I forget). It was as if it became altogether intelligible; I had a feeling of transparency in words when they cease to be words and become so intensified that one seems to experience them; to foretell them as if they developed what one is already feeling. (*MB* 103)

Virginia tries to explain the "queer feeling" (*MB* 103) to Vanessa, who seems incapable of grasping her meaning. The *Treasury* included the "Intimations of Immortality" ode, where the struggle to "admit the notion of death" (Wordsworth 2008, 297)[7] is integrated

7 This passage appears in a note Wordsworth dictated to Isabella Fenwick in 1843. The idea had already been proposed in the 1802 Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, where Wordsworth briefly states the purpose of the most important poems in the volume, including – in a slightly modified form – the formulation 'to attend our notion of death' (Wordsworth 2008, 598). The child's struggle with the idea of death can thus be considered a *leitmotif* of Wordsworth's work.

by Wordsworth into his anamnestic attempt to retrieve the gaze of the Child – a poetical entity who is "glorious in the might / Of untamed pleasures" (300, ll. 124-5) and ultimately able to free the adult from the "inevitable yoke" (300, l. 127) of "sleep and forgetting" (299, l. 58). The ultimate acknowledgement of nature as a force able to penetrate into the self's consciousness through the projection of sensorial impressions that are to be rekindled as embers of a lost, fugitive state of illumination brings to the fore the primacy of individual impressions as aesthetic triggers. Ceasing to be feared as "incommunicable, solipsistic" (Lee 1986, 23), these impressions begin to gain soundness and dependability in the eyes of an artist confronting the inhospitable, chaotic nature of the outside world – a world filled with objects potentially able to trigger acts of remembrance, but ultimately recognised as an unstable and flickering whirlpool of fragmentary images.

5 Impressions of Being

Recognising the Romantic roots of Woolf's epiphanic reconstruction of the past matters for more than her autobiographical urge alone. It also clarifies her larger understanding of literature and consciousness (*MB* 85). Her ability to turn the "state of despair" into a "state of satisfaction" that she explicitly connects to the illumination of having "made a discovery" (*MB* 84), and thus the threads I have here analysed – of anamnesis and epiphany – all concur in a redefinition of her ampler outlook on the relationship between literature and consciousness.

Such a reappraisal of the role of impression in Woolf's memorial enterprise – a critical insight inaugurated by Hermione Lee's seminal investigation – calls for wider contextualisation. Literary Impressionism, often isolated as one of the prodromic phenomena of Modernism (Bowler 2016), was for Woolf a much more vivid intellectual presence by virtue of her familiarity – both personal and intellectual – with Roger Fry's cult of artistic Post-Impressionism in the 1910s (Banfield 2000, 245 and passim). Fry's critical incursions into (Post-)Impressionist techniques were instrumental to Woolf's heated critique of Edwardian materialism and informed the pronounced visual quality of her early works, especially her short stories. Being a close friend of Roger Fry, and one of the first witnesses of his notoriously pioneering Post-Impressionist exhibition, Woolf was no novice with regard to the full implications of the term. Fry's interpretation of Impressionism as a tendency in art emphasised its ability to reduce objects to ephemeral sensations, at the risk of collapsing them into mere "coloured blobs" (Fry 1996, 384) devoid of the capacity to "deliver any intelligible message" (73). As Banfield

suggests, Woolf saw this as a limitation, prompting her to supplement Impressionism's insights with other aesthetic stimuli, in order to liberate modern fiction from conventional narrative constraints while retaining Impressionism's innovations (Banfield 2003, 478).

This reflective engagement with Impressionism, much like her negotiation of epiphany, formed the crucible of Woolf's early aesthetic experiments. The 1920s marked a phase of intense experimentation in short fiction, which served as a form of groundwork for her late-1930s engagement with autobiography. Additionally, the 1930s proved crucial for her renewed engagement with Fry's theories, as Woolf was absorbed in the writing of his biography. While re-reading Fry's essays in that period, she confided to her sister: "I realise that he's the only great critic that ever lived" (Woolf 1982, 285). The difference between the painterly and somewhat flimsy impressions of the short stories and the intricate tapestry of memories in the autobiographical writings becomes even more discernible when the recuperation of Wordsworth and Pater is brought into the picture. The Romantic process of achieving self-consciousness through anamnesis, when fused with Modernist epiphanies, acquires additional complexity and coherence via the theoretical reflections provided by Fry.

In his comprehensive survey of Woolf's literary Impressionism, Jesse Matz describes how she was consciously elaborating an informed approach to the subject, which testifies to her "effort to adumbrate a new faculty, one that has the freedom perceptually to range" (Matz 2001, 178). This same note might have come to Woolf's mind while, in the earliest stages of her new autobiographical adventure, she mused on how she could process brute personal data into an interlacement of visions. By resorting to the image of the painter tracing her "impressions" to "make a picture that was globular; semi-transparent" (*MB* 79-80), she seems to be reaching towards what Wordsworth calls "visionary power". In an early passage of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth describes it as that which

> Attends upon the motions of the winds
> Embodied in the mystery of words;
> There darkness makes abode, and all the host
> Of shadowy things do work their changes there,
> As in a mansion like their proper home;
> Even forms and substances are circumfused
> By that transparent veil with light divine;
> And, though the turnings of intricated Verse,
> Present themselves as objects recognized,
> In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own. (Wordsworth 2008, ll. 619-29)

This hazed, prismatic perception supports a model of autobiography that refuses teleology. Rather than organising a life into a continuous arc, it reconstructs the past through fragments that are deliberately selected and arranged into a pattern on the page. And if, in her own autobiography, Woolf was to escape the "damned self-conscious susceptibility" (Matz 2001, 183), she would need to take a step further and devise an enhanced Impressionism.

In this respect, Pater's lesson about aesthetic intensity re-emerges. It has often been claimed that the infamously amoral "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance* is to be ranked alongside the manifestoes of literary Impressionism (Bowler 2016, 127) for its depiction of human minds caught in the act of accounting for worldly objects as entities "loosed into a group of impressions" (Pater 1980, 187). In addition to this theoretical scrutiny, Pater devised a fictional analogue to his aesthetic principles in the *Imaginary Portraits*, which can be read as "demonstrations of how problematic it is to distinguish fact from fiction" (Saunders 2010, 47), effectively postulating an irreconcilable split between the object of the portrait and the portrait itself. Thus, autobiographical life-writing could represent, for Woolf, a domain in which Wordsworth's poetic insights could be metamorphosed into modern prose with the aid of Pater's critical and creative remodelling of them.

The recognition of such a split and its causes bestowed upon Woolf a new mode of interpreting the life of the artist and its transposition into literary form, enabling her to formulate a model of life-writing that escapes the framework of purely confessional self-centredness. *The Child in the House*, for instance, is an exercise not only in the staging of a semi-autobiographical product untainted by narcissism – by virtue of a celebration of a self whose inherent quality is the capacity to resist dissolution in the flux of impressions – but also a "subtle reworking" of Wordsworth's iconic "Intimations Ode", where Pater offers his own prose version of Wordsworthian epiphanies (Losey 1986, 304). Freed from the triviality of biographical life, the writer could sift through memory, giving sustained attention only to those specific moments that carried the power to restore the immediacy typical of childhood, when impressions were unmediated and accepted as they deposited on the consciousness. In this carefully interlaced critical constellation, Woolf could thus bring together Roger Fry's theory of art, Strachey's practice of new biography, and Pater's philosophical outlook on the crucial instance of human self-perception and its literary rendering.

A case in point is the short story *Slater's Pins Have No Point*, later re-titled *Moments of Being*, where Woolf describes the aesthetic moment of receiving an impression and interweaves it with personal recollections – namely, her lessons with Clara Pater, sister of Walter and, for a period, Woolf's private tutor of the classics. The narrator

Fanny Wilmot concludes that the remark by Julia Craye about the pins is but the surface of a deeper and more complicated state of mind, tinged with reminiscences of her late brother and intertwined with the present. After much reflection – forming the body of the story – Fanny realises that she:

> had surprised her [Julia] in a moment of ecstasy [… she] seemed to emerge out of the London Night, seemed to fling it like a cloak behind her. It seemed in its bareness and intensity the effluence of her spirit, something she had made which surrounded her, which was her. Fanny stared. All seemed transparent for a moment […] She saw back and back into the past behind her. (Woolf 1989, 220)

It is not hard to detect, behind many of the images in the final passage, the spectral imprint of Pater's reformulation of Wordsworth's *spots of time* philosophy. Fanny embodies the child's gaze, so crucial in both *The Prelude* and the *Sketch*, while the recurring motif of transparency – underscored by the image of glass throughout the story – recalls Pater's praise of diaphaneity in *The Renaissance*. A similar ideal of translucency is also adumbrated in Book 5 of *The Prelude*, where the poet recalls how actual poetic creation emerges from youthful "ecstasy" (Wordsworth 2008, l. 614), accompanied by "visionary power" (l. 619) "Embodied in the mystery of words" (l. 621), and articulated through flashes of insight.

Pater's ambitious ideal diverged from Eliot's notion of impersonality, aiming instead at the dissolution of the personal – impersonal divide into a new unitary entity. This entity blurs the line between fact and fiction, elevating memories to "the unreality of dreams" (Saunders 2010, 56). Modernists, including Eliot, attempted to move away from Pater's project of blending genres to create a "hybrid genre in which fiction, auto/biography, history, essay, and criticism weave together and enweave each other, in an allegory of ecstatic subjectivity" (70) – a project which was in many respects Wordsworthian in nature. Understanding Woolf's prose within this constellation reveals her ongoing exploration of selfhood in relation to a transient, refracted world. Her treatment of "moments" becomes emblematic of her engagement with modern consciousness, culminating in a philosophy whose boldest tenet is that "to retrieve the matter of memory, we must simply (re)discover the correct 'trace' of emotion to reconnect [itself] to the past and make it again conscious of the present" (McIntire 2008, 169).

6 Conclusion

This article has argued that Woolf's blueprint for autobiography in *A Sketch of the Past* is not grounded in a repudiation of tradition. It emerges instead from a composite interlacing of inherited Romantic and Victorian elements, which Woolf re-reads under the sign of creative reappropriation. In this respect her stance is markedly less defensive than that adopted by many of her male contemporaries. A cohort of friendly ghosts ensured she was able to craft a novel view of autobiography, which unfortunately she did not have the opportunity to practice consistently or to further scrutinize with fully fledged essayistic reflections. Her forefathers dissected Wordsworth and clarified aspects of his work that she could freely reassemble and reshape in order to attune them with her own needs. Outside her fiction, Wordsworth's treatment of the past offered Woolf a workable model for autobiography. In The Prelude, the individual past is shaped into a kind of poetic monument, and ecstatic elevation is repeatedly triggered by epiphanic moments. Woolf could therefore use Wordsworth's procedure as a practical instrument for conceiving her own autobiographical enterprise. Thanks to Wordsworth being almost the perfect representative, in *The Prelude* at least, of this feature, we can further characterize the aforementioned exchange with Strachey about *Jacob's Room*: Woolf did answer her friend that Romanticism was a way out, a "breaking with representation" (Woolf 1978, 568), and that she considered Romantic tenets as possible tools to process her Modernist prose. Thus, the autobiographical in Wordsworth was surely a prized token.

Fuelled by a sort of irenic counterpart to the 'anxiety of influence', Woolf seemed interested in crafting a complex thread of grateful allusions, which all concur in forming a wider, welcoming perspective. To look back on Wordsworth's lesson on the art of sketching the past did not entail a Freudian spiral of literary Oedipal frictions, but rather offered an opportunity to interweave it into her own version of autobiography, enriching her life-writing with a powerful post-Romantic trait. The rigid vertical framework of influence is substituted by a more unbroken stream of "fluxes and refluxes" (Beer 1993, 5), or, to borrow once again, an interplay of "strong Sensations" (Wordsworth 2008, 505, l. 752) that were able to find in her the exact "capaciousness and amplitude of mind" (l. 759). Ultimately, Wordsworth's poetry and its lyrical autobiography can and must be accounted as one of the underlying frameworks influencing and concurrently shaping Woolf's aesthetic landscape.

Woolf does not steal from Wordsworth, nor does she camouflage her debts through misreading, limitation, debasement, or counter-creation. Instead, she summons the poet of *The Prelude* openly, alluding to the 'spots of time' in a tone that is appreciative and

conciliatory. Paradoxically, this overt acknowledgement sharpens rather than dilutes her modernity (O'Neill 2007, 11-12), because it answers the trenchant rebuttals that Wordsworth and other Romantics suffered in Woolf's times. Through a thoughtful interiorization of the critical legacy that Wordsworth's poetry had generated, Woolf is not only echoing his words but also "spending […] an inheritance" (Ricks 2002, 9) cumulated by (more or less) sympathetic readers of the poet, to create her own grammar of a 'post-Romantic Modernist autobiography'. The many spectres – both of the poet and of his critics – preside over her creation without the faintest power to force their doctrine on her, since her own critical appropriation of the poetic tradition has earned her a voice as authoritative as theirs. Wordsworth's *Prelude* is thus a sort of rich bequest that Woolf was able to appropriate and mould according to her aesthetic needs, without the weight of the patriarchal mortgage, but with the exuberance of the inheritance which can be liberally expended to craft something new.

Romantic ancestors like Wordsworth resurface in Woolf's prose as peculiarly familiar ghosts, able to haunt the text in a benign manner, becoming the occasion for an enrichment of its epistemic and semiotic background. Their presence in Woolf's works matters because it is not merely a fleeting set of fragmentary and unrelated appearances and disappearances, but an underlying framework influencing and concurrently informing her aesthetic landscape. Like the ghosts portrayed by Henry James, Woolf's manifestations of the Romantic poets seem to be summoned more effectively "whenever the significant overflows our powers of expressing it" (Woolf 1988, 324), and the author needs a recognizable catalyst upon which to wreathe together multiple threads of sense.

Read against this background of grateful inheritance and creative reappropriation, Strachey's descriptive image of Woolf as a "Romantic in Sirius" does more than diagnose a residual Romantic strain in Woolf. It evokes a Romanticism that has been driven outward and upward – condensed into a single, exceptionally bright point in the modernist firmament. Sirius is, after all, the brightest star in the night sky, outshining all its neighbours and long serving as a navigational marker and seasonal signal. To call Woolf "Romantic in Sirius" is therefore to acknowledge both the intensity and the critical distance of her engagement: Romantic energy persists in her work not as a diffuse atmosphere but as a concentrated, guiding luminosity, at once a legacy and a compass, brilliant enough to be unmistakable yet sufficiently remote to avoid the epigonism her male modernist peers so anxiously repudiated.

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The Philistine Revolution: Ethel Mannin, Virginia Woolf and The Battle of the Brows

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Abstract The language of the Brows – highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow – has continued to shape how we think and talk about literature today, with middlebrow remaining the most contested and debated of the three. Notions of what should and should not be classified as high art were first determined by the innovators, the modernists themselves, including Virginia Woolf, whose letter to *The New Statesman*, "Middlebrow", is considered one of the most definitive examples of how literature and readerships were categorised and critiqued. Middlebrow author Ethel Mannin, writing at the same time as Woolf, posed a significant challenge to the Battle of the Brows that has gone unrecognised in scholarship. In the 1930s, she and Woolf produced works, fiction and non-fiction, that appeared to speak directly to each other in a battle fought unknowingly between two authors who exemplify opposing sides of the cultural debate, and the zeitgeist of the period. When placed side-by-side with Woolf's "Middlebrow", her diary entries about literary form, and how she explored these ideas in her novel, *The Waves*, Mannin's reframing of the Battle of the Brows as between "Philistines" and highbrows in *Confessions and Impressions* (1930), creatively illustrated by her critique of cultural hierarchies in her novel *Ragged Banners: A Novel with an Index* (1931), amount to new definitions of highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow that redefine the Battle as a site of class conflict.

Keywords Virginia Woolf. Ethel Mannin. Middlebrow. Modernism. Interwar literature. Working Class.

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1 Introduction

The interwar period in Britain is regarded as one of remarkable innovation and creativity in literary production. It was also a period of tense cultural debate known as the Battle of the Brows. The Battle has had far-reaching consequences. As Beth Driscoll explains, "the language of the brows – highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow – continues to influence the way we think about literary culture", in turn influencing which works are considered worthy of study (2014, 5). The boundaries erected around what should and should not be classified as high art, and around the European canon in literary studies, were first determined by the modernists themselves. These boundaries have been maintained by generations of literary critics, amounting to widely held beliefs and misconceptions about the relationship between genres, reading, and the reading public. Of the three categories, 'middlebrow' has remained the most contentious.

Scholarship on the middlebrow is broad, and the definition of the term is constantly in flux. Faye Hammill's useful summary of the two main debates in middlebrow studies illustrates the difficulties of identifying what it means to be middlebrow, and how the middlebrow is situated in literary culture and history:

> First, is 'middlebrow' an aesthetic property of artworks or a set of cultural formations that circulate and interpret those artworks to broad audiences? Second, is the culture of the middlebrow a good thing because it improves literacy and public taste, or a bad thing because it has a standardising effect and tends to devalue intellectual culture and high art? The first debate is conducted principally among scholars in our own era, while the second has its origins in the interwar period, and is regularly re-ignited. (Hammill 2023, 98)

Scholars agree that the term was coined in the 1920s,[1] but the discovery of an article in the 23 March 1916 edition of *Bioscope* about "High-Brow, Middle-Brow, and Low-Brow" audiences has disproven this claim (*Bioscope* 1916, 1235; Timlin 2026, 259).[2] The term typically refers to "someone with high intellectual or aesthetic aspirations" who lacks "the cultural capital necessary to understand

1 See Humble 2001; Driscoll 2014; Jaillant 2014; Chowrimootoo 2018.

2 Scholars tend to cite the 23 December 1925 edition of *Punch, or the London Charivari*'s short note about "a new type, the 'middlebrow'" (673), or "A Musical Renaissance", which was published in the *Freeman's Journal* on 3 May 1924 (*Freeman's*, 6; Macdonald 2011, 7; Driscoll 2014, 7). *Bioscope* uses "middlebrow" without defining it, which implies that it was already familiar to their readers. It is therefore likely that there are earlier uses of the term.

high art" (Jaillant 2014, 5). In the literary sphere, the middlebrow is positioned between "'high' and 'low' cultures" (5). Finally, and consistently, work on the Battle of the Brows references Virginia Woolf's "Middlebrow" (1932).

In her posthumously published letter to the editor of *The New Statesman*, she famously argues that middlebrows of "middlebred intelligence" are caught up in a middleclass preoccupation with fame, money, and upward mobility. Middlebrows, as their name suggests, occupy a middle ground: "Their brows are betwixt and between" (Woolf [1932] 1966, 198-9). According to Woolf, they lack the authenticity and vitality of the lowbrow, and the intellect and refinement of the highbrow. They are neither "highbrows, whose brows are high; nor lowbrows whose brows are low" (198).

The language of the Brows developed out of phrenology, a pseudoscience pioneered by Franz Joseph Gall in the nineteenth century. Gall's work, coupled with Thomas Malthus's theories on reproduction (An Essay on the Principle of Population 1798) and Francis Galton's theories of inherited intelligence (Hereditary Genius 1869), were foundational to the eugenics movement's resurgence in the 1930s.[3] "Middlebrow" is written in the language of the Brows, but it is not a phrenological or eugenicist text. In her other works, Woolf often appropriated eugenicist language to challenge the idea that biological differences between men and women are grounds for social and political inequality. Anna Snaith (2002) argues that in Flush (1933) she rejects notions of good breeding and offers a critical response to eugenics in fascist ideology. Linden Peach demonstrates that Woolf uses eugenicist language playfully, citing "Modern Fiction" (1925) as an example:

> Edwardian writers, whom she saw as outmoded materialists, constituted a kind of aesthetic degeneration, to be arrested by a different, stronger and more exciting literary heritage promised by her more experimental Georgian contemporaries, in particular James Joyce. (Peach 2012, 442)

"Modern Fiction", which Woolf included in *The Common Reader: First Series* (1925), was originally published as "Modern Novels" in *The New Statesman* in 1919. Reading the original essay alongside the revised version is useful for tracing Woolf's developing views on middlebrow fiction and literary form. In "Modern Novels", she uses the examples of H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, and Arnold Bennett to argue that:

3 The movement experienced a brief decline in popularity after the Eugenics Society's campaign to sterilize the mentally disabled.

> the form of fiction most in vogue more often misses than secures the thing we seek. Whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality, this, the essential thing, has moved off, or on, and refuses to be contained any longer in such ill-fitting vestments as we provide. (Woolf [1919] 1992, 285)

In "Modern Fiction", she calls these authors "materialists" who "are concerned not with the spirit but with the body". They "have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul" (1925,1:60). She is more confident in the revised essay, and her stance is firmer. What began as a tentative exploration of her aversion to middlebrow fiction is consolidated – it is bland, conventional, and in her view, unable to produce an accurate account of reality. The author, she writes, is "constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability… The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn" (61).

Woolf's determination to find an unconventional literary form capable of conveying the complexities of reality intensified between 1929 and 1931, while she was drafting her most experimental novel, *The Waves* (1931). The views she developed over this period found their way into "Middlebrow", which she composed in 1932 in response to J.B. Priestley's review of *The Common Reader: Second Series* (1932). He accuses her of "condemning other people – Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy, for example – for not writing novels like her own" (1932, 2:8). His accusation placed Woolf in conflict with the middlebrow authors (the "materialists") whom she foregrounds in "Modern Fiction". He concludes his review by suggesting her "new readers must be now so numerous that very soon the high priestess will be driven out of Bloomsbury as 'a best-seller'" (8). Woolf did not appreciate being called the high priestess of Bloomsbury or having her work demoted to "best-seller" status (a term often used to describe popular middlebrow fiction).

Priestley was referring to a phenomenon in highbrow literary circles that others, including middlebrow author Ethel Mannin, had noticed. Mannin writes that among the literary elite there "seemed to be some virtue in obscurity; obscurity of style and in you yourself being obscure, religiously avoiding the vulgarity of success, or even of recognition outside of the immediate circle" (1939a,73). She listened to conversations "in bars and cafés, in little restaurants" (74) and recalls feeling "that such success as I had achieved was nothing … but feeling, too, that however clever all this was, however much it might be the only authentic art, I must go on in my own way, putting things down as I felt them and saw them" (74).

In the early 1930s, when she decided that she was "finally 'through' with that phase of living", when Priestley wrote his review, and when Woolf wrote "Middlebrow", the Battle of the Brows was reaching a critical point (74). According to Christopher Chowrimootoo:

> many saw the problem epitomized in modernism's supposed rejection of its potential audience, as though the movement had elevated highbrow snobbery into an aesthetic principle. For modernism's defenders, however, it was the public's philistine hostility that begat modernism's highbrow esotericism, not the other way around. (Chowrimootoo 2018, 4)

While highbrows like Woolf deployed the language of the Brows to fend off the anti-intellectualism they associated with mass popular culture, middlebrow authors like Mannin resisted attempts to control how literature and readerships were categorised and critiqued.

There is growing interest in Mannin's life and literary activism, which until recently has received very little scholarly attention. Eve Patten considers Comrade O Comrade, or, Low Down on the Left (1945) and other late novels in relation to British modernism and international socialism in Ireland, Revolution and the English Modernist Imagination (2022). Nick Hubble has helped to reappraise her fiction in his work on the literary cultures of the 1920s and 1930s,[4] and Lesley A. Hall includes Mannin in her discussion of the effects of genre, changing gender roles, self-image, and censorship on women authors' careers (2025).

In his brief mention of Mannin in The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes, Jonathan Rose calls her the "anti-Woolf" (2001, 445). Mannin was not entirely at odds with Woolf. Both were autodidacts with eclectic tastes in literature who wrote about gender inequality, women's writing, British society, and politics from opposite ends of the literary spectrum. Mannin was a lifelong socialist and writer of middlebrow fiction. Woolf was a proud highbrow who oscillated between liberal and conservative positions. Her liberalism was grounded in her socialist leanings and hatred of patriarchy. Her conservatism was informed by her latent class prejudices.

Rose's designation of Mannin proves fitting when applied to her and Woolf's respective stances on the Battle of the Brows. In Mannin's memoir Confessions and Impressions (1930), she advances a nuanced argument about the socio-political implications of the Battle and the language used to define readerships and their literary

4 See for example "'You're not in the Market at Shielding, Joe': Beyond the Myth of the Thirties" (2021), and "Fairy Fruit and Creative Auto-Intoxication: The 1920s as a Decade of Fantastic Romance" (2025).

preferences. Woolf, an upper-middleclass author, frames the Battle of the Brows as a culture war. Mannin, who was raised in a working-class household to be "a socialist in the old William Morris, Keir Hardie tradition", sees it as a reflection of broader inequalities in British society (1952, 101). But despite posing a significant challenge to the Brows, her transformative contribution to the debate has gone unnoticed because she is siloed by the very categories (middlebrow, romance author, best-seller) that she critiques.

Mannin spent time in highbrow literary circles, but there is no evidence to suggest that she and Woolf crossed paths. She purchased Jacob's Room (1922) and To the Lighthouse (1927) "as befitted a serious young writer" in the 1920s, but was unable to muster "the proper intellectual excitement over this leading Bloomsbury literary light" (1971, 101). She read none of Woolf's work to completion apart from Orlando (1928). "The rest", she writes, "were just not for me, then or now. My tastes were and are more robust" (101). Mannin found Woolf "too intellectual, too subtle and complicated and remote from reality" (101). Considering Woolf's views on popular fiction, and given the absence of any mention of Mannin in her detailed diaries and letters, it is unlikely that she met her or engaged seriously with her work.

And yet, between 1929 and 1932, Woolf and Mannin wrote commentary on the Brows and experimental novels that appear to be in dialogue. Their critical engagements with genre and form are creatively illustrated by their respective experimental *Bildungsromane*, The Waves and Ragged Banners: A Novel with an Index (1931). The definitions of highbrows, lowbrows, and middlebrows that Woolf provides in "Middlebrow" are unsettled by Mannin's reinvention of the Battle as a site of class conflict in Confessions. This was a battle fought unknowingly between authors who exemplified opposing literary spheres. Taken together, their work captures the zeitgeist of the 1930s and the cultural debates raging in Britain.

2 Neither Highbrows nor Lowbrows

Mannin's *Confessions and Impressions* is a memoir that maps her path to becoming an author and traces her developing philosophy of writing, literature, and readerships. In the first chapter, "Genesis", she recasts middlebrows as "Philistines" (16). She makes the connection to the Battle of the Brows by positioning Philistines as "neither Highbrows nor Lowbrows" (16). By replacing "middlebrow" with "Philistine", she initiates a process of "reclamation" which, in Mihaela Popa-Wyatt's definition, is "a form of socio-political protest that seeks to re-shape oppressive social practices by controlling what can be done with words" (2018, 1). Whereas a speech act would typically involve reclaiming the offending term – in this case,

'middlebrow' – Mannin recognises that, even if reclaimed, the term would retain its origins in class-based discrimination and phrenology. For this reason, she does away with it entirely. She replaces it with, and then reclaims, another pejorative term with a similar meaning.

In her formulation, Philistines "do not fit into any of the class distinctions; they are the real people…their common denominator is their authenticity" (15). They are "not literary; they strike no mental attitudes. They do not say, 'This is good; this is bad; this is right; this is wrong; this is beautiful; this is ugly.' They say, 'if you like that sort of thing, that's the sort of thing you like'" (15). Unlike the middlebrow, they do not occupy a middle ground but a democratic common ground founded on a commonsense approach to reading.

She references her Philistine philosophy directly in her novel *Ragged Banners*, which was published in the same year as *Confessions*. The index (unusual in a novel) guides readers to creative illustrations of her argument about the Brows, class conflict, and the arts. Searching "Eliot, T. S". leads to a conversation between Starridge and Lattimer after they leave Café Royal. Lattimer styles himself as a socialist and considers himself a Philistine, despite moving exclusively in highbrow circles. To distance himself from these circles, he describes them sardonically as:

> a mutual appreciation society, with a fixation on succès d'estime … If you want to become popular with them you talk about the Bitch Goddess Success and the prostitution of art. Then you affect an intimate friendship with Aleister Crowley and a deep admiration of the genius of T. S. Eliot (Mannin [1931] 1940, 65-6)

Mannin emphasises the connection between literary elitism, class, and politics when Lattimer is revealed to be as disingenuous in his aversion to the "mutual appreciation society" as he is in his socialism. In a moment of drunken honesty, he tells Starridge:

> 'when the revolution comes, if it comes in my time, I shall be the first to help smash the proletariat!'…I don't want to fight in a bloody revolution for the sake of the dirty little taxi-driver with the bunion on his neck who brought us here tonight – Damn the poor, drat the poor, blast the working classes'. (Mannin [1931] 1940, 64)

In the index, "Philistines, philosophy of" leads to Starridge's estimation of Lattimer as a Philistine (96), then to Lattimer's realisation that the author Mary Thane "was truly the Philistine who did not care, postulating no objective truths, not spelling lives in majuscules" (102), or, as Mannin writes in *Confessions*, not spelling "art with a capital A" and "beauty with a capital B" (15). In her notes on the reception of *Ragged Banners*, Mannin remarks that a "number

of people have conceived an affection, it seems, [for Mary] and find pleasure in identifying with the author" (1939a, 22). Put differently, they identified with the novel's celebrated Philistine.

Her readers identified with Mary because they identified with the Philistine's "autodidactic approach to reading, reading what [they] wanted to read, because [they] wanted to read it, without concern for intellectual distinction" (Timlin 2024, 203). In this sense, the Philistine reader is similar to Woolf's common reader, who is "uncorrupted by literary prejudices" and "reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others" (1925, 1:1).[5] But what appears to be, in the words of Winifred Holtby, "a democratic theory", is weakened by Woolf's firm ideas about what did and did not constitute worthwhile literature (1932,6).

Woolf carefully curated the essays that she included in the *Common Reader*. She omitted, for example, the more balanced "Hours in a Library" (1916), in which she celebrates unprejudiced reading habits and highlights the benefits of reading "bad books" ([1916] 2018). She made a similar argument in a scripted debate with her husband, Leonard Woolf, on a BBC radio programme in 1927. She promoted reading the "easy books and the flashy books and the books that ask no trouble in reading" because these could guide readers to "better books" ([1927] 2006, 242-3). In "How to Read a Book", which she did include in the *Second Series*, she permits a degree of "rubbish reading", but she is not referring to popular fiction. Instead, she uses the example of Tate Wilkinson's four-volume *Memoirs of My Own Life* (1739-1803,263-4). Ultimately, the essays in both volumes are instructive. In "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia", for example, she models best reading practices by moving from:

> the sensory joy that she experiences when first taking up Sir Philip Sidney's prose pastoral romance, *Arcadia* (late sixteenth century), to her loss of interest, which she justifies with a more technical account of the deficits in the writing, plot, and characterisation. (Timlin 2026, 365)

By all accounts, Woolf's intentions were good. She was committed to making complex literature accessible to a wider reading public. At the same time, she opposed public middlebrow lectures on highbrow fiction. In "Middlebrow", she writes:

> I often ask my friends the lowbrows… why is it that while we, the highbrows, never buy a middlebrow book, or go to a middlebrow

5 Woolf borrows from Samuel Johnson's "Life of Gray" to make her argument (*Lives of the English Poets* 1925, 392).

> lecture, or read, unless we are paid for doing so, a middlebrow review, they, on the contrary, take these middlebrow activities so seriously? (Woolf [1932] 1966, 200)

The activities that she refers to were educational efforts "forged in opposition to the perceived elitism or unintelligibility of modernism" that "involved representing and interpreting difficult works so that they became more accessible to the general public" (Hammill 2023, 99). Woolf's and other highbrows' distaste for these initiatives is steeped in what Erica Brown and Mary Grover identify as the "powerful anxieties about cultural authority and processes of cultural transmission" that informed the advent of middlebrow as a cultural category (2018, 1).

Mannin disagreed with middlebrow educational efforts, but for different reasons. Based on her experience, she did not believe that working men and women needed highbrows or middlebrows to teach them about art, music, and literature. Rose notes that for centuries working-class autodidacts strove:

> to assume direction of their own intellectual lives, to become individual agents in framing an understanding of the world. They resisted ideologies imposed from above in order to discover for themselves the word of God, standards of beauty, philosophical truth, [and] the definition of a just society. (Rose 2001, 13-14)

Mannin claims that:

> the majority of the middle and upper classes suffer from the delusion that they have the monopoly of intelligence, and that they alone can enjoy and appreciate the arts, regardless of the fact that there is a great deal of very real appreciation for the arts among the working classes. (Mannin 1939b, 263)

She writes that the authenticity of the Philistine, while not tied to any particular class, is most apparent among the "working men and women of the class from which I myself sprang and with which I am proud to identify myself, men and women in connection with whom the blessed word 'comrade' has real meaning" (1939a, 19).[6] Mannin emphasises the class conflict central to the Battle of the Brows by identifying working-class men and women as the true Philistines and the true revolutionaries.

6 Mannin, a self-identified Philistine, was economically middleclass when she wrote *Confessions*.

3 Highbrow Minds, Lowbrow Bodies

Mannin foregrounds class in her Philistine philosophy. In "Middlebrow", Woolf does not address class directly, but classist undertones shape the way she frames the Battle of the Brows. Her writing from that period (1929-31) suggests that her preoccupation with capturing the spirit and life of the mind in fiction, along with her aversion to conventional novelistic forms, influenced how she negotiated her own class position and how she represented the lower classes. The literary and the material became entangled in unprecedented ways, blurring the line between creative practice and social consciousness.

Her desire to privilege the spirit over the body in narrative form is echoed in the introductory letter she wrote for Margaret Llewelyn Davies's edited essay collection *Life as We Have Known It, by Co-operative Working Women* (1931).[7] In her notes on *The Waves*, Woolf writes that she wants to escape:

> this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely conventional… Why admit anything to literature that is not poetry – by which I mean saturated… The poets succeed by simplifying: practically everything is left out. I want to put practically everything in; yet to saturate. (1981, 3: 209-10)

In the letter, she describes the Guildswomen as "thick-set and muscular", with names "like the stones of fields – common, grey, worn, obscure, docked of all splendours of association and romance" ([1931] 1975, xxii). She dismisses their lowbrow life writing as lacking in "detachment and imaginative breadth", just as the women themselves, she suggests, lack "variety and play of feature". "Here are no reflections… no view of life, and no attempt to enter into the lives of other people. Poetry and fiction seem far beyond their horizon" (xxxvii). Charlotte Taylor Suppé explains that Woolf perceived "irreconcilable differences between herself and the Guildswomen; where they had motherhood and housework, she had a command of language and an active artist's mind. These biases appear across Woolf's work" (2024, 71).

Such biases surface in "Middlebrow" alongside gestures toward reconciliation. Woolf does not repeat her criticism of the Guildswomen's literary voices. Instead, she encourages lowbrows "who write so

7 The letter is a recollection of the events of the Annual Congress of the Women's Co-operative Guild in Newcastle which she attended on 10 and 11 June 1913. According to Alice Wood, the letter was not well-received by the Guildswomen (2014, 18).

beautifully when [they] write naturally" to compose their own stories instead of consuming the "middlebrow version of what they have the impudence to call real humanity" (200). She insists that "highbrows need lowbrows" and "lowbrows need highbrows", because "one is the complement and other side of the other" (198). In her view, "it is one of the necessities of life to [lowbrows] – to be shown what life looks like. And the highbrows, of course, are the only people who can show them" (198). This, she claims, is because highbrows are "the only people who do not do things" and are therefore uniquely positioned to observe life as it unfolds (Woolf [1932] 1966, 198).

She dramatises this interdependence in *The Waves*. The upper-middleclass characters are able to narrate their sensations and reflections because domestic labour is performed in the background by workers who appear only when perceived. Bernard, who is widely regarded as Woolf's artistic alter ego,[8] records Mrs. Moffat's "sayings" (58). After spilling cinders from the grate, he reassures himself that "Mrs Moffat will come and sweep it all up" (60). He repeats this phrase whenever he requires comfort. Mrs. Moffat is never given form outside of Bernard's use of her: first as cleaner, then as a source of phrases. She is inscribed into his soliloquy as *a phrase* that signifies stability and security.

The lowbrow that Woolf describes is, in many respects, as much of a fantasy as the ever-comforting Mrs Moffat, whom Bernard records in his notebooks. By the time she wrote "Middlebrow", Woolf was an established and privileged highbrow author. Nigel Nicolson notes in his introduction to *The Letters of Virginia Woolf* that she was not deeply concerned with those less fortunate than herself, regarding "the working class [as] pitiable but uninteresting" (1979, 5: xv). In *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants*, Alison Light argues that Woolf preferred to engage with class at a distance. She found extreme poverty and "the romantic figure of the old vagrant, belonging to the eternal caste of the poor" easier to "sympathise with than the housemaid… a poor person in the wrong place, who came much too close for comfort" (2007, 153). In "Middlebrow" her efforts to democratise the Brows by claiming to know "duchesses who were highbrows, also charwomen", are undermined by her inability to reconcile the intellect (the artist's mind) with the body (the merely conventional). The highbrow is of "thoroughbred intelligence", riding "his *mind* at gallop across country in pursuit of an idea". The lowbrow "rides his *body* in pursuit of a living at a gallop across life" (197; emphasis added). Thinking

8 See Cristina Fernández Lacueva's "'Here is the Central Rhythm; here the Common Mainspring': The Device of Repetition in Woolf's 'the Waves'" (2021), María O'Neill's "Virginia Woolf: The Architecture of Gender" (2004), and Evelyn Ender's *ArchiTEXTS of Memory* (2005).

highbrows are compared with unthinking lowbrow bodies destined for labour, like the Guildswomen who "gripped papers and pencils as if they were brooms", with no lightness of literary touch ([1931] 1975, xxii).

By contrast, Mannin recognised the lowbrow as a highbrow invention. In *Confessions*, she dispenses with the category altogether, briefly defining the lowbrow as "merely a Highbrow gone wrong and become an intellectual pervert" (16). Woolf envisions the Battle of the Brows as a war in which "highbrows and lowbrows joined together in blood brotherhood" take a stand against the middlebrow (Woolf [1932] 1966, 202). Mannin reimagines the battle as a conflict between Philistines and highbrows. The category of "Philistine" becomes a site of emancipation which, in Jacques Rancière's formulation, entails "the blurring of the boundary between those who act and those who look; between individuals and members of a collective body", achieved by reconfiguring the "distribution of space and time, work, and leisure" (2009, 19). Such blurring disrupts the notion – which closely resembles Woolf's characterisation of lowbrows – that "the members of a collective body do not have time to spend on the forms and insignia of individuality" (19).

For Mannin, "highbrow" encompasses the aspirational lower-middle-classes "who try so desperately hard to be what isn't worth being"; the middle classes, a "semi-detached social strata" obsessively concerned with appearances; and the upper classes, who clutter "up their lives with a lot of ideas about themselves" and wallow in "the muck of idealism" ([1930] 1937, 15). They share a fixation on cultural capital or, in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, on "given cultural competence (e.g., being able to read in a world of illiterates)", which "derives a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner" (1986, 18-19). According to Mannin, these groups believe that "a char-woman could never enjoy a Cézanne picture, a Bach fugue, a factory girl learn to appreciate opera and ballet, a washer-woman read poetry in her spare time". Such assumptions are "merely the expression of innate bourgeois snobbery" (1939b, 263).

Mannin's Philistine philosophy and Woolf's views on literature and the middlebrow, and especially as they pertain to readerships and form, informed their respective creative works. *Ragged Banners* (published 1 January 1931) and *The Waves* (published 8 October 1931) were written over the same two-year period as *Confessions* and "Middlebrow". In *Ragged Banners*, Mannin addresses the Battle of the Brows overtly through her guiding index, which calls on readers to make connections between her fiction and non-fiction. By structuring her novel as a juxtaposition of conventional and unconventional narrative forms, she unsettles the divide between high and low art. Woolf explored the challenges of disrupting convention by contrasting

Bernard's grappling with phrases, incomplete stories, and attempts to convey the fullness of his life with the silent Percival – a character devoid of an inner world, whose story is narrated by his friends. Although written from radically different perspectives and within opposing literary spheres, these novels share striking thematic similarities that move the Battle from the realm of non-fiction into experimental fictional landscapes.

4 The Ultimate Unreality Made Absolute

The Waves comprises the soliloquys of six characters – Bernard, Neville, Louis, Susan, Rhoda, and Jinny, and a silent seventh character, Percival. *The Lancashire Daily Post* aptly summarises Woolf's method: "the comings and goings, the use of arms and legs which are recorded so lengthily by the conventional novelist have for her little reality. It is life. The life of the mind, which is real" (1931, 4). In *Ragged Banners*, Mannin intertwines Starridge's thoughts, fantasies, and sensory experiences (the life of the mind) with the conventional comings and goings of Stephen Lattimer, Mary Thane, Maurice Volsted, Wanda, and Max.

The cast of characters in each novel are similar. "The thin flame that was Wanda" and "Jinny dancing like a flame" are both social, sexual and sensuous women (Mannin [1931] 1940, 213; Woolf [1931] 1992, 87). Lattimer and Bernard, both gregarious and rational, make constant reference to famous authors and express themselves using a curated collection of phrases. Susan's longing for rural life correlates with Mary's search for peace in the country. Volsted, a scholar, is in love with Starridge in the same unrequited way that the bookish poet Neville is in love with his "one god" Percival (37) whose "magnificence is that of some mediaeval commander" – an allusion to Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* (Woolf [1931] 1992, 37, 26). His unrequited love recalls the relationship between Starridge, a poet, and his god-like Max whom he imagines as Siegfried from Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.[9] Woolf and Mannin treat music and life as indissoluble and use the ebb and flow of waves to illustrate this.

Allusions to Wagner's work play an important role in how Mannin and Woolf illustrate arguments about narrative form. Emma Sutton adds her analysis of *The Waves* to studies, beginning in the 1960s, that identify the novel as a Wagnerian work. Sutton convincingly argues that Woolf uses images from or alludes to the *Ring* parodically: "the ring which confers omnipotence becomes, for instance, a cupboard handle", as "one strategy by which she undercuts Wagner's project,

9 The full cycle was performed for the first time at the Bayreuth Festival in 1876.

adopting his leitmotivic technique for profoundly anti-Wagnerian purposes" (140). Woolf does this to undermine the "the homogenising effects of myth and symbolism" in favour of "the pluralist" (140). Using allusions to Wagner, she draws attention to her efforts to reject the ordering principle of literary convention in favour of the sensory and, in her opinion, more honest representation of reality. She achieves this by contrasting the commonplace mythology that the six characters construct around Percival against the "myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel" that make up their soliloquys (1925, 1: 61).

Louis attempts to "fix in words, to forge in a ring of steel" his impressions of:

> grass and trees, the travelling air blowing empty spaces in the blue which they then recover, shaking the leaves which then replace themselves, and our ring here, sitting, with our arms binding our knees, hint at some other order, and better, which makes a reason everlastingly. (Woolf [1931] 1992, 28)

Percival intervenes clumsily in his attempt when he "destroys it, as he blunders off, crushing the grasses" (28). The poetic descriptions of "air blowing empty spaces" and "shaking leaves" are disrupted by the mundane account of his blundering – the "appalling narrative business of the realist…merely conventional" (1981, 3: 209). Percival is described as "conventional" and a "hero" throughout the novel (Woolf [1931] 1992, 98). It is likely that Woolf's decision to name the hero Percival was informed by her estimation of Wagner's *Parsifal* as contained, complete, and "poured out in a smooth stream at white heat; its shape is solid and entire…It is the only work which has no incongruous associations" ([1909] 1986, 290).

Mannin similarly uses Wagnerian imagery to contrast conventional and experimental narratives. Starridge's "unreality" (the experimental plot) prevents him from fully engaging with the reality (the traditional plot) that the other characters navigate in the novel. He experiences the "thirteenth-century castle" that he and Max visit near the Rhine as a setting reminiscent of *Siegfried*. But the events that transpire there do not align with his imagination. The sleepy, "Junoesque" woman with "a kind of medieval splendour" is a perversion of Brünnhilde. She is "soft" and "white", with the "breath of decay upon her" (Mannin [1931] 1940, 226). When she mentions the beauty of the castle and landscape, Max replies, "in a theatrical fashion, yes. It is all a little too operatic to be taken seriously" (203). His frankness, coupled with his decision to seduce the woman, disrupts Starridge's fantasy that he is Siegfried: "Max was one of the lordly ones, and if he must lust it should be as a god…with a striding magnificence and lordly pride, an arrogant untouchedness

of stars and winds and mountain peaks…Max who should have known a woman no less than Brunhild" (207). When Max "became a young man who got into bed with women", he "ceased to be a shining, lordly figure remote from everydayness" and "died for him" (236).

The decision to mythologise Max and Percival as heroes is a calculated move on the part of both authors. Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen explains that over the centuries, the outward appearance, speech, and actions of the hero have changed, "but in their innermost core the characters remain essentially the same. The fundamental traits of human nature, transmitted by inheritance from generation to generation, seem capable of but a limited amount of variation" (1889, 594). Mannin and Woolf also invoke the hero's journey, a narrative archetype that has retained its basic structure for centuries. Precisely because it is one of the oldest and most recognisable stories in literary history – and one so closely associated with entertainment – it functions as an ideal stand-in for conventional narrative form. Both authors foreground the expectations of popular fiction even as they subtly rework them.

Starridge experiences the world and his travels with Max as "incandescent", a "pure fantasy" in its "quality of ecstatic unreality" (Mannin [1931] 1940, 194). But Max is not the hero Starridge believes him to be. Mannin intersperses scenes from Max's life outside of Starridge's imagination. He has thoughts and experiences of his own that can only be relayed through a realist narrative. Mannin integrates the hero trope into the unreality of the experimental narrative to show the limits of a literary form that privileges an individual's experiences and impressions over the world-building that realism allows.

It is precisely the "reality" of Max that initiates, in Roland Barthes' terms, a breakdown of the image-repertoire, which brings about an annihilation of both the loved object (Max) and the lover (Starridge). As Barthes describes it, the lover hears "a counter-rhythm" in his amorous discourse: "something like a syncope in the lovely phrase of the loved being, the noise of a rip in the smooth envelope of the image" (2002, 25). Starridge's fantasy unravels in an extended, cyclical mingling of repeated phrases and images, culminating in "Anger" mounting in him "wave upon wave…it mounted in him with the irresistible force of an orgasm, it reached its climax; the world went black…there was a crashing over of black waves, wave upon wave, blinding, drowning…" (Mannin [1931] 1940, 226). Max's metaphorical death secures Starridge's complete break from reality and fully severs his connection to the novel's conventional plot.

Starridge's death initiates a return to the conventional narrative which continues without him. In *The Waves* Percival's death initiates a break from convention. In the final section, Bernard takes his place as the protagonist, tasked with summing up the events of his life in

a soliloquy uninterrupted by the other speakers. He recalls Neville's claim that without Percival there is no solidity; more pointedly, he references a line spoken by Jinny: "Let us hold it for one moment… love, hatred, by whatever name we call it, this globe whose walls are made of Percival" (Woolf [1931] 1992, 109). Bernard rephrases the line as:

> Let us again pretend that life is a solid substance, shaped like a globe, which we turn about in our fingers. Let us pretend that we can make out a plain and logical story, so that when one matter is dispatched – love, for instance – we go on, in an orderly manner, to the next. (Woolf [1931] 1992, 193)

Bernard resists the idea that a plain and logical story (the story of heroes like Percival) is an adequate vehicle for the fullness of life. Instead, as he approaches death, he abandons conventional literary form, searching for a discourse that can give shape to his experiences. He says, I begin to doubt the fixity of tables, the reality of here and now, to tap my knuckles smartly upon the edges of apparently solid objects and say, 'are you hard?' I have seen so many different things, have made so many sentences. I have lost in the process of eating and drinking and rubbing my eyes along surfaces. (Woolf [1931] 1992, 221-2). He asks, "'Who am I?' I have been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct?" When asking "Who am I?" he does not list Percival among his constituents (222). Percival is mentioned but only as a "blow" to his "brow" when he died, and to restate that he "is dead" (222). Bernard dispenses entirely with "the pressure of the eye, the solicitation of the body, and all need of lies and phrases" valued by the realist, becoming a composite of all the speaking characters in the novel (226).

Starridge undergoes a similar process of self-reflection in *Ragged Banners*, but with a different outcome:

> It was as though all these people were part of him, the hidden and denied parts of him. Volsted gave the warm, free friendship he could not give; Mary the peace he needed, but which realities were constantly destroying for him; Lattimer was a symbol of impersonality, intellect divorced from emotionalism; Wanda was all the repressed sexual instinct in himself; Max the gay, irresponsible being he would have liked to be. They had all been real for him only inasmuch as they were part of him, yet because he himself was not a real person, he must ultimately deny them all. (Mannin [1931] 1940, 236)

The other characters are all part of his story but they also represent a material world and alternative narrative that he cannot access.

His "ecstatic unreality" prevents him from becoming a fully rounded character in the story. He is not a "real person" capable of interacting substantially with those around him. Mannin foreshadows this in chapter one of the novel by calling Starridge "a lost person from the beginning" who "remained lost" (11).

In *The Waves*, Bernard's narrative supplants Percival's. He becomes a new type of hero different from the unchanged hero of literature past. He confronts death with his "spear crouched" and "hair flying back like a young man's, like Percival's"(228). Starridge meets death as a tragic figure who submits to the idea that he "had known the love that makes oblivious of life; there but remained death which obliterates love" (Mannin [1931] 1940,273). He passes into "the empty dark of the ultimate unreality made absolute" (241). *The Waves* concludes with Bernard's death. With the final italicised line – "The waves broke on the shore" – the narrative reaches a coda (Woolf [1931] 1992, 228).

The final chapters of *Ragged Banners* focus on Mary and Lattimer, who return to the lives they lived before meeting Starridge. They make love before attending a party. Mary "knew with the closing of his arms about her that it were better to drown…love that makes oblivious of life…and death that obliterates love…she was a ship that slid restlessly down the last slip into the impatient sea; dark waves engulfed her, closed over her" (250). Whereas Starridge slips into "the empty dark of the ultimate unreality made absolute" (241), through Mary the sensory and the physical coexist in harmony. The celebrated Philistine embodies both narrative forms without privileging one over the other. She is also the character who is "nearly as right as it is possible to be in defining the indefinable" when it comes to Starridge (11). Like Mannin's Philistine readers she is capable of navigating and making sense of a conventional *and* experimental narrative.

5 The Philistine Revolution

In Woolf's "Middlebrow" and Mannin's *Confessions*, they reflect on readerships and how these factor into and inform the Battle of the Brows. *The Waves* and *Ragged Banners* are reflections on literary form. Mannin treats readership and form as interconnected. Her parallel conventional and unconventional narratives illustrate the freedom of the Philistine to read across genres without discrimination. She simultaneously challenges authors who profess to provide a more accurate version of reality then pass judgment on the literary tastes of the ordinary reader and middlebrow writers.

Woolf was more concerned with the authorial process. *The Waves* is the culmination of years of grappling with the author's role in shaping fiction. In "Life and the Novelist", she claims that the writer

"is at the mercy of the world and its meanings". He writes "with a sense that he is being stimulated and played upon by the subject-matter of his art" ([1926] 1966, 2: 131). Mannin's approach to writing is less romantic:

> The artists job is to take some aspect of human life which strikes a spark in him and make something out of it; what he creates must speak for itself; the artist should not intrude his own views in many words, but allow the implications of his creation to seep into the consciousness of his audience…if he has anything of importance to say and has made a good job of saying it, implications will be apparent to those of sensibility. (Mannin 1939a, 28)

She de-centres the author and privileges readers and reader reception. She was opposed to what she called an "obscurity of style" and "language that burns black the tongue of one who speaks it and scars the one who listens", favouring "language that will make meaning clear" (1939a, 72-3).

Woolf did consider reader reception when she published *The Waves*. She was anxious about the novel's accessibility, and so were those who read the final drafts. Leonard Woolf was "doubtful how far any common reader will follow" (1982, 4: 36). Post-publication, reviews emphasised that it was intended for a sophisticated readership which reinforced the idea that it was written for highbrows:

> her genius does not lie in entertainment – the easy entertainment we usually expect from a novel – but in the interpretation of a new vision of life. Her books are essentially for those readers who are sufficiently aware of themselves to be ready to say: "How tired I am of stories, how tired I am of phrases that come down beautifully with all their feet on the ground." Life is not like that. (*The Lancashire Daily Post* 1931, 4)

Reviews of *Ragged Banners* were similarly concerned with readerships. The writer of "Half-Hours with the Highbrows" in the 30 January 1931 edition of *The Liverpool Echo* bent to misconceptions about the intelligence of Mannin's readers. He expresses relief that the "average citizens" who read the book are "completely ignorant" of the "literary quotations" included in the novel, and the "portion of life" (Bohemia) that she critiqued leaving them oblivious to the novel's overarching social commentary (4). In the same edition of the weekly, a librarian took a different view: "It is a fact…that Miss Mannin has a very large public, and by no means an unintelligent one, who regard her as the apostle of modern thought and originality" (10).

Mannin continued to critique highbrow literary circles in her fiction and non-fiction, but her Philistine philosophy in *Confessions*

and *Ragged Banners* remains her most overt intervention into the Battle of the Brows. In her later work, she satirises highbrow poets and their acolytes in *Comrade O Comrade, Or Lowdown on the Left*. The protagonist in her newspaper serial "Nigel in Paris" is a caricature of a highbrow painter who realises that nobody is "at all impressed or even aware of the fact that here was Nigel Morton, English painter in revolt against English bourgeois life; he had no office and no home in which to air his views on life and art and indulge his egotism"(Mannin 1936, 20). "Nigel in Paris is the second in a series of interconnected stories, including "Revolt of Youth", "Forbidden Love", "Good Time Colin" and "Vangie and Bill" published in *The Daily Mirror* from 29 March to 2 April 1937.

"Middlebrow" did not appear in print until after Woolf's death. It is speculated that she set the letter aside to rework it into an essay. Maroula Joannou surmises that her decision not to post it is "perhaps indicative of anxieties about its tone or else of a self-conscious awareness of the contradictions of her own position as an author reliant on her income from writing" (2013, 15). Considering Woolf's extensive critical engagement with the effect of patriarchal social and political structures on writing as a career for women, Joannou's suggestion is more plausible. There are traces of the anxiety she notes in "Middlebrow" in the semi-fictional account of Woolf's conversation with the lowbrows who remind her that "middlebrows, like other people, have to make money…We all have to earn our livings nowadays" (201). It's also worth considering Woolf's professional activity post-publication of *The Waves* which indicates that she may have revised some of her opinions. Between December 1931 and December 1932, she published six articles in *Good Housekeeping*. She did not need the money and could have turned down the editor's request, but actively chose to affiliate with the middlebrow magazine. Her late best-selling novel, *The Years* (1937) is in some regards a work of conventional realism, and her final posthumously published novel, *Between the Acts* (1941) resembles more closely the structure and lyricism of her earlier work.

Reading Mannin and Woolf together sheds new light on the different ways that literature and readerships were positioned in the cultural debates of the 1920s and 1930s – debates which, as Hammill shows, are ongoing. The difference is that the intellectual is no longer entirely at odds with the middlebrow. Beginning in the latter half of the twentieth century, and continuing today, scholars like Hammill ("Modernism and the Middlebrow" 2023), Beth Driscoll (*The New Literary Middlebrow* 2014), Nicola Humble (*The Feminine Middlebrow Novel* 2001), Janice Radway (*A Feeling for Books* 1991), and others have contributed to a process of reclamation that reframes the middlebrow as a positive category for literature and readerships.

Woolf's "Middlebrow" appears consistently in scholarship on the Brows because it is considered an exemplar of the highbrow position in the Battle. Mannin's Philistine philosophy constitutes a unique intervention in the discourse of the Brows. She refuses highbrow arguments about the alleged anti-intellectualism of the middlebrow and the precariousness of high culture. By moving the debate into its broader socio-political context, she reveals the class-based politics at its core. Placing Woolf's and Mannin's fiction and non-fiction in dialogue expands the fields of middlebrow and modernist studies to include new forms of resistance that reshape how we conceive of the Battle of the Brows. Culturally and politically, the interwar period in Britain stands apart in literary history as one in which middlebrow and lowbrow challenges to the highbrow were revolutionary acts.

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