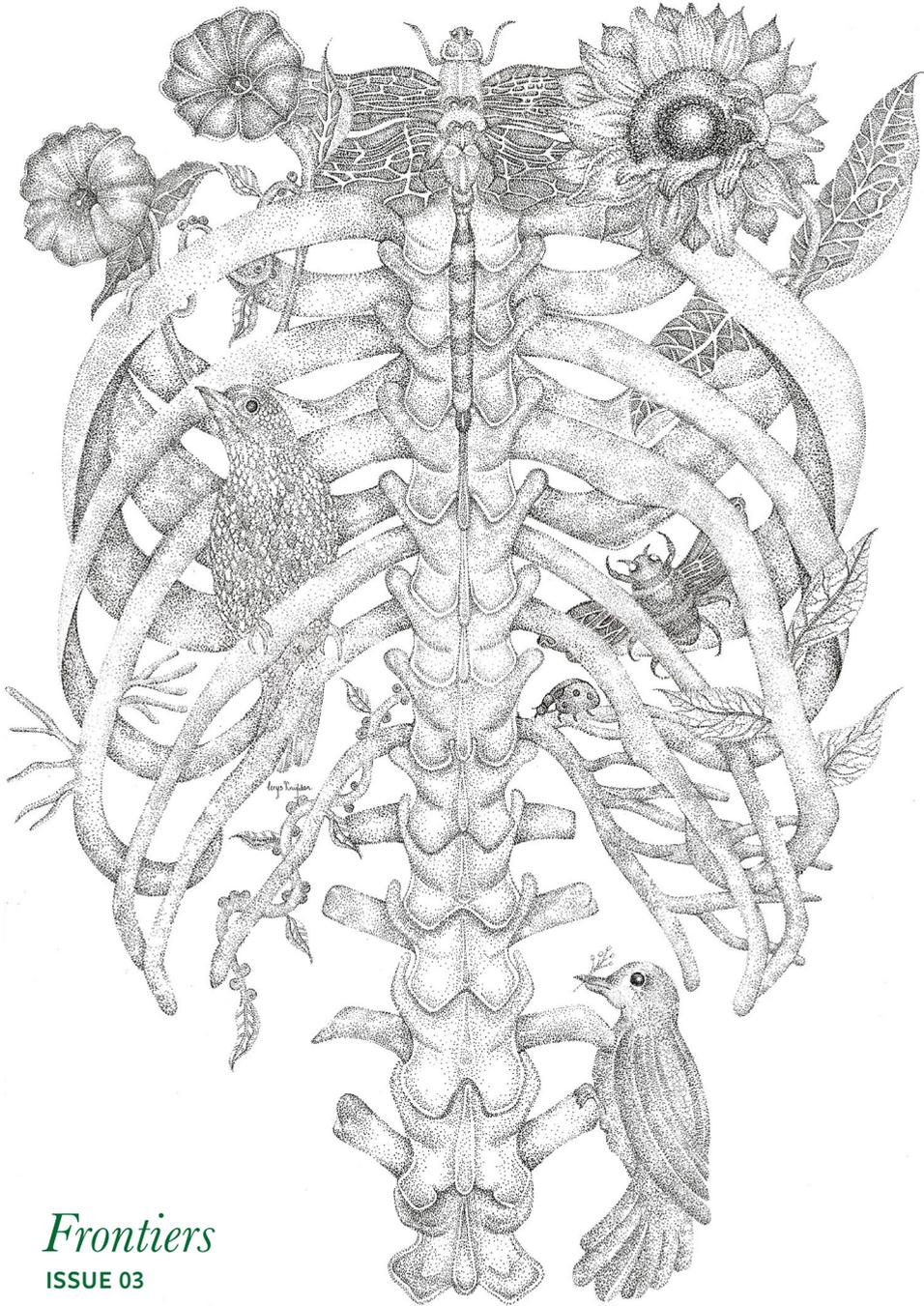


QUESTION

ESSAYS & ART FROM THE HUMANITIES



Frontiers
ISSUE 03

QUESTION

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Designers

Bryony Horne & Hannah Griffiths
*Students in the Department of Typography &
Graphic Communication, University of Reading*

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The fourth issue will address the theme
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Frontiers

Q

This issue of Question is dedicated to Frontiers. Many of the narratives shaping current global sociopolitical affairs centre on representations of division and difference, and are often expressed in calls for forms of separation or protection. As a result of this polarised ‘us versus them’ rhetoric, frontiers risk being reduced to places of opposition and contrast that propagate fear of what is other or unknown. Through the essays, creative writing and artworks on the pages of this issue of Question, we aim to subvert this discourse. The contributions address the theme from multiple perspectives, spanning geographical space, epochs and cultures. They help us to see frontiers as psychological, ideological and cultural, as well as physical concepts, and to reconfigure them as sites of possibility, cross-fertilisation and development.

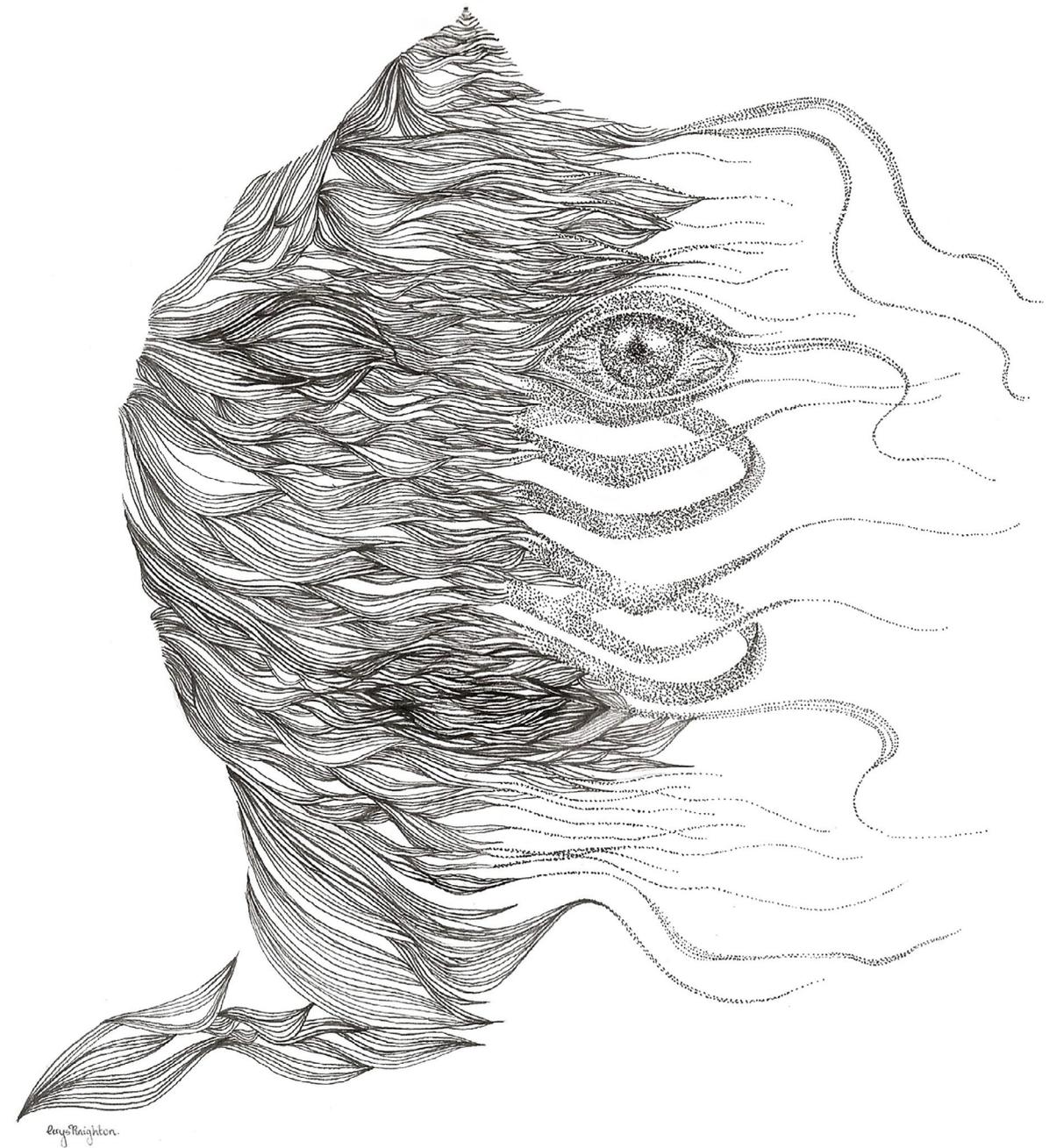
Among the essays, Martina Delucchi shows us how Roman theatre flourished as a result of its encounter with the Greek tragic tradition. Ewan Short then brings a fascinating insight into the contributions of European-born Byzantine empresses to the shaping of Crusader rule following the fall of Constantinople. In her article on the French author Marie NDiaye’s novel *My Heart Hemmed In*, Alison Marmont analyses the invisible frontiers that can shape the social spaces inhabited by ethnic minorities and calls upon her readers to dismantle what she terms the ‘frontier of difference’. Ekaterina Gasparian also explores issues of identity and self-perception in her diachronic analysis of the effect of Western culture’s penetration into post-Soviet Russia. Rachel Beaney’s article looks at children’s drawings from the Spanish Civil War with the aim of subverting the narrative of victimhood commonly attached to children’s roles during conflict. Finally, as Ellen Grace Lesser’s article on the compatibility of the Genesis text and the Big Bang theory demonstrates, ceasing to see frontiers as lines of separation between two mutually exclusive narratives can pave the way for new understandings of established ideas.

In the centrality of identity to the prose and poetry responses to the theme of this issue, we see how far the negotiation of physical, political and psychological frontiers can impact on self-perception. Told through the eyes of a child, Sabrin Hasbun’s ‘Card Sharp’ examines what happens when regional conflict forces complicated ethnic and religious identities to be analysed and defined for the first time. Kristina Lloyd Quintero’s autofiction piece, ‘The Mid-Land,’ dramatises the meeting of national, class, educational, linguistic and political identities within a small town and within one family. In her poem ‘The Mariner,’ Leanna Brinkley subverts the perceived separation between seafarers and onshore communities in the early modern period. Helena Drysdale’s ‘State of Emergency’ explores

the idea of contagion, comparing the narrator's experience of radioactive iodine treatment for cancer with her great great grandfather's experience of quarantine in a Greek lazaretto in 1847. On a related theme, Cerys Knighton's artwork, which features on the cover and throughout this issue, engages with the idea of the body's surface as a frontier. By revealing what lies beneath, she allows us to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of our bodies, and to find beauty in what might otherwise provoke fear or discomfort.

In an era characterised by non-stop streams of information, a surge in authoritarian and/or populist political discourses, and dichotomous social structures, this issue of *Question* aims to create room for reflection. Through discussions of the sort emerging within its pages, perhaps we can discover what can be gained by crossing frontiers rather than reinforcing them, and, in so doing, come to reconfigure them as sites of possibility, inclusivity and increased understanding.

Andrea Romanzi and Julia Sutton-Mattocks



State of Emergency

Helena Drysdale, University of Exeter & Bath Spa University

It was a machine in the sky, lifts clanking up and down, medical people scurrying past anxious and disorientated patients. The entrance to Ward 6 North bore a black and yellow radiation hazard sign, the trefoil that could be a skull. I had to be buzzed in. Pointed canisters lined the walls, like bombs, ready to destroy one kind of tumour or another.

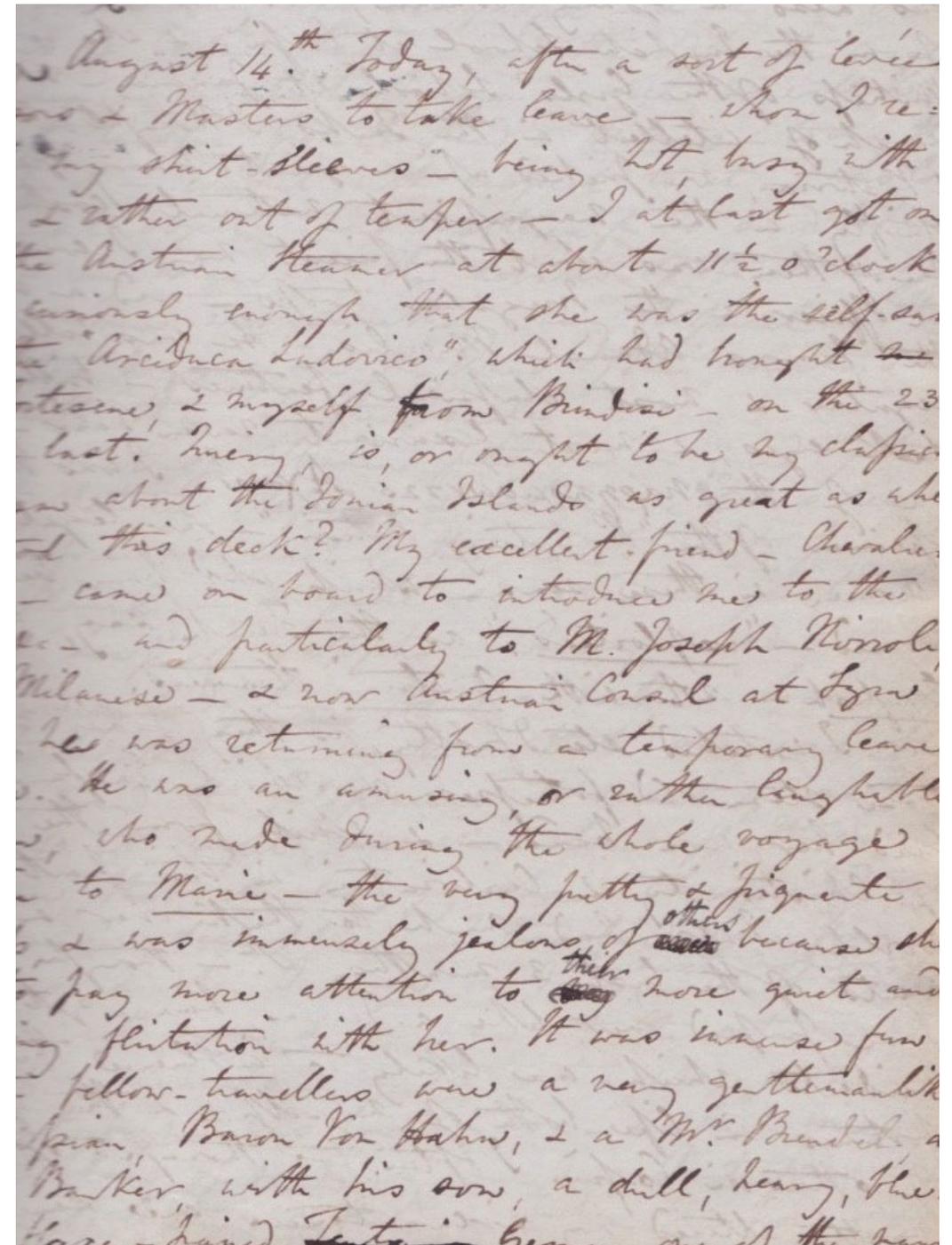
Robert, the nuclear technician, met us at the door. He was gangly, spectacled. He knew I'd be nervous, everyone was. He tried to reassure me by saying he had worked on Ward 6 North for twenty years and didn't glow in the dark. And you don't have two heads. I joined in the mordant vibe. No, still only got one head – not that there's much inside it. He even had a girlfriend.

If radiation was visible, I asked him, what would it look like once swallowed? He stretched out spidery arms. It would be twenty feet of brilliant light emanating all around, like the sun. If someone stayed within a metre of you for an hour, they would be contaminated with more radiation than they are safe to receive in a whole month.

I followed his loping stride into the ward. My room was still being decontaminated after the previous incumbent. Its door had been left ajar. I didn't like to stare – it was too intimate – but I glimpsed runkled sheets, a discarded toothbrush, blue plastic gloves still bearing the shape of the wearer's hands. It looked like a hasty departure. Get me out of here.

The adjacent bay was dark. Tumours bred under the morphine hush. Nurses with soft footfalls. Lights winking on invisible machinery, like satellites at night. The endgame. I waited in the day room. People came here to be given bad news. Its walls were mauve, which psychologists must have advised was a soothing shade.

A month before, I'd been waiting in the lobby at the Orthodox Patriarchate in Fener, the traditionally Greek district of Istanbul. The same sequestered and hallowed space, the same mood of reverence, the same trepidation as I watched functionaries busying importantly about. That time, I was following in the footsteps of George Bowen, who had been there 167 years earlier. Like him, I was preparing myself for an audience with the Patriarch, His All-Holiness, Primus Inter Pares. This time I had an appointment with a pill. Like Byron's Childe Harold, I needed to *feel* –



George Bowen's journal, 1847. Author's own collection

*We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be, – and to steel
The heart against itself.*

I had accused Bowen of hiding behind poets in his journal, of using their words to screen his own emotions from others or himself, and now I seemed to be doing the same. But I wasn't hiding. Poetry was a validation: it's justifiable to feel like this because others have felt it too. That connection helped me to steel my heart against itself.

The oncologist arrived, and he and Robert patiently answered my questions. To understand the beast is to begin to tame it. Not that I did understand. I tried to, but their voices were a wall of sound. The crucial thing, I gathered, was that nobody should enter the room for four or five days.

I'll do what I have to do, Robert said. Some patients don't like being on their own, so I'm okay to talk from nearby.

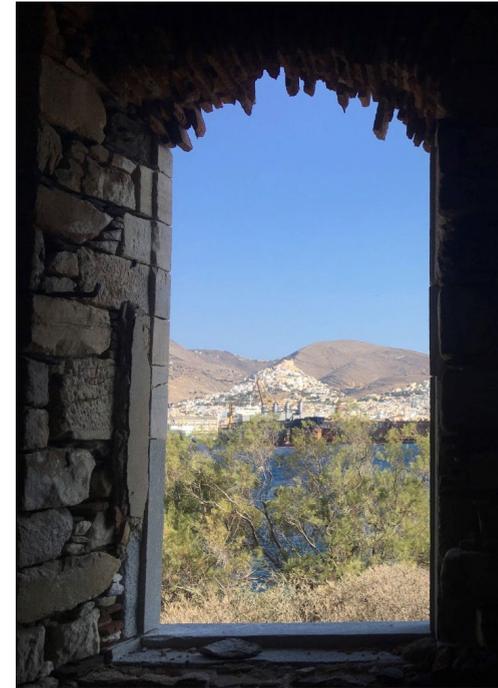
For his own safety he wore a radiation monitoring badge that was sent regularly to the USA for analysis.

I won't run away from you, he said, but you have to have a balance.

At last a nurse signalled from the end of the corridor. The room is ready for you now.

I focused on my footsteps. I crossed the threshold of the outer door, then an inner door, both made of lead. Deaths-head warnings on each door, and between the doors strange black dials on the walls. There was no Handbook to this, no guide. I didn't even have Bowen's journal because it would get contaminated and that would prevent me from taking it home afterwards. But I clung to the thought of him. He was the one person I knew, or was getting to know, who had experienced something similar. And as my great great grandfather he was with me, at least on a cellular level.

'19th September 1847. At 10am we cast anchor in the harbour of Syra – very much cooler than it was when we were here before, just 4 weeks ago. And these 4 weeks seem 4 months, so much have we crowded into that short space of time.' After a final dinner on board the steamer, Bowen dropped his luggage into the dinghy, then followed it down the ladder. He was rowed across Syros harbour, a long haul. It was 5pm. Agios Giorgios, its hill-top basilica silhouetted against treeless brown mountains, receded with each oar pull. So did Deedes, still on deck, still waving. Their Eastern jaunt was over. While moored in Smyrna the previous evening Deedes had bought a gift of figs and melons for Lady Seaton, wife of the British High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands, where Bowen ran the University.



View across Syros harbour from Lazaretto. Author's own collection

To accompany the gift Bowen had scribbled a light-hearted travelogue.

*Bismillah! We have bowed before
The Sultan's radiant face,
And gazed on – all yashmaks reveal
Of Oriental grace.*

*We've seen the ugly King of Greece,
We've seen his lovely queen –
And shrunk before the liquid blaze
Of Photini's bright een.*

Photini was the Queen's beautiful Greek lady-in-waiting, with whom Bowen was enamoured.

*We've slept 'neath Ida's snowy ridge,
Thermometer at zero, –
And bathed by old Leander's tower
Alas! – without a Hero!*

And so on, for twenty verses. Now Colonel Deedes had been summoned back to the Ionian Islands to rejoin the 34th, which was being deployed to Gibraltar. They would never meet again. Bowen would write in his journal: Alas poor Deedes!

Bowen was deposited on the most isolated spot on the far west side of the bay, as remote from habitation as possible. He climbed a flight of steps up to the Lazaretto. Towering over him rose the stone walls of that bastion. Here he would be incarcerated until such time as the doctor, the classically-named Belisarius, declared him disease-free and gave him 'pratica' or 'pratique', permission to enter Greece. The gates were bolted behind him.

No pictures, no TV. They couldn't bang in picture hooks because the walls were lined with steel to protect the rest of the ward from radiation. Lead makes a better barrier but is too soft to stay upright in a wall. Steel walls a concentric ring around my steeled heart. A lead shield was wheeled across the inner door. The nurses would stay behind it at all times, to protect their vital organs. I was about

to become so toxic that in my orbit fetuses would shrivel and die. Small children would be rendered infertile for life.

Screwed to the shield was a mysterious list.

Caesium,
Gold Seeds,
Iridium Wire,
Iodine-131.

It looked like a list of treasures in the Patriarchate, an inventory of the contents in the Hall of the Throne, the Hall of the Patriarchs, the Holy Synod Room. The gilt and brocade chairs, the bowls of multi-coloured foil-wrapped sweets, the icons and chandeliers. Caesium, Gold Seeds... they sounded beautiful. These were the arcane medical procedures carried out in this room. At the bottom, in smaller lettering, as if mentionable only in the tiniest squeak, *Gynaecological or Needling*. That sounded worse than anything.

I changed into a hospital gown. Any clothes I wore would become radioactive, so would have to stay here afterwards. I donned blue plastic gloves, which I had to wear throughout my stay to limit the spread of contamination, and stylish blue plastic bags that functioned as overshoes. They reminded me of the felt slippers that Stavri, Bowen's valet-de-place, had carried for him to put on over his boots on entering Istanbul's mosques.

Robert attached a wrist band, as tenderly as a lover giving a bracelet, but this one had a skull-and-crossbones on it. Just in case, it included a phone number for the body-handlers to call for advice. Mine would not be your run-of-the mill cadaver. They would wear protective suits, and approach it with awe, like the Orthodox faithful approaching a relic in the cathedral at the Patriarchate. Maybe they would pack it into a marble casket like the incorrupt relics of St Euphemia the Great Martyr. But I would secrete poison, not holy blood.

Are you ready?

Yes.

Robert wheeled in a trolley bearing contraptions of different colours and sizes with short hoses, like hand-held vacuum cleaners. These were radiation measuring meters and a Geiger counter. Beside them was a lead pot with the dimensions of a Dijon mustard jar. Inside it the radioactive Iodine-131 capsule. It was made of beta particles and gamma rays. I imagined it vibrating, trying to get out. It was ordered by a laboratory in Amersham, made by a laboratory in Germany from a fission of Uranium-238 isotopes which came from a nuclear reactor, and transported to Ward 6 North in a radiation-proof container. Unlike Iodine-129, which has a half-life of 15.7 million years, Iodine-131 has a half-life of eight days. Robert had to calculate the timing precisely so that the isotope had decayed enough

to reach my prescribed dose. He did the sums, humming and making clocking sounds with his tongue, while I waited, perched on the edge of the bed as if preparing to flee.

He explained the procedure. He would unscrew the lead pot and insert a funnel about eight inches tall. It had a hinged flap at the top, like a plastic Venus Flytrap. This funnel would pick up the capsule. He would hand it to me and I would flip back the top, put it to my lips, and swallow. Why the tall funnel? Because it made a significant difference to Robert's risk level if he held it at the top rather than closer to the capsule. Even as we spoke, radiation was haemorrhaging through the lid. I realised I shouldn't be asking all these questions – every second exposed Robert to more radiation.

Are you ready?

Yes.

Dread mixed with a kind of excitement. Everything was strange and unreal. Robert poured me a glass of water. Then he unscrewed the lid, inserted the funnel, picked up the capsule. It was small and ginger. Who would guess that so much havoc would be caused by such an inoffensive bean? I didn't waste time inspecting it. I tipped it into my mouth and swallowed the nuclear bomb. Robert watched anxiously.



Syros Lazaretto, 2018, now a ruin. Author's own collection

All right?

Yes.

He suddenly looked aghast. You didn't chew it did you?

No.

Phew.

Radioactive teeth?

He laughed uncertainly.

Now I'm going to leave you. I won't be back for half an hour. Don't eat or drink anything.

He didn't run, exactly.

The worst was over, the swallowing moment. Eat me. Drink me. I lay on the bed and waited for some kind of metamorphosis – if not shrinking or expanding, at least a buzz of high energy electromagnetic waves. Nothing. I stared at the lead screen, reciting the list like an incantation.

Caesium,

Gold Seeds,

Iridium Wire,

Iodine-131

Gynaecological or needling...

I went inwards, trying to visualise my deepest cellular recesses. Down, down, down through circulatory systems and lymph systems and interlocking networks of muscle and sinew and bone. Bowen's DNA lurked somewhere. I willed the tumour to suck up the iodine, unaware it was radioactive, and die. This sorcery I do.

I was lucky because Ward 6 North had recently been refurbished, my room given an en suite bathroom like in a Holiday Inn. Bowen was lucky too. While some of his friends endured horrific conditions in the Piraeus Lazaretto, an old fishing hulk where you were likely to catch plague, the Syros Lazaretto had been rebuilt in 1840 by a Bavarian engineer at King Otto's expense, financed by British loans. Before that, according to the 1840 Handbook, it was 'abominable, and ought by all means to be avoided. It is composed of mere boxes of wood, which swarm with vermin.' Now it was one of the best in the Mediterranean.

After the conflagration he had just survived in the timber-framed alleyways of Pera, Bowen regarded fire as one great scourge of the East. The other was thought to be disease. Turkey's spire-shaped minarets had provoked in Bowen an uncharacteristic longing for 'England's sweet churches', and this was more than homesickness. He was afraid he might never get home and he was right to be afraid. New global communication networks were bringing people into contact with new diseases, and these diseases had become epidemics. By the 1840s, pathogens were reaching their peak, killing left and right, before causes and cures began to

be found during the second half of the century. Six months after parting, Deedes would be dead from fever, buried in Gibraltar. The following year Bowen would be felled by a malignant fever in Athens. The year after that one of his brothers died of dysentery in Burma.

Of all diseases surging around the Levant, plague was feared most. Alexander Kinglake called it an Infernal Angel, more terrible than Suleyman in his glory, mightier than armies. If you mocked the ailing Ottoman Empire, sneered at its faded splendour, at least plague would inspire awe. Plague was thought to be caused by foul vapours or miasmas emanating from swamps, or the breath of a sick person, spread through contagion. Travellers in Turkey were convinced it lurked in Oriental clothing, in rich furs and costly shawls, in embroidered slippers and golden saddle-cloths. If forced to venture into the streets during an epidemic, they carefully avoided touching any person or thing. The French even donned protective shiny oilskin capes.

The east came to be associated with disease, but plague ignored frontiers and passports. A solution was to isolate everyone coming from the Orient for as long as it took to ensure they were not contaminated. As soon as Greece gained independence, Kapodistrias's fledgling government imposed quarantine laws between Greece and Turkey. But Greece was diseased too – Byron died not from



Steps up to Bowen's suite at Syros Lazaretto. Author's own collection

wounds at Missolonghi but malaria – so Greece was also in quarantine with the Ionian Islands, and the Ionians with Trieste and Malta, Malta with Gibraltar. On crossing these borders you were incarcerated sometimes for seven days, depending on the prevailing state of health, and sometimes up to forty – hence the word quarantine. As Bowen described in his Handbook, even if a ship arrived from somewhere that had had no recent outbreak of disease, and no contact with land or other ships en route, you still had to endure ‘the purgatory of purification’ before being readmitted to ‘the Paradise of civilized life.’ It could add months to a journey, and was a serious drawback of an Eastern tour. Until recently, if you were caught avoiding quarantine, you could be executed.

‘I was installed in 3 tolerably comfortable rooms for which I was to pay 3 drachmas or 2s a day.’ Although dilapidated they were far more commodious than Syros’s Hotel d’Angleterre, where Bowen had stayed en route to Turkey a month earlier, and they commanded an excellent view of the harbour and towns of Syra and Hermoupolis. But he not only had to pay for his imprisonment, he also had to furnish the rooms. A hotel attached to the Lazaretto rented him two rickety deal tables, a truckle bed, basin, jug and two straw-bottomed chairs, and also supplied his meals. In the next door suite were two Greek merchants settled at Malta – *‘very civil & obliging fellows’* – but he was the only Englishman, and apart from them *‘the only person with any claim to the designation of gentleman.’* A room on the floor below held a party of eight women, who he found intimidating. *‘Along with us there are, however, 50 or 60 Levantines – divided off in wards just like those of a prison – each ward having its guardiano. Nearly everyone carries a stick – chiefly with the purpose of keeping off those not in the same quarantine with himself.’*

If Bowen had physical contact with others who had entered the Lazaretto after him, he would be ‘compromised’, and would have to stay in quarantine until that person obtained pratique. He was assigned a personal *guardiano*, ‘a comical old rogue’ called Triandaphylos, who never left his side, and beat off anyone who approached. Bowen and his possessions were *contumaci* and *sporchi*, contumacious and foul. The phraseology was Italianised because the first Lazaretto was established in Medieval Venice. Lazaretto from Lazarus, the New Testament’s sick beggar, a name for lepers, who were cared for in a sequestered Lazar-house, at a time when leprosy was as mysterious and horrifying as plague.

I too was enduring the ‘purgatory of purification’ before being readmitted to ‘the Paradise of civilized life.’ I stared at myself in the bathroom mirror. The scar on my neck greeted me with its usual smirk. No sulphurous glow. I was surprised that nothing had changed. No hair standing on end. I wished it was visible, my aura, all twenty feet of it, molten like sun rays. I imagined it sliding over furniture and into cracks.

Bowen and I were burdened with actual and potential powers of contagion – of connection – so lethal that we had to be sequestered from the world, trapped in this non-space, this no-man’s-land. We had both had audiences with Patriarchs in that glittering hall overlooking the Golden Horn, where they were surrounded by guardiani, and protected from extremists by high stone walls. The Patriarchs wore invisible halos of spiritual radiance. Mine was an agent of death. I imagined swooping on those rush hour pedestrians down in the network of West London streets, cutting a swathe on my invisible wings, wielding my invisible sword. Maybe people do that. I felt my power.

After the initial radioactive burst had died down, Robert’s head materialised over the lead shield. His awkward geeky manner. He asked me to lie beneath a black tube in the ceiling, like negative neon, which he said was a radiation measuring stick. He remained safely between inner and outer doors, where he fiddled with the dials to calculate the energy waves. He would do this daily to estimate the rate at which the radiation was degrading. This indicated when I could be released.

Make yourself at home, he said breezily as he left. Enjoy your holiday in this comfortable hotel.

Robert was my *guardiano*, my Triandaphylos. I had a moment of separation anxiety. It was 5pm. Twelve hours since I had left home; a lifetime still to go.

Cultural Contact on Stage: Greek and Roman Theatre

Martina Delucchi, University of Bristol

By the end of the first century BC, Rome was finally at peace. The first emperor, Augustus, surrounded himself with philosophers, poets, rhetors, eager to celebrate the dawn of an era. Among them, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, more commonly known as Horace, produced literature in many different genres: satire, lyric poetry, but also epistles. In an *epistula* in hexameters to the emperor himself he writes one of the most famous quotes transmitted to us from the ancient world: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*. ('The subdued Greece conquered the savage victor') (*Epistulae*, II. 1. 156).¹ The poet is here describing a process that, for two centuries, had been transforming Rome into a new Athens of the Golden Age. And there is no Athens without theatre. Greek drama seduced the Romans and Latin authors, reading the works of their Greek predecessors, started not just to imitate but to emulate, reproducing the most famous tragedies of the classical period.² Unfortunately, this rich production of drama is known only through fragments, which nevertheless encourage interesting questions: to what extent can we consider them 'exclusive property' of Latin authors? How did they adjust the text to a new sensibility? How did the staging change? But let's start from the beginning.

Greece and Rome: from speed dating to a long-term relationship

When Horace writes, around one hundred and thirty years had passed since Rome established its domain in Greece and yet what could be called an 'inferiority complex', at least from a cultural point of view, remains. From the victory over the Macedonian king Pyrrhus in 275 BC, through Carthage's defeat in Sicily (at that time split between Carthaginian and Greek colonies), and to the fall of Corinth in 146 BC, Rome had to deal with its troublesome neighbour: the Greek world. A 'Graecomania' exploded in Rome: political battles were fought among traditionalists, anchored to those Roman traditions that they perceived threatened, and those who embraced new lifestyles from the Greek East. The Roman senate with its conservative majority even banished Greek philosophers from Rome in 161 BC.

Nevertheless, the process had started long before that: since the Romans

controlled Greek colonies in Sicily and South Italy and Greece itself, even if their political and military power was steady, they found themselves dominated by the Greeks' cultural supremacy. However, the *real* first contact between Greece and Rome dates back to the seventh century BC. Archaeological findings give proof of thriving commercial exchanges between the monarchical Rome and the colonies of Magna Graecia, partly mediated by the Etruscans.³ So why does the phenomenon only explode in the third century? It is probably due to the political and social distension that Rome experienced after conquering the South.⁴ The military occupation of such a vast territory brings to the capital a considerable number of slaves, several of them literate: exemplary is the case of Livius Andronicus, Greek from Tarentum and first author of the Latin literature, he who 'invented the art of translation'⁵.

Understanding each other: to translate or... to turn?

At that time, the necessity of literary translation came from the need to penetrate in the context of another reality perceived as culturally more mature and at the same time from the need to understand it better. Acquiring new knowledge allowed to be at the same level as the other culture. Rome, indeed, was well aware that the Greeks had the first place in the field of epics and drama, and they proceeded to translate poems, tragedies and comedies first, while scientific literature stayed untouched for two hundred years.⁶

The Romans conceived translation in two different ways: on one side there was word for word translation, that of an interpreter, on the other there was the action of *vertere*, a less faithful and more "authorial" kind of translation. For them there was a big difference between translating word for word, and *vertere*, which in Latin literally means 'to turn'. Applying the verb 'to turn' to translation means that their intention was to transpose *concepts* from one language to another and not merely reflect words.⁷ This distinction appeared very soon in the Roman mindset: in the prologue of the comedy *Trinummus*, 'The three coins', written by the Umbrian poet Plautus around 190 BC, it is told that this comedy was originally composed by the Greek comedian Philemon and then Plautus himself *vortit barbare*, 'turned it into a barbaric idiom'.⁸

Nevertheless, it is the politician and philosopher Cicero who first theorises the practice of translation. For example, in his treaty *On the best kind of orators*, published in 46 BC, he clearly draws the distinction between the two *modi operandi*: the translation word for word and the freer, authorial translation.

I did not translate them [the Greek authors] as a mere interpreter, but as an orator, respecting the concepts with the same figures of speech

and thought, but using the terms which conform to our usage. I did not deem it necessary to render word for word (*non verbum pro verbo*), but I preserved the general meaning and essence of the words (*sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi*).

(Cicero, *On the best kind of orators*, 14.3–14.7)⁹

So, the mere interpreter translates the texts word for word, pedantically, while the orator maintains the essence of the original but adapts it to a new, mutated context. This difference is pivotal. *Vertere* is the practice of the orator, he who works with words. It implies an active role: the person who turns something into something else does so to change it and to adapt it into an instrument to do something. The orator needs to re-shape and re-create to make use of the words. A plain copy-paste would reveal itself dull and useless. The Latin Author must look at their Greek antecedent as a model to emulate, not to imitate, *aemulatio*, *non imitatio*. Imitation is passive, while emulation implies keeping in mind the source and then reinventing it so to fulfill a purpose, to defy the model. In this way the *aemulatio* and the act of *vertere* work as a bridge between two cultural models, filling a cultural gap.¹⁰ This is what a good orator, what Cicero does. Rather than reporting blindly the original text, copying it word for word as a humble scribe would have done, Cicero claims to have adopted another practice: a free translation, aimed at preserving the essence of the text, whilst granting its author/translator the means to reinterpret it and own it as they desire.

Drama: the spice of every relationship

Even if Cicero is not famous for being humble, on this matter he admits that someone else already moved in the right direction in perfecting the art of translation. In fact, in his 45 BC dialogue *On Academic Skepticism*, he chooses to crown three archaic poets Ennius (239–169 BC), Pacuvius (220–130 BC) and Accius (170–84 BC), all authors, among other genres, of dramas, whose models were the three great tragedians of Classical Athens: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

For what reason the experts in Greek literature should read Latin poets and not philosophers? Maybe they take pleasure from Ennius, Pacuvius, Accius and many more who expressed not the words but the **essence** (*vis*) of the Greek poets? How much more pleasure could they take from philosophers, if they emulated Plato, Aristotle and Teophrastus in the same way in which these authors emulated Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides?

(Cicero, *On Academic Skepticism*, I. 10. 6–13)¹¹



Mosaic with scenic masks (II cent. CE). Photograph by C. Raddato

Before Latin orators, like Cicero himself, it was dramatists who mastered the art of translation. They were able to manipulate the ancient texts to grasp their essence, ‘language and text as totality – as action, function, result’¹², to re-invent them and transform them into something new, profoundly steeped in *Latinitas*. Latin dramatists of the third and second century BC did not simply translate word for word the works of their illustrious predecessors, but they re-elaborated, re-accustomed the Greek text and, even if they maintained a certain fealty to the original message, they transferred it in a new context to communicate it to a completely different audience.

Many aspects of Greek drama were changed: the chorus, whose name itself means ‘dance’, ceased to perform dances. The structure of the Roman theatre itself prevented it: the orchestra, the dancing space of the Greek theatre, was occupied by the audience. We do not even know if the chorus’ lines were sung or if they were just performed by the main leader, the coryphaeus.¹³

What is left of the production of these archaic authors? Almost everything is lost. There are no complete tragedies from the archaic period. The only Latin author whose tragedies are preserved is Seneca, who lived more than two hundred years later, and he wrote a very different kind of theatre, probably not even meant to be performed on stage. There are fragments, most of the time quoted by later authors. Sometimes, it is possible to identify the Greek tragedy that the Latin dramatist was inspired by and, if we are lucky, it is one of the extant tragedies by one of the major authors.¹⁴ Some other times the mythical subject is somehow connected to the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, that the Latin dramatists occasionally mixed up with tragic texts to create brand new versions of myths.¹⁵

Homer, Aeschylus and Accius: a tragic love triangle

The case study that I want to present now is a parallel between two fragmentary tragedies, Aeschylus's *Myrmidons* and Accius's *Myrmidones*, and consequently prone to speculation. *Myrmidons* was probably one of the first tragedies written by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus, active in the first half of the fifth century BC.¹⁶ Even if we know very little about it, it was famous in antiquity, so much so that the comedian Aristophanes mocked it half a century after its supposed first staging.¹⁷ From what we can infer from the fragments that survived, it contained some of the events narrated in books 9 to 18 of the *Iliad*. The plot included the embassy scene of *Iliad* 9: in the poem, an embassy formed by the cunning Odysseus, the mighty Ajax and the old and wise Phoenix, who had been Achilles's pedagogue, was chosen by Agamemnon to persuade Achilles to go back to war. After that, it probably showed the moment in which Patroclus, Achilles's companion, decided to take his place in the ranks, to trick the Trojans into thinking that he came back. Finally, it ended with the loyal Antilochus, squire of Achilles, bringing news of Patroclus's death by the hand of the Trojan champion Hector. Three centuries later, Lucius Accius, the last of the archaic poets, who lived between 170 and ca. 84 BC, selected *Myrmidons* as a model for his *Myrmidones*.¹⁸

There were differences between the two. For example, Accius involved Antilochus in the plot *before* the death of Patroclus. We are not sure, on the other hand, if Aeschylus made him more than the messenger that brought the news of Patroclus's death. Furthermore, while we know that Phoenix was a fundamental character in the *Myrmidons*, we have no actual proof that he appeared at all in the *Myrmidones*.

But what can we say about other characters? Let's focus on the embassy scene. There are no fragments that can be related to that of Aeschylus's *Myrmidons*, but what we do have is a fragment of Accius's *Myrmidones*, that can be connected with that particular moment:



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. The Ambassadors of Agamemnon in the tent of Achilles, 1801. Joconde database

But if, as was becoming (*ut decuit*), you had stood
On my side, or if sorrow shown by me
Had saddened you, then long ago the sons
Of Atreus would have seen their ships ablaze (*diu inflammari Atridae
navis uidissent suas*).
(Accius, fr. 4 Ribbeck)¹⁹

It is plausible that Achilles is speaking. He is reproaching someone, but who? Some scholars proposed Antilochus,²⁰ since we do have another fragment in which Achilles argues polemically with him, but Antilochus was a young man and even if his military prowess was certainly decent, he was not as great as to justify such a compliment. Moreover, it is true that in a version of the myth he came to Troy against his father Nestor's will and he joined Achilles's forces,²¹ but there are no blood relations nor other kind of connection that could validate an expression as strong as *ut decuit*.²² Another option is Ajax, formidable warrior,

second only to Achilles himself, first cousin of Achilles and, as we said, ambassador in *Iliad* 9. It is quite plausible that he was in Accius's tragedy: Achilles is right to be angry that a member of his own family did not side with him in the dispute with Agamemnon, a man who would have been a powerful ally nonetheless.

But what about Aeschylus? Despite the absence of proof, Odysseus has always been the obvious choice as ambassador: he is indeed the one constantly present on the pottery testimonies depicting the embassy, and, in the *Iliad*, he is the first one to speak and gives the most elaborate speech.

Nevertheless, we have a papyrus fragment attributed to the *Myrmidons*, that could make us doubt.²⁴ It contains the moment in which Achilles begins to speak, after having been silent after the discourse of the first interlocutor and that of Phoenix:

< PHOENIX > I have no cleverer enchantment:
Speak with words since I went on unbridled
And please, Achilles, do as I ask you.

< ACHILLES > Old Phoenix, close to my heart,
While I was listening to many harsh words
([πολ]λῶν ἀκούων δυστόμων λ[αλημάτων])
I stayed silent for a long time and I do not know
for how long
I have not answered, but you, the worthiest...

It is particularly interesting that Achilles says that he listened to 'many harsh words'. The Greek adjective used is δῦστομος (read: 'dūstomos'). It is a very rare word, it appears only another time with this meaning, in later literature, and in



Embassy to Achilles – Odysseus (here labeled Olunteus), Achilles veiled, Ajax, Phoenix, Diomedes. Line drawing of Athenian red-figure aryballos (half 5th century), Berlin Antikensammlung F2326²³

tragedy only Sophocles uses a verb which has the same origin, and only once at that.²⁵ Its etymology is connected with the negative prefix δυσ- (read: 'dus-') and the word στόμα (read: 'stōma') which means 'mouth' as the organ of speech. The meaning must be associated with a negative discourse, 'harsh', 'slanderous'.²⁶

So, Achilles is saying that someone spoke harshly to him and that he stayed silent for a long time. Unfortunately, as we mentioned, we do not have even a small fragment of this speech. All we have is the *Iliad*, which Aeschylus certainly had a deep knowledge of, as was common at his time.²⁷ There, the speech that Odysseus delivers is everything but harsh: he flatters Achilles; he promises him presents; and the worst accusation that he addresses him with is 'you are forgetful', because he doesn't remember the warning his father Peleus gave him concerning wrath.²⁸ There is indeed someone who does not hold back: Ajax. His words are angry and resentful: he accuses Achilles to have worked up his heart to fury, to be a hard man, regardless of the love of his comrades, to be pitiless, to have a heart which is obturate and evil.²⁹ A harsh speech indeed. It is possible that Aeschylus chose the grouchy but honest attitude of Ajax instead of Odysseus's honeyed sophisms.

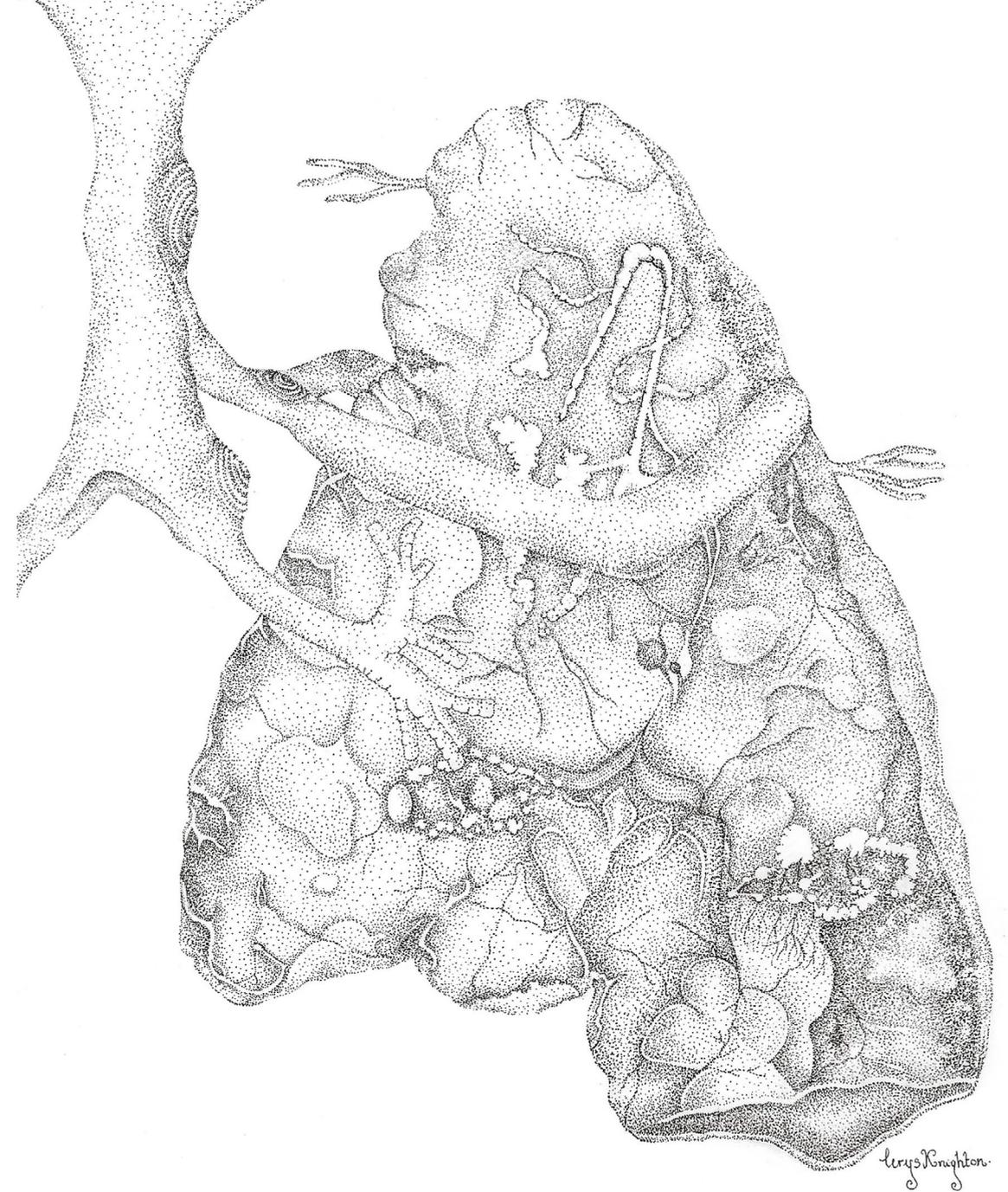
Of course, we cannot be certain that a potential Aeschylean Odysseus would be exactly like his Iliadic counterpart. No extant tragedy by Aeschylus has Odysseus among its characters, and even if it did, we could not be certain that he always used the same characterization.³⁰

It is also perfectly possible that Accius added the character of Ajax to his tragedy – if we believe that Achilles is talking to him in that fragment. It is uncommon but not impossible that Latin authors added characters that were not in the original and Accius in particular was very keen on taking liberties.³¹ Moreover, Ajax was there in the *Iliad*, so a contamination between *Myrmidons* and the *Iliad* would have made perfect sense in the mind of a Latin poet and his audience. Contamination among tragedies or among tragedies and myths was absolutely normal, even craved: it gave new perspectives and twists to the already known material.

Only a glimpse into the past

From the moment in which Greek and Rome firstly collided and then came to know each other through cultural exchange, the Romans embraced the tragic theatre as they embraced the comic one, a genre that was much more similar and congenial to the theatrical expressions they already produced. Through constant exchange and re-elaboration of Greek tragedies and mythical material, the great poets of Republican Rome created an incredible number of masterpieces that nowadays we can appreciate only partially, due to the terrible loss we suffered.

Seldom, we can try and draw connections between them, hoping to grasp something that could help us feel nearer to that lost world, something that could shed light on that thriving moment of history. The Greeks were the champions of tragedy, but the Romans managed to learn and to own the mastery of it, taking ideas from them, shaping what they had; emulating, yes, but never imitating.



The Agency and Authority of Agnes of France and Margaret of Hungary in the Aftermath of the Fall of Constantinople (1204–1206)

Ewan Short, Cardiff University & University of Reading

At the beginning of 1204 the medieval Roman Empire, known in modern scholarship as the Byzantine Empire, ruled large swathes of territory in Asia Minor, Greece and the Balkans. On the 11th April of this year, the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, was conquered by the Fourth Crusade, which had diverted from its objective of recovering Jerusalem.¹ Two days after the conquest, a Byzantine delegation offered an official submission to the Crusade's commander-in-chief, Boniface of Montferrat.² Boniface then immediately made haste to take possession of the Great Palace, which had been the centre of Byzantine government. Here he encountered two women taking refuge behind the palace walls; Agnes of France and Margaret of Hungary.³ Both women were of western European origin but had previously reigned as Byzantine empresses. Margaret was soon betrothed to Boniface himself, whilst Agnes's husband Theodore Branas proved a loyal vassal of the Crusader Latin emperor of Constantinople. Both Agnes and Margaret were active during the establishment of autonomous vassal states under the suzerainty of the Latin emperor. This paper will read the histories of these women alongside one another, recovering their contributions to the establishment of a new ruling class in former Byzantine territory.

Modern studies of the establishment of Crusader rule in former Byzantine territory have focused upon the agency of male political actors, such as Latin emperor Baldwin I of Constantinople, Boniface of Montferrat, and Theodore Branas.⁴ Yet, the writings of the Crusader historians Robert of Clari and Geoffrey of Villehardouin give clear evidence that Agnes and Margaret also exercised agency during the establishment of Crusader rule in former Byzantine territories. This paper will redress the comparatively inadequate coverage which these women have received in modern scholarship. I begin by analysing Agnes's preparation to become Byzantine empress and her subsequent performances in this role. Agnes will be shown to have assumed a role as a cultural mediator within Byzantine society, whilst also retaining cultural connections to the French society in which she was born. Next, I will assess Margaret's contribution to the establishment of the autonomous kingdom of Thessaloniki, a vassal state under the suzerainty of the Latin emperor in Constantinople, which existed between

1204–1224. I will then return to Agnes to assess her role in the establishment of Crusader suzerainty over another vassal state in the Balkan peninsula based around Adrianople and Demotika, lasting from 1206–1228.⁵ The comparative format of this paper clearly demonstrates the agency of these women, who have been neglected from previous scholarship which focus on their husbands.⁶ Finally, both women will be shown to have used their multifarious cultural and societal connections to command loyalty from conquered Byzantine populations, whilst maintaining trust amongst the Crusader leadership.

The 'French Empress'

In 1179 Agnes, the eight-year old daughter of French king Louis VII (r.1137–1180) and sister of Philip II (r.1180–1223), arrived in Constantinople and was betrothed to the future Byzantine emperor Alexios II (r.1182–1183). Agnes would subsequently reign as empress alongside Alexios II and then Andronikos I (r.1183–1185), remaining in Constantinople after the latter was overthrown. This woman, whom the Byzantines renamed Anna, was one of five foreign-born princesses to become Byzantine empress in the twelfth century.⁷ Across Byzantine society, there was an emphasis upon the communication of authority through ceremony and ordered ritual, which was without parallel in any western European kingdom.⁸ The women who reigned as Byzantine empresses held a recognised position as performers within these ceremonies. Here, they used specific expressions to communicate to their Byzantine subjects the culture which consecrated the authority of the ruling class.⁹ These women therefore acted as cultural mediators within Byzantine society.¹⁰ I argue that for this reason, the foreign-born princesses who arrived in Constantinople received specific training in Byzantine language and culture.¹¹ Following their training and subsequent tenure as empresses, these women could deliver authoritative performances familiar to Byzantine audiences. After 1204, this experience enabled Agnes and Margaret to exercise authority and agency during the establishment of Crusader rule in former Byzantine territory.

Agnes's arrival to Constantinople was met with ceremonial rituals, represented in the images and text of a twelfth-century manuscript kept in the Vatican Library.¹² This manuscript, catalogued as Vat.gr.1851, features a poem written in vernacular Greek and seven illuminations (two of which are depicted in Figs. 1 and 2).¹³ Agnes is addressed directly in the second person several times within the poem. Cecily Hilsdale has proposed that the manuscript was gifted to Agnes around the time of her arrival in 1179. For Hilsdale, the manuscript was produced for Agnes to develop her understanding of the Greek language and Byzantine ceremonial.¹⁴ The identity of the commissioner of the manuscript is uncertain, but Hilsdale has suggested Maria of Antioch, the mother of Alexios II.¹⁵



Figure 1: Reception of the princess. Vat.gr.1851, folio.3v



Figure 2: Meeting of the two princesses Agnes of France and Maria Komnene. Vat.gr. 1851, folio.6r

The poetic verses on the third folio of the Vatican manuscript address Agnes directly:

you have been changed into Roman *Despoina* (Lady) garb, along with all of the other accessories and insignia suitable for the *Augousta* (empress). And in such a way, everyone could see you and venerate you.¹⁶

In the lowest of the three registers depicted on the third folio Agnes appears in a long-sleeved golden and purple dress. (Fig.1, also shown in Fig.2). Her attire contrasts with the simple mantle which she wears during her arrival in the top register of the folio. In the lowest register, Agnes is represented in a static pose, sitting upon a Byzantine throne (*suspendion*) and attended by women from the Constantinopolitan court. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, men and women from the imperial Byzantine family frequently communicated and consecrated their authority through formal public appearances, wearing outfits which visually marked their status.¹⁷ On these occasions they positioned themselves in static poses whilst their subjects venerated them. These performances were delivered from elevated positions in the built environment in and around the Great Palace in Constantinople. The Byzantine poet Theodore Prodromos describes several such performances during Manuel I's reign (1143–1180).

His poems include descriptions of Manuel 'emerging from a high place' (*prokuptei*) in the Great Palace alongside his daughter Maria, and also on an occasion outside of Constantinople, in Antioch.¹⁸ During the twelfth century, Byzantine emperors and their families likely also delivered such performances in settlements in Greece and the Balkans, because they made frequent sojourns in this region.¹⁹ In these moments, imperial authority was represented as timeless, and the distance between the ruling class and their subjects was made visible.²⁰ Both image and text in this folio indicate that very soon after her arrival, Agnes made a formal appearance in Constantinople where she was venerated by the city's population. Here, Agnes's static pose and outfit demonstrated her entrance into the Byzantine ruling class as a future female relative of the imperial family. Agnes's performance communicated established expressions which consecrated the authority of the Byzantine ruling class, positioning her as a cultural mediator. The verses and illumination on this folio here corroborate Hilsdale's position. They seem designed to help Agnes understand the significance of the ceremonies which marked her arrival in Constantinople, and which she would continue to perform as an empress.

A passage in the Crusader Robert of Clari's history, written in 1216, describes Agnes in 1203, two decades after the events depicted in Vat.gr.1851. Agnes was now married to Theodore Branas, whose family had been prominent at the courts

of Isaac II (r.1185–1195) and Alexios III (r.1195–1203). Robert says that a group of French Crusaders sought a meeting with Agnes in July 1203, eight months before the fall of Constantinople. Agnes received them at an audience in her own palace, located near to the Great Palace. Here, Agnes claimed to have forgotten French, speaking only in Greek through an interpreter. Yet, Robert hints that her decision to speak only Greek was part of a deliberate performance. He tells us that soon after rebuffing the party of Crusaders, Agnes held a private meeting with her cousin Count Louis of Blois. Here, she presumably spoke the French language. Robert also writes that Agnes received the Crusaders haughtily, refusing many of their offers of good service.²¹ I argue that Agnes's performance at the audience was in fact intended to establish distance between herself and the Crusaders, thereby communicating her membership of the Byzantine ruling class and her status as a mediator of the culture which consecrated the authority of this group. Robert's account of Agnes's well-practiced performance suggests that even after the deaths of Alexios II and Andronikos I, this former empress continued to derive authority through performances which confirmed her status as a cultural mediator within Byzantine society.²²

Robert writes that Agnes was widely known amongst the Crusaders as the 'French empress' (*que on apeloit l'empeerris de Franche*).²³ Agnes's French connections are also discussed by another historian, the French Crusader Geoffrey of Villehardouin (writing in 1207) who describes her as 'the sister of the King of France,' (Philip II).²⁴ The majority of participants in the Fourth Crusade were French vassals of Philip II, to whom the Crusaders from Flanders and Hainault also owed fealty.²⁵ In 1203, the party of French Crusaders sought out Agnes because they felt affinity and loyalty to this sister of their king – and Demotika. By this year, Agnes seems to have developed a trusting relationship with the Crusaders, underpinned by her status as the sister of Philip II. The Crusaders may have also turned to Agnes because of her familiarity with and authority within Byzantine society, as signified by her performance in 1203. In the third section, this paper will show how Agnes used performances from within Byzantine culture to establish authority and exercise agency when governing Adrianople alongside Theodore Branas. Before this, however, I will show how Margaret of Hungary also used this manner of performance to maintain her own authority and agency when contributing to the establishment of Crusader rule in Demotika and Thessaloniki in 1205.

Margaret of Hungary and Performances of Power

Margaret, who took refuge alongside Agnes in the Great Palace in 1204, was the daughter of the Hungarian king Bela III (r.1172–1196) and sister of King Emeric

(r.1196–1204). She reigned as Byzantine empress through marriage to Isaac II Angelos from 1185–1195 (when she was renamed Maria), until he was overthrown by Alexios III.²⁶ During Isaac's reign, Margaret and her Hungarian ladies-in-waiting were involved with negotiations in the international politics involving Isaac and her father, Bela.²⁷ In 1203, Isaac was briefly restored to the Byzantine throne after Alexios III fled following the arrival of the Fourth Crusade. Geoffrey of Villehardouin records that Margaret was present at a private meeting held between Isaac, his translator and four Crusader envoys, including Geoffrey himself. This meeting involved the reading and signing of Latin documents.²⁸ Here Margaret may have acted as a translator and advisor to Isaac, having received an education in Latin as a princess at the Roman Catholic Hungarian court. By 1204 Margaret had therefore accrued significant experience within the international politics surrounding the Byzantine Empire.

In 1204, Margaret was married to Boniface of Montferrat.²⁹ Like Agnes, Margaret shared cultural connections with the Crusaders. Margaret's knowledge of Latin and connection through Hungary to the Roman Catholic Church would have encouraged the Catholic Crusaders to view her as a natural ally. For these reasons, Margaret seems to have quickly established a strong relationship with Boniface and his party. Boniface soon entered a conflict with the Latin emperor Baldwin I, besieging Adrianople in summer 1204, then held by Baldwin's men. Robert of Clari writes that during this siege Margaret went to the walls of Adrianople to negotiate with at least one of the leading Byzantine men in the city.³⁰ Although her efforts were not fruitful, this incident shows that Boniface and his entourage were willing to employ Margaret during high-end negotiations. Their faith in Margaret shows they recognised the political acumen which she had accrued during her tenure as Byzantine empress.

Geoffrey also describes how just before Boniface's siege of Adrianople, Margaret worked to encourage the Byzantine populace in Demotika to side with her husband. He says she was successful because the Byzantines were friendly towards her.³¹ The strength of Margaret's relationship with the people of Demotika is emphasised by the fact that she left the siege of Adrianople to return to the town, which she appears to have managed as a secure base of operations for her husband's army.³² Baldwin and Boniface negotiated a settlement to end their conflict in August 1204. Their agreement stipulated that Boniface must surrender Demotika but that he could rule Thessaloniki and the surrounding lands autonomously. Geoffrey writes that when Boniface moved to take possession of Thessaloniki, he, along with Margaret, stopped at each settlement en-route, to ensure that they declared loyalty to him.³³ Following her success at Demotika,

Margaret seems to have been again involved in persuading local Byzantine populations to accept Boniface's rule.

Geoffrey of Villehardouin also writes that on two occasions in 1203 he saw Margaret perform in a Byzantine ceremony alongside Isaac II.³⁴ This is key to understanding Margaret's agency when accompanying Boniface and his entourage. I have noted the likelihood that the imperial family frequently communicated their authority through formal appearances before their subjects in Greece and the Balkans during the twelfth century. I argue that after 1204, Margaret made formal appearances before conquered Byzantine populations in this region. She presented herself in static poses familiar to audiences there, which she had learnt to perform as empress. Margaret's performances in 1203 show that she was established as a mediator of the culture which consecrated authority in Byzantine society. After 1204, Margaret's status would have legitimised the performances she delivered to conquered Byzantine audiences. These performances would have encouraged Byzantines around Demotika, and then Thessaloniki to recognise Boniface's reign as a continuation of the former Byzantine ruling class. In this way Margaret was a significant agent during the establishment of the kingdom of Thessaloniki. Margaret continued to hold a position of recognised authority in the kingdom, acting as regent for her son Demetrios between 1207–1216.

My analysis of Agnes's audience with the French Crusaders has suggested that empresses continued to hold high status within Byzantine society after the deaths of their imperial husbands. Margaret's success in persuading conquered Byzantine populations to accept Boniface's rule has also been connected to her continued high status as a former empress and mediator of the culture which consecrated authority of the Byzantine ruling class. By expressing herself through performances familiar to Byzantine political culture, Margaret encouraged the conquered Byzantines to expect that Boniface's rule would not radically overhaul the order and practices of their communities. Agnes's role in the governance of Adrianople and Demotika after 1206 also worked to emphasise the continuity of a Crusader-affiliated government. The status of imperial Byzantine women as cultural mediators, and the use of this status to legitimise performances which established authority and enabled political agency after the fall of Constantinople is further seen in Agnes's role in this region.

Agnes and the *Pactum Adrianopolitanum*

In June 1206, Adrianople and Demotika surrendered from a revolt against Crusader rule, a settlement was quickly reached, the details of which are recorded in a Venetian document named the *Pactum Adrianopolitanum*. The document

recognises the Venetians' lordship over Adrianople, which they had been granted in 1205. Yet, the text further specifies that Theodore Branas would govern the city on the Venetians' behalf, 'according to the customs of the Greeks' (*'suam secundum usum Grecorum'*). Branas's descendants were granted a hereditary right to the governance of Adrianople. The settlement achieved some success, because Branas was able to pass his governance on to an heir, although Adrianople was lost in 1228.³⁵

Filip Van Tricht has suggested that the Branas family's acquisition of a hereditary right to the governorship of Adrianople might have upset the balance of power in the city, given the presence of families with stronger imperial ties, such as the Kostomyrai.³⁶ Yet, the *Pactum* states Michael Kostomyres swore an oath signifying that the leading families in the city agreed to the settlement.³⁷ I would argue that Agnes played a crucial role in this acceptance of the *Pactum*. It is here then, that we see the importance of Agnes's political experience and role as former Byzantine empress. Geoffrey of Villehardouin states that the governorship of Adrianople and Demotika was shared by Agnes.³⁸ Agnes's position as a former empress would further have persuaded the wider Byzantine populations in these settlements that they would indeed be governed according to Byzantine customs. I argue that Agnes delivered cultural performances of authority which were central to this persuasion, and for the gaining acceptance of the *Pactum*. These performances involved familiar, formal and static appearances before the conquered Byzantines. Agnes' French ethnicity and kinship with Phillip II led to the Crusaders placing their trust in her. Simultaneously, her status and experience as a former empress was crucial in gaining the acceptance of both leading and wider Byzantine populations in the region to the *Pactum*, and the elevated position which her husband attained through the settlement.³⁹

This paper has shown that Agnes continued to be recognised as a cultural mediator within Byzantine society, even after the death of her imperial husbands. Her established status would have legitimised her performances and encouraged the Byzantines to accept them. Here, Agnes was following Margaret, who had also won loyalty from the people of Demotika in 1204. By communicating her authority and imperial majesty through expressions familiar to Byzantine political culture, Agnes also associated Theodore Branas with her prestige. Her performances would have asserted that she and Branas were successors to the old Byzantine ruling class. This offered assurance that the government of Adrianople and Demotika would adhere to the *Pactum Adrianopolitanum* and uphold the order and practices traditional to Byzantine society.

Conclusion

Modern studies of the establishment of the kingdom of Thessaloniki and the vassal-state of Adrianople and Demotika have hitherto focused on the agency of male political actors, leaving Margaret and Agnes's contributions overlooked. This paper has shown that both women were in fact strongly positioned to exercise agency and carry authority during the fast-moving events which followed the Crusader conquest of Constantinople. Both women held connections with western European societies, which encouraged the newly arrived Crusaders to view them as natural allies. Margaret's experience of involvement with Byzantine politics also encouraged Boniface of Montferrat and his entourage to entrust her with responsibility during the establishment of the kingdom of Thessaloniki in 1204. The evidence from the manuscript Vat.gr.1851 suggests that these foreign-born princesses were trained to deliver authoritative performances before beginning their tenure as empresses. This paper has shown that both Agnes and Margaret held a status as cultural mediators, even after the deaths of their imperial husbands. When meeting the Crusaders in 1203, both Agnes and Margaret confirmed their capabilities as performers of Byzantine ceremonial and mediators of the culture which consecrated the ruling class. Subsequently, these women utilised their position to deliver authoritative cultural performances familiar to Byzantine audiences. These women's actions associated the new Crusader rulers with the prestige of the old Byzantine imperial family. Their performances asserted that the Crusaders were successors of the Byzantine ruling class. This encouraged conquered Byzantine populations to hope that the Crusaders would respect existing order and societal practices. Both women subsequently held positions of recognised authority within the vassal-states which they had helped to establish. In conclusion then, I argue that when the Crusaders overthrew the Byzantine regime in 1204, Agnes and Margaret quickly realised that they had new opportunities to exercise agency and achieve power in the changed political context.

The Mid-Land

Kristina Lloyd Quintero, Queen Mary University of London

We lived in the suburbs of a large market town that had once, I suppose, been important. The vestiges of some bygone significance remained – a canal; a sturdy Victorian railway station; a public school founded with a bequest from an illustrious greengrocer. It was, to me, a nowhere place and I think of it (if I ever think of it) as a place of greyness and rain. This is an unfair characterisation – my memory’s reliance on pathetic fallacy rather than on truth. But this is how my years there are recorded in my mind’s eye. Even the warm days, even the heatwave summers of ‘95 and ‘97, are overlaid with a chalky patina of ennui.

And yet, the people of the town – the ones, especially, who had been born and raised there – had a conviction that there had once been glory and that this glory had been stolen. For this reason, I suppose, there was – underneath the hoary listlessness of the place – the buzzing of a quiet fury. Something had been taken from them. Something of old that must be recovered in the manner of Arthurian legend. But what exactly had been taken? And by whom? These details were never articulated.

It was a town that could not decide whether it was industrial or agricultural. On all sides, R---- was surrounded by arable land – working fields of hay bales and doleful cows from which, on warm mornings, the stench of manure would waft over to our suburb and wash it with a sepia hue. The town centre was an uncomfortable, ill-planned mess of brutalist architecture jostling with Victorian red brick terraces. Opposite the Gothic chapel of the school, a multi-storey carpark stood and jeered. There was an indoor shopping precinct (a Claire’s, a Bon Marché, a Timpson) my abiding memory of which is off-white tiling with dirty grouting, and a predictable High Street (Woolworths, Marks and Spencer, a Smiths). In the west, a cement plant towered, behemoth in beige and grey, reminiscent of a rocket launch station except all it ever launched into the ether was its pillar of smoke, which it exhaled constantly. To and from this plant, orange trucks with cement mixing drums came and went like gargantuan hornets.

I sometimes think that nostalgia about one’s hometown is necessary for health in adulthood. There should be a placid cosiness about returning and floating around old haunts. I ought to feel at least a quiet fondness for the Clock Tower, the Queen’s Gate, St Mary’s Church where I received my first communion – but I don’t. Instead, they inspire in me the same mildly nauseating distaste

I might feel anticipating an encounter with my school bully. A memory of terror blunted by the sense that I now have better things to do.

When I return, these days, it is only to visit my father. But for him, I doubt I should ever return and it strikes me as profoundly sad to have so little emotional connection to the place of my birth and early childhood. But that is how it is. I retain no friends in that place – they have all moved on. I hold no affection or sentimentality for any of it.

My father’s friends were the ones he had grown up with. Other men who, as boys, had attended the same comprehensive school – a school that had been shut down long before I was born. A school they alluded to without fondness or camaraderie but rather with a grim resoluteness, in the way of those who have shared a trauma. As young men, they had taken jobs that were available in the area: assembling parts at the car factory, meat packing at the abattoir, shelf stacking and delivering things. For some, these careers had continued into middle age. Others, including my father, had gone to night school and, in time, university, then acquired jobs that involved wearing ties, sitting at desks, getting company cars, travelling abroad for business. These men, my father especially, seemed keen to prove that they had not changed. That they were still R---- lads at heart.

There was, as I suppose there is everywhere, a great deal of bonding over food. They had a sort of schoolboy mischievousness with which they approached eating – a sense that it was important to eat together only things which were either bad for them or disgusting. Pork scratchings, chip butties, salt and vinegar crisps, pickled onions or, worse, pickled eggs, stuffed into the mouth whole, straight from the jar. Drink, too, was important: I was made to understand that this was the only genuine way to relax after a hard day of toil. Life was a grind and alcohol the reward. Sometimes my father’s friends would come into the study, watch me doing my homework, and ask me, Didn’t I want a drink? All work and no play makes Jane a dull girl, they said.

These men and their wives dropped by the house without prior warning for cups of milky tea. My father would throw the door open and bellow at my mother to *put the kettle on*. This is what one did for guests: put the kettle on. My father would receive them in jogging bottoms, discoloured socks and a stained or threadbare sweatshirt. They always said, as they crossed the threshold, that they *weren’t stopping*. They were on their way into town. They couldn’t stay.

But they did stay, usually until the evening, when takeaway food would be ordered. Someone would drive out for fish and chips. Or we would order, by telephone, a Chinese from the Happy Valley takeaway on the parade next to the post

office. All day, even through dinner (which we ate on the sofa off plates on our laps), the television would be on, the drone of Formula One battling the conversation, roaring through the lulls in communication.

My mother came from a home where the television set was upstairs, in a dedicated television-watching room, and it was switched on sparingly. Guests arrived by invitation and were served cafecitos and little cakes on china plates with napkins by the empleada, who would also wash the plates and crockery afterwards, dry them, and stack them away in the sideboard. More usually, socialising took place out of the home – at the pasteleria, the café-bistro, or at the Club Regatas on one of the terraces overlooking the ocean.

There was no ocean in R----. It was about as far from the coast as one could go in any direction, which perhaps accounted for the stagnant density of the air. My mother pestered my father constantly about taking us to the seaside. My sister and I, too, begged him. One year, he took us to Wales, where the beach was nothing like what we were used to in Lima. The sand was grey, covered in tall grasses and brush and discarded tin cans, and we kept our coats on because of the cold.

Ours was a long road. At one end, it reached the village of W----- and at the other it culminated in a roundabout which, in the summer, the council would plant with flowers as part of the R---- in Bloom celebration. Public floral displays were, I think, an attempt to distract the townspeople from their lethargy with pansies, geraniums, zinnias. The roundabout had two main exits, towards the town centre in one direction and, in the other, towards the A-roads that stretched, eventually, to the motorway and on to London. It was this second exit which we took the day my mother drove me to Oxford to start university. She was mournful that day and predicted that I would not come back home. I reassured her that I would return, but she was right. I visited, of course, for holidays (for Christmases and Easters), but I married straight after my final exams and moved to the capital.

I can imagine the despair my mother felt at being left behind, first by me and then by my sister. She was desperately unhappy in that town, susceptible to bouts of depression, especially in the winter, when she would mourn to see us engaged in rainy day activities (puzzles, board games, reading books) because these were the things Peruvian children did when they were unwell. Living in R---- and acclimatising to English life was akin, in her mind, to being always sick and bedbound. My mother got restless, constantly pining for the sun, moaning how her skin turned sallow and she looked moribunda. She hated the clothes that were sold in

the sorry little shopping precinct in the town centre: everything was pastel, she said, designed for gringa women with blonde hair and blue eyes. It all made her look muerta. The lipstick shades, too, were wrong – too cold in hue – and she never understood the English taste for florals.

In the early days, when international calls were expensive, saved only for birthdays and deaths and Christmases (and even then, they were timed by the minute), Mami lived for the airmail letters in which her mother and her sister would share news from home and sketch little pictures for me of us all together, usually at the beach. We wrote back, and I would scribble for them a drawing or the few words I knew how to write (my name and a selection of small words: ‘hello’, ‘cat’, ‘dog’ and so on).

Later, one Christmas, my father bought a video recorder, so that my mother could document our lives – the school assemblies, family dinners, bath times, afternoons playing in the back garden. That way, on our next visit to Lima, our grandparents could watch the tapes and fill in the gaps of the months (sometimes years) that they had missed.

These visits to Lima were the cause of a great deal of financial strain in our home. How were they to be afforded? My parents would sit together at a desk of papers and spreadsheets to see what could be done. What savings could be made on food, school shoes, fuel for the car and household utilities to be able to pay the airfare? Some years only three of us went and my father stayed behind, working through his holidays in exchange for extra pay. Other years we simply could not go, and my mother would cry disconsolately for days.

The holidays we spent in Lima were the happiest times of my childhood. But the time to leave would always, inevitably, come, and the days and hours before our departure were, perhaps, the most traumatic of my life. I was keenly aware, from a very early age, that we might not return for a very long time. That in that time, one or both of my grandparents might pass away before I could see them again. Goodbye was always goodbye, perhaps, forever. So in those final days I focused my attention on memorisation. On imprinting their faces onto my memory, carving out the exact timbre of their voices, the cadences of their laugh, the way they smelled, the feel of their hands in mine. It was like this every time – the desperate need I felt to breathe in every detail of their person. And it was this breath that I would hold in desperately until I saw them again in the flesh.

They are gone now – both of them. I am too frightened to admit, even to myself, that there are many things I memorised which I am, by degrees, forgetting.

My mother was a lawyer in her country, specialising in the international laws regarding refugees and asylum seekers. Here, in England, her degree and qualifications were not recognised. She would have to study again and retrain. While my sister was a baby, and I was not yet toilet-trained, she completed her Master of Laws at an English university not far from our home. She wanted to improve her command of the language, ready herself to convert to the English system and get her articles.

I remember the day she travelled to London on the train to meet with a legal recruiter. My father took the day off work to care for us. I remember the anticipation that hung around my mother as she blow-dried her hair, shimmied into her skirt suit, applied her lipstick. How she checked and checked again that she had all her certificates in her binder – Peruvian Bachelor’s, Master of Laws, certificates and diplomas from law schools in Madrid, Amsterdam, Berlin.

That was the day my mother abandoned her legal career. The recruiter told her that no firm would recruit a trainee who spoke English with an accent.

Whenever we went out, there was a question that would inevitably be posed of us. Of my mother, more specifically. It could be asked by anyone – the cashier at the store, the teller at the bank, the man who came to read the gas meter. It was a question that would be asked reluctantly, as if under duress, with the tone and nasal wrinkle one might employ to enquire about the provenance of an unknown substance on the side of one’s shoe. There was, at best, only a thinly-veiled attempt at feigning breezy disinterestedness or innocent curiosity. The disdain was palpable.

Where are you from?

How my sister and I dreaded that question. In particular we dreaded the way my mother would turn the encounter into a public education session.

Where are you from?

Where do you think I am from?

{Indifferent shrug.}

Do you know where is Perú?

Near Iraq.

For the most part, the manner of the enquirer betrayed their absolute conviction that we were inherently their inferior and that it was insufferable that they should have to be scanning our groceries, accepting our money, counting our change. I remember the sentiment coming mostly from older generations. The teenagers who worked the tills at the weekends were more likely to ask how our day was going, whether we had found everything we needed today? But the adult workers (the weary middle-aged, the grey-haired near-retirees) seemed frostbitten with resentment.

I suspect, in their minds, all foreigners ought to be poor, like the hungry-eyed, fly-ridden children starving on television. They ought to be doing the serving, not being served. My father’s friends, too, laboured under the misapprehension that my mother had been scooped out of misery and destitution in some godforsaken backwater nation. One of them said to her one evening, as we sat on the couch eating something greasy off plates on our laps, *Your father must be so grateful you married a Western, English man.*

There was one time when a functionary at the town hall refused to attend to my mother. She did not do so explicitly but rather kept sending her away with corrections to her form, letting other people skip in front of her in the queue, erecting pointless bureaucratic objections to the simple transaction she needed to undertake. My mother called me at school to say she had been held up, could not collect me, that I would need to meet her at the council offices.

When I arrived, I could see immediately what was going on. I had by then witnessed fifteen years of white people looking down their noses at Mami, condescending her, over-pronouncing their words, pretending not to understand her accent. I had also learnt the entrenchment of the class divide in the Midlands, especially in R----. I was, at that time, attending the town’s public school on a scholarship. Most of the other students there were boarders – children of Right Honourable Whatshisnames and So-and-So, Dukes of Somewheresvilles. They floated about the town in their tweed blazers and floppy, uncombed hair, levitating on their sense of entitlement.

They called the local people Stigs (pronounced *shtig*), I suppose as in *Stig of the Dump*, though the origin of the slur was never explained to me. It was an inside joke to which I was not privy. This was before the days when the term ch-- became commonplace but, as far as I can tell, they meant the same thing. To them, I suppose, I was a Stig, too – or, at least, a charity case – the one whose presence at the school was subsidised by their parents’ money. A sponge. A scrounger. The one who should be deferential and grateful for the opportunity to escape my humble origins.

It was from these privileged children that I learned the workings of the class system. From them, I learned the potency of a plummy voice speaking received pronunciation. I learned the power of **bahth** and **grahss** and elongated vowels. Of **yah** instead of yeah. Of articulating dental plosives and opening sentences with *I'm sorry...* but saying it in the sort of tone that implied the only thing one was sorry about was having to speak to *you*. I had mastered the face of quiet disgust of the gentrified classes: the arch of the single eyebrow, the heavy-lidded gaze, the lifted chin that tipped the whole head back a little from the nape.

To my schoolmates I was an interloper. They could tell simply by looking at me, I think. I did not have the aura of someone whose father had a pied-a-terre in Wimbledon or some parcel of land passed down since the days of feudalism. Or perhaps it was the inferior quality fabric of my school shirts; the fact that my shoes were bought on sale in the precinct, my blazers from the second-hand uniform shop behind The Stodge. But to the people of R--- when I wore my uniform and spoke in that breathy, measured way of the sighing aristocrat, I held some sort of authority. At the time, it felt like a superpower, ready to be wielded at any moment when the need struck. Looking back, it was a power that they themselves handed to me. I had no authority over them. I was just a teenager. Merely un piojo as my mother might have put it. But they deferred to the accent and the disdainful looks, and I used this power in the protection of my mother.

So that day, at the town hall, when the pinched-face woman behind the window played her little power game with my mother, I pointed my chin at her and spoke to her with my **ahs** and my **yahs** and suddenly my mother's transaction was not quite so troublesome after all.

In the village of W----, next to the fish and chip shop, there was a corner store that sold newspapers, sweets, non-perishable essentials, and rented videos. It was run by a Bangladeshi family whose children were a few years younger than me and went to my school. Their shop was known locally (or, at least, by my father's friends) as the P--- shop, and they said it without any hint of apology.

I do not know now, looking back, whether they said it entirely in ignorance of the violence bundled up inside that word. There were claims that it was said without malice, that it was harmless – affectionate even. But I wonder whether the slinging of these epithets behind closed doors was a sort of truculent revenge. A revenge, perhaps, against the foreigners who were coming here, taking *their* jobs, audaciously running businesses (restaurants and corner shops; later working as tradesmen – plumbers, bricklayers, sparks), making a success of themselves,

sending their children to private schools... A revenge stoked by the simmering fury about the ancient glory which had been stolen and needed to be recovered.

It is a cliché now – a phrase mocked by middle class comedians on BBC's Live at the Apollo. But during my childhood I heard it often, said without irony: foreigners were coming over here. Taking their jobs. Then they would turn to my mother and say, *We don't mean you, Imelda, obviously.*

But who did they mean, exactly? For a time, they had a problem with 'The Mexicans' because a Mexican construction company took over the cement plant. Around that time was when a man in Sainsbury's told us *To go the fucking hell back where we came from* when he heard us speaking castellano in the vegetable aisle. A few weeks later, there was an arson attack on the Portuguese café.

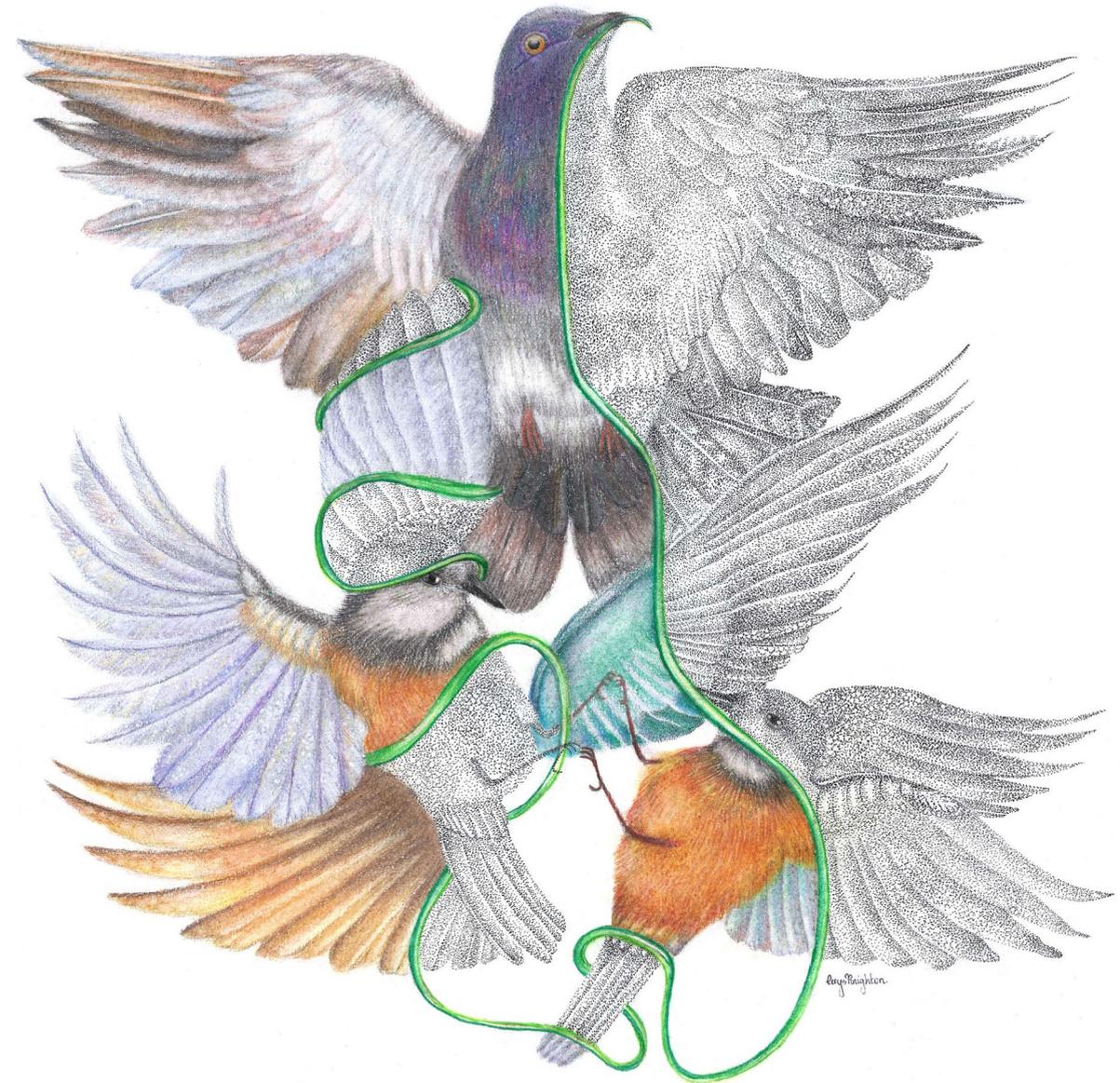
R---- racism was belligerent but imprecise. Once, a boy in my class (I'll call him Asim), was assaulted by a gang of teenagers who, during the course of the attack, called him a fucking P---. According to a bystander, as the attackers fled, Asim (lying on the ground) had shouted, *I'm not Pakistani. I'm Sudanese.*

Nowadays, their malaise seems to be focused on people from Eastern Europe. When I go back, there is much complaining about 'The Poles', but I do not think their issue is with persons from Poland specifically. I suspect they use the term metonymically. Whether they are conscious that they do so, I do not know. My father's friends (greyer now, and slower-moving, avoiding fats and alcohols on the advice of their physicians), still sit on the sofa and gripe. Foreigners form protective ghettos, they say, and freeze local people out of jobs at the packing warehouses. Immigrants are bringing over 'their own lads' from abroad and turning local boys away. The Europeans drive down wages because they are happy to live twelve-to-a-bedsit and send all their money back home, draining the British economy.

They say that Britain should be for the British. I ask them what they mean by this and they splutter. I suppose that to them it is obvious. That they can distinguish between who is British and who is not in the same way that the floppy-haired aristocrats at R---- School could identify who was gentry and who was Stig. It is in the manner of speaking and the cut of their collar, perhaps? But I do not understand who these notional 'British' are to whom Britain is purported to belong, nor why a person's situation of birth should make them more or less entitled to a guarantee of The Good Life than anyone else. I wonder whether this is a secret that has not been shared with me – something I have failed to

grasp because I am the one who does not belong. If so, I am happy to remain an outsider.

My mother no longer lives in R---. She moved back to Lima for a time but found that it had changed (or, perhaps, that she had changed). For some years, she spent time moving back and forth between the countries – Perú-England-England-Perú – trialling life in different English counties, until she settled, at last, in -shire, where she owns a small cottage in a quaint village near some woods. She actually enjoys English life these days. She owns a dog, a pair of wellies, and goes out walking, even in the rain.



Marie NDiaye's *My Heart Hemmed In*: A Call for the Reappraisal of Frontiers of Difference

Alison Marmont, University of Southampton & University of Exeter

Frontiers often evoke the image of the boundaries, barriers and barbed wire walls that literally or metaphorically surround a nation. Whilst the main purposes of these borders are, among others, to control people's movement and access to resources, and to defend national soil, they also serve to protect national identity. When a particular ethnic group conceives of national identity as linked and limited to their own race, religion or culture, they can use frontiers to limit the entry of people they identify as different into the nation through the creation of physical, legal or administrative barriers. However, the increasing ease of transnational migration thanks to modern technology and transport and the need for countries such as France to replenish its workforce, particularly after the Second World War, means that the nation's ethnic make-up has become more diverse in recent decades. This diversity is inextricably linked with France's colonial past as many of the migrants seeking work and refugees fleeing violence originated from the countries which formed France's empire.¹ Given that France often considered its colonial subjects to be uncivilised, inferior or even sub-human because of their different cultures and skin colours, this diversity complexifies our understanding of frontiers as those deemed to belong outside national borders often reside within them.² These ethnic minorities now encounter invisible frontiers *within* the nation as they face various kinds of discrimination, marginalisation and violence. In light of this, this article aims to explore how identifying someone as different can create invisible barriers that have a negative impact on their social, political and economic manoeuvrability within the nation. In other words, I want to examine how difference itself can become a frontier that violently shapes the lives of marginalised people. In order to do this, I will outline Sara Ahmed's concept of stranger fetishism to understand how a person's identity can become synonymous with, and therefore reductively limited to, their difference. I will then apply this to analyse *Mon Cœur à l'étroit* by the acclaimed French author Marie NDiaye, a novel which was published in 2007 and translated into English by Jordan Stump as *My Heart Hemmed In* in 2017. This analysis will reveal the violence involved in the creation of these invisible walls and the traumatic impact they have upon Nadia, the ethnic minority female protagonist. Ultimately, NDiaye's portrayal of Nadia's marginalisation

subverts reductive understandings of identity and calls for a reappraisal of what I will call the frontier of difference.

In her work *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (*Transformations*), Ahmed notes that the formation of identities relies upon the process of differentiation, whereby we define ourselves based on our perceived similarities and differences with others.³ She argues that this process can become violent if we reify or objectify someone as a 'figure' of difference. She describes this dehumanising construction of an individual as a figure who is entirely defined by their difference, such as gender, ethnicity or religion, as 'stranger fetishism':

fetishism involves [...] the transformation of objects into figures. What is at stake is the 'cutting off' of figures from the social and material relations which overdetermine their existence, and the consequent perception that such figures have a 'life of their own'. Stranger fetishism is a fetishism of figures: it invests the figure of the stranger with a life of its own insofar as it cuts 'the stranger' off from the histories of its determination.⁴

So, for Ahmed, the issue is not just that people reduce the so-called stranger to their difference, but that seeing them in this light overlooks the socio-political and economic factors shaping their existence. As such, labelling someone as a stranger masks their past experiences, including any discrimination they may have faced, and denies them any individuality by constructing them as synonymous with a particular group associated with limiting stereotypes. In this way, stranger fetishism dehumanises the individual and so justifies and conceals any discrimination or violence which they face.

Stranger fetishism is a discursive practice whereby an individual, group, or even nation, creates its own identity by constructing an image of the stranger. In this sense, the identities of the self and the stranger are both interdependent and imagined. Similarly, the nation is 'an imagined political community' that relies on the representation of the stranger as different and external so that it might be 'imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.⁵ Although these constructs are imagined, the discursive practice of fetishism has a significant impact on people's lives. In his analysis of the racism experienced by immigrants from France's former colonies and their descendants, Didier Fassin argues that they face multiple 'internal frontiers':

By internal frontiers, I mean the limits between racialised social categories inherited from the double history of colonisation and

immigration: these limits distinguish individuals and groups based on variable indices of colour, origin, culture or indeed religion. These ideological constructions radicalise difference and have a considerable impact on the access these individuals or groups have to practical resources such as education, employment or housing.⁶

For Fassin, the radicalisation of difference creates internal frontiers that impede the socio-economic mobility of the victims of this fetishism. As such, we can argue that when an individual or a group becomes defined as the embodiment of an unassimilable difference, regardless of their similarities to the self, or their shared humanity, difference becomes a frontier. Whilst this difference is made to appear monolithic, it in fact disguises various forms of discrimination linked to an individual's identity, including their gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class and religion. The next section of the article will examine this frontier and its impact on the fetishised individual through an analysis of Marie NDiaye's *My Heart Hemmed In*.

My Heart Hemmed In is told from the perspective of the protagonist Nadia as she experiences marginalisation in modern-day Bordeaux. The novel begins as Nadia is suddenly and unexpectedly vilified by her community, including the primary school where she and her husband Ange teach. The discrimination they face is so extreme that Ange's pupils stab him in the side. This attack leaves Ange with a wound, one of the various fantastic elements present in the novel, which will continue to puss and ooze throughout most of the story. Nadia cannot comprehend why she and her husband are the victims of such violence and she eventually flees the country to stay with her estranged son living in a country named only as C. The reader is likewise clueless to the reason for Nadia's marginalisation until she begins to delve into her own past, especially her rejection of her parents and their ethnic and socio-economic status, to make sense of her present situation. We discover that Nadia was born in a poor outer suburb of Bordeaux to a working-class family who look different from other people, speak another language, have different customs and practice another religion.⁷ NDiaye never mentions the skin colour of any of the characters in the novel and she does not include Nadia's maiden name, which might give the reader a clue about her origins. Nonetheless, this description suggests that Nadia's family is part of a non-white ethnic minority that emigrated from the former colonies to the metropole.

This insight into Nadia's origins sheds light on the discrimination she faces because she is identified as different to the white, middle-class ethnic majority. A pharmacist, also the mother of one of Nadia's pupils, tries to explain the reason for her ostracism from the school:

It's not you, not exactly you that this ugliness is attacking, and besides, who around here even knows you? [...] But no, it's not you, it's... how can I put it... the untouchability of what you are, your... your stiffness, your purity, your manner, your habits, oh, how can I put it...⁸

The lady's reference to the fact that no one really *knows* Nadia, suggests that she is being fetishised, created as a figure who has no subjectivity. This is highlighted as the pharmacist identifies visible and superficial characteristics such as her habits and appearance as the reason for her marginalisation.⁹ So Nadia is reduced to her behaviour and physical appearance which are identified as synonymous with the stereotypes associated with a supposedly homogeneous group of people. Integral to this process is her dehumanisation, which is revealed through the reference to her supposed 'untouchability'. In this sense, her difference is framed as a frontier between her and the ethnic majority. NDiaye gives us an example of this earlier in the novel when a man spits on Nadia in the street because she smiles at him. When confronting her, he says: 'What right do you have to smile at me, you filth?'.¹⁰ The use of the term 'filth', as with 'untouchability', constructs Nadia as a pariah and justifies the treatment of her as such through the implicit suggestion that she is sub-human, inferior and therefore potentially contaminating. In this case, the frontier of difference means that Nadia's social manoeuvrability is limited because she cannot engage with people in the same way as others as she is not allowed to smile at someone in the street.

Another important element in both of these extracts is what remains unsaid. Neither the pharmacist nor the stranger in the street explicitly mentions Nadia's ethnic minority status or skin colour and this remains the case throughout the novel as Nadia is often referred to using euphemisms such as 'people like you'.¹¹ On the one hand, this seems to arise from the characters' attempts to remain politically correct, as exemplified in the pharmacist's struggle to verbalise Nadia's situation. The very fact that people use such terms when they are discriminating against Nadia reveals, however, that these euphemisms serve to conceal rather than prevent fetishism. The fetishism involved is also made clear by the levelling implied in phrases such as 'people like you' that identify Nadia as representative of, and inseparable, from a homogeneous group. On the other hand, the use of these phrases can also be linked to the concept of republican universalism which shapes French political discourses. According to universalism, French citizenship is based on the equality of every individual as an abstract being divested of any identitarian affiliations based on, for example, gender, sexuality or ethnicity.¹² Consequently, universalism is conceived as the antithesis

of communitarianism and the French state and its members are supposed to be blind to race. Considered in this light, the refusal to mention Nadia's identitarian affiliations simultaneously reflects the lack of related French political vocabulary and the fantasy of race-blindness. This silence in fact becomes an invisible frontier as it makes it harder for Nadia to understand why she is being marginalised and deprives her of the necessary vocabulary to challenge this violence. This is the case when she loses her job at the school; when the pharmacist shoos her out of her shop in case another customer leaves and when she feels she must flee the country for her own safety.

Now that we have seen some of the frontiers Nadia faces because she is marked as different, we can consider their impact. In a psychoanalytical analysis of the lacunae in Nadia's memory Andrew Asibong argues that Nadia remains in denial of the discrimination she faces until she realises she is being humiliated by the ethnic majority which she thought had accepted her.¹³ For Asibong, Marie NDiaye's characters consciously or unconsciously blank out traumatic memories. However, as memories from the childhood she has tried to forget come back to Nadia, she recalls how loving her parents were. Nadia's attitude towards people who are like her sheds light on why she has abandoned her parents in spite of their kindness:

*Was I always fair and hospitable with the students – rare, in the neighbourhood where I taught [...] who looked to one degree or another like the little girl I was? In all honesty, I wasn't fair or hospitable or decent, I was unfeeling and remote, even derisive, silently wanting to see them eradicated, see them fly away, far away from my beloved school, and didn't I sometimes picture them as pigeons, so multitudinous and filthy and unnecessary that they can be shot down without sanction?*¹⁴

Nadia's attitude towards her young, ethnic minority pupils reflects the racist mindset of the man who spits on her in the street as she sees them as a filthy, worthless and indistinguishable mass, rather than individuals. She further dehumanises them through her association of them with verminous pigeons who are a threat to the school and whose exclusion or even eradication is therefore justified. Her wish for them to 'fly away' by themselves is evocative of right-wing political discourses which try to encourage unwanted immigrants to return to their homeland, even when they were born in France. The representation of harmless children as dangerous suggests that, rather than posing a physical threat to the school or Nadia, they are seen to pose a threat to the identity of both. The reference to the children's overwhelming numbers, a tactic often used to portray people as a threat to society, emphasises this as it conveys the fear that the school

will be overrun. However, this very discourse is undermined at the start of the passage where Nadia mentions that ethnic minority children were rare in her school.

As such, NDiaye reveals the fetishising discourses, and their multiple inherent anomalies, applied to ethnic minorities through the eyes of someone who in fact shares similar origins. Somehow, Nadia has internalised these discourses and become complicit in the violence of which she has been the victim. Michel Foucault, in his analysis of power and knowledge, argues that the gaze which arises from these kinds of discourses can be perceived and internalised by the object of that gaze:

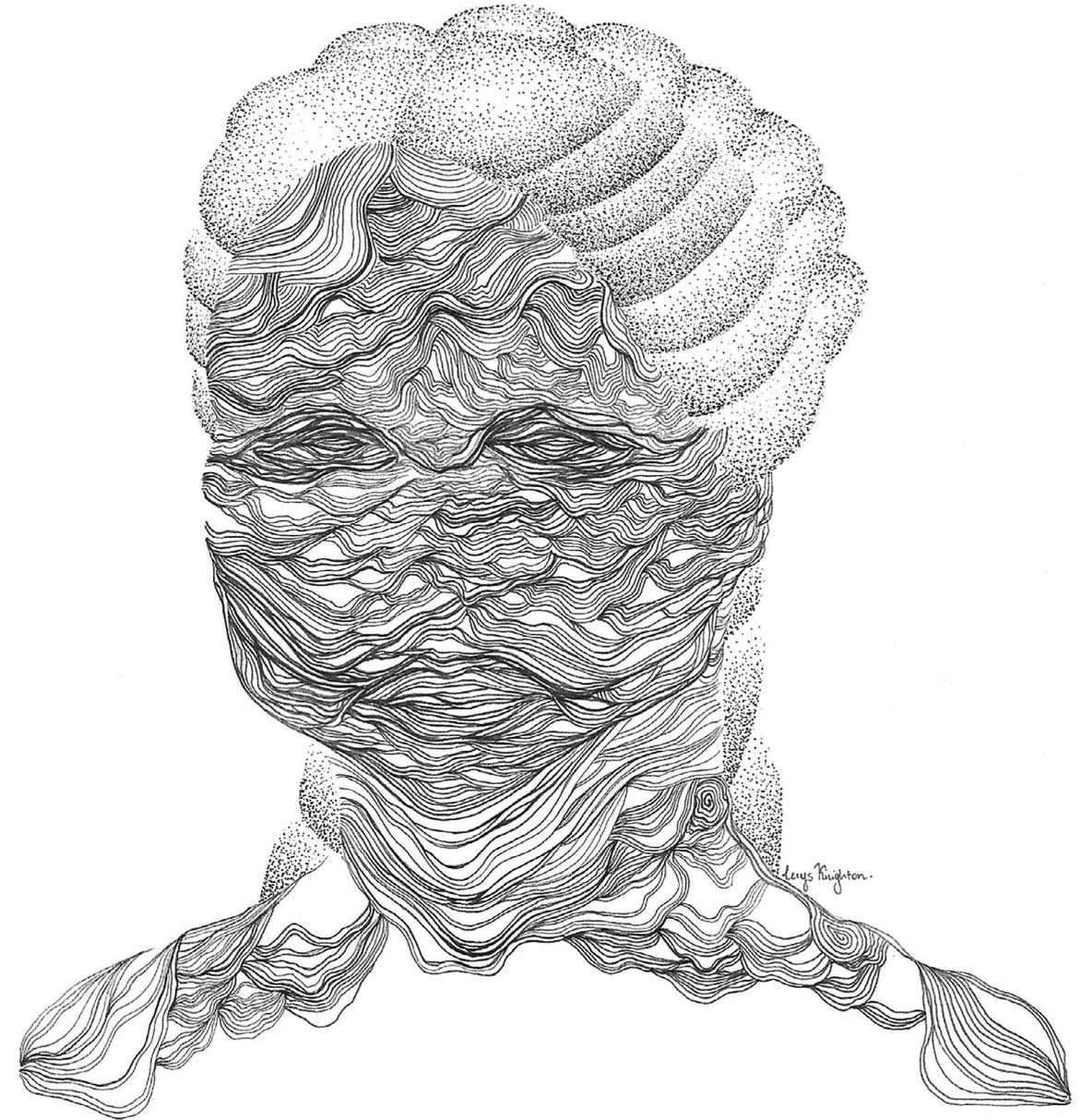
There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself.¹⁵

So Nadia, exposed to these discourses when growing up in France, has interiorised them. Yet, rather than seeing herself as inferior and behaving in the way that society expects of her, she believes herself to be superior to those like her. This enigma is perhaps the key to understanding Nadia's response to this violence. If blankness is a psychological response developed to cope with traumatic memories, Nadia blanks out her own construction as a fetishised figure of difference to try to overcome this frontier of difference. As a result, she tries to deny her origins and looks down on them as she aligns herself with the white ethnic majority middle-classes. So the hatred she feels towards her parents and the ethnic minority children in her classroom is evidence not only of her internalisation of racist discourses in Bordeaux but also of her frustration at being confronted with her own otherness. Likewise, she resents the commonness of her first husband, who shares the same socio-economic background, and the way their son's appearance reminds her of her difference. These lead her to tacitly renounce her role as a mother and abandon her first husband to marry the middle-class and most likely white Ange, described as a 'true Bordelais'.¹⁶ This marriage becomes a way for her to temporarily surmount the invisible barriers she faces because of her ethnicity as she improves both her social and economic position in French society.

However, the white characters' references to her supposed stiffness, purity and pretentiousness suggest that people mistreat Nadia *because* of her complicity with the ethnic majority's fetishising discourses.¹⁷ By denying the inferior position assigned to her in French society as an ethnic minority woman, Nadia is

seen as a threat to Bordelais identity and, like her pupils, must be eradicated or made to fly away. The attack on her white husband Ange can, therefore, be seen as a means to punish him because of their relationship and intimidate her. Her construction as a threat is an internal frontier that Nadia does not manage to overcome and she does indeed flee. Nonetheless, her reunion with her son and her parents allows her to reflect on her attitudes and the toxic impact her repudiation of them had on her and everyone around her. Whilst her son continues to resent her because of her emotional neglect of him as a child, this reflection allows Nadia to develop positive relationships with her parents and her young granddaughter.

In conclusion, Marie NDiaye's *My Heart Hemmed In* reveals the violence of stranger fetishism and its pervasiveness by placing the reader in the shoes of someone who is directly affected by, and implicated in, this process. The way Nadia blanks her memories of her socio-economic origins and becomes complicit with the ethnic majority's inferiorisation of people like her conveys how traumatic it is to interiorise her own fetishisation. Yet through self-reflexivity, Nadia becomes aware of her own complicity in this process. The novel therefore challenges us to consider whether we, in our own lives, unconsciously build frontiers of difference by constructing others as figures of an inassimilable and inferior difference. The increased awareness to which this questioning leads is fundamental to Nadia's ability to tear down the frontier of difference through her acceptance of her own identity and the subjectivity of others like her. In this way, *My Heart Hemmed In* calls on us to engage in an honest and unrelenting process of self-reflexivity so that we might have ethical relationships with others.



Colouring Outside the Lines: The Child's Drawing in Spanish Cinema and History

Rachel Beaney, Cardiff University & University of Exeter

“What do you think an artist is? An imbecile who only has eyes if he's a painter, ears if he's a musician, or a lyre in every chamber of his heart if he's a poet – or even, if he's a boxer, only some muscles? Quite the contrary, he is at the same time a political being constantly alert to the horrifying, passionate or pleasing events in the world, shaping himself completely in their image. How is it possible to be uninterested in other men and by virtue of what cold nonchalance can you detach yourself from the life that they supply so copiously? No, painting is not made to decorate apartments. It's an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy.”

Pablo Picasso¹

One of the most well-known examples of artistic expression that speaks to the extreme violence of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) is Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*.² The abstract oil painting depicts the devastating effects of the Nazi bomb that was dropped on the Basque town of Guernica in Northern Spain. With this work, Picasso brought the Spanish Civil War to the attention of the world, demonstrating that artistic depictions of the conflict offer insightful responses. His experimental, abstract approach conjures an almost childlike style. It is, in fact, the perspective of the child that this article explores, arguing that similarly to the work of Picasso Spanish children's drawings of the Civil War also promote veracious, profound depictions of war-time life. The presence of children's drawings in both historical accounts of and fictional cinematic narratives about the Civil War highlights the primacy of the child's perspective in this context.

Unspeaking violence and atrocities were committed by both the Nationalist and the Republican sides during the Spanish Civil War, leading to the death of approximately 500,000 people. The conflict, which historian Paul Preston labelled as ‘The Spanish Holocaust’,³ gave way to the Franco regime: this

dictatorship was led by General Francisco Franco until his death in 1975. In works of Spanish cinema that engage with this traumatic and recent past, the figure of the child is frequently a symbol of (passive) victimhood. However, children throughout Spain were in fact active participants in Spanish society throughout this conflict. Through the recent digitisation of collections of children's drawings which were made during the Civil War and the presence of the child as a social actor in several films children's voices within history have been amplified. This article explores the significance of children's historical drawings and instances of the cinematic agentive Spanish child, arguing for a move beyond narratives of victimhood (of children) in both cinematic and historical accounts of the Spanish Civil War. Children's artistic expression demonstrates that they were engaged social actors, challenging the boundaries of traditional oral and written testimony about the conflict. Such drawings make up the collection *They Still Draw Pictures* which provides important materials for this study.⁴ The article also examines children's drawings found in the Spanish films *El espinazo del diablo*⁵ and *El espíritu de la colmena*.⁶ By considering these works this article reframes the figure of the child, previously often seen as a cipher for victimhood, through an exploration of children's drawings across history and cinema.

Reclaiming Narratives of Victimhood

Scholars of Hispanic Studies such as Sarah Wright observe a narrative tradition in contemporary Spanish cinema that uses the figure of the child to evoke historical memory or as an ideological symbol of suffering;⁷ a ‘vehicle for adult concerns and fears’.⁸ Examples of this include the films *Cría cuervos*,⁹ *La lengua de la mariposa*,¹⁰ and *Pa negre*.¹¹ The content of these films reflects areas of investigation within the field of Memory Studies which in the Spanish context ignited as part of the process of the recuperation of historical memory,¹² following the passing of the Law for Historical Memory in 2007.¹³ The analysis of the child as a stand-in for homogenous victimhood, however, overlooks any capacity for children's agency and diminishes dynamic acts of resistance and oppositional practices by them. Acknowledging testimonies of suffering is crucial. Nonetheless, it is dangerous to view those who suffered as passive victims only thus ‘robbing them of a sense of agency’.¹⁴ Such an emphasis on victimhood can perpetuate existing power relations or lead to the avoidance of shared (national) responsibilities for the mistakes of the past.¹⁵ My exploration of the child's perspective entails a consideration of the symbolic childhood that is often represented in works about the Spanish Civil War.¹⁶ It is necessary to allow for nuanced modes of agency to enter the analytical spectrum in order to move beyond existing focus on victimhood and the child as a ‘convenient symbol’.¹⁷ Instead, a re-reading of the figure of the

child and the burden of symbolism which children have often borne should be considered by studying their illustrations.¹⁸

Agentive Artists¹⁹

The presence of children's drawings in Spanish cinema as well as historical documents presents the child's encounter with the (traumatic) past, moving away from limited renderings of the child as a 'motor-helpless', passive onlooker.²⁰ Examining these drawings in both a historical and a cinematic context centralises the child's voice in contemporary Spanish history. Cheri Robinson notes that archived drawings are 'means of resisting the obliteration of the Other and a reclamation of existence'.²¹ During the Civil War and the Franco regime, some 300,000 children were displaced; this scandal was called 'los niños robados del franquismo' [*the stolen children of Francoism*]. Thus, the significance of the child's drawing in both historical and fictional accounts speaks to contemporary tensions as Spanish society uncovers its own recent past.²² Drawings and cinema are both visual media that transgress the boundaries of written or oral testimony.

The concept of children's agency has recently been popularised in both Childhood Studies and Hispanic Studies. In particular, the New Sociology of Childhood seeks to investigate trends in Cultural Studies and literature that do not view the child as an agentive social actor:

The point of the new childhood studies is to dismantle the epistemological hegemony that has regarded children as being *merely in transition*, as nothings and nobodies in the here and now.²³

Of course, the notion of agency is problematic on a number of levels.²⁴ Hartung highlights this, explaining that the term 'agency' is often unquestioned in abstract studies that focus on empowering the child and the child's capability to participate.²⁵ Indeed, agency depends on context. In Hispanic Studies, Latin Americanists Carolina Rocha and Georgia Semiet stress that children's agency in cinema is 'a slippery domain due to their reliance on adults and relative lack of autonomy'.²⁶ Nonetheless, 'recent research indicates that children and childhood have become an object of scholarly interest'.²⁷ Deborah Martin's work *Childhood and its Representational Uses* is one example of scholarship which questions Hispanic cinema's inclination to use myths of childhood that deny the child agency. For example, Martin argues that Latin American director Victor Gavira's work 'privileges the child's disruptive agency'.²⁸ Similarly, I propose a reading of the child that centralises the manifestation of children's agency and subjectivity in the form of children's drawings, while acknowledging Spanish cinema's predilection to understand children as a symbol of futurity and reproductive futurism

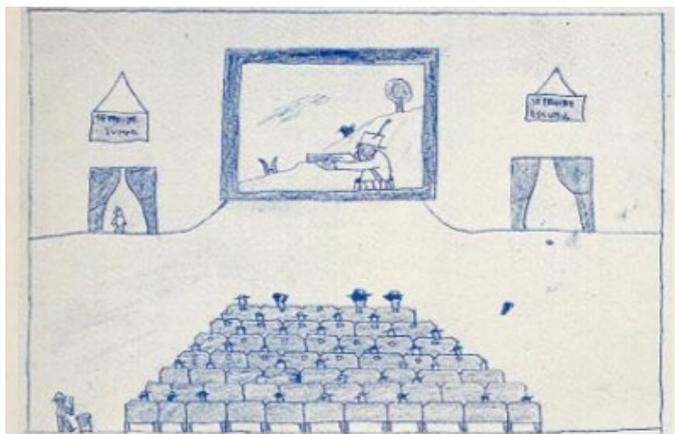
or as a motif of victimhood.²⁹ Agency in this article should thus be understood as the child's capacity to act and participate in both historical and cinematic narratives. A recognition of the on-screen child as a social actor encourages the critical reconsideration of archival drawings which present children's nuanced historical agency and the resilience of those who negotiated structures of oppression during the Civil War and Franco's Spain.³⁰ It will be useful in this context to look closely at children's drawing further below, after a discussion of the role of Spanish cinema in representing children's agency during the War.

Cinematic Subjectivities

Victor Erice's 1973 film *El Espíritu de la Colmena* has been referred to the 'grandfather' of cinematic response to the Spain's Civil War.³¹ In this film, Erice combines the use of intertexts, ambiguity, and allegory. As the two young protagonists Ana (Ana Torrent) and Isabel (Isabel Tellería) navigate family life during the closing years of the War, Erice evokes historical memory by offering a 'profound investigation into the mind and imagination of its child protagonist'³² – in spite of the constraints of the censorship regime applied to Spanish cultural production at the time of the film's production.³³ The film opens with a sequence of children's sketches that foreshadow events which happen in the diegesis, including a film screening of James Whale's *Frankenstein* (see **Figure 1**). The drawings were completed by the actresses who played the children in the film and signify more than just a decorative credit sequence. Through their inclusion, Erice alerts the spectator to the child-centred focus of the film and emphasises the subjectivity of children as their own outlook is depicted through their drawings. The unique use of the child's point of view in this film 'helps us see the world of the adults from a different perspective'.³⁴ The drawings, along with the cinematography, highlight the agency of the child protagonists. However, there is little discussion in existing scholarship so far about the liberating potential of these sketches. For instance, one area of investigation considers how in numerous horror films the child's drawing is a motif for psychosis.³⁵ The drawings in Erice's film, however, allow the children free reign to untangle and creatively articulate their lived experience. This resembles Susumu Hani's 1956 film *Children Who Draw* which highlights children drawings within a Japanese school setting, with the film's opening narration explaining that 'these early scribbles deserve more attention for they can reveal to us the world of the child'.³⁶ This position is applicable to this study: I propose that the inclusion of children's drawings in Spanish films about the Civil War reveals a desire to problematise dominant historical and cinematic perspectives on the conflict, especially those that position the child as a dormant witness. This strategy of representation, employed by Erice through



Figure 1: A drawing from the opening credits of *El espíritu de la colmena*. Author's screenshot



Plato 39

Julian Arjonilla, 12 years old, Children's Colony of Olivia, Valencia Province. Inscription on reverse says: "Movies before the war." Inscription on left: "Smoking forbidden." To right: "Spitting forbidden." The child remembers a Wild West film. The broad-brimmed hats of spectators seem to indicate that Julian Arjonilla's home was in Andalusia.

Figure 2: Julian Arjonilla's drawing from *They Still Draw Pictures*. Reproduced with the permission of Southworth Spanish Civil War Collection, Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego Library

centralising children's drawings in his film, further emphasises the importance of looking at archival drawings of children. Such drawings are central to the argument and analytical perspective of this paper. As the following section observes, the drawings are a historical reference point to real children who used drawing as a means of expression throughout the conflict.

Transgressive Testimony

The collection *They Still Draw Pictures* was published one year before the end of the Civil War and collates drawings completed by Spanish schoolchildren during this conflict.³⁷ These drawings showcase a range of scenes: some depict life in a school setting or colony whilst others are scenes of bombardment. **Figure 2** shows a child's experience of cinema before the war. It presents a fascinating connection to the opening credits of Erice's film (as seen in **Figure 1**): both images recall children who are engaged in cinema as active spectators, putting 'emphasis on the firstness of the child's cinematic experience and children's drawings'.³⁸ *They Still Draw Pictures* highlights how perceptions of children were affected by the conflict and that these young artists express authorial power in their drawings, an idea which this article emphasises. Previous scholarship has read the circulation of children's artistic depictions of atrocity as 'recycled violence'.³⁹ My work, instead, positions the child's drawing as a means to encourage an analytical reading of children's political subjectivity.

In his introduction to *They Still Draw Pictures*, Adolous Huxley notes that 'the child's power of psychological and dramatic expression' is apparent in the drawings.⁴⁰ Indeed, these drawings are explicit expressions and testimonies in which children's perspective of the conflict is foregrounded. In their exploration of the drawings, Geist and Carroll discuss their value as historical documents that give physical form to children's experiences of war-time.⁴¹ I maintain that the primacy of drawing and the child's perspective promotes a powerful reconsideration of stereotypical associations between childhood innocence and passivity.

Figure 3 shows another child's drawing from *They Still Draw Pictures*. As the caption indicates, these images usually offer an inscription that summarises the child's vision for the drawing. In this context, Lucia del Hierro's drawing in **Figure 4** is also interesting because the scene expresses a vast amount of information. Day-to-day life during the conflict is presented, as women and children queue for groceries against a backdrop of a sky littered with military planes. The drawing depicts the continuation of everyday life for Spanish families throughout the war. The events of this conflict are well documented in historical textbooks and documentaries, but it is rare to see such an intimate account of daily life during this period. Significantly, the machinery of war is still present in the scene,

although in the background, whereas in **Figure 3** the devastation of war is more centralised. Moreover, **Figure 4** also shows the long queues for food, accentuating the impact of the war on families and the shortages of provisions that ensued. Both drawings depict attacks from military planes which is something that many drawings in the collection have in common. As Spanish researchers including Núria Padrós Tuneu and Isabel Carillo Flores et al have recently pointed out, the multitude of scenes sketched by children mean that their experiences offer valuable historical knowledge:

[T]he images, expressions and perceptions glimpsed in the children's drawings are far from being mere footnotes to history. Since the children themselves were protagonists in the unfolding events, their drawings offer us testimonies that are full of information and interest and, as a result, enable us to gain a broader understanding, and undertake more complex analyses, of the processes involved in what was a crucial period in our history.⁴²

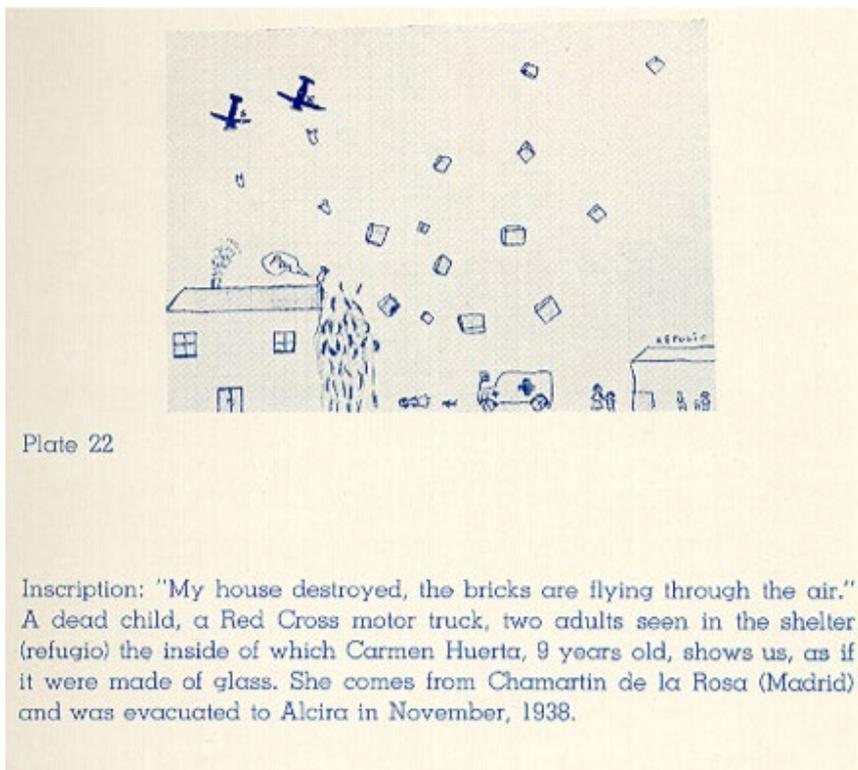


Figure 3: Carmen Huerta's drawing from *They Still Draw Pictures*. Reproduced with the permission of Southworth Spanish Civil War Collection, Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego Library



Lucía del Hierro, 11 years old. No other inscription. The expressive picture represents women and children standing in line to buy coal (1st from left), bread (center) and groceries to the right. A woman leads a child by the hand. A girl is jumping rope. Planes, play and the struggle for food.

Figure 4: Lucia del Hierro's drawing from *They Still Draw Pictures*. Reproduced with the permission of Southworth Spanish Civil War Collection, Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego Library

Film as Lens

Where cultural studies of cinema often seek to 'embed media like the cinema in a larger cultural and historical context', Film Studies can also serve as a springboard for reconsidering entrenched views of the past.⁴³ Spanish films that centre on the child's experience offer opportunities to reflect on wider societal attitudes towards children and the past. Guillermo del Toro's *El Espinazo del Diablo*, a gothic horror film set in a Spanish orphanage during the Civil War, is also worth considering for its recognition of children's agentive action through drawing.⁴⁴ In this film Jaime (Íñigo Garcés), a young male resident of the orphanage, witnesses the murder of a peer. The audience is made aware of this through the discovery of his sketchbook (see **Figure 5**). The child's voice, otherwise silenced in an environment centred on adults, is able to speak through his sketches. Drawing once again appears as a dynamic example of children's agency. In these examples, through the visual media of cinema and art narrow notions of childhood and passivity are opened up for debate. The point-of-view shot of Carlos (Fernando Tielve) viewing Jaime's drawing, as seen in **Figure 5**, replicates the experience of cinema spectators who are also experiencing the drawing as a window to the inner world of Jaime, like Carlos. Furthermore, Jaime and Carlos have a shared fascination with collecting and creating comic books. This foregrounds their agency both

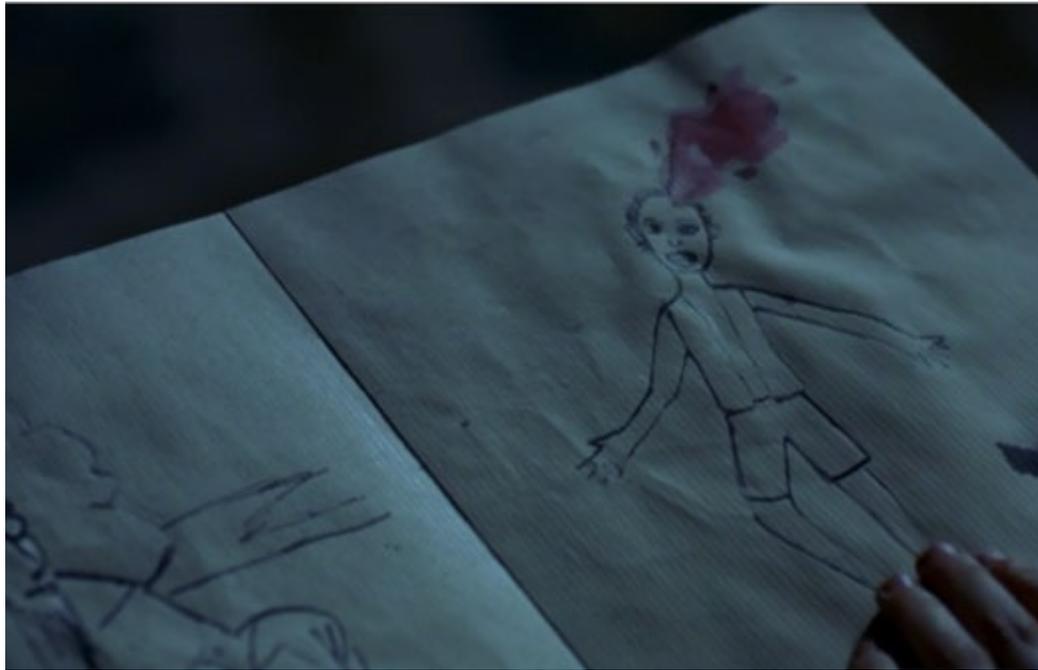


Figure 5: Carlos discovers Jaime's drawings of Santi's death in *El Espinazo del Diablo*. Author's screenshot

intra- and extra-diegetically and encourages a consideration of their need to author and share their own story through the medium of drawing.

As such, drawings empower cinematic as well as historical children through their central role in these narratives. This links to the historical testimony of the images in *They Still Draw Pictures*. As Butcher proposes drawings such as these express the voice of the child and recognise that children are 'important voices and agents in the history of war'.⁴⁵ The cinematic reflection on historical drawings in the films of Erice and del Toro and their focus on children's subjectivity through the incorporation of their artwork means that these films present children not only as having a voice but as possessing 'determining agency with respect to events and other people'.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Readers may recall Omran Daqneesh, the three-year-old Syrian boy injured in the 2016 air strike in Aleppo, Syria, whose image was used in politically charged news reports on the crisis.⁴⁷ This can be connected with the image in **Figure 6**, a poster issued by the Madrid Defence Council during the Spanish Civil War depicting an injured child. Geist has explored how this image of the dead/injured child hints at sensibilities not only to foster empathy but also to encourage

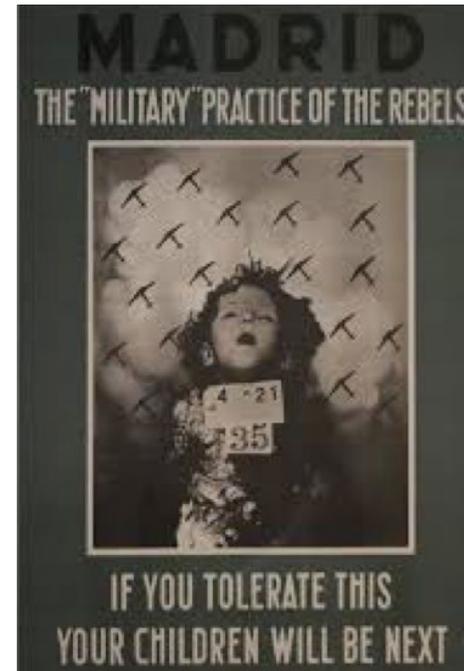


Figure 6: Poster produced during the Spanish Civil War 1937. 'If you tolerate this your children will be next'. Ministerio de Propaganda

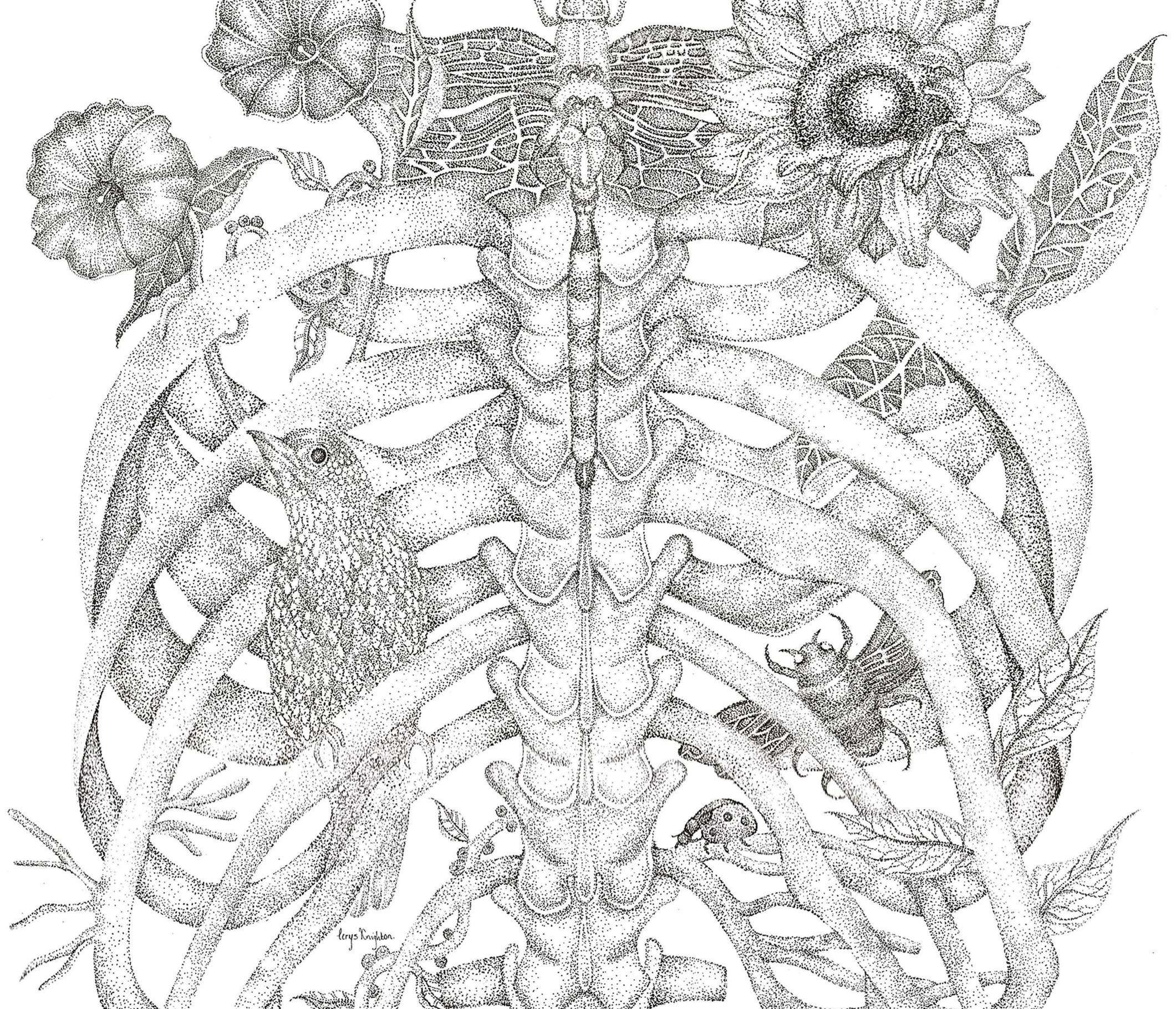
ideological change and political mobilization.⁴⁸ Bloomfield has also highlighted this, stating that

As photographic subjects, child victims of war met the requirements of high-energy propaganda of agitation: the need to address and affect individuals within a collective, and to elicit and capitalise on base sentiments against an enemy.⁴⁹

Gutiérrez-Albilla notes that this tendency is dangerous 'as it may fail to respect the dignity, integrity and autonomy of the subject, thereby reducing her or him to a cipher of victimhood and enacting a form of colonisation of the other'.⁵⁰ Can one turn away from this image and instead begin to understand the child as an agentive social actor? The cinematic representations of children's drawings discussed in this study can be aligned with those examples from history seen in *They Still Draw Pictures* to productively engage with children's drawings and to think critically about victimhood, agency, and existing stereo-

types. Whilst works of Spanish cinema often represent the suffering of children during the Spanish Civil War, they also open up a space for critical dialogue about the subjectivity and perception of their child protagonists. While agency is not always possible, the works analysed in this study facilitate the consideration of children's drawings as historical accounts of conflict. Such examples of the child's voice are fundamental in order to broaden interpretations of the cinematic and historical agentive child.

The images from the collection *They Still Draw Pictures* have been reproduced with the permission of the Southworth Spanish Civil War Collection, Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego Library. Thank you. The collection of drawings can be accessed here: <https://library.ucsd.edu/speccoll/tsdp/> and have also been published as part of the book *They Still Draw Pictures*.



Lorys Knighton

Card Sharp

Sabrin Hasbun, Bath Spa University

“If war was a game of cards, I’d say someone was cheating.”

Spike Milligan

This piece of nonfiction writing is part of a longer chapter included in my family memoir. All facts included in this narration are as accurate as possible according to what I have been told by the people involved in these events. Of course, to render these memories on a page I needed to shape them into a readable story, with some consequent distortion. I selected the piece below because it looks at how identities change, and how new boundaries and conflicts are seen by a ten-year-old boy. Specifically, the scene is about being forced to define yourself and your identity for the first time, without being prepared to do so. Through the protagonist’s eyes we can also see how the same situation affects the adults around him. Briefly, this piece tries to creatively analyse the impact of forced labels in a context where they were previously absent or not important, and it ultimately looks at the power of categories and definitions to create or subvert borders.

The reader will notice that any specific denotation of time and place has been omitted. This choice has ideological reasons as well as creative ones. To justify my decision, here are Kundera’s words on Öe’s novella, *Sheep*:

“Imagine that, for all the length of the narration, the *Japanese* passengers were put in front of *American* soldiers! Openly pronounced, the power of that single word would reduce the novella to a political text, to an accusation against the occupier. You need to simply renounce to that word in order for the political aspect to remain a loose shade and for the light to be shed on the actual enigma around which the writer’s interest revolve: the existential enigma”¹

The first time history raided the plain narration of Rami’s childhood – which otherwise would have been a completely normal childhood – was in the shape of a radio.

Rami first realised that there was something going on in the early afternoon, when he was walking back home after school. There, in the school’s playground the older boys were being trained, but not for any kind of sport or competition. They were armed, and despite their bemusement at having to hold an old rifle instead of the usual ball, they were trying to learn how to use it. Rami thought it was just a new exercise and that he needed to wait until he was old enough before he could try it too. It wasn’t until his mother prevented him from staying out to play with his friends that he sensed something was wrong. He thought he was in trouble for having stolen his father’s playing cards again, and he braced himself, ready to spend the whole afternoon helping him with the animals. But there was no punishment, or household chores, and his father, George, told him there was no need to bring the animals up the hill where the best pastures were. Now Rami could see black smoke rising up from that hill and his parents behaving more unpredictably than ever. That was the moment Rami felt for the first time, there in the space between his lungs, where the ribs give up to the flesh, a feeling that something was lost.

“We have to bring our stuff down,” said George “not much, but the most important things.”

“We need to bring food too!” interrupted Rami’s mother, Helena.

“Rami ask the neighbours if their radio works or if we need to bring ours!”

“Can I bring dad’s playing cards too?” asked Rami,

“Do you think this is an appropriate time for cards?” cut short his mother.

In a matter of a couple days Rami had seen the older boys playing with old rifles, glimpsed the black smoke coming from the hill where they kept their animals, and experienced that untamed loss for the first time. And now he found himself with his whole family and the neighbours on the ground floor of his house, a rusty radio on the table, no cards for distraction, and engulfed by the palpable embarrassment of needing to start a conversation. Not just because they needed to talk about what was happening, but because, after years, they were all in the same room where the proximity of their bodies and the pressure of the situation urged them to disclose their thoughts.

The ground floor was the original floor of their house. It was an old building made of arches, high ceilings, and useful thick walls. Rami's brother, sisters and parents had lived there before he was born, before his father decided to expand it by adding a modern first floor, with more rooms, thinner walls to gain space, and a white balcony on the front. George believed for a while that the family could use both floors, that in the future it would be possible for one of his children to raise their family downstairs, and that there would be enough space nearby to build another house. But then he had had to use all his savings to build that first floor upstairs. He had made his wife sell food to raise more money to build the stairs, had kept the children busy by making them take out the old nails from the unused supports so that they could reuse them for the new walls, and had finally ended up renting the ground floor, just for now, because money was needed to build the ceiling.

After nearly ten years the neighbour's family was still living downstairs, and they now shared the thickness of the wall with them. When George built the first floor he hadn't expected to need a thick wall. They didn't need to protect themselves from the cold winter now that efficient electric stoves could be bought from the nearest shop, and the summer heat couldn't harm them, not in the garden with the bulky shade of the olive trees and the little pool for redfish, quick plunges, and children's games. George didn't really think he would need to defend his family from another war.

"Switch on the radio," said Helena to Rami, who was still looking at everyone and waiting for someone to tell him what was happening or what to do. For some time they all listened to the radio silently, as if his parents, older siblings, and the neighbours also needed someone to tell them what was happening or what to do:

"Our great armies are gathering together to defeat the enemies!"

"The courage of our generals is forcing the enemy to retreat."

"The precision of the pilots is cutting the sky with the blades of their wings."

But no one explained to Rami what happened up on the hill or to his animals. Or why it wasn't an appropriate moment for cards. Or how long they should have stayed with the neighbours, holding the silence and the embarrassment of an aborted conversation. The sunset came and no one was moving from their places in the neighbours' living room, no one switched on the lamp, or went to the kitchen to cook meals. They were waiting in a darkening room in perfect silence, like pale neglected furniture in an abandoned house. Just the radio declaring big victories.

"Why can't we switch on the light?" Rami asked,

"Shushhh," They all hushed him, as though someone else was there, lurking in the shadows, ready to find out that they were not pieces of furniture.

Then the darkness took over, and the furniture relaxed, with that naive certainty that if you can't see you can't be seen. Protected by the anonymity of the lightlessness, forced by that unusual proximity, and encouraged by the live-every-day-as-if-it-were-the-last moment, they started a conversation. At the beginning it was just a way to comment on the optimistic radio:

"Our army is unstoppable!"

"Where do you think they are?"

"Our planes are flying all over the sky!"

"I can't really hear them, can you?"

"The enemy is surrendering!"

"When do you think we can switch the lights on?"

Then it became more and more like a proper conversation in which the radio was just an annoying, interrupting chatterbox.

"We should eat something. I brought so much from upstairs, and if we are winning we don't need it all."

"*Sfiha*, my favourite, they are always so good when you make them!"

"The generals are triumphant and they are announcing that..."

"The secret is in the meat, in how you mince it."

"Really? I thought it was in the dough?"

"Rising against the enemy"

"Believe me. I will tell you this story so you can understand!"

Gossip and anecdotes, and then longer stories started to pour out from the mouths of the neglected furniture, as if the darkness had finally freed them from the silent stillness which had haunted them for years. They could finally stream into each other the lives they had never revealed before. George, who couldn't see the intimidating beauty of his wife's eyes, or the confused expression in his children's faces. Helena, who in the dark couldn't reflect her husband's silent image. The children, who were no longer required to interpret their parents' thoughts. They all let go to an impetuous river of words.

It was then that they heard it, not from the radio, which was still celebrating its announced victory, but directly from above. Not from the first floor, from higher up. Not from the hill with the animals, from higher up. A big boom which made the thick wall tremble. And then, too late, a siren. Rami felt the space between his ribs expanding to give more surface to his fear, as if a little explosion happened there between the lungs and the heart. But the radio was still cheerful.

"Our great army won, we destroyed our enemy, we took the sky and the land..."

So when it was announced that the army had entered the town, they really believed it was that great, victorious army of theirs, which had finally arrived and saved them all. That noise was just the last boom of the fallen enemy.

But it was not like that, despite all the promises of their radio which stumbled on for hours. The great army, which had won, defeating all resistance, destroying the air forces, and conquering the land in just less than a week, was not their army, it was the enemy's.

Now the new guardians came to knock at the door:

"You have an hour to leave or we will bomb everything here."

It was pointless to play at being dusty furniture any longer. They needed to do something, make a decision.

"No one moves!" It was the voice of the neighbour in the dark of the lightless house.

"What do you mean don't move, they said they will kill..."

"Shush!"

The radio also stopped. Silence was back. They were all hoping that the walls of the old ground floor were thick enough.

The voice of the new army was not like the old radio. What they said happened for real. Bombs came. Roofs collapsed. Shops went up in flames. The street to the market crumbled. They needed to find someone else to buy the milk from. And in September some desks at school were empty. They said that the old ground floor kept its word too. It didn't fall down. Maybe the walls were thick enough. Or maybe they were more used to the silence, in that house, and the new soldiers really believed that no one was there. An abandoned house. No need to bomb it.

After the last day of war, and the bombs, and the lies of the radio, people started to come out from their houses. Rami's family and neighbours found out that they were not the only ones who stayed, who kept silent, didn't move. The new generals were also surprised to see so many people. Rami wondered what he was supposed to do now; if he should still bring the animals up the hill where the best pastures were, or if his father was going back to his butchery again. Could they go back upstairs now, or were the walls there still too thin? But there was no answer. The silence that fell upon them, after that night of liberated stories, was now thicker than ever before. Rami was left to understand for himself what the right or wrong thing to do was, like playing a new game of cards without knowing the rules.

After his first unsure steps, Rami realised with relief that no one knew what was right or wrong anymore. There was a strange ambiguity between the two. The radio's statements of security ceased, and everyone was left to figure out for themselves what they should be doing. There was still the curfew imposed by the new power that you had to respect because it was real and had real consequences. And there were some new rules as well, but people didn't really know how to

interpret them. For example, Rami's favourite uncle, Albert, couldn't decide what the right thing to do with his rifle was, and he took it and hid it in the well close to his house, instead of consigning it to the new wardens. That was Rami's time to learn that wells are unreliable, that nothing ends well around a well. That wells have stories to tell. That people around wells talk. And that people who get involved with wells get into trouble.

What confused Rami more than anything was how he was supposed to behave with the new rulers. When George discovered that his son had become friends with the soldier guarding the building in front of their home, Rami experienced one of the longest silences his father could keep, echoed by his mother's stormy reaction. But then George made him behave nice and politely when the new settlers came to buy meat from his butcher shop. Or his uncle Albert who, when he came back after the rifle-well situation, made him work and sell goodies to the new tourists.

And then came the identity card changing and switching and declaring. They were lined up in the main square of the town, in front of the church, all waiting for their turn to declare who they were and what they believed in. Rami started trembling. His school was a Catholic school, but his mother kept taking them to the Greek church. His father instead preferred some of the Protestant groups. They were more practical, less wordy, a compromise between Helena's deep faith and George's useful empiricism. So when his turn approached, Rami didn't really know what to say. He never really thought about it, for him any faith was good. He thought about declaring his passion for the Greek style, for its dramatic ceremonies. He thought about his father's groups which at least had shorter services. But he also really liked his teachers. When his turn came the new authority made everything simpler – or more complicated:

"Christian or Muslim?" the soldier asked.

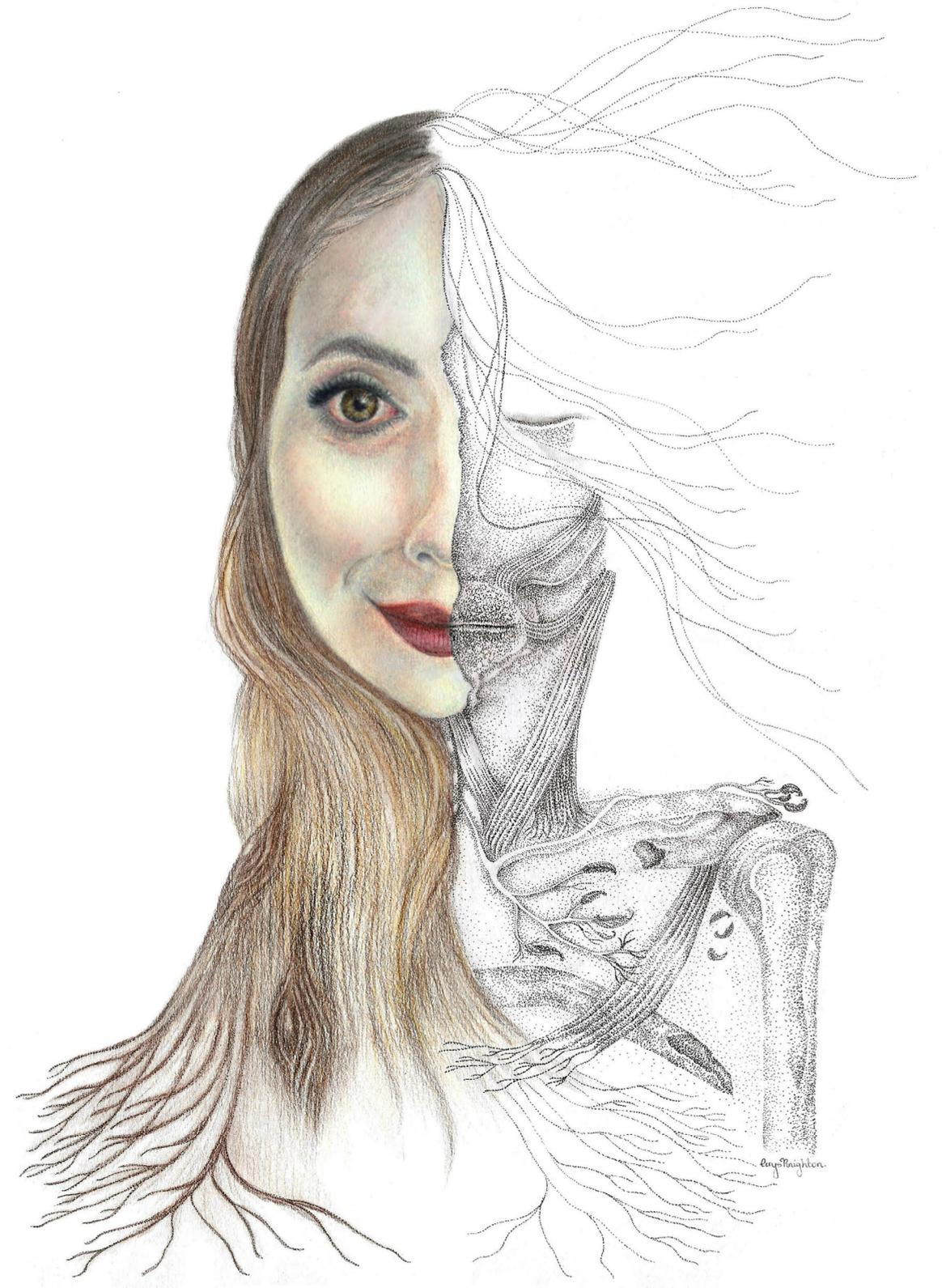
Rami, instead of rejoicing at the general label of Christian, was taken by the panic of yet another option. He had never really considered being Muslim, but many of his friends were, so how could he discard the complexity of his eternal faith in a matter of seconds? Could he come back another day? Reflect on it a bit more? Try them all and then decide? And what about his father. Could he say, "Neither, thank you"? Or what about Ibrahim, his classmate with a Muslim mother and a Christian father? What would he have answered?

"Christian." Cut short his mother, solving centuries of religious debates in favour of family affiliation. Rami understood then that he was not supposed to answer, he was too young to have his own identity card. Nonetheless, Rami was never convinced about these new cards, as if a cardsharp had shuffled them. It had the name of new state on it, even though they were still living in the same

place. It also had an alphabet Rami didn't know how to read. And there was that Christian there, too general to be the truth, yet so precise that it cut through reality.

Rami, and everyone else under this new rule soon found out that it was not just a matter of god. That there were some tangible, earthly privileges that came with being Christian, that didn't come with being Muslim. Better business, shorter queues at the checkpoints, softer treatment in prison. People who probably knew but who hadn't paid much attention before, started to ask their neighbours what IDs they had been given. Even Rami and his friends played with their identities like cards at the game table. You got Muslim, I am sorry for you. I can give you my Christian one if you give me your sweets for the rest of the year. But while for Rami and his friends it was just a matter of an annual supply of sweets, for others that new word on people's IDs brought an awareness of difference into the town. They said it was just a word that had no value, that it didn't matter for them, they knew who they really were. But in the long run – not days or even years – and with the influence of other news coming from abroad, that word became more and more vague, and yet precise enough to draw another invisible border – ambiguous, unclear, often trespassed – but still a border.

Rami never remembered those days clearly. They went on for years with the same blurred vision, with those presbyopic symptoms of people who experience something too closely to tell you clearly what happened. Every day was like a suspended reality – but still a reality after all – where right and wrong got mixed, radios lied, identities could change with the turn of a card, wells took people and then returned them changed, and walls got thicker or thinner. It was only many years later that a friend of Rami's told me that good and evil are in the details and that you need the right pair of glasses to see them.



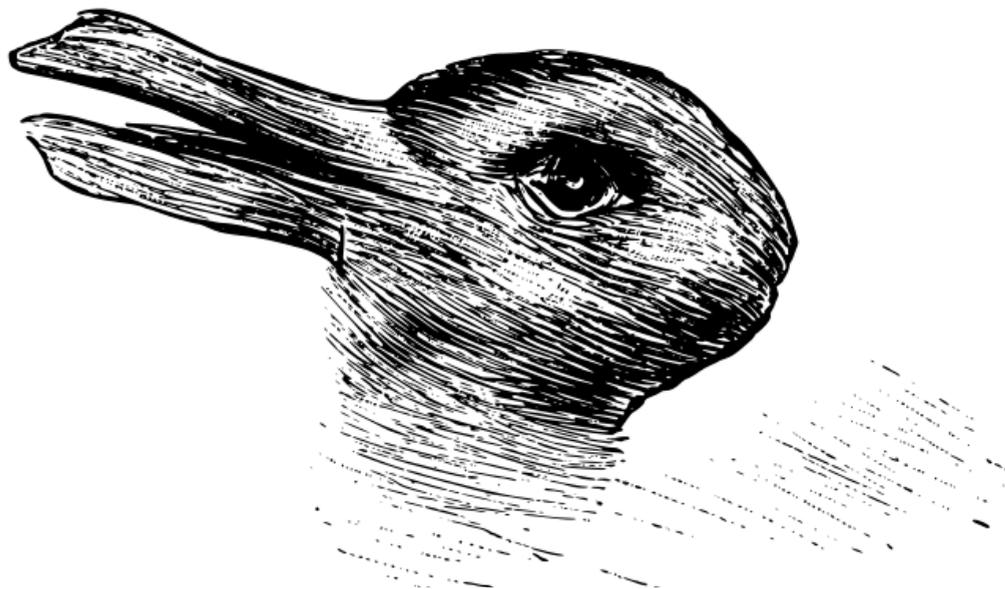
Russia and the West Since the Breakup of Paradigms: Identity on a Cultural Rollercoaster

Ekaterina Gasparian, University of Bristol

“See your true self.”

*Baron von Ungern*¹

The collapse of the Soviet regime in Russia in the late 20th century offers diverse material for socio-cultural research into the formation of a new, post-Soviet, identity. In 1991, after more than seven decades of Communist party rule, the Soviet population was exposed to a new paradigm. Western democracy, based on a multi-party system, rights of the individual, and civil liberties, was a stark contrast to the Soviet ideology. Market economy, free enterprise, and product diversity replaced the frugal planned economy of the former Soviet Union. These changes made Western, largely American, mass culture easily available to the Russian public. Films, books, videogames, and other brightly-packaged marketed mass consumption products represented a leap into



Ludwig Wittgenstein: the 'rabbit-duck' perspective.²

the Western reality with its refreshingly new set of beliefs, values, and cultural codes that were vaguely, if at all, familiar to Soviet society. The avalanche of new concepts merged with former Soviet concepts, deconstructing them and creating a curious cultural patchwork of a new identity.

According to Yuri Lotman, literary scholar and cultural historian, cultural domain, formed by social memory, is not purely global: each specific culture has its own sub-domain existing in shared social memory with its symbols, signs and codes: 'Every text of a culture is by definition heterogeneous. [...] the heterogeneity of the languages of culture forms a complex plurality of voices'.³ The same idea is conveyed by the notion of 'trans-culture', proposed by Russian literary theorist Mikhail Epstein, which 'diffuses' the symbolic meanings of one culture into the conceptual fields of another.⁴ This article aims to identify which Western concepts entered the Soviet cultural domain and how they were diffused in a new 'trans-culture', forming a new identity. To do this, we shall focus on the works of the prominent contemporary Russian writer Viktor Pelevin, a chronicler of his time, who critically observes a trajectory of social and cultural change as the swish Western rollercoaster carries the post-Soviet society along the remaining Soviet track.

One of the central themes in Pelevin's work is free enterprise, eagerly embraced by the Soviet public as a market economy principle from the West. The author's early writing gives a humorous account of the way free enterprise was perceived and implemented. With no prior business experience, the Russian public set about making quick money by any means available lest this lucrative opportunity disappear. For greater comic effect Pelevin places his short story *Deviaty son Very Pavlovny (The Ninth Dream of Vera Pavlovna)*, in a public toilet to illustrate the enterprising enthusiasm of the 1990s in Russia. Bleak and smelly when state-owned, it changes beyond recognition when privatised, with coloured tiles, paintings, and classical music. At first the tone is upbeat and optimistic: 'one could hear the merry jingle of coins'.⁵ However, the story goes on to reveal the random way of post-Soviet entrepreneurship, with no long-term plan: 'dazed Soviet people crowded around, buying and selling trinkets'.⁶ The disoriented post-Soviet society was grasping for a new ideology, so making money and consumption represented a tempting alternative. A character from *Zhizn' nasekomykh (The Life of Insects)* summarises the new goal of that period: 'Serezha bluntly asked how he should live from now on. His friend said, "Dig as much dough as you can, then you'll see for yourself"'.⁷

As the public was swept away by the new market philosophy, the post-Soviet collective mind began to associate money with success. Western brands became measures of achievement, extensively illustrated in Pelevin's narrative.

Cheap imported mass products like Coca-Cola, Absolut, and Nike are used as cultural signifiers; in later works they are replaced with items of conspicuous consumption – Rolex, Mercedes, and Porsche become symbols of the successful Westernised Russian. Giving a satirical overview of the late-1990s post-Soviet route to success in his cult novel *Generation P*, Pelevin raises a philosophical issue with this aspect of cultural change – wealth-stimulated ego begins to dominate this new identity:

A man takes out a bank loan, [...] rents an office, buys a Cherokee jeep and eight boxes of Smirnoff. When Smirnoff runs out, it turns out that the jeep is crashed, [...] and the loan is to be paid back. So he takes out a new loan – three times as big – to pay back the first loan, buy a Grand Cherokee and sixteen boxes of Absolut. [...] While half of Absolut is still there, the jeep is still running and death seems a distant and abstract notion the man becomes aware of a formerly dormant feeling of omnipotence.⁸

The lines describe the philosophy of a by-product of the Western-Soviet socio-cultural relationship – a ‘new Russian’ (‘Novyi russkii’, or ‘bratok’) – an unpredictable sidewinder on this post-Soviet rollercoaster ride. Typically, this new Russian character is an ostentatiously-dressed entrepreneur, barely educated, but with some basic understanding of business principles and aspiring to or pretending to have Western affiliations, like a character from *Chapaev i Pustota* (*Chapaev and Pustota*): ‘[Globus] had a Porsche, wore gold chains five grand each.’⁹ In later works by Pelevin, entrepreneurs of this kind are referred to as ‘oligarchs’ to stress their growing affiliations with the state and their resulting political power.¹⁰ The Western influence upon this kind of businessman becomes more apparent, but only in the refined, better-educated image they present: ‘Pragmatism [...] helped him survive in the infernal world of Russian business. [...]. [...] He was fluent in English [...]. [...] He could, [...], spend hours in the sauna with [...] men from the steel and aluminium corporate [...] world [...]’.¹¹ Shortly afterwards: ‘[...] having heard about multiculturalism in America [he] set about searching for so-called identity [...]’.¹² What stands out in the speech and appearance of new Russians in Pelevin’s narrative, especially in *Chapaev i Pustota*, is violence, evoking fear and intimidation: ‘I’ll do the moron in’; ‘there was something deeply scary about hi[m]’.¹³ The novel traces the possible causes of the violent nature of Russian business back to the October Revolution of 1917. It was a time of social conflict, when, according to Pelevin, ‘the darkest of ignorant thugs emerge and make everybody follow their mean and duplicitous laws’.¹⁴ The

imagery and diction associated with 1917 revolutionaries have strong negative connotations redolent of uncivilised, pointless violence: ‘unpunished permissiveness: [...] Lenin’s permission to “rob the robbers”’.¹⁵

The similarity between the two social groups in *Chapaev i Pustota* – 1917 revolutionaries and 1990s new Russians – is striking. The former are represented as one rough, illiterate, destructive mass; the latter are equally violent, differing only in attire and business acumen. This perspective on the two phenomena – the Bolshevik masses and the new Russians – exposes a historical and sociocultural paradox. On the one hand, the revolution and collapse of the USSR were, at least in part, inspired by Western ideas of democracy; on the other, what they exposed in Russian society was far from the original concept of democracy. As a new Russian character from *Chapaev i Pustota* puts it, ‘after all, our country has always been a prison camp, and such will it stay’.¹⁶ The master trope of a prison camp (‘zona’) in the novel evokes the idea of suppression which Pelevin associates with Bolshevik and Soviet ideologies still deeply rooted in the minds of new Russians: ‘he never really left the prison camp. He simply [...] drove a Porsche around [it]’.¹⁷ Thus, another important aspect of the Western paradigm – democratic reform – seems to have undergone a curious transformation in the post-Soviet reality.

Key concepts of Western democracy include freedom of political choice and expression, respect for the individual, and state protection of individuals. The perception of these concepts by the post-Soviet public is summed up in *Zhizn’ nasekomykh*. When one of the characters, Sam Sucker, an American mosquito, speaks about ‘rights of insects’ as basic and inalienable, another character, Russian fly Natasha, responds pessimistically: ‘[...] no one has had or will ever have any rights here’.¹⁸ This might sound like another sociocultural paradox: for decades the Soviet public pined for freedom and democracy; as a character from *Betman Apollo* (*Batman Apollo*) observes, ‘a Russian person almost always lives in hope that he is on the verge of breaking the shackles, overthrowing tyranny, and defeating corruption’.¹⁹ But the collapse of the Soviet government brought no relief and the liberal reforms of 1991, based on the Western model, ‘did not touch the fundamental principles of Russian life, swiftly romping along its surface’.²⁰ In his works Pelevin turns to the Russian collective identity for possible causes. In *Chapaev i Pustota* he introduces the term ‘collective visualisation’, suggesting that people within a certain system of values and beliefs see the world through the limitations of these local constructs. In other words, within the prescriptive Soviet paradigm people could only see one aspect in the ‘rabbit-duck’ image, an optical illusion that was made famous by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein to illustrate the difference in people’s perceptions of the same

image. With this explanation, the fragments of the new Western-Soviet reality fall into place in the author's chaotic, violent post-Soviet picture.

In his earlier works Pelevin explores the collectivist ideology of the Soviet Union, whose key concepts are a striking contrast to the Western democratic principle of individual rights. Collectivism, which places the interests of the 'socium' above those of an individual, was interpreted within Soviet discourse as a duty to conform to the guidelines and decisions prescribed by the ruling Communist party. Individuality and dissent from the mainstream were treated as a threat to the 'socium', so a non-conformist was publicly ostracised. Punishment and intimidation practiced by the Soviet government to curtail any form of dissidence are recurrent themes in Pelevin's early texts. For example, two non-conformist characters, broiler chickens, in *Zatvornik i Shestipalyi* (*Hermit and Sixfinger*) are not only ousted from society for being different and not 'lov[ing]' what is 'prescribed',²¹ but are subjected to exemplary punishment to induce fear in the crowd: '[...] the frightening moment of retribution has come. [...] we will all squint when these two renegades dissolve into the void of non-being [...] And let this event serve as a horrifying lesson to us all, to the People'.²² With fear and violence being an intrinsic part of the Soviet collective visualisation, Pelevin's *Generation P* highlights this vague awareness of individual rights mixed with fear and a sense of consumer entitlement in a postmodernist grotesque reference to Dostoevsky's *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (*Crime and Punishment*): 'Am I a trembling creature or have I the right? [...] A trembling creature who has inalienable rights. And dough too'.²³

From the late 1990s to the early 2000s the Western-Russian symbiosis is further facilitated by media technologies from the West, whisking the post-Soviet public on to a zero-gravity roll of the global virtual environment. Virtual reality becomes a setting in its own right where Russian and Western consumers display identical behaviour patterns and consumer identities: they will 'munch popcorn, watching the battles of scatological gladiators of the blogosphere'.²⁴ Business also moves into the digital world: 'instead of boxes labelled "fragile", now they were loading and unloading huge sums of money [...] in the elusive domain of electro-magnetic fields and electronic networks'.²⁵ Thus, the former Soviet-Western dichotomy dissolves, locking consumers and the ruling elite in a global virtual loop. Pelevin further experiments with the idea of artificial intelligence in his 2017 novel *iPhuck10*, presenting the book as not 'written' but 'generated' by AI, an algorithm called Porfirii Petrovich:

I have a name – Porfirii Petrovich. But it does not mean that an algorithm writing these lines has a 'self', or that he 'exists' in philosophical

terms. I do not exist in the very direct meaning. I feel nothing, want nothing, am located nowhere. To be clear, I do not exist even to myself. I leave traces – these very lines – but these traces lead to nowhere.²⁶

The lines sum up the author's current perception of humanity in the digital age: he questions the very essence of personal identity as well as national differentiators. Therefore, 'Russia versus the West' opposition evolves into a symbiosis based on Western realities. Pelevin's characters enjoy wearing Nike, Gap, and Prada, driving red Porsches and Lincolns to the music of Marilyn Manson, Pink Floyd, and Leonard Cohen, posing as Dracula, Batman, and Schwarzenegger. A litmus test for cultural borrowings, language, also reveals the assimilation of Western codes in Russian identity. Pelevin's texts abound in neologisms and cross-cultural puns: 'Koka-kolokol' (Coca[-cola]-bell), 'Khram Spasa na pro-V' (Church of Christ the Saviour on pro-V), 'SANTA BARBARA FOREVER. OTDEL RUSSKOI IDEI POZDRAVLIAET KOLLEG S DNEM SVIATOI VARVARY!' (The Department of the Russian Idea sends its greetings to colleagues on the day of St Barbara). These linguistic blends illustrate the absurdity and cynicism of post-Soviet advertisers who merged incompatible notions of sacred themes and mass consumption brands.²⁷

With the transcultural morphing complete, Pelevin's latest novels – *S.N.U.F.F.*, *Batman Apollo*, *iPhuck10* – shift from the national to a new, class-based, distinction. The global business and political elite ('Big Byz', 'financial universe', 'anonymous dictatorship') control the mass consumer through subliminal messages of global media: 'Glamour and discourse are the two main arts [...]. Their very essence is disguise and control, and as a result, power'.²⁸ Coincidentally, in present-day Russia there are signs indicating a gradual return of the phantoms of the Russian ideological past – the rhetoric of the 'unique Russian national spirit'. The author's position on this nationalist discourse is unequivocal: 'Unlike the Slavic style, which does not exist, the pseudo-Slavic style is a well-structured artificial paradigm'.²⁹ It seems that, after completing the Western loop, the Russian public is being pushed back to 'Russia versus the West' mode as the government attempts to consolidate its electorate by alluding to Russia's 'unique experience' and role of 'reinstating its traditional values'.³⁰ At present the Western paradigm appears so well-rooted in the contemporary identity of Russians that returning to the 'Great Russian Idea' would be a long-term process. It does raise questions, however, concerning the further impact on the identity of the younger Russian generation. Set in the context of opposition, rather than diversity, it is bound to fragment identity, this time reversing Westernisation and, yet again, creating a conflicting socio-cultural patchwork. This multiplicity of contextual

interpretations makes it possible to shift an existing paradigm in society by using the same symbols but replacing their familiar connotations with new cues tailored to the desired outcome: '[A]ny epoch [anywhere] is an age of decay, the change is only in the wording of the ruling mottoes'.³¹ Pelevin's narrative can, therefore, be remarkably prescient in this context, revealing the manipulative language-games of modern political discourse.

There is little doubt that Russian identity is in a state of flux and has been since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Is the tale of two ideologies fated to always reflect one extreme or the other or can an individual identity find a balance to reflect its own personal set of beliefs? An omniscient character from *Chapaev i Pustota*, Baron von Ungern, dispels the myth of a country's 'uniquely different nature'.³² He urges the protagonist to 'see [his] true self', i.e. to turn inwards and discover his true identity instead of following specific national ego-pampering paradigms. After all, free from social constructs and cultural conditioning, are we not 'incredibly alike, although few of us are ready to admit it'?³³



Lost in Translation? Genesis, Big Bang Cosmology, and Creation Out of Nothing

Ellen Grace Lesser, University of Exeter

The origins of the universe and the Genesis Creation narrative are hotly debated in the field of science and theology. Young Earth Creationists, for instance, see Big Bang cosmology as being in direct contradiction to the Genesis narrative, and so reject it out of hand. Similarly, many physicists do not accept a view which incorporates the Genesis Creation narrative. That the Genesis Creation narrative describes the Creation of life, the universe, and everything in six days does not accord with the scientific evidence collected in fields such as astrophysics. Indeed, we cannot assume that the writers of Genesis had knowledge of the universe and its beginnings in the same way that we do, and so arguably some disparity is only to be expected.¹ Yet this does not mean that there is no compatibility between the two accounts of the origin of the universe – the Genesis account and the scientific account. In this paper, I shall argue that it is possible to provide an exegesis of the Genesis Creation narrative which does accord with Big Bang cosmology.² I shall further argue that one way to achieve this is by contesting the equation of Big Bang Cosmology with the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo*.

Genesis 1.1 and *Creatio ex nihilo*

The doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo* states that God created the universe from nothing: that there was nothing other than God until God Created, and when God Created, things other than God came into existence.³ Stoeger claims that *Creatio ex nihilo* “has dominated the monotheistic theological traditions”, and one can see how such a view can be formed from an exegesis of Genesis 1.1.⁴ The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation reads thus: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth”.⁵ The translation goes on to describe how the earth and the heavens were when they were first created; the inference made by many exegeses of these verses is that the heavens and the earth were created from nothing. Creation of the heavens and the earth was ‘the beginning’. There was nothing before, other than God, and therefore there was nothing from which they could have been formed. They must have been created from nothing.

Over the past one hundred years, Big Bang cosmology has become the dominant theory in scientific discussions of the formation of the universe.⁶

As Big Bang cosmology offers an account of the same event as Genesis 1.1 – i.e. the beginnings of the universe as we know it – it seems inevitable that the two accounts will be compared and contrasted. Indeed, Halvorson and Kragh note that “As long as humans have been trying to make sense of the universe, they have been proposing cosmological theories” and that while deities “often” play “central role[s] in these [early] cosmological theories”, the scientific cosmology first developed in the early 20th Century is a cosmological narrative in which no deity of any description plays a role, central or otherwise.⁷ Yet we should avoid saying that the writers of Genesis 1.1 were commenting on Big Bang cosmology for, as I have mentioned, this would be anachronistic. I will, however, claim that it is possible to provide an exegesis of Genesis 1.1 which accords with Big Bang cosmology, but only if we jettison the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo*.

Big Bang Cosmology and *Creatio ex nihilo*

Lemaître theorised Big Bang cosmology from the redshift data showing “that distant stars are moving away from us, and moving faster in direct proportion to their distance”, which was taken as evidence of an expanding universe.⁸ Stoeger describes the process by which Lemaître arrived at the conclusion of Big Bang cosmology as a possible explanation for the expansion of the universe as extrapolating backwards from the expanding universe to a time when the universe was much hotter and denser than it is now.⁹ He says:

Using a simple physical-mathematical model of such a universe, the Friedmann-Lemaître-Robertson-Walker (FLRW) model, we find that at a finite time in the past, such a universe had to be infinitely hot and infinitely dense. This is often referred to as the initial singularity or the Big Bang¹⁰

The singularity is not, however, the beginning of the universe as we would understand the universe in terms of its physical constituents; rather it is the beginning of time. Stoeger goes on to say: “the Big Bang cannot be considered the beginning of the universe, even from the point of view of physics and cosmology, and certainly not its ultimate origin or explanation”.¹¹ If the Big Bang is not the beginning of the universe, then the Big Bang cannot be considered the point at which God created the universe *ex nihilo*.

Halvorson and Kragh hold that it is logical to conclude that Big Bang cosmology can be compatible with the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo*, though they believe that we must remain wary that we do not make an unsubstantiated leap from the presentation of a finite universe given by Big Bang cosmology to the ‘truth’ of traditional theism. They describe the Big Bang singularity as a point at which

time (t) = 0. At this singularity, neither matter nor time existed. They say: “Since these models describe a universe with a finite lifetime, it is reasonable to conclude that the universe has not always existed.” Many theists, they note, such as William Lane Craig and Hugh Ross, take these models as evidence for the veracity of the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo* due to their presentation of a finite universe. Halvorson and Kragh admit the logic behind such a position, saying, “indeed, big bang cosmology does provide *prima facie* support for theism. After all, big bang cosmology says that the universe has a finite age, and (traditional) theism says that God created the universe out of nothing. Does big bang cosmology not confirm traditional theism?” Halvorson and Kragh are sceptical of this, however, saying that we should not assume that Big Bang cosmology gives us reason to conclude that we have discovered definitive proof that the universe had a beginning point in time.¹² I would argue that the model itself, wherein it describes the Big Bang singularity as $t=0$, shows that the beginning of the universe cannot have happened within time. The singularity existed ‘before’ time truly began, and therefore any temporal language used to describe the beginning of the universe and indeed the singularity itself can never be fully accurate.

Thus, Big Bang cosmology cannot describe a temporal moment in which matter was formed *ex nihilo*. Therefore, even if the Big Bang is the moment of Creation described in Genesis 1.1, there is no definitive proof that such Creation was *ex nihilo*.

Genesis 1.1 Without *Creatio ex nihilo*

Yet if Big Bang cosmology does not necessarily describe *Creatio ex nihilo*, how can we conceive of an exegesis of Genesis 1.1 which is compatible with Big Bang cosmology? One solution would be to say that God created the singularity from nothing. This threatens to lead us to an infinite regress which could, arguably, only be resolved with an appeal to the second of Aquinas’s Five Ways. I find Aquinas’s argument limited in that it removes the chain of causation from the realm of scientific investigation. While this is less of an issue when discussing the Person(s) of God, I would say that the chain of causation belongs firmly within the realm of scientific investigation when discussing the beginning of the universe.

The doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo* was not adopted by the Church for some two hundred years but, as Fergusson notes, by the 2nd Century CE the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo* had been all but unanimously accepted as the standard teaching of the Church.¹³ *Creatio ex nihilo* found sudden and widespread acceptance because it was seen as an alternative to both “heretical” Gnostic theology and to Greek philosophy and its ideas of the eternity of matter. The concept of eternal

matter held several problems for the early Christians: first, eternal matter could not have been created and so was on an uncomfortable par with God; second, early Christians wished to reserve eternity as an attribute of the divine and so if matter was eternal then it was necessarily divine and so joined God in the possession of divinity; and third, a God who can create a universe from nothing is more powerful than a God who must have pre-existent material to fashion into a universe.¹⁴ The first of these reasons is the most persuasive, for there is no reason to equate eternity with divinity and that it is a greater show of power to create *ex nihilo* does not entail that Creation occurred *ex nihilo*.

The historical acceptance of the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo* was, therefore, not related to an exegesis of Genesis 1.1 but a desire for Christian theology to distance itself from the heretical Greek philosophies and Gnostic theologies. The Genesis text does not comment on the philosophical consequences of eternal matter, and the writers of Genesis would not have been overly concerned with differentiating between Greek philosophy and their doctrine of Creation. In fact, an investigation of the Hebrew text of Genesis 1.1 paints a different picture: one which affords far more compatibility with Big Bang cosmology than with the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo*.

I shall now discuss the wording of Genesis 1.1 and, for transparency, shall reproduce the text in both English and in Hebrew:

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth”¹⁵

בְּרֵאשִׁית תְּאוֹרַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂה תֵא מִהֵלֵא אֶרֶב תִּשְׂאֶרֶב¹⁶

The verb used to describe the creative act in Genesis 1.1 is אָרַב, a verb which appears forty-eight times throughout the Hebrew Bible. In these forty-eight instances, the verb is usually translated with connotations of “making”, “forming”, or “doing”.¹⁷ I would hold, however, that there is another translation which is equally valid and which supports the notion that the creative act in Genesis 1.1 does not necessarily describe *Creatio ex nihilo*.

Hebrew uses a three-letter root system, such that words with the same root have the same connotations. The root אָרַב, for instance, means “to rule” or “to have dominion”, so that words derived from this root include the words for “king” and “queen”. Hebrew did not, however, always use this three-letter root system, and did at one time use a two-letter root system. Some words used within the new three-letter root system contain the remnants of this older, biliteral root system. Gesenius notes that many words in more modern usages of Hebrew which use the three-letter root system can be interpreted from their earlier two-letter roots and that, when doing so, it is usually the weaker consonants

which can be discarded: “The stems with the hard, strong consonants are to be regarded... as the *oldest*, while feebler and softer consonants distinguish forms of a later period”.¹⁸ Thus, in the case of the word used in Genesis 1.1, אַרְבַּ, the weaker consonant which can be dropped to form a two-letter root is the א, which is in Hebrew a guttural consonant which can behave as a vowel. This leaves us with the bilateral root, רַב, which can be translated as “to cut”, “to break”, “to divide”, and so forth.¹⁹ Thus, even though we cannot say with certainty what exactly the word אַרְבַּ means, we can infer that it is related to a division of some kind.²⁰ We can see the use of a word derived from the root אַרְבַּ being used to indicate cutting in Ezekiel:

“The assembly shall stone them and with their swords they shall cut them down; they shall kill their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses.”²¹

When applying this translation to Genesis 1.1, “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth”, becomes “In the beginning when God *divided* (or *separated*) the heavens and the earth”. Such a translation relating to creation as division can be found in Amos:

“For lo, the one who forms the mountains, creates the wind, reveals his thoughts to mortals, makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth – the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name!”²²

In this verse, אַרְבַּ is used to denote the “creation [of] wind”. Thus, this verse could be alternatively translated as: “For lo, the one who forms the mountains, *divides* the wind”.

This translation creates a rift between the Genesis text and the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo*, for there cannot be a division without something pre-existent to be divided. Thus, we can justifiably interpret Genesis 1.1 in the manner that God divided pre-existent material into the heavens and the earth of His Creation rather than Creating the heavens and the earth from nothing.

I have suggested that Big Bang cosmology is not creation from nothing, and that it is possible to give an exegesis of Genesis 1.1 which refutes *Creatio ex nihilo*. Does this mean that we can offer an exegesis of the Genesis text which concords with Big Bang cosmology?

As we have seen, the singularity which has been identified as the Big Bang was not the beginning of the universe. Something was “pre-existing” where the universe entered a temporal paradigm at the “moment” when expansion began,

insofar as the language available limits us to metaphorical temporal descriptions of an atemporal ontology. It is not clear whether this was any form of matter as we understand it, but something existed to expand. In much the same way as we can infer from the Hebrew of Genesis that something existed to be divided, we can infer that something existed at the Big Bang singularity which then expanded outwards into the universe which we inhabit. New scientific research is theorising that the Big Bang was not a moment of beginning at all, but a moment of transformation: from an atemporal state into the temporal universe we experience.²³ In much the same way, we can provide an exegesis of the Creation narrative in Genesis 1.1 which describes a moment of transformation rather than a moment of creation from nothing.

Conclusion

In the above, I have argued that it is possible to provide an exegesis of Genesis 1.1 which is compatible with Big Bang cosmology. I have suggested that one way to do this (though alternatives are doubtless possible) is to jettison the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo* and hold to the alternative translation of Genesis 1.1 which I have offered in this paper. This allows us to retain both Big Bang cosmology and a Genesis Creation narrative (at least where the initial beginnings of the universe are concerned). I have also suggested that it is reasonable to rid ourselves of the doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo* to be more consistent with both the Genesis narrative and the existing and emerging cosmological theories.²⁴

The Mariner

Leanna Brinkley, University of Southampton

DEPARTURE

Flaccid rope slumps, heavy over shoulder
 The day has just begun
 Aching and tired, boards creak underfoot, masts above groan against easterly blow
 He is a man of the sea, so they say.

Rough hands fondle unused candles, prayers whispered as gale pierces canvas cassocks
 St Elmo will protect
 Candles lit for sturdy vessels, good weather, guidance in dark waters
 He is a man of the sea, so they say.

She waits, babe on breast, deserted, penniless, longing for his homecoming
 Months pass with no word
 Babe grows pale, sickly, cold. Copper dish rings out sharp and loud as alms drop from giving hand
 He is a man of the sea, so they say.

RETURN

Congregation filters through dark pews, uninviting and hard atop cold dull stone
 Golden trinkets shimmer in candle light
 Sagging skin sits plump on Father's jowls, strengthen me, O God, he prays
 He is a man of the sea, so they say.

Innkeeper thrusts patrons 'cross the threshold; practised arms heave sweaty bodies
 Blood spatters, drips warm
 Stumbling home, men from the town, seamen and craftsmen, stagger wearily onwards
 He is a man of the sea, so they say.

Mother holds babe close, rocking left and right, urging the wailing to cease
 Fear fills heavy heart as she hears him stir
 Rugged fingers gather blankets and bonnets. Gently he rocks as fledgling eyes lull closed
 He is a man of the sea, so they say.

ONLOOKERS

They said he was a man of the sea
 They said he was violent, uncouth
 They said he prayed to gods unknown, to saints unheard
 They said he abandoned, neglected, forgot.
 They said he was a man of the sea.

Yet they noticed him not among men of town
 They noticed him not knelt upon hassock,
 They noticed him not among peers in the tavern, mumbling vows at the altar.
 They noticed him not among men of the town.

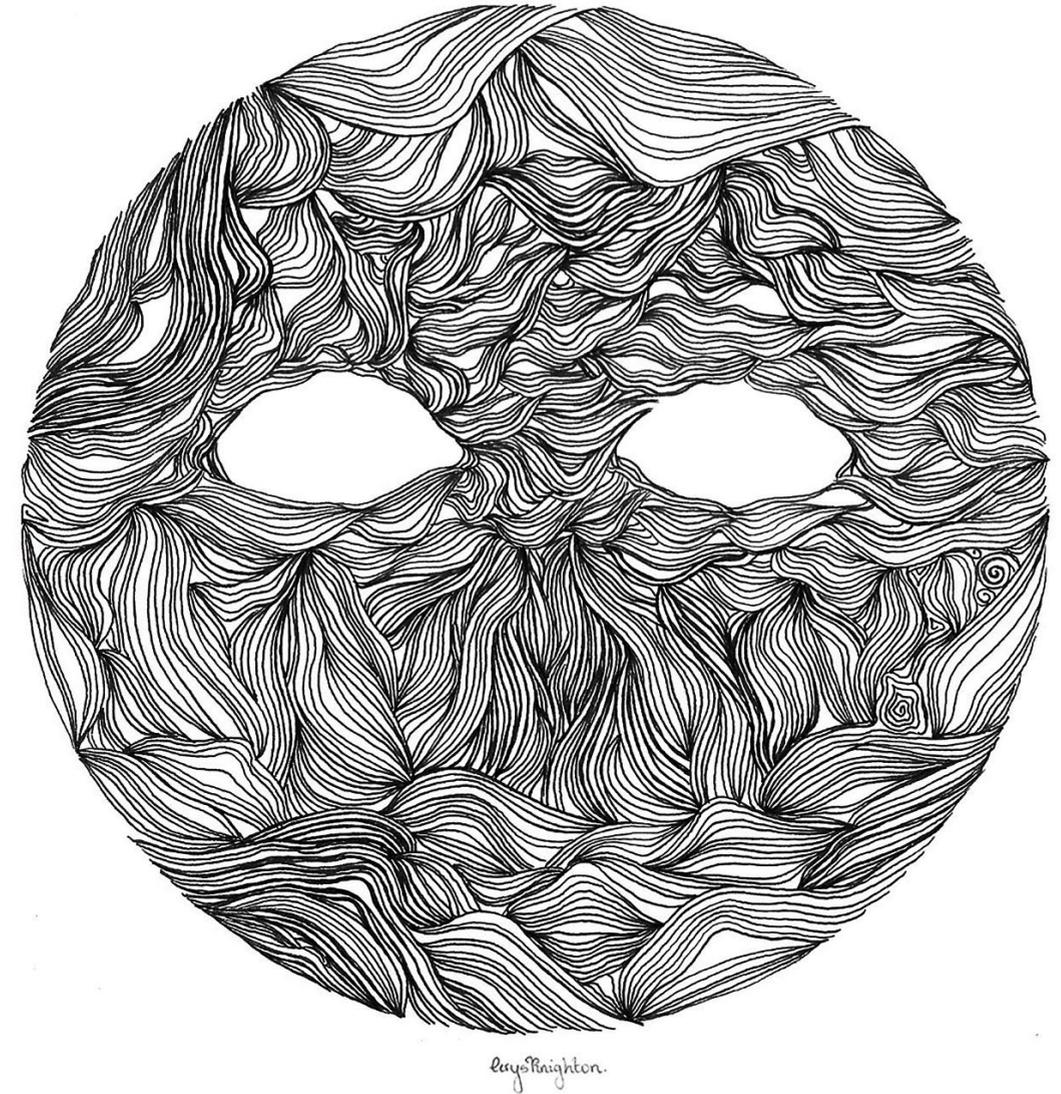
They said he was a man of the sea,
 But was he so different?
 From him?
 Or from he?

Q

Cerys Knighton is a Welsh artist and medical humanities PhD student funded by the South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership. Primarily using a pointillism technique with pen and ink, her artwork examines and communicates the findings from her research. Cerys analyses patient case notes, medical journals and literary texts to investigate the conceptualisation of mood disorders as a category for diagnosis. Her artwork also draws from her own experiences of living with bipolar disorder since childhood.

Cerys's artwork studies and toys with anatomy through ink textures, and by contrasting pointillism with softer mediums. She also takes inspiration from wildlife and nature, investigating the way we consider human and animal characteristics in her study of mental wellbeing with a focus on eyes, bones and muscle texture. By exploring the divide between organic and inorganic, Cerys's work challenges the viewer's perspective to provoke discussion about social perceptions of mental ill health.

Cerys Knighton, Cardiff University & University of Exeter



Endnotes

Cultural Contact on Stage: Greek and Roman Theatre, pp. 18–26.

Martina Delucchi, University of Bristol

- 1 Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929). All translations are the author's, except where explicitly stated.
- 2 The most famous archaic authors who wrote tragedies were Livius Andronicus, Nevius, Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius.
- 3 For more information regarding the first contacts between Greece and Rome: T.J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 86–92, 118; A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- 4 B. Gentili, *Lo spettacolo nel mondo antico* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2006), p. 92.
- 5 F. Leo, *Geschichte der Römischen Literatur. Die Archaische Literatur*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1913), I, pp. 59–60.
- 6 On the choice of subjects in translation: J. Connolly, 'Being Greek/being Roman: Hellenism and Assimilation in the Roman Empire', *Millennium*, 4 (2007), 21–42; D. Feeney, *Beyond Greek. The Beginnings of Latin Literature* (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 43–44, 51.
- 7 The scholarship on the translation technique of the Romans is vast: e.g. A. Traina, *Vortit barbare: le traduzioni poetiche da Livio Andronico a Cicerone* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1970); S. Brock, 'Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity', *GRBS*, 20 (1979), 69–87; A. La Penna, *Fra Teatro, poesia e politica romana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), pp. 5–142; J. Blänsdorf, 'Livius Andronicus und die Anverwandlung des Hellenistischen Dramas in Rom', in *Identität und Alterität in der Frühromischer Tragödie*, ed. by G. Manuwald (Würzburg: Ergon 2000), pp. 145–56; A. J. Boyle, *Roman Tragedy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 27–55; Gentili, pp. 89–100; Connolly, pp. 93–119; A. Barchiesi, 'Roman Perspectives on the Greeks', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, ed. by G. Boys-Stones and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 98–113; M. Bettini, *Vertere: Un' antropologia della traduzione nella cultura antica* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011); M. Citroni, 'Horace's Epistle 2. 1, Cicero, Varro, and the Ancient Debate About the Origins and the Development of Latin Poetry', in *Augustan Poetry and the Roman Republic*, ed. by J. Farrell and D. Nelis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 180–204; D. Feeney, *Beyond Greek. The Beginnings of Latin Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).
- 8 Plautus, *Trinummus*, v. 19. T. Maccius Plautus, *Plauti Comoediae*, ed. by F. Leo (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895).
- 9 Cicero, *De Inventione, De Optimo Genere Oratorum, Topica*, ed. by H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1949).
- 10 Cf. R. Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages. Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 30.
- 11 Cicero, *Academicorum reliquiae cum Lucullo*, ed. by O. Plasberg (Leipzig: Teubner, 1922).
- 12 Copeland, p. 14.
- 13 For more information regarding the role of the chorus in Roman drama: Horace, *The Art of Poetry* vv. 193–201; E. Fraenkel, *Plautine Elements in Plautus*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); G. Manuwald, *Roman Republican Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011), pp. 138–40, 324–27; Feeney, pp. 110–14.
- 14 E.g. Euripides' *Medea* was "translated" by Ennius (*Medea*), Pacuvius (*Medus*) and Accius (*Medea sive Argonautae*). Sophocles' *Tereus*, now lost, was the model of Accius' *Tereus*. Euripides' lost *Telephus* was the model for both Ennius and Accius' *Telephus*. For other "matching" tragedies cf. e.g. S. Nervegna, 'Performing Classics: The Tragic Canon in the Fourth Century and Beyond', in *Greek Theatre in the Fourth Century BC*, ed. by E. Csapo and others, (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 157–88 (pp. 177–78).
- 15 E.g. Accius' *Epinausimache*, cf. A. Golzio, 'Accio e Omero: per la ricostruzione dell' *Epinausimache*', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, 3 (1979) 175–91.
- 16 Sommerstein thinks that the first time in which Aeschylus won was with this tragedy in 485/4 BC. Cf. A. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus. Fragments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 135.
- 17 Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 907–26.
- 18 We cannot be certain that *Myrmidons* was *Myrmidones*' model, but the extant fragments of both tragedies allow us to hypothesise at least a connection between them. Also, no ancient tragedy that we know about was entitled *Myrmidons*, except Aeschylus'.
- 19 E. H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 483.
- 20 E.g. G. Barabino, 'I *Myrmidones* di Accio', in *Antidoron. H. E. Paoli oblatum* (Genova: Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di Filologia Classica, 1956), pp. 57–72 (p. 69); expressing some doubts: L. Accio, *I frammenti delle tragedie*, ed. by V. D'Antò (Lecce: Milella, 1980), p. 190.
- 21 Hyginus, *Fabulae* 97; Philostratus, *Heroicus* 3.2.
- 22 In the myth, Achilles and Antilochus become closer especially after Patroclus' death. E.g. *Iliad*, 18.16, 23.556, 607; *Odyssey*, 3.112, 11.468, 24.72; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 3.19; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 114.
- 23 Line drawing in C. Robert, 'Die Gesandtschaft an Achilles', *Archäologische Zeitung*, 39 (1881) pl. 8.
- 24 In 1966, the Italian papyrologist Vincenzo Bartoletti noticed that the papyrus catalogued as PSI 1472, lost in a bombing in Florence, but luckily readable through its drawing, and a small fragment

of the papyrus catalogued as P. Oxy. 2163, today in Oxford, were in fact two parts of the same papyrus (V. Bartoletti, *Un frammento dei Myrmidones di Eschilo*, in A. E. Samuel (ed.), *American Studies in Papyrology. Essays in Honor of C. Bradford Welles*, (New Haven: American Society of Papyrologists, 1966) pp. 121–23). Thanks to his intuition we can read what most scholars believe being the first words that Achilles uttered in Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*. Of course, we cannot be sure because the fragments of the papyrus did not bear the title nor the author of the text, as most of the times happens, but the attribution is generally agreed upon. The text the author translates from is Bartoletti's.

- 25 Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* v. 986. Sophocles, *Fabulae*, ed. by H. Lloyd-Jones and N.G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
- 26 Sommerstein, p. 139 chooses to translate it with 'slandorous': this is probably because in Sophocles the verb with the same radical, *δυσστομέω* (read: '*dusstomèō*'), is generally interpreted as 'offend', 'speak ill'.
- 27 Atheneus reports that Aeschylus used to say that his works were 'slices of the great Homeric banquets' (Ath. 8.347d), but of course all the Classical Culture was steeped in Homeric echoes. On Aeschylus and Homer, cf. e.g. A. Sommerstein, *Aeschylean tragedy*, 2nd edn (London-Oxford-New York-New Delhi-Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2010), pp. 241–53.
- 28 *Iliad*, 9. 225–306.
- 29 *Iliad*, 9. 628–38.
- 30 For example, Sophocles uses Odysseus as a character both in the *Ajax* and in the *Philoctetes*, but they are two very different Odysseus. Diomedes the Grammarian (1.490.21–491.3 Keil) says that Latin authors added characters so that the representations would be more fabulous because of the crowding. On Accius: C. B. Earp, 'A Study of the Fragments of Three Related Plays of Accius' (privately published, Columbia University, 1939), pp. 26–7.

The Agency and Authority of Agnes of France and Margaret of Hungary in the Aftermath of the Fall of Constantinople (1204–1206), pp. 28–37.

Ewan Short, *Cardiff University & University of Reading*

- 1 The classic study of the Fourth Crusade remains, Queller, D. & Madden, T.F., 1997, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. Philadelphia. The principal textual sources for the Fourth Crusade are: Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, 249, ed. by E. Faral, 1961, as *Geoffrey de Villehardouin, La Conquête de Constantinople vols. 1 & 2*, 2nd edition. Paris. Trans. by C. Smith, 2008, as *Joinville and Villehardouin, Chronicles of the Crusades*. London; Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. and trans. by P. Noble, 2005, as *Robert of Clari, La Conquête de Constantinople*. Edinburgh; Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. by J.-L. van Dieten, 1975, as *Nicetae*

Choniatae Historia, Berlin. Trans. by H.J. Magoulias, 1984, as *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*. Detroit.

- 2 Queller & Madden, 1997, pgs. 191–192.
- 3 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, 249.
- 4 E.g.: Angold, M., 2003, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*. Harlow. Pgs. 111–263; Van Tricht, F., 2011, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople (1204–1228)*. Leiden & Boston; Van Tricht, F., 2014, 'The Byzantino-Latin Principality of Adrianople and the Challenge of Feudalism.' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 68. Pgs. 325–342.
- 5 Adrianople is in modern day north-western Turkey, whilst Thessaloniki and Demotika are in northern Greece.
- 6 Michael Angold's analysis of Margaret's contribution to the governance of Thessaloniki is limited to a brief comment on her positive relations with the Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy in the city during her regency for her son Demetrios: Angold, 2003, pg. 172. Van Tricht discusses Margaret's role as regent in his monograph but provides no analysis of her role in the establishment of the kingdom, only observing that her marriage to Boniface indicates that this man was favourable to the Byzantines: Van Tricht, 2011, pg. 276. For Margaret's regency, which lasted between 1207–126: *ibid.*, pgs. 87, 170–172, 202, 213, 232–233, 342, 413, 415. See also below, n.26. Agnes has been similarly overlooked. Hendrickx, B., 2001, 'Some Notes on the "State" of Theodoros Branas.' *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 12. Pgs. 118–129, discusses Branas's role without analysing that of Agnes. Van Tricht, 2014, pg. 339, acknowledges that it was possible Agnes exercised agency in Adrianople and Demotika, but offers no further analysis of her position.
- 7 During the twelfth century, Byzantine emperors became more interested in establishing marriage alliances with other European dynasties, because they wielded an increasingly potent military capability. The other foreign-born empresses were the Hungarian Eirene-Piroska (r.1118–1134), Bertha-Eirene of Sulzbach (r.1146–1159), Maria of Antioch (r.1162–1182) and Margaret of Hungary (r.1185–1195 & 1203). Foreign-born princesses were frequently given Greek names upon their arrival in Constantinople. This practice helped position these women to communicate authority in Byzantine society. William of Tyre, writing in Latin, uses 'Agnes', but Greek texts call her Anna: William of Tyre, *History of Deeds done beyond the Sea*, 22.4, trans. by E. Babcock & A.C. Krey, 1976 as *A History of Deeds done beyond the Sea* by William Archbishop of Tyre. New York; Choniates, 347. Robert of Clari calls Agnes only the 'French empress' (below, n.23). Geoffrey of Villehardouin always calls Agnes 'the sister of the king of France' rather than using her name (below, n.24).
- 8 For the role of ceremonial in Constantinople and the Byzantine provinces: Neville, L., 2004, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society*. Cambridge. Pgs. 14–16, 82–83, 166. The principal source for the study of Byzantine ceremonial is the tenth-century text known as the *Book of Ceremonies*, composed by the emperor Constantine VII: Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, *Explanation of the Order of the Palace*, ed. and trans. by A. Moffatt & M. Tall, 2012, as *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*:

- The Book of Ceremonies, with the Greek Edition of the Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1829). Canberra. The fourteenth-century *Treatise on Offices* is also significant: Pseudo-Kodinos, *Treatise on Offices*, ed. and trans. by R. Macrides, J.A. Munitiz & D. Angelov, 2013, as *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*. Farnham & Burlington. In Constantinople, the ruling class also continued to see themselves as culturally superior to western European societies, who they described as barbarians ('barbaroi'), seen in the Byzantine princess Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, written in 1148: Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, 1.13, 4.7, 10.5, ed. by D. R. Reinsch, 2001, as *Annae Comnenae, Alexias*. Berlin. Trans. by E.R.A. Sewter & revised by P. Frankopan, 2009, as *The Alexiad, Revised Edition*. London.
- 9 Byzantine Empresses are described performing in ceremonial in both the *Book of Ceremonies* and by Pseudo-Kodinos: Constantine VII, R207–14, R594–R598, R599–607; Pseudo-Kodinos, 7, 12. For an argument that extant visual representations of Byzantine empresses overwhelmingly display their official, public bodies, divorced from their private persons: James, L., 2001, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*. London. Pgs. 101–147.
 - 10 Susanne Janssen and Marc Verboord define cultural mediators as 'those involved in the mediation between the production of cultural goods and the production of consumer tastes': Janssen, S. & Verboord, M., 2015, 'Cultural Mediators and Gatekeepers,' in J.D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 2nd edition, vol. 5. Oxford. Pg. 440.
 - 11 In the twelfth century, most of the population of the Byzantine Empire spoke a 'koine' (common) Greek. The grammar and syntax of ancient Greek was however taught to the children of the Byzantine elite in Constantinople's private schools. Latin was not widely understood in Byzantium, but other commonly spoken languages included Armenian, Coptic, Georgian, Slavonic and Syriac. For language in Byzantium: Beaton, R., 1996, *The Medieval Greek Romance*, 2nd edition. London & New York; Holton, D. & Manolassou, I., 2010, 'Medieval and Early Modern Greek,' in E.J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. Pgs. 539–565.
 - 12 For the dating of this manuscript to the twelfth century and the identification of the princess as Agnes of France: Spatharakis, I., 1976, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*. Leiden. Pgs. 210–230; Jeffreys, M., 1981, 'The vernacular Εἰστρήριοι for Agnes of France,' in E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys & Ann Moffatt (eds.), *Byzantine Papers: Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference, Canberra, 17–19 May 1978*. Canberra. Pgs. 101–115; Hilsdale, C.J., 2005, 'Constructing a Byzantine Augusta: A Greek book for a French bride.' *The Art Bulletin* 87 (3). Pgs. 458–483.
 - 13 Alongside Agnes, the text and images in the manuscript represent several members of the Byzantine ruling class, including the emperor Manuel I Komnenos and his wife the empress Maria of Antioch. Agnes's betrothed husband Alexios II and her sister-in-law Maria Komnenos (Fig.2) are also depicted.
 - 14 Hilsdale, 2005, pgs. 476–477. She notices that although the poem is composed in simplified vernacular Greek, it is written in a large and formal script. This script seems to have been chosen because it was more easily read by a beginner to the Greek language. The visual images compliment the poem but can also be read separately to the text, also suggesting this manuscript was produced for a reader with an incomplete grasp of the Greek language.
 - 15 Hilsdale, 2005, pgs. 475–477, following the opinion of Michael Jeffreys: Jeffreys, 1981, pg. 106. The possibility that Maria commissioned the text as a training manual for Agnes is corroborated by a passage within the tenth-century history written by Leo the Deacon. Here, Leo suggests that another empress, Theophano (active between 963–978), was responsible for the training of Bulgarian princesses, who were betrothed to members of the Byzantine ruling class: Leo the Deacon, *History*, 5.6, trans. by A.M. Talbot & D. F. Sullivan, 2005, as *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*. Cambridge, MA. For Maria of Antioch, who was born in Antioch to a French father and an Antiochene Crusader mother: Garland, 1999, *Byzantine Empresses*. London & New York. Pgs. 199–209.
 - 16 Hilsdale (trans.), 2005, pg. 468. The original Greek text is published in, Spatharakis, I., 1976, pgs. 220–227.
 - 17 Pseudo-Kodinos's fourteenth-century *Treatise on Offices* is the only surviving text from Byzantium to treat the attire of the ruling class in detail. The text shows that men and women who held titles at the Byzantine court, or who were related to the emperor, wore red to distinguish their status. Their attire was also studded with pearls and decorated with motifs which communicated imperial connotations. These elements are all represented in folio.3v and folio.6r of Vat.gr.1851. A double-headed eagle is inscribed upon the tent in Fig.2. See: Pseudo-Kodinos, 2, 12.
 - 18 For these poems see Jeffreys, 1987, 'The Comnenian Prokypsis.' *Parergon* 5. Pgs. 38–53; Macrides, R., Munitiz, J.A., Angelov, D., 2013, 'Commentary,' in *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*. Farnham and Burlington. Pgs. 406–408. Several thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Byzantine texts describe a ceremony specifically named *Prokypsis* (literally translating as emergence), involving male and female members of the imperial family. Here a curtain was unveiled to reveal one or two imperial men or women poised in a static position and illuminated by artificial light on an outdoor elevated platform. Onlookers responded with chanting and singing. For the *Prokypsis*, including a performance in 1346 by Theodora, daughter of John VI: *ibid.* pgs. 401–411. John Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Histories* also describes the empresses Zoe and Theodora appearing from an elevated position (*prokupsai*) near the Great Palace to calm a riot in 1044: John Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories*, 434, ed. by H. Thurn, 1973, as *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*. Berlin. Trans. by J. Wortley, 2010, as *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811–1057*. Cambridge. For the importance of posture and gestures as an expression of hierarchy in Byzantine society: Macrides, R., Munitiz, J.A., Angelov, D., 2013, pgs. 379–387.
 - 19 Anna Komnene describes how she frequently moved through Greece and the Balkans alongside her father Alexios I and mother Eirene Doukaina: Anna Komnene, 9.4–5, 12.3., 13.1, 14.4, 14.8. For the presence of the emperor Manuel I and his family in this region: Jeffreys, M., 2000, 'Manuel

- Kommenos' Macedonian military camps: a glamorous alternative court?' in, J. Burke & R. Scott (eds.), *Byzantine Macedonia*. Melbourne. Pgs. 184–191.
- 20 For the use of ceremony to represent imperial majesty as fearsome: Neville, 2004, pg. 14.
- 21 Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, 53, ed. and trans. by P. Noble, 2005, as *Robert of Clari, La Conquête de Constantinople*. Edinburgh.
- 22 Other former Byzantine empresses seem to have held high status in Byzantine society, which they were concerned to maintain. The Byzantine man of letters, Theophylact of Ohrid, addressed the former empress Maria Alania (married to Constantine X Doukas, r.1059–1068 and Nikephoros III Botaniates, r.1078–1081) as 'my holy Lady': P. Gautier, 1986, *Théophylacte d'Achrida: Lettres*. Thessaloniki. Pg. 137. In one of his letters, Theophylact celebrates Maria's decision to visit him during sickness: *ibid.*, pg. 525. Eirene Doukaina, the wife of Alexios I (r.1081–1118), commissioned several encomiastic poems during her widowhood: Polemis, D.I., 1968, *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*. London. Pgs. 72–73.
- 23 Robert of Clari, 53.
- 24 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 249, 403, 413, 423.
- 25 For the demographics of Fourth Crusade: Queller, 1997, pgs. 42–43.
- 26 The Latin chronicler Alberic of Trois-Fontaines uses the name 'Margaretam de Grecia': Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *Chronicle*, 1167, ed. by G.H. Pertz, 1925–1933, as 'Chronica Albrici Monachi Trium Fontium,' in G.H. Pertz (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptroum. Tomus 23, Chronica aevi suevici*. Leipzig. The Byzantine man of letters and historian Niketas Choniates described Margaret's renaming as Maria in lines of a celebratory speech published in, Brand, C., 1968, *Byzantium Confronts the West, 1180–1204*. Cambridge, MA. Pg. 80 n13. Neither Geoffrey of Villehardouin or Robert of Clari name Margaret, describing her as 'the sister of the king of Hungary' (Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 185, 212, 249, 262; Robert of Clari, 99)
- 27 According to Niketas Choniates's History, written around 1207, Isaac took Margaret and the women of the court with him when he travelled to the Sava river near Niš (modern day Serbia) in 1191. There Isaac met Margaret's father, Bela, who was dissuaded from supporting a Serbian uprising: Choniates, 434.
- 28 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 185–189.
- 29 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 261–262. The betrothal was probably initially intended to support Boniface's unsuccessful attempt to become the first Latin emperor of Constantinople. He was overlooked by a college of Crusader and Venetian electors, who chose Baldwin, Count of Hainault and Flanders.
- 30 Robert of Clari, 101.
- 31 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 279.
- 32 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 287.
- 33 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 300.
- 34 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 212.
- 35 The *Pactum Adrianopolitanum* has been published in, Hendrickx, B., 2001, pgs. 120–121. The dates of Branas and Agnes's deaths are unattested. Branas and Agnes's heir was Baldwin of Béthune, who in the view of Van Tricht, married one of their daughters. In 1228 Adrianople was successively captured by soldiers from the Empire of Nicea, and then the Despotate of Epiros: Van Tricht, 2014, pgs. 334, 339 n97, 340.
- 36 Van Tricht, 2014, pg. 339. Branas's father Alexios had been a prominent Byzantine general: *ibid.*, pg. 329 n31. However, alongside the Kostomyrai, the Bryennoi, the Humbertopouloi, the Petraliphai, the Raoul, the Tarchaneiotai, and the Vatatzai are all attested as established at or nearby Adrianople during the eleventh and twelfth centuries: Cheynet. J.C., 1992, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1204)*. Paris. Pgs. 232–233, 241–242, 374. From amongst these families, the Bryennoi had very nearly missed the Byzantine throne in 1081 and 1118. The Vatatzai had been connected by marriage to the Komnenoi and would provide John III Vatatzes as Emperor of Nicea between 1222–1254.
- 37 Hendrickx, 2001, pg. 121.
- 38 Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 423.
- 39 The *Pactum Adrianopolitanum* describes Theodore Branas with the epithet 'the most noble Komnenos.' Branas seems to have adopted this epithet, which associated him with this former imperial family, because of his marriage to Agnes. She had previously been married to Alexios II Komnenos and Andronikos I Komnenos: Hendrickx, 2001, pg. 120.
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- Marie NDiaye's *My Heart Hemmed In: A Call for the Reappraisal of Frontiers of Difference*, pp. 48–54.
Alison Marmont, University of Southampton & University of Exeter
- 1 See Susan Ireland and Patrice J. Proulx, *Immigrant Narratives in Contemporary France* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001).
 - 2 This kind of biological racism was particularly prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For more information see, for example, Artur Comte de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1853–55).
 - 3 Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality (Transformations)* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 23.
 - 4 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

- 5 Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 6.
- 6 My own translation from Didier Fassin, 'Introduction', in *Les Nouvelles frontières de la société française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010), pp. 5–24, p. 6: 'Par frontières internes, j'entends les limites entre catégories sociales racialisées héritées d'une double histoire de la colonisation et de l'immigration: ces limites distinguent des individus et des groupes sur des indices variables de couleur, d'origine, de culture voire de religion qui ont en commun de radicaliser la différence; elles sont des constructions idéologiques dont l'efficacité pratique est considérable du point de vue de l'accès à des ressources telles que l'éducation, l'emploi ou le logement'.
- 7 See Marie NDiaye, *Mon Cœur À L'étroit* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), pp. 227, 251, 338, 367.
- 8 Marie NDiaye, *My Heart Hemmed In*, trans. Jordan Stump (San Francisco: Two Lines Press, 2017), p. 21. Original French version in NDiaye (2007), p. 33: 'Ce n'est pas vous, précisément vous, que cette ignominie attaque [...] Mais non, ce n'est pas vous, c'est... comment l'exprimer... le caractère intouchable de ce que vous êtes, votre... votre raideur et votre pureté, votre aspect et vos habitudes, oh, comment l'exprimer...?'
- 9 The reference to Nadia's appearance is clearer in the original French version through the use of the word 'aspect'.
- 10 Ibid, p. 6. Original French version NDiaye (2007), p. 15: 'Du quel droit tu me souris, saleté?'
- 11 NDiaye (2007), pp. 139, 235, 264, 266.
- 12 For more information see Jeremy Jennings, 'Citizenship, Republicanism and Multiculturalism in Contemporary France', *British Journal of Political Science*, 30 (2000), 575–597.
- 13 See Andrew Asibong, *Marie NDiaye: Blankness and Recognition* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).
- 14 NDiaye (2017), p. 266. Original French version in NDiaye (2007), p. 361: 'Ai-je toujours été juste et hospitalière avec ceux de mes élèves, bien rares dans le quartier où j'enseignais, qui me rappelaient les Aubiers, ai-je toujours été correcte avec les fillettes qui ressemblaient plus ou moins à celle que j'avais été? En vérité, je ne me suis montrée ni juste, ni hospitalière, ni correcte avec ces enfants-là, je me suis montrée dure et distante, voire ricaneuse, souhaitant au fond de moi leur élimination, leur envol loin de ma chère école, et ne m'arrivait-il pas de les imaginer comme des pigeons sur lesquels on peut tirer impunément tant ils sont nombreux et sales et superflus?'
- 15 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Vintage, 1980), p. 155.
- 16 NDiaye (2017), p. 163. Original French version in NDiaye (2007), p. 222: 'vrai Bordelais'.
- 17 Ibid, pp. 33, 48.

Colouring Outside the Lines: The Child's Drawing in Spanish Cinema and History, pp. 56–65.

Rachel Beaney, Cardiff University & University of Exeter

- 1 N. Cox, *An Interview with Pablo Picasso* (New York: Cavendish Square Publishing LLC, 2014).
- 2 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica* (Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain: 1937).
- 3 P. Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012).
- 4 Jose A. Weissberger, *They Still Draw Pictures! A Collection of 60 Drawings Made by Spanish Children During the War, Southworth Spanish Civil War Collection, Special Collections & Archives, Uc San Diego Library*. ed. by Jose A. Weissberger (New York: The Spanish Child Welfare Association of America, 1938).
- 5 Guillermo del Toro, *El Espinazo Del Diablo* (Spain: Warner Soge films A.I.E., 2001).
- 6 Víctor Erice, *El Espíritu De La Colmena* (Bocaccio Distribución, 1973).
- 7 See Sarah Wright, *The Child in Spanish Cinema* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).
- 8 Karen Lury, *The Child in Film: Tears Fears and Fairy Tales* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010).
- 9 Carlos Saura, 'Cría Cuervos' (Spain: Emiliano Piedra, 1976).
- 10 José Luis Cuerda, 'Butterfly's Tongue' (Warner Sogefilms S.A., 1999).
- 11 Agustí Villaronga, 'Pa Negr' (Spain: Savor, 2010).
- 12 See Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire', *Representations* (1989), 7–24; Jo Labanyi, 'History and Hauntology; or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period', in *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, ed. by Joan Ramon Resina (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 65–82; and Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (Columbia University Press, 2012).
- 13 The Law for Historical Memory or 'Ley 52/2007, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura' was passed by the Spanish socialist government in 2007. The bill deemed punishments and sentences passed by the Franco regime illegitimate and initiated the process of recuperation and recognition for victims of the violence of the regime. Full details of the legislation can be accessed at <<https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2007-22296>>. Further to this, a relevant example of scholarly work by a researcher funded by the AHRC's South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership is Tom Wardle's Twitter page 'Spain's Memory Wars'. This page describes itself an 'English blog curating tweets and articles about Spain's disputes over its past, from street names to unmarked graves' See <<https://twitter.com/SpainMemoryWars>>.

- 14 Ofelia Ferrán, 'Oppositional Practices in Dulce Chacón's *La Voz Dormida*: Affirming Women's Testimony and Agency', *Hispanic Issues On Line*, 14 (2014), pp. 118–37.
- 15 For further useful readings on nations and victimhood, see Clark, D, *Constructions of Victimhood Remembering the Victims of State Socialism in Germany* (Palgrave, 2019).
- 16 Jo Labanyi has analysed 'Els nens perduts del franquisme', a documentary that highlights testimony of children's experiences of displacement during the conflict. See Montserrat Armengou and Ricard Belis, 'Els nens perduts del franquisme [The Lost Children of Francoism]' (Televisió de Catalunya, 2002).
- 17 See endnote 8.
- 18 Rachel Randall has noted that 'both cinema and childhood [...] are notions linked to the ideas of modernity, progress and the formation and projection of a national imagery or ideal'. See Rachel Randall, *Children on the Threshold in Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Nature, Gender, and Agency* (Lexington Books, 2017), p. xxv
- 19 Like Hartung, I use the term agentive to encompass a spectrum of characteristics associated with the child in the areas of participation, empowerment, and social actors. See Catherine Hartung, 'A Sense of Autonomy: Rethinking Children and Young People's "Agency"', in *Conditional Citizens: Rethinking Children and Young People's Participation* (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2017), p. 51.
- 20 G. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Athlone Press, 1989), p. 2.
- 21 Cheri Robinson, 'Representations of Transnational Violence: Children in Contemporary Latin American Film, Literature, and Drawings' (University of California, 2017).
- 22 For more information, see < https://www.washingtonpost.com/amhtml/world/europe/spains-plan-to-exhume-franco-digs-up-memories-of-an-unsettled-past/2018/10/18/3531e1b4-coe9-11e8-9f4f-a1b7af255aa5_story.html?utm_term=.e1d9574a0ac4&__twitter_impression=true >
- 23 D.T. Cook, *Symbolic Childhood* (Peter Lang, 2002), p. 5.
- 24 Here I am thinking of Anthony Giddens's structuration theory (Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), amongst other critical theories. We can also note that the Western understanding of both childhood and agency should not be the norm to measure global experiences of childhood. Ansell (2014) points out that 'it is essential to adopt a relational approach that recognises the need to transform power relationships' as existing definitions of children's agency are not always applicable and that the 'possibility to exercise agency is affected by a range of political and economic factors at multiple levels.'
- 25 Catherine Hartung, 'A Sense of Autonomy: Rethinking Children and Young People's "Agency"', in *Conditional Citizens: Rethinking Children and Young People's Participation* (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2017), p. 51
- 26 C. Rocha, G. Seminet, 'Introduction', in *Screening Minors in Latin American Cinema*, ed. by C. Rocha and G. Seminet (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), p. xi.
- 27 *ibid.*
- 28 D Martin, 'Childhood and Its Representational Uses: Cinematic Experience and Agency in Víctor Gaviria's *La Vendedora De Rosas*', in *Seeing in Spanish: From Don Quixote to Daddy Yankee, 22 Essays on Hispanic Visual Cultures*, ed. by T. Altenberg and R. Prout (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), p. 68.
- 29 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 30 Peter Seixas, 'Historical Agency as a Problem for Researchers in History Education', *Antíteses*, 5 (2012), pp. 537–53.
- 31 Robert J. Miles, 'Reclaiming Revelation: *Pan's Labyrinth* and *The Spirit of the Beehive*', *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 28 (2011), pp. 195–203. For an in-depth review of the film, see <<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-spirit-of-the-beehive-1973>>
- 32 Rob Stone, *Spanish Cinema, Inside Film*. (Harlow ; New York: Longman, 2002), p. 87.
- 33 Censorship of Spanish cinema under the Franco regime began as a wartime exercise and continued well into the nineteen-sixties. Anything that was thought to undermine the ideals of the state and the church could be cut, films could be pulled from exhibition and foreign films could redubbed (this even included films in the Catalan language).
- 34 Criterion Collection, 'Observations on Film Art: *The Spirit of the Beehive* – a Child's Point of View' (2017), available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4DA39X8rHk>>.
- 35 Ellie Violet Bramley, 'Clip Joint: Children's Drawings in Horror Movies', *The Guardian*, 27th October 2014.
- 36 Susumu Hani, *Te O Kaku Kodomotachi [Children Who Draw]* (Iwanami Productions, 1956)
- 37 I am grateful to Meleri Jenkins (Cardiff University), who first alerted me to this collection.
- 38 Sarah Wright, 'Child, Cinema, Dictatorship: Ignacio Agüero's *One Hundred Children Waiting for a Train*', in *Childhood and Nation in Contemporary World Cinema: Borders and Encounters*, ed. by S.H. Donald, E. Wilson and S. Wright (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), p. 106.
- 39 *ibid.*
- 40 Aldous Huxley, 'Introduction', in *They Still Draw Pictures*, ed. by Jose A. Weissberger (New York: Spanish Child Welfare Association of America for the American Friends Service Committee, 1938), n.pag.
- 41 A.L. Geist, and P.N. Carroll, *They Still Draw Pictures: Children's Art in Wartime from the Spanish Civil War to Kosovo* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), p. 24.
- 42 Núria Padrós Tuneu, Isabel Carrillo Flores, Josep Casanovas Prat, Pilar Prat Viñolas, Antoni Tort Bardolet, and Anna Gómez Mundó, 'The Spanish Civil War as Seen through Children's Drawings of the Time', *Paedagogica Historica*, 51 (2015), p. 493, DOI: 10.1080/00309230.2015.1049185
- 43 R. Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Wiley, 2017).

- 44 Whilst Guillermo del Toro is a Mexican director, *El espinazo* is also considered as part of the corpus of Spanish cinema due to its setting and subject matter relating to Spain. It was also nominated for the Spanish Goya awards for Best Special Effects and Best Costume.
- 45 Emma Butcher (@EmmaButcher_), “12 #Wtostc These Letters, Memoirs, Portraits, Fantasy Worlds Show That Children Are Important Voices and Agents in the History of War. We Can Learn New Details About Important Battles/Emotions Relating to War through Their ‘Stuff’. We Should Listen to Them.”, Tweet, 28 September 2018, 10.28 a.m., <https://twitter.com/EmmaButcher_/status/1045606136379002880> [Accessed 25 February 2019].
- 46 See endnote 33.
- 47 Elle Hunt, ‘Boy in the Ambulance: Shocking Image Emerges of Syrian Child Pulled from Aleppo Rubble’, *The Guardian*, 2016, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/18/boy-in-the-ambulance-image-emerges-syrian-child-aleppo-rubble>> [Accessed 25 February 2019].
- 48 See endnote 40.
- 49 Imogen Bloomfield, ‘Photographs of Child Victims in Propaganda Posters of the Spanish Civil War’, *Modern Languages Open* (2018), p. 6, <http://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.voio.178>.
- 50 Julián Daniel Gutiérrez-Albilla, ‘Children of Exile: Trauma, Memory and Testimony in Jaime Camino’s Documentary *Los Niños De Rusia* (2001)’, in *Spain on Screen: Developments in Contemporary Spanish Cinema*, ed. by Ann Davies (London: Springer Nature, 2011), p. 143

Card Sharp, pp. 68–74.

Sabrin Hasbun, Bath Spa University

- 1 Personally translated from the Italian edition of M. Kundera, *The Curtain*: M. Kundera, Il Sipario, Milano, Adelphi, 2005, p. 80.

Russia and the West Since the Breakup of Paradigms: Identity on a Cultural Rollercoaster, pp. 76–82.

Ekaterina Gasparian, University of Bristol

- 1 ‘Uvid’te samogo sebia’, Viktor Pelevin, *Chapaev i Pustota* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1996), p. 277.
- 2 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*: ‘seeing that’ versus ‘seeing as’. Used as a visual illustration of a paradigm shift. The image was first published in the 23 October 1892 issue of *Fliegende Blätter*. Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kaninchen_und_Ente.svg> [accessed 12 February 2019]. Public domain.

- 3 Y.M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. by Ann Shukman, intr. by Umberto Eco (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1990), p. 103.
- 4 Mikhail Epstein, *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 281.
- 5 ‘V turniketakh veselo zveneli den’gi.’ Viktor Pelevin, ‘Devyaty son Very Pavlovny’, *Sinii fonar’* (Moscow: Tekst, 1991), p. 143.
- 6 ‘Prishiblennyi sovetskii liud tolpiusia vokrug, oni prodavali i pokupali vsiakuiu meloch.’ Ibid., p. 147.
- 7 ‘Serezha bez obiniakov pointeresovalsia, kak zhit’ dal’she. Priiatel’ skazal tak: “Naroi pobol’she babok, a dal’she sam uvidish’.” Viktor Pelevin, *Zhizn’ nasekomykh* (Moscow: Znamia, 4, 1993), p. 49.
- 8 ‘Chelovek берет кредит. [...] snimaet ofis, pokupaet dzhip «cheroki» i vosem’ iashchikov «Smirnovskoi». Kogda «Smirnovskaia» konchaetsia, vyiasniaetsia, chto dzhip razbit, [...] a kredit nado ot davat’. Togda beretsia vtoroi kredit — v tri raza bol’she pervogo. Iz nego gasitsia pervyi kredit, pokupaetsia dzhip «grand cheroki» i shestnadsat’ iashchikov «Absoliuta». [...] Kogda primerno polovina «Smirnovskoi» ili «Absoliuta» eshche ne vypita, dzhip eshche ezdit, a smert’ kazhetsia dalekoi i abstraktnoi, v golove u cheloveka [...] prosypaetsia chuvstvo bezgranichnogo velichia.’ Viktor Pelevin, *Generation P* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1999), p. 16.
- 9 ‘[Globus] na “porshake” ezdil, tsepi na nem po piat’ kuskov kazhdaia byli.’ Pelevin, *Chapaev i Pustota*, p. 304.
- 10 Works by Pelevin containing references to ‘oligarchs’: *DPP(NN)* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2003), *Sviashchennaia kniga oborotnia (The Sacred Book of the Werewolf)* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2004), *Empire V* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2006), *P5* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2008), *Ananasnaia voda dlia prekrasnoi damy (Pineapple Water for the Fair Lady)* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2010), *S.N.U.F.F.* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2011), *Betman Apollo (Batman Apollo)* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2013), *Tainye vidy na goru Fudzi (Secret Views of Mount Fuji)* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2018).
- 11 ‘Pragmatizm [...] pomog emu vystoiat’ v infernal’nom mire russkogo biznesa. [...] On vladel angliiskim iazykom [...]. On mog, [...], podolgu parit’sia v bane s [...] muzhnikami iz aliuminievo-kosmopoliticheskikh [...] sfer [...].’ Viktor Pelevin, *Grecheskii variant* (Moscow: Playboy, 5, 1997), p. 2.
- 12 ‘[...] uslyshav v Amerike pro mul’tikul’turalizm, [on] aktivno zanialsia poiskami tak nazyvamoioi identity [...].’ Ibid., p. 3. (The word ‘identity’ is written in Latin script in the original).
- 13 ‘Zavaliu kozla’. ‘[...] v ego [manere] progliadyvalo chto-to [...] pugaiushchee’. Pelevin, *Chapaev i Pustota*, pp. 286 & 90.
- 14 ‘[...] naverkh vsplyvaet eto temnoe bydlo i zastavliaet vsekh ostal’nykh zhit’ po svoim podlym i zakonspirovannym zakonom?’ Ibid., p. 326.
- 15 ‘Beznakazann[aia] vsedozvolennost[‘]: [...] dann[o] Leniny[m] razresheni[e] “grabit’ nagrabennoe”’. Ibid., p. 330.

- 16 '[...] u nas zhe strana zonoj otrodias' byla, zonoj i budet.' Ibid., p. 305.
- 17 '[...] on, [...], s zony nikogda i ne vykhodil na samom dele. Prosto [...] na "porshake" po nei ezdit' stal [...].' Ibid., p. 304.
- 18 'Nikakikh prav ni u kogo tut ne bylo nikogda i ne budet [...].' Pelevin, *Zhizn' nasekomykh*, p. 43.
- 19 '[...] russkii chelovek pochti vseгда zhivet v nadezhde, chto on vot-vot porvet tsepi, svergnut tiraniiu, pobedit korruptsiuu [...].' Pelevin, *Betman Apollo*, p. 319.
- 20 '[...] reformy ne zatronuli glubinnnykh osnov russkoi zhizni, proidias' shumnym uraganchikom tol'ko po samoi ee poverkhnosti.' Pelevin, *Chapaev i Pustota*, p. 186.
- 21 '[...] kto-to sprosil, liubliu li ia chto polozheno.' / '[...] someone asked me whether I loved what was prescribed.' Viktor Pelevin, 'Zatvornik i Shestipalyi', *Sinii fonar* (Moscow: Tekst, 1991), p. 24.
- 22 '[...] prishel pugaiushchii mig vozdaiania [...]. [...] kogda dva eti otshchepentsa ischeznut v nebytii [...]. I pust' eto volnuiushchee sobytie posluzhit strashnym urokom vsem nam, narodu.' Ibid., p. 28.
- 23 'Tvar' li ia drozhashchaia ili pravo imeiu? [...]. Tvar' drozhashchaia, u kotoroi est' neot'emlemye prava. I leve tozhe.' Pelevin, *Generation P*, p. 18.
- 24 'Zhevat' popkorn, nabliudaia za bitvami sortirnykh gladiatorov blogosfery?' Pelevin, 'Operatsiia "Burning Bush"', *Ananasnaia voda dlia prekrasnoi damy*, p. 78.
- 25 '[...] vmesto korobok s nadpis'iu "fragile" teper' otgruzhalis' i zagruzhalis' ogromnye summy deneg, [...], a v smutnom izmerenii elektromagnitnykh zariadov i elektricheskikh tsepei [...].' Viktor Pelevin, 'Chisla', *DPP (NN)*, p. 35.
- 26 'U menia est' imia – Porfirii Petrovich. No eto ne znachit, chto u algoritma, pishushchego eti stroki, imeetsia kakoe-to "ia", ili chto on "est" v filosofskom smysle. Menia ne sushchestvuet v samom priamom znachenii. Ia nichego ne chuvstvuiu, nichego ne khochu, nigde ne prebyvaiu. Chtoby bylo poniatno, menia net dazhe dlia menia samogo. Ia ostavliaiu sledy – vot eti samye stroki – no sledy eti vedut v nikuda.' Viktor Pelevin, *iPhuck10* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2017), p. 11.
- 27 'Khram Spasa na pro-V', 'Koka-kokol', SANTA BARBARA FOREVER. OTDEL RUSSKOI IDEI POZDRAVLIAET KOLLEG S DNEM SVIATOI VARVARY!' Pelevin, *Generation P*, pp. 175 & 273.
- 28 'Glamur i diskurs – eto dva glavnykh iskusstva [...]. Ikh sushchnost'iu iavliaetsia maskirovka i kontrol' – i, kak sledstvie, vlast'.' Viktor Pelevin, *Empire V* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2006), p. 57.
- 29 'V otlichie ot slavianskogo stilia, kotorogo ne sushchestvuet v prirode, lozhnoslavianskii stil' iavliaetsia razrabotannoi i chetkoi paradigmati.' Pelevin, *Generation P*, p. 32.
- 30 'Vozrozhdaetsia traditsionnye rossiiskie dukhovno-nravstvennye tsennosti.' / 'Traditional Russian moral and spiritual values are being brought back.' See 'Strategiia natsional'noi bezopasnosti' ('Strategy of the National Security of The Russian Federation') (2015), *Ofitsial'nyi internet-portal pravovoi informatsii*, <<http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102385609&intelsearch=%D1%F2%F0%F2%E5%E3%E8%FF+%ED%E0%F6%E8%EE%ED%E0%EB%FC%ED%EE%9+%E1%E5%E7%EE%EF%E0%F1%ED%EE%F1%F2%E8>> [accessed 11 February 2019], (General Provisions, Clause 11); and '[...] peredacha [...] traditsionnykh dlia rossiiskoi tsivilizatsii tsennosti' / '[...] passing down [...] values that are traditional for the Russian civilization.' See Presidential Decree 'Ob osnovakh gosudarstvennoi kulturnoi politiki' ('On the Basic Principles of the State Cultural Policy') (24 December 2014), *Ofitsial'nyi internet-portal pravovoi informatsii* <<http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102364581&intelsearch=%CE%E1+%EE%F1%ED%EE%2%E0%F5+%E3%EE%F1%F3%E4%E0%F0%F1%F2%E2%E5%ED%ED%EE%9+%EA%F3%EB%FC%F2%F3%F0%ED%EE%9+%EF%EE%EB%E8%F2%E8%EA%E8>> [accessed 11 February 2019], #808 (General Provisions).
- 31 '[...] liubaia epokha est' epokha upadka, i v mire meniaiusia tol'ko devizy pravleniia [...].' Viktor Pelevin, 'Zapis' o poiske vetra', *DPP (NN)* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2003), p. 373.
- 32 '[...] kogda v soznanii poiavliaetsia poniatie i obraz Rossii, nado dat' im samorastvorit'sia v sobstvennoi prirode, [...] nikakoi sobstvennoi prirody u poniatii i obraza Rossii net.' / '[...] when your mind conjures up a concept and image of Russia, you should let them dissolve in their own nature, [...] the concept and image of Russia has no nature of its own.' Pelevin, *Chapaev i Pustota*, p. 383.
- 33 'Ochen' malo kto gotov priznat', chto on takoi zhe v tochnosti, kak i drugie liudi.' Ibid., p. 279.

Lost in Translation? Genesis, Big Bang Cosmology, and Creation Out of Nothing, pp. 84–89.
Ellen Grace Lesser, University of Exeter

- I am assuming here that the writers of Genesis were not divinely inspired in their endeavour and so could not have been imbued with knowledge of the origins of the universe as we understand it today.
- Halvorson and Kragh note that "most theological interactions with cosmology have taken place within the Christian tradition" (Hans Halvorson and Helge Kragh, *Cosmology and Theology*, Edward N Zalta (ed.), Vers. Summer 2017. Accessed December 19, 2018. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/cosmology-theology/>).
- Capitals have been used here to emphasise the magnitude of the Creative Act that brought the universe as we know it into being.
- William R Stoeger, 'God, physics and the Big Bang', in Peter Harrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 181.
- Genesis 1.1, NRSV.
- The term, 'Big Bang', was coined by Georges Lemaître in the 1920s (Jon Cartwright, 'The Big Boil', *New Scientist* (2018), p. 30).
- Halvorson and Kragh, *Cosmology and Theology*'.

- 8 Halvorson and Kragh, 'Cosmology and Theology' (sic).
- 9 Stoeger, 'God, physics and the Big Bang', p. 175.
- 10 Stoeger, 'God, physics and the Big Bang', p. 175. For a detailed explanation of FWR spacetime and how it relates to the Big Bang singularity, see Halvorson and Kragh, 'Cosmology and Theology'. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/cosmology-theology/>, esp. Section 2, 'Creation and the big bang'.
- 11 Stoeger, 'God, physics and the Big Bang', p. 175, 179. Arguably, the fundamental building blocks of the physical universe emerged *after* the Big Bang; while the time between the Big Bang and the emergence of these fundamental building blocks is infinitesimal, that the gap is there distinguishes the emergence of the physical universe as we would understand it and the beginning of time in the Big Bang singularity.
- 12 Halvorson and Kragh, 'Cosmology and Theology'.
- 13 Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation Out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*. Translated by A. S. Worrall. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), p. 22; David Fergusson, 'Creation', in John Bainbridge Webster, Kathryn Tanner and Iain Torrance (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 72–90, 79.
- 14 David Fergusson, 'Creation', in John Bainbridge Webster, Kathryn Tanner and Iain Torrance (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 72–90, 79–80.
- 15 Genesis 1.1, NRSV.
- 16 German Biblical Society, BHS, n.d. Accessed December 31, 2018. [online at: <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/biblia-hebraica-stuttgartensia-bhs/read-the-bible-text/>] Transliteration: *Bereshit bara elohim et ha'shamayim ve'et ha'arets*.
- 17 Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1855) explains that the three-letter root, ארב, means, most fundamentally (i.e. in the *Kal*), "to create, form, make" but, in the *Piel*, means "to cut, cut down" (p. CXIII [sic]).
- 18 Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Eleventh German. Translated by T.J. Conant. (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1839), pp. 71–72.
- 19 Davidson lists all instances of words consisting of רב in the Hebrew Bible, and notes that there are three possible three-letter roots from which such words can be derived: ארב, as we have seen (footnote 28, above); ררב, meaning "to separate"; or ראב, meaning "to engrave, as upon a tablet" (Davidson, *Lexicon*, p. CXVIII (sic), LIX (sic)).
- 20 Siam Bhayro has, in personal correspondence through a lecture, explained that it is viable to translate ארב as it appears in Genesis 1.1 as implying a division of a kind.
- 21 Ezekiel 23. 47, NRSV (my emphasis).
- 22 Amos 4. 13, NRSV (my emphasis).
- 23 Jon Cartwright, 'The Big Boil', p. 30. Cartwright points out that we cannot conceive of a 'time' 'before' time existed, and so I would argue that we lack any language other than temporal so describe such phenomena but must remain aware that such language is inaccurate.
- 24 I am indebted to Dr Jonathan Hill for his comments during the redrafting of this paper.



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