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FOREWORD

Dr. Ljubica Matek, Assistant Professor

We are very happy to be able to present the third issue of *Kick*, a journal of students of English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. The issue collects selected papers that were supposed to be presented at the first interdisciplinary conference of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science's Association of Students of English "Glotta" in April 2020. The topic of the planned conference was "Bridging The Gap: The Youth, Space, Literature, And Beyond," but, unfortunately, due to the pandemic of the Covid-19 disease, the conference was cancelled. Despite the fact that the pandemic prevented students to bridge the physical gap between them and meet in Osijek, both the editors and contributors have decided not to give up on the planned project.

Not only did the editorial team persist with the project but they also decided that the third issue will mark a new stage in the development of *Kick*. Dispensing with the term *magazine*, the editors opt to identify Kick as a student *journal*, which aims to develop as a serious academic publication, dedicated to publishing double-blind reviewed papers in the fields of Literature, Film, Adaptation and Translation Studies, Linguistics, and Methodology. As such, we hope that students in all stages of their studies (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate) will see *Kick* as a platform for their early entry into the world of academic publishing. Thanks to a more rigorous review process, the journal will help students both test and improve the quality of their academic work, and, ultimately, it will help them publish it, making their research more visible. The journal also plans to continue promoting the students' creative writing in English.

In addition to helping students apply the scholarly knowledge and skills acquired during their studies by means of publishing their

research, the journal is also a place for students to learn about the intricacies of the publishing process. We use this opportunity to invite students or alumni interested in participating in the process of editing and publishing an academic journal to join our team.

The issue you hold in your hand contains eight papers. Valentina Markasović's "Brides in Mirrors: The Reflections in Carter's 'The Bloody Chamber' and 'The Tiger's Bride'" is an excellent analysis of the motif of the mirror and its role in shaping the identity of Carter's female protagonists. Marta Keglević writes about liberal feminism in John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* illustrating both the ongoing relevance of Mill's text and the need to continue the struggle for equality. In her illuminating paper, "The Iconology of War in Homer's *Iliad* and W. H. Auden's 'The Shield of Achilles,'" Maja Grgić shows how the depiction of warfare reveals the prevalent worldview. Saška Petrović compares the fictionalized version of Ned Kelly, the Australian armoured outlaw, to the historical one.

In "The Effects of Worldbuilding on Storytelling in George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*," Marcel Moser explores the relationship between worldbuilding and storytelling in Martin's wildly popular fantasy saga. Petra Sršić looks into the social construction and marginalized groups in the Harry Potter universe, whereas Ivan Stanić devotes his attention to Stanley Kubrick's brilliant classic *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. The section of academic papers ends with Nikolina Novaković's "Ethnography of Space and Place of the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb," with which she offers a departure from the literary or film subjects, and provides the readers with an ethnographic analysis of one of the major Zagreb libraries. Finally, in line with the aim to promote students' creative writing, the issue offers the readers a fantasy short story titled "The Story about the Blue Executioner" by Luka Vrbanić.

We hope you'll enjoy reading our third issue and consider submitting your own work for future publication in *Kick*.

Valentina Markasović
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Original research paper

Brides in Mirrors: The Reflections in Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" and "The Tiger's Bride"

Abstract

Angela Carter's 1979 collection of short stories titled *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* contains stories that readers will recognize from their own folk traditions and well-known fairy tales; but these stories are re-imagined in surprising ways: the Beauty becomes a Beast, Little Red kills the werewolf. This paper deals with two of the stories from the collection: "The Bloody Chamber," a reinvention of the Bluebeard story, and "The Tiger's Bride," a twist on Beauty and the Beast. The paper examines how the mirror, a staple of the fairy tale genre, aids the protagonists, or more specifically, how the mirror shows the general social standing of women and how it may be utilized to create one's own identity.

Keywords: Angela Carter, symbol, mirror, "The Bloody Chamber," "The Tiger's Bride," fairy tale

1. Introduction

First published in 1979, the collection of short stories penned by Angela Carter and titled *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* contains re-imaginings of stories that are to be found in various folk traditions. The first story, "The Bloody Chamber," is Carter's version of the Bluebeard tale. It is followed by two interpretations of Beauty and the Beast ("The Courtship of Mr Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride"), a story called "Puss-In-Boots," "The Erl-King," which connects fairy tales and Romanticism; then, "The Snow Child" is reminiscent of Snow White, and "The Lady of the House of Love" is about a female

vampire. The collection ends with three wolf stories—"The Werewolf," "The Company of Wolves," and "Wolf-Alice." Suzette A. Henke describes the collection as "a compendium of poignant pubescent tales that urge the reader to deconstruct thickly woven feminist fabulations of trauma, shame, mortification, self-punishment, and transformation" (50). Henke is one of many scholars who have dealt with Angela Carter's work. The interest Carter piques is such that Tom Shippey stipulates that postmodernism "wouldn't make sense without her" (qtd. in Benson 23).[1]

Carter has prompted polarizing views about how she handles the position of women in her stories; except for these prominent (anti) feminist interpretations, her work has also been subject to a variety of literary and interdisciplinary ones, including examinations of Biblical elements, as well as those of the grotesque and the Gothic, along with analyses of Oedipal and other Freudian allusions. Evidently, Carter's stories present fertile ground for further research and varied readings. In writing her literary fairy tales, which she interprets not as ubiquitous, static myths, but as products of "specific cultural, political, and economic positions" (Kaiser 35), Carter still makes abundant use of the symbols emblematic to the fairy tale convention; among them is the symbol of a mirror. The aim of this paper is to explicate the usage and the meaning of the mirror as a symbol and as a device in two of Angela Carter's stories—"The Bloody Chamber"

1 While it is futile to attempt to list the complete bibliography on works about *The Bloody Chamber*, Stephen Benson, in his paper "Angela Carter and the Literary Märchen: A Review Essay" (*Marvels & Tales*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1998, pp. 23–51), Amy DeGraff in "The Fairy Tale and Women's Studies: An Annotated Bibliography" (*Merveilles & Contes*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1987, pp. 76–82), and the entry "Carter, Angela" in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (edited by Jack Zipes, Oxford UP, 2002, pp. 89–90) offer more exhaustive overviews of reviews, criticism, and interpretations on Angela Carter. Works such as *Flesh and the Mirror: Essays on the Art of Angela Carter* (edited by Lorna Sage), *The Arts of Angela Carter: A Cabinet of Curiosities* (edited by Marie Mulvey-Roberts), and Christina Bacchilega's *Postmodern Fairy Tales* offer some of the more extensive analyses of Carter's fiction.

and "The Tiger's Bride." The paper partially relies on the research of Veronica L. Schanoes and Kathleen E. B. Manley, both of whom have dealt with the significance of the mirror in Carter's stories. The paper will first elaborate upon the conventional symbolism of the mirror in fantastic fiction and portray a connection with Carter's stories. The stories will then be briefly retold to delineate the specifics observable in the fluid meaning of a mirror and the role it has in establishing Carter's protagonists: how the mirror helps them recognize the position of women in society and build their own selves.

2. Mirror as a Symbol in Fantasy Fiction

The mirror is found in numerous works of fantastic fiction. As a crucial item in fantastic literature, mirrors have been imbued with mythical and magical meanings (Yoke 89), so this device can be interpreted in different ways. In their study *The Madwoman in the Attic,* Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar present the mirror as "the patriarchal voice of judgment that rules the . . . self-evaluation" of women (38). Luce Irigaray, in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, underlines that the mirror "is needed to reassure [the male ego] and re-insure it of its value" (54). Schanoes' thesis in "Book as Mirror, Mirror as Book: The Significance of the Looking-Glass in Contemporary Revisions of Fairy Tales" asserts that mirror "reflects women's fantasies, experiences, and desires under conditions often hostile to their expression" (5). The mirror is ubiquitous in staples of fantasy, from the well-known story of Snow White, where the mirror is an informant which divulges the secret of who is the fairest of them all to the wicked Queen; to Lewis Carroll's Alice, who steps through the looking glass; and to Tolkien's Lady Galadriel and the reflective water of her mirror, a fount of visions. The last instance confirms that the mirror does not have to be a literal one to serve a purpose.[2]

2 This is in agreement with Barbara Walker's reading of the Narcissus myth in *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects.* In it, she recognizes the reflective surface of water as a mirror which traps the soul of Narcissus, that is, causes his death (146).

As well as being a source of information and a (meta)physical portal, the mirror can serve as a device of introspection. Such is the case of the Mirror of Erised from the *Harry Potter* series, which "shows . . . the deepest, most desperate desire of [the onlookers'] hearts" (Rowling 229). Sarah J. Maas has also utilized the mirror, spelling out its introspective properties whilst painting self-acceptance as an ordeal worth the trouble. When her protagonist, Feyre, is faced with both the good and bad sides of herself, she elaborates, "And what I saw . . . I think – I think I loved it. Forgave it – me. All of it" (Maas 618).

Although this paper will predominantly focus on "The Bloody Chamber" and "The Tiger's Bride," it is fruitful to bring to attention another story in *The Bloody Chamber*: "Wolf-Alice." The story is about a feral child saved from the wolves, who struggles to adapt to the human culture of life and her own maturing process. She encounters a mirror in the house she is confined in: "First, she tried to nuzzle her reflection; then, nosing it industriously, she soon realised it gave out no smell. She bruised her muzzle on the cold glass and broke her claws trying to tussle with this stranger. She saw, with irritation, then amusement, how it mimicked every gesture of hers" (*WA* 208). She confides in the figure in the mirror, which she speculates might be an "invisible cage" (208), sharing all the curiosities of growing up, such as pubic hair. At last, Alice recognizes the stranger's movements as her own:

> This habitual, at last boring, fidelity to her very movement finally woke her up to the regretful possibility that her companion was, in fact, no more than a particularly ingenious variety of the shadow she cast on sunlit grass. . . . She poked her agile nose around the back of the mirror; she found only dust, a spider stuck in his web, a heap of rags. A little moisture leaked from the corners of her eyes, yet her relation with the mirror was now far more intimate since she knew she saw herself within it. (*WA* 211)

Avis Lewallen, in her paper "Wayward Girls But Wicked Women? Female Sexuality in Angela Carter's The Bloody Chamber," dubs this "a sort of Lacanian mirror phase moved to puberty" (154) and the Lacanian parallel is recognized by Henke, as well (57). This concept refers to Jacques Lacan's theory that infants are able to recognize their reflections and see themselves as objects in the process of apperception (75); Alice is, at this point in the story, already entering puberty so her recognition is connected with grasping the meaning of menstruation and temporal orientation. The role of the mirror is underscored in the last sentence of the above paragraph: Alice's relationship to the image in the mirror has grown considerably more intimate once she has embraced its nature as her own. As Schanoes explains, the reflection symbolizes the "entrance into knowledge, self-awareness, and humanity" (10). Therefore, the mirror in "Wolf-Alice" serves its primary purpose—recognition of the true self and self-awareness. This is only one possible reading of the symbol of the mirror and the next chapters deal with instances of more nuanced symbolism of mirrors in Carter's work.

3. The Eye of the Beholder: The Mirror in "The Bloody Chamber"

"The Bloody Chamber" is Carter's spin on the tale of Bluebeard, a rich man who murders his wives and hides their bodies in a chamber, the discovery of which inevitably leads to the murder of the subsequent wife. In Carter's tale, the protagonist narrates her marital experience, from the courtship with the Marquis, during which she is gifted an opulent ruby choker evoking an image of a slit throat. Next, the now married couple arrive at their castle. The Marquis shows his wife her room and disrobes her, but the consummation takes place only later, after the bride finds his collection of sadistic pornography. After the painful intercourse, the Marquis is called away on a business trip. He gives a set of keys to the protagonist and leaves, instructing her not to open one particular chamber where he finds his peace. The protagonist, imagining that the chamber will allow

her to get to know her husband better, seeks it out and discovers the remains of his previous wives. All three have been murdered and the protagonist realizes that her life is on the line. The Marquis returns from the business trip unexpectedly and the protagonist's disobedience is discovered. Before the Marquis succeeds in decapitating her, the protagonist's mother arrives on horseback and shoots him.

In the more or less standard version of the Bluebeard story, the mirror is not a prominent symbol. Carter, however, puts it front-and-centre. Manley argues that Carter uses the mirrors in the story to "show the protagonist's emerging sense of subjectivity" (71), that is, her fluctuation between being a passive object and an active subject. This is done using the mirrors, which enable "opportunities to see herself as others see her" (Manley 73). Schanoes explicates that the mirrors are a significant part of the story and that they "are associated with the Marquis and the financial, sexual, and physical power he wields over the protagonist" (7). Here, the way in which the mirrors punctuate the protagonist's growth from passivity to activity will be delineated. It will also be explored whether the protagonist is able to use the mirrors for introspection.

3.1. From Object to Subject

Already during their courtship, the future Marquise starts to use the mirrors as a device that helps her view herself in the eyes of society; more precisely, in the eyes of the Marquis. When he takes her to the opera, she observes him in the mirrors:

> I saw him watching me in the gilded mirrors with the assessing eye of a connoisseur inspecting horseflesh, or even of a housewife in the market, inspecting cuts on the slab. I'd never seen, or else had never acknowledged, that regard of his before, the sheer carnal avarice of it; and it was strangely magnified by the monocle lodged in his left eye (*BC* 8-9).

The "gilded mirrors" signify the imprisonment she will soon find herself in (Schanoes 7). The monocle he wears serves to centre the

focus on his gaze; the attention is on the man observing the woman, and although the protagonist does make note of her own drive, it is pushed into the background in favour of the Marquis' lust: "When I saw him look at me with lust, I dropped my eyes but, in glancing away from him, I caught sight of myself in the mirror. And I saw myself, suddenly, as he saw me . . . And, for the first time in my innocent and confined life, I sensed in myself a potentiality for corruption that took my breath away" (*BC* 9).

This trend is continued when they arrive at the Marquis' ancestral home, a sea-bound castle. The Marquis takes his bride to the bedroom and its interior design is revealed: "Our bed. And surrounded by so many mirrors! Mirrors on the walls, in stately frames of contorted gold . . . The young bride . . . had become that multitude of girls I saw in the mirrors" (*BC* 14). The mirrors are arranged so as to both cater to the Marquis' hobby of collecting wives, as well as to solidify the position of the bride as an object, one of many. Carter draws on the image of a Sultan and his wives to showcase how women are objects to be acquired: "'See,' he said, gesturing towards those elegant girls. 'I have acquired a whole harem for myself!'" (*BC* 15). Even in the company of many other women, albeit all reflections of her, the protagonist is still subdued by her husband. She uses the mirrors to distance herself from the reality of the situation (Schanoes 8): "I could not meet his eye and turned my head away, out of pride, out of shyness, and watched a dozen husbands approach me in a dozen mirrors" (*BC* 15). When the process of disrobing is over, she sees the image of herself, naked, and her husband fully clothed: "[h]e in his London tailoring; she, bare as a lamb chop. Most pornographic of all confrontations. And so my purchaser unwrapped his bargain" (*BC* 16). That "he is the purchaser; she, the commodity" (Sheets 651) permeates the whole of their relationship and places her firmly into the position of an object to be owned (Schanoes 8). The protagonist is transformed into "a lamb chop" and "perceives herself as a pornographic object" (Kaiser 33) which is in line with Carter's view that "if flesh plus skin equals sensuality, then flesh minus skin equals meat" (*SW* 138). The protagonist being "a lamb chop" is representa-

tive of an "economic objectification," a transaction (Makinen 10). The underlining of the protagonist's meagre economic situation prior to the marriage is now combined with sexual passivity. Both levels of oppression agree with what Carter proposes in *The Sadeian Woman*: "sexual relations between men and women always render explicit the nature of social relations in the society in which they take place and, if described explicitly, will form a critique of those relations" (20). By showing the sexual act in the mirrors, constructing it as an act of oppression, Carter casts light on the "shaming ideologies that tend to shape female identities in Western culture" (Henke 49) and fulfils her role of the "moral pornographer", an artist who uses "pornography as a critique of current relations between the sexes" (*SW* 19).

The protagonist's passivity is accentuated because in the above scene, again, she does feel some sort of desire, but it is insignificant in the face of the Marquis's wish to first inspect the goods he has bought: "And, as at the opera, when I had first seen my flesh in his eyes, I was aghast to feel myself stirring" (*BC* 16). However, she receives no pleasure in the act itself—when the moment of consummation arrives, the Marquise finds solace in narrating the event in the third person, as if it is taking place only in the mirrors (Schanoes 8), "A dozen husbands impaled a dozen brides while the mewing gulls swung on invisible trapezes in the empty air outside" (*BC* 20).

The imagery of the mirrors returns later on. After discovering the Marquis' dark secret and after he returns from his pretend business trip, the Marquise gains some impetus in terms of her own agency, as evident in a scene involving mirrors. She tries to seduce her husband and distract him from the question of the keys; doing this, she sees herself: "I forced myself to be seductive, I saw myself, pale, pliant as a plant that begs to be trampled underfoot, a dozen vulnerable appealing girls reflected in as many mirrors, and I saw how he almost failed to resist me. If he had come to me in bed, I would have strangled him, then" (*BC* 50-51). While Schanoes does not see even this instance as a reflection of the protagonist's activity and finds it merely an addition to the estranging role that the mirrors play (9), Manley

claims the protagonist "is no longer naive about her situation" (74), meaning that she is no longer a passive object, but rather, beginning to take action.

However, her plan of seduction falls through. The Marquis discovers the bloody key: "I knelt before him and he pressed the key lightly to my forehead, held it there for a moment. I felt a faint tingling of the skin and, when I involuntarily glanced at myself in the mirror, I saw the heart-shaped stain had transferred itself to my forehead, to the space between the eyebrows, like the caste mark of a Brahmin woman. Or the mark of Cain" (*BC* 53). The Marquise looks into the mirror "involuntarily," because she has been all but conditioned to seek out how she is viewed and to get only second-hand experience of what is happening to her. In this instance, what she sees in the mirror reminds her of the caste system, where a woman's status is displayed for everyone to see; she also equates her mark to that of Cain, thereby recognizing that she is, in the Marquis' view, a sinner. Afterwards, she again flees into the third person narration as she is undergoing her own funeral rites: "Twelve young women combed out twelve listless sheaves of brown hair in the mirrors; soon, there would be none" (*BC* 54-55). This change from a brief activity to repeated passivity speaks in favour of Manley's proposition that the protagonist is wavering between girlhood and womanhood, "between a patriarchal view and her own definition of herself" (75).

3.2. Reflections on the Self

As has been shown, the Marquise looks into the mirrors most often when she is with someone else, to distance herself from what is happening and to see how others see her. In the scene of her exploration of the castle, she "was alone, but for my reflection in the uncurtained window" (*BC* 34). In this scene, she does not dwell on the reflection. She is currently an active participant in pursuing what interests her (the secrets of the Marquis' heart) and, being alone and fuelled by her own agency, she does not need to distance herself from the situation at hand. She also does not take this opportunity to look

at herself alone and perhaps gain knowledge about how she sees herself, not only how others construct their view of her. Only with temporal distance is she able to pronounce herself unknowledgeable of the world and recognize her motivation for entering the marriage—the desire for money and a rising sexual drive. The foreign gaze or the arrangement of mirrors allow her to perceive her own status as an object in society, but it is difficult for the Marquise to get insight into her true self. The reflections primarily serve to establish her objectification, but, simultaneously, raise the question of her awakening sexual desires:

> I was not afraid of him; but of myself. I seemed reborn in his unreflective eyes, reborn in unfamiliar shapes. I hardly recognised myself from his description of me and yet, and yet -- might there not be a grain of beastly truth in them? And, in the red firelight, I blushed again, unnoticed, to think he might have chosen me because, in my innocence, he sensed a rare talent for corruption. (*BC* 25)

She makes a point to mention his "unreflective" eyes, which are also described as "dark and motionless as those eyes the ancient Egyptians painted upon their sarcophagi, fixed upon me" (*BC* 10). Unlike in the previously mentioned instances in which the Marquise is beginning to be sexually aroused, here she arrives to the conclusion about her "talent for corruption" alone, without the aid of a reflective surface—the Marquis' eyes, without the monocle and the surrounding mirrors, lose their ability to offer her a construction of her social standing and the requirements she must meet.

It is important to also cast light on another case of reflection that occurs in the story. As has been mentioned, the Marquis' castle is surrounded by the sea and even becomes completely cut off from the shore when the tide comes in. The location is significant because the reflection of the sea is mentioned twice in the story. When the bride is being disrobed the first time, she describes: "The play of the waves outside in the cold sun glittered on his monocle" (*BC* 15). Next, she

is lying in bed the morning after consummation: "I lay tossing and turning in his ancestral bed until another day-break discoloured the dozen mirrors that were iridescent with the reflections of the sea" (*BC* 27). According to Carl Jung's *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, "[w]ater is the commonest symbol of the unconscious" and it represents "spirit that has become unconscious" (18–19). The reflection of water in "The Bloody Chamber" can be interpreted as hinting towards the protagonist's unconscious spirit. Furthermore, the Jungian theory sees water as "earthy and tangible, it is also the fluid of the instinct-driven body, blood and the flowing of blood, the odour of the beast, carnality heavy with passion" (19). Hence, reflections of water may be connected with the protagonist's sexuality—the reflection of the sea in the mirrors represents the state of agitation, the glittering awakening of her desire for sexual play and, in the second instance, the calmer, resolved, iridescent state of being conditioned to be satisfied with providing pleasure for her husband, but not for herself. These scenes of the mirrors cooperating with water—symbolically heavily layered—may have helped the protagonist's sense of self, but she does not pursue this line of thinking.

On the whole, the reflective surfaces are unable to explicitly aid the protagonist in grasping a sense of herself because they are "extensions of the Marquis" (Schanoes 7). They exhibit somewhat magical properties in the scene when the Marquise is alone, livid with the discovery of the bloody chamber and seeking a hiding place: "I could not take refuge in my bedroom, for that retained the memory of his presence trapped in the fathomless silvering of his mirrors" (*BC* 42). While the mirrors themselves are not imbued with magic, the Marquise links them with the image they have previously provided, that of the Marquis. Therefore, it is impossible for her to manipulate them to her merit.

In the end, it is not the mirrors that initiate the maturing process of the protagonist; rather, it is the exploration of the bloody chamber and the realizations connected with it. She takes the path from "innocence to full sexuality, from unknowing to knowing" (Renfroe

84). The Marquise is transformed from "her role from passive object into active subject, altering her signification and determining her own meanings and subjectivity" (Brooke 77). Manley recognizes the protagonist's sense of subjectivity in the instances when she does not feel shame about what people (for example, in the opera) think of her, but also when she is ashamed of her greed for material wealth (80), which can be seen as a sign of maturity (Lokke 12). The mirrors are capable only of showing her what others find in her image, but offer no place for introspection.

4. The Mirror Image of the Social Standards: The Mirror in "The Tiger's Bride"

Angela Carter's "The Tiger's Bride" presents the narrative of Beauty and the Beast with numerous twists. The heroine and her father travel to Italy, where the father plays cards with The Beast, with his own daughter at stake. The father loses and the heroine is forced to leave for the palazzo of The Beast, who looks like he is not actually human, but only wearing a human mask. Here, she is offered the following: she will be sent home, with many additional riches, as soon as she displays herself naked in front of The Beast. The heroine refuses, but is then invited for a ride with The Beast. She accepts and the outing ends with first The Beast's undressing – where he sheds his human mask—and then the heroine discarding her clothes. The heroine realizes her father has been paid off and does not care if she returns or not. This pushes her into taking off her clothes once again, offering herself to The Beast, and being transformed under his tongue into her true look—that of a beast.

The traditional story of Beauty and the Beast features a magical mirror that allows the young girl to see her father. The mirror also appears in Carter's version, where, as Schanoes argues, "one of the mirror's many functions is to tell the story and to identify the woman watching events unfold in the mirror with the woman reading the story; the mirror is her book" (14). This chapter proposes that the mirror's usage is two-fold. Firstly, it reflects the woman's position in

the society and then it makes it possible for the protagonist to discover herself.

4.1. Recognizing the Social Standards

At the beginning, the heroine and her father sit in a room with The Beast and the protagonist watches the card game in the mirror above the table: "the mirror above the table gave me back [father's] frenzy, my impassivity, the withering candles, the emptying bottles, the coloured tide of the cards as they rose and fell, the still mask that concealed all the features of The Beast" (*TB* 81–82). The heroine is unbiased in dissecting the scene in front of her; she sees that she is passive, in accordance with the expectations imposed on women of her class. She also sees that her father is agitated, but only at the end of the story, when he reaches the final "stages of debauchery" (*TB* 85), does she accept her father's view of herself. To him, her worth is irrevocably equated with material wealth. Curiously, she also comments on the cards in her father's hand: "A queen, a king, an ace. I saw them in the mirror" (*TB* 85). It might prove interesting to try to assign the meaning of these cards to each of the main figures of the story. If the heroine is the Queen, and The Beast the King, the father would have to be an ace; the value of this card seems discrepant with the father's character. On the other hand, The Beast could remain the King, with the Queen card being assigned to the emasculated (through the juxtaposition to the masculine, non-materialistic Beast) father. The heroine would then be an ace, the one whom both players, for different reasons, want to possess.

The second mirror is of more significance because of its magic properties. It is given to the heroine by a beautiful clockwork replica of herself and the first time that the heroine sees her father in the magic mirror, he is crying and drinking alcohol; this may be seen as her father's sadness over his daughter's departure. However, she once again gazes into the magic mirror and is faced with the image of her father after she has bared herself to The Beast. She realizes that her father has been paid for her compliance in exhibitionism; moreover,

he is ready to continue on with his journey and does not care to wait for his daughter, even though he has been notified of her imminent arrival. This is the final piece of knowledge that the magic mirror imparts on the heroine; the mirror, indifferent and objective, confirms what Beauty already knows – her own skin is her "sole capital" (*TB* 89) in a society ruled by patriarchal norms. What is more, her value has a price tag even to her own father. As Schanoes points out, every time the protagonist looks into the mirror, she sees her father before she sees her own image, which reflects her subjugated status in the society: "[i]n the patriarchal world she inhabits, she exists only as an extension of her father; she has no self to see that can rival that status" (13).

This does not, or should not, come as a surprise to either the heroine or the reader. From the onset of the story, she shows a keen awareness of her place in the world. Apparently, she is beloved and praised by all, and she is also "[t]he living image" (*TB* 82) of her mother. This physical likeness forebodes her possible future. Namely, the heroine states: "My mother did not blossom long; bartered for her dowry to such a feckless sprig of the Russian nobility that she soon died of his gaming, his whoring, his agonising repentances" (*TB* 82). The heroine implicates her father's role in the demise of her mother and thereby illustrates the subjugated position of women in contemporary society, where men sucked the essence of life out of women. She pinpoints the misfortune of the lives of women, "I watched with the furious cynicism peculiar to women whom circumstances force mutely to witness folly, while my father, fired in his desperation by more and yet more draughts of the firewater they call 'grappa', rids himself of the last scraps of my inheritance" (*TB* 81). The name of the character who is the inspiration for the heroine's character – Beauty – foregrounds the characteristic which is, paired with sexual purity, the bastion of a woman's value in the patriarchal world: "I was a young girl, a virgin, and therefore men denied me rationality just as they denied it to all those who were not exactly like themselves, in all their unreason. . . . I certainly meditated on the nature of my own state, how I had been bought and sold, passed from hand to hand"

(*TB* 101). The quote illustrates how women are praised for their virginity, denied the possibility of rational thought, and emphasizes their painful awareness of their own predicament. This is confirmed though the images playing out in the mirrors before the heroine's eyes.

4.2. Recognizing the Self

The heroine of the story finds her true mirror in the Beast. The beastly nature of her lover may be interpreted as the embodiment of her "feminine libido," the "autonomous desire which [Carter's] female characters need to recognize and reappropriate as a part of themselves" (Makinen 12). In the story, the Beast is masked because, on the surface level, he must fit in with human society; but, a deeper reading also allows the interpretation of his mask as the heroine's initial fear of indulging her own sexuality. She is instantly aware of the stilted appearance of the Beast, recognizing his unnatural scent and his "self-imposed restraint, as if fighting a battle with himself to remain upright when he would far rather drop down on all fours" (*TB* 83-84). His countenance is "with too much formal symmetry of feature to be entirely human: one profile of his mask is the mirror image of the other, too perfect, uncanny" (*TB* 84). He is characterized by an air of secrecy: he "conceal[s] his feet" and "hides his hands" (*TB* 92). The heroine feels the connection they share, but rejects it: "The Beast goes always masked; it cannot be his face that looks like mine" (*TB* 88). Thus, she is aware that the Beast's mere existence does not adhere to the social standards, but she is not ready to embrace either her own nature or his. She refuses his desire to see her naked and offers to admit to it only if she is covered from the waist up and does not see him watching her. The Beast's voyeuristic desire is interpreted as a humiliating one (Fowl 73).

Only when The Beast shows himself to her does she undress in front of him. Doing this, she is clumsy and blushing, but recognizes this as an effect of pride: "Pride it was, not shame, that thwarted my fingers so; and a certain trepidation lest this frail little article of hu-

man upholstery before him might not be, in itself, grand enough to satisfy his expectations of us" (*TB* 103). Here, the heroine is proud of who she is and is well on her way to accepting her nature. She describes her body as a piece of upholstery, hinting at her true nature hidden beneath the artificial layer. Her subsequent liberation is then explicitly stated: "I felt I was at liberty for the first time in my life" (*TB* 104). She is the subject not only of The Beast's gaze, but her own, as well (Bryant 448), as evident from her introspection and realization of her nature. During this time, she is not helped by any reflective surface; instead, she finds her equal partner in The Beast.

At this point in the story, the heroine is the master of her own image. She sends her clockwork maid, who is her mirror image, but merely an imitation of life, back to her father to perform daughterly duties in the heroine's stead; with this she "effects both a deliberate completion of her own story on her own terms and handily interrupts the old story of female goodness and fidelity" (Bryant 450). For herself, she chooses the life The Beast offers her and once again strips down. This time, the unclothing is more painful, perhaps because she is doing it in privacy and, ultimately, for herself, not to satisfy The Beast's imploration: "I was unaccustomed to nakedness. I was so unused to my own skin that to take off all my clothes involved a kind of flaying. I thought The Beast had wanted a little thing compared with what I was prepared to give him; but it is not natural for humankind to go naked, not since first we hid our loins with fig leaves. He had demanded the abominable" (*TB* 106). Fowl proposes that the reason for the pain Beauty experiences whilst undressing may lie in the notion that she uses clothes to protect herself from the humiliating male gaze—humiliating because connected with monetary profit. Another explanation could be that the clothes do not truly fit her, just like the mask does not fit The Beast, but only serves as a way to infiltrate mainstream society (Fowl 74). It could be interpreted that The Beast has not sought sexual gratification or placation of his own curiosity about the human shape; rather, he asks the heroine to strip off the layers of social stigma concerning nakedness and female sexuality. She does this and "peel[s] down to the cold, white meat of contract"

(*TB* 106), hence evoking again Carter's musings about the flesh mentioned in the last chapter.

Although aware of the beauty people see in her, the heroine describes her own reflection as "haggard from a sleepless night, pale enough to need my maid's supply of rouge" (*TB* 96) and, even more obviously near the culmination of the story, as "a pale, hollow-eyed girl whom I scarcely recognised" (*TB* 105). In this instance, the heroine is already one step away from complete disconnection to her supposed human nature. When denouncing human society, the protagonist escapes the "patriarchal gaze", the one staring at her from the mirrors, that has previously bound her sexually and morally and prevented her from showing herself to The Beast (Bacchilega 98) and she offers herself to The Beast. She knows that "[t]he tiger will never lie down with the lamb; he acknowledges no pact that is not reciprocal. The lamb must learn to run with the tigers" (*TB* 102). This is why she lets herself be worked on by The Beast, whose "each stroke of . . . tongue ripped off skin after successive skin, all the skins of a life in the world, and left behind a nascent patina of shiny hairs. My earrings turned back to water and trickled down my shoulders; I shrugged the drops off my beautiful fur" (*TB* 109). This is the final stage of the characters' identities, which are of an unstable and changeable nature. The Beast escapes the prison of his mask, whereas the heroine undergoes the painful revelation and then transformation into a beast. Therefore, with the progressive recognition of the society she lives in, as well as of her own desires, Beauty is able to move on from the initial refusal of nakedness, to the momentary "fear of devourment" (*TB* 108) and, finally, the acceptance of her own healthy (sexual) desires (Fowl 74-76) in a relationship that is reciprocal.

5. Conclusion

Angela Carter takes well-known fairy tales and, twisting them, gives them deeper meaning and uses them as a platform for social commentary. The familiar devices, such as the mirror, may be given different purposes. In Carter's rendition of the Bluebeard story,

the mirror becomes one of the central items, unlike in its traditional counterpart. Carter positions her protagonist in front of mirrors to allow her to see how other people view her. What she concludes is that she is treated as an object, available for purchase. She likens herself to a piece of meat and thus establishes that the relationship she is in consists of unequal partners. She escapes the present by looking at the mirrors—narrating what the image in the mirror is doing comes easier than reliving the painful experiences. The mirrors, then, are used to disassociate from the upsetting events of her life and reveal her oppressed status. She rarely looks into the mirrors – or the Marquis' eyes, where she tries to see herself, but fails – in search of a deeper reflection on her own self or how she may act to change her position. Instead, her change is brought about by other means and the mirror remains a focal point of a foreign gaze, namely, the Marquis'. It is pertinent to bring up the fact that she finds happiness with Jean-Yves, the blind piano-tuner who tries to help her escape the morbid castle. Although he is blind, the protagonist emphasizes that "he sees [her] clearly with his heart" (*BC* 61)—the protagonist has escaped the condemning Marquis' gaze and found peace with a polar opposite.

Like the first story, "The Tiger's Bride" also fronts the symbol of the mirror. The heroine of this story also uses the mirrors to see the general image of society and how it treats women. What she sees in the mirrors, both magical and non-magical, serves to confirm her already existing knowledge or suspicion. The images help her observe the nature of society and her own nature objectively and make her see them clear-cut. Since one of the mirrors is magical, this heroine has a slight advantage over the protagonist of "The Bloody Chamber." The exposition of the objectification of women is presented more explicitly and this heroine is able to get insight into what other characters, specifically her father, are doing. On top of that, the heroine of "The Tiger's Bride" discovers her real nature by using the mirror. It should be highlighted that, despite being referred to as beautiful and despite the established connection to the character of Beauty in the tale of Beauty and the Beast, the heroine of "The Tiger's Bride" describes her

reflection as haggard, pale, and hollow-eyed. Only at the end, when she is transformed into a beast, does she use the word beautiful to refer to her appearance. This signals that true beauty and satisfaction with one's own persona only emerge when the person has realized their full potential and is aware and accepting of one's nature.

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Original research paper

The Iconology of War in Homer's *Iliad* and W. H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles"

Abstract

From the period of Ancient Greek history to the twentieth century, the development of thought regarding warfare has contributed to the changing attitude towards ideas of war and peace. This change becomes apparent through the analysis of differences between two poems from distinctive backgrounds, Homer's *Iliad* and W. H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles." Although these poems share a similar source of inspiration, their treatment of the source material is different and reveals the prevalent worldview of the time. These texts show not only the change in the historical context relevant to the texts but also the development of cultural, social, and religious practices that influenced the creation of the poems. Taking those practices into consideration, this paper will show the development of the iconology of war through the similarities and differences of both time periods using Panofsky's three levels of iconological description.

Keywords: "The Shield of Achilles", *Iliad*, iconology, war, Panofsky, religion

In the *Iliad's* "Book XVIII", after hearing Achilles' cry, the goddess Thetis decides to ask Hephaestus to make him a new armor so he can avenge his closest friend's death. Hephaestus forges, among other items, a shield depicting scenes of natural landscapes, constellations, dancing children, festivals and cities of mortal men. More than a thousand years later, compelled to respond to the atrocities of war with a plead for political action, W. H. Auden writes "The Shield of Achilles" in which he reveals a shift in the role of the poet: "It is clear

to many of us throughout the whole world that now, as certainly never before, we are determined or compelled, to take sides. The equivocal attitude, the Ivory Tower, the paradoxical, the ironic detachment, will no longer do" (qtd. in MacKay 97). Therefore, using Panofsky's three levels of iconological description, this paper will show the change of the iconology of war through the centuries considering the events in Homer's *Iliad* and W. H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles."

Erwin Panofsky was an art historian closely related to the field of iconology whose work portrayed the deeper meaning of art within its historical and cultural context: "The search for meaning, combined with the acknowledgment of a vital link between art and culture, is central to Panofsky's approach to art history" (Murray 193). In *Studies in Iconology,* Panofsky describes three levels of subject matter analysis. The first level (pre-iconographical) includes primary subject matter and analyzes forms in a work as representations of natural objects or motifs: "an enumeration of these motifs would be a pre-iconographical description of the work of art" (Panofsky 5). The second level of description (iconography in its usual sense), which consists of the secondary subject matter, describes motifs connected with themes or concepts. Those motifs are then called "images, stories and allegories" (Panofsky 29). The third level (iconology or iconography in a deeper sense) is comprised of intrinsic meaning or content and portrays a relationship between the work and "those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion" (Panofsky 30). This level shows the possible interpretations of the work using the pre-iconographical and iconographic level: "conceiving of pure forms, motifs, images, stories and allegories as manifestations of underlying principles, we interpret all these elements as what Ernst Cassirer has called 'symbolical' values" (Panofsky 31).

Panofsky's first level of analysis is the "pre-iconographic level which depends on practical experience and interprets primary subject matter as distinct from its historical and textual embodiments" (Panofsky 12). In the *Iliad,* the subject matter of pre-iconographic

description "keeps within the limits of the world of motifs" (Preziosi 224) and describes the images which are familiar and easily recognizable: "He made the earth upon it, and the sky, and the sea's water, and the tireless sun, and the moon waxing into her fullness" (Homer 388). The role of this level of analysis is apparent as most people can recognize the shape and appearance of the ocean, the sun, and the sky. Furthermore, as Hephaestus forms the shield, he adds to it lyrical and pleasant scenes depicting "two cities . . . there were marriages in one, and festivals . . . among them the flutes and lyres kept up their clamour" (Homer 388) and scenes filled with violence and death: "and Hate was there with Confusion among them, and Death the destructive . . . The clothing upon her shoulders showed strong red with the men's blood" (Homer 389). In "The Shield of Achilles," Thetis looks at the shield Hephaestus makes and expects to see marble cities and vibrant landscapes, but all she sees is "an artificial wilderness and a sky like lead" (Auden 7). She sees an "unintelligible multitude" (Auden 13) and "barbed wire . . . bored officials . . . three pale figures" (Auden 31-32), as she looks over his shoulder, hoping each time to see something that would give her hope. In the *Iliad,* Hephaestus portrays the happiness of festivities: "a youth with a singing lyre . . . singing and whistling and light dance-steps" (Homer 390) contrasted with parts that represent dangers of warfare: "two lions . . . gulped the black blood" (Homer 391). Auden chooses to portray only the ominous feeling of decay, the vacant stares of the resigned people, and "the shield's grim depiction of humanity and foretelling of Achilles' impending death" (Broder 1). The *Iliad* starts the description of Achilles' shield through the depiction of its components, namely the sun, moon, stars, and the easily observable constellations: "The constellations named are the most obvious of the night sky" (Willcock 211).

The scenes on the shield continue with two cities: the city where peace prevails and the other which is at war. The peaceful city shows two scenes: "one of weddings, with dances and music, and women watching from the doorsteps" and the other of a "primitive legal process" (Willcock 211). The second scene shows two men in a dispute

over a method of payment and the process of bringing the case to a judge. The city at war is less detailed with two attacking armies that seem to have different goals, one wants to attack the city, and the other wishes to take half of the citizens' personal property. In Auden's work, the cities take on a different shape: "The City is a 'facetious culture,' outwardly planned and orderly, but ignoring ultimate questions; the planners have taken care of everything but the anxiety and evil of individuals" (Spears 422). Auden shows "where the altar should have been . . . barbed wire enclosed an arbitrary spot / where bored officials lounged (one cracked a joke)" (Auden 31-32). In the *Iliad*, the stars and the sky take up the center of the shield, while the other elements form scenes spreading in concentric circles to the edge of the shield. In Auden's work the sky becomes "like lead" (Auden 8) and the stars are nowhere to be seen, the earth equally empty, devoid of life: "A plain without a feature, bare and brown, / no blade of grass, no sign of neighborhood" (Auden 9-10). "The Shield of Achilles" portrays a shield that does not have defined boundaries, parts of it mixing until they form an inseparable mass. The form of the shield signifies that there is no order in Auden's world: "The mass and majesty of this world, all / that carries weight and always weighs the same lay in the hands of others" (Auden 38-39). Homer continues the description of the shield with occupations portrayed on it "of life in the city and life in the country—satisfying and social life, enjoyed by those who take part or watch" (Willcock 209). In "The Shield of Achilles," there are no descriptions of occupations aside from those related to wartime, there is no time devoted to enjoying life and ordinary people only watch and loiter without purpose: "they were small / and could not hope for help and no help came" (Auden 40-41). The *Iliad* continues the making of the shield with "The three scenes, of ploughing, reaping, and gathering the vintage" which "represent three seasons: winter, summer, and autumn" (Willcock 213). Additional scenes of lions, cattle, sheep, and a "country dance, in two parts: first the dancers move round in circles . . . then they form lines which run up to and through each other" (Willcock 214) form the inner parts of the shield which are nowhere to be seen in Auden's

poem. The description of Homer's portrayal of the shield ends with the ocean which "forms the edge around the disk-shaped Homeric world" (Willcock 214). Such a portrayal is made relevant by its historical context at the next level of Panofsky's analysis.

Panofsky continues his iconological investigation with the iconographic level which "considers the work's literary precedents and 'reads' the pre-iconographic level with the texts that it illuminates" (Orelle and Horwitz 1). It identifies the subject matter by word which precedes the image and concerns itself "with the subject matter or meaning" (Panofsky 26). Auden, like T.S. Eliot in "The Wasteland," portrays the post-war disillusionment through a constant state of apathy and loss of value. Using fragmented depictions of the gods, Auden removes any further elaboration on their background and leaves his readers with forms resembling those found in the *Iliad,* but who, very much like the soldiers in his poem, are stripped away of their individuality. In "The Shield of Achilles," the iconographic reading presupposes the historical context and constructs the conception from the image and the text. Auden writes his poem as a depiction of the war-ravaged modern world and, valuing honesty of thought and language, depicts the consequences of war: "Auden's grief over the Second World War's violence and destruction would find voice in poems that are haunted by ghostly figures" through "landscapes . . . haunted by past violence" (McCray 296). In addition, Auden replaces Homer's vibrant dancers with lifeless figures devoid of empathy and rejects the romanticization of war prevalent in the *Iliad*, making it evident that the idealized portrayal of war that Homer depicts becomes unattainable in the modern era: "the European present is even worse than the world the *Iliad* represents, because . . . the kind of pity Achilles feels for Priam and the dignity and self-respect that Priam maintains . . . are now no longer possible" (Schein 18).

In the *Iliad,* war is portrayed as having two sides, similar to the two cities shown on the shield. War can be cruel and dehumanizing, but it can also be exhilarating, honorable and, most importantly: "war forces the individual to endure the threat of slavery or annihi-

lation, but does so without dissolv[ing] his personality" (Schein 20). Auden contrasts the customs and traditions of Greek warfare and shows how meaningless modern conflict is, comparing it to ancient wars that appear to signify a greater purpose, a means to reach a meaningful end. In the *Iliad,* the figures have a greater purpose than their function on the battlefield as they play games, dance, make art, "expressing a basically optimistic view of life, a view that admits the existence of conflict and discord . . . but whose optimism is not essentially qualified by them" (Byre 34). In the *Iliad*, war is portrayed through scenes of everyday life mixed with the reality and brutality of war. The poem does not shy away from scenes of violence, but it focuses most of its attention to scenes of domestic life which show the importance of living life during difficult times and portrays the war as a necessary counterpart to everyday life, showing its legitimacy through contrasted notions of war and peace. In Auden's work, Thetis attempts to find aesthetically pleasing scenes among portrayals of violence, but she does not manage to find what she is looking for. Echoed in parts of the poem such as: "Thetis of the shining breasts cried out in dismay . . . the strong, iron-hearted, man-slaying Achilles who would not live long," the prevalent change in attitude regarding the war becomes apparent as Auden comments on the stagnant nature of the modern world, a worldview which supposes futility of life and the lack of purpose: "an individual is nothing but a cog in the social machinery—and this mechanical existence fosters nothing evolutionary, rather paves way for a life punctuated by stagnation" (Qadeer 1). Characters in the *Iliad* prize themselves on their achievements and share a feeling of the importance of life, even though it may be short. Each life is given purpose and the characters are aware of their impermanence, making peace with it because they know their life serves a greater purpose. In Auden's "The Shield of Achilles," however, there is no satisfaction brought by the brave deaths of the soldiers because they are treated as no more than puppets. Their purpose remains on the battlefield; they have no life outside of it and they are only necessary as long as they are capable of fighting. The *Iliad* portrays the preoccupation of traditional sources with the glorifi-

cation of war and its supremacy over love and sacrifice. Thus, Auden shows the demoralizing effects of war and manages to "enlarge the scope of the poem's concern from the plight of exceptional heroes to the plight of all human beings" (Summers 221). Through acceptance of the limited nature of human beings and their differences, Auden describes "the quest for the Authentic City, a city neither in heaven nor earth . . . the city in which human excellence is possible" (Haffenden 393).

Another relevant theme of Auden's poetry is "the cohabitation of Eros and Logos, body and consciousness, and the implicit acceptance of human duality" (Smith 210). To Auden, *logos* forms the objective law and is the foreground of reality that leads to the understanding of universal values through the exchange of old and new knowledge: "One must tear down old belief to build up new belief" (Izzo 135). According to Auden, "The body is revalued as the house of the spirit, which expresses its wish to shape and order the world through architecture. If the body is our primary home, the house . . . becomes our second body" (Smith 210). In this context, what the primary body reflects is the desensitized and emotionless spirit in "The Shield of Achilles" which, in turn, affects the second body, the vacant areas ravaged by war: "a plain without a feature . . . nowhere to sit down . . . column by column in a cloud of dust" (Auden 9–11). Homer's *logos* presents a less somber view of natural law. The *Iliad* portrays the idea of *logos* through the desire to live and the creation of self-identity. The *Iliad*, depicting a man who has lost his friend and himself, shows that even after an incredibly traumatic incident, Achilles is still "the man of indomitable intensity and fierceness . . . of clarity and purity, who will a good impossible in the world and eventually achieve it" (Redfield 10). Auden's soldiers are not as fortunate as they struggle under a regime that continues to deny them through oppressive measures: "however great any human being might estimate the force of hate to be, he would always underestimate it" (Auden 48).

Panofsky's final level of description is the iconological which consists of "iconography turned interpretive" (Hourihane 6) and deci-

phers the visual concept as a cultural idea, "expressive of the tendencies of the human mind crystallized into a particular historical, personal and cultural moment" (Firat 34). Both in the *Iliad* and "The Shield of Achilles," the shield holds great symbolic importance from which the reader can infer other essential themes and concepts relevant to the text. In the *Iliad,* the shield is both a symbol of Achilles and "a totality, wider than the epic itself" (Kalligeropoulos444). The shield itself is a portrayal of the ancient world: "a model of the universe . . . Moreover, it is a model of the social structure of Greek cities" (Kalligeropoulos 444). Providing an antithesis to Homer's scene of "the king in silence and holding his staff . . . near the line of the reapers" (Homer 390), Auden depicts his version of a king: "a voice without a face / proved by statistics that some cause was just in tones as dry and level as the place" (Auden 16–17). Auden continues to provide images of war combined and mixed with the images of war from different times and places, reinforcing the idea of the totality of war and its all-encompassing nature, suggesting the idea that all wars are ultimately the same. In the *Iliad*, the war and the people are allowed to exist independent of one another, while Auden portrays his soldiers as an extended force of the war, the barren land now a symbol for its equally barren people: "they lost their pride and died as men before their bodies died" (Auden 43–44). In the *Iliad,* however, the war functions as the counterpart to the images of peace and comfort, showing the importance of life beyond the brutality of warfare: "Justice and love, which have hardly any place in this study of extremes and of unjust acts of violence, nevertheless bathe the work in their light without ever becoming noticeable themselves" (Weil 188). Auden leaves the comfort of aesthetic glamorization, portraying war not as one aspect of existence but its direct actuator and determinant, showing its dominant role in the dehumanization of people: "A ragged urchin . . . who'd never heard/ of any world where promises were kept" (Auden 57–58). Not only does the poem focus on the effects of post-war disillusionment and dehumanization, but it also shows the importance of art during times when people are most vulnerable, portraying the need for art to confront the worst rather

than seek refuge in a dream (Smith 163). Although it is not apparent whether making art can help solve real-world problems, Auden does not shy away from a realistic depiction of the consequences of war through a more humane perspective. In this kind of world, the role of the artist is uncertain and seems to mirror the unsettled nature of the landscape which has become "the spiritual desert . . . a symbolic landscape leading to death" (Smith 211).

Auden's rejection of Romantic images becomes apparent through his depiction of nature and its role within the context of the poem, as opposed to similar poems where nature provided "an imaginary framework enabling the self to overcome alienation . . . enabling the self to enter a higher plane than that of a mundane reality where actual, physical nature was increasingly sacrificed to the Industrial Revolution" (Smith 212). While the *Iliad* deals with images of nature provided by gods, "full of irrational purposes and erratic interventions," (Redfield 15) Auden's work describes a realistic reminder of the post-war wasteland, an "inverted expression of Auden's vision of the Just City achieved by and embodying Agape" (Summers 215). Homer's use of divinity and godlike figures differs from elements of contemporary religion because the gods serve as active participants in the events that unfold. In the *Iliad*, gods watch and intervene when they want to, and their presence is felt through the entire poem: "a god who watches is normally a god who intervenes, a patron and an avenger" (de Jong 439). Auden shows a different view of religion, instead turning attention to executions similar to the Crucifixion which replace the rituals and "white flower-garlanded headers, libation and sacrifice" (Auden 25–26) which Thetis expects to see on the shield. In "The Shield of Achilles," Auden points to the importance of personal involvement in the development of a fair city through love for one's neighbor and freedom of choice. He shows the dangers of a social position "imposed involuntarily and unjustly, as in all the forms of exclusion and murder exemplified . . . by the Crucifixion" (Smith 58). Furthermore, Auden uses the horrors brought by indifference and passivity which make the inhumane actions of the people described possible: "that girls are raped, that two boys knife a third" (Auden 56)

to bring to light the symbolic incapability for love during the time of war through the connection of man and religion. Auden uses a few symbols to describe the failing relationship between God and man: the dove (or a bird) which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the "evocation of the Trinity in the form of 'three pale figures'" (Summers 224), the acts of hatred toward people through inaction, and the symbols of Christianity which emphasize that "the contemporary world has willfully rejected God's new covenant of love" (Summers 224).

To conclude, both the *Iliad* and "The Shield of Achilles" show the prevalent attitude toward the war through depiction of everyday life and violence brought on by the war. After showing the characteristics of both works, a clear distinction can be seen between the ideas in the *Iliad* and "The Shield of Achilles" which show the development of thought regarding warfare, such as the difference between the soldier's outfits: "In modern warfare, the warrior's dress and training is designed to dehumanize him. Thus, soldiers wear identical haircuts and uniforms so that they will all have one (uni) form" (Magee 1). Finally, while Auden's poem portrays the depersonalization and resignation of the people typical for the twentieth century, Homer's work continues to show that, despite the violence of war, "Anything destined for destruction and ignorant of its danger . . . is lit up with tenderness" (Bespaloff 88).

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Review paper

"The Master Has Given a Sock": The Construction of Society and Marginalized Groups in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* Series

Abstract

There is hardly a child who has not heard of J. K. Rowling's acclaimed *Harry Potter* fantasy series featuring seven volumes about a young wizard who encounters different challenges during his education at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The series discusses different problems that are, however, hidden beneath the surface, consequently causing a significant number of people to deem it unworthy of attention or research simply because they never take the time to consider the series in a more serious manner. To provide depth to the story, J. K. Rowling used history as a source for creating her magical society. Ideally designed to be equal, the reader cannot help but wonder upon realising the society is not so. In this paper the emphasis will be placed on different races of magical creatures fighting for their rights and place in a society that elevates wizards onto a pedestal. Focusing on the social injustice towards three specific magical races: goblins, house-elves, and centaurs, it will be shown that Rowling used three of the most exploited groups in history, the Jewish people, the African slaves, and the Indigenous Americans as inspiration for the construction of her characters. This will be done by analysing the entire Harry Potter series and comparing the results with historical information. Lastly, the evolution of the perception and the prejudice towards marginalized groups in the series along with the means of control over them will be presented.

Keywords: J. K. Rowling, society, *Harry Potter* series, prejudice, goblins, house-elves, centaurs.

1. Introduction

There is hardly a bookstore in the whole world that does not hold one of seven J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels or their complements such as *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. Starting in 1997 with the *Philosopher's Stone*[1] and finishing ten years later with the *Deathly Hallows*, Rowling built a fantastic world of witchcraft and wizardry. This series of fantasy novels chronicles the lives of a young wizard Harry Potter and his friends Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, all of whom are students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The exploits of the trio during six consecutive years in Hogwarts make up the plot of six novels, whereas the last novel is the only one set outside of the school. The main focus of the series is Harry's struggle against Lord Voldemort, a dark wizard who intends to subjugate all wizards and Muggles, that is, non-magical people. Owing to Rowling's use of racism and social injustice in its construction, the society Voldemort wishes to be the leader of is highly complex and hierarchical. Goblins, house-elves, and centaurs are especially maltreated due to some of their characteristics which connect them with historically marginalized ethnic or racial groups, that is, the Jewish people, the African slaves, and the Indigenous Americans. The purpose of this paper is to present and explain how Rowling portrayed these magical races and their historical foundation by using stereotypes. The prejudice and maltreatment of other social classes present in the series is not disregarded; however, the paper focuses on the chosen groups. The selected topic is still a major problem as many people continue to face prejudice and are ostracized because of their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion.

Cornelia Rémi has compiled a list of scholarship and criticism based on, or using the corpus of, the *Harry Potter* series (*Harry Potter Bibliography*) related to the topic. Research done on the series

1 The first entry in the Harry Potter series was published in the United States under the title *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The two titles will be used interchangeably in this paper.

focuses on a multitude of topics ranging from the examination and critique of contemporary society to psychological analysis of various aspects of the series. The Bibliography is compiled in alphabetical order and it is possible to find more than ninety publications of various kind (collections, articles, theses) only under the letter A (Rémi, *Harry Potter Bibliography*). However, publications dealing with historical background, othering, and racial issues are relatively few in number. "Harry and the Other: Answering the Race Question in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter" by Jackie Horne, "Not So Magical: Issues with Racism, Classism, and Ideology in Harry Potter" by Tiffany L. Walters, and *Stereotypes and Prejudices in the Magical World of Harry Potter* by Jasmina Gagulić are studies that feature extensive analyses of racial issues in the series and focus on magical creatures. They briefly mention the historical basis for the chosen magical races. Several other papers such as "Hermione and the House-Elves: The Literary and Historical Contexts of J.K. Rowling's Antislavery Campaign" (Carey), a chapter in *The Politics of Harry Potter* "Purebloods and Mudbloods: Race, Species, and Power" (Barratt), and "*Beasts," "Beings," and Everything Between: Environmental and Social Ethics in Harry Potter* (Fettke) focus on the racial relations in the series.

2. The Social Structure of the Wizarding Society

First and foremost, the wizarding society is portrayed as a society in which all witches and wizards legally have an equal status. However, in practice, it is highly divided based on two principles that separated nobility from the commoners throughout history: money and blood. For example, "My father told me all the Weasleys have red hair, freckles, and more children than they can afford" (Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone* 108) is what Draco, a descendant of an old rich pure-blood family, said to Harry when they first met. The Weasleys, likewise an old, pure-blood family, are considered less worthy because they are middle-class wizards who associate with Muggles and are referred to as "nasty old blood traitors" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 103). Mudbloods, wizards with Muggle parents, are treated even

worse and are continually insulted: "No one asked your opinion, you filthy little Mudblood" (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 112).

The structure of society in the series is viewed from the perspective of the old order and the rules they abide by. The perfect representation of a traditional wizarding family are the Malfoys. They strongly adhere to their attitudes and are ready to go to extremes to see them implemented. The Malfoys share these traits with Lord Voldemort, whom they serve. Next in line are other middle or lower-class pure-blooded wizarding families like the Weasleys. The middle-class is followed by the Mudbloods who are sometimes negatively branded or shunned for their Muggle origin. The bottom part of the magical society are the Squibs, those born into wizarding families albeit without any magical abilities. They are referred to as blood traitors and treated as second-class citizens: "Squibs were usually shipped off to Muggle schools and encouraged to integrate into the Muggle community . . . much kinder than trying to find them a place in the Wizarding world, where they must always be second class" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 155). It might be argued that squibs are the series' equivalent of disabled people. They are segregated from the rest of the wizarding society and equated with muggles, people not connected to magic and the wizarding community, the lowest class of human beings with whom most wizards have no contact at all.

The treatment of the last two groups is significantly better than that of non-human parts of society, magical creatures, illustrated by the fountain in the entrance hall of the Ministry of Magic featuring "a noble-looking wizard with his wand pointing straight up in the air" and "a beautiful witch, a centaur, a goblin, and a house-elf" of whom "the last three were all looking adoringly up at the witch and wizard" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 127). This description depicts centaurs, goblins, and house-elves as being happy in their subjugated position whilst governed by their 'beacon', the wizard. All three are starkly contrasted by their behaviour and position. Goblins are included, and have a significant role in the society, whereas house-elves are servants who live to please their masters, and centaurs are out-

casts who, driven away into the forests, prefer to live without human intrusion. Horne suggest that, in dealing with these magical races, Rowling draws upon two antiracism education strategies, multicultural antiracism and social justice antiracism. The former is "an approach that affirms the value of diversity as a method of combating racial oppression . . . by enabling empathy and cross-cultural understanding and solidarity" (78) and the later "assumes that racism lies . . . in the institutions that grant privileges and power to certain racial group . . . and restrict other racial groups from the same…" demanding that students question and challenge institutional structures that contribute to, or foster, racism (79).

3. Goblins

Goblins are introduced in chapter five, *Diagon Alley*, of the first book, when Harry has to acquire school materials. The first goblin he sees is essentially a doorman, standing in front of Gringotts, the wizard bank, in a uniform. Described as having "a swarthy, clever face, a pointed beard and, Harry noticed, very long fingers and feet. He bowed as they walked inside" (Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone* 72). The characteristics of the Jewish people, or to be more accurate, the stereotypes about them, represent the historical basis upon which Rowling shaped the goblin(s). A number of attributes, namely the goatee (Trachtenberg 46), a big nose (Lipton, "The Invention of the Jewish Nose"), and money-lending (Foxman 61), are the most obvious connections. A common stereotype about Jews is that they run most of the world's banks and control the economy, just like the goblins operate Gringotts, the wizarding bank. What further solidifies the image of the goblin is the fact that they are skilled in magic precisely like the Jews because "in popular belief the Jews were held to be adroit in all the skills of the magician" (Trachtenberg 57).

However, their magical abilities are restrained as exemplified in the final volume of the series, *The Deathly Hallows*: "'The right to carry a wand, said the goblin quietly, 'has long been contested between wizards and goblins'" (488). The extent of maltreatment is evident

when a small act of politeness surprises Griphook: "Goblins and elves are not used to the protection or the respect that you have shown this night. Not from wand-carriers" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 488). Similarly, the Jews have been marginalized and oppressed throughout history, culminating in Hitler's Holocaust. In the series, goblins do not accept their position peacefully and there is mention of several "bloody and vicious goblin riots" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 392) by Professor Binns, for which it is noted "that goblin resistance was not merely a single event, but a way of life" (Horne 90). Their rebellions and the animosity Griphook clearly shows towards his hosts at Shell Cottage contribute to the conclusion that "the biases that goblins and others receive from many wizards is just as equally given" (Walters 47), and suggests that there is a significant cultural gap between goblins and wizards, possibly too large for the races to trust each other (Walters 48). Unlike Tolkien's goblins who are "cruel, wicked, and bad-hearted" (Tolkien 44), Rowling's seem not to be inherently evil but prejudiced and oppressed. It is then a question of how much of their behaviour is conditioned by their status in the society and how much the behaviour influenced their placement in the society.

Occasionally, Rowling induces sympathy for the goblins, but also portrays Griphook, the only goblin readers have more contact with, as "unexpectedly blood-thirsty, laughed at the idea of pain in lesser creatures, and seemed to relish the possibility that they might have to hurt other wizards" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 509). This kind of portrayal is reminiscent of a prejudice towards the Jewish people, according to which they are vicious and bloodthirsty, which stems from the fact that they were labelled as the people who killed Jesus Christ and murdered and drank the blood of Christian children (Falk 369). In Rowling's novels, this creates mixed feelings, which likely serve to show that even though an individual is bad, that does not mean one has the right to oppress the entire race the individual belongs to. Moreover, there is a department within the Ministry of Magic called the Goblin Liaison Office, which would suggest an approach towards equality, but its head is a wizard, not a goblin, which further corroborates the thesis that wizards are the leaders of all races. Walters com-

pares this type of institutionalized separation with the Separate but Equal policy from the late nineteenth century stating that wizards still foolishly believe that goblins are comfortable with this arrangement (48). Nonetheless, the position of the goblins, however bad, was even worse while Voldemort was in power: "They've suffered losses too. Remember that goblin family he murdered last time" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 85). In spite of their treatment by Voldemort, the prejudice towards goblins makes wizards, like Tonks's father, believe that: "the goblins were for You-Know-Who, on the whole" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 296). However, even though the goblins choose to take no sides in the wizards' war (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 296), Griphook helps Harry and his friends in their efforts to defeat Voldemort, even if it is for selfish reasons.

4. House-elves

The second, most oppressed group in the series are the house-elves. Dobby, a house-elf whom the readers meet and come to love, first appears in *The Chamber of Secrets*: "The creature slipped off the bed and bowed so low that the end of its long, thin nose touched the carpet. Harry noticed that it was wearing what looked like an old pillowcase, with rips for arm- and leg-holes" (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 12). Being house-servants, unpaid and always working, elves are historically based on the African slaves. However, the slave society was divided into levels and the house-elves might be best compared to the field hands, the lowest-level slaves who worked in the fields, because field hands, much like house-elves, wore clothes made out of rough fabric, usually issued twice a year by their master (Gruber). The importance of clothes in the slave society is further confirmed by the fact that house-elves could only be liberated through receiving clothes from their master, whereas African slaves stole clothes when they escaped to blend into the free society (Gruber).

What further connects the elves to African slaves is the fact that they speak in the vernacular, "reminiscent of 1930s and 40s Hollywood misconceptions of African-American dialects" (Carey 104).

In addition, Dobby's physical features are described as resembling a stereotype of a Black man: "The elf's ugly brown face split suddenly into a wide, toothy smile" (Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets* 249). When threatened by their masters with being given clothing, both Winky and Sirius's house-elf, Kreacher, are terrified by the prospect of freedom: "No, master! Not clothes, not clothes!" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 138). This kind of ridiculous behaviour is reminiscent of a stereotype, deriving from Southern literature, of a "Happy Darky" proud to serve their masters (Flora and MacKethan 327) and it illustrates "the depth of false consciousness in elf culture" (Ostry 96). The house-elves have so long been conditioned to the state of servility by the wizards that they no longer know of anything else.

The relations between the wizards and the house-elves are represented by two important characters. Hermione, who grew up in the Muggle society and is very educated, quickly realizes that the treatment of house-elves is similar to slavery and exclaims: "It's slavery, that's what it is!" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 125); moreover, she is the only one who wonders: "Why doesn't anyone do something about it?" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 125). Her question is immediately answered by Ron, whose attitude represents the public opinion: "'Well, the elves are happy, aren't they? You heard old Winky back at the match . . . 'House elves is not supposed to have fun' . . . That's what she likes, being bossed around . . .'" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 125). Lyubansky supports Hermione's opinion and states that "there is evidence that prolonged enslavement (and even second-class status) can lead to the victimized group's internalization of the oppressors' belief system" (245). Therefore, the slaves cannot be happy because they are so accustomed to the burdens they carry as to consider them a noble service. This is well exemplified by the character of Kreacher, for whom Dumbledore says: "Kreacher is what he has been made by wizards . . . Yes, he is to be pitied. His existence has been as miserable as your friend Dobby's" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 832), especially when referring to the fact that he ill-behaved towards his new owners (employees) because he considered them less worthy than his deceased masters. Hermione, the main supporter of house-elves,

simply cannot stand how they are treated and she starts S.P.E.W. – Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare, to battle for the rights of the elves who have been enslaved for centuries. Horne recognizes Hermione's approach to the fight against slavery as the social justice antiracism approach because Hermione is trying to change the system; she is calling for institutional change (85). Her effort is confronted by various characters who believe things should stay as they are, which include even Ron and Hagrid. However, Harry is presented as the character who promotes the multicultural antiracism approach, that is, treating others with kindness, respect, and sympathy, changing things on a personal level, unlike Hermione's political struggle on a wider scale (Horne 84).

Harry's friendship with Dobby ultimately ends with Dobby's death in *The Deathly Hallows*. He is killed by Bellatrix Lestrange, one of Voldemort's most trusted Death Eaters, when he rescues Harry and the others. Harry and Dobby's relationship, in which Harry gives Dobby freedom, and Dobby constantly helps and saves Harry, dying in the process, is reminiscent of a magical-negro and white-messiah trope. The magical negro is a character who exists to help, support, enlighten, and inspire (Ikard 94), everything Dobby does by being who he is and causing Harry to take pity on him and show him kindness. The magical negro is self-sacrificial (Ikard 10) and "disappears from the plot after fixing the White character's problems, signalling their ancillary position as a personified plot device" (Hughey 756). Similarly, Dobby helps Harry on multiple occasions, serves to raise Harry's awareness of the issues of racism and, ultimately, Dobby's death and subsequent burial portray Harry as an unusual wizard in the eyes of Griphook (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 486), meaning that he is better than most wizards. Dobby is, essentially, a backdrop character for Rowling to develop Harry's multicultural antiracist approach. Harry, the white messiah, sees Dobby as being in need of love, understanding, and inspiration (Ikard 10). He frees him from slavery by giving him a sock and is thus his saviour. Harry and Hermione's behaviour later affects Ron who has always been sceptical about S.P.E.W. and ignorantly accepted inequality as a given. In the

Deathly Hallows, he demonstrates a degree of worry and compassion by saying that they should save the house-elves in the kitchen in Hogwarts: "I mean we should tell them to get out . . . We can't order them to die for us" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 625).

5. Centaurs

Of the three portrayed social groups, the centaurs are the ones who are lawfully as well as physically excluded from the wizarding society. The first encounter with these magical beings occurs in *The Philosopher's Stone* when Harry is saved from Voldemort by the centaur Firenze. Even though the story of the centaurs derives from classical mythology, they are historically based on the Native Americans. They are connected to nature and their respect for the environment is what they share with the native peoples. Furthermore, their land was taken from them lawfully by various treaties and they have been excluded and limited to forests, that is, reservations ("Native American Cultures"): "I would remind you that you live here only because the Ministry of Magic permits you certain areas of land" (*Order of the Phoenix* 755).

Dolores Umbridge portrays the attitude of the Ministry of Magic toward centaurs when she says: "So be very careful! By the laws laid down by the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, any attack by half-breeds such as yourselves on a human . . ." (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 754). She insults them by calling them half-breeds, subjugating them into a position inferior to humans. Several Hogwarts students also assume that the centaurs are inferior: "Did Hagrid breed you" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 601), but they mostly do so out of ignorance and are immediately answered that "Centaurs are not the servants or playthings of humans" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 602).

Due to the history of their conflicts, the animosity of centaurs towards wizards is reciprocated: "We do not recognize your laws, we do not acknowledge your superiority" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix*

757). Centaurs have even refused the "being" status granted to them by the Ministry of Magic and requested to remain "beasts" to show that they are not willing to be part of the wizarding community and would rather be left alone as non-threatening beasts are (Rowling, *Fantastic Beasts*, xiii). Centaurs do not like to interact with people, especially in ways that include behaving like horses: "You have a human on your back! Have you no shame? Are you a common mule . . . It is not our business to run around like donkeys after stray humans in our forest!" (Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone* 257). Namely, centaurs find themselves superior to wizards, to whom they refer merely as humans, and not wizards: "We consider that a great insult, human! Our intelligence, thankfully, far outstrips your own" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 754). When the centaur Firenze comes to teach divination in Hogwarts, he becomes an outcast (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 427) due to his involvement in the wizarding community. He is accused of "peddling our knowledge and secrets among humans . . . There can be no return from such disgrace" (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 698). Moreover, certain wizards also show their displeasure with his position such as Professor Trelawney: "'Or Dobbin, as I prefer to think of him. You would have thought, would you not, that now I am returned to the school Professor Dumbledore might have got rid of the horse? But no . . . we share classes. . . . It's an insult, frankly, an insult" (Rowling, *Half-Blood Prince* 317). By calling Firenze a Dobbin, that is, a farm horse, which is clearly a derogatory term for a centaur, Professor Trelawney expresses the opinion that she is obviously better than Firenze, if only on the grounds of being a wizard, and not a member of a lower race.

6. Interracial Animosity

Interracial animosity is present and portrayed in the quote where Winky suggests that Dobby is an anomaly among the house-elves: "He is getting up to all sorts of high jinks, sir, what is unbecoming to a house-elf. You goes racketing around like this, Dobby, I says, and next thing I hear you's up in front of the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, like some common

goblin" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 98). It is clearly stated that house-elves look down upon the goblins' rebellious behaviour. Similarly, the goblins project similar prejudice as wizards towards house-elves: "Duties ill-befitting the dignity of my race . . . I am not a house-elf'" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 296). Another instance of interracial animosity is when Hagrid, a half-giant himself, refers to the centaurs as mules when their behaviour does not suit him (Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix* 699). Towards the end of the series the house-elves of the kitchens of Hogwarts unite with the wizards and all those opposing Voldemort, even the centaurs, during the final battle for Hogwarts: "The centaurs Bane, Ronan, and Magorian burst into the hall with a great clatter of hooves . . . The house-elves of Hogwarts swarmed into the entrance hall, screaming and waving carving knives and cleavers" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 734). The scene after Harry kills Voldemort portrays everyone sharing sorrow and happiness together: "All were jumbled together, teachers and pupils, ghosts and parents, centaurs and house-elves, and Firenze lay recovering in a corner, and Grawp peered in through a smashed window" (Rowling, *Deathly Hallows* 745). All of these races were brought together by a common enemy, all of them except for the goblins, who remain on the outskirts of the action. This may point to the fact that prejudice against Jews is still present in contemporary society more than it is towards any other race or ethnic group, or it may just be that Rowling felt the goblin question to be too complicated to be this easily glossed over.

7. The Exertion of Control: the Ministry of Magic

The Ministry of Magic is the wizards' governing body whose "main job is to keep it from the Muggles that there's still witches an' wizards up an' down the country (Rowling, *Sorcerer's Stone* 65), as well as to administer the magical community by prescribing and enforcing laws. The Ministry is composed of departments, one of which is the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, that is, beings, beasts, and spirits. Definitions for these three categories were established in 1811. A being is "any creature that has

sufficient intelligence to understand the laws of the magical community and to bear part of the responsibility in shaping those laws", beasts are creatures without sufficient intelligence, and the category of spirits exists because ghosts asserted that it was "insensitive to class them as 'beings' when they were so clearly 'has-beens'" (Rowling, *Fantastic Beasts* xii). The definition given for beings suggests that they have the right to partake in the workings of the Ministry, but the name of the department implies that magical creatures are subject to certain rules and restrictions, such as the right to carry a wand, granted only to wizards (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 71).

Beasts, beings, and spirits who break these rules will also be disciplined, depending on the gravity of their transgression. One of Voldemort's Death Eaters has a job that includes "destroying dangerous beasts for the Ministry of Magic" (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 651). The threat of a member of the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures is enough to scare house-elves (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 141). In the *Goblet of Fire*, Winky is caught holding Harry's wand after someone made the Dark Mark with it, and Percy comments how that would have looked "if she'd been brought up in front of the Department for the Regulation and Control", clearly saying she could have stood trial for breaking the law, a situation made worse by the damage she did to her master's reputation by disobeying his orders (Rowling, 141). However, the Department has established The Goblin Liaison Office and The Centaur Liaison Office as an approach towards equality, but at their heads are not even the members of their own species, but wizards (Rowling, *Goblet of Fire* 86). The fact that no other magical race has a representative in the wizarding governing body, the Ministry of Magic, corroborates the thesis that wizards consider themselves the leaders of all races and that the Ministry of Magic is a means of exerting control over other beings.

8. Conclusion

To summarize, J. K. Rowling clearly based the house-elves, goblins, and centaurs on three of the most exploited groups in history,

the Jewish people, the African slaves, and the Indigenous Americans. They differ in accepting their inferior positions, house-elves being accustomed to it, goblins rebelling against it and centaurs excluding themselves from the wizarding society. Rowling's reasons may have been to create an atmosphere where the reader is likely to accept them as inferior, subjugated creatures whose unacceptable treatment serves to elaborate how the wizarding society functions. In addition, Rowling makes the readers think about their society and the inequality and oppression within. The actions of Harry and Hermione appear to promote two ways of dealing with inequality and racism, the multicultural approach and the social justice approach. The readers may choose how they wish to address the problem, whether individually or on an institutional level, what matters is that they recognize the signs and fight for what is right. The novels also send a message that the government is sometimes to blame for their treatment of marginalized groups and that it often serves as a means of control, rather than protection. Therefore, all citizens have the duty to fight against any form of discrimination and injustice, and raise awareness to help marginalized people fight for themselves. An oppressive society is condemned to a defeat as long as there are those willing to fight for justice. In Rowling's series, the unification of all magical creatures against Voldemort might be the beginning of change of the crude old ways, which provides hope for making the wizarding society that of equals, in which everyone will have the same rights and the possibility to choose their future for themselves.

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Review paper

The Effects of Worldbuilding on Storytelling in George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*

Abstract

In order to write a successful fantasy story, a writer should always have his worldbuilding affect the storytelling, creating immersion and making the story believable in relation to the setting. George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* serves as a prime example of how worldbuilding can be used not only to make the world richer, but also to affect the storytelling, making it more engaging for his audience. In this way, Martin's worldbuilding affects the plot, characterization, tone, and the mood of his work. Specifically, he influences the plot by setting the groundwork for his story, writing about the geography, history, politics, and cultures of his world. All of this heavily influences the decisions that his characters make and, therefore, drives the plot. Simultaneously, the same elements affect characterization, determining the background of different characters and giving them certain traits according to it. Furthermore, Martin uses worldbuilding to affect the tone and the mood in his novels, influencing the reader's understanding of the story, or showing characters' emotions and drawing the reader's attention. Despite having some minor issues with pacing and consistence, Martin created an immersive, detailed world that manages to sustain and drive his complex story.

Keywords: worldbuilding, storytelling, George R. R. Martin, plot, characterization, pacing

1. Introduction

Worldbuilding is an essential part of fantasy writing. Through it, fantasy writers shape the settings of their stories, creating unique worlds suitable for what they want to tell. The worlds can be a sim-

ple twist on our own reality or fully developed, distinct settings with their own geography, history, cultures, flora and fauna, physics, and more (Ryan 41). While the purpose of this information is to provide context, the goal of worldbuilding is to immerse the reader and make them believe the story that they are reading (Gillet 1). To accomplish this, the writer has to make sure that the story makes sense within the created setting. This is achieved by having the worldbuilding affect the storytelling. That way the characters and their actions stay in line with the conditions posed by the setting, while the setting gets to exist on its own, independent of the characters, which makes it appear natural and realistic (Rosenberg 32). Lately, few writers have accomplished this better than George R. R. Martin in his acclaimed fantasy series *A Song of Ice and Fire.* In it, Martin describes his world in detail, writing about its geography, history, politics, cultures, and much more, not only to expand his setting, but also to shape his storytelling in a multitude of ways. All of this helped create a vivid and immersive universe which has earned him a tremendous amount of attention over the last decade (Rosenberg 31). In spite of this fame, his approach to worldbuilding has not been examined thoroughly in academic writing and that is why this paper will discuss the main ways in which Martin utilizes worldbuilding to shape his storytelling. The methods in question are not Martin's inventions. However, he does display an aptitude that makes his works a good example for some of the numerous ways in which worldbuilding can be utilized, which might be inspiring to beginner writers, or more experienced ones for that matter. Therefore, the paper will briefly define Martin's style of worldbuilding and then discuss the ways in which worldbuilding affects some elements of storytelling, namely the plot, characterization, tone, and mood. Lastly, it will also mention some negative effects of worldbuilding that are noticeable in Martin's novels.

2. Martin's Style of Worldbuilding

In Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, all of the worldbuilding is delivered through characters in the form of senses, dialogue,

thoughts, or knowledge. These are mediated with the use of third-person narration with a non-omniscient narrator. As such, the amount of information that the reader gets is limited and very much tied to knowledge and experience of the featured point of view character and the characters surrounding them (Hirsso 4). However, Martin includes around a dozen POV characters in each novel,[1] with up to eighteen characters in *A Dance with Dragons,* switching between them and thus generating more than enough information required to get a sense of his world (Rosenberg 31). These characters are dynamic and realistic, all having their own views and beliefs, which depend on their background and development. Because of this, some events in the novels are described from different perspectives, adding to the overall complexity of the world and the story. Martin does not build his world linearly the way, for instance, Tolkien does in *Silmarillion,* where he includes a creation myth and describes thoroughly the design of his world's cosmology and the featured races (Whittingham ch. 2). Instead, he reveals bits of it through his characters, which the reader then pieces together to create his own view of the world. This is further complemented by the fact that many of these characters stand opposed to each other, with none of them truly being in the right. Such an approach creates an interesting dynamic between the story and its readers, making them co-dependent, as the readers themselves essentially become world-builders (Boni 10). This is, perhaps, one of the most prominent features of Martin's books, supported by the fact that there are hundreds of theories posted and discussed online by his readership. It also lends itself well to the sense of realism that is central to Martin's books.

Martin uses two main methods to deliver his worldbuilding. Firstly, most of the basic information about the characters and their surroundings are simply narrated from the third person perspective, while being presented as information that is in some way integral to the POV character in that chapter. This is the main method by which

1 Point-of-view character is a character whose perspective is represented in the story or part of the story.

Martin introduces most of his worldbuilding, tying it seamlessly with the rest of his narration:

> Bran was going to be a knight himself someday, one of the Kingsguard. Old Nan said they were the finest swords in all the realm. There were only seven of them, and they wore white armor and had no wives or children, but lived only to serve the king. Bran knew all the stories. (*A Game of Thrones* 73)

Besides general exposition, this is also the way Martin writes about his characters' senses, thoughts and emotions which can reflect the world and provide further information about it.

The other major method used for worldbuilding are the dialogues which can additionally provide a perspective that is external to the POV character. This method best shows the different worldviews that characters have, introducing new information or questioning what has been previously established. An example of this can be found in the second book, *A Clash of Kings*, when Jon Snow captures a wildling girl called Ygritte. As they try to pass the time, Jon asks her to tell him the story about a figure called Bael the Bard and she says that "He was King-beyond-the-Wall a long time back" (673), who seduced a Stark girl who "loved Bael so dearly she bore him a son" (675). Jon, however, does not believe the story since he had never heard of Bael before and refuses to believe that a wildling could seduce a Stark, having been taught that wildlings are evil.

Both worldbuilding methods are carefully utilized by Martin to provide the information and the hints necessary for the readers to piece the world together. While most questions do eventually get answered, some of them like the origin and the history of the Others, the history of the children of the forest, and the world in general are intentionally left ambiguous. Therefore, omission also plays an important role in Martin's writing, engaging the readers with the world, as they try to explain parts of Martin's writing and fill in those that are missing.

3. The Effects of Worldbuilding on Plot

The most obvious element of storytelling affected by worldbuilding is the plot. The world that a writer constructs serves as a drive for the story that he wants to tell (Hergenrader 18). At the same time, it provides context for the characters and makes sense of their actions and goals. Without it, or if done incorrectly, the story can be illogical, contradictory, and not immersive (Hergenrader 17). Martin is aware of these effects and acts accordingly, crafting his setting meticulously and making sure that all of the plot points work in harmony with it. As a result, he manages to create an organic and realistic universe with relatively few inconsistencies and plot holes. While he does explore themes like identity, violence, and social inequality, which are all applicable to our modern age, he nevertheless adapts them to the unique environment of his universe. This means that, instead of focusing only on the story that he wants to tell, Martin makes sure that his storytelling follows the rules and fits the environment set by his worldbuilding. This can be contrasted with the later seasons of its TV adaptation, *Game of Thrones,* which arguably rushed multiple storylines, ignoring the groundwork set in the previous seasons, including geography, history, and culture.

Throughout Martin's works, readers can notice the connection between the plot and worldbuilding. At least, this can come down to the terrain and the climate of Martin's world which, despite being mostly ordinary, are not used as mere backdrop and instead greatly influence the actions of different characters. For example, in *A Game of Thrones*, Robb Stark has to negotiate with House Frey in order to secure the crossing of the river Trident. To have his army cross the river, Robb has to marry one of Lord Frey's daughters (626). Similarly, a big part of Daenerys Targaryen's plot revolves around her trying to secure ships in order to cross the Narrow Sea and retake the Iron Throne. But perhaps the best example of this are the seasons of Martin's world which are very unpredictable, with winters lasting up to a couple of years. For example, in *A Game of Thrones,* it is mentioned that Tyrion Lannister "had been born in the dead of winter" (201),

which lasted for almost three years (201). Such conditions, naturally, shape the whole dynamic of Martin's world, especially in *A Dance with Dragons* where everyone becomes much more conservative when it comes to food. This is best seen on the Wall where Jon has to find a way to feed all of the wildlings that joined them and crossed the Wall. One of his officers remarks: "If they do not slay us with their swords, they will do so with their mouths" (205).

Another important aspect of worldbuilding that Martin uses to shape his plot are history and politics, which he intricately develops to drive the whole story. To begin, Martin creates a setting that is similar to Medieval Europe, which is one of the most common inspirations for fantasy writers in general (Hirsso 2). However, instead of using it only for aesthetical purposes, he uses his setting as the vessel for the themes that were previously mentioned. For example, the fact that Martin makes the noble houses an integral part of Westerosi society serves as the drive for numerous characters who question their identity, like Theon, Jon, Arya, Daenerys, and others. Theon Greyjoy, for example, betrays the Starks, who were his foster family, trying to prove himself to his father, Balon Greyjoy (*A Clash of Kings* 351), going as far as capturing the Stark's ancestral castle Winterfell. Similarly, the fact that Martin makes his world patriarchal serves as the drive for multiple female characters who try to prove their worth in society. A good example of this is Lady Brienne who dreams of becoming a knight, training to be a capable fighter and acting according to the ideals of knighthood, proven by her steadfast loyalty to the people that she had given her vows to, as seen in *A Feast for Crows*: "There are others looking, all wanting to capture her or sell her to the queen. I have to find her first. I promised to Jaime. *Oathkeeper,* he named the sword. I have to try to save her…or die in the attempt" (533). Finally, all the differences between the characters, including their status, opinions, and beliefs, are the cause of violence, which is the main theme of Martin's novels.

To establish the differences between characters in his world and explain the current socio-political structure of it, Martin writes ex-

tensively about history, showing the developments that led to the current state of it. This also lets the reader track the source of different plot points, showing the events that led to certain bonds and animosities. Multiple examples of this can be drawn from the past civil war called Robert's Rebellion, which in many ways serves as the catalyst for the story itself due to the fact that the events surrounding it have shaped many of its characters (Hirsso 5). Daenerys, for instance, seeks to reclaim the Iron Throne because her family, the Targaryens, lost it. House Lannister tries to claw its way to the top due to the fact that it positioned itself highly during the last days of the war, while House Martell seeks revenge for the murder of its family members during the sacking of King's Landing (Walker 89). Besides genealogy, Martin affirms these conflicts by including different accounts of past events. For example, during the final moments of Robert's Rebellion, Jaime Lannister murders the Mad King, despite being one of his sworn guards. Following that, Jaime feels that his actions were just, considering them as his finest act (*A Clash of Kings* 722), due to the fact that the King had ordered the complete destruction of the capital city, which the reader finds out later. Ned Stark, however, is not aware of these orders and immediately judges Jaime's actions, seeing them as dishonorable (*A Storm of Swords* ch. 37). This greatly influences the relationship between the two characters and drives Jaime's later efforts to redeem himself.

In addition to history and the political structure of his world, Martin also writes a lot about various cultures and religions. He describes how different parts of the world have different beliefs and customs, which are not implemented merely to make the world richer but also to greatly influence the plot. At the beginning of the first book, religions only have a minor role. However, by the fifth book, *A Dance with Dragons,* there are several religions that meddle with the politics of Martin's world, influencing the plot. Melisandre, a red priestess, persuades Stannis Baratheon that he is the hero of the lord of light R'hllor, driving him to perform sacrifices and rituals and follow her prophecies. In King's Landing, religious fanatics known as sparrows come to power in the city (*A Feast for Crows* 272), punishing anyone who

violates the norms put forward by the Faith of the Seven. Lastly, in the north, the Three-Eyed Raven and the Children of the Forest teach Bran about greensight and warging, which are granted to the worshipers of the Old Gods of the Forest. These religions have their traditions and practices which sometimes also determine the plot. The best example of this are the laws of hospitality, also known as the guest right. After the massacre known as the Red Wedding, which happens in *A Storm of Swords*, many people start to despise House Frey for breaking the guest right and murdering their former liege lord, Robb Stark, and hundreds of his followers after giving them a formal promise of protection. In *A Feast for Crows,* it is stated that some people believe "The Red Wedding was an affront to all the laws of gods and men" (276). This event was, however, provoked by Robb's breaking of betrothal to one of Lord Frey's daughters, which is considered to be a huge slight in Martin's world. All of these examples show some of the ways in which Martin uses worldbuilding not only to expand and enrich his world, but also to influence the story in a multitude of ways by having his characters interact with their surroundings.

4. The Effects of Worldbuilding on Characterization

Characterization is another important element of storytelling that is affected by worldbuilding. As has already been established, characters' actions are determined by numerous elements of worldbuilding like politics, history, religion, and culture. Similarly, a character can have his entire characterization determined by the same factors. Martin himself has stated that he prefers to think of his characters as real people ("George RR Martin on Character Development"), which means that he mostly avoids shaping the world according to individual characters and instead tries to write them in accordance with it. Like real people, his characters, therefore, experience real problems and run into obstacles in their world. This proves the point that most of his characterization, like character actions, depends on worldbuilding. There are numerous examples to back this. To begin with, due to the socio-political context of Martin's world, his characters are defined by

their social status. While this is not a rule, characters of higher status are more often shown to be better educated, trained, and well-spoken, but also spoiled, greedy, and disregarding of others. This can be seen in *A Game of Thrones* when Jon joins the Night's Watch. Upon meeting his sworn brothers, Jon believes that he is "better than they are" (176), since he is a better fighter than all of them. Conversely, lowborn characters are often shown to be uneducated and quite superstitious. Characterization further varies from one part of the world to the other, implying a degree of stereotypization. For instance, characters from the North are often seen as hardy and wild, characters from Vale as honorable, characters from Dorne as hot-blooded and so on.

Gender differences are also prevalent due to the fact that the world that Martin depicts is mostly patriarchal (Hirsso 11). In it, women are expected to be as presentable as possible, polite, and obedient (Hirsso 12). While most try to adhere to these preconceptions, Martin shows that they are aware of the unfair way in which they are treated, evidenced, for example, by Lady Catelyn's thoughts in *A Storm of Swords*. After her son orders her to stay put while he goes off fighting, she ponders, "Is this my punishment for opposing him about Jon Snow? Or for being a woman, and worse, a mother?" (65). This is another way that Martin uses worldbuilding to question important issues like social and gender inequality.

Characterization is further affected by the various prejudices that Martin plants into the different cultures that he depicts, which have a great effect on the characters who are the subject of these prejudices. The best examples of this are Jon Snow and Tyrion Lannister, who are both belittled due to the circumstances of their birth. Jon was born out of wedlock, being the only illegitimate child of Lord Eddard Stark. From the first novel, readers can see the extent to which this shapes his character, making him somber, resentful, and sometimes jealous of his siblings. After the death of his father, Jon thinks to himself: "I have no place… I'm a bastard, I have no rights, no name, no mother, and now not even a father" (*A Game of Thrones* 758). Martin, however, made Jon even more complex of a character by writing him as a

highborn bastard and showing him being raised at his father's court, which he states to be highly unconventional for most of Westeros. This addition in worldbuilding, which may seem unimportant on its own, is the source of most of Jon's frustration that is an important element of his character arc. Similarly, Tyrion is born with dwarfism and has thus been subjected to mockery and discrimination his whole life. Contrary to many other fantasy worlds, Martin did not make dwarfs into a distinct race and instead chose to portray them the same as they are in our world. Like Jon, Tyrion comes from a powerful noble house, the Lannisters. This greatly shapes him as a character as it means that, in spite of his dwarfism, things are expected of him (*A Game of Thrones* 118). Since he was unable to become a great warrior due to his short stature, he became very well educated, which is one of his most noted features. Furthermore, due to being treated unfairly, he is shown to be quite compassionate towards other broken or mistreated characters. However, he is also frustrated and bitter, especially when mistreated by his own family. These examples show how Martin uses worldbuilding to support characterization, developing his characters naturally according to the world that he creates.

5. The Effects of Worldbuilding on Tone and Mood

While it is essentially background information, worldbuilding should not be straightforward exposition without tone or expression. On the contrary, Martin uses worldbuilding to influence both the tone and the mood in his work.

In the first case, Martin's worldbuilding provides two overlaying tones which complement the content of his story. When dealing with the fantastical elements of the story, worldbuilding helps create a dark and mysterious tone. This makes these elements stand out from the rest of the story where the tone of worldbuilding remains mostly neutral, depicting a realistic albeit grim medieval world (Hirsso 1). That also enforces the duality of Martin's world, where the magic is no longer ingrained into everyday life and is instead slowly becoming more pronounced, while appearing as something mysterious

and threatening to a lot of characters (Hirsso 4). The best examples of worldbuilding that induce a sense of mystery and dread are the tales and legends that Old Nan used to tell Bran. These stories usually speak of magic and various monstrous creatures, and are often full of violence and gore. And while some elements of the stories do appear to be entirely fictional, beings like the Others and the children of the forest are real and have their perception heavily influenced by the tone of these stories. On one occasion, Old Nan spoke of the Others:

> They swept over holdfasts and cities and kingdoms, felled heroes and armies by the score, riding their pale dead horses and leading hosts of the slain. All the swords of men could not stay their advance, and even maidens and suckling babes found no pity in them. They hunted the maids through frozen forests, and fed their dead servants on the flesh of human children. (*A Game of Thrones* 233)

This and other stories later affect the tone of Bran's chapters, after he crosses the Wall and goes north, getting closer to the Others and the children of the forest. They also affect the reader, making the other chapters that mention these beings appear dark and mysterious as well.

As mentioned, worldbuilding can also shape the mood of certain chapters in order to bare the character's emotions and imply their thoughts, or to simply affect the reader and make them more engaged with the material. There are several examples of this as Martin often uses worldbuilding to aid his characterization, displaying character's opinions and emotions. One example can be found in a Catelyn chapter in the *A Storm of Swords*, when Robb and his retinue travel to the Twins, the seat of House Frey, for an event that would later be known as the Red Wedding. As they travel through the Whispering Wood, where a battle took place not long ago, the reader gets a somber view of the area, seeing the remains from the battle. The mood of these descriptions matches Catelyn's thoughts, as she thinks: "More than the trees have died since then" (55), reminding her of her dead husband. Another example of this comes from *A Dance with Dragons*

where Tyrion travels through a ruined city called Chroyane and in the distance sees a ruined building called the Palace of Sorrows. His words denote his own sorrow, as he reveals that the place used to be known as the Palace of Love, turning his thoughts to his brief marriage with a girl named Tysha (ch. 18). In such examples, the created mood can indirectly reveal a lot about the character, showing their reaction to certain things around them, which would by themselves probably be unimportant.

Lastly, Martin shapes the mood with the help of worldbuilding in order to make certain chapters of paragraphs more impactful on the readers. An example of this is a Bran chapter in which he stays in an abandoned castle called the Nightfort and tells his companions some of the stories that Old Nan used to tell him, including the ones about the Night's King, the Rat Cook, Danny Flint, and Mad Axe (*A Dance with Dragons* 184–185). Likewise, Martin creates a sense of mystery while describing certain places like Essos, the Old Valyria, Asshai, or the continent of Sothoryos, making the readers curious and driving their imagination (Hirsso 69).

6. Negative Effects of Worldbuilding on Storytelling

In spite of the various ways in which worldbuilding makes the story deeper and richer, it can also have some negative effects on storytelling. As much as he has been praised for the world that he has created, Martin's worldbuilding is not without issues. In an interview for *The Guardian* Martin discussed the reason why his world became so vast and compared his writing to gardening, saying:

> The gardeners dig a hole, drop in a seed and water it. They kind of know what seed it is, they know if [they] planted a fantasy seed or mystery seed or whatever. But as the plant comes up and they water it, they don't know how many branches it's going to have, they find out as it grows. (Flood)

Due to his style of writing, his worldbuilding does not always affect the story since it does not necessarily have a specified purpose.

Namely, as it would be natural for them to do so, Martin's characters sometimes observe their surroundings and think about its history. This means that, at times, the story is put on hold in favor of exposition. While this rarely happens in *A Game of Thrones, A Clash of Kings,* and *A Storm of Swords,* it becomes more frequent in *A Feast for Crows* and *A Dance with Dragons,* slowing the pacing considerably. An example of this is a Brienne chapter in *A Feast for Crows* where a character called Nimble Dick extensively describes the history and politics of the region they were in, "regaling them with tales of Crackclaw Point. Every gloomy valley had its lord, he said, the lot of them united only by their mistrust of outsiders" (316). This is also noticeable in Tyrion chapters in *A Dance with Dragons*, where he spends much of the time traveling along the Rhoyne river and describing the scenery and history of the places along the coast of it.

Besides pacing, extensive worldbuilding can also cause problems with consistency and logistics. Namely, with the inclusion of so much information, Martin has to make sure that it all adds up and makes sense. This can be especially time-consuming since he sometimes deliberately writes conflicting information. Furthermore, it has led to a couple of inconsistencies of which the most notable one is the currency. For instance, in *A Game of Thrones,* Ned finds out that the rewards alone for the Hand's Tourney will amount to "Ninety thousand gold pieces," of which forty thousand go to the champion (187–188). However, in *A Storm of Swords* Jaime claims that "Three hundred dragons is a fair ransom for a knight" (37), while in *A Feast for Crows* a character claims that "Ten dragons are a fortune" (241). While these numbers are used to emphasize King Robert's carelessness or the poverty of the lower classes, they do not seem to add up logically, especially when other prices are considered. For example, in *A Storm of Swords,* Brienne wants to buy a couple of horses, offering "a dragon for each" (ch. 11). In the same book, the same sum is used to buy "a side of beef or six skinny piglets" (ch. 38). This does not fit the context of the world, especially since horses are seen as a status symbol and are mainly used by the nobility. Therefore, while well tied and meaningful worldbuilding is always welcome, a writer

should avoid the elements which could later cause unnecessary complications or drag the story too much.

7. Conclusion

To write a believable story and immerse the reader into their world, writers should make their worldbuilding affect their storytelling. George R. R. Martin's world of *A Song of Ice and Fire* serves as a prime example of how worldbuilding can be utilized not only to shape the setting but also to affect the story, creating a vivid and immersive fictional universe. In his novels, Martin writes extensively about geography, history, politics, cultures, and many other aspects of his world, which are all tied closely to the story. Upon inspection, the reader can notice a couple of ways in which Martin's worldbuilding affects his storytelling.

Firstly, worldbuilding influences the plot by describing the terrain and climate which set some of the basic rules of the world. Instead of serving as a mere backdrop, with characters simply describing the scenery around them, terrain presents an actual obstacle which sometimes greatly affects decisions of Martin's character. The same can be applied for the climate, which provides an overarching threat to the characters. Additionally, the plot is shaped by the history, politics, and culture of Martin's world, which creates differences that are the source of most of the conflict within the story. As such, these aspects of worldbuilding put forward some major themes of Martin's writing such as identity, social inequality, and violence.

Secondly, worldbuilding influences characterization similarly to the plot. Namely, as a result of social and cultural differences within the story, characters possess different traits that subsequently evolve according to their surroundings. This means that Martin generally avoids the use of archetypes and instead chooses to develop his characters realistically. With that, he also abandons the black-and-white morality which is prevalent in the fantasy genre. Therefore, to create a realistic character, Martin uses several different factors that would

affect a real person, which extend far further than, for instance, only their social status. Characters are influenced by their ethnicities, culture, norms, and prejudices.

Finally, worldbuilding can be used to influence the tone and mood in the story by presenting things in a certain light. Martin uses this to establish the duality of his world, with one part being grounded in reality and the other being magical. Namely, at the beginning, Martin's novels have only a few magical elements which gradually become more pronounced. Due to not being common in Martin's world, magic is perceived as something mysterious and threatening by a lot of characters. This is in big part accomplished through worldbuilding that paints these elements with a dark and sinister tone, while showing the rest of the world in a more neutral manner. Furthermore, worldbuilding is used to affect the mood of certain chapters, denoting fear, or sorrow of certain characters, and making the readers more engaged with the story.

Despite its positive effects, Martin's worldbuilding also has its drawbacks. Specifically, as he builds his world naturally, Martin tends to describe many things that do not have any effect on the story. This can affect the pacing of his story severely, as he basically puts it on hold in order to describe the world around his characters. Furthermore, as he introduces a great number of details, he makes the writing more difficult by having more information that he needs to connect and make sense of. The best example of this is the currency, which appears to be quite inconsistent across the novels. Nevertheless, considering the scale of his novels, these are all minor issues that do not change the fact that Martin is a skilled worldbuilder. Therefore, all of the presented examples can serve as an inspiration to other writers.

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Review paper

The Armoured Outlaw: What Influenced Edward Kelly

Abstract

The Iron Bushranger, also known as Edward "Ned" Kelly, was and continues to be one of the most prevalent historical icons of outlawry that heeds from the land Down Under, Australia. Ned Kelly lived in a time when Australia was a budding, newly-discovered, lawless convict colony under the British rule; a tough time overall but made rougher by the scarcity of food, money and resources. Of Irish Catholic descent and rather poor, Kelly and his family often found themselves troubled by their circumstances which had subsequently influenced the young outlaw-to-be in his early days greatly. This paper focuses on the story of the famous bushranger, from his days as an unruly but determined child to his final hours as an aspiring revolutionary and what had led him there. With the main chunk of the research done based on the award-winning novel by Peter Carey called: *True History of the Kelly Gang*, the paper will show a side to colonial Australia through the lens of someone who has been disillusioned with what is expected of him from an early age in a new and unknown land ruled by greed and power-hungry men. The paper demonstrates how this had influenced a young Ned. Alongside Kelly's own life, the paper will take a look into the aftermath of Kelly's death and his actions as an outlaw with the help of the novelised version of Ned Kelly and the events of his life put into comparison with the historical ones.

Keywords: Ned Kelly, Peter Carey, *True History of the Kelly Gang*, family, authority, the British Empire

1. Introduction: *True History of the Kelly Gang*

To know the character of Edward 'Ned' Kelly from Peter Carey's book *True History of the Kelly Gang* one must first familiarize oneself with the premise of this semi-biographical novel. According to Mc-

Crum "This tour-de-force of storytelling, Carey's great gift, is a postmodern historical novel, a quasi-autobiography, narrated in the Australian vernacular with primitive grammar and scant punctuation, a dazzling act of ventriloquism, in a style inspired by an extraordinary fragment of Kelly's prose known as the Jerilderie letter." The vernacular in question is a style of writing that, while often difficult to read and comprehend, helps immerse the reader into the world of Ned Kelly. The style that the author uses mimics Kelly's alleged vernacular and therefore lacks grammar, coherence, and punctuation and often uses abbreviations. The style used also omits expletives for the sake of Ned's fictional daughter to whom the novel is addressed. While it is believed that the style is derivative of both the Cameron letter and the Jerilderie letter as Utley claims: "He had explained himself in the Cameron letter. That had failed. He would try again. This time he had a stack of paper, fifty-six pages crammed with 7,500 words" (150), having read the letters, it is safe to conclude that this is not the case. Kelly uses a different style in his letters that is distinctly more refined and has a high style of expression, presumably due to the letters being considered very important by Ned and due to his need to be taken seriously by the authorities.

As for the aforementioned fictional daughter, the novel starts with Ned addressing her as if she were the reader: "I lost my own father at 12 yr. of age and know what it is to be raised on lies and silences my dear daughter you are presently too young to understand a word I write but this history is for you and will contain no single lie may I burn in Hell if I speak false" (Carey 4). The decision to write the novel in this style lends itself to the portrayal of Ned Kelly as a "people's champion". The honesty that the introduction promises is, of course, subjective since the narrator is compromised by the events of the story, but the wish of the perceived narrator for the retelling to be as accurate as possible comes across as sincere and humanizes the outlaw in the reader's eyes. This is a well-known feature characteristic for works of historic fiction, where the lines between truth and fiction blur. As Linda Hutcheon points out in her chapter on historiographic metafiction, every history is real in itself and that story-

tellers have the right to exclude, omit and add parts to histories since these actions are no different to those of historians (107). With this in mind, alongside the fabricated baby daughter, the novel adds some new characters (like Mary Hearn, Ned's wife) and reforms some of the events of the outlaw's actual life to add to the dramatization of the outlaw's life story, to create an alternate history and tell a story. Events such as, for example, Ned Kelly's partnering with the outlaw Harry Power were manipulated to further solidify Ned's life as that of "a man wronged by the police and the government" (Tranter and Donoghue 374).

Many of these events, whether manipulated for the dramatics or not, influenced Ned Kelly and his legacy as the nation's "only true hero" (Utley 183). After the proceedings of his trial and subsequent execution, Ned's story and his crimes became almost mythical in their appearance.

As Utley claims "Even before his death, books, pamphlets, and articles in newspapers and magazines began rolling off the press. They celebrated Ned Kelly both for his exploits and his person; some portrayed him as the hero who robbed the rich and gave to the poor, while others condemned him as criminal bushranger rampaging around Victoria preying on banks and travellers" (Utley 183), and these behaviours aided the transgression of public opinion after the outlaw was sent to hang and continued to do so long after Ned Kelly was dead.

The fact that they could sway the public opinion to their side even after the crimes Ned and his gang had committed shows how tender the peace between the English and the Irish was and how willing the people were to support outlawry if it caused damage to the inept authorities. Being the sympathetic personality that he was, Ned saw that his people were suffering and sought to rectify that. He wrote the two letters, both expressing the need for change and stating his story and yet he was not heard by anyone. Even in his final days in the courtrooms of Victoria all he wanted to do was tell his story: "All I

want is a full and fair trial, and a chance to make my side heard. Until now, the police have had all the say, and have had it all their own way" (175). Unfortunately, Australia would not know him for the hero that he was until much later.

2. The Circumstances That Created the Armoured Outlaw

Many of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Armoured Outlaw as one of Australia's most iconic figures in the *mythscape*[1] are linked with Ned's heritage as a son of an ex-convict and are therefore linked to his family life as well. His father and mother played a great role in how he saw the world around him and his exposure to criminal activity at a young age shaped him as a person. Other important influences were the larrikins and the bushrangers, as well as the injustice in the Australian judicial system of the time—the time being the second half of the nineteenth century. Though, even after Ned's death, the Armoured Outlaw—a sort of moniker for Australia's very own superhero—continued being prevalent in the public eye, which consequently popularized the legacy and life of Edward Kelly.

2.1. Ned Kelly's Family Life and Upbringing

While Ned of the novel *True History of the Kelly Gang* speaks rather unkindly about his father, John "Red" Kelly, and the type of man that he was—due to the slander he'd been fed and his father's overall poor handling of family life—there are certain facts that need to be stated first in order to better understand the situation. As retold by Utley, "Red Kelly personified the origins of Australian society. The

1 Duncan Bell introduces the notion of a mythscape in his paper *Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity:* "I consequently introduce the notion of a mythscape, the temporally and spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of peoples memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested and subverted incessantly. The mythscape is the page upon which the multiple and often conflicting nationalist narratives are (re)written; it is the perpetually mutating repository for the representation of the past for the purposes of the present" (66).

first generation of white Australians were convicts, transported from England as punishment for crime. Moreover, Red Kelly was Irish, bitterly opposed to the rule of Queen Victoria. In Ireland, John Kelly stole two pigs, an offense punishable by transport" (Utley 112), which is why it is not a surprise that Ned grew up respecting and being influenced by his Irish heritage. While often described as absent in the novel, Red Kelly was, nevertheless, the source of this Irish pride in the boy. Having often told his children tales from his homeland and of her folklore; stories of interlocking Irish clans and their troubles with the law (Utley 119), he cultivated a strong sense of loyalty towards their ancestral home and towards one another: "The stories, repeated endlessly, cemented Ned's identity as an Irishman, one who detested the queen's laws, her system of justice, and especially her police" (Utley 116).

Since the novel paints Red Kelly as a distant father, young Ned often felt the need to act as the man of the house (Utley 117), which is why he also felt the need to provide for the family as well. Ned had to grow up fast and in doing so he lost some of his innocence very early: "So you can see I had become a very serious boy it were my job to replace the father as it were my fault we didn't have him anymore" (Carey 20). One such incident acts as Ned's foray into his career as a criminal. Ned Kelly, at the age of 11, once saw a heifer that was not of the Kelly herd and killed her so that the family could have meat: "But if there was a law against the murder of a beast I would plead guilty and you would be correct to put the black cap on your head for I killed my little heifer badly and am sorry for it still" (Carey 12). Ned did not face the consequences for this crime, and Red Kelly took the fall and went to jail in his stead. Ned tried to take responsibility for the killing of the cow, but his father had denied Ned being involved on top of the police not believing the young boy (Carey 13). And so, Red Kelly went into lockup yet again, this time for the crime that he did not commit, and Ned felt the guilt in many ways: "I dreamed about my father every night he come to sit on the end of my bed and stare at me his puffy eyes silent his face lacerated by a thousand knife cuts" (Carey 14). However, Ned admits, immediately after that even,

that though their lives were harder for their father's absence, living without his presence was also better.

Biographies tell us that Ned had grown closer to his mother only after his father's death and that their bond grew as his mother, Ellen Kelly, feuded with acquaintances with increasing frequency (Utley 119) and took on the farm work that the men of the household would usually do. Ned's confession that he and his mother did all the ploughing and seeding, all twenty acres of their land (Carey 18) is a prime example of how every bit of hard work around the house and their plot of land fell onto Ned's and his mother's shoulders, and considering that they did not have the benefits of modern technology, ploughing twenty acres was very difficult. However, Ellen Kelly was a proud woman and she would not be felled by farm work. Even when Red Kelly's brother Jim burned down the house where they were staying, Ellen Kelly did not give up and instead kept working hard to provide for her family: "In Wangaratta, Ellen washed clothing during the day and made dresses at night. Within six months, hard work had earned enough money for Ellen to stake out a selection of land near Greta" (Utley 121). While the novel portrays her as a strong woman dedicated to her family, Justin Kurzel's theatrical adaptation from 2019 by the name of *True History of the Kelly Gang* portrays her as somewhat pigheaded and complicates the mother-son relationship to the point where it almost appears as if she were gaslighting Ned through her actions and words. Though somewhat gentler than the movie version of her character, the novelised version of Ellen Kelly was not exempt from bad parental behaviour. She certainly subscribed to the "tough love" style of parenting and could oftentimes be found cursing out young Ned and calling him a "bastard" (Carey 27) or some other derogatory term. However, through all of these renditions of Ellen Kelly, she always had one consistency, and that is the love she held for her children and the wish she had for them not to fall prey to a life of crime.

While he was evidently brought up to be a hardworking young man, Ned was not blind to the injustices of the world around him.

And yet, he strived to be brave and bold in the face of danger. One such incident can attest to this is Ned Kelly's saving of the young Dick Shelton, an only child from a wealthy family, from drowning. This event was a landmark in Ned's early life that impacted him greatly and proved that he could be a hero if he put his mind to it. For his act of heroics Ned received a green sash that spelled out "TO EDWARD KELLY IN GRATITUDE FOR HIS COURAGE FROM THE SHELTON FAMILY" (Carey 16-17). This sash was one of the few items that followed Ned through his life continuously and signified his willingness to act selflessly and showed his firm beliefs in doing the right thing: "The green sash testified not only to Ned Kelly's courage, his instant decision to jump into the water without even knowing how to swim, but more importantly to a fundamental trait of his character. He was a youth of substance and would mature into an adult of substance" (Utley 118–19).

2.2. The Culture of Wild Colonial Boys and Harry Power

Soon after Ned's uncle was charged with arson for burning their house down, Ned took up with the larrikins. Even though this part of his life was omitted in the novel, it is nevertheless important to the development of Ned's character since the larrikins were in their essence young bushrangers.[2] As Utley puts it, bushrangers were the "Robin Hoods" (Utley qtd. in Tranter and Donoghue 376) of Australia, robbing from the rich and giving to the poor. They detested the royal presence and protested it by stealing horses, cattle and sheep; they drank too much and were overall a nuisance in the police's eyes: "For the larrikins, the Victoria Police Force symbolized the "iron chains." And for the police, the larrikins symbolized the behaviour of the Wild Colonial Boy. As a consequence, the police constantly harassed the larrikins and their families, intimidated them, and ar-

2 The term "bushrangers" was common in Australia as early as 1805, when it was used in the Sydney Gazette to describe "a group of suspected highway robbers, possibly escaped convicts, who often waylaid travelers in the bush" (qtd. in Tranter and Donoghue 376).

rested them on the slightest charge, sometimes fabricated" (Utley 122). According to historical reports, this is where Ned at the age of fourteen learned many useful tricks and trades some of which he had picked up from the Aborigines people earlier in his life when he had become good friends with one of the tribes in the area. Ned had eventually become a part of the Aborigines religion and his name is well known through their belief system as a figure akin to Jesus, God or Noah (Rose 189). In the novel, however, this is the point where Ned partners up with the famous bushranger by the name of Harry Power.

With his father dead and his mother an eligible widow with a sizeable property, Ned began seeing an increase in suitors coming to court Ellen Kelly. One of these men was Harry Power: "Harry was an Irishman with a clumsy appearance that belied his skills as a hold-up professional who could ride at furious speeds through the rough, forested countryside" (Utley 123). And while in reality Ned had willingly partnered up with the bushranger (Utley 124), Ned from Carey's novel is sent off with the outlaw against his will in an attempt to distance the two men from another one of his mother's suitors by the name of Bill Frost: "Bill Frost dressed the squatter and wore his hairy brown tweed coat right through the worst of summer which is why Annie were in favour of him but I were insulted by his ignorant opinions it drove me mad to see my mother fall under his spell" (Carey 28). Ned does not like Bill Frost and is very adamant that Harry is a better suited future-husband than the Englishman. This leads him to become somewhat hostile towards Bill and subsequently makes his mother wary of Ned's behaviour in the man's presence. After his sister's wedding, Ellen sends young Ned off with a drunken Harry, who is heartsick that Ellen chose someone else over him (Carey 31). At this point in his life, Ned still holds ideas of grandeur and heroics and thinks that the life of a bushranger is the route to take if he were to accomplish this: "Harry called me out onto the road to show me all the marbles spread across the hard dry earth. There you are lad help yourself. / These will make me a hero?" (Carey 36). The events that proceed that first act of crime – bailing up a coach at the bushrang-

er's side – marks Ned and set him off on a path of criminal activity: "I were but 14 1/2 yr. old no razor had yet touched my upper lip but as I cantered after Harry Power my pockets crammed with marbles I were already travelling full tilt towards the man I would become" (Carey 36–37).

Harry treats young Ned with a mix of fondness and disdain; often violent towards the boy he drives Ned away: "Filthy, exhausted, and resentful of his treatment by Harry, Ned parted with him and returned to Greta" (Utley 126). Later, once it has become clear that Ellen practically sold Ned to Harry for "15 quid", Ned finds his way back to the bushranger and makes threats upon Bill Frost's life. He also finds himself in jail for the first time after being recognized by R. R. McBean and thus the law begins its endless pursuit for Ned Kelly's head.

2.3. Law and Authority

Being the son of an ex-convict, Ned Kelly was already predisposed to becoming a subject of police scrutiny. His first interaction is with Sergeant O'Neil, who feeds him lies about his father at a very early age: "Sergeant O'Neil had filled my boy's imagination with thoughts that would breed like maggots on a summer day you would think his victory complete but he begun to increase his harassment of my father rousing him from bed when he were drunk or fast asleep he also needled and teased me whenever he seen me in the street" (Carey 7). Of course, after becoming Power's apprentice, this harassment would only worsen because now the lawmen had good reasons to suspect him of wrongdoings.

On top of the already existing hostilities between the Protestants and the Irish Catholics, Ned also has the privilege of seeing the people of Victoria being oppressed by the law enforcement that is present there. He dreams of ridding Victoria of that oppression (Utley 129), and that is a dream that he is not willing to give up; this, in the end, leads him to commit the crimes that he did later on in life. "He

was fifteen and had experienced enough police and judicial attention to keep him repeatedly on the wrong side of the law—and repeatedly in the eyes of the police" as Utley states, the authorities were relentless in their pursuit (126). The first time Ned was brought to the police's attention was for horse theft. However, he did not know the horse was stolen at the time, but this did not seem to matter to the judge and the jury: "When no evidence could be produced to back Hall's accusation, the charge was amended to read "receiving" a stolen horse. On this flimsy verdict, the judge sentenced the hapless youth of sixteen to three years at hard labour" (Utley 127). After his release, Ned returned home to find his mother engaged to a man named George King, a man who would rope Ned into stealing horses with him eventually: "So my mother had chosen herself another flash talking b----r he were no better than Bill Frost with his bolts of cloth. /Are you going to assist me said he or will I have to turn to Dan?" (Carey 81). As Ned cares for his younger brother and does not wish for young Danny to go to Pentridge Gaol, he threatens King into leaving his brothers alone. Dan however, is already on his way to becoming a larrikin and therefore, in the eyes of the law, a bushranger (Carey 87). This then leads to an incident where a horse pound owner hurts Dan, inciting Ned's anger and need for revenge (Carey 92). Once again, Ned's strong loyalty for his family leads him into trouble.

After an incident involving stolen dresses, Ned is introduced to Constable Fitzpatrick who is a brother to a policeman that Ned has previously fought (Carey 93-94). In reality, the story of Constable Fitzpatrick and his friendship with Ned is much less dramatic but both stories culminate in Ned and his brother Dan and their two friends, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne, and Joe's "mate" Aaron Sherritt running away to escape their prosecution for assaulting an officer of the law: "To escape arrest, Ned and Dan rode to their hideout on Bullock Creek in the Wombat Ranges" (Utley 132). And even though Fitzpatrick has been a good friend of Ned's for some time, the man still betrays the bushranger's trust and, in turn, after arresting Ellen Kelly, chooses to pursue Ned as a criminal. The newly-formed gang hides out in the bush where Harry Power once evaded the long arm

of the law and they remain there until the Stringybark incident. Even later in his career as an outlaw, Ned admits to regretting what transpired that day: "More than once, Ned took all the blame for the police killings on himself and expressed his regret that the police had failed to do as he ordered" (Utley 138).

The events at Stringybark impact Ned greatly. It was the first time that he shot and killed a man, and it is after that that he and his gang are pronounced outlaws, and by the Felons Apprehension Act[3] they could be killed or captured on sight by anyone. Suddenly, it became very dangerous for Ned to be seen anywhere near civilisation, and his dreams of a normal life grew ever fainter. After dedicating himself to the life of an outlaw, Ned decided that they would not be like the other outlaws and they conducted themselves in such a manner: "They committed more criminal acts, but they carried them out as gentlemen, adopted a unique style of their own, and displayed a courtesy, compassion, and generosity constantly noted by friendly newspapers" (Utley 139). Ned lived by those words until the day he died in Glenrowan, donned in armour and still believing in a Victoria free of oppression, and seeking to say his piece, wanting to be remembered and heard. And as evident by his status as a national hero of Australia, it can be said that was successful in his intentions even at the cost of his own life.

3. The Aftermath

To say that Ned Kelly had left an impression on the people of Victoria would be an understatement. During his two years of outlawry Ned gained sympathizers, gained followers and people who had nothing but words of praise for him. Even without his letters reach-

3 "Back in Melbourne on this day the Legislative Assembly (lower house) of Victoria's Parliament enacted the Felons Apprehension Act. Modelled after a similar law passed earlier in New South Wales to bring down the celebrated bushranger Ben Hall, it branded named criminals as outlaws. Men outlawed could be captured, shot, or killed by any citizen who recognized them. The Legislative Council (upper house) promptly adopted the same bill" (Utley 137).

ing the wider public, Ned became a well-known enemy of the state and friend of the people. Alex Castles states that:

> "The trial of Ned Kelly was an object lesson in the conjunction of politics and law. The forces ranged against Kelly were determined that nothing would be left to chance. He was denied access to his family, his legal representation was generally inadequate and his trial was moved and truncated to ensure that it did not clash with great public events" (224).

Even though multiple newspaper sources tried to run a smear campaign against Ned's name, he remained in the public's good graces (Castles 225). Another show of support for Kelly and his gang were the mass protests that were happening all over Melbourne ever since the man was captured: "Night after night, with torches blazing, thousands of people marched in the streets of Melbourne to protest the execution of Ned Kelly. Typically, the press described them as "the laboring class", "idle and seedy." The mass protests were accompanied by a drive to get petitions for clemency signed" (Utley 179). Ned became widely regarded as a national hero much later. Even though his supporters tried to turn the tides, the people in charge decidedly did not see Ned as a good guy. The opinion was changed only after the government of Australia changed its attitudes towards the need for a well-defined national identity in their fight for independence:

> "A powerful nationalistic movement began in that decade, as the government and the people groped for Australian meaning to fill the void left by the decline of British influence. Ned Kelly became part of the new national identity, cultivated by all levels of government, cultural and historical institutions, and commercial enterprises. His image has grown year after year since the 1960s" (Utley 187).

As Tranter and Donoghue state in their 2008 research *Bushrangers: Ned Kelly and Australian Identity*, Ned Kelly is by far the most

frequently named and remembered bushranger in Australia, even though he is not the only famed one (380): "Australians overwhelmingly identify Ned Kelly as the bushranger, and, based upon the sheer volume of books, films and newspapers articles on Kelly, he is certainly a key figure in Australian mythology" (Tranter and Donoghue 378) meaning that the impression Ned Kelly has left on the people of Australia is far greater than that of any other bushranger that roamed the expanse of the colonial land.

4. Conclusion

As he stepped onto the gallows and a noose was lowered over his head, Ned was heard muttering the words: "such is life" (Carey 166). There certainly were many events that led Ned to these last words, many of which had influenced him greatly through his formative years and his years as an outlaw. From his Irish Catholic heritage as a son of an ex-convict to his own convictions that the people of Victoria should live in their own "Republic of North-eastern Victoria" (Utley 158) separate from Her Majesty's rule, Ned experienced a great many things. Many things shaped the young man into the Armoured Outlaw and many more thereafter were influenced and inspired by the outlaw himself. Ned was a revolutionary in his own right and in his last stand, he was discovered wearing the sash that had been given to him for saving the boy Dick Shelton when he was a child; the sash was green, the colour of Ireland, and Ned chose to wear this symbol of his youthful triumph to demonstrate the significance he attached to the dream of an independent republic (Utley 168). We can only speculate if, had his father been more attentive and had his mother had a kinder heart, he would have grown up to be a different type of man; and in the end it does not matter.

For all that he had suffered in his short lifetime, Ned succeeded in one thing: becoming the icon of rebellion and independent Australia and living up to the mantle that he had so reluctantly taken upon his shoulders.

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Review paper

Liberal Feminism in John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*

Abstract

This paper aims to present the theory and the reasoning behind liberal feminism by one of the first generation of feminists, a British philosopher, John Stuart Mill. His perspective on gender-based discrimination is consolidated in a historic essay regarding the feminist theory, *The Subjection of Women*. Moreover, this paper will outline Mill's biography and his argumentation on the concepts of liberalism and utilitarianism, both of which immensely influenced his feminist viewpoint. John Stuart Mill was one the first thinkers who united the philosophical ideas of liberalism and utilitarianism with feminism, establishing liberal feminism—liberalism that defines women's inability to live their lives how they choose as a disastrous problem that requires the implementation of adequate and protective legal rights. Mill reflected on women's unfavorable and oppressed position in Victorian society, marriage, and family while questioning the necessity of women's subordination. He argues for the most significant benefit for women's emancipation: maximum happiness for the maximum amount of people. This paper will attend to some of the criticism made by present-day feminists. They question particular parts of Mill's theory such as the traditional gender roles and Mill's contradictory claims of women's characteristics. Nevertheless, criticism is an indispensable part of a progressive society and therefore *The Subjection of Women* by John Stuart Mill should only be regarded as a foundational contribution to feminist thinking.

Keywords: liberal feminism, John Stuart Mill, liberalism, utilitarianism, inequality, feminism, women

1. Introduction

The position of women in society has been slowly and continuously changing from prehistoric to modern times. However, regardless of which era is analyzed, a woman's position is reduced to that of a wife and a mother. Women who opposed these notions were imprisoned, ostracized, and labeled as ungrateful. Women being deprived of various opportunities such as the ability to own property and receive equal education, unsatisfactory working conditions and wages, not being able to vote, and many other factors are what became the pivot point of the women's rights movement. During the Victorian era, these issues were known as *the woman question*. Few historical figures have positively influenced women's position in society and John Stuart Mill is one of them. *The Subjection of Women* influenced both the nineteenth century and modern-day liberalism by actively attempting to include marginalized groups into the political context (Hekman 681). By analyzing the arguments presented in John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, this paper will not only showcase the progressive attitudes towards gender equality and the representation of Mill's liberal feminism but also highlight several critiques of his theory and argumentation.

2. The Socio-Historical Context and John Stuart Mill's Background

First and foremost, to comprehend the significance of Mill's ideas, it is principal to present and analyze the socio-historical context of the era in which *The Subjection of Women* was written and published—the nineteenth century. For the most part, the nineteenth century coincides with the reign of Queen Victoria, one of the greatest rulers of the British Empire, and therefore the period between 1837 and 1901 is defined as the Victorian era. This was an era of marvelous innovations regarding political, social, moral, religious, and scientific beliefs; and because of this it bestows a momentous mark on present-day Britain, Europe, and the world. The Victorian era was an era of questions and contradictions, so it is no wonder that

book publishing flourished, giving a platform to express diverse ideas and creating a dynamic public sphere that "changed the role of intellectuals as social critics, moral guardians, and active participants in societal reform" (Georgieva-Stankova 2). Even though the Victorian era is deemed as inventive, the position of women did not witness such progress. Women were still regarded as subordinate and inferior beings that did not have equal economic, legal, or political rights as men. Women were stereotyped as emotional, hysterical, unintelligent, and more. That subsequently generated the perception of a woman as *the angel in the house*—a gentle, submissive, passive, and pure daughter, wife, and mother. Given the aforementioned, it can be deduced that what was published was beginning to be vital in various debates and discourses for the betterment of human life or yet, the betterment of women's lives.

John Stuart Mill dedicated his thinking and academic corpus to marginalized and subordinated women concerning gender issues. By declaring in the opening paragraph of the essay: "That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement," (Mill 1) Mill acknowledges the fundamental value of equality between sexes in a democratic society. It is well documented that Mill was more than a philosopher dwelling in abstract texts and theories—he was an avid participant in the political territory, given that he was a Member of Parliament in 1865 for the Liberal Party calling for diverse social changes (Macleod). Mill sought to influence public legislation regarding women's suffrage and the right to own property. According to Mariana Szapuová, John Stuart Mill most intensively campaigned on women's suffrage and equal education "from the latter half of the 1850s until his death" (180) and collaborated with several feminists, such as Elizabeth Stanton, the leader of the first woman's movement in the United States (180). An important figure in Mill's private and public life was Harriet Taylor, a British philosopher and a feminist, but more importantly the author of "The Enfranchisement of Women" (Macleod). Although her work and contributions are barely rec-

ognized, some researchers consider her feminist reasoning as having crucial influence on Mill's viewpoint (Macleod). Taylor and Mill were friends long before they were spouses who treated each other as an intellectual equal. Together, they reflected and commented on numerous inequalities imposed on women thus co-signing an abundance of their work. The fact that their argumentation was ahead of its time did not matter as they knew that what they were publishing was significant and urgent. Mill's awareness of this relevance was pointed out by Georgieva-Stankova who stated that Mill purposely chose to publish *The Subjection of Women* in 1869, even though it was written in 1861, not only because the suffrage movement was gaining traction at the time (4) but also because he wanted to wait for a more suitable time after Taylor's death; additionally, he waited for the publication of "The Enfranchisement of Women" to gain its popularity and make an impact (4). Mill always emphasized *the right time* as a crucial factor (Georgieva-Stankova 5; Macleod) for successful social progress; he was the most prominent figure during his political career so the publication of this (controversial) essay at the time is considered strategic and rebellious. Furthermore, Mill's language in *The Subjection of Women* is simple, accomplishing to define and explain complex abstract terms and situations so that it is suited for younger generations—one of the many reasons of how Mill managed to accumulate a variety of readers and followers.

As many researchers stated, Mill's biography, accompanying his philosophical background on utilitarianism and liberalism, is what shaped his argumentation on the necessity for women's emancipation and the foundation of his liberal feminist political theory (Donner 155; Hekman 681; Georgieva-Stankova 7). Mill's desire to reshape the society is rooted in his beliefs of utilitarianism, a philosophical theory that judges a morally right decision by the amount of good it causes (Hekman 681; Macleod). John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham are considered to be the founders of this theory and, what is more, Bentham influenced Mill's writing (Macleod). Utilitarianism seeks the greatest good for the greatest number. In this sense, Mill viewed the subjection of women as the main obstacle in achieving

happiness and, therefore, obstructing the path towards the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. Liberalism was founded by the Enlightenment philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Liberalism puts forth individual freedom as a value essential to personal growth. To participate as conscious and rational agents, individuals must have access to primary rights such as a right to equal education and suffrage. Liberalists perceive the protection of rights as utmost important but it is well-known that society does not treat every individual justly; liberalism contributes to the connotation that the public (rational) sphere is male, and the private (emotional) sphere is female. For women to be equal, they will have to transfer into the male sphere. The liberalist philosophers failed to recognize what harm this causes; they simply overlooked the subordinate and wrongful position of women. While Hobbes claims that authority is neither male nor female, he views the private sphere and family life as a woman's responsibility and domain. Likewise, Locke views the subjection of women as natural. Such distinctions between the private and the public domain have long been the center of feminist criticism. Even though Mill agrees with liberalist views, he does not pursue this division of spheres and believes that earnest choices of men and women are essential to their well-being (Gerson 795). Moreover, "*The Subjection of Women* can be deemed to be one of the important links that had to be established between liberalism and feminism" (Georgieva-Stankova 7). The values of living a life of your choosing are quintessential liberal feminism. Mill expresses this very notion stating that no society should "ordain that to be born a girl instead of a boy, any more than to be born black instead of white, or a commoner instead of a nobleman, shall decide the person's position through all life" (18). Liberal feminism considers the government the greatest ally to the women's movement and position – an opinion evident in Mill's theorizing given that he assumes that the reform of the public (legal) sphere will pursue the reforms of the private sphere.

3. John Stuart Mill and *The Subjection of Women*

The Subjection of Women embodies Mill's understanding of utilitarianism and liberal feminism. In the light of the era *The Subjection of Women* was published in (1869), it can be presumed that the upsurge of industrialization and mechanization showcased the triviality of physical strength, the main distinction between men and women. Szapuová explains that as civilization progresses, physical strength diminishes in importance, while the progress of reason, which is the same for men and women, develops (182). Up and until that point, women's contribution to the society, more specifically the economy, was considered trivial—women's *weak* physical strength was worthless. As it was expected, childbearing and taking care of a household were not perceived as strengths; rather it was an element of oppression used even today. With this in mind, the gender-based discrimination can solely be determined as "a universal custom, any departure from it quite naturally appears unnatural" (Mill 12). Any discrimination is artificially created, but the subordination of women is unique in the sense that women internalize the notions of their weakness and unintelligence as their notions and opinions.

In the first chapter of the essay, Mill reveals how gender-based oppression perseveres for centuries; through the system of education, it is constructed, established, and instructed by men. Mary Wollstonecraft was one of the first who emphasized the educational injustice regarding women's education and Mill echoed the same: "the masters of women wanted more than simple obedience, and they turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose" (14). With such perspective towards women's abilities, the society managed to create a mindset that everything that a woman possesses she does so solely because of a man. The focal point of Mill's condemnation of the subjection of women is to underline to what extent does nurture negatively influence women more than men, especially when reflecting the historical context.

Regarding the differences between men and women, Mill focuses mostly on their similarities and the effect of societal influence (nurture), not their nature. In other words, he claims that any difference that might occur only exists due to the century-long educational injustice mentioned before. Furthermore, Mill states that it is complicated to know or to research the true capabilities of women since their subordinate position obscures even their familiarity with themselves. Using the example of the sovereignty of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria, Mill illustrates that not only is the legal reform crucial to the reform of society's perspective but also the visibility of women in the public sphere.

Mill makes an interesting claim regarding the continued subordination of women: a result "of the male sex [that] cannot yet tolerate the idea of living with an equal" (49) which substantiates Mill's opinion that for women marriage is a Hobson's choice and slavery. Family and marriage were the most important institutions during the Victorian era and even though women were the center (given their roles of child care and household care), they were objectified and enslaved by them. Mill discusses the social and economic pressure imposed on women to marry since women can earn little to no means for a substantial life, meaning that women are not free neither married nor unmarried. Mill examines women's unfavorable position in a marriage, concluding that marriage founded upon friendship and equality before the law is the only way to ensure happiness for both parties (Mill 42). Furthermore, Mill reflects on inequality in divorce, where women are coerced into staying married because, unlike men, they lack adequate legal rights and power. Additionally, Mill notes a problem that is present and relevant in today's society to some degree: "Women cannot be expected to devote themselves to the emancipation of women, until men in considerable number are prepared to join with them in the undertaking" (78). Given the socio-historical context, Mill highlights the possible danger of being vocal and the need for help from the privileged group—men. Such dangers and debates exist today; men withdraw from feminism without comprehending the possible benefits.

The aforementioned quote illustrates Mill's perspective according to which he does not perceive the subordination of women as beneficial to women, men, or to the society. The elevation of women's position concurs with the ultimate goal of feminism: it aims to provide every individual with the privilege of choice and legally protect men and women from the stereotypes of toxic masculinity, from domestic violence, discrimination, and more. With this, Mill voices his utilitarian stance. In justifying the benefits of an egalitarian marital relationship, Mill claims that an educated wife will only improve the husband, otherwise "his desire of mental communion is thus in general satisfied by a communion from which he learns nothing" (96). However, such benefit was criticized by contemporary feminists asserting that women's education should not be elevated towards being *a better wife,* but towards being better individuals (Georgieva-Stankova 14). Today, a plethora of research verified that the improvement of women's rights and position in society goes hand in hand with the social, demographic, and economic improvement of the same society. This is the core of Mill's reasoning—prosperity for women epitomizes prosperity for humankind. That can only be achieved if every corner of reasoning, intellect, creativity, and opportunity by progressive legislation and equal education is available to women.

4. The Contemporary Criticism

Theories on liberal feminism have repeatedly been the center of rigorous debates and critiques among present-day feminists and academics. Firstly, the most vocal critique put forth by contemporary feminism is that, while he advocated for legal reforms and equality before the law between the sexes, Mill overlooked the importance and significance of unceasing traditional gender roles. He accepts the idea that women's primary role in marriage is taking care of the household, furthering the traditional gender-based division of labor: "when a woman marries, it may, in general, be understood that she makes choice of the management of a household, and the bringing up of a family" (48). What is more, he determines that even when

women do have complete freedom, they will still choose the domestic sphere because it is in their nature, furthering the concept that a woman belongs only in the private domain—a claim that contradicts Mill's idea of liberal feminism. On the other hand, what contemporary feminists fail to remember is that family was the most integral institution in a prosperous society during the Victorian era, meaning that women were the center of society; they sustained these values. Nevertheless, it is simply wrong to deprive women of various choices and opportunities under fictitious explanations that this inequality benefits and protects women.

Secondly, Mill assumes that when reforms in the public sphere occur, reforms of the private sphere will follow, regardless of whether the society attempts to raise awareness about inequality and gender-based stereotypes. Such perspective was repeatedly proven incorrect. If it were true, the activism and reasoning behind the second, third, and fourth-wave feminism would not have transpired. The vigorous fight for women's rights would have concluded with the women's suffrage movement, but that was not the situation—the struggle for women's rights continues even 151 years after the publication of *The Subjection of Women.*

Lastly, there is some concern that Mill was not interested in the subordinate position of women by its very unfair nature, but for the benefits of the humankind primarily. In other words, contemporary feminists are concerned with Mill's union of utilitarianism and liberal feminism. Given that utilitarianism is a reason-based ethical theory, Mill is criticized for his empirical stance and reasoning when expressing contradictory observations sentence after sentence. This criticism mostly stems from Mill's discussion of women's mental capacities that incline towards practical while men's do towards logical analysis. First he states that women have been (and continue to be) influenced by the societal norms in such a way that "their nature cannot but have been greatly distorted and disguised" (56) and then contradicts himself by stating that by "looking at women as they are known in experience, . . . the general bent of their talents is towards

the practical" (57). This furthers the debates around Mill's beliefs—are women by nature or nurture practical? As Ring questions, "If the qualities already present in women are uniquely desirable, what is the motivation for changing woman's circumstances?" (39).

However, the modern-day feminists fail to account for the socio-historical context of a century and a half ago and fail to realize that even if Mill wanted to present more factual empirical benefits for dismantling women's subordination, the limitation (the fact that such questions were presumed as irrelevant and the fact that such qualitative researches were not and could not be organized) of that time did not allow him to do so. Today, there is a profusion of research that has empirical and statistical evidence which speaks in favor of elevating the position of women. John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* simply must be perceived as one of the most important and revolutionary contributions to the feminist theory and the feminist movement.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Subjection of Women* by John Stuart Mill was one of the most influential works not only for the nineteenth-century society but also for the modern-day feminist theory. Mill was an active and devoted feminist throughout his whole life. The publication of *The Subjection of Women* was strategic given the socio-historical context of the Victorian era. The Woman Question was a reoccurring theme in the publications of the time, and as such it influenced a variety of readers. Mill's liberal feminist theory was shaped by philosophical utilitarianism and liberalism—the protection of basic rights and the ability to live a life of your choosing are the core values of liberal feminism. He was mostly influenced by his long-time friend and partner, Harriet Taylor. Mill's leading argument for emancipation of women is that the well-being of women will bring humankind's well-being, echoing the central idea of utilitarianism. More often than not, women are deprived of every opportunity, which only means that any kind of intellect, creativity, or contribution to society

will remain hidden and unknown. He understood that the betterment of women's position must have a starting point in progressive legislation. And although progressive laws are necessary, they are not sufficient; the reform of society's perspectives and stereotypes must also occur. Even though his essay was momentous since the first publication, all theories must be questioned because criticism and critical reflection pave the way toward improvement. *The woman question* remains unsolved, it is (to some) a controversial problem that continues to be at the center of debates with no answer in the foreseeable future.

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Review paper

The Timeless Satire of Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb

Abstract

Stanley Kubrick's 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* is one of the greatest classics of Cold War cinema and a chilling satire of the possibility of nuclear warfare and the popular points of view on that topic in the 1950s and 60s. This paper combines several different analyses of the film to give a more general image of what it focuses on. The three main topics the paper discusses are Kubrick's critique of nuclear strategy, the relationship between man and machine, and the role of the figure of Dr. Strangelove in the film in order to show that the irrationality of human behavior may have major political consequences, including death and ecological disaster.

Keywords: Cold War, *Dr. Strangelove*, nuclear warfare, satire, strategy of deterrence

1. Introduction

Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room!
President Merkin Muffley

Stanley Kubrick's 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* is one of the greatest classics of Cold War cinema, and a chilling satire of the possibility of nuclear warfare and the popular points of view on that topic in the 1950s and

60s. Taking up Boyer's claim that "on one hand, the film evokes an increasingly remote historical moment. On the other, the larger issues it raises remain distressingly contemporary" (46), this paper analyses several aspects of the film to give a general image of what the film focuses on and how it influenced the culture of its time, as well as how, in certain aspects, the questions raised in the film are still relevant because the threat of nuclear warfare is far from gone. The three main topics the paper discusses to show the film's pertinence are Kubrick's critique of nuclear strategy, the relationship between man and machine, and the role of the figure of Dr. Strangelove in the film.

2. Historical Context

The 1960s began with two great crises which threatened to escalate the Cold War into a hot one: 1961 saw the Berlin crisis and the construction of the Berlin Wall, while 1962 marked the closest known moment the two conflicting powers, the USA and the Soviet Union, ever came to all-out nuclear war, the Cuban Missile Crisis. Combined with the assassination of American president John F. Kennedy in 1963, the early years of the decade were marked by crisis and a sense of paranoia logically stemming from it. The satirical nature and black humor displayed in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* might appear to be in bad taste given the historical moment, but instead the film marked a breakthrough moment in the way the Cold War was represented in American cinema at the time.

The nuclear catastrophe depicted in the film questions above all the way nuclear strategy is created. As Vanaik points out, "Ever since Stanley Kubrick's film *Dr. Strangelove*, the specter of a nuclear war launched by madness or accident has haunted the world" (2243). However, in order to properly appreciate the ironic take on nuclear strategy depicted in the film, it is necessary to outline the dominant cultural paradigm of the time and the place nuclear strategy held within it. Charles Maland's article on *Dr. Strangelove* will be used as basis for the discussion on that. Maland claims that a certain cultural

paradigm was dominant in the US between the 1930s and the 1960s, one he describes referring to Hodgson as follows:

> the ideology contained two cornerstone assumptions: that the structure of American society was basically sound, and that Communism was a clear danger to the survival of the United States and its allies. . . . The only threat to this domestic harmony, the argument continued, is the specter of Communism . . . If America accepts this responsibility to fight Communism, while also proclaiming the virtues of American economic, social, and political democracy to the rest of the world, the country will remain strong and sound. (698)

Kubrick satirizes this dominant paradigm in multiple ways, most notably in the fact that the nuclear catastrophe which occurs at the end of the film is not a direct product of Soviet actions, but rather of US military activity: "Kubrick's fumbling attempts to construct a screenplay provide an example of . . . a 'paradigm revolution' in the making: a dramatic moment when accepted understandings of the world no longer make sense and new ones are needed" (Maland 703). The film can be described as a dark comedy, using irony and black humor to show the absurdities of the moment, which is evident from the extended title of the film: *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. The title is a play on the paranoia about the possibility of nuclear war in the 1960s, yet it does not suggest that the paranoia is unwarranted. Instead, the title ironizes the way the potential of thermonuclear warfare was relativized by the media and military strategists at the time. Boyer gives several examples of that:

> While exposing the dangers and dilemmas of deterrence theory, Kubrick also satirized contemporary military figures and strategists, probably including Henry Kissinger, the author of Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy (1957); physicist Edward Teller, the 'father' of the H-bomb; the ex Nazi space scientist Wernher Von

> Braun; and the bombastic, cigar-chomping SAC commander Curtis LeMay, who in 1957 had told a government commission assessing U.S. nuclear policy that, if a Soviet attack ever seemed likely, he planned to "knock the shit out of them before they got off the ground." Reminded that U.S. policy rejected preemptive war, LeMay had retorted, "No, it's not national policy, but it's my policy." (47)

In addition to the above mentioned figures, the title of the film and the film itself ironize the media at the time, which "seemed determined to convince the American public that thermonuclear warfare was 'almost as safe as ivory soap is pure'" (Maland 700). Another figure ironized in the film is Herman Kahn, a military strategist infamous for his analyses of what would happen in the case of nuclear war and one of the key inspirations for the character of Dr. Strangelove, but that will be discussed in more detail later in the paper.

3. Satirizing the Paradigm

Kubrick's film challenges the dominant cultural paradigm of his time and the key actors who created it. In his analysis, Maland finds four dimensions of the Cold War ideology directly satirized in the film: "anti-Communist paranoia; the culture's inability to realize the enormity of nuclear war; various nuclear strategies; and the blind faith modern man places in technological progress" (705).

The first one, anti-Communist paranoia, is personified in the character of the mad General Ripper, a man who "has mistaken his own sexual inadequacy as proof positive [of] an inevitable communist plot" (Linden 78), and who orders a pre-emptive strike on the Soviet Union without the approval of any authority above him. Here already the criticism of the nuclear strategy of deterrence is clear, since it is human madness and human error, an element which can never be disqualified in any such strategy, which produces a nuclear holocaust (see Maland 705). The strategy of deterrence, which shall

be discussed in more detail later in the paper, is a logic according to which the nuclear arms race during the Cold War would mean that neither side would actively seek out conflict, since any conflict would inevitably lead to massive losses on both sides. It is a strategy which does not allow for slip-ups, however, since any attack, even if accidental, could lead to a breach of the deterrence strategy. To increase the irony, during the meeting of the military top brass, key government officials and Merkin Muffley, the US president, the eccentric General Turgidson claims that they should not dismiss the whole nuclear strategy just because of one little slip-up caused by human error.

The second element, the failure to realize how warfare has changed, takes place on the B-52, where Major Kong and the crew do not seem to grasp the enormity of the task they have. In fact, their behavior is more in line with what one would expect of a bomber crew going on a raid during the Second World War (Maland 706-708). The scenes in the bomber suggest what Simon calls the "ironic disparity between the modern technology of the nuclear apparatus and the anachronistic behavior of characters operating it" (215).

4. The Strategy of Deterrence

The third dimension of the Cold War paradigm satirized in the film is connected to the first two: it is the more general nuclear strategy of deterrence used by both nuclear superpowers at the time. As Boyer points out, "the plot revolves around a central dilemma of deterrence theory: how can one nuclear power convince another that an attack would inevitably trigger a devastating counterattack?" (47). This plotline takes place in the War Room, where two key characters represent two different approaches to deterrence. The first one is General Turgidson, whose preferred tactic of dealing with the crisis at hand is to launch a full-scale pre-emptive nuclear strike on the Soviet Union. On the other hand, President Merkin Muffley hopes to achieve a peaceful solution, but is ineffective and his talks with the Russian premier Kissoff are constantly interrupted by ludicrous

small-talk (see Maland 709–710). When the policy of deterrence collapses, it is not because of a mistake in the general policy itself, but due to human error which was allowed by certain elements of that policy. The element of nuclear policy most directly ironized in this film is, therefore, the notion of its rationality. According to Steven Belletto,

> Kubrick emphasizes that the nuclear strike is only accidental from the perspective of what the president calls 'national policy.' From the perspective of General Jack D. Ripper, the Air Force commander who ordered the strike, it was not accidental at all. This difference in perspective points to the problem with the stridently rational approach insisted on by Kahn. Ripper, who is, as British Group Captain Mandrake observes, 'as mad as a bloody march hare,' nevertheless proceeds from a rationality of sorts. (346)

The difference in logic and in rationality is the actual cause of the nuclear catastrophe. The strategy of deterrence presumes that all sides involved will be led by the same logic, which is that nuclear warfare ought to be avoided at any cost. However, the whole strategy becomes useless when even one small element within it ignores that rationality for another, which is that the other side cannot be trusted to go on with deterrence and that a pre-emptive strike is necessary. Simon points to that in his analysis of the three spaces in the film, the bomber, the air base, and the War Room, and how each represents an element within the mechanism of the strategy of deterrence: "Major Kong's airplane is the space of weapons and human agents who operate the airplane in order to deliver the weapons. Burpelson Air Force Base is the space of intermediate command. . . . The War Room of the Pentagon is the space of the highest level of command" (218). When the cohesion between the three elements breaks down, the whole nuclear strategy breaks down and results in nuclear holocaust. The people at fault for the disaster, however, are not constructed as villains but rather as "lovable lunatics" (Burgess 9), suggesting that the force

behind the whole catastrophe is not the commonly used notion of hate directed against America by malignant villains, but rather banal human imperfection and the unreliability of the human psyche.

5. Man and Machine

The fourth element of critique according to Maland, and one of the key aspects of the film, is the juxtaposition between man and machine. More specifically, the film shows the great gap between rapid technological progress and human inability to understand the scale of the new technology and to use it properly. Maland points out that "in Kubrick's world view, modern man has made scientific and technological advances inconceivable to previous generations but lacks the wisdom either to perceive how the new gadgetry might be used in constructive ways or, more fundamentally, to ask whether the 'advance' might not cause more harm than good" (701). The opposition between man and machine is the central topic of the film according to Linden, who claims that "the plot of the film is the accelerating technological inevitability of modem society, an acceleration which has produced social stupidity and ultimate political impotence. Man, real enemy, becomes subject to his infernal machines" (66).

The relationship between man and machine in the film is shown in the way man uses machines and in the way man and machine function. Burgess points out that "in the images of the film there are the repeated juxtapositions of Man—sloppy, incompetent, unreliable, but full of hope and courage—and Machine—beautiful, functional, absolutely reliable, but mindless and heartless" (11). That claim is evidenced by the functionality of both men and machines in the film. The nuclear disaster is caused by the decision of a madman, and the sexual undertones of both the motivation behind Ripper's decision to attack the Soviet Union and the names of all the key characters in the film point to the fallacy of believing in the notion of rationality, an ideal which is easily proven void by human sexuality, more specifically sexual frustration, in the film.

The incompetence of the leaders of the two great powers to defuse the crisis in the War Room is juxtaposed to the sheer genius of the crew of the B-52 bomber which manages, against all odds, to drop an H-bomb onto a target in the Soviet Union and, in doing so, trigger the Soviet Doomsday Machine. Human imperfection and sloppiness is connected to their failure to make use of one of the two main types of technology shown in the film, communication technology, for any other purpose but for that of destruction. The other kind of technology depicted in the film, technology of destruction, however, functions with cold perfection and the Doomsday Machine does what it was built to do without fail (see Maland 712). The power of technology puts into question any notion of morality and the logic of human life itself—with the nuclear age our species is for the first time in its history capable of destroying not only itself but almost all life on Earth. As Burgess suggests, "conventional virtues are useless in the day of the B-52, the H-bomb, and fallout—but what other virtues have you got?" (10). In fact, when regarded from the point of view of ethics, *Dr. Strangelove* asks a vital question in the nuclear age: What good is morality when man has managed to build weapons of mass destruction, the most immoral of all human creations? The moral responsibility does not lie with the machine, since the element of morality cannot apply to it, and yet all the characters in the film are innately immoral in the conventional sense, as is suggested by their names, which all refer to sexual lewdness (see Maland 704–705; Linden 76; Simon 223–224). Therefore the ideal of morality, which is alongside pure survival instinct the basis of the rationality behind the strategy of deterrence, proves to be void. When survival instinct is also made void by the existence of the Doomsday Machine, what follows is complete nuclear annihilation.

6. Dr. Merkwürdigliebe

Now that the key elements of the American Cold War paradigm which Kubrick satirizes in the film have been outlined, the focus shifts to the title character, Dr. Strangelove, and his role in the film.

Although he does not speak until the final third of the film, the military strategist is key to understanding the message of the film. As already mentioned above, the figure of Dr. Strangelove (his name an anglicization of his German last name Merkwürdigliebe) has been inspired by multiple nuclear strategists of the time, most notably Henry Kissinger, Edward Teller, Wernher Von Braun, and Herman Kahn. Of all these figures, it is Kahn who is most often associated with Strangelove, and Strangelove's mention of working with *Bland Corporation* seems to be a direct link to Kahn's work with the RAND Corporation. Writing on Kahn, Maland points out the following: "Kahn was willing to indulge in any speculation about nuclear war, including such topics as the estimated genetic consequences of worldwide doses of radioactive fall-out, the desirable characteristics of a deterrent (it should be frightening, inexorable, persuasive, cheap, non-accident prone, and controllable)" (699). Belletto also claims that Kahn and his attempts at cold rationality when writing on the potential outcome of nuclear warfare was the main inspiration behind Strangelove, and he claims that Kubrick's principal target is "Kahn's basic insistence, so measured and rational as to be chilling, that global thermonuclear war would not result in complete annihilation of the human race. By implementing the right strategy, Kahn argued, human life would survive" (344). If Kahn really was the main inspiration behind Dr. Strangelove, and it does appear to be so, then the film can be seen as an attempt to ironize his seemingly rational approach to potential nuclear catastrophe and to show how such a rationality is irrational by default, since any potential nuclear war is not just a mere game of numbers but a question of the very survival of the human race.

Dr. Strangelove's plan to evade complete annihilation by moving the country's leading elite into some of the deeper mineshafts in America and, with a ratio of 10 women to 1 man, having them restart the human race, "unites Kahn-like rationality with Nazi ideology" (Belletto 347). The Nazi element is another aspect key to understanding the figure of Dr. Strangelove, who is an ex-Nazi scientist rehabilitated and employed by the US government to work on their military

projects. Such a course of events was not unusual in the post-WWII era, as exemplified by the already mentioned Wernher Von Braun, the father of the German V-2 rocket, who was moved to the US to work for the military as part of the infamous "Operation Paperclip," an operation which saw hundreds of ex-Nazi scientists going down the same route.

Dr. Strangelove, however, appears to remain loyal to Nazi-like cold calculation and an affinity to eugenics. His right hand, which he struggles to control and which constantly attempts to do the Nazi salute, is, according to Slavoj Žižek's analysis in *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, the very core of his personality (26:50–27:27). Burgess points out the same by claiming that "the salute, and the cry 'Mein Führer!' aren't politics but habit, mechanical habit" (10). The film ends with Dr. Strangelove managing to stand up from his wheelchair, victoriously proclaiming "Mein Führer! I can walk!" before the scene cuts to a series of nuclear explosions with a WWII love-song playing in the background, the apocalypse and perhaps a chilling final victory for what could be considered the fascism within all of us, which Foucault describes in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* as "the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us" (XIII). Foucault's notion of the fascism within, which resembles Kant's notion of the propensity to evil, can be read in the American context as the idea of the original sin, the fall from grace and the greed and desire for power which corrupted the dream of the first colonizers of creating a utopian city upon the hill. This fall from grace, further accentuated by the already mentioned prevalence of sexual innuendos in both character names and their motivation, in the end leads to the utter annihilation of humankind, just as the world's leaders in the film were in the midst of coining a brand new ideal for a post-apocalyptic, utopian society, an idea which is absurd by default and is further proof of the all-encompassing intensity of satire in Kubrick's film.

7. Dr. Strangelove Today

Finally, with the critique of the 1950s and 60s Cold War society in Kubrick's film outlined, a question has to be asked: what is the relevance of the film today? While the film begins with a disclaimer that all events and figures in the film are fictional, and the US military has stated that a course of events like the one depicted by Kubrick has never been possible, Boyer makes the chilling remark that "under a SAC command protocol called Chrome Dome, in place from 1961 to 1968, the *Dr. Strangelove* scenario was, in fact, possible" (47). Writing in 2004, 40 years after the film was released, Boyer also discusses how the specter of nuclear fallout shown in the film still haunts us in the twenty-first century:

> Amid the nostalgia, however, nuclear dangers and conundrums, from proliferation and terrorism to radioactive-waste disposal, show no sign of diminishing. The issues have evolved, of course, and nuclear bombs and warheads are now often rhetorically subsumed into the broader weapons of mass destruction category, but if the dangers have mutated, they have hardly disappeared. (46)

In addition to that, it is worth remembering that the threat of nuclear warfare today does not only seem to stem from the conflict between two seemingly opposite, but yet stable and functional governments but also from the possibility of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of various terrorist organizations or being developed by more radical and isolated governments like that of North Korea or Iran. Along with that, the question of who is in charge of nuclear weapons is as critical as it was in 1964. When General Ripper discusses his order to execute a pre-emptive strike on the Soviet Union with Mandrake, he claims that war has become too serious to be left to the politicians. With the diminishing trust and interest in politics by the general public in recent years, demonstrated most perfectly by the election of the politically completely inexperienced Donald

Trump as president of the USA, the question of who is in charge of the world's nuclear arsenal has become as crucial as it was at the time Kubrick shot his by now cult film. Rising tensions between the world's nuclear superpowers, most notably the US and China, suggest that the threat of nuclear conflict may never have gone away in the first place.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, in his film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* Stanley Kubrick uses dark humor and satire to criticize the dominant cultural paradigm of Cold War America and the nuclear strategy of deterrence used by the two great powers during the Cold War. In addition, the film paints a grim image of the relationship between man and machine in which man is fallible and often driven by delusions or, in the case of the film, sexual drive, while machines are in most cases perfect tools which, if used by men with murderous intentions, can cause a disaster. Finally, the film also critiques the way the US recruited a large number of scientists from Nazi Germany after World War Two to work on developing the American nuclear arsenal and how those scientists came to run the US nuclear policy. While the film is an excellent critical match for its time, some of the questions it opens are still as contemporary as they were in the 1960s. Totalitarian regimes in countries like Iran and North Korea seek to develop nuclear weapons, a development which is sponsored by some nuclear powers and opposed by others. Such a development, combined with growing tensions between the US and China, brings the world in danger of plunging into another Cold War, and the awareness of what such a conflict could entail is as important today as it was at the time the film was made.

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Professional paper

Ethnography of Space and Place of the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb

Abstract

Anthropology of space and place defines places as spaces that were given meaning by people (Cresswell 7), most frequently by a certain group. However, each individual has their own connections with some place, depending on their experiences, knowledge, or even lessons learned there. This paper analyses the space and place of the largest faculty library in Croatia that is the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, which is visited by students of other faculties as well as its own, all while also being open to the general public. The methods of the research were as follows: unobtrusive observation, two semi-structured interviews with three respondents, an analysis of the library's monograph and photographing. Starting with the meaning and the value of the library, and the humanities and social sciences that it represents, the paper is focused on the lived experience of the respondents within the library. In the observation and interviews, focus was put on practises and behaviours in the library, various uses and impressions of the library, and the overall atmosphere there. Although this is not a totality of all meanings this library has, it is a useful overview of what a library can mean and represent for its users.

Keywords: library space, ethnography, behaviour-study, observation

1. What are Space and Place in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology?

The humanities are scientific disciplines that deal with the permanence of man, that is, the experience of being human, using analytical, critical, and speculative methods noted in most empirical approaches in natural and social sciences ("Humanity"). Two such sciences under the Humanities, ethnology and cultural anthropology, occupy a narrower field, that is, the study of culture and people as cultural beings (qtd. in Čapo Žmegač 8). Furthermore, according to Bratanić, culture is everything that a nation has created, and the way in which it facilitates, repairs, and beautifies human life (qtd. in Čapo Žmegač 8). Since places are also created by people or nations through the process of giving meaning to a certain space (Cresswell 7, 10), they often become complex constructs of social history, personal and mutual experiences, and selective memory (Kahn 167).[1]

Cultural meanings do not arise in things, in this case spaces, but as a consequence of our social discourses and practices by which we meaningfully create the world (du Gay et al. 14–15). Meaning is constantly produced and exchanged in every personal and social interaction (Hall 3). This is seen most clearly when an ethnologist goes to a remote, unfamiliar terrain. Spaces, but also places already known to the locals, gain new meanings and characteristics with the arrival of ethnologists and their interaction with them (Kahn 188–189). Hence, meanings are never fully determined and unalterable. A city or a place in general, therefore, is not just a physical or instrumental space, but a space that is primarily constituted by people who live in it, their memories, emotions, symbols, and meanings that they themselves inscribe in the physical space of the city (Jalšovec 6).

1 According to philosopher Malpas, 'space' seems to designate just the realm of atemporal physical extension (23), while 'place' is often distinguished from 'mere location' through being understood as a matter of the *human response* to physical surroundings of locations (30).

A place, like culture, can represent various things for each individual. Everyone chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what to attach to a place, be it biographical facts, shared history, memory, a moral lesson, or something else. (Augé 43). Each human has, in relation to a certain place, their own *lived experience* (Rodman 205), or according to Agnew a *sense of place* (qtd. in Cresswell 7).

As different professions study the concepts of space and place in different ways (Cresswell 12), so do different people experience space and place differently, which leads to difficulties in the work of ethnologists and cultural anthropologists, whose main goal is to understand and explain how individuals or groups understand these terms. However, by interfering with the researched community, new common places, memories, and meanings connecting the researchers and community are created. The researched places become anthropological places that imply concrete and symbolic construction of space, and have identity, relational and historical features (Augé 50).

2. Conducting a Research of Space in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

Space, like many other concepts in the humanities, can be explored in different ways and disciplines. The problem, as anthropologist Margaret C. Rodman states, is when that term is taken for granted. Space is not just a location (204). It is socially constructed, that is, transformed by human social exchanges, memories, images, and everyday use of the material environment—into scenes and actions that carry symbolic meaning (Low 92).

Contemporary geography favours an approach to place as a lived experience (Tuan ch 12), which is used also by sociologists (Lefebvre 93-94, 190)[2], as well as by anthropologists and ethnologists (Low 92). The methods of this approach are participatory observation, struc-

2 Henri Lefebvre points out the importance of one's body and its use in the *lived experience*, especially the use of hands and sensory organs (40).

tured, semi-structured and open interviews, the study and analysis of historical documentation, as well as the study, analysis and interpretation of art and literature about that place (Hall 55–61; Low 96–98). Research questions should deal with boundaries in space, how are they marked, their permanence, the distances between individuals and how they are sanctioned, hierarchies of space, taboos, how boundaries affect people's behaviour, personality, and emotions (Low 93). However, it should be noted that the data should not be comprised only from words, but also from objects, labels, smells, tastes, etc (Low 110).

3. Literature Review

There are very few studies of library spaces in Croatia, such as the one about the library of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek (Tanacković et al.) Based on the results of this study, several recommendations have been made to the aforementioned library in respect to its redesign and service improvements in order to support student work behaviours, as well as a modernization of library furniture and improvements of ICT services (Tanacković et al. 7–8).

Most of the studies about libraries are conducted by librarians or sociologists, using ethnographic methods (Suarez; Briden and Marshall; Bedwell and Banks). They are focused on the effects of the design of the library (e. g. panoptical design leads to adherence to quiet study rules) and ambient noise on the student behaviours, along with the blending of social and academic activities in the library space. The study presented in this paper was conducted as a part of a research assignment for the course *Anthropology of space and place*, with a topic that had to be related to Vrbik, a residential neighbourhood in Zagreb.

4. Library[3] of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb[4]

The Library monograph was used as the starting point for research. The building was constructed in 2009, and it is the second largest library in Croatia and the largest faculty library in Croatia.[5] Its importance is best noted in the words of the then dean, Miljenko Jurković, who said that "the library has outgrown the Faculty"[6] (5). The Library is located at 3 Ivan Lučić Street in Zagreb, between the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, in the residential neighbourhood called Vrbik, which is visible on the map.

3 Unless otherwise indicated, the word 'Library' in the rest of the text refers to the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb.

4 Unless otherwise indicated, the word 'Faculty' in the rest of the text refers to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb.

5 The architects of this library are Ante Vulin, Dina Vulin-Ileković and Boris Ileković, who designed the exterior and interior, from the shelves to the work surfaces and all the details. (unizg.hr).

6 It is taller than the Faculty, although not larger. It has six floors, while the Faculty has three. (Its surface area is 8050 m^2, while the surface area of the Faculty is 15.616 m^2). (www.arhitekt.hr/en/works/work/nova-knjiznica-filozofskog-fakulteta,203.html., *Vodič za studente 1. godine Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu 2004./2005*. FF press, 2004.)

Fig. 1. Map of the Library and its surroundings, Vrbik quarter. (Googlemaps.com)

This paper will use the approach of theory of social production to analyse the Library. Ergo, in order to understand the constructed forms, they need to be placed within the broader context of history and institutions of society. The constructed becomes a place of "spatial articulation in which many economic, social and cultural factors intersect," with its meaning revealed through metaphorical connection and ritual practice (Low 91).

According to the selection of the online encyclopaedia of architecture wikiarquitectura.com, the Library is listed among the 32 most beautiful libraries in the world.[7] In fact, Jurković suggests that the

7 Along with the Library of Alexandria, the Arab Institute in Paris and the City Library of Seattle.

Library is the "visual focus" in the urban chaos of Vrbik (5). This can be related to the term *landmark*, coined by Kevin Lynch, meaning an easily recognizable object that serves as an external reference point. However, the location of research is not the same as the subject of the research (Geertz 22). Therefore, the paper is not interested in the coordinates of the Library, its size, geographical location, appearance, number of floors, exact layout, or other characteristics of the sort. These characteristics also affect how people behave there, what practices they perform, and what meanings, and why, they inscribe to that place, which is actually the main subject of this research, that is, the symbolic construction of space in everyday time, with a focus on reading areas in the Library.

The Library gathers people of different age groups, interests and orientations, according to their study groups or faculties,[8] different genders—which sets it apart from some other places or faculties where one gender predominates—different beliefs, place of origin, or even ethnicity, and other characteristics. Thus, they generally do not know each other, do not share common memories, myths or background, and, ideally, according to the rules of the library, do not interact with each other through conversation, making the appointed aim of this paper's research hard to achieve due to lack of understanding of the community as a whole. It should be understood that, in light of only a few interviews and some time spent observing participants, it would prove impossible to understand all the meanings that its users attribute to the Library.

8 Students of other faculties also come to the Library because their faculties do not have their own libraries, or do not have a study space that big. Other visiting students are mostly students from nearby faculties like the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, but also students from the Faculty of Law, the School of Medicine and other academic institutions.

5. Methodology

The data in this paper's research was gathered using triangulation, qualitative and ethnographic methods of unobtrusive observation, photographing,[9] conducting two semi-structured interviews with tree respondents, writing a field diary,[10] and by researching about the Library itself[11]. According to Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, the strength of ethnography lies in the use of more than one method (qtd. in Naidoo 2).

An important method of the conducted research was the participant observation method which, unlike other methods such as interviews and surveys, can provide data of a different, and perhaps more realistic nature (qtd. in Boccagni and Schrooten 216). The data obtained through other methods is mostly self-representative, that is, only providing what observed participants want others to think or see; in other words, their ideal image of themselves, performed as, according to Goffman, "behavior on stage" (qtd. in Boccagni and Schrooten 216). In addition, people's behaviour does not always correspond to the opinions they consciously express (qtd. in Boccagni and Schrooten 216), and therefore the method of unobtrusive observation, with participation, is very useful. As stated by Espeland, doing something and talking about it is qualitatively different (qtd. in Frykman 82), so the data obtained from different methods can be compared and new conclusions can be drawn from these differences.

9 Photos were taken during off-peak hours, so that other students would not be interrupted, and to avoid taking their photographs without their consent. Photographs showing students were taken with their consent.

10 Field notes were taken across the span of ten weeks, over at least one hour per week, and were taken while observing other students and users. This was done mostly during weekdays at different times of day to find out at what times the Library is more crowded, and if different behaviours will be exhibited at different times of day.

11 Documents about how and when the Library was built, the statute of the Library, its mission and other facts can be found at: knjiznica.ffzg.unizg.hr/pravilnik_2012.

Also, it should be considered that the attitudes towards a place can change, depending on one's conditions and needs. The view and understanding of the Library is different at a time when an exam or some deadline is due in less than 24 hours, than when one is in the Library without "real" obligations during a break between classes (Woodward 48–49). As a result, students spend their time in the Library in different ways.

To explore the supposed field, in this case the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, observation, social interaction, note taking, mapping, and other methods were employed. This provided the knowledge necessary to document its ethnography and not only describe this place, but also to understand it and interpret it, providing a "thick description"[12] of the place (Geertz 5–6), which is according to Schwandt described as

> Rather to thickly describe social action is actually to begin to interpret it be recording the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and so on that characterize a particular episode. It is this interpretive characteristic of description rather than detail per se that makes it thick. (qtd. in Ponterotto 2006)

Two interviews with three respondents were conducted, which the paper will elaborate upon in its continuation, along with an explanation of the questions asked.

For the first two respondents, two very open and talkative people were chosen, who were previous acquaintances, so the interview was very lively. Both interviewees were either studying or had studied information science, which is related to librarianship and libraries. One of the two respondents, M., at first thought that the interview is going to be about her profession. However, her *lived experience* in the Library was the centre of recorded information. For the third re-

12 This concept originates from Gilbert Ryle (Geertz 5–6). For Ryle, "thick" description involved ascribing intentionality to one's behaviour.

spondent, a person who frequents the library and spends more time there was chosen. The questions were quite open and there was no intention to indicate anything specific, such as some practices, exact rules, or relationships with students from other faculties; that way, the respondents were mostly allowed to express their experiences and views.

6. Findings of the Ethnography of the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb

> The analysis and interpretation of construction decisions cannot be understood without the social and economic institutional forces that constantly influence actors, just as the interpretation of symbolic meaning cannot be separated from those forces or history. (Low 91)

6.1. The Importance of the Library for the Dean at the time of its Construction

The dean of the Faculty at the time of the construction of Library pointed out the importance and the success of the Library being built in spite of the discouraging atmosphere towards the social sciences and humanities, and long-lasting marginalization of the position of those scientific fields in the wider (academic) society: "We remember even today that some thought that the Faculty should not even be given funds for construction. We succeeded despite all the difficulties. . . . we are even more satisfied and fulfilled with the completed work" (Jurković 4, translated by N. N.). It is apparent that this building is not merely a building, that it has its meanings in a broader historical and social context, i.e. its social relations and social practices are physically and conceptually located in the social space[13] (Low 91–92).

13 Social space thereby becomes a metaphor for the very experience of social life (O'Neill 174). According to Lefebvre it "incorporates" social actions, the ac-

6.2. Being in the Field

Through observation and photography, the research aimed to envision how the space of the Library is socially developed, through human social exchanges, memories, and everyday use of the environment (Low 92), along with the special *ways of operating* of the individuals[14] (de Certau XIV). There were many discernible behaviours and practises that students do in the Library besides studying. Attention was paid to sounds, smells, and other sensory experiences (Pink 23). Another interest was what students bring to the Library, and how they organize their study space, in this case their desk. Here are some of the notes from the field diary:

> Library tables are made of wood, whose surface is shiny. Most students have a water bottle on their desk along with a mobile phone, pencil case, notes, notebooks and / or books. Some have (also) a laptop. Some, probably from faculties of engineering sciences or similar, also have a calculator. Stains can be seen on some places on the carpets, probably from coffee or tea, which is forbidden in the Library. There are no special odours in the Library.

tions of subjects both individual and collective (33), it is the space of society (35).

14 The *ways of operating* of individuals are actually the ways in which people appropriate certain space that is organised by technics of sociocultural production. Those are tactics or strategies used by individuals or groups already "caught in nets of discipline" (de Certau XIV–XV), that is, special behaviours or practices that may be prohibited, special naming or other acts.

Photo 2. Stains on the carpet in the Library.
Photographed by Nikolina Novaković[15], 10 March, 2019.

6.3. Sounds in/of the Library

Depending on the time of day, weather conditions outside the Library, and the crowdedness of the Library, there are a variety of sounds that can be heard there:

> Most of the time you hear the sound of book pages flipping, mouse clicking and typing on computers and laptops, and sometimes the sounds of cell phones vibrating or the sound of messages arriving. You can also hear the vacuum cleaner, plugging in a mobile charger, students' whispers and sometimes footsteps, high heel noises, sneezing, coughing, chairs hitting the tables and the sound

15 All the following photos are also taken by the author of the text, Nikolina Novaković.

> of putting on a jacket. You can hear the sounds of the elevator, especially if you are closer to them. Sometimes you can hear the sound of a chainsaw coming from the outside.

6.4. "Reserving" Places in the Library

A pattern emerged during the research process, whereby the time, when the circulation of people was at its highest and at which times the tables are vacant but "reserved":

> I noticed that most students leave their place of studying before the beginning of the lectures, which is around 11:00, 12:30, 14:00, and other time frames. Also, during lunchtime, most places are "occupied" or "reserved," but empty. Students often leave their belongings on the desks during their breaks, so that they do not have to carry them to the toilet or similar places, and to "save" their place, which is actually against the Library rules. But, I also note that this practice is not sanctioned. These breaks can be short, like bathroom break or a phone call break, or longer, such as when going for lunch or coffee. I once heard from some girl in passing that somebody had drawn a penis on her scripts while she was away from the table.

6.5. Other Activities in the Library

Besides studying, reading or writing, students can be seen yawning, stretching, playing with pens, checking their phones, playing videogames on computers or phones, drinking, eating (not often), and resting or sleeping, which means that the Library serves as a "third place"[16] (Oldenburg 16) for them.

16 Third places "host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work" (Oldenburg 41). Examples of such places are cafes, churches, clubs, parks and libraries, although the reading areas are different from the other places which encourage interaction.

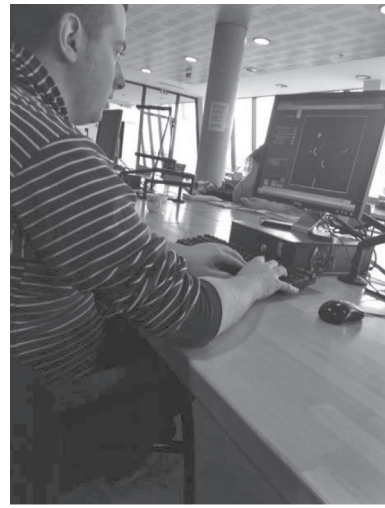

Photo 3. A student playing an online game
in the Library. 11 March 2019.

Photo 4. Student sleeping (or resting)
in the Library. 5 March 2019.

Spending more time here [on the fifth floor] I notice a younger librarian doing a laps around the reading area every hour, probably to make sure everything is in order, that no one is disturbing other users, or bringing in something they should not, such as food or coffee.

Photo 5. Signs prohibiting food, beverages, and mobile phones in the Library. 23 April 2019.

On some of the floors there are sofas/couches where students can relax, rest or stretch—especially if they are in the library for a longer period of time—or snooze between lectures. These sofas are different colours than other chairs.

Photo 6. Sofas on the third floor of the Library. 24 April 2019.

Certain spaces in the library may remind of Augé's term *non-place*[17] (Augé 75), as they are characterized by commands, prohibitions or informative displays and messages. These are spaces such as the entrance to the Library, entrances to each floor or the toilets, the elevator, and the staircase. The messages are very clear and noticeable.

17 Non-places do not have identity, or relational and historical features; they are the opposite of anthropological places (Augé 75). Examples are shopping malls, gas stations, airports, and hotel rooms.

Photo 7. Toilet entrance in the Library. 23 April 2019.

Photo 8. A sign representing that water is allowed in the Library. 23 April 2019.

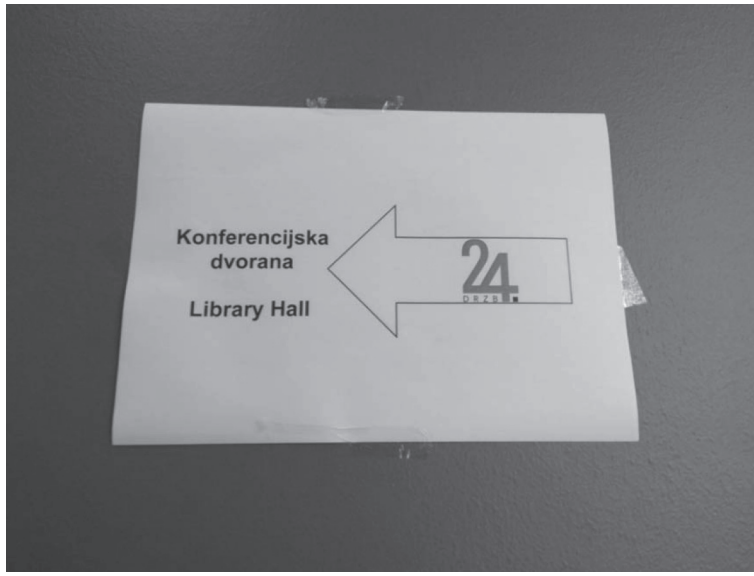

Photo 9. An arrow showing the way to the
Library Conference Hall. 23 April 2019.

As mentioned in the Methodology section, two of the respondents had studied or were studying information science. Respondent M. graduated in information sciences; archiving, and informatics, while respondent A., at the time of the interview, was enrolled in the second year of bachelor studies of Croatian language and literature and information science. Third respondent, T., is a student of Italian language and literature and Linguistics, and was, at the time of the interview, enrolled into the third year of bachelor studies.

6.6. The Respondents' Impressions of the Library

The first association of the respondent A. is that the Library is a warm place, used for various activities: "It represents to me, well, I see a picture of a warm place, beautiful, glazed… where I can sleep, chat with colleagues even though it is not allowed, but it is really nice.

It has the best toilets, especially those in the basement. They always have toilet paper. (laughter)"

For M., "the Library represents a house of knowledge", although both A. and M. agree that it is a "very stuffy place", and M. even calls it "a big greenhouse."[18]

They were asked how often they visit the Library, to which they responded that they usually visit the Library twice a week, and during the period of exams every or every other day. They go there with or without a task in mind, usually during the breaks between lectures, when they have nothing else to do. A. goes there to "look out the window, watch people, sleep, solve sudoku puzzles… read, play a game on a cell phone." Breaks last "sometimes up to an hour and a half, two, sometimes 15 minutes… depends."

M. reported that she gets bored quickly during such breaks, and after 15 minutes she is bored with "listening to music or counting the birds," or "it gets too hot for me if it's summer so then I just have to leave." A. says that the ground floor is the best and most ventilated, and M. mentions another place she finds nice, which is the Library basement, with lockers for students' stuff: "there is peace and quiet there, rarely anyone passes except the people who work in that hallway in the basement."

T. is in the Library almost every day, spending time during her long breaks,[19] or studying because she lives in "a crazy house" where everyone wants something from her and she cannot concentrate there. She "spent hours and hours there" and she always goes "to the fifth floor, to the same place, where there are mostly the same peo-

18 They would like to have the option to open the windows, even though they understand the reason behind it, as the moisture is not good for books. They also think that it would not be good if some student, especially from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, "wanted to throw himself out of the window in the middle of studying".

19 Or she goes there so that she does not have to take the crowded busses right after the end of classes.

ple".[20] She describes the atmosphere as: "quite pleasant, the only thing is that it can get too hot and too cold."[21]

Another interesting activity for A. is to read inscriptions on the toilet doors. Her overall view of the Library is that it puts her in a good mood, and that she is very comfortable there. "It is nice to walk through the shelves . . . I like to look for books the most. I could look for books all day."[22] Although, she is really annoyed by stuffiness.[23]

M. reports that what she likes is "that it has huge windows", saying "it kind of inspires me. So when I have that big, wide view of the city, that's huge inspiration for anything. In fact, I always chose such places to sit [there]."

6.7. Undesirable Behaviours, People, and Rules in the Library

Another topic mentioned earlier in the paper are other people, mostly students in the Library, and their undesirable behaviours. M. does not like when people make out in the basement, between the lockers or on benches, while A. says "that is the best part". Even though, M. admits she has also done that before, when she had a boyfriend. She is also annoyed by people talking in the Library, eating, or having very bad headphones, so that you can hear their music through them.[24]

20 T. mentions M., the librarian, and B., her mentor.

21 T. does not have many complaints about the Library but she would prefer a better heating and cooling system although she realises that it is not possible to rebuild it. That is why she always sits under the window. She also likes the chairs, which are more comfortable than the ones in the classrooms.

22 A. also dreams about kissing between the shelves in the library.

23 A. also wonders why are the toilets at a "-10 degree" Celsius temperature, while the library is at "+50". The respondents also mention the stink from the drainage in the basement.

24 T. also likes peace in the library and does not like when people listen to music loudly. She remarks how she asks them to turn the volume down then.

A. admits that she is annoyed by the keyboards on computers, it took her "a very long time to get used to the sound of typing." M. is also annoyed by people who bring coffee in the library, especially because of the stains on the books, carpets, or computers and everything else. Furthermore, she mentions people occupying a computer and not returning for an hour or more. "There aren't enough computers for all the people who need it, and yes, half of them don't work."

The respondents describe some of the students and other users of the Library as irresponsible, remarking that "they don't understand… the idea of a library". The respondents get frustrated when a book stays borrowed past the return deadline, especially when it is the only book for borrowing. Another nuisance they find are returned books in very bad condition, under which M. qualifies scribbling, "cutting bacon" over the book, drinking coffee,[25] and writing notes inside. Although, A. says that "some notes come in handy."[26]

They notice that students from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture mostly take up spaces near the windows, and often just leave their books to "camp" on the tables and A. recognises them by the special colours of their books. M. also mentions that she would sometimes pretend "to be smart", or "open ten books", so that some of the boys would look at her. A. says that she is sometimes jealous of other girls if they have a nice pencil case, or type fast, which she does not.

25 M. admits that she did not bring coffee to the Library, but she "regularly ate something, always, so there were always crumbs over the books. Like I said I do not like it, but I've always done it, of course." A. enjoys chatting and disturbing others, while M. says that she would get looks from others to the effect of "*leave because I have to study and you can't talk on the phone here*" from other people. A. reports that she once entered the Library with a huge cup of coffee and then the librarian warned her, and then she ran away. She also remembers one episode of dropping "two pieces of chocolate on *Loderecker*, the dictionary, one and only…".

26 Even though, one time she found some verses from a Balašević song *Ringišpil* [eng. *Carousel*] in *Dubravka* written by Ivan Gundulić". She thought it was the summary of the chapter, which it was not.

T. is annoyed by people who talk, make noise or leave eraser crumbs, thinking of students from other faculties who come here, that sometimes they show off, "like they own our library". She thinks that they take up the most space, and make the most of the mess, and "when they study together they are also quite dynamic."[27] She admits that she sometimes eats in the Library, "walnuts or raisins", but that she eats everything else—bananas, pastries—outside.[28]

The respondents also talked about people who are not students but come to the Library to use the reading area. They mentioned an old lady with hair in a bun, with a suitcase and a lot of papers, which made them want to know what she is doing.[29] The respondents express concern because the Library has open access for everybody. In addition, A. is annoyed that the sixth floor is closed because she is interested in the view from there.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to document the ethnography of space and place of the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. Analysing the findings, we can notice different zones, different practices and behaviours, different sounds, different people and different meanings, while there surely remain common practises and *experiences* of the Library.

This specific place and space do not represent the same and do not mean the same to everyone. To the dean who was in office when the Library was being built, it represents the recognition and prog-

27 T. is not always sure that they are students of another faculty, so . . . "I think 'let them come', I don't mind really, it's quite a nice library . . . especially since they don't have their own spaces."

28 T. is considerate of other people, so she never answers her phone in the Library, always turns off the sound, and listens to music quietly.

29 M. reports that the old lady had asked her for a password to use the computer, which she denied, and adds that once the lady asked her to keep an eye on her suitcase.

ress of the Faculty, as well as social sciences and humanities in general. Meanwhile, for users who spend more time there (and develop a *sense of place*), mostly students, it becomes a "workplace," a place to study, but also to socialise, sleep, relax, read, and do other activities—a *third place*. All these users, through their practices, socially, but also materially, shape this space[30] and its meaning(s), which are never final.

Even though the number of the respondents was low, some conclusions can be drawn from their narratives. The Library, like most places, has its positives and negatives. It is big, it is characterised by nice, warm atmosphere, but that can sometimes turn into a space that is too hot and stuffy. The Library has open access to everyone, although that can at times be concerning or disturbing, especially when the other users do not obey the rules. The Library is a place visited by different people who come there for various reasons, to study, read, relax, or "kill some time", all guided by rules they should follow. The respondents themselves break the rules from time to time, eat, drink coffee, talk, or commit similar offences, but those behaviours seem to be more irritating when done by some other person.

For the following topics to be researched I would propose a comparison of different study places for students, such as home, cafes etc.; what are their effects on the studying itself and the impressions they leave on students.

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30 For example, leaving stains on the carpets.

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Creative Writing

The Story about the Blue Executioner

Luka Vrbanić

Translated by Zvonimir Prtenjača

* * *

A man is sitting at a table by a broken window in a tiny, dimmed room; his hair ashen, and his face illuminated by a small lamp on the table, whose power is slowly diminishing. Clad in a stained white shirt and tattered black trousers, as well as a brown jacket with a hood patched up in several places, the man's age is unknown. Still, several of his protruding grey hairs point to the fact that he is past his prime. Everything around him is destroyed: the foundations of his house are barely standing, and when he gazes through the window, all he can witness is the desolation caused by Him. The entire town is in ruins, yet is not afflicted by wars or mass bombings, but rather by the bloodthirsty destruction of an insatiable dictator, one chosen by the people, who prefers to remain faceless and revels in the torture of others. He stripped him of everything. He took his job, his friends, his family, his life. He was left completely alone. Alone to fight him, the Blue Executioner.

The man stoops and reaches for a ragged piece of old newsprint from the floor, the letters of which have already faded, whereas the paper itself has considerably yellowed. He retrieves a pencil from his sash and starts writing a letter addressed to the Blue Executioner. Having finished, he takes a piece of thread lying around and binds the letter into a small, yellowed volume. He gets up and walks to the window. As he opens the half-broken window, he imagines that the entire town can hear its shrilling creaks. He looks up to the darkened, titian sky, sighs heavily, takes a deep breath, a curious intermixture

of oxygen and smog, and whistles. Within seconds, a black raven descends upon the window ledge. The man quickly ties his yellow volume to the raven's leg, gently caresses him, and whispers something, almost inaudibly. The man grabs the raven, but only to let him fly away. For a few moments, the man observes as the raven's wings slash the sky, and then closes the window and returns to his table.

He opens a drawer and takes a sharp knife with the letters "C R O P U L U S" engraved on its blade. For a second or two, he observes the inscription, and laughs, somewhat coyly. He then sheathes his knife and steps out of his poor, dilapidating house. He covers his head with the jacket's ragged brown hood and heads towards the highest part of the town, where the Blue Executioner's Castle is located and populated with his bloodthirsty paramilitary. Slowly and carefully, avoiding the merciless patrols of the Executioner's army, he crouches and begins to move towards the streets, and finally arrives at his destination, a majestic, although a decayed one. Oblivious to the passage of time, for it seemingly stopped ticking away when he set out on this escapade, he examines his blistered palms, scarred by lashes and dirt. With the titian sky darkening heavily above his weary head, the man ponders. Realizing that walking through the main entrance is not an option, he contemplates about the ways to reach the top of the castle. He returns to his seasoned palms, now graced with a couple of heavy, salty tears which have rolled down the man's emaciated cheeks. He wipes his eyes and starts climbing up the protruding stone ledges. With each of his steps, a stone shard plummets. Yet the guards are not alerted, as they are used to the castle's slow disintegration, and they fixedly gaze forward.

Many stone ledges onward, the man's blisters start popping and the blood oozes slowly. Seeing an entrance to the castle in the form of a window, just big enough for a man of his stature, he reaches for it and quickly wipes the blood off his palms on his shirt, now even more stained than before. He unsheathes his knife and starts crouching towards the castle's highest chamber. He moves through the castle so smoothly, as if dancing between the shadows, a move-

ment he is all too familiar with given that he has spent years moving from shelter to shelter and crawling from one hole to another. He creeps up the stairs and finally reaches the chamber he aimed for all along. He quickly glances through a rusty keyhole and, seeing that nobody is in the room, enters. The room, whose spacious landscape is dominated by an old bed ornamented with various wooden figures, and disrupted only by a massive oak cabinet, immediately ignites the man's memories. Transposed to his childhood, the man reminisces of how he enjoyed to play underneath a branched oak canopy in his grandmother's backyard. He hides in the cabinet, waiting for Him to enter the room. He has only an idea of what He looks like because he only ever had one chance to glance at Him when he personally came to observe the untangling of His destruction. But, even during that day, the man was trying to avoid the onslaught of His cruel paramilitary, and all he managed to discern was that He was covered in a royal blue robe, with a dark, golden cap on his head. But for the man, this appearance was enough, and it would forever be etched into his memory.

* * *

As he is thinking about the Blue Executioner, the heavy wooden doors open, creaking and screeching along the way. He enters the room, reaching for His massive mirror on the other end of the room. The man, boiling with anger, barely keeps himself from lashing out at Him and failing to complete his task. At that moment, a raven flies down onto His window ledge, burdened by a small, yellowed volume attached to his leg. The Blue Executioner gently caresses his head and removes the volume from his leg, only to snap his neck immediately, throw him out of the window, and laugh maniacally. He opens the volume and quickly reads through the words written down. Though there are not many of them, they are just enough to make His face turn pale. He discards the volume and rushes headlong for the exit, but he is stopped by the man, determined to deliver his last blow. The Blue Executioner, petrified, asks the man with the knife:

- Who are you and what do you want? – Not knowing these to be his final words.

The man with the knife answers, though in a chillingly reserved manner:

- Now, you meet your end. – With a single, smooth blow, the man strips Him of His life, blood gushing out relentlessly from his neck veins. With the final remnants of His strength, He exclaims loud enough to alert the guards. Within seconds, four heavily armed men invade their master's chamber, instinctively shooting at His assailant. The man falls down to his knees, tears falling down one last time. But the man is not sad, and the tears running down his cheeks are that of joy and peace for finally cleansing the world of His evil. Then, all of a sudden, heavy footsteps echo through the room, and an imposing figure stands in front of the man. It is him, the Blue Executioner, visibly surprised, but collected enough to state in his deep voice:

- I always knew that someone would try, but I never thought that someone would actually be that stupid and crazy to really come here and kill me.

The smile on the man's face dissipates, as do the tears of joy. Emotionless, he surrenders to the company of the black skeleton he was dying to meet. His knife clanks down on the floor, the inscription "C R O P U L U S" filled with blood. Now, the real Executioner heads towards the window to read the words noted down on the yellowed volume. Having read them, he laughs out loud, crumples the paper, and throws it out of the window. He turns to his guards, and they stare at him as if they have seen a prophet of old. One of them boldly speaks up:

- Oh, Almighty Executioner, what was written in the scroll?

The Blue Executioner smugly replies:

- Do you really want to know? The wretched bastard thought he could scare me with his empty threats! The scroll read: “Your end is nigh!”

The guards exchange a few looks amongst each other, as if oblivious to the Executioner’s statement. His voice sharpens, and he orders:

- Ditch him in the dungeon with the others! I do not have time to be slowed down! The world awaits, and we move forward!

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About *Kick*

From its inception, students' journal *Kick* had one simple purpose, to provide students at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek with an easy and simple way to publish both their academic and creative writing in English. Students wholeheartedly accepted this opportunity and, as a result, *Kick* has already had three online issues in 2018 containing students' research papers, poems, short stories, and reviews. In 2019 *Kick* published its first two printed issues. It continued with its activities in 2020, now as a double-blind reviewed journal and a part of the English Student's Association "Glotta." In spite of the difficulties posed by the ongoing pandemic, it successfully produced this issue by compiling the works intended for Glotta's first interdisciplinary conference, which was regrettably canceled, and other insightful papers submitted by our colleagues.