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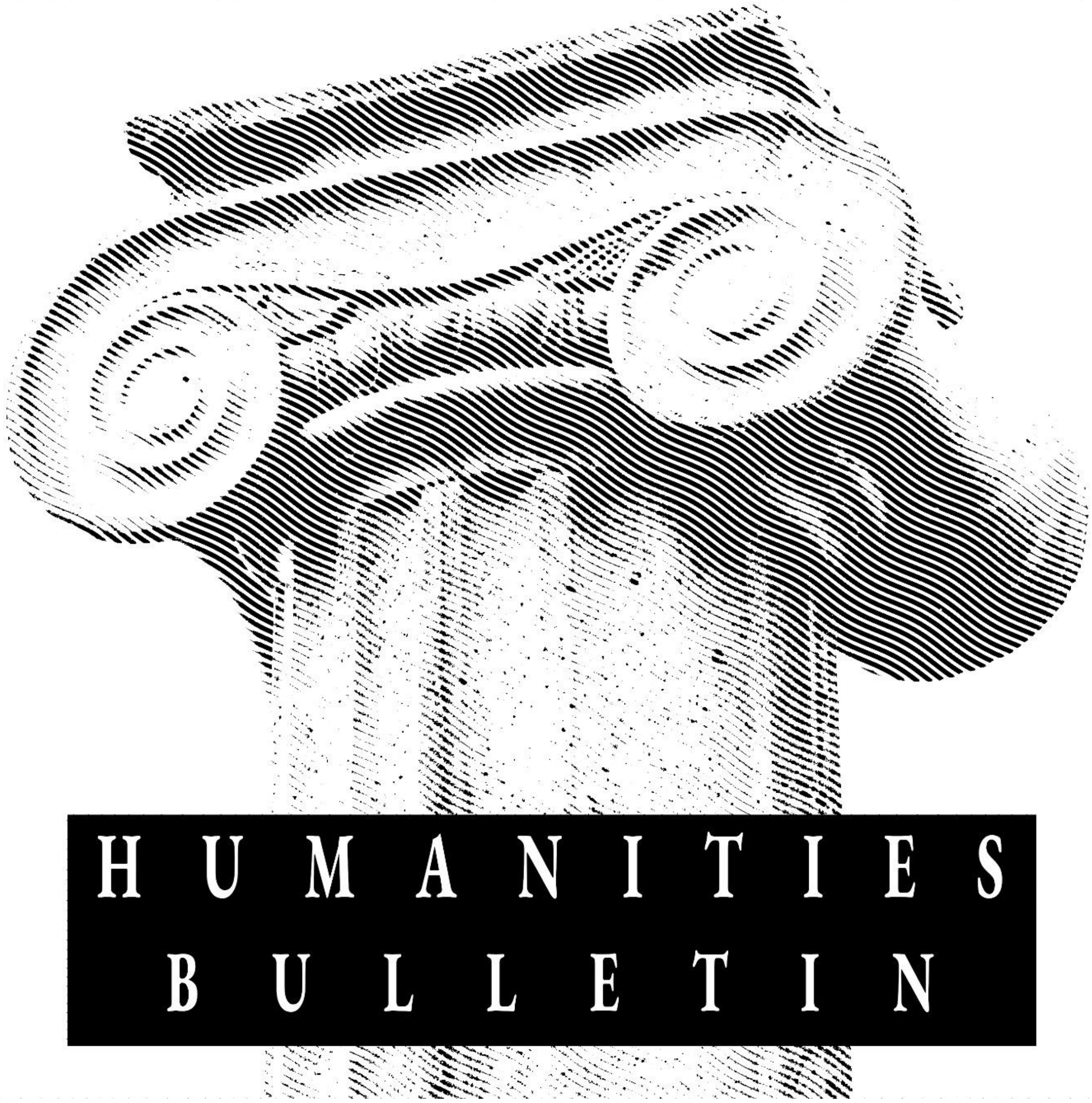
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The Serpent Archetype in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

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Abstract:

The serpent serves as a prominent symbol in various mythologies and religious traditions, embodying a complex meanings that differ by culture. This article examines Friedrich Nietzsche's frequent and varied use of the serpent in his famous and influential book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In this text, the serpent emerges as a multifaceted symbol linked to themes of wisdom, materialism, instincts, mortality, transformation, renewal, and growth. Nietzsche's portrayal invites a reflection on the dual nature of the symbol, as it appears both as a loyal companion to Zarathustra, offering support, but also as a dangerous creature that thrusts him into extreme confrontations. Thus, the serpent encapsulates Nietzsche's thought and represents Nietzsche encouragement for his readers to recognize the bravery required to navigate the complexities of life, ultimately advocating for a philosophy that honors both our earthly connections and our capacity for spiritual evolution.

Keywords: Nietzsche; Zarathustra; Jung; Serpent; Snake; Symbolism; Nineteenth century philosophy

1) The serpent archetype

Serpents carry great symbolic significance in many cultures. In Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, they represent a variety of ideas—most prominently, perpetual metamorphosis and the fierce struggle for survival. After briefly reviewing the central role the motif plays in diverse religious and mythical contexts, I shall discuss how Nietzsche employs it.

Serpents feature in cultures the world over, many myths revolving around the early ambivalent attitude towards them—horror and abhorrence at their cunning and guile vs. admiration for their powers of rejuvenation and finesse. As a complex and cardinal multidimensional archetype, the snake represents a broad array of (on occasion contradictory) concepts that accord with divergent cultural and social norms. In many instances, the archetype serves a number of purposes within a single tradition or mythology, often being associated with varied themes—wisdom, enticement, evil, healing, renewal, etc.

Many societies regard serpents as smart, cunning, alluring, and deceptive—as in *Genesis*, wherein the snake tempts Eve into eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge (*Gen* 3:4-7). In Hebrew, נחש also functions as a verb, signifying divination—a roundly denounced practice (cf. *Deut* 18:9-11). In Zoroastrianism, the serpent is the symbol of Ahriman, the embodiment of evil (Lurker 1989, 5).

Apep, the Egyptian god of darkness and evil and Ra's adversary, similarly takes the form of a serpent (Bunson 2014, 44). While Christianity identifies the snake with Satan—the epitome of evil and deception—its intelligence can also be useful and valuable, Jesus encouraging his disciples to be "wise as serpents" (*Matt* 10:16).

Snakes are also associated with healing, both physical and mental. In accordance with God's command, Moses "made a copper serpent and mounted it on a standard; and when bitten by a serpent, anyone who looked at the copper serpent would recover" (*Num* 21:9). A snake entwines itself around the staff of Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, as a symbol of cure and renewal (Rodríguez-Pérez 2020, 20). The Greek Messenger-god Hermes, who mediates between the realms of life and death, likewise carries a staff on which two coiled serpents face one another—an image likely reflecting the Egyptian fertility gods (Retief, 194-96).

The snake also functions as the god of healing in Gnosticism, Chinese myths similarly associating serpents with healing, safeguarding/protection, and sexuality and fertility (Retief & Cilliers 2006, 191). In Egyptian mythology, the goddess who protects the necropolis at Thebes takes the form of a snake (Lurker 1989, 124). Closely linked to the earth due to their ability to dig themselves thereinto, serpents further represent the wild, raw primal force (Rodríguez-Pérez 2020, 23). In Celtic and other sagas, they symbolize the netherworld and Earth-goddess, thus frequently being connected with fertility and rejuvenation. In the Gilgamesh Epic, the snake steals the secret of perpetual youth from the hero, its skin-shedding capacities lying behind the belief in its immortality (Retief & Cilliers 2006, 198; Lurker 1989, 370-71).

The ancient Greeks attributed diverse and conflicting symbolism to serpents. In addition to their ties with Asclepius and Hermes, snakes also appear in Tartarus—one of the divisions of the underworld in Greco-Roman mythology—as the indestructible offspring of Gaia, Mother-Earth. On occasion, they also serve as gatekeepers, Apollo fighting the python that dwells at the center of the earth and Hercules' Ladon, the guardian of the golden-apple-bearing tree, for example. At the same time, Athena's residence in Athens is guarded by a holy serpent in a rite that become so popular that the Greeks came to believe that, certain snakes protecting homes and hearths, they must not be harmed (Rodríguez-Pérez 2020, 6, 11-12, 14).

Hinduism esteems serpents as symbolizing both destruction/death and life/eternity. Closely linked with rack and ruin, the goddess Kali is always accompanied by snakes, for example. In other Eastern traditions, some texts depict the cobra-like supernatural Nagas as possessing the capacity to change their form. Serving as spiritual guardians of water and ancient wisdom, they represent wild creation on the one hand and maternalism (birth and suckling) on the other (Wessing 2006, 226; Heinze 2002, 41; Lurker 1989, 2-6, 10, 15).

In many mythologies and religious traditions, the snake is accorded metaphysical status, constituting a fundamental element of reality. The serpent plays a central role in the Fall of man in *Genesis*, Leviathan likewise serving as another embodiment of evil (cf. *Job* 3:8; 40:25-41:26, *Ps* 74:14;104:26; *Isa* 27:1). In Hinduism, the snake represents the cycle of creation and destruction, being one of the manifestations of Vishnu. In Germanic folklore, a monstrous serpent, the offspring of Loki, embraces the globe, holding its tail in its mouth (Lurker 1989, 111, 125). Swallowing the Sun-god Ra nightly, the Egyptian mythological serpent Apep epitomizes chaos and darkness (Rodríguez-Pérez 2020, 5; Lurker 1989, 16; Bunson 2014, 44).

The snake appears in numerous, diverse, and antithetical guises in various traditions. Drawing heavily on disparate mythologies and religions, Jung attributes a wide-ranging symbolism to it, including transformation and rejuvenation, his system of archetypes—collective patterns embodying universal genetic behavioral traits that carry the form of mythological motifs—informing personality so that individuals inherit and reflect pre-existing templates whose conscious forms are merely secondary (Jung, 1957-1990, 9:1, 61). Jungian archetypes are thus common cultural themes representing the pan-human experience, shaping human life, dreams, and cultural symbols and influencing the way in which individuals experience and live in the world. As representational motifs, they resemble complex hereditary attributes—i.e. instincts and drives (Jung 2012, 67-69). They thus constitute a form of hidden wisdom human beings can locate within themselves that enables change, carrying the potential for spiritual growth by bearing the unconscious aspects of the soul (shadow, anima) and bringing them into consciousness (the ego) (Jung 2014, 41).

On various occasions, Jung adduces the serpent as a symbol of evil/the primal instincts. Maintaining that they are the anatomical representation of the sub-cortical structure of the cerebellum and spinal cord, they symbolize instinctive, unconscious mental aspects. He thus associates snake dreams as alluding to the tension between the emergence of a new non-instinctive consciousness and unconscious instincts (Jung, 1957-1990, 9:1, 99, 180)—also adducing cases in which, like the egg, serpents serve as a sheath for the true self or even an intellectual layer over the ego (9:1, 346). In this sense, they function as a symbol of unconscious energy, dealt with by transformative processes informed by the danger posed to personality on the one hand and its healing and enlargement on the other (Netzer 2023, 132-33).

Jung also appeals to the Kundalini—a form of mental energy likened to the serpent coiled around the spinal cord according to yogic thought. Human beings must arouse this energy by means of techniques that remove the snake from the spinal cord through the skull, thereby opening up tracks for mental instinctualism. According to Jung, the Kundalini corresponds to the anima—the feminine archetypal aspect that forms an impersonal element of personality, whose very raising makes a person aware of his or her instinctive nature. Fully uniting all the parts of the personality, this process is essentially transformative (Jung 2012b, 22, 39, 68).

2) The serpent archetype in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Nietzsche depicts a world that is continually forming, painting time as an eternal return—an endless cyclical recoil *from the terror* of construction and destruction, the simple to the complex and back, governed by no purpose (*WP* §1067). As Zarathustra contends: "All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle … Must not whatever *can* happen, already have happened, been done, passed by before?" (II, "On the Vision and the Riddle," 2).

Nietzsche regards the will to grow and expand as lying at the heart of all human life, referring to it as the will to power. Every living thing is thus innately an egotist, his or her primary goal being self-enlargement and dominance rather than survival (*GS* §349). The *übermensch* embodies the authentic expression of this will and affirmation (that exists despite the sense of purposelessness) and embrace of individual fate (*WP* §866, 1041): "My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity" (*EH* §10 from "Why Am I So Clever").

Regarded as Nietzsche's most personal and poetic text, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is closely associated with his inner self-searching, the ideas it contains taking the form of narrative, myths, and archetypes rather than philosophical doctrine. Many consider it to be less representative than his other works precisely due to its poetic surrealism. Others argue that it is the fullest expression of his thoughts, the figure of Zarathustra embodying diverse forces (Huenemann 2013, 75).

Nietzsche cautions against abandoning all mythological tradition. Comparing those who live without myth as starving for food, he argues that popular mythology acts as a common-memory-and-meaning-based narrative that, incorporating strong emotions, makes sense of the world and time for individuals and collectives alike. He thus distinguishes between peoples on the basis of the mythologies they embrace, whereby they encounter the terror of the world. As lovers of myths that find expression in tragedy, the Greek cultivate the virtues, for example (*TI* §23 from "What I Owe the Ancients").

In this sense, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* serves as a new myth, uniting his thought processes into a worldview governed by the human will for power and the eternal return, training people in the values that produce the *übermensch*. It thus recalls his perception of the godhead as a useful falsehood (pragmaticism being more important than truth): while artificial, it is vital for survival in a chaotic universe (Winchester 1994, 108-11, 121).

The serpent archetype occurs in various guises in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche identifying diverse manifestations of it that embody disparate concepts. On numerous occasions, the snake appears as Zarathustra's wise companion and advisor. On others, it assumes the form of a viper use venomous bite both kills and brings to life. When black, it represents gloomiest thought; when green, it is a heavy creature that, unable to shed its skin and change, must simply wait for death.

The archetype of the snake in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* thus represents three things: a) wisdom (of the body/land) and deep creative sagacity; b) instinctualism, humiliation, and struggle; and c) transformation, metamorphosis, cyclicity, and victory.

3) The serpent as symbolizing wisdom

The snake symbolizes first and foremost wisdom. It makes an appearance as early as the prologue, wherein Zarathustra leaves his isolated abode in the mountains to share his wisdom. He is accompanied by his companions the eagle and serpent, the former also symbolizing the desire for elevation in many ancient myths. The snake, in contrast, embodies the desire for descent/the depths.

In the prologue, Zarathustra depicts it as the wisest of all creatures whose customary pose is coiled around the eagle's neck:

> Thus Zarathustra had spoken to his heart when the sun stood at noon, then he gazed at the sky with a questioning look, for above him he heard the sharp cry of a bird. And behold! An eagle cut broad circles through the air, and upon it hung a snake, not as prey but as a friend, for the snake curled itself around the eagle's neck. "It is my animals!" said Zarathustra, and his heart was delighted. "The proudest animal under the sun and the wisest animal under the sun – they have gone forth to scout. (I, "Zarathustra's Prologue," 10)

Discussing the symbolism of Zarathustra's faunal companions, Heidegger depicts the eagle as a proud bird that inhabits the heights, the wise and ductile snake being the master of disguise. He thus interprets their joint appearance as alluding to the motif of the eternal return (Heidegger 1984, 2:47; Heidegger & Magnus 1967, 413-14). Jung treats them rather differently, regarding the eagle as epitomizing intuition and spirit and the serpent corporality, sexuality, and vitality. The two are thus polar opposites, the eagle carrying the snake on its wings thereby representing the victory of the spirit over the flesh (Jung 1988, 18-19, 22).

The antithetical representation of snakes as both wise and cunning is framed within Nietzsche's privileging of instinct over reason. Regarding the latter as merely a corporal phenomenon, he concludes that the body and its direct contact with the world must be granted precedence in establishing meaning (*BGE* §230; *WP* §489). *Contra* the central stream of Western thought, he opposes the idea that reason plays a central role in the recognition of the world and humanity. Zarathustra refers to corporal wisdom as "great reason," contrasting with intellectual wisdom—wisdom in its conventional sense—being "small reason," the tool of great reason (I, "On the Despisers of the Body"). While Freud considers the primal processes, which closely resemble simple instinctualism, as inferior and primitive in relation to secondary, more complex processes, Nietzsche accords them a higher status à la Jung et al. According to this view, primal, the complex products of consciousness are the result of unconscious processes—as evinced in creativity and dreams (Noy 2008, 55-56, 133, 169).

While wishing to be wise like the serpent, Zarathustra knows that this status lies beyond him. He thus tempers his request: "May I be wiser! May I be wise from the ground up like my snake! But I ask the impossible, and so I ask instead of my pride that it always walk with my wisdom!" (I, "Zarathustra's Prologue," 10). As innate representations of his inner life, the faunal pairing that accompanies him throughout his journeying stands for the harmony between body and spirit that, despite their polarity, must become integrated. Rather than limiting they must strengthen one another, those who flee to upper realms thus being as flawed as those who immerse themselves in the earthly.

Other occurrences of the snake as symbolizing wisdom are secondary. In the second part of the novel, Zarathustra's animals again represent his metamorphosis. Here, the serpent is the manifestation of wisdom and self-knowledge (II, "The Child with the Mirror"). The fourth section contains several references. "The Magician" depicts the snake (and eagle) as an advisor who helps the wizard find the inner power to shape himself and transcend his limitations on his way to becoming his true self (IV 2). The snake plays a similar role in "The Voluntary Beggar," wherein Zarathustra sends the mendicant to consult the eagle and serpent in addition to the cows to whom he pays heed (IV). Later on, the snake reappears on the periphery as a symbol of wisdom and the courage to change (IV, "On Science"). Finally, it enters the stage as Zarathustra's companion, echoing his concluding speech and epitomizing wisdom and the conditions for self-improvement (IV, "The Sleepwalker Song," 2).

4) The serpent as symbolizing human drives

The snake also frequently represents instinctualism and inferiority. In the first part of the novel, the pale criminal's inner world is depicted as a "ball of wild snakes that seldom have peace from each other – so they go forth for themselves and seek prey in the world" (I, "On the Pale Criminal"). It thus stands for the id—the wild, unregulated primal drive, inner life being a system of conflicting drives that interfere with a person's ability to mobilize targeted forces.

This view is a product of Nietzsche's philosophy, according to which human instincts form the basis for understanding the subject, driving individuals to act and interpret reality in diverse ways—each governed by the desire to control the whole organism and impose its perspective on the others. The subject being none other than a verbal fiction that clothes the drives that take turns controlling the self, Nietzsche calls on individuals to cultivate a supremely pragmatic inner life in order to unite all their drives into their service. He thus distinguishes between a state in which one instinct dominates, seeking to synchronize all the others to produce harmony, and one in which they all act as friendly rivals, creating a weak personality (*BGE* §6; *WP* §68). Modern scholars thus tend to understand Nietzschean authentic selfhood as an orderly, organized structure of drives lacking any moral focus—i.e. a strong will that enables discipline and control over the diverse instinctive forms (Gemes & Janaway 2006, 336).

Later on, Zarathustra likens the snake to the evil and negative aspects of human beings, attributing a measure of positivity to evil, however, as the locus of exoticism and power that enables creation and change: "I am enchanted to see the wonders hatched by a hot sun: tigers and palm trees and rattle snakes" (II, "On Human Prudence"); "When swords ran every which way like red-stained snakes, our fathers warmed to life; the sun of all peace seemed limp and lackluster to them, but the long peace caused them shame" (IV, "Conversation with the Kings," 2). In the latter chapter, the blood-stained sword-like snake symbolizes drive, ambition, and war-lust, being linked to Nietzsche's view of warfare as necessary for greatness and power. Power drives rest on an inner instinctual struggle, Nietzsche arguing already in the prologue that "one must still have chaos in oneself in order to give birth to a dancing star" (5). Human beings must fight to channel and harness their instincts in the service of growth and creativity in order to bring about change both in themselves and in the world.

In this context, the serpent is also an inferior, abhorrent creature. In the second part of the novel, it represents the hypocrisy of those who despise the earthly (II, "On Immaculate Perception").

This symbolism recurs in the third part, wherein Nietzsche juxtaposes the snake with the pig: "Lust to rule: before whose gaze human beings crawl and cower and drudge and become lower than snake and swine" (III, "On the Three Evils," 2). Here, the serpent is thus emblematic of the instincts, bareness, and the subjection of principles to its desire for control.

According to Zarathustra, despite the human tendency to avoid the base qualities of human nature, they must be dealt with in order to overcome and gain self-control. When drives are acknowledged, they can be transcended and harnessed in the desired direction. Nietzsche thus portrays the powerful as first and foremost faithful to their instinctual capacities, which cannot be brought into line with social ethics. Human beings needing to free themselves from conventional morality in the name of growth, he contends that the noblest person is also the most wicked.[1] As Zarathustra observes: "But it is with human beings as it is with this tree ... The more they aspire to the heights and the light, the more strongly their roots strive earthward, downward, into darkness, depths – into evil" (I, "On the Tree on the Mountain").

In the fourth part, Nietzsche expresses his yearning for and closeness to the eagle and snake, laying emphasis here on the serpent's naturalness and simplicity (IV, "The Song of Melancholy," 1). The animals that wished for his recovery in the third section now advise him to go and learn how to sing from the birds (III, "The Convalescent," 2). The dark aspects of simple naturalness are linked to growth, overcoming, and the return to the abyss on the way to authenticity, Nietzsche more than once depicting the *übermensch* as Dionysus or a child who naturally conveys his desire for power—transmigrating out of himself in innocence and confirmation of the existing—as an act of spontaneous intensification (I, "On the Three Metamorphoses").

5) The serpent as a symbol of transformation

The snake also stands for change and self-overcoming—circularity. In the prologue, it appears on the stage immediately before Zarathustra's metamorphosis. Here, it may well represent the process of change via the shedding of its skin and the leaving behind/ transcendence of its old ways of thinking. This idea occurs in the earlier *Daybreak*, wherein Nietzsche notes: "The snake that cannot slough its skin perishes" (§573). Casting off the old is a prerequisite for elevation.

In "The Ugliest Human Being," the serpent epitomizes the ugly person himself. In his account of "Snake Death" valley, Zarathustra depicts the "species of hideous, thick, green snakes that would come here to die when they grew old" (4). As remarked above, Nietzsche regards serpents incapable of shedding their skin as condemned to death. The ugliest human being thus symbolizes the person who, having killed God, fails to re-assess his or her values. Not being able to change, he or she chooses to reject renewal.

In the first part of the novel, the viper represents another essential serpentine attribute:

> One day Zarathustra had fallen asleep beneath a fig tree, since it was hot, and he had laid his arm over his face. Then an adder came along and bit him in the neck, so that Zarathustra cried out in pain. When he had taken his arm from his face he looked at the snake; it recognized the eyes of Zarathustra, turned

> around awkwardly and tried to get away. "Not so fast," spoke Zarathustra. "You have not yet accepted my thanks! You waked me in time, my way is still long." "Your way is still short," said the adder sadly: "My poison kills." Zarathustra smiled. "Since when did a dragon ever die of snake poison?" he said. "But take back your poison! You are not rich enough to give it to me." Then the snake fell upon his neck once again and licked his wound. (I, "On the Adder's Bite")

While the snake serves as a lethal threat, Zarathustra knows how to use its poison as an antidote for self-growth. According with his famous dictum: "What does not kill me makes me stronger" (*TI* §8 from "Arrows and Epigrams"), this view leads in turn to the notions of self-transcendence and the *übermensch*. Zarathustra thanks the snake for awaking him, this imagery also serving as a metaphor for waking up to the truth and changing the existing order. Although this entails great suffering, it is welcome, Zarathustra blessing the serpent for his toxic gift.

When his disciples ask him the moral of this story, he replies: "The annihilator of morals the good and just call me: my story is immoral" (I, "On the Adder's Bite"). If Judeo-Christian ethics are good and proper, the poisonous snake is he who seeks to destroy them. These ethics being in fact a sign of weakness and degeneration, however, the toxin also plays a positive role, awakening human beings to a truer lifeform.

As noted above, Nietzsche emphasizes the fact that human beings must kill God and create a new myth. This imperative is intensified in light of the human need to change and the way in which people observe and shape the reality in which they live. Constituting the preeminent symbol of rebellion against God in Western thought, the snake epitomizes the existential choice between values, rebellion against existing norms, and an attempt to fashion a distinctive perspective in the absence of absolute values.

In the Hebrew Bible, the serpent symbolizes rebellion against divine authority. Seeking to allay Eve's unease over eating from the Tree of Knowledge, the snake tells her: "You will be like God, who knows good and bad" (Gen 3:5). Human beings cannot rise to a higher order if they are conformists. They must rebel and challenge authority as Freudian Oedipal murderers, the *übermensch* revolting against weak servant ethics and the limits of morality and becoming like God, knowing good and evil in the framework of individuation, independence, and authenticity.

The lesson for humanity is the demand for the creation of a new myth that will encapsulate the human worldview and human beings' place in society, elucidating the values that must be sanctified in order to make sense of life. This new myth is exemplified in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the symbols/archetypes therein not only drawing on early mythical sources but also seeking new forms and thereby serving as a modern alternative.

The snake makes a significant appearance in "The Other Dance Song" in the third part of the novel, taking the form of a woman and the very soul of life in a passage that recalls the Greek Medusa:

> I leaped over to you; you dodged my advance, retreating deftly; and only the licking, fleeing, trailing tongues of your hair were left me! I leaped away from your hair's lurid snaking; and there you stood,

> half facing me, your eyes afire with aching. ... Oh this cursed clever, supple snake and slippery witch! Gone without a trace? (3, 1)

Zarathustra describes life as a dance with a female snake. Despite finding it difficult to decide whether he is the hunter or hunted, he chooses not to be the sacrifice, waltzing the serpent to the tune of his whip. This snake can be interpreted as a metaphor for Nietzsche's call to approach life with power, joy, and celebration rather than fear or terror. Zarathustra thus teaches the need for courage and contentment in the present in the face of the chicanery of life in order to enable future elevation and growth.

According to Nietzsche, human beings must seek to transcend all contact with the external and internal worlds. Despite appearing to oppose reason, Nietzsche in fact attributes an important role to it in the organization of the inner world, its overcoming leading to the reconciliation of conflicts and clashes in the soul by means of stimulation into life and the cultivation and conquering of passions (*BGE* §200). Human beings should thus gain benefit from everything they encounter on the grounds that choice strengthens, weeding out everything that weakens the will. Reason's role is to outline a way of dealing effectively with human drives—namely, by interpreting reality and gradually but persistently assimilating new habits until they become internalized and second nature.

The snake-woman illustrates an important and integral element of the process of becoming stronger—namely, the notion of the eternal return. As in other mythologies, the serpent assumes a metaphysical status here, lying at the heart of reality itself—whether in the form of the eternal return upon which Nietzschean existence rests or as the female dimension (à la Daoist yin) of reality. Significantly, as we have seen Jung also identifies the Kundalini with the anima as the female archetype in the male personality.

Jung—and even more prominently Erich Neumann in his footsteps—adduces the link between the serpent and the negative archetype of the engulfing Great Mother. The snake tempts human beings to return to the unknown, to flood their inner world with the unconscious—i.e. make direct contact with their shadow—which, while enabling a new awareness, also threatens to become overwhelming. The mythical hero who defeats the dragon and is not devoured by it in fact confronts his dark shadow, conquering what threatens him from within (Netzer 2023, 135-36, 140, 142).

In the third part of the novel, the snake is directly and horrifically associated with the eternal return:

> And truly, I saw something the like of which I had never seen before. A young shepherd I saw; writhing, choking, twitching, his face distorted, with a thick black snake hanging from his mouth. Had I ever seen so much nausea and pale dread in one face? Surely he must have fallen asleep? Then the snake crawled into his throat – where it bit down firmly. My hand tore at the snake and tore – in vain! It could not tear the snake from his throat. Then it cried out of me: "Bite down! Bite down! Bite off the head! Bite down!" – Thus it cried out of me, my dread, my hatred, my nausea, my pity, all my good and bad cried out of me with one shout. ... Meanwhile the shepherd bit down as my shout advised him; he bit with a good bite! Far away he

> spat the head of the snake – and he leaped to his feet. No longer shepherd, no longer human – a transformed, illuminated, *laughing* being! Never yet on earth had I heard a human being laugh as *he* laughed! (III, "On the Vision and the Riddle" 2)

Nietzsche often depicts the eternal return as a heavy, threatening idea according to which meaningless and purposeless existence endlessly spins around on itself (*GS* §341). This circularity constitutes one of its central features—the snake biting its own tail (IV, "The Sleepwalker Song," 11). Or Zarathustra observes, everything doubles back on itself as a wheel forever spinning, everything dying and coming alive again (cf. Qoh 1:9).

The eternal return is also rejuvenating and empowering, however. In *Zarathustra*, this notion finds expression in the call to the young shepherd to bite the snake—i.e. for a bold, barbaric struggle against the gravity of the harshest idea of all. After the shepherd fights back and defeats the snake (as primal thought), he is thus enlightened and encouraged. Rather than surrendering to the horror the eternal return embodies or despairing before it, individual should esteem it as an absolute value (III, "The Convalescent," 2). Calling out to it in celebration as coming to terms with his fate, Zarathustra thus declares his love and affection for it, consecrating it with a bridal ring (III, "The Seven Seals," 1). In this sense, the eternal return serves as a psychological test: the more gravity governs a person, the harder and more intolerable the eternal return seems. When someone is filled with lightness and cheerfulness, however, thinking of it has a liberating effect that drives he or she upwards (Oger 1997, 4-7, 10-13).

The serpent that enters the shepherd's mouth and closes the circle exemplifies the way in which human beings form part of the pattern of eternal return. This active move of biting the snake to death alludes to the fact that even if human beings accept their place within the eternal return they retain an element of free will/choice—and thus the potential to change the future. The bite may also represent an act of self-preservation and authenticity in the face of the world's attempt to engulf human beings and fashion them according to its own design. Jung reads the shepherd as becoming superhuman after biting the snake's head—on a par with the apotheosis that occurs in several Egyptian myths in which the serpent represents the godhead or a demonic power human beings must overcome (Domenici 2018, 9).

In "The Convalescent," Nietzsche directly relates to the chapter discussed above. Alongside the reference to the deadly black snake, he here adduces the serpent aids Zarathustra as he recovers. Zarathustra recognizes that the shepherd into whose mouth the serpent coils itself is in fact himself: "… and how that monster crawled into my throat and choked me! But I bit off its head and spat it away from me" (III, 2). Zarathustra's struggle with the snake is thus also associated with self-consciousness, the serpent being depicted as darkest thought and the biting off and spitting out of its head serving as an analogy of himself and his salvation. The black serpent is further compared in this chapter to the disgust of the little man who endlessly returns to himself. This may be understood as a warning to those who repeat the same action to contract their attributes and take no active steps to alter their state.

As we observed above, Heidegger also highlights the affinities between Zarathustra's faunal companions and circularity. Confirming his nature to him, the animals inform him that his destiny is to instruct human beings regarding the eternal return: "For your animals know well, oh Zarathustra, who you are and must become; behold, *you are the teacher of the eternal recurrence* – that now is *your* destiny!" (III, 2). He thus maintains that the faunal pair is responsible for teaching Zarathustra the form into which he must metamorphosize, representing the blending of pride and wisdom to which he must aspire (Heidegger & Magnus 1967, 413-14, 429).

Like other Nietzschean scholars, Heidegger regards the eternal return, love of destiny, and *übermensch* as forming integral parts of a single concept, human beings saving their will by constantly affirming the narrative of empower they choose, thereby determining their fate, past, and life as a whole (Loeb 2001, 29-30, 33-34, 38-41). In this context, Nietzsche's recall of Heraclitus' account of the world as in a process of continual change is of note. Building on his idea that reality is governed by fire, Nietzsche adduces Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility, whose rites called for the celebration of volatility (*TI* §4 from "What I Owe the Ancients").

Like Dionysus, the Jungian serpentine archetype also contains an element of trickery that is linked to the shadow—i.e. everything rejected and abhorred in society, such as the instincts and immoral behavior (Netzer 2023, 137). Hereby, Zarathustra contends that only a dancing god can be believed in, thus calling for the slaying of Satan through laughter—i.e. the most primal thought. He then proceeds to describe the lightness of being that falls upon him: "Now I am light, now I fly, now I see myself beneath me, now a god dances through me" (I, "On Reading and Writing").

This view aligns with Nietzsche's attempts to undermine the traditional Christian theological doctrine that God's primary attribute is absolute goodness. Asserting that such a belief not only restricts but also distorts the godhead's true nature, he argues for a far more complex and multidimensional deity—one who can dance and sin. He thus appeals to the Greek gods who celebrated their affirmation and nature (*WP* §1052). The serpent's positive and negative aspects and transformative skills (shedding its skin) evince its ability to change (which human beings should aspire to imitate) and move between good and evil in accordance with its needs—irrespective of any moral compass.

At the end of the first part of the novel, Zarathustra's disciples present him with "a staff upon whose golden knob a snake encircled the sun" (I, "On the Bestowing Virtue," 1). The master interprets the sun as symbolizing ruling, dominant thought as the supreme good— girdled by the knowing snake to indicate the combination of will and knowledge. This representation relates to the eternal return—here as a volitional psychological conflict rather than metaphysical dictum, however. The serpent embodies the process of self-overcoming that, through training, enables the individual to transcend the dark drives of human nature on the way to a deeper understanding and a new, higher nature on the one hand and the fact that self-elevation is not achieved all at once but is a lengthy, Sisyphean process on the other.

According to Jung, Nietzsche turns the traditional symbolism on its head. While the snake/dragon customarily devours the classical hero, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* the serpent is (partially) ingested by the shepherd. As we saw above, Jung regards the snake as representative of the denied aspects of human nature, whose integration is necessary in order to reconcile antithetical elements and achieve individuation. He thus views Nietzsche as shedding established values but refusing to accept his dark side, which remains unconscious—i.e. avoids incorporating the anima within his personality. This state reflects his mental breakdown (Domenici 2018, 6-8, 21-23).

The shepherd into whose mouth the snake enters and is bitten to death epitomizes the transcendence that enables the emergence of the Nietzschean *übermensch*/Jungian harmony (Domenici 2018, 21). As Bishop (1995, 8-9, 117) observes, the Jungian process of individuation parallels Zarathustra's "becoming who you are"—i.e. the actualization of the *übermensch* ideal is synonymous with Jung's identification of the "I" with the archetype of the self. This process entails a continuous struggle with the unconscious along the route to the expansion and perfection of personality.

The serpent forms part of the Jungian shadow archetype—the unconscious parts of the human psyche that are too dark to be acknowledged. While it possibly even serves as its mythical manifestation, it is not an exclusively negative component, also creating the psychic energy that enables psychic content to be transferred from the dark to the light. It thus forms the basis of rebellion, the perpetual need for transformation, non-acceptance and irreconciliation with what exists, and the will for renewal and rebirth.

Despite the risks to Nietzsche's mental health, he calls for the bold choice of self-transcendence. The Nietzschean world operates in accordance with fixed principles (eternal return, predetermined fate) that threaten to subsume human beings, annul their value, and enslave them. They must thus seek to overcome these—as represented by the serpent—and reach a state in which they devour rather than being devoured. By taking this courageous path, they can turn the toxin within themselves into good, their transformative value giving them the power, alongside their circularity, to change and grow into something different.

Conclusion

Nietzsche's thought is characterized by inconsistency and contradiction, some parts being framed in rational analytical philosophical terms and others in poetic, symbolic, and prophetic style. The latter is preeminently on display in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, readers often seeking an Ariadnean thread in order to make their way through the maze. The serpent archetype functions as one of the most powerful symbols in the novel, the many and varied guises it takes being analyzed and discussed in detail above.

The motif of the snake in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ties together many of the major themes of Nietzsche's philosophy—eternal return, change and self-transcendence, love of struggle, healthy drives, the harnessing of the instincts for growth and creativity, etc. Epitomizing both cunning and the wisdom of earthly life, the serpent represents inferiority and abjection, the evil inclination and humiliation, temptation and instinct—and the female element, the soul of life, the depths of the psyche and the unconscious, the conflicting drives and the danger of death.

On the other side, it symbolizes renewal and the removal of the old and undesirable, its poison serving as a life- and reality-affirming antidote—the eternal return or Ouroboros, the snake that bites its tail. Although human beings may come to disregard their old values, in "biting back" they can resist everything life forces them to swallow, transcend their circumstances, and rise above what they were, accepting the inevitable with joy and life- celebration.

I suggest that the central feature of the serpent archetype and Nietzsche's innovative use of it lies in the idea of transformation—specifically, that of human attitudes towards the world. Nietzsche's dark and merciless universe reflects his broader concepts of fate and the eternal return. If we translate the latter into terms of human relations with the world, Nietzsche makes a dichotomous distinction between being engulfed by the exterior and engorging it and passing to the other side of this process (death, insanity) to a new, higher life—this transformative essence resting on swallowing its toxin and surviving.

Most human beings being subsumed by/within the world, predetermined fate and the eternal return govern human life and reduce human stature. While no one can escape either, everyone can adopt, develop, and embrace his or fate, undergoing a comprehensive inner transformation of life containment and fate as a dance, elevation, change, and growth that in effect is re-formation as an *übermensch*. In this sense, the serpent archetype serves Nietzsche as an Ariadnean thread that leads people out of the Nietzschean maze of ideas, both as an accompanying force and as an advisor serving as a natural instinct that rises above rationality as a symbol both of the dangers that lurk ahead of human beings as they make their way towards transformation and the choice between engulfment and ingestion.

The modern myth Nietzsche develops in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* seeks to guide human beings towards observing life through the prism of the will to power, the eternal return, and the choice of self-transcendence. As a multifaceted symbol incorporating conflicting elements, it is primarily associated with the power of change and renewal, serving as a central means for guiding people towards the cultivation of human attributes and attainment of the status of *übermensch*.

Human beings are born and live under the inescapable sentence of death, the ways of struggling and rebelling against their fate being the active embrace of the curse of destiny and dancing through life—biting the snake and swallowing rather than being swallowed. While the poison is lethal, it can also serve as an antidote and enable a fuller, higher life. The Nietzschean serpent archetype thus constitutes the perfect symbol of this cruel choice.

Endnotes:

1. Nietzsche betrays the influence of Schelling here, who identifies selfish evil as a vital element of nature (rather than the absence of good) that helps sharpen life forces. Human beings gain their freedom through manifesting their evilness, demonstrating themselves as capable of subjecting the general to the individual will. These ideas paved the way for Nietzsche to undermine the conventional notion of good and transcend morality: see Bowie, 2023.

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Induction and Probability

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Abstract:

The present research aims to examine the different accounts of induction given by Aristotle, Hume, Leibniz, Carnap and De Finetti, trying to support that probability calculus offers a sufficient grounding of inductive logic. The term induction had been contrasted to deduction, by Aristotle. The Neoplatonic philosopher Alcinous suggested that dialectic firstly investigates the substances and then the accidents. There are five kinds of dialectic reasoning: division, definition, analysis, induction and syllogistic. The first three concern with substances, the last two with accidents. Although Leibniz regarded probability theory as a basis of inductive logic, Hume's skepticism was seminal for the reappraisal of the role of induction in modern philosophy. Enhancing Hume's criticism, Popper and Wittgenstein completely denied that scientists use induction. Hans Reichenbach, however, attempted to build a theory of justification for the use of induction, based on a factual basis of other successful predictive methods that make induction feasible (Earman & Salmon 1999). Moreover, Buchdall (1969) stressed that we must distinguish the inductive process of the scientist from the inductive conclusion, which comes after the completion of observation and experimentation.

Keywords: induction, confirmation, probability, inference, implication, entailment, equivalence, consistency, belief, satisfaction

Hume's Legacy

Hume wrote that we have reason to believe in the truth of a state of affairs only if we can connect it with something we now perceive or remember: though our empirical inferences carry us beyond our memory and senses, and make us certain of matters of fact, which happened in the most distant places and at the most remote times; yet some facts must always be present to the senses or memory, if we may in the first place be able to draw those inferences. As is the case when we start from archaeological findings and follow up with careful study to reach the eyewitnesses of the past. In short, if we did not take as our starting point some fact, which is present in our memory or senses, our reasonings would be merely hypothetical, the chain of our conclusions would have no support, no foundation.[1]

Hume's thought on the problem of induction focused precisely on the absence of such support, mainly regarding future events, according to the following argumentation: All reasonings may be divided into two kinds, namely, demonstrative reasonings concerning relations of ideas, and moral reasonings concerning matters of fact and existence. All arguments about existence are founded on the relation of cause and effect. Our knowledge of this relation is derived entirely from experience.

The two propositions which follow are far from being the same proposition, 'I have found that such an object is always followed by such an effect', and 'I predict that other objects, which are, apparently, similar, will be followed by similar effects.' All our experimental conclusions have for their starting point the assumption that the future will be conformable to the past. The problem of causal arguments lies in the observation that if the course of nature changes, all experience becomes useless, and the past cannot be a rule for the future and can provide no basis for any inference. No empirical argument can prove the similarity between the past and the future.[2]

Self-evident inductive connections are not rationally justified, because the inference of an event B from another event A is never demonstrative, since it is only an empirical proposition and therefore, we can deny it without contradiction; there is no synthetically necessary connection between the events A and B; the only reason to expect B given A is past experience, but the inference is invalid because it is based only on experience. It is an inductive leap. To support induction, we would need an additional premise: 'examples of which we had no experience will resemble those of which we had', but all we can do is detect and conceive of a change in nature, however, even the possibility of such a conclusion is based on the assumption that nature is governed by uniformity, so we look back to the past. With this double questioning of both the present and the past we conclude that the general principle of the uniformity of nature does not apply. So, since our conclusions are not formally valid and since their conclusions are not possible without circularity, we consider that they are not rationally justified but are based on habit alone.

Our bewilderment before the infinite nature of the recursion in the chain of causal connection, our inability to attribute the cause of every cause seem insurmountable obstacles. For this reason, Hume suggested that simply the repetition of a certain act or operation produces a tendency to renew the same act or operation, without being compelled by any reasoning or by any mental process. Hume contends that this tendency is the result of Custom, which is not, however, an ultimate cause, but only a principle of human action that becomes known from its effects.

We cannot observe anything beyond a continuous succession of objects, while the secret forces, by the aid of which all natural functions are performed, never appear to the senses, because elasticity, gravity, cohesion, momentum have not yet been adequately studied. We must of course note that fire and heat, snow and cold are certainly not connected with each other by habit, as Hume maintains. This is an extremely paradoxical and contradictory assertion, where his thought engages in some kind of Psychologism.

But the most interesting point of the Humean critique is the concept of moral reasoning. I believe that it indirectly refers to a paper published in 1738 by Daniel Bernoulli, in which he solved the St. Petersburg paradox. Bernoulli distinguished two concepts of expectation: mathematical and moral, which considers the individual characteristics of the subjects who take risks in a game. In the case of the paradox in question, moral reasoning refers to economic utility: infinite increases in utility are directly proportional to infinite increases in wealth and inversely proportional to the amount of initial wealth. This idea of Bernoulli had an enormous impact on the science of probability and on the social sciences.

Debugging Hume's Error

There is no reason to doubt that the relations of ideas are a priori analytic propositions. But there are serious objections to Hume's view that only the relations of ideas are demonstrative propositions and that all the propositions of Geometry are relations of ideas, that is, they do not depend on what happens anywhere in the universe. The shift of the scientific horizon from the closed world to the infinite universe has made the latter claim false. It turns out that geometry has empirical foundations and many, like Mill, argue the same for arithmetic. But my objection is deeper and refers to the first claim and to the concept of proof in Hume. I also comment on his epistemological resort to the concept of habit.

Let the sentences π_0, π_1, π_2, π_3 of our language be:

π_0: I observe the sky from the highest peak of Naxos.
π_1: There are absolutely no clouds above and around Naxos.
π_2: We will not have rain in Naxos soon.
π_3: I can, with the help of meteorological radars, searchlights and EMY balloons, determine what I mean by 'soon'.

Aristotle would characterize the proposition π_1 as a presumption of reasoning, an average that makes the reasoning valid, precisely because i) it is connected to the specific relations of part and whole with the extreme terms but also ii) because it is the empirical presumption of the reasoning

$$\pi_2 \subset \pi_1 \subset \pi_0$$

in which the term π_2 is a subset of the average term π_1; the average term π_1 is also a subset of the term π_0 (the proposition π_3, which can be understood as auxiliary, is not included). For short-term forecasts derived only from local observation, clouds are one of the two most important available factors.[3]

Remaining in our position, which ensures satisfactory visibility and observing the sky, we may later see at 30,000 feet some cirrostratus that will cast a white veil around the sun or some sparser cirrocumulus. Only a sudden evaporation and convergence of air currents and a sudden and vertical ascent of warmer air to a higher point, usually riding a cold current, either climbing a high mountain, or colliding with another air current, can create clouds or carry some. But even then, we may know that it will not rain soon, if there is nothing beyond cumulus, the charming wavy white clouds of summer (fair weather clouds).

The problem of induction

According to Aristotle, the inductive arguments demonstrate the universal, because they show that the particular is evident, obvious. They use examples for this purpose. For the universal exists, when it is demonstrated on the contingent and first instance. Induction focuses on the most probable, the clearest, the most familiar and common to many. On the other hand, deductive reasoning is more hasty and more active towards contradiction. These may simply be reminiscences, where we do not examine the actual reality of what is being discussed.

However, induction par excellence is not demonstrative, e.g. the inductive reasoning:

the α_i are b
the α_i are c
therefore all c are b

is not demonstrative. What are the characteristics of a demonstrative procedure, according to Aristotle? First, the only valid generalization scheme is the reasoning that displays a universal quantifier, categorical or negative, in the major term and an existential or indefinite[4] categorical in the minor. All other syllogisms containing a universal quantifier in other positions are invalid or not perfect. But even then, the calculation may be inaccurate or impossible to be accurate. Infinity cannot be exhausted.

If we cannot calculate the size and height of the clouds, that is, if their lowest point reaches two miles from the ground, while the highest reaches five miles (cumulonimbus: thunderhead), then not only will we fall outside the induction, but we will also suffer a sudden storm.[5] If we were to give a more formal character to the propositions π_0, π_1, π_2, referring, for example, to mathematical meteorological data and to distances of latitudes and longitudes, to curves of the earth's surface and to heights above sea level, our reasoning would be universal. That is, it could also admit of inductive generalizations, considering longitudes and latitudes, curves and heights as variables that take on various values. However, it seems that these generalizations, while more formal, would only offer us high degrees of conviction and would remain plausible; they would not be pointing-out, as Aristotle supports, that is, they would not be certain propositions.

In any case, we can only ensure satisfactory predictability when our propositions are indicative, referring to empirical data, as Hume would say. And we do not know whether we would ever obtain certainty for exceptional cases, as for example when approaching the Himalayas or in the tropical cyclone regions, namely the West Indies (hurricanes), the East Indies and Japan (typhoons), Australia (willy-willies) and the Philippines (baguios), where cyclones reach 136 miles per hour and make our forecasts extremely uncertain, especially as regards the time parameter, since the monthly frequency of tropical cyclones in the North Pacific is $f \leq 4.5$ in September. But in the Mediterranean the strongest winds are the Bora and the Gregale, which do not exceed 82 miles per hour.[6]

The problem of proof comes back more sharply at this point. We observe that formality in the use of language reduces provability. Hume may have been refuted as can be seen from our fair-weather example. However, the skepticism that he developed with unparalleled skill in his work was very fertile. An empirical rational epistemological position is based on sharp criticism. But it should not underestimate induction, to end up in the deification of the deductive method. Do we prefer the distant formality that does not find ways of development and grafting into experience?

Only after Bacon do we overcome the stage of thought experiments and set observation and experiment as prerequisites for the construction of scientific theory. Induction is poor if it reaches the principles of science by simple enumeration without using exclusions and conclusions or appropriate analyses of nature, according to Bacon. He suggests also that the method that axiomatizes is a source of errors. The first aim of true induction is the rejection or exclusion of individual natures that are not found in an example in which the given nature is present or are found in an example from which the given nature is absent or are found to increase in an example where the given nature decreases or to decrease when the given nature increases. Bacon's analysis of induction was fruitful in the organization of scientific practice, because it highlighted and emphasized old and new methods that renewed science, such as harvesting, tables, rejection-exclusion, classification of examples, privileged examples, supports of induction, limits of research, preparation of research.[7]

Subset or implication?

Let the sentences π_4, π_5, π_6 of our language be:

π_4: I observe the sky while flying with a helicopter over Greece.
π_5: There are absolutely no clouds over and around Greece.
π_6: We will not have rain in Athens soon.

And here our reasoning has the form

$$\pi_6 \subset \pi 5 \subset \pi 4 \text{ assumption}$$
$$\pi_4 \land \pi_5 \land (\pi_5 \subset \pi_4) \text{ assumption}$$
$$\pi_4$$
$$\pi_5$$
$$\pi_5 \subset \pi_4$$
$$\pi_5 \land \pi_6 \land (\pi_6 \subset \pi_5) \text{ assumption}$$
$$\pi_5$$
$$\pi_6$$
$$\pi_6 \subset \pi_5$$

Our reasoning would be characterized as perfect, insoluble and true by Aristotle, because it conforms to the first, the only valid of the three schemes of logical inference. In fact, it is a proof, stemming from true and first and immediate and more familiar and a priori and causes of the conclusion.

In this proof, neither the concept of habit, nor any related concept, plays any role at all. Our proof has a clear and pure empirical character, while the concept of habit is an unverifiable hypothesis that undermines our empirical intentions.

In the case where one of our propositions is not connected by a part-and-whole relationship with each of the other two propositions, we end up with an invalid reasoning. The reasoning is also true if its terms are true. Since the exclusive disjunction does hold:

$$(\pi_5 \subset \pi_4) \vee (\pi_7 \subset \pi_4)$$

where π_7: There are clouds over and around Greece.

We prefer to express the evidential relation through the subset relation, because the truth table of material inference is loaded with errors: for values F ⇢ T it gives a truth value T in the conclusion, which is not sensible and logical for empirical induction. Let us recall at least one case from our everyday life that we would like to risk using inferences containing false premises.

In our real earthly world, the implication F ⇢ T is not true, while in material implication there is no 'real connection' between the premises and the conclusion. We simply assert that it is not true that the premises are true when the conclusion is false.

Copi[8] distinguishes material implication, which is empty of content, because the premises may be unrelated to the conclusion or refer to non-existent objects,[9] from implications that express logical connection, definition, cause and decision.

The truth table of implication has the following correct form:

$$(T \dashrightarrow T) \leftrightarrow 1 \dashrightarrow 1 \leftrightarrow T$$
$$(T \dashrightarrow F) \leftrightarrow [T \dashrightarrow (1\text{-}T)] \leftrightarrow 1 \dashrightarrow 0 \leftrightarrow F$$
$$F \dashrightarrow T \leftrightarrow [(1\text{-}T) \dashrightarrow T] \leftrightarrow 0 \dashrightarrow 1 \leftrightarrow F$$
$$F \dashrightarrow F \leftrightarrow [(1\text{-}T) \dashrightarrow (1\text{-}T)] \leftrightarrow 0 \dashrightarrow 0 \leftrightarrow T$$

Thus, we can define the subset relation as the inverse function of the inference relation, that is,

$$(\rho \dashrightarrow \sigma) \leftrightarrow (\rho \supset \sigma) \leftrightarrow (\rho \subset \sigma)^{-1} \leftrightarrow (\sigma \subset \rho)$$

Indeed, it is true that sentences with truth value T are subsets of sentences with truth value T. It is also true that sentences with truth value F are subsets of sentences with truth value F. However, it is neither true that sentences with truth value T are subsets of sentences with truth value F nor that sentences with truth value F are subsets of sentences with truth value T.

De Finetti[10] identifies the concept of subset with logical implication (not with material implication) and distinguishes the implication of an event A from another event B

$$A \subseteq B \ .=. \ \vdash A \leq B$$

from the specific equality of A and B

$$A \equiv B \ .=. \ \vdash A = B$$

and from the strict implication

$$A \supset B \ .=. \ \vdash (A \subseteq B) \wedge \sim (A \equiv B)$$

The concept of subset can be linked to terms such as probability, informativeness and preference. Probability theory is based on the concept of a set. Events or contingencies are subsets of the sample space δ. The outcome of a chance experiment is a simple event or a simple contingency. A set of simple events is called an event or contingency. If our sample space is discrete, that is, countable, either finite or infinitely countable, all its subsets correspond to events and vice versa. If it is continuous, only some subsets correspond to events.

In our thought experiment, we consider that π_2 offers us less information than π_1, just as π_1 offers us less information than π_0, and correspondingly, even when we are not sure (that is, although we do not have a confidence level of 1) we can nevertheless derive the valid formula

$$P(\pi_2) \leq P(\pi_1) \leq P(\pi_0)$$

Also, if there are indeed no clouds in the sky, we believe that π_6 is more preferable than π_7, because with these data we have, accepting it involves less risk.

The empirical confirmation of propositions π_6 and π_7 can be regarded as a preference issue, precisely because these propositions are not causally connected to each other.[11] In the case where there is a causal relationship between two propositions π and ρ, then we compare them based on the information they contain and the proposition that is more informative is considered the cause of a proposition with a smaller information size.

Hempel on confirmation and induction

In 1945, in his article *Studies in the Logic of Confirmation*, Hempel tried to prove the logical invalidity of Nicod's confirmation criterion that i) an object x confirms a universal hypothesis if and only if it satisfies both the antecedent and the subsequent. ii) An object x disproves (disconfirms) a hypothesis if and only if it satisfies the antecedent but does not satisfy the subsequent proposition of the hypothesis. That is, the proposition

$$\forall x \ [\pi_i(x) \supset \pi_j(x)]$$

is confirmed if and only if x is π_i and x is πj and is disproved if and only if x is π_i and x is not π_j. Hempel adds that Nicod implies that the two other cases, namely when x is not π_i, are neutral or irrelevant to the hypothesis.

So let the sentences

$$S_1: \forall x\ [\text{raven}(x) \supset \text{black}(x)]$$
$$S_2: \forall x\ [\sim \text{black}(x) \supset \sim \text{raven}(x)]$$

i.e. S_1: 'All ravens are black' and S_2: 'What is not black is not a raven'.

Hempel observes that the fact a: 'black raven', N-confirms[12] S_1 but is considered N-neutral[13] for S_2.

However, as Hempel himself claims,

i) the fact a also confirms S_2. Similarly, the fact d: 'neither raven nor black', while confirming S_1, is not N-neutral for S_2. On the contrary, it also confirms S_2.

ii) The propositions S_1 and S_2 are logically equivalent, that is, they are different formulations of the same hypothesis. This is the equivalence condition: Whatever confirms (or unconfirms) one of the two equivalent propositions confirms (or unconfirms) the other. Here is the important problem that Hebel identifies: that the Nicod criterion violates logical equivalences and makes validation dependent not only on the content of the hypothesis but also on the formulation.

Nonetheless, a member of the audience may argue, that this is due to Hempel's vagueness, not only Nicod's. Two types A and B are logically equivalent if and only if the equivalence $A \leftrightarrow B$ is a tautology. But $S_1 \leftrightarrow S_2$ is not a tautology. For example, the proposition

$$(\pi \supset \rho) \supset (\sim\rho \supset \sim\pi)$$

is indeed one of the axioms of Gottlob Frege's *Begriffsschrift*, yet it is not an instance of logical equivalence but of material implication and is moreover not quantified.

Propositions S_1 and S_2 differ from a specific perspective. The second intervenes in the field of definition and amplifies the definition of raven, implying that objects that have exactly the same specific features as ravens, but are not black, aren't ravens either. If we include the color black in the definition of raven, it will not be possible that 'when ravens are not black, they do not look like ravens.' Whereas if the color black is not part of the definition, it will be possible that 'ravens that are not black do not look like ravens.' An extremely important distinction, if we want to discover them and not miss them. And it is also possible to arrange for cases such as the one that makes the nymph not looking like a butterfly, although it is going to be one.

In another instance, Hempel had really observed that there are no inductive rules. We invent our hypotheses and theories; we do not produce them. Scientific knowledge is not the application of some inferential inductive process, but formulates inventive hypotheses, gives bold answers to problems, and makes experimental implications.[14] Our suspicious member of the audience could have therefore considered S_2 as such a bold attempt.

Confirmation, conjunction and disjunction

We must remark that Hempel, by rejecting the Nicod criterion, refuses to limit the content of confirmation to the context of conjunction. For if the equivalence of S_1 with the proposition S_2 holds, then we cannot formulate any safe confirmation rule based exclusively on conjunction relations, since, as he claims, i) 'white shoes' confirm S_1 and ii) 'black ravens' confirm S_2. Thus, Hempel a) considers that irrelevant or neutral evidence can be factor of confirmation and b) highlights the case of cancellation (T⇢F ⇢ F) through disjunction, thus returning to the criterion of inductive rejection or exclusion formulated by Bacon. Hempel's contribution is the emphasis he gives to the differentiation of cases.

Nevertheless, of the two controversial examples, i) seems unfortunate. It sounds not logical that 'white shoes' should confirm an irrelevant proposition, because the amount of relevant information is zero.[15] But are other propositions, like S_2, confirmed by corresponding examples? If we are to distinguish cumulonimbus from cumulus or other clouds, the proposition k: 'Every time it does not rain there are no cumulonimbus,' seems to be strengthened by instances of cumulus and cirrocumulus, but stratus, altostratus and nimbostratus which bring rain are neutral with respect to k. Hempel's criterion is very useful for disjunction of instances of a class. However, we must exclude expressions that can only result in confusion, such as 'every non-raven confirms S_1 and S_2' or 'that all mermaids are green'.

The example ii is more tempting and seems to confirm S_2. The examples we have of 'black ravens' are so numerous that, since we have not yet discovered a raven that is not black, we believe that S_2 is confirmed by the 'black ravens' we have observed. But this too presents difficulties. In ancient times they did not know that there were black swans. A white swan seemed to confirm the proposition 'What is not white is not a swan'. When we discovered black swans in Australia the opposite was proven. Probably, we may never find raves that are not black. But even then, we cannot be sure.

Some shades of black may overlap with colors or with gradations of the achromatic scale white, gray, black. And while a 'gray-blue raven' probably disconfirms both S_1 and S_2, it is not certain that gray-black, black-brown or black-blue confirm S_1, but they seem to confirm S_2. Unless we formulate them more clearly. But Hempel denies that the formulation is essential. Certainly, the formal formulation is less essential than the physical scientific one: We would then say that 'every raven is covered by plumage whose surface scatters almost no incident light, i.e. the diffusion coefficient, expressed by the quotient of the scattered light by the intensity of the incident light, is approximately zero.'[16]

Moreover, we can show with absolute clarity that S_2 is not equivalent to S_1 by examining the sentences S_3 and S_4. That is,

$$S_3: \exists(x)\ [\sim black(x) \supset \sim raven(x)]$$

$$S_4: \exists(x)\ [black(x) \land raven(x)]$$

The sentence S_4: ‘There is at least one object x that is black and is a raven’ does not imply that the property ‘is black’ has any causal relation to the entity raven. It is purely a matter of preference whether to consider ravens to be black.

But with the symbol of implication that we used in S_1, we denoted a causal and necessary relation. Unless we followed Russell and read the universal quantifier as ‘every’. Salmon[17] also, based on the rejection of necessity, supports a physical and not a logical or metaphysical concept of causality. The point of departure from the ancient conception of induction and causality is the rejection of necessity. By saying ‘Every raven is black’ we give appropriate emphasis to the fact that we are expressing observational data.

What about proposition S_2? We can also read this as ‘Anything that is not black is not a raven’, but we will not have escaped the scope of the proposition ‘Everything that is not black is not a raven’. The problem is that the natural language propositions with which Hempel primarily translates the formal expressions S_1 and S_2 are not equivalent, because they do not both use the same expression for the universal quantifier. ‘Everything’ is not equivalent to ‘anything’.

And neither of the two sentences satisfactorily translates the symbol of implication. Suppose that S_1 corresponds to the statement that the color black is a subset of every sample we have of ravens. What meaning should we give to the implication we make with S_2? In what way does the property ‘is not black’ imply the entity ‘is not a raven’? The claim that beings that are not ravens are a subset of beings that are not black is clearly false, whether for all or for each. Only some of the beings that are not ravens are a subset of beings that are not black. The error arises from the binding of the variable x with the universal quantifier. That is why we use the existential quantifier in S_3 and S_4. Regarding the hypothesis that the color black has some causal relationship with the entity ‘raven’, it can be posed as a scientific question. Until it is answered, only S_4, which uses the conjunction relation, is correct.

Confirmation and equivalence

We might ask ourselves - if we had to choose - which proposition best validates the empirical fact ‘black raven’? S_1, S_2, S_3 or S_4? Obviously, S_1 is confirmed by the class of the points of the probability space $P(S_1)$, where we place each black raven. S_2 is weakly confirmed in the complement of $P(S_1)$, in the probability space $P(S_2)$, namely Ω-P(S1).

S_2 does not express a sequence, like the sequence of observed black ravens, which we can approximate from the statistical frequency of the data and efficiently reconstruct by data feedback. S_2 expresses an uncountable and continuous function of the events that are not black and are not ravens at points in $P(S_2)$ that correspond to probabilities.

$P\ (S_2)\text{: } \Omega\ \text{-}\ P\ (S_1)$

Not every point of Ω-P is a subset of P(S_2), because a) there are events without color and colorless objects. And while black, gray and white belong to the achromatic scale of optics, there may be colorless objects that do not belong to this scale, b) there may be objects that 'change color' and c) there may be objects that are ambiguous whether they are black and d) there are an infinite number of clearly non-black objects and, plausibly, some of them may be a raven. Thus, we conclude that the simple fact 'black raven' satisfactorily confirms only the proposition S_5, which does not express an implication but the unspecified fact that

$$S_5\text{: black(x)} \subseteq \text{raven(x)}$$

'objects x that are black belong to the concept raven'. S_1 is satisfactorily confirmed only by the entire series of ravens and if they are black. However, it is not verifiable. If we ever find ravens of a different color, or better yet colored ravens, or gray or white, and their frequency is, let's say 0.1, then S_1 and S_2 will be refuted.

Belief

Logically equivalent expressions exist in the field of logic and in any formally axiomatized language. However, in the experimental laboratory, it is very likely that the data can refute the hypotheses of scientists, and the most vulnerable from this point of view are the formal expressions. But the same thing happens at the level of natural observation, as in everyday life, where we do not formulate scientific hypotheses but simply form beliefs.

Let us suppose that a merchant who runs a stationery store order pens from the POP company. However, it happened that repeated errors were made in the execution of the order and that they sent him all the colors of ink, except black. The result is that the merchant forms the belief that 'the POP company does not produce black pens.' Because not only in the first order but also in the other three that were made for correction, they did not send him a single black pen. We thus find a good example to show that twisted expressions like 'Everything that is not black is not a POP pen' are completely inappropriate when one must make decisions. We realize that such a twisted logical expression cannot describe the merchant's dilemma.

He will risk rejecting POP not because he is certain of some belief about POP, but because he is not certain of anything. And he estimates that uncertainty is harmful. His conclusions and actions, in any case, will express his tendency to recover the coherence of his activity. He is motivated by uncertainty, not quite the same as De Finetti's[18] view, who assumed that we do not want to participate in bets that will certainly result in our loss. A set of our predictions is therefore coherent if among the combinations of bets there is none for which the odds are always uniformly negative.

Let us return to the earlier distinction between experimental activity, physical observation, and the formation of beliefs in everyday life. Often the validation of scientific or technical hypotheses encounters insurmountable obstacles. How can a consumer verify whether a piece of meat or a quantity of sausages is fresh, since their red color may be the result of the action of sodium nitrite? It is very doubtful that he will be able to determine whether this sodium salt is present in the meat by the method of testing that Hempel reminds us of. Sodium vapor does indeed color the flame a bright yellow, but we will only test the meat if we have somehow formed the belief that sodium salt is possibly in it. We do not test for sodium like that in the comfort of our own homes. How can a consumer perform such an experiment? And, even if he does, he still won't be sure that it's sodium nitrite.

An alternative way is to make another disjunction and check another property of fresh meat, such as smell. Even if the consumer had the belief that it is impossible to find sodium nitrite in meat and his belief was justified, it would still not be true because it would be impossible to confirm the universal generalization that 'no meat and no sausage has sodium nitrite'.

And there would be no confirmation, because we would not be able to check all the products one by one and above all we would not be sure that no one would ever try to deceive us in this way. The best we could achieve would be to ensure many and effective health checks and relative degrees of conviction or trust, but not certain conviction. We conclude that there are many obstacles to effective confirmation.

Here we find the starting point of the concerns raised by the subjective interpretation of probabilities, when it establishes that, although its opponent, the objective interpretation, uses rules that limit the frequency of incorrect decisions to a fixed limit, regardless of values and unknown parameters, it cannot effectively apply these rules to the control of, for example, production. As De Finetti[19] argues, every control can be done incorrectly, and no one can be satisfied with the fixation of the production of defective products even at thresholds of the order of 0.01%.

Conclusions

Given his initiative to upgrade the applicability of formal equivalence, it becomes clear that Hempel wants to keep his distance from observation and experiment. While he considers the criterion of logical equivalence of formal expressions to be their confirmation or disconfirmation by the same sets of observational data, he is not prepared to upgrade the role of empirical control. For example, he contends that most scientific hypotheses and laws express regular connections of characteristics that are not observable in the sense of direct observability.[20]

Nevertheless, the observation, as by Pavlov, of the psychological connection and dependence of the bell stimulus on the hunger stimulus, as well as everyday events such as our observation of the wear of car tires while driving, testify that knowledge is formed by observation, and even by direct observation.

This happens even with the most complex empirical phenomena, for example with events such as the observation of the formation of violet light, violet blue, reddish violet from blue and red photons, which on surfaces of a certain thickness are strongly reflected one or the other or both. On observations we base all our verifiable explanations, such as the scientific explanation of the creation of the feeling of black from the observation of the incidence of light in areas that cancel any reflection, which is accompanied by the simultaneous descent of the curve of both blue and red and their simultaneous arrival at their minimum points. Established in direct observation are also the findings concerning the operation of the chronometer in the above phenomena, that it turns faster when we observe the blue photon and slower when we observe the red.

With the concept of blue and red 'photon' we describe precisely this difference in the movement of the chronometer.[21] Hempel insists on the conceptual character of scientific knowledge and, for this reason, tries to subject confirmation to purely logical criteria. He divides, in principle, confirmation into the following acceptable cases: entailment condition, consequence condition, based on the concept of class, consistency condition and equivalence condition. And finally, he identifies the confirmation of a hypothesis with the *satisfaction* criterion of confirmation, that is, he identifies it with the logical inference from an observational report of the development of the hypothesis in question for the class of objects referred to in the observational report.[22]

Indeed, we form the concept of class through experience. Our knowledge is based on observation. We first perceive a change in nature, as Hume would say. And from the repetition of this change, we form the concept of event. With the repetition of the same event, we first observe the difference between the same and its absence. Observing that this difference of appearance and absence returns and identifying long intervals of absence, we finally form the concept of negation. And, with feedback again from observation, we distinguish simple events from conjunctions of events and formulate conjunctions and disjunctions of events. With even more intense effort, we distinguish between conjunctions of events, those that are conjunctions of similar events, that is, which constitute sets of similar events that we consider as facts.

Thus, with new repetitions, we form the concept of similarity and may make a hypothesis, which if confirmed will take the form of implication. We gradually learn to make successive confirmations and disconfirmations and from a very early age we apply the act of comparison and especially comparison based on probability. A topical problem that we raised at the beginning of our work concerns not only the truth table of implication but also more generally the persistence of logical analysis in the relation of implication, with a parallel degradation of the relations of negation, disjunction and conjunction, that is, of the primal nature of comparison.

If conjunctions are the enemies of high probabilities, disjunctions are their indispensable allies, as Salmon observes.[23] However, when he refers to 'conjunctions' and 'disjunctions', he means logical relations between events that are equally probable, that is, he refers to phenomena that exhibit a statistical regularity, to which Jacob Bernoulli's limit theorem applies, which legitimizes the practice of equating statistical frequencies and probabilities.[24]

By contrast, if we insist on the opposition of statistical frequencies and probabilities, we will adopt the subjective interpretation of probability and will make yet another distinction between statistical probability and logical probability.[25] Carnap, for example, bypasses Bernoulli's theorem, which concerns cases whose number tends to infinity, and, rather wanting to include cases with finite number of samples, states the principle of indifference or insufficient reason: that if we do not know any reason to explain why one situation occurs instead of another, then these situations are equally likely.[26]

The subjective interpretation clearly distinguishes between accepting a hypothesis and decision and refers to cases of known a priori probabilities. The objective or statistical interpretation is concerned with conclusions that remain true regardless of a priori probabilities. Intermediate theories, such as Carnap's or Kendall's, accept neither the formalization of statistical computation theory nor the indispensable character of a priori probabilities.[27] This is why Carnap claims that a priori probabilities are uniformly distributed.

Finally, Hempel maintains a subjective position, and this is evident from his emphasis on the equivalence condition. For the subjective theory there is no stability of probability or independence of the probabilities of the tests, because there are no unknown probabilities as in statistics, but only 'equivalence' or 'exchangeability' between known probabilities that differ in the number of favorable cases.[28] Any hypothetical probability of a test remains subjective and depends on the chosen opinion, since the assessment of a subjective probability concerns a single test. On the other hand, frequency functions form a family of one parameter, with independent variables referring to a sequence of independent tests. A priori probabilities are an important and useful concept, especially for the social sciences. But in the natural sciences the objective interpretation of probabilities is much more applicable and effective.

Endnotes:

1. Hume, *An Enquiry.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. Donn, *Meteorology,* pp. 97-98.
4. An indefinite term is one that is neither universal nor particular.
5. Donn, *Meteorology*, p. 102.
6. Strong cyclones are created not very close to the equator but in the tropics, where a) there are sufficient Coriolis forces and b) the evaporation of water is easier, because its temperature is greater than 270 C (Donn, Meteorology, pp. 227-228).
7. *New Organon.*
8. *Introduction,* pp. 223-227, 243-244.
9. As Hempel's example shows, ∀x [mermaid (x) ⊃ green (x)] (*Aspects of Scientific Explanation,* p. 16).
10. *Theory of Probability,* 40.
11. Maher, 1-33.
12. N-confirms: confirms according to the Nicod criterion.
13. N-neutral: is neutral according to the Nicod criterion.
14. Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*, pp. 15-17.
15. Salmon, *Causality and Explanation,* p. 98.
16. Alexopoulos, *Optics,* p. 226.
17. *Causality and Explanation,* p. 24.
18. *Theory of Probability, A critical introductory treatment,* Volume 1, p. 76.
19. *Recent Suggestions for the Reconciliation of Theories of Probability,* p. 214.
20. *Aspects of Scientific Explanation,* pp. 25-29.

21. Feynman, *QED.*
22. *Aspects of Scientific Explanation,* pp. 35-39.
23. Salmon, *Causality and Explanation,* pp. 97-98.
24. Daston, p. 31.
25. Carnap, An *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science,* p. 22.
26. *Ibid*., p. 23-24.
27. De Finetti Bruno, *Recent Suggestions for the Reconciliation of Theories of Probability,* pp. 218-221.
28. De Finetti Bruno, *Theory of Probability, A critical introductory treatment,* Volume 1, p. 7.

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Logical Connectives and Global Epistemological Skepticism

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Abstract:

In Aristotle's *Metaphysics* there is an interplay between metaphysics and metalogic in his attempt to undermine universal skepticism through the foundational laws of logic and, in particular, the law of non-contradiction. However, recently, the debate has shifted from logical laws to the ubiquitous elements of modern logic, namely, logical connectives. By drawing on Arthur Prior's (in)famous "tonk" connective, Paul Boghossian contends that the issues arising from this type of connective transcend matters logical and, ominously, open the floodgates of radical skepticism. This discussion note is an examination of Boghossian's attempt to delegitimize logical connectives of "tonk" ilk for the purpose of averting the calamity of global epistemological skepticism.

Keywords: Aristotle, Being, Boghossian, Law of Non-Contradiction, Logical Connectives, Prior, Skepticism, Tonk

There is a notable consensus that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is intentionally concerned with the problem of skepticism as an integral part of a universal or special science of being. Indeed, his discussion of the Protagorean doctrine, arising out of the problem of conflicting appearances, is tied to the denial of the law of non-contradiction which in turn epitomizes itself in the Aristotelian corpus as radical skepticism.

Prima facie, one may suspect a dissonance here as any discussion of the law of non-contradiction seems to be more ensconced in the domain of logic and its foundation in contrast with a study of the content and details of a universal or special discipline dedicated to the overarching subject of being and existence. However, Aristotle in his pioneering role as the first *metalogician* (Lear 1980; 1988) attempts to shed light on the nature of proof and consequence and, in particular, the status of the law of non-contradiction in his *Metaphysics* with the ultimate aim of demonstrating the *intelligibility* of the broad structure of *reality* in the same breath. In Aristotle's own articulation, this metaphysical and metalogical interplay and interaction takes place in the following manner:

> Obviously then it is the work of one science to examine being *qua* being, and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being, and the same science will examine not only substances but also their attributes ...

> We must state whether it belongs to one or different sciences to inquire into the truths which are in *mathematics* called axioms, and into *substance*. (Emphasis added) Evidently, the inquiry into these also belongs to one science, and that the science of the philosopher; for these truths hold good for everything that is, and not for some special genus apart from others. ...
> Evidently then it belongs to the philosopher, i.e. to him who is studying the nature of all substance, to inquire also into *the principles of syllogism*. (Emphasis added) But he who knows best about each genus must be able to state the most certain principles of his subject, so that he whose subject is existing things *qua* existing must be able to state the most certain principles of all things. ... Evidently then such a principle is the most certain of all; which principle this is, let us proceed to say. *It is, that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect* (Emphasis added) ... This, then, is the most certain of all principles ... *that all who are carrying out a demonstration reduce it to this as an ultimate belief; for this is naturally the starting-point even for all the other axioms.* (Emphasis added) (McKeon 1941, 1005^{a} 13-1005^{b} 34, pp. 735-737)

Thus, in Aristotle's ontology, what ultimately underwrites being and existence is logic, or, more specifically, the law of non-contradiction, and thereby metaphysics and metalogic seem to be intrinsically coextensive in the Aristotelian architecture. In a somewhat anachronistic characterization, one may even venture to think of Aristotle as an early proponent of *logicism* on a grander scale than its circumscribed mathematical variety as presented in the works of Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell when it comes to the overall ontological structure of reality.

Nonetheless, what seems clear and incontrovertible in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is that a defense of the foundation of logic, *viz.*, the law of non-contradiction as conceptualized in the Aristotelian architectonic, holds the key to mounting a successful challenge to radical skepticism. However, more recently, the boundaries of extreme skepticism have been pushed beyond logical laws to the omnipresent and cardinal character of modern logic, namely, the ubiquity of logical connectives and their status. The debate was initially introduced by Arthur Prior (1960) as a critique of logical conventionalism and specifically against the conventionalist reading of logical connectives; yet, somewhat ironically, the criticism has now spilled beyond logical and mathematical conventionalism to the far greater domain of epistemological skepticism. Nonetheless, Prior's scathing attack has been of such an impact that any doctrine or stripe of conventionalism, whether in logic and mathematics, needs to visit and find a way of responding to it. (Warren 2020)

In this exceedingly pithy paper, for the purpose of highlighting a number of issues including what constitutes a logical connective and what constitutes a justification of logical laws, Prior introduces his (in)famous connective "tonk" by the following introduction (I-Rule) and elimination rules (E-Rule):

I-Rule:	*A*	E-Rule:	*A* tonk *B*
	A tonk *B*		*B*

Then he points out how such a construal of logical connectives shows the problematic nature of an inferentialist approach that imputes the truth of logical laws to the meanings of logical vocabularies whose definitions are given in terms of some deducibility rules. Specifically, Prior shows how through the "tonk" connective we can generate inferential forms whose application leads to absurdity and *Falsche Spitzfindigkeit*.

Recently, however, it has been argued by Paul Boghossian (2001; 2003; 2014) that the problem of "tonk" goes beyond the problem of justifying deduction and can be easily extended to the larger issue of *global* epistemological skepticism: that is, how there could be objectively correct epistemic principles of any kind. Basically, so goes the argument, if deduction is in trouble for its justification, given the ineluctable involvement of *deductive* reasoning in any account of how we might know the correctness of any *non-deductive* epistemic principles, then there arises the specter of global epistemological skepticism.

The preamble to Boghossian's approach is the observation that:

> If there are no objectively correct facts about how one ought to reason deductively, much of what we take to be knowledge would not be binding on those who would prefer to reason differently. (Boghossian 2001, 14)

And, then, he sketches the argument in outline thus:

> All the points about the inadequacy of observational or default reasonableness accounts would carry over to the non-deductive case. That means that any justification for the principles governing non-deductive reasoning would have to be inferential. As inferential, they would either have to be non-deductive or deductive, or a mixture of the two. If non-deductive, then the justification would be rule-circular ... If deductive, then ditto. If a mixture, then ditto. (*Ibid.*, 15)

Boghossian, finally, caps the argument by the following iteration:

> To put matters another way, it seems to me that all we really need, in order to raise a serious problem about the possibility of objectively correct epistemic principles, is the simple and seemingly inescapable claim that *reasoning* of some sort will be involved in any putative knowledge that we might have of any high-level epistemic claim. Once that simple thought is in place, seemingly insuperable problems are upon us virtually immediately. (*Ibid.*, 15)

However, to stave off global skepticism, Boghossian mounts a defense of deduction by arguing against the legitimacy of "tonk" type connectives as they apparently fail to be truth-preserving. The argument is buttressed by the semantic stipulation that there must be a semantic value for any logical constant which makes its corresponding inferential laws truth-preserving. In other words, "tonk" is not only not truth-preserving but also meaningless. However, given the *deductive* nature of the argument, Boghossian readily concedes the circularity of the reasoning but contends that the rule-circularity involved in the argumentation is of a virtuous than a vicious variety.

The rest of this epigrammatic discussion is, therefore, an outline of a number of critical concerns about Boghossian's contention.

(1) If rule-circularity is permissible in the justification of deduction, why cannot the same latitude be shown towards inductive justification of induction? Indeed, there has been a renewed flurry of justifying induction *à la* Hans Reichenbach through meta-induction and optimality. (Schurz 2019) Thus, there appears to be no cause for global skepticism.

(2) Notwithstanding the rule-circularity issue, in view of the existence of many competing and mutually exclusive deductive systems, one is left in dark as to how to choose between them. Boghossian's wherewithal to justify deduction is not sufficiently discriminatory to adjudicate among such *competing* deductive calculi.

(3) In pursuit of his meaning-theoretic concerns, Boghossian appeals to the forgoing semantic stipulation to delegitimize "tonk" type connectives. Yet, what exactly is the status of such meaning stipulations? That is, would not an appeal to such constraints embroil one either in a vicious circle or in an infinite regress? This seems to be somewhat reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's (1895) famous dialogue between the tortoise and Achilles.

(4) Moreover, the imposition of the semantic stipulation on the construction of any logical framework seems to blur the boundaries between *logicality* and *meaningfulness* of connectives. It can be shown that there are perfectly decent logical connectives that can operate in the absence of such semantic constraints: that is, though such cases are unhelpful by obscuring the meaning of those connectives, the absence of the semantic stipulation neither engenders incoherence nor renders their rules incapable of defining the meaning of the connectives as logical. (Read 2008; Warren 2020)

(5) Furthermore, the converse of the preceding point about Boghossian's possibly unintended blurring of the boundaries between logicality and meaningfulness can be expressed in the form of the following question: why should the mere possession of semantic value be sufficient to figure in valid patterns of inference? A poignant example here is Frege's problematic principle, Basic Law V, involving the term "extension" that ultimately led to the discovery of Russell's Paradox.

(6) There have been attempts at exploring the possibility of contexts where the addition of "tonk" would not lead to absurdity and failure of truth-preservation. The attempts can be divided into two broad categories: syntactical as in Cook (2005), Maruyama (2016), Ripley (2015) and Teijeiro (2020), or semantical as in Ripley (2015) and Warren (2015; 2020).

(7) It seems that the grounds for the *virtuous* rule-circularity claim in Boghossian's argument include *inter alia* an espousal of non-crude *externalism* which presumably provides an opportunity to break out of the *vicious* circle of *internalism* that relies on *a priori* reasoning, self-knowledge, or reflection. The idea here seems to be that we can acquire a warrant for an inference despite its circularity since it is not required for us antecedently to possess a *reflectively appreciable warrant* for that inference rule. Thus, in line with externalism, the requirement to first reflectively acknowledge

the truth-preserving nature of the inference to be warranted is obviated. Now, besides the considerable concerns surrounding externalism, the critical question to ask in the context of logic is: does an external warrant furnish a proper and apposite ground for justifying logical laws? Specifically, does not externalism deprive logic of its most cherished and cardinal characteristic, namely, *necessity*?

(8) In contrast with Boghossian's method, another approach to solving the problem of justification for both deduction and induction has been to claim the need for a disambiguation in the concept of justification. It is contended that there are at least two senses of justification here: justification *simpliciter* (my term) and justification *relative to a cognitive end*, and the problem of justification of deduction and induction concerns the latter not the former which can be overcome *inductively for deduction* and *deductively for induction*. (Huber 2017) Although the approach fails to appeal to justification purists, at least it is not more problematic than Boghossian's.

(9) Historically speaking, Boghossian's rule-circular justification of deduction diverges drastically from the initial emergence and treatment of the issue. Specifically, it flies against the earliest extant attempt at such a justification by Aristotle in *Metaphysics Γ*. Aristotle's method of *elenchus* (negative proof or proof by refutation) in his version of the justification of deduction brings the problematic nature of Boghossian's approach into further focus and light.

(10) Finally, whether Prior's "tonk" connective is truth-preserving and meaningful or not, the more fundamental and pressing issue is the question of what constitutes a logical connective. That is, what is it that separates logical vocabulary from the non-logical ones? This is a problem of demarcation of an utmost significance. In this context, it is sobering to recall Alfred Tarski's skepticism about the bifurcation of lexicons into logical and non-logical. (Tarski 1956) He contended that that there are no objective grounds to permit one to draw a sharp boundary between the two groups of terms.[1] Now, if Tarski happens to be right in his contention that there are no decisive demarcations between logical and non-logical lexicons, not only the justification of deduction is in peril but also the Aristotelian project of defeating skepticism through the vindication of the law of non-contradiction for the purpose of establishing his prized universal or special science of being *qua* being. By the same extension, it seems Boghossian's anti-skeptical enterprise is in jeopardy too and the global epistemological skepticism is back in business.

Endnotes:

1. In view of Tarski's later innovative work on logical constants in terms of *invariant permutations*, it is important to bear in mind that the problems still persist. Generalizing Felix Klein's Erlanger Programm in geometry, Tarski attempts to explicate the class of logical lexicons in terms of notions that remain invariant under all transformations: 'we call a notion 'logical' if it is invariant under all possible one-one transformations of the world onto itself.' (Tarski and Corcoran 1986, 149) However, Tarski readily admits that his proposal is just 'about a possible use of the term' where 'the term is used in several different senses that my suggestion gives an account of one of them.' (*Ibid.*, 145) That is, without a 'monistic conception of logic' (*Ibid.*, 153), in Tarski's own words, what

turns out to be a logical notion differs and diverges. In other words, Tarski's proposal invites the problem of either circularity or regress in one's identification of logical notions. In fact, early in the paper, he explicitly states that in his endeavor to characterize what a 'logical notion' is, he has no truck with 'people [who] speak of catching the proper, true meaning of a notion, something independent of actual usage, and independent of any normative proposals'. (*Ibid.*, 145)

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A Thomistic Restoration of the Liberal Arts

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Abstract:

The notion of liberal arts, since Aquinas, has dramatically changed in its content, method, and aim. Today the liberal arts are understood synonymously with liberal education or general education, which calls for its restoration and rediscovery. For Aquinas, the seven liberal arts—which by his time were already composed of the *trivium* (i.e., grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (i.e., geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy)—are contrasted to the mechanical arts and the speculative sciences. The current conception of the liberal arts as holistic education came from a gradual conceptual shift in the last two centuries. Liberal arts studies have been progressively reduced to teaching "subjects" rather than giving students the tools, the "art," of learning, of liberal education. The loss of the sense of the liberal arts—especially its Thomistic sense—brings certain repercussions in how the nature of "education" is understood. As such, this article aims to (1) clarify the situation of the liberal arts, (2) retrace the history of the liberal arts, (3) explore its Thomistic conception, and (4) consider the need to recover them as necessary for the proper order of learning befitting man.

Keywords: Liberal arts, *trivium*, *quadrivium*, education, speculative sciences, mechanical arts

The situation of the liberal arts today, often mistakenly interchanged with "liberal education," has a history often taken for granted. When we think of the liberal arts, the most spontaneous reaction is to think of it as the arts that free the person, the arts that liberate man. Another interpretation these arts receive is that they are a set of disciplines that give sufficient human tools to enable the person to engage in more demanding disciplines, like the hard sciences. This is much closer to the original conception of the liberal arts, but it still is far from being an accurate representation of what the liberal arts *are* and what they are *meant for*. A third interpretation of liberal education, which is perhaps the commonest one, is that it is taken to be interchangeable with the humanities or interdisciplinary studies: that the liberal arts are the same as the humanities and interdisciplinary studies. This seems to be one of the gravest errors which speaks of a great deficiency in the understanding of what the liberal arts are.

More forgivable is the association between the liberal arts and liberal education. The two are both "liberal" studies, but what sense of "liberal" do liberal *arts* and liberal *education* adopt? The confusion between the two comes from the distinction in the Aristotelian-Thomistic scheme of knowledge between "liberal knowledge" and "liberal arts knowledge." The former is the same as theoretical knowledge, sought for its own sake, while the latter is constructive knowledge, sought for the sake of *making* something else. What is specific to liberal arts knowledge is that it is *constructed for the sake of liberal knowledge*. That is to say, liberal arts knowledge is for the sake of liberal knowledge. This aspect of the liberal arts, of being "for the sake of," was lost in its history and thus tended to be equated with liberal education, which has as its chief end liberal knowledge (Mullaney 1956, 499).

The liberal arts, traditionally, have been classified into two stages: the first phase, *trivium*, and the second phase, *quadrivium*. The *trivium* is composed of the subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; the *quadrivium* is composed of the subjects of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.[1] Their etymological roots help us understand their nature as a set of disciplines. *Trivium* comes from the Latin *tres* ("three") and *via* ("way"), which combined means "three ways." In a similar fashion, *quadrivium* comes from the Latin *quattuor* ("four") and *via* ("way"), and this means "four ways."

But what are they *ways* toward? What are they ways *for*? In the Middle Ages, particularly in the Aristotelian sense that was adopted by Scholastics, these "ways" were understood to mean ways in which the person could advance from the active life to the contemplative life, from the practical to the speculative, from the arts to the sciences (Aquinas, "Summa Theologiae" [*ST*] II-II 182.4). As Aquinas wrote, "the reason why they are divided into the *trivium* and *quadrivium* is that they are as it were paths introducing the quick mind to the secrets of philosophy" (Aquinas, "Super Boetium de Trinitate" [*In De Trin.*] 5.1.3).[2] In other words, the liberal arts dispose the human person for the attainment of wisdom, the knowledge of the highest causes (*ST* II-II 45.1).[3]

Now, this demands further elaboration and will be treated in a later section, but for the moment it suffices to say that the liberal arts, in its centuries-long history, has assumed so many shapes and forms, but it seems to stand in its obscurest form today, in the twenty-first century. Hence, for this investigation, an attempt will be made to make patent the situation of the liberal arts today. Second, the history of the liberal arts will be retraced from its origin in the ancient Greeks and Romans. Third, this brief survey will elaborate on the Thomistic conception of the liberal arts. The final section will consider the need to recover the Thomistic character of the liberal arts as a proper order of learning befitting man.

1. The situation of the liberal arts today

Advocates for a liberal arts curriculum are scrambling to find ways to make relevant the education they either give or receive. This is largely due to the growing popularity of STEM-related (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) disciplines. Now this fact is something that cannot be taken lightly, because it is something very real in the educational atmosphere of today. The reason for this exponential increase in the preference for STEM subjects can be primarily attributed to the growing phenomenon of "scientism," an approach that absolutizes the scientific method, claiming that the only real way of arriving at legitimate knowledge is through scientific inquiry. It is no surprise that among the principal advocates of scientism are the so-called New Atheists (e.g., Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennett, etc.).

There is a long history of how this came to be, and this is not the proper place to discuss such a dense subject matter. I must defer to Sir Roger Scruton's magnificent work, *On Human Nature* (2017), which discusses in depth the various dimensions of scientism, particularly the ills it causes on our perspective of the human person, and the possible remedies for it.

A partial reason for the decadence of the liberal arts is the progressive intrusion of other disciplines into the structure of the original seven arts, which disrupts their unity and meaning. One of the factors that contributed to the saturation of foreign disciplines comes from the claim of some scholars that, "historically, the aim of a liberal arts education, in the most general terms, has been to inculcate a set of cultural values through texts and traditions believed to exemplify those values. In other words, the purpose of such education has been to pass on 'culture'—to transmit the values, practices, and institutions a culture believes to be its fabric and framework" (Atwill 1998, 1).

However, as we shall see, this is a mistaken view of the liberal arts because it appears to distort both what the seven arts have meant and what they are supposed to mean—to say nothing of the irrepressible tendency to synonymize liberal arts with liberal education, which has had catastrophic consequences on the way education systems posture themselves. Admittedly, the "liberal arts" is somewhat of an elusive term, at least in the history of what it has meant for man, for there are "a great many arts which are not liberal, and a great many liberal studies which are not arts. All this makes it extremely easy to lose one's way" (Mullahy 1949, 362).

One need only look at the gradual pace of educational decadence by observing the "general education" curriculum, which supplanted the apparently outdated "liberal education" curriculum. There should be a moderate amount of suspicion toward general education; after all, in the medieval period, the liberal arts were taught prior to higher education. There were what were called grammar schools which instructed the youth in literacy (i.e., the Latin language and Latin literature). This sort of education was a prerequisite as it laid the foundation to make the study of the other liberal arts possible (especially the great dependence logic has on grammar).

There was a turn in how the liberal arts were understood to be "liberal." At a certain point in the history of the liberal arts, they became identified as the arts that make man free, the arts that liberate man (Lewis 2013, 129-30). From those questionable premises, one easily concludes that the liberal arts must be a holistic education that frees man from the bonds of his brute tendencies. But yet again, this is not an adequate view of the nature, or at the very least the function, of the liberal arts. The problem with this perspective is that it equates the liberal arts (an education for skills) with liberal education (an education for the whole of the person).

Proponents of such a radical change in the trajectory of the liberal arts defend the idea that knowledge has become so multifaceted that holistic education necessarily had to expand its scope to accommodate social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences, and that a truly liberal education is a formation in all these areas. One might ask, where have the liberal arts gone? The fields of learning now appear divided into those three: the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Some would apply the liberal arts as congruent with or as encompassed by the humanities. But that will not do. The crux of the problem is the loss of what the liberal arts meant in their original Thomistic conception which, consequently, meant a loss in the sense of urgency and necessity for the liberal arts.

Far from what they mean to many today, the liberal arts are not a curriculum that gives man all the tools for holistic human development. The use of the term "tools" is deliberate: students are now more concerned with the expectations of employers rather than the education that ought to be had, that is, the kind of education befitting the human person. Since employers tend now to look for "experience" and "hard or soft skills," among other vague qualifications, students seek the sort of education that fulfills just that. And that appears to be the direction in which attempts to define liberal education are being done (Schneider 2009).

Not only does the current general education curriculum undermine liberal education, but it also appears to have erased the liberal arts from education, as much as this sort of curriculum professes to preserve them. Only remnants of the liberal arts remain beneath the core curriculum courses. One could argue that different "skills" have replaced the "skills" (*ars*) of a liberal arts education, and that the advancement of knowledge and the expansion of domains of learning admit of a need to adapt the skills learned in school to contemporary circumstances.

But to such a claim only a simple refutation is needed: that the "skills" that contemporary education offers are simply a knowledge of "know-how," which is distinct from the knowledge of "know-why" that the liberal arts have proven to bestow. With "know-how," one is given a sort of knowledge—i.e., *useful* knowledge—that resembles the capabilities of machines; but with "know-why," one is given a sort of knowledge proper to human persons. That is what the liberal arts prepare persons for, and that is precisely what general education takes for granted. But before the rapidly changing and globalized world forgot the liberal arts, the seven arts had relative stability for many centuries, until around the nineteenth century, when liberal arts colleges began to be the pedagogical vogue of higher education, especially in the United States.

2. The origin of the liberal arts in the ancient world

Scholars have debated on the origin of the liberal arts, but the most likely theory has been presented by Pierre Conway and Benedict Ashley. There they argued against the claim that the liberal arts have a Platonic origin and were systematized by the Stoics. They acknowledged that the first mention of the liberal arts as seven in number is in the writings of Martianus Capella, a Roman writer from the fifth century, who is taken to be a Stoic (Conway and Ashley 1959, 462). It is not difficult to imagine the Roman and Stoic origin of the liberal arts because the first recorded usage of the term liberal arts was in Marcus Tullius Cicero's *De Inventione*, where he refers to an "*artum liberalium*," liberal arts (1968, 72-3). It is doubtful he meant the seven liberal arts as they were later to be known by, but this goes to show that it is no surprise that the liberal arts were systematized by the Romans.

Some other scholars propose that the liberal arts have Platonic origins. Robert Brumbaugh noted that all the seven liberal arts are mentioned, in one way or another, in book seven of Plato's *Republic* (Conway and Ashley, 1959, 463). But it is unlikely that these two propositions hold because, firstly, the liberal arts precede Plato and thus precede the ancient Romans. The mathematical arts of the *quadrivium* can be traced back to Pythagoras and his school, while the arts of letters and symbols of the *trivium* are found already in the dialogues of some of the pre-Socratics, particularly Zeno and Empedocles. In any case, the liberal arts could not have had a Platonic or Stoic origin. Rather, the liberal arts can be found imbued in the form of ancient Greek education, which was called *παιδεία*, *paideia*.[4] This term is not adequately translated as "education" in the understanding of the term today, but more properly an intense form of education that could be called "erudition" (McKeon 1949, 292).

But what is particularly interesting is what Aristotle thought of the liberal arts because, though he does not apply the terms *trivium* and *quadrivium*, he speaks of the liberal arts in detail. For Aristotle, there is a difference between liberal and servile studies, the studies meant for their own sake and the studies meant for something else. But what did this liberal studies consist of for Aristotle?

> We know that among the liberal studies he included grammar (reading, writing), and the study of music, to which he says that drawing might be added. Music, of course, is connected with poetry, which in turn, like rhetoric and dialectics, is rooted in logic in the strict sense. Hence, it is safe to say that Aristotle considered the *trivium* as the basis of education, although for him the tripartite division is not significant (Conway and Ashley 1959, 464).

Appended to this is the mathematical studies of the *quadrivium*—though not identified as such by Aristotle—in his belief that mathematics "*precedes* the study of the natural science" (Conway and Ashley, 1959, 464). Aristotle writes, "...one might ask this question too, why a boy may become a mathematician, but not a philosopher or a physicist. It is because the objects of mathematics exist by abstraction, while the first principles of these other subjects come from experience" (Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics" [*NE*] 1142a15). Hence, for Aristotle, mathematics, as practical wisdom, is an introductory study to speculative wisdom. This is thus the basis for the Aristotelian character of the *quadrivium*. Nevertheless, the defined disciplines included in the liberal arts (and in two levels, as *trivium* and *quadrivium*) were yet to take form during this period.

As early as the first century B.C., Cicero admitted that they—the Romans—owed much of their learning to the Greeks and the arts that were transmitted to them. In fact, the ancient Romans appropriated the Greek idea of *paideia* and translated it into the Latin *humanitas*. Yet the Latin *humanitas* did not simply mean "humanity" but, more than that, it was a reflection of the "result of the impact of Greek arts on Roman life" (McKeon 1949, 292). Cicero wrote:

> We are therefore bound to do our utmost to make good this claim not in our native arts only but also in those that belong to the Greeks themselves. However, words which the practice of past generations

permits us to employ as Latin, e.g. the term 'philosophy' itself, or 'rhetoric,' 'logic,' 'grammar,' 'geometry,' 'music' we may consider as being our own (Cicero 1931, 220-1).[5]

3. The liberal arts prior to its Thomistic conception

Even before the medieval period—an era that spanned almost a millennium, from the fifth century to the thirteenth century—when the liberal arts were situated firmly in the cycles of study, the seven arts were already held in high esteem, especially by Augustine, who in fact was working on a compilation of commentaries on the liberal arts called the *Disciplinarum Libri*, which by some turn of events was never completed. He holds that "the liberal disciplines (if, of course, moderate and concise), produces lovers more lively, more persevering, and better groomed for embracing the truth; and as a result they more ardently desire, more consistently pursue, and finally, more sweetly cling to that which is called... the happy life" (Augustine 2020, 36-7). It is worth pointing out that there is unanimity in what Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas believe the goal of the liberal arts is: *eudaimonia*, flourishing, the happy life, the contemplative life.

This goal of contemplative life is crucial to understanding the role of the liberal arts in the formation of the human mind. Aquinas, commenting on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, said that "perfect happiness evidently should consist in contemplative activity" (Aquinas "Sententia libri Ethicorum" [*In NE*] 10.12.2121).[6] Hence, it follows that if one were to form his mind and faculties, it must have as its aim contemplative activity. Aquinas argues that there are stages in the attainment of contemplative life; that, unlike the intellect of angels, the human person must make his way through premises and must undergo a process (i.e., the operations of the mind: simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning) before arriving at the perception of truth. Nevertheless, this series of intermediate acts arrive at a "final act," the "crowning act," which is contemplative activity (Aquinas "Expositio libri Posteriorum Analyticorum" [*In Post. An.*] 1.1 and *ST* II-II 180.3).

Further revealed by the series of acts leading up to the crowning act of contemplative activity is the idea, articulated by Augustine, of moderation. As mentioned, he stipulated a condition for reaching the end of the liberal arts (i.e., the speculative sciences, the kind of knowledge necessary for human happiness), which is to be educated in the liberal disciplines *with moderation*. In what does this moderation consist? One interpretation of this is that one must not perpetually spend his energies pursuing the skills perfected by the liberal arts (i.e., the products of reason: a syllogism, composition, discourse, etc.). One should advance to the speculative sciences somehow, to greater or lesser degrees of immersion, since these sciences are the higher end of learning. If one were to remain in the liberal disciplines all his life, he would be groomed to embrace truth but perhaps would not have yet embraced truth itself.

Another interpretation of the need for moderation in the study of the liberal arts can be derived from Aristotle's claim that "amusement is needed more amid serious occupations than at other times (for he who is hard at work has need of relaxation, and amusement gives relaxation, whereas occupation is always accompanied with exertion and effort)" (Aristotle "Politics" [*Pol.*]

1337b35-40). Hence, the liberal arts could also be seen not only as studies preparatory for the disciplines proper to speculative truth, but also the arts that provide man the *sufficient relaxation* to prepare for the speculative studies. Hence, "music, and generically poetics," to which one could relate rhetoric, "...are in addition singled out by Aristotle as especially appropriate for the relaxation in the leisure devoted to intellectual activity" (Conway and Ashley 1959, 487).

4. The Thomistic conception of the liberal arts

Aquinas was not the one who formulated the liberal arts, nor was he the one to define what the liberal arts were meant for. Rather, Aquinas expanded the potential of the liberal arts to the fullest breadth of its rich Aristotelian character. That is to say, he enriched the seven liberal arts by identifying how they are "liberal" and why they are "arts," drawing especially from the Aristotelian explanation for the development of the mind. This order in intellectual progress can be found in the prologue to his *Super Librum de causis expositio*, where he writes:

> Hence the chief aim of philosophers was to consider all things in order to arrive at knowledge of first causes. That is why they placed knowledge of first causes last, in the final stage of life, and began first with logic which treats the mode of the sciences, went on second to mathematics, of which even children are capable, third, to natural philosophy which requires time for experience, fourth to moral philosophy of which the young are not suitable students, and finally they turned to divine science which considers the first causes of beings (Aquinas "Super Librum de causis expositio" [*In LDC*] 7-8).

This order of learning—from logic to mathematics, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and finally the divine sciences—might appear as if Aquinas excludes the other liberal arts (i.e., grammar, rhetoric, music, and astronomy) as part of the order of learning. This is not so. Rather, Aquinas uses the terms "logic" and "mathematics" as general headings to refer to the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, respectively (Conway and Ashley 1959, 500).

Aquinas further states in the prologue to his *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*: "Now all the sciences and arts are ordained to one thing, namely, to man's perfection, which is happiness." Although science and art are ordained toward man's attainment of *eudaimonia*, Aquinas holds that science is generally a superior kind of knowledge to art. He comments, "Therefore, since many useful arts have been discovered (some to provide the necessities of life, as the mechanical arts, and others to introduce us to the sciences, as the logical disciplines), those artists must be said to be wiser whose sciences were discovered not for the sake of utility but merely for the sake of knowing, that is to say, the speculative sciences" (Aquinas "Sententia libri Metaphysicae" [*In Met.*] 1.1.32). Furthermore, "science... pertain[s] to the speculative part of the soul, which [Aristotle] speaks of in [the *Ethics*] as the scientific part of the soul..." but "art belong[s] to the practical part of the soul, which reasons about our contingent courses of action" (*In Met.* 1.1.34).

Hence, Aquinas thinks, as earlier mentioned, that what comes first in the formation of the intellect is the art of reasoning, logic, and then mathematics, the art of numbers and symbols, which are the crowning skills of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, respectively. These seven arts prepare the mind for those highest truths which "are less and later known for [man]" because the knowledge of causes is made only through their effects (*In LDC* 3). Once this has been achieved, men can proceed to the speculative studies, natural and moral philosophy, and more importantly, divine sciences (theology and metaphysics) (Aquinas "Super Boetium De Trinitate" [*In De Trin.*] III 5.1.10).[7] But this order of learning, Aquinas says, is not exclusive to the philosopher. Instead, this is the "fitting order of learning" for *all* men. This is short of saying this order of learning constitutes the framework of any education.

A second aspect of interest in what Aquinas said here is that it reveals the end of learning: the speculative sciences, that is to say, contemplation—which Aristotle famously regards as the "highest form of activity" (*NE* 1177a18). One could thus consider the liberal arts as those products of reason which dispose it for higher activity. The formation of the intellect is meant to lead the human person to the speculative disciplines. But, for Aquinas, following Aristotle, the order of knowledge comes from what is apprehended by the senses. There is nothing in the mind that has not gone through the senses. This Aristotelian principle is all over the famous introductory lines of the first book of the *Metaphysics*. Similarly, Aquinas believes that learning happens this way, in accord with the order of knowledge: from the active life to the contemplative life, from the practical to the speculative, from the arts to the sciences. This is why Aquinas thinks it is not aligned with the fitting order of learning for man that he engage immediately in the divine sciences, in theology and metaphysics, without first having a firm footing in the basic arts.

These basic arts, which are preparatory to the speculative sciences, are precisely the liberal arts. Now this term "liberal arts" might appear as somewhat of a contradiction, Mullaney observes. The reason is that "liberal" means that which is sought for its own sake, while "art" has an inferior role of being *for* something else. But this is not so because, as Conway and Ashley note, the liberal arts are only "arts" by extension, that is, only "according to a certain likeness" (1959, 474). A preliminary consideration for this may be found in a text from Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*:

> Similarly, the other seven are called liberal either because they require minds which are liberal, that is, liberated and practiced (for these sciences pursue subtle inquiries into the causes of things), or because in antiquity only free and noble men were accustomed to study them, while the populace and the sons of men not free sought operative skill in things mechanical (1961, 75).

Apart from this text of the *Didascalicon*, a work Aquinas frequently referred to for insight concerning the liberal arts, it is likewise evident in his own writings. In his early work, *Super Boetium De* Trinitate, he stresses the "productive" character of the liberal arts, which qualify them as "arts" but distinguish them from the servile, mechanical arts, or arts of utility (*In De Trin.* 5.1.3).[8] He writes, "these [liberal arts] are called arts because they involve not only knowledge but also a work that is directly a product of reason itself; for example, producing a composition, syllogism or discourse, numbering, measuring, composing melodies, and reckoning the course of the stars" (*In*

De Trin. 5.1.3). Grammar consists of producing a composition; logic, producing a syllogism; rhetoric, producing a discourse; arithmetic, the art of numbering; geometry, the art of measuring; music, the art of composing melodies; and astronomy, the reckoning of the course of the stars.

Not only are the liberal arts products of reason, but they are the only arts directed to knowledge—wholly opposed to the arts directed toward useful ends. Aquinas comments, "[O]nly those arts which are directed to knowing are called free [or liberal] arts, whereas those which are directed to some useful end attained by action are called mechanical or servile arts" (*In Met.* 1.3.59). This distinction Aquinas makes between the liberal arts and servile arts, *artes liberales* and *artes serviles*, refers to the division of intellectual life: the contemplative intellect and the practical intellect. The former concerns the "knowledge of truth itself" while the latter "some external action" (*ST* II-II 179.2). Since the liberal arts are products of reason, that is, their effects are "internal," they qualify under the contemplative intellect, not the practical intellect. In other words, the liberal arts "are not ordained to anything outside the intellect" (Mullahy 1949, 364).

In all this, it is interesting how Aquinas nuances the function of the liberal arts. First, as we observed earlier, Aquinas says that the liberal arts are *liber* in two senses: in the sense that they are arts befitting free men and in the sense that they are for their own sake or, more precisely, for the sake of the speculative sciences that are for their own sake. Second, the liberal arts are *ars* because they have a certain product: a composition, syllogism, discourse, etc. But they are products totally unlike the products of the mechanical or servile arts which have an external product. The products of the liberal arts are *internal*. Human reason *makes something*. The kinds of arts, the mechanical arts and liberal arts, are distinguished by the "fact that 'art' in the strict sense has a product which goes out into external matter, while the 'liberal art' does not have a material product but a product primarily in the mind, and one ordained to knowledge" (Conway and Ashley 1959, 474).

This idea of internal creation done by the liberal arts is also accounted for in the *Summa Theologiae*:

> Even in speculative matters there is something by way of work: e.g. the making of a syllogism [logic] or of a fitting speech [rhetoric], or the work of counting [arithmetic] or measuring [geometry]. Hence whatever habits are ordained to such like works of the speculative reason, are, by a kind of comparison, called arts indeed, but "liberal" arts, in order to distinguish them from those arts that are ordained to works done by the body, which arts are, in a fashion, servile, inasmuch as the body is in servile subjection to the soul, and man, as regards his soul, is free [*liber*] (I-II 57.3.3).

The third nuance Aquinas presents is that the liberal arts are preparatory to the speculative sciences. Although he says that they are ends in themselves because they are *liber*, they remain preparatory studies for the speculative sciences. What seems to be this dual end of the liberal arts is an idea already articulated by Augustine in his proposition that "liberal arts are learned, partly for their usefulness in living, partly for the knowledge and contemplation of things" (Augustine 2020, 89). Aristotle and Aquinas believe that logic and mathematics are indispensable to acquire the method of science before one can engage in the sciences themselves (Conway and Ashley 1959, 471). Hence, although it is for all men to study logic and mathematics (the liberal arts) as the basic stages of learning, not all men can engage in the study of the divine sciences, theology and metaphysics.

The sequence of the liberal arts and how they are directed to the speculative sciences is further concretized thus: the mathematical *quadrivium* is the last of the liberal arts but the first of the speculative sciences (Conway and Ashley 1959, 489). In effect, the progression of learning begins with the most basic art, logic, which is the crowning skill of the *trivium*, then the learning proceeds to the *quadrivium*, in which the mind is immersed in mathematics, which is the crowning skill of the *quadrivium*. Then the study of the speculative sciences begins. But here the learner experiences a shift: in the final stage of the liberal arts he learned mathematics as an art, but proceeding to the speculative sciences, he begins by learning mathematics as a science (Conway and Ashley 1959, 490). This is consonant with Aristotle's idea that "a boy may become a mathematician, but not a philosopher or a physicist," because the latter two areas of knowledge require experience, which, for Aristotle, is contingent on time (which the youth do not yet have) (*NE* 1142a15).

The meaning of the liberal arts' "preparatory" nature could also refer to Aristotle's idea that "it is absurd to seek simultaneously for knowledge and for the method of obtaining it" (Aristotle "Metaphysics" [*Met.*] 995a13-4). Aquinas interprets this to mean "that we must investigate the method of scientific thinking before the sciences themselves" (*In De Trin.* 5.1.3). For this context, that is to say the liberal arts and the speculative sciences cannot be pursued *at the same time*. One must acquire the skills of the method—the liberal arts—before endeavoring into the speculative sciences themselves—e.g., metaphysics and theology.

It is also interesting to note that Aquinas says not all the liberal arts are necessary for the speculative sciences. Aquinas identifies logic, grammar, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy as indispensable to the speculative sciences, while rhetoric and music have a supplementary function. This means that the liberal arts have a specific "ministerial function" to the speculative sciences, but rhetoric and music have no direct contribution to this ministerial role of the liberal arts (Conway and Ashley 1959, 497). The primacy of logic in the *trivium* and the mathematical skills in the *quadrivium* are firmly founded on the Aristotelian premise found at the beginning of the *Metaphysics* (*Met.* 9800b25 and Conway and Ashley 1959, 478).[9]

Finally, we can observe from Aquinas account of the liberal arts that he thinks of them as ordained to the perfection of man, as the order of learning that helps man attain his happiness (Conway and Ashley 1959, 482, 504). The reason is that the liberal arts, as we have been saying, is necessary for the study of the speculative sciences; and it is the grasp of the speculative sciences which is the measure of man's achievement of contemplative life. This is why "the man who by his intellect is able to tend through the speculative liberal arts to the speculative sciences, is more fundamentally free than the man who is only legally free" (Conway and Ashley 1959, 479). In other words, the human person can be "freer" with the liberal arts than simply being legally or physically free.

Aquinas claimed that perfect happiness cannot be attained by the consideration of the speculative sciences. However, he admits that the speculative sciences permit the human person to have, as it were, "a certain participation of true and perfect happiness" (*ST* II-I 3.6).[10] It has been made clear that the liberal arts are introductory to the speculative sciences; and because the speculative sciences facilitate one's participation in true and perfect happiness, it follows that the liberal arts have an indirect contribution to the attainment of happiness. In other words, the liberal arts can be characterized as being preparatory, and therefore ordained, to man's happiness. Hence, not only do the liberal arts perfect the mental faculties of man—the "skills of reason"—but also, and more importantly, perfect the human person *qua* human person.[11]

This conclusion is not explicit in Aquinas doctrine of the liberal arts. Nevertheless, it can easily be implied when one strings together the ends of each level of learning: the liberal arts are for the speculative sciences, and the speculative sciences are for happiness; therefore, the liberal arts are for man's happiness. But one must *not* presume that the liberal arts, in and of themselves, constitute the adequate means for attaining happiness. Such is contrary to the ideas of both Aristotle and Aquinas for two reasons: (1) the liberal arts are not for their own sake, and thus not ends in themselves (which is an attribution proper to happiness), and (2) to say that the liberal arts are adequate for attaining happiness is to say that the arts (*τέχνη*, *tékhnē*) are adequate for reaching happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*, *eudaimoníā*), which is not the case because art always has a certain product, and is therefore not sought for its own sake.

Aquinas comments on the *Metaphysics*, "free men exist for themselves *inasmuch as they acquire things for themselves* and work for themselves [emphasis added]" (*In Met.* 1.3.58). That is to say, those activities sought for their own sake are what increase man's freedom. This is the exclusive contribution of the liberal arts among the other arts (i.e., fine arts and mechanical arts), because "their construction takes place within the very soul of man, within the very principle from which all of man's liberty flows, [thus] they are not art in the most strict sense of the term," but only by extension, so much so that Aquinas attributes to the liberal arts the name of "speculative arts" (Mullahy 1949, 372 and *ST* II-II 47.2.3).[12] In this manner, the liberal arts constitute "the beginning of the life of contemplation whose final fulfillment and complete realization is wisdom" (Mullahy 1949, 386).

5. Recovering the Thomistic conception of the liberal arts

Many scholars have attempted to lay the groundwork for re-establishing the liberal arts curriculum in secondary and higher education. The most draconian proposal to my knowledge is from James Mullaney. If not for the serious conviction for his unsettling conclusion, his article could have been one of the great contributions to the study of the nature of the liberal arts in the twentieth century. He concluded his work with the proposal of revising the content of the *quadrivium* and replacing arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music with the humanities (which he defines as the "integrated study of a given culture in its history, its philosophy, its literature, and its art" (Mullaney 1956, 501). Apart from the multiple contentions that can be raised against his characterization of the humanities, Mullaney stands to be corrected in his claim that the *quadrivium* ought to be revised because of the simple "fact of educational usage that 'liberal arts' *means* humanities" (Mullaney 1956, 504).

He draws this conclusion from (1) the "actual education practice" and (2) because of his claim that the content of the *quadrivium* is not art but science (i.e., mathematics and physical science) (Mullaney 1956, 505). He further suggests that the actual education practice, currently, understands the liberal arts as the humanities; thus, it becomes proof enough to reconsider the nature of the liberal arts and to subsume the study of the humanities under the liberal arts' *quadrivium*. But it appears that he has forgotten the simple difference between what *is* practiced and what *should* be practiced; or put another way, between "actual education practice" and "proper education practice."

Dorothy Sayers likewise proposed a revival of the liberal arts curriculum, but with more tempered claims. She identifies the liberal arts, particularly the *trivium* (i.e., grammar, logic, and rhetoric) to be the "art of learning," the transferable tools man applies in order to be acquainted with new fields of learning. Sayers lamented the ideal of modern education which finds no fault in bombarding students with "subjects." She said that "modern education concentrates on *teaching subjects*, leaving the method of thinking, arguing, and expressing one's conclusions to be picked up by the scholar as he goes along" (Sayers 2017, 16). For Sayers, the capital crime of modern education is the disintegration of logic in the curriculum of the youth, much more the loss of its relevance in higher studies (2017, 29).[13]

What we need, as Mullaney and Sayers have called for, is to return to the liberal arts, to recover the "lost tools of learning"—the liberal arts. But not just any kind of liberal arts, for as the history of the liberal arts has testified, the liberal arts have assumed so many meanings. The kind of liberal arts we need is the Thomistic one, firmly rooted in its rich Aristotelian character. This claim does not come from any suspicious Thomistic leanings, but from the simple fact that the liberal arts, in the way Aquinas has conceived of it, has shown to be a formidable educational method that conforms to the human person's order of learning.

In fact, Aquinas does not justify the proper order of learning based on the liberal arts; rather, he justifies the liberal arts based on the proper order of learning. "Had there been no *trivium* or *quadrivium*, Aquinas' reasons for the sequence of studies [i.e., logic, mathematics, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and divine sciences] would still be the same" (Conway and Ashley 1959, 500). The reason is that Aquinas derives the order of learning, "not from the 'liberal arts' of his day, but from his consideration of the order of studies in Aristotle—to which order he shows the conformity of the 'liberal arts' system of his time" (Conway and Ashley 1959, 500). This fitting order of learning is what the liberal arts serve, not the other way around.

However, modern education does not recognize this as a consequence of the fluctuations in the meaning, content, method, and aim of the liberal arts. "Since the concept of the liberal arts is vital, it grows and changes and evolves as does man, without impairment of nature but with ever fuller development" (Wise 1947, 200). Furthermore, "[i]t may be readily admitted that historically there has been considerable fluidity in the use of the term liberal art. Yet, in the midst of this fluidity, there has for many centuries been a persistent tradition in Western culture which restricts the term to a few well defined studies—the three studies of the *trivium*… and the four studies of the *quadrivium*" (Mullahy 1949, 365).

In any case, as the situation of the liberal arts today so clearly shows, we have lost the wonderful Thomistic sense of its being "liberal," that is, for its own sake and as preparatory for the speculative sciences, and "arts," as skills which have a certain product of reason, as a perfection of reason. The liberal arts is so muddled up with various disciplines and fields of learning that it has ceased to be "liberal," that is, it has ceased to be sought for its own sake. Aquinas' conception of the liberal arts appears to be a sure way to recover the power of the liberal arts as a means for human perfection, especially the perfection of human reason. The fluid understanding of the liberal arts has been in vogue for longer than it should, and we need to find firm grounds for establishing the formative potency of the liberal arts. This is most effectively done if we can recover the liberal arts' Thomistic meaning which seemed to have been buried deep centuries ago, to the detriment of man's progression.

This brief investigation should aptly conclude with the words of Mullahy which evoke a tone of hope and confidence in the revival of the Thomistic conception of the liberal arts: "If the modern world is to be saved from the devastation of science and technology, there must be a return, not merely to the liberal arts, but to liberal education in all its dimensions, and especially to wisdom, which is the culmination of all liberal knowledge" (1949, 386). Today's increasing threats of scientism and the overwhelming preference for STEM-related disciplines may very well serve to reverse the wheels of progress unless authentic liberal education, through the integrity of the Thomistic liberal arts,[14] is given its rightful place in the formation of the human person.

Endnotes:

1. Sister Miriam Joseph described the seven liberal arts and their content thus: (1) logic, the art of thinking, (2) grammar, the art of inventing and combining symbols, (3) rhetoric, the art of communication, (4) arithmetic, the theory of number, (5) music, the application of the theory of number, (6) geometry, the theory of space, (7) astronomy, the application of the theory of space. See Sister Miriam Joseph, *The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2002).
2. "[E]t ideo distinguuntur in *trivium* et *quadrivium*, eo quod hiis quasi quibusdam viis vivax animus ad secreta philosophiae introeat."
3. "…it belongs to wisdom to consider the highest cause."
4. For an extensive discussion on the history, meaning, and trajectory of the Greek *paideia*, see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vols. 1-3, 2nd ed., trans. Gilbert Highet (Basil Blackwell, Oxford: 1945-1947).
5. "Quamquam ea verba quibus institute veterum utimur pro Latinis, ut ipsa philosophia, ut rhetoriea, dialectica, grammatica, geometria, musica, quamquam Latine ea dici poterant, tamen quoniam usu percepta sunt nostra ducamus. Atque haec quidem de rerum nominibus."
6. "Et dicit, quod hoc, quod felicitas perfecta consistat in quadam speculativa operatione…"
7. "Mathematics should be studied before natural science, for the young can easily learn mathematics,

but only the more advanced natural science, as is said in the Ethics. This is why the ancients are said to have observed the following order in learning the sciences: first logic, then mathematics, then natural science, after that moral science, and finally men studied divine science."

8. "Other sciences (such as divine and natural science) either do not involve a work produced but only knowledge, and so we cannot call them arts, because, as the *Metaphysics* says, art is *productive reason*; or they involve some bodily activity, as in the case of medicine, alchemy, and other sciences of this kind. These latter, then, cannot be called liberal arts because such activity belongs to man on the side of his nature in which he is not free, namely, on the side of his body."
9. Aristotle says, "The animals other than man live by appearances and memories, and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art and reasonings."
10. "...consideratio scientiarum speculativarum est quaedam participatio verae et perfectae beatitudinis."
11. This conclusion is further justified by Aristotle's claim in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1099b14-5: "happiness... comes as a result of virtue and *some process of learning or training* [emphasis added]."
12. See Mullahy, "The Nature of the Liberal Arts," 369-70, for a detailed elaboration on how the liberal arts qualify as "speculative arts."
13. "The disrepute into which formal logic has fallen is entirely unjustified; and its neglect is the root cause of nearly all those disquieting symptoms which we have noted in the modern intellectual constitution."
14. See Robert Hutchins, *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education* (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1984), 4-5. "The method of liberal education is the liberal arts, and the result of liberal education is discipline in those arts. The liberal artist learns to read, write, speak, listen, understand, and think. He learns to reckon, measure, and manipulate matter, quantity, and motion in order to predict, produce, and exchange."

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A new Thrasymachus: Genealogy and Essentialism in Plato's *Republic*

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Abstract:

This article seeks to reread Thrasymachus, or more precisely, fragments of Thrasymachus' position, in Book I of the *Republic*. To do so, I begin by articulating the sophist's function as a philosophical-literary character. As Plato takes on the dual role of philosopher and writer, the interpreter of the *Republic* approaches Thrasymachus as both the mouth piece for a (possibly confused) set of claims and, as I seek to show, a plot device. Because the interpreter doesn't only ask "what argument wins out?" but, "what lesson does Plato wish us to learn by argument X winning out?", Thrasymachus is approached internally to the philosophical-literary throughline of the *Republic*. In this article, I suggest that this practice clips the wings of a portion of Thrasymachus' position. This occurs because the philosophical-literary approach of the interpreter has as its condition that Thrasymachus thinks within the essentialist underpinnings of the *Republic*. Yet, this article argues that elements of Thrasymachus' position don't lend themselves to essentialism, and indeed call it into question. In the closing portion of this article, Foucault is turned to as a source of a critical methodology (in particular the genealogy) that can strengthen those anti-essentialist Thrasymachean fragments. I conclude that the interpretive tendency to approach Thrasymachus internally to the Platonic throughline of the *Republic* has withheld access from fragments which, precisely because of their incompatibility with said throughline, are the most rewarding to consider.

Keywords: Thrasymachus, Foucault, Genealogy, philosophy of authorship, philosophy of dialogue, Plato, The Republic.

Introduction

Thrasymachus, as presented in the *Republic*, is the sophist *par excellence*. If we are inclined to hold Socrates in high regard, the opposite is the case with his interlocuter. The rhetoric which Thrasymachus offers at a fee is jumbled, often contradictory, and seemingly vapid under Socrates' prodding. From this one can draw lessons: to embrace philosophical rigor, to question one's beliefs, to pursue a cohesive philosophy. The dialogue can teach us lessons because the *Republic* is both a work of philosophy and literature. As such, it is constituted by a set of philosophical-literary decisions made by Plato. These philosophical-literary decisions are to be interpreted and pieced together so as to uncover the dialogue's lessons. A lesson can be learned, for example, through interpreting each interlocuter as an instantiation of a philosophical belief: if one interlocuter fairs better, the lesson would be learned that their belief does so too. With this in mind, the scholar debates if Socrates did indeed defeat Thrasymachus, and the answers to this are multiple.[1]

These answers are themselves philosophical-literary. In interpreting how Thrasymachus fairs, the scholar decides what Plato was getting at by including this sophist. Annas remarks forcefully that "Plato is writing both parts [of the debate]; and presumably some point is being made" (Annas 1981, 56). Deciding Plato's point becomes an interpretation's foundation, in light of which Thrasymachus' philosophical-literary function is interpreted.[2] Yet, this entails that a reading of Thrasymachus must meet the condition of compatibility with the Platonic throughline. In needing to account for Plato as an author (as the creator and coordinator of philosophical-literary elements) we address Thrasymachus as a character (as a philosophical-literary element whose coordination must be understood in relation to the Platonic throughline). Thrasymachus becomes *internal* to this throughline: as a problem for Socrates to overcome; a set of thoughts to be brought under scrutiny; a contribution to the broader lessons to be learned. Problematically, this keeps us from accessing the possibility of Thrasymachus being *external* to the Platonic throughline. This investigation will first attempt to turn us towards the *external* Thrasymachus, towards a voice which exists as an alternative to the Platonism, and secondly attempt to embolden this new interlocuter with more developed anti-Platonic critical tools found in Foucault.

While I will attempt to cast a new light on Thrasymachus, I state here that his redemption will not be sought outside of the text. I will not posit a historical Thrasymachus, rich in philosophical nuance, which Plato denigrates into the sophist we encounter in Book I. Instead, I wish to reinvigorate Thrasymachean fragments dulled by the need to interpret them internally to the Platonic throughline. In so doing, I will propose that a particularly sharp anti-Socratic fragment emerges from the text. This fragment is a primitive genealogy: the explanation of justice in terms of power. This will be found not only to go unaddressed by Socrates - who focuses instead on other, disparate elements of his interlocuter's position – but also as offering a powerful critique of the structural underpinning of the Socratic quest: essentialism. To best explicate how exactly essentialism is challenged, Foucault offers a stern articulation of that which, in Thrasymachus, we find only in hints.

On Foucault and Genealogy

It might seem overzealous to bring Foucault into this dialogue. Briefly, I wish to motivate this decision through exploring what in Foucault would most rewardingly enliven elements of Thrasymachus' position. Foucault understands power as dynamic; as co-extensive with knowledge; as a producer of reality. These critical principles can contribute to an attempt to articulate justice in terms of power. Further, this investigation is aided by Foucault's genealogical method. Bernard E. Harcourt usefully distinguishes between the possible qualities of a genealogy. A genealogy can be *subversive* through its focus on de-essentializing, can *problematize* through bringing into question the unquestioned, and can *possibilize* new understandings through articulating alternatives (Harcourt 2024, 2-4). These are qualities to "draw upon in combination," to further critical inquiry (Harcourt 2024, 2-4). Foucault, as the scholar in which one finds both the above understanding of power and the genealogical method, cannot but be rewardingly brought to this dialogue.

In the following I will provide a characterization of essentialism. I state now that this essay treats genealogy and essentialism as contrary approaches to philosophy. Where I will seek to show that certain Thrasymachean fragments are anti-essentialist, I understand myself to be expressing a genealogical tendency. Where, alternatively, I address more directly their genealogical tendency, I understand myself as characterizing further their anti-essentialist drive.

Essentialism

Before Thrasymachus' cacophonic arrival, Socrates and Polemarchus are in pursuit of the essence of justice. Counterintuitively, to attempt to pin down the essence of a thing, one must first presuppose that there is such an essence to pin down. If I were to set myself the task of determining the essence of love, I would presuppose that there is such a thing as love. One might interject with reference to a history of poetic answers of the type "love forbids definition". Yet, if my task results in this conclusion, then that would mean precisely that my task has failed, not that it is accomplished. This possible exception of love proves the rule. When Socrates and Polemarchus search for the essence of justice, success presupposes justice itself. The assumption of the existence of an essential justice is the simple, intuitive form of essentialism to which I propose Thrasymachus offers a challenge. By essentialism I intend the belief that there is a discoverable and determinate essential core to the object of one's philosophical analysis. The dialogue Thrasymachus interrupts presupposes essentialism, albeit in a simple, intuitive form. In this essay, 'essentialism' and 'intuitive essentialism' will be used interchangeably to refer to this simple, intuitive essentialism.

In setting the stage for this investigation, I distinguished between an internal Thrasymachus and an external Thrasymachus. The *differentia* was the basis on which Thrasymachus is interpreted. When he is approached as a character one approaches him internally to the Platonic throughline. When one doesn't approach him in such a manner, Thrasymachus can be accessed in his (possible) externality. I contend that a condition of a character existing internally to the Platonic throughline is structural adherence to essentialism. Essentialism is a meeting point of Plato the philosopher and Plato the author. If the lesson to be learned is that the essence of justice is X, then the lesson and the characters subjugated to it must necessarily obey the structure of essentialism. The question immediately presents itself: could an external Thrasymachus think outside of the underpinning essentialism?

To state clearly: the position offered here is not that interpreting Thrasymachus internally is wrong (and externally correct). Instead, I intend to bring to the fore the impact of Plato's authorship on interpretation, allowing Thrasymachus to be approached afresh. The aim is not to deny the presence of a Thrasymachus who functions neatly as a Platonic character, but instead to free fragments of his position, which only uncomfortably serve this function, from needing to do so. In so doing, one addresses a Thrasymachus that offers a more potent alternative to the Socratic position. This potency derives from the following: to locate Thrasymachean fragments that fail to presuppose essentialism is to locate a critique of essentialism. Anti-essentialist theses express the contingency of an essentialist underpinning: they show that philosophy could be done otherwise (the *possibilizing* quality of genealogy). The final dimension of the potency this interpretation wishes to free is the ability of fragments to *problematize* the Socratic quest for the essence of justice by challenging the conditions of its possibility – essentialism. The possibility of Thrasymachus calling into question the very viability of the Socratic quest (like the poet who disparages any definition of love), entails the possible impossibility of this quest.

Interpreting fragments

To perhaps oversimplify, Thrasymachus is known to make two (possibly incompatible) claims:

A. Justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger.
B. Those acts denominated as unjust are, in actuality, just.[3]

When confronted with two (possibly incompatible) claims, our urgency isn't to force compatibility, but to account for their difference. One method of doing so is considering whether a claim accepts or rejects the *Republic*'s 'rules of the game'. By this I intend the conditions of being internal to the Platonic throughline: to accept the rules of the game is to both take up a literary function and to presuppose essentialism. Our aim being that of freeing fragments which struggle to obey the rules of the game, it is productive to ask whether these claims differ in their ability to play along. Two considerations:

1. Immediately, it is important to notice the more properly normative dimension to claim B. Thrasymachus seems to be saying that justice and injustice exist, but that their normative predication should be reversed. This (to speak loosely) is a *satanistic* stance: good is actually bad (and bad actually good). To briefly bracket the philosophical dimension of the rules of the game, a satanistic thesis allows for a satanistic character. The journey of the satanist character within the Platonic throughline (e.g., how they fare and how their attitudes change) is one that lends itself happily to the construction of philosophical-literary lessons. Thereby, this moralizing aspect of claim B begins to indicate its ability to accept the rules of the game.

2. In observing the distribution of claim A and B in Book I, a clear picture emerges. Thrasymachus' position begins as A, but upon encountering Socratic prodding, seemingly shifts to B. Shortly after his intrusion, upon encouragement to explain his position, Thrasymachus summarizes at 339a: "the just is [...] the advantage of the stronger". This is plainly claim A. From 339b to 339e Socrates asks Thrasymachus a series of questions with the aim of showing that Thrasymachus' thesis is a contradiction. Yet, from the first Socratic question the dialogue moves away from claim A, and towards claim B. Socrates asks: "don't you [...] say that it is just to obey the rulers?" This question evidently concerns the normative predication of justice. The apparent contradiction subsequently drawn ("according to your account, it is just to do not only what is to the advantage of the stronger,

but also the opposite, what is not to their advantage") hinges on opposed acts receiving identical normative predication. In other words, the contradiction drawn is that Thrasymachus holds claim B and not-B. Thereby, Socrates' engagement with claim A is such as to leave it be, and address claim B instead. A consequence of this is that claim A only appears for the first moments of their exchange, while claim B gets all the screentime. The greater screentime of claim B seems to suggest an affinity at playing by the rules of the game. Claim A's brief, early presence, and its following absence can be read oppositely: it struggles to find a place in the dialogue.

Both claim B's screentime and its moralizing dimension hint at its participation in the Platonic throughline. The interlocuter-character to whom we assign claim B readily becomes internal to the Platonic throughline. Claim A, instead, seems far less able to participate in the throughline: its relative normative silence renders the character to whom it is associated a dull philosophical-literary plot device – something perhaps betrayed by its lack of screentime. Could this mean that claim A is external to the Platonic throughline? For a claim to be external it must fail to meet the rules of the game: fail to have a literary function and fail to presuppose essentialism. The considerations above relate only to the former. Yet, claim A's apparent inability to take on a literary function could hint at its separation from essentialism. This hint will guide the next stage of this investigation: a closer engagement with the text to uncover fragments which fail to presuppose essentialism.

Invigorating fragments

We seem to have attained a hint that textual fragments of claim A could not presuppose essentialism. An exemplar fragment of claim A is: "justice is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger" (338c). Immediately, it must be said that this is a proposed definition of justice. A definition of justice seemingly entails essentialism. Yet, this is only at first glance. To try to push further, let us contrast it with (one of) Polemarchus': justice is to "treat friends well and enemies badly" (332d-e). To decide if claim A presupposes essentialism, one is brought to ask if these two definitions are structurally equivalent. Aside from the definitions themselves differing, are we to place such weight on Thrasymachus' "nothing other than" as the difference between presupposing and challenging essentialism? Can a mere "nothing other than" entail the possible impossibility of the Socratic task?

Late at night, you hear a sound coming from the back garden. To say that this rustling is the doing of a fox, as opposed to "nothing other than" a fox, is a slight but significant difference. The latter more directly acknowledges alternative causes (a burglar, an escaped convict) and labels the ruckus in part through their negation. Of course, negated alternatives are present in both cases, but in the latter more emphasis is placed on the fact that it is *not* a burglar. The rustling in the back garden is a horizon on which danger can emerge, and in deciding that it is "nothing other than" a fox is to close that horizon. The relevance of this "nothing other than" closing that horizon is due to this horizon having, in a qualified sense, the structure of essentialism. That noise is a bridge between you and a determinate something that exists. This bridge is a precondition of you determining the nature of that something (the wind, a fox, a burglar). Being afraid of what the clatter could entail has as its condition that the clatter entails something. It is now opportune to ask: why is it that this "nothing other than" reassures us? It reassures us because it silences the frightening possibility of the clatter. Of course, we are still answering the question that the clatter poses us. Yet, in a qualified sense, to say that the clatter is "nothing other than" a fox is to say that there isn't a clatter: the noise is no longer a bridge between you and anything.

To begin to unite this reflection with Thrasymachus' claim at 338c, notice the similar ambiguity in their usage of "nothing other than": on the one hand, the claims married to "nothing other than" are answers to their respective questions ("what is justice?" and "what was that noise?"). On the other hand, it has been seen that, at least in the case of the clatter, this "nothing other than" dissolves the structure on which the question-horizon emerges. It is to be seen if this second aspect of "nothing other than" can be located in claim 338c. If it were, then this would be the locus of anti-essentialism: the dissolution of the essence quested after by Socrates.

What animates the clatter is fear. What enlivens the Socratic dialogue is curiosity. While the colour is different, searching for the essence of justice and trying to determine what that clatter was are structurally analogous. Both require a something to relate to: a structural condition of both is the existence of a something (to be fearful of or to quest after). It is at this point that the prior reflection on the ability of "nothing other than" to close the question-horizon in the case of the clatter should be applied to Thrasymachus' claim. If saying that the clatter is "nothing other than" a fox is to say that there isn't a clatter, then is saying that justice is "nothing other than" the interest of the stronger to say there is no justice? This would entail a problematization of the quest for the essence of justice. For this to be used to suggest that Thrasymachus is challenging the structure of essentialism beneath the dialogue, one must account for more than this "nothing other than". Yet, Thrasymachus begins to appear externally.

Claim A defines justice as the interest of the stronger. It is here that a peculiar quality of genealogy emerges. The genealogy is composed of a simultaneous affirmation and negation.

Through accounting for the dynamic reality of a something (affirmation), one dissolves the metaphysical category of *essentia* that constrains that something (negation). For this Thrasymachean fragment to be genealogical, then, we'd need to find this odd interplay of affirmation and negation. Thrasymachus' "nothing other than" was seen to negate the essentialism underpinning the dialogue. Hence, we ought to search for, in claim A's definition, the corresponding affirmative dimension of genealogy.[4] Briefly, to proceed it is necessary to consider what such an affirmation would look like:

(i) Denying justice's essence doesn't necessitate a denial of its existence. Instead, a genealogy of justice should account for justice as it is lived.

(ii) In accounting for justice's existence, one must explain its coming into existence. This significantly changes the way justice is interrogated. It is no longer justice's essence that is worth attaining, but its function. Hence: claim A contains the affirmative dimension of genealogy if therein we find an account of justice as it is lived and of its function.

A symptom of this affirmative dimension's presence is in the following fragment. Here Thrasymachus includes in his analysis the different historical-political realities from which justice can take shape: "democracy makes democratic laws, tyranny makes tyrannical laws, [and these are, in their respective cases, all just]" (338d-e). Instead of questing for the essence of justice, Thrasymachus accounts for justice's plurality. This is an example of Harcourt's *problematizing* and *possibilizing*: problematizing thinking essentially, possibilizing thinking plurally. Justice, in each case, is defined according to its function in its historical-political reality. This allows justice to come forth as it is lived: differently. Thrasymachus' success here is clearer when contrasted with Socrates' failure. While in Book VIII Socrates addresses the politics of different city-states (timocracy, oligarchy, etc.), justice is only found in the kallipolis. The essentialism of Socrates prevents him from accessing plurality: there is only one justice. Instead, Thrasymachus is able to give expression to plurality: there are multiple justices, differentiated by justice's function in its historical-political reality.

The position I am attempting to carve out is confined to a handful of fragments – and is left behind rapidly as the dialogue progresses. Yet, this investigation never sought to claim that all of Thrasymachus' disparate theses were anti-essentialist. Instead, our guiding principle was to provide the conceptual apparatus to relieve fragments which struggled to conform to essentialism from needing to. These relieved fragments, without refinement, only hint at genealogy rather than constitute a genealogy proper. To be sure, this is fresh air, but quickly stifled. Can we open a window?

The refinement of fragments

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault articulates a dual functionality of power: power is not only a repressive force, a force which acts by negation and by reaction (reactive power), but also a creative, constitutive force (Foucault 2020, 22-24). Accounting for justice in terms of solely reactive power has its limitations. For example, the pleasure of acting justly is only uncomfortably explained by reference to the fear of punishment. An account is enriched if power is also conceptualized as creative. Foucault extends the conception of creative power to its extreme with the claim that "[power] produces reality" (Foucault 2020, 194). In using Foucault to open a window, so to speak, power replaces "the interest of the stronger" as our conceptual nexus in our account of justice. It isn't clear if Thrasymachus' account can bypass the conceptual limits of reactive power. The relationship proposed by Foucault (power producing reality) can push claim A further. For example, claim A struggles to account for the original emergence of justice. Thrasymachus attempts to do so here: "[the rulers] declare what they have made [...] to be just for their subjects, and they punish anyone who goes against this as lawless and unjust" 338e. This explanation inherits the limits of conceptualizing solely with reactive power: justice as it is lived will scarcely conform to the mere fear of punishment. When power is understood to produce reality, this limitation is surpassed.

The format of this investigation prevents a rigorous exposition of all the critical tools in Foucault that could enliven Thrasymachus' position. Yet, exhausting their hypothetical collaboration was never the intention. In this article, I wished to wrestle free Thrasymachean fragments that had heretofore been interpreted internally to the Platonic throughline. In putting to one side a search for the lessons imbedded in Book I, the need for Thrasymachus to obey the rules of the game fell away. With[1] the disappearance of this need, it becomes clear when Thrasymachean fragments obey said rules, and when they don't. In our analysis, obeying the rules meanings furthering the structural essentialism of the dialogue and not obeying means offering an alternative to this essentialism. Through his "many-colouredness", Thrasymachus attempts both the former and the latter. Having created the conceptual space to express this, this analysis is able to account philosophically for Thrasymachus appearing confused and muddled. Being able to do so, as opposed to relegating an explanation of this to a Platonic lesson, is evidence for the extent to which this practice was rewarding. Differentiating between obeying and critiquing the rules of the game allows Thrasymachus' 'contradictory' position to be untangled. A difference between Thrasymachus and Socrates that was allowed to appear was the sophist's focus on the function of justice, instead of its essence. This is a bold methodological break that struggles to emerge when the interpretive priority is given to explicating the Platonic throughline. The difficulty encountered in accessing Thrasymachus is the difficulty of wrestling him free from the Platonic hold. But in using Thrasymachus, in incorporating him in a philosophical-literary story, in a set of lessons, an Achilles' heel is incorporated into the *Republic*. That is, if we look for it.

Endnotes:

1. An example of scholarship bringing into question the Socratic victory is in Rosen, see: (Rosen 2017, 38-59). "It is not Thrasymachus personally who frightens him but the thesis that might makes right". Another example is Annas, see: (Annas 1981, 50-51).
2. Another example of this is in Barney, where the inability of the dialogue in Book I to reach a conclusion is explored as a philosophical-literary decision by Plato, see: (Barney 2006, 44-62).
3. Commonly in the literature these are known as *conventialism* and *immoralism* respectively: see Annas, (Annas 1981). One reason I avoided these labels was to encourage new interactions with these fragments, which could be stifled by labelling them traditionally. Further, *conventialism* as a label for A. might overemphasis the importance of legislation in Thrasymachus' position: it isn't legislation that makes right, but might.
4. This allows us to explain a prior source of confusion. This section began by noting the brute fact that Thrasymachus does give a definition of justice. It seemed then that this forbade an anti-essentialist reading of claim A. Now, through the tool of the genealogy, the presence of a definition no longer runs contrary to an attempt to dissolve the notion of an essential justice.

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Comments on Michael Jacovides' Paper "Hume and the Rotting Turnip"

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Abstract:

In Part 12 of David Hume's, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Professor Jacovides attempts to explain how the Rotting Turnip explains the generation of life; and who the various characters mentioned in this Part–Philo, Cleanthes, Demea, the atheist, the theist, dogmatists, sceptics–actually represent. In my paper, I show that the Rotting Turnip cannot explain the generation of life, and that Jacovides' attempt to identify which (actual) philosophers hold what positions in the *Dialogues* does not shed any light on the structure of this work, and the philosophic roles that the speakers–particularly Cleanthes and Philo–play in reaching the final dictum articulated by Philo in the penultimate paragraph in Part 12.

Keywords: Rotting Turnip, Design Argument, atheist sceptic, dogmatist, extreme consequent scepticism

Professor Michael Jacovides' paper is somewhat long, and I do not have the time here to address many of the points that he makes. Instead, I will confine myself to his argument in what he calls 'The Rotting Turnip Paragraph', the point at which Hume focusses on the theist and the atheist. Michael spends considerable time trying to figure out who the 'atheist' and the 'theist' are in this paragraph. And he concludes that the atheist is the atheists that Hume met in the 1760's, because they appealed to rotting vegetation as an explanation of the generation of life. Michael offers no more than this on the topic, and, consequently, I find myself somewhat bewildered, namely, as to how rotting vegetation explains the generation of life. Or even, why Michael thinks that the rotting vegetation comment in the *Dialogues* is relevant to an explanation of the generation of life. In fact, 'the rotting of the turnip' is grouped together with 'the generation of an animal' and 'the structure of human thought', for the sole purpose of pointing out to the atheist that "from the coherence and apparent sympathy in all the parts of the world, there [is] a certain degree of analogy among all the operations of nature, in every situation and in every age; whether the rotting of a turnip, the generation of an animal, and the structure of human thought be not energies that probably bear some remote analogy to each other...(D 176) In other words, Hume is intent on showing that in all design, whether the design pertains to generation, decay, or to the structure of human thought, the same essential features must be present, namely, coherence and apparent sympathy in all the parts of the world.

One further point about this paragraph. Michael thinks that when Philo attempts to reconcile the theist and the atheist, that the theist of the turnip paragraph is not Cleanthes, but Demea. Now, the problem with Demea in this context, as I see it, is that Demea's avowed mysticism prevents him (except in Part 9, when he defends the Cosmological-Ontological Argument) from accepting that God is even the least bit knowable. In the opening paragraph in Part 2, Demea says the following to Cleanthes:

> I must own, Cleanthes, said Demea, that nothing can surprise me, than the light in which you have all along, put this argument. By the whole tenor of your discourse, one would imagine that you were maintain the being of God, against the cavils of atheists and infidels...But this, I hope, is not, by any means a question among us...The question is not concerning the Being, but the Nature of God. This I affirm, from the infirmities of human understanding, to be altogether incomprehensible and unknown to us...And next to the impiety of denying his existence, is the temerity of prying into his nature and essence, decrees and attributes. (D 107)

On Michael's view, Demea must have changed his position somewhat on the knowability of God, as the dialogue continues. That this is not the case, can be learned from the final paragraph in Part 11. Pamphilus, the narrator of the dialogue, says there of Demea: "But I could observe that Demea did not at all relish the latter part of the discourse; and he took occasion soon after, on some pretense or other, to leave the company. (D171) Now, if Philo's intent is to reconcile the theist and atheist in Part 12, and if the theist in Part 12 is, as Michael urges, Demea, then, surely, Philo would have encouraged Demea to stay for the final part of the dialogue. But Philo is entirely silent on Demea's departure at the end of Part 11. Therefore, it is most unlikely that Demea is the theist Philo is addressing in Part 12.

In the part of the debate that we are now discussing in Part 12, Hume attempts at least a partial reconciliation between the theist and the atheist on the topic of the divine mind. How to explain that Philo's attention now turns to the theist and the atheist? I submit that the shift to the theist and the atheist is not a move away from the characters, Cleanthes and Philo. The theist represents the Cleanthes-type believer, and the atheist represents the sceptic, given that their atheism "is only nominally so, and can never possibly be in earnest" (D.176). The importance of the shift, therefore, is to move the debate away from the two disputants, Cleanthes and Philo, and render the reconciliation between different *philosophical* positions, each philosophical position represented by Cleanthes and Philo respectively. Similarly, in a footnote in Part 12 of the

Dialogues (footnote 18, the only passage in which Hume speaks in his own person) the dispute is held to be between the dogmatists and the sceptics.

> It seems evident, that the dispute between the sceptics and dogmatists is entirely verbal, or at least regards only the degrees of doubt and assurance, which we ought to indulge with regard to all reasoning: And such disputes are commonly, at the bottom, verbal, and admit not of any precise determination. No philosophical dogmatist denies that there are difficulties both with regard to the senses and to all science, and that these difficulties are in a regular, logical method, absolutely insolvable. No sceptic denies that we lie under an absolute necessity, notwithstanding these difficulties, of thinking, and believing, and reasoning with regard to all kinds of subjects, and even of frequently assenting with confidence and security. The only difference, then, between these sects, if they merit that name, is, that the sceptic, from habit, caprice, or inclination, insists most on the difficulties; the dogmatist, for like reasons, on the necessity. (D 177)

Cleanthes fits Hume's definition of the dogmatist offered in the *First Enquiry*: "…while they see objects only on one side, and have no idea of any counterpoising argument, they throw themselves precipitately into those principles, to which they are inclined; nor have they any indulgence for those who entertain opposite sentiments". (E. 161) In this regard, it is instructive to recall what Cleanthes states in the very last paragraph of Part 1 of the *Dialogues*:

> …[S]urely, nothing can afford a stronger presumption, that any set of principles are true, and ought to be embraced, than to observe, that they tend to the confirmation of true religion, and serve to confound the cavils of atheists, libertines and free thinkers of all denominations.

Cleanthes insists that a set of principles is true, provided that they tend to the confirmation of true religion (presumably, a version of Christianity): accordingly, he sees objects only on one side, and does not consider counterpoising arguments. It is clear that Cleanthes fits Hume's description of a dogmatist.

The shift in footnote 18 in Part 12, once again, moves the debate away from the two disputants, Cleanthes and Philo, and renders the reconciliation between different philosophical positions. This appears to be Hume's goal: to reconcile different philosophical positions (atheist and theist; sceptics and dogmatists), and, therefore, to go beyond the individual thinkers in the dialogue. Cleanthes can now be understood to be variously classified as a theist and a dogmatist, while Philo can be variously described as a (nominal) atheist and a sceptic.

While I do not have time or space here to provide a full accounting of my views on Part 12, I do want to say that the structure of the *Dialogues* appears to me to follow what Hume has to offer in Section XII of the *First Enquiry*, where he urges that the best antidote to dogmatism is 'extreme consequent scepticism', through which the principles utilized by the dogmatist can be shown to support a number of conclusions-conclusions which are unacceptable to the dogmatist. Once the dogmatist has been shown, through extreme consequent sceptical arguments, that their principles are unable to support the position for which they have argued, and they are brought to a position of indifference (see the final paragraph in Part 8, in which Philo urges that "A total suspense of judgement is here our only reasonable resource"), it is the role of the mitigated sceptic, to "correct" the "undistinguished" doubts generated by the extreme consequent sceptic, through "common sense and reflection" (*Enquiry*, 161). Mitigated scepticism is contrasted by Hume with dogmatism, and it is pyrrhonian doubts which can turn the dogmatist into a mitigated sceptic. On my reading of the dialogues, Cleanthes is the dogmatist; Philo in Parts 1 through 8 is the extreme consequent sceptic; and in Part 12, both Philo and Cleanthes are brought to the position of 'mitigated scepticism', culminating in the final dictum, *that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence*. (D 114)

In conclusion, I would urge that Michael's attempt to identify which (actual) philosophers hold what positions in the *Dialogues* does not shed any light on the structure of the *Dialogues*, and the philosophic roles that the speakers-particularly Cleanthes and Philo-play in reaching the final dictum cited above. It is more fruitful, I suggest, to attempt to connect the characters and discussion in the *Dialogues* to other of Hume's writings, particularly Section XII of the *First Enquiry*.

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The Attitude to Nature in 21th Century: Unnoticed Ecocide, the Diagnosis of Mediology, and the Zhuangzi as a Cure

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Abstract:

The aim of this essay is to offer us a philosophical solution to environment crisis and ecocide. Firstly, the notion of ecocide is discussed from different perspectives (biology, law, psychology). Secondly, in the light of Debray's philosophy the modern attitude to nature is examined. It is necessary in order to explain what has to be changed if we want to avoid the destruction of nature entirely in the future. Furthermore, the philosophy of Zhuangzi is described as self-cultivation that can be used against the current situation at the personal level. To consider the philosophy of Zhuangzi as a path of self-cultivation, a practice that is a cure for the consequences of ecocide and environment crisis is the novelty of this essay. Thus, the necessary measures that must be taken are available for anybody in the world there is simply a need of persistence, responsibility and effort.

Keywords: nature, ecocide, mediology, Taoism, Régis Debray, Zhuangzi.

My mind is like the autumn moon
clear and bright in a pool of jade
nothing can compare
what more can I say
Cold Mountain[1] (2000, 39)

Hardly any discussions can be mentioned about ecocide. This term is lacking of an exact and generally accepted by everyone in the world definition. It is almost a taboo, because as a part of genocide it is better not to focus the attention of people on it, since thanks to it the imperfections of human nature are more obviously observed. The introduction of the term happened in 1970, at the conference on responsibility for war crimes and its link with conscience by Professor Arthur Galston, a Yale biologist:

> After the end of World War II, and as a result of the Nuremburg trials, we justly condemned the willful destruction of an entire people and its culture, calling this crime against humanity genocide. It seems to me that the willful and permanent destruction of environment in which a people can live in a manner of their own choosing ought similarly to be considered as a crime against humanity, to be designated by the term ecocide (Zierler 2011, 19).

The aim of ecocide is to destroy an entire ecosystem during the war that will lead people to a massive displacement or death:

> Acts of war associated with ecocide include the use of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological, or chemical, and attempts to provoke natural disasters such as volcanoes, earthquakes, or floods. In addition, ecocidal acts of warfare include the military use of defoliants, the use of explosives to impair soil quality and to enhance the prospect of disease; the bulldozing of forest or croplands for military purposes; attempts to modify weather or climate; and the forcible and permanent removal of humans or animals from their places of habitation in the pursuit of military or other objectives (Broswimmer 2002, 75).

Ecocide is actually a psychological weapon against people, that "leaves long lasting scars (not only on the land and sea but also in the psyche of people" (Stoett 1999, 72). This psychological weapon is an instrument of genocide among others (Stoett 1999, Lemkin 1944). However, since on the one hand, there is a difficulty with the definition of the term, ecocidal acts are not a crime everywhere (Minkova 2023, Gauger 2012, Sarliève 2021) and on the other, the system of international law punishes individuals, not states. Ecocide as a crime is done by a state therefore the war criminal can go unpunished.

The novelty of this essay is that its aim is to add a philosophical dimension to these discussions. It is necessary for us in order to know how to deal with consequences of unprovoked military aggression, invasion or predatory wars at the level of philosophy. Therefore, the first part will be about the mediological examination of the anxiety about nature in our times, meanwhile the philosophy of Zhuangzi will be analyzed in the second part, because it can help us to cope with the modern attitude to nature, the environmental crisis and the tragedy of ecocide[2]. This is a tragedy, because it is a deliberate destruction of environment, when people are aware of their actions, but simply are hiding behind their state.

Mediology is a contemporary French philosophy, that was founded by Régis Debray in 1979, when his book *'Le pouvoir intellectuel en France'* which in its English translation in 1981 was entitled 'Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France' was published. Mediology or the philosophy of mediation is an answer to a question: how to deal with the reality when the role of intellectual is changed, when truth is a luxury? A professional intellectual is a "person who has an effect on other people through symbols (images, words, sounds)" (Debray 2001, 59). The professional intellectual is beyond the traditional institutions, such as academia or universities, because his duty is to say unpleasant things. His main task is to influence people's opinion during his own lifetime because he invites somebody to think and search for the truth. However, as Debray states:

> The truth is a luxury that rich societies will be able to afford less and less, insofar as the establishment of truth and its dissemination are slow, complicated procedures, and all tend to run counter to common sense, in other words they do not have market value, so show value. It seems to me that there is an industrial economy of reason which will increasingly make reason anti-economic (Debray 1989, 308).

Therefore, people are constantly sending messages to their audiences, but they are unable to put out a statement, because the value of a message is decided by the audience, meanwhile the statement is always valid by itself: "Finally, the truth is what exists independently of place and time. There is a truth, we reach a domain of truth when we are rid of the coefficients of place and moment. It is universal, which is always valid and always remains the same" (Debray 1989, 314). According to Debray: "A rational discipline like mediology (which aims to be rigorous and must show itself to be so) can help fashion tools to make reality intelligible and weapons to transform it; inasmuch as it acknowledges the real, it can also serve those who find advantage there" (Debray 1981, 2). Then, someone, who does philosophy of mediation or a mediologist uses a mediological method in order to study the process of incarnation and transmission or how abstract ideas, including people's beliefs, thoughts and experience of life, get material forces and are saved through time. It is possible in the form of traces:

> A trace is not just something that remains from religion, knowledge, or opinion, but it is one of the necessary conditions for their appearance and circulation. [...] Trace supposes support, a tool, writing and reading technique, a semiotic regime, a method of indexation, control and conservation and a dissemination system (Debray et al 1998, 281)[3].

The term mediology itself is a Greco-Roman world combination, from Latin language medium is used with the meaning of body, and logos from Greek with the meaning of explanation. The body links intelligible entity with actions. Therefore, the existence of soul is impossible without body. This is the basic confirmation of mediology. Transmission as a term of mediology is a loan world, from the poet and philosopher, Paul Valéry's oeuvre, with the same meaning: "It is man's greatest triumph over things, to have been able to carry the effects and fruits of eve's labour (literally: results of labour from yesterday) until the next day. Mankind has only slowly risen on the heap of what lasts" (Debray et al 1998, 281–282)[4]. Special places or places of mediation, such as libraries, museums and archieves are a necessity for traces in order not to be destroyed. Also, there is a need of someone, a mediator, who is able to save traces, preserve heritage and explain their origin, meaning and value to others. Knowledge, strict hierarchy, mutual respect and effort, education as basic elements of transmission evoke comprehension, that creates duration, which is the definition of culture in mediology. Thus, a mediologist deals with memory, that is defined in mediology as a self-organized work, a complex uninterrupted data processing, a selection of what has to be forgotten and what has to be remembered, which is developed by technical and institutional (family, religion, nation, etc.) devices.

The book of Régis Debray, *Le Siècle Vert,* was published in 2020 by Gallimard. This is a philosophical analysis of the condition of contemporary humankind in Europe and its attitude to nature from the perspective of mediology.

According to Debray, nowadays, a human being can be depicted as Faust, who suffers from amnesia. He is always in a hurry to do something, he lives in a city, his life is organized in Excel. He works hard and is never afraid of taking the initiative. He is a person of the soul – an active force which transforms reality. He forgot that a person is an integral part of nature. Debray's definition of nature and soul (or spirit) follows the European philosophical tradition: "nature is a totality of things that are independent of us, meanwhile soul is a complex system of forces that are used for making them be dependent on us" (Debray 2020, 6-7)[5].

He (Faust with amnesia) also forgot about death and its rituality. He decided to choose cremation, since it can be further used as fertilizer. This "recycling death" is less time-consuming and expensive, therefore it won't distract the attention of the joy of life.[6] The refusal to make preparation for death creates barbarians.

The green era has replaced the red era. The metaphorical usage of colors has the following significance: the green era is an era of nature while the red era is an era of history. The red era was about the promising future, when people believed that their hard work would be the key to it. The green era is about the lost innocence, which means it is an attempt to hide from the cruelty of the overbearing reality. People of this era want to have a guarantee that other nations will defend them from the enemy in the situation of war. Earlier history was considered as a teacher, which is evidently present in Cicero's words that were shortened and became a saying: Historia est magistra vitae[7]. Today history is considered as heritage that can be used for tourism or feeling proud. The ultimate goal in someone's life is to achieve well-being. No one wants to think about death, hence it is hidden in hospitals. Debray cites Kandinsky[8] about the green color in order to briefly characterise the contemporary Europe: "The absolute green in the society of colors is the same as the bourgeoisie in the society of human beings: an element without immobility, desires, satisfied, joyful. This green is as a cow, big, healthy, sleepy and meditating on something, only capable of looking at the world with its vague and apathetic eyes" (Debray 2020, 23)[9].

When people get rid of history or the past, they no longer live in time, instead of time they are living only in space, as animals. Debray claims that the movement in defence of nature is hypocritical, since for everybody in the West the most important is the profit.

Finally, Debray's analysis comes to a conclusion. People badly need nature and culture, since both not only have an effect on their life circumstances, but are like their "parents". They cannot exist without them. Furthermore, they must accept their dependence on nature that is free and change their attitude towards it. They must learn how to contemplate instead of capturing. Nature and soul – both are always present in people's life, there is no need for them to choose: "There are always both in affairs of humans, the Nature and the Soul. The matter and the tool. [...] History-geography. *Therefore, there is no choice between the mower and the gardener*, between the tool and the aim, between the technique and the spiritual" (Debray 2020, 56)[10].

In the direction of Daoshu[11] accompanied by Zhuang Zhou

Spring water is pure in an emerald stream
moonlight is white on Cold Mountain
silence thoughts and the spirit becomes clear
focus on emptiness and the world grows still
Cold Mountain (2000, 91)

The text of Zhuangzi[12] is chosen, since it was written in the middle of the constant war, in the epoch of the Warring States, when the "Seven Powers of the Warring States Period" (Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao, Wei, Qin) and the "Three Jins" (Han, Zhao, Wei) were rivals over the control of the land, because larger states practiced a policy of annexation that was possible thanks to the weakness of the Zhou royal house. The "Warring States Period" (in Chinese: 戰國, 403 BCE - 221 BCE) as a segment of Chinese history got its name after a classical history work that is the collection of anecdotes at the court level – the Strategy of the Warring States. Zhuang Zhou's philosophy is about spiritual freedom and inner self-cultivation; meanwhile Laozi's thought is about society and its issues:

> People used to see affinities between Laozi's and Zhuangzi's philosophies (Laozhuang zhexue 老莊哲學) because they shared much common ground: both respected nature, discussed Dao (even if they defined it differently), and advocated going back to pure and innocent human nature. Yet there are fundamental differences between them. In Laozi's Daodejing (道德經), so-called governance through inaction (wuwei erzhi 無為而治) is a political strategy, an ideal for the political sage; yet Zhuangzi's philosophy, with its aesthetic attitude of acceptance of the world, is based on each individual's inner, spiritual freedom (Jianmei 2016, 4).

Therefore, Zhuang Zhou is able to offer us a practice that helps us get through an "era of ecological despair" (Nelson 2023, 9): "This alternative entails that Daoist exemplars can be deployed as therapeutic models in the present, while at the same time confronting their ideological codifications and uses" (Nelson 2023, 1-2). The poetic nature of Zhuang Zhou's philosophy[13], the literary roots of mediology[14] and the interconnection between mediology, the Zhuangzi (Chung-yuan 2011, Shaw 1988) and art can be a common point that allows us to write this essay. As Debray, himself, claims that: "Was not the East really wiser, when tried to find harmony and communion with nature, imitating it, not possessing it?" (Debray 2020, 9)[15]. Throughout this text I will use Burton Watson's translation of Zhuangzi: *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*. Also, the authorship of Zhuangzi is not questioned here, since for my point of view Master Zhuang is the only author of the text and this scientific problem is irrelevant for the subject and aim of the essay.

Philosophy in China is practical wisdom that helps people to live a better life. It is not simply a theoretical discipline at the university, which lectures about are inevitable if someone wants to graduate, or discussions at conferences for professionals, where they represent some results of their research activity. Chinese people have philosophy instead of religion, ideology, or politics. They are living their life according to philosophy, in which there are "super-moral values" (Fung 1966, 4-5) that can be experienced. Thanks to these super-moral values the spirit of Chinese culture is elevated, that leads Chinese people to feel impelled to practice the rituality of traditional Chinese culture and to be worthy of their ancestors. Therefore, philosophy in China is not about the necessity of increasing knowledge on facts or reality, but about cultivation: "According to the tradition of Chinese philosophy, its function is not the increase of positive knowledge (by positive knowledge I mean information regarding matters of fact), but the elevation of the mind - a reaching out for what is beyond the present actual world, and for the values that are higher than the moral ones" (Fung 1966, 5).

The reader of Zhuangzi finds there instructions of self-cultivation. Self-cultivation (in Chinese: **修身**) is self-transformation, when someone is working on himself as a whole in order to become a perfect person. It means that a person has a life-long task that is to improve himself throughout his whole life. This notion is generally associated with Confucius and his teachings. However, I think, that Master Zhuang's teachings also is a type of self-cultivation, with the same aim, but different connotation.

Someone who follows the path of self-cultivation as it is described in Zhuangzi can be considered an onlooker. He is not indifferent or apathetic, but calm and distant: "When I talk about having no feelings, I mean that a man doesn't allow likes or dislikes to get in and do him harm. He just lets things be the way they are and doesn't try to help life along" (Watson 1968, 117). He is empty: "The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore, he can win out over things and not hurt himself" (Watson 1968, 146). He observes the world around himself and becomes aware of change as the main principle of everything. There are no oppositions, but a process of endless transformation. This principle is metaphorically described as fish Kun, that is the tiniest and at the same time the largest fish that changes into a bird whose name is Peng. The story of Peng also helps him to recognize the necessity of the right time for everything in the world:

> If water is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up a big boat. Pour a cup of water into a hollow in the floor, and bits of trash will sail on it like boats. But set the cup there, and it will stick fast, for the water is too shallow and the boat too large. If wind is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up great wings. Therefore when the Peng rises ninety thousand li, he must have the wind under him like that. Only then can he mount on the back of the wind, shoulder the blue sky, and nothing can hinder or block him. Only then can he set his eyes to the south (Watson 1968, 53).

When he is able to accept change as the main principle, then he becomes highly adaptable:

> But waiting for one shifting voice [to pass judgment on] another is the same as waiting for none of them. Harmonize them all with the Heavenly Equality, leave them to their endless changes, and so live out your years. What do I mean by harmonizing them with the Heavenly Equality? Right is not right; so is not so. If right were really right, it would differ so clearly from not right that there would be no need for argument. If so were really so, it would differ so clearly from not so that there would be no need for argument. Forget the years; forget distinctions. Leap into the boundless and make it your home! (Watson 1968, 77).

However, it doesn't mean he is amoral or antisocial. It means he is able to be in harmony with things and the world, "be attuned"[16] with them: "The fruits of trees and vines have their patterns and principles. Human relationships, too, difficult as they are, have their relative order and precedence. The sage, encountering them, does not go against them; passing beyond, he does not cling to them. To respond to them in a spirit of harmony—this is virtue; to respond to them in a spirit of fellowship—this is the Way. Thus it is that emperors have raised themselves up and kings have climbed to power" (Watson 1968, 345). He recognizes that all particles[17] in the world are always forming the whole, but in this whole they remain particles:

> For this reason, whether you point to a little stalk or a great pillar, a leper or the beautiful Xishi, things ribald and shady, or things grotesque and strange, the Way makes them all into one. Their dividedness is their completeness; their completeness is their impairment. No thing is either complete or impaired, but all are made into one again. Only the man of far-reaching vision knows how to make them into one. So he has no use [for categories] but relegates all to the constant. The constant is the useful; the useful is the passable; the passable is the successful; and with success, all is accomplished. He relies on this alone, relies on it and does not know he is doing so. This is called the Way (Watson 1968, 68).

Particles are in order. There is no obstruction, because it can cause disorder and chaos that can harm all creatures and therefore the whole.

At the heart of everything there is change. Then an onlooker goes along with the natural order of things. He accepts and lets go of everything since he is aware of the constant change, then he knows that he possesses nothing. He responds to the constant change of everything without emotions, feelings and desire. However he is not indifferent, but wise. He is unconcerned about his appearance, wealth and authority. He is still and not attached to anyone, meanwhile meditates on the beauty of the eternal change:

> Heaven and earth have their great beauties but do not speak of them; the four seasons have their clear-marked regularity but do not discuss it; the ten thousand things have their principles of growth but do not expound them. The sage seeks out the beauties of Heaven and earth and masters the principles of the ten thousand things. Thus it is that the Perfect Man does not act, the Great Sage does not move—they have perceived [the Way of] Heaven and earth, we may say. This Way, whose spiritual brightness is of the greatest purity, joins with others in a hundred transformations. Already things are living or dead, round or square; no one can comprehend their source, yet here are the ten thousand things in all their stir and bustle, just as they have been since ancient times. Things as vast as the Six Realms have never passed beyond the border [of the Way]; things as tiny as an autumn hair must wait for it to achieve bodily form. There is nothing in the world that does not bob and sink to the end of its days, lacking fixity. The yin and yang, the four seasons follow one another in succession, each keeping to its proper place. Dark and hidden, [the Way] seems not to exist, and yet it is there; lush and unbounded, it possesses no form but only spirit; the ten thousand things are shepherded by it, though they do not understand it—this is what is called the Source, the Root. This is what may be perceived in Heaven (Watson 1968, 341-342).

Conclusion

Down to the stream to watch the jade flow
or back to the cliff to sit on a boulder
my mind like a cloud remains unattached
what do I need in the faraway world
Cold Mountain (2000, 175)

The novelty of this essay is in its attempt to comprehend the modern attitude to nature with environment crisis, ecocide as its part from the philosophical perspective and to offer one of the possible solutions to this. I firmly believe that people must educate and cultivate themselves by learning from the Western and Eastern philosophical tradition at the same time, since as Merab Mamardashvili said: "The philosophical thought appears, in my opinion, as a whole, in such unity, that in my eyes there is no such problem of Western and Eastern philosophies, the truth is already exists, and it is simply expressed differently" (Mamardashvili 2012, 258)[18].

When Régis Debray uses the mediological method in order to analyze the contemporary obsession with the environment and nature, he discovers that now a human being as Faust with amnesia, since he forgot about death and its rituality. Then the green era has replaced the red era, which means that people hide from the cruelty of life that is history behind their hypocritical anxiety about nature and environment. However, there is no choice between history and nature, between soul and nature, since both are inevitably essential for the healthy life of humans.

Reading Zhuangzi explains a path of self-cultivation to its reader. Someone, who goes on this path, accepts that the process of change is at the heart of everything and goes along with it. He is not indifferent or apathetic, he responds to everything with harmony. He is not attached to anyone and anything meanwhile follows the Way and knows that:

Some seek pleasure in love
blind to the trials of a mortal body
others see a bubble or mirage
and realize impermanence undoes us all
a real man's will is straight like iron
in an uncrooked heart the Way is true
dense and tall bamboos in the snow
show you the mind not used in vain (Cold Mountain 2000, 93).

Endnotes:

1. Cold Mountain is a Chinese poet. He is well-known in Korea, Japan and also in the West, to which he was introduced by Jack Kerouac, when the latter dedicated *The Dharma Bums* to him in 1958. Little is known about Cold Mountain's life and he is not a part of the traditional literary canon of China despite the fact that he is the only poet whose statue occupies the altars of temples and shrines with other immortals and bodhisattvas. His name 'Cold Mountain' or in Chinese 'Han-shan' was chosen by

himself after the cave that served as his home. This cave is located in Chekiang province, not far away from the East China Sea.

2. In 21 century's Europe ecocide has been done since 2014 until now in Ukraine. The following cases exemplify it: the explosion of the Kahovka Dam, the bombardment of the Dnieper Hydroelectric Station, the bombardment of the Trypilska thermal power plant, the mining of croplands and the case of occupied Mariupol, where water pipes intentionally collapsed, causing serious flooding that was full of waste, at the center of the city. Since the water was from sewerage, an outbreak of epidemic may be on the way. Therefore, the point №8 in Ukraine's peace formula philosophy is about ecological safety: «8. Ecological safety. War against Ukraine caused large-scale environmental damage resulted in unprecedented pollution, disruption of ecosystems and physical destruction of biological species both on the territory of Ukraine and on the scale of the entire region and the world. Destruction of the environment is prohibited in the international law. International community shall support Ukraine in the following key directions to ensure environmental security and to counter the environmental consequences of the war: (1) Short-, medium- and long-term environment damage assessment, including the impact on human health and biodiversity conservation. (2) Prosecution for environmental damage. Aiming to reach this goal it is necessary to record and document properly each case of damage, to provide appropriate legal assessment and to conduct an impartial investigation. (3) Recovery and reconstruction, including the green economy transition. A comprehensive system of environmental and economic recovery should include measures on Ukraine's environment renewal, including land remediation and demining, revival of destroyed forests and nature reserves, creation of new national parks and nature protection zones, rivers, lakes and sea waters purification, etc.». Cited at: Ukraine's Peace Formula Philosophy. Офіційне інтернет-представництво ПРЕЗИДЕНТА УКРАЇНИ. Available at: https://www.president.gov.ua/storage/j-files-storage/01/19/53/32af8d644e6cae41791548fc82ae2d8e_1691483767.pdf [Accessed at: 27 April 2024]. It is based on the international law, especially the UN charter in which the deliberate destruction of ecosystem is prohibited. It is also an appeal for assistance that is necessary for everyone to restore the peaceful coexistence of all nations and countries in the world.
3. In French: «La trace n'est pas seulement ce qui reste d'une croyance, d'un savoir ou d'une opinion, mais l'une des conditions nécessaires à leur emergence et leur propagation. [...] La trace suppose un support, un outil, une technique d'écriture et de lecture, un régime sémiotique, une method d'indexation, de contrôle et de conservation et un dispositif de diffusion» (translation – E. L. N.).
4. In French: «C'est le plus grand triomphe de l'homme sur les choses, que d'avoir su transporter jusqu'au lendemain les effets et les fruits du labeur de la veille. L'humanité ne s'est lentement élevée que sur le tas de ce qui dure» (translation – E. L. N.).
5. In French: «L'Esprit, oui, par opposition à la *Nature*. Ces termes démodés, jugés peu recevables par nos maîtres-déconstructeurs, il nous faut les assumer, avec ou sans leur majuscule hautaine. S'entendra ici, prosaïquement, par *nature*, à la façon stoïcienne, *l'ensemble des choses qui ne dépendent pas de nous*, et par *esprit*, le système élaboré des *forces qui s'appliquent à faire qu'elles dépendent de nous*» (translation – E. L. N.).
6. In French: «Le recyclage du grand-père en compost au bout du jardin, c'est une économie de temps et d'argent (789 euros l'enterrement, mauvaise nouvelle pour les pompes funèbres, bonne pour les familles). Nos restes contribueront à l'entretien des parcs et vergers» (Debray 2020, 18). In English: «The recycling of grandfather into compost at the end of the garden, this is an economy of time and money (789 euro for funeral, bad news for pomp of funerals, good for families). Our remains will contribute to the support for parks and orchards» (translation – E. L. N.).
7. This is the well-known form of the phrase, however the whole text is the following: «Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia, nisi oratoris, immortalitati commendatur?» [Cicero 1967, 224]. In English: «And as History, which bears witness

to the passing of the ages, sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence, and brings tidings of ancient days, whose voice, but the orator's, can entrust her to immortality?» [Cicero 1967, 225].

8. Debray speaks about Kandinsky's work that in French was entitled 'Spirituel dans l 'art'. You can read this work in English: Kandinsky 1977.
9. In French: «Le vert absolu est, dans la société des couleurs, ce qu'est la bourgeoisie dans celle des hommes: un élément immobile, sans désirs, satisfait, épanouie. Ce vert est comme la vache, grasse, saine, couchée et ruminante, capable seulement de regarder le monde de ses yeux vagues et indolents» (translation – E. L. N.).
10. In French: «On est toujours deux dans l'affaire homme, la Nature et l'Esprit. Un matériau et un outillage. [...] Histoire-géo. *Il n'y a donc pas à choisir entre la tondeuse et le jardinier*, entre le moyen et la fin, entre le technique et le spirituel» (translation – E. L. N.).
11. When I use the term daoshu, I imply the following definition of the word: daoshu is «the Heavenly perspective from which all things can be viewed as one, which is what Zhuangzi calls "Dao-Axis" (dao shu 道樞)» (Kamamoto 2022, 49).
12. Zhuang Zhou is the philosopher, the author. Zhuangzi is the philosophical text. The title of the text is using honorific –zi (in Chinese: 子) that can be translated as "master". In Chinese tradition from medieval period written works are classified into four classes according to their genre. One of these classes is *zi* "Masters" category and in the West it is generally considered as philosophy. For more information read the first chapter in the book *Theoretical Knowledge in the Mohist Canon* (Schemmel, Boltz 2023, 1-36).
13. This citation from the book about Zhuangzi's impact on the modern Chinese literature proves it*:* 'As a real poet, Wen Yiduo not only adores Zhuangzi's literary value but also admires his works' content: "Zhuangzi's thought itself is a marvelous poem"' (Jianmei 2016, 148).
14. Debray thinks that the forerunners of mediology can be found mostly in art and literature than in history of philosophy that has a few people: "In reality forerunners and enlighteners of mediology should be looked for with much more reason in the field of literature and art, than in philosophy (there are quite a few of them in the works of cultural theorists)" (Debray 2010, 163). In Russian: «В действительности предшественников и просветителей медиологии следует искать с гораздо большим основанием в поле литературы и искусства, нежели философии (их довольно мало в трудах теоретиков культуры)» (translation – E. L. N.).
15. In French: «L'Orient n'avait-il pas été plus sage en cherchant l'harmonie et la communion avec la nature, en s'en faisant l'émule et non le maître?» (translation – E. L. N.).
16. For more information on this aspect read: Nelson 2020.
17. I use the word "particles" as something that covers all elements that the world is made up of. It has nothing to do with chemistry or physics.
18. In Russian: «Философская мысль возникает, помоему, едино, настолько едино, что в моих глазах вообще нет проблемы западной и восточной философии, истина уже существует, и она лишь разными способами высказывается» (translation – E. L. N.).

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A Linguistic-Narratological Commentary on the Dialogue of Odysseus and Achilles in the Underworld in Homer's *Odyssey* (vv. 465 – 491)

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Abstract:

This commentary examines verses 465-491 from Rhapsody λ of Homer's Odyssey, where Odysseus encounters Achilles in the Underworld. Through a narratological and linguistic analysis, the study explores the use of direct speech and narrative techniques that express the psychological states of both heroes. Odysseus, as a secondary narrator, reflects on his sufferings, while Achilles reveals his deep regret about death, stating his preference for a humble life over rulership in the afterlife. The analysis highlights the shifts in time and space, the contrast between life and death, and the emotional depth achieved through Homeric formulas and linguistic structures. Special emphasis is placed on focalization, with both Odysseus and Achilles presenting their perspectives on past experiences and their current fates in the Underworld. This passage from Rhapsody λ offers valuable insights into the thematic richness of the Odyssey and deepens our understanding of Homer's narrative techniques, particularly in relation to heroic ideals and the human condition.

Keywords: Odyssey, Commentary, Narratological analysis, Linguistic approach, Homeric epic

Introduction

The aim of the present commentary is to analyze a passage from Rhapsody λ of Homer's *Odyssey* (465–491), focusing on its narrative structure while exploring the various linguistic phenomena present in these verses. This work will employ theories from narratology and linguistic analysis to support a comprehensive examination of the text.

In this passage, Odysseus encounters Achilles, who, after his death in the Trojan War, exists as a shadow in the Underworld. Following his interactions with other souls—such as his mother and Agamemnon—Odysseus' dialogue with Achilles emerges as a pivotal moment in the narrative. Throughout Rhapsody λ, Odysseus emphasizes the significance of his communication with the seer Teiresias, who provides crucial information about his journey back to Ithaca, as well as the contrasting themes of life and death.

This passage is particularly interesting from a narrative perspective, as it alternates between narration and direct speech, allowing for a deeper focalization of the experiences shared by the two heroes during their encounter. Odysseus reflects on his hardships and the challenges he faces in reaching his homeland, while Achilles articulates his own thoughts on death and the suffering he endures in Hades.

Moreover, the temporal and spatial shifts in this segment enhance its narrative complexity. Unlike earlier interactions, such as those with his mother and Agamemnon, the time and location are more distinctly established. Both characters reference their past adventures and emotional states in the Underworld, enriching the narrative variety. The inclusion of both narrative and discursive modes further underscores the emotional depth of their meeting, particularly highlighted by Achilles's poignant reaction upon seeing Odysseus.

To facilitate a thorough analysis of this passage, I will divide it into smaller sections, examining the relationships between the parts and identifying key themes. This commentary draws from the edition by Ameis, K.F. & Hentze, 1900, *Homer's Odyssey, Gesang VII-XII*, Leipzig.

Text passage

νῶι μὲν ὣς ἐπέεσσιν ἀμειβομένω στυγεροῖσιν
ἕσταμεν ἀχνύμενοι θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες·
ἦλθε δ' ἐπὶ ψυχὴ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
καὶ Πατροκλῆος καὶ ἀμύμονος Ἀντιλόχοιο
Αἴαντός θ', ὃς ἄριστος ἔην εἶδός τε δέμας τε
τῶν ἄλλων Δαναῶν μετ' ἀμύμονα Πηλεΐωνα.
ἔγνω δὲ ψυχή με ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο
καί ῥ' ὀλοφυρομένη ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
'διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ,
σχέτλιε, τίπτ' ἔτι μεῖζον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μήσεαι ἔργον;
πῶς ἔτλης Ἄϊδόσδε κατελθέμεν, ἔνθα τε νεκροὶ
ἀφραδέες ναίουσι, βροτῶν εἴδωλα καμόντων;'
ὣς ἔφατ', αὐτὰρ ἐγώ μιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπον·
'ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ Πηλῆος υἱέ, μέγα φέρτατ' Ἀχαιῶν,
ἦλθον Τειρεσίαο κατὰ χρέος, εἴ τινα βουλὴν
εἴποι, ὅπως Ἰθάκην ἐς παιπαλόεσσαν ἱκοίμην·
οὐ γάρ πω σχεδὸν ἦλθον Ἀχαιΐδος, οὐδέ πω ἁμῆς
γῆς ἐπέβην, ἀλλ' αἰὲν ἔχω κακά. σεῖο δ', Ἀχιλλεῦ,
οὔ τις ἀνὴρ προπάροιθε μακάρτερος οὔτ' ἄρ' ὀπίσσω·
πρὶν μὲν γάρ σε ζωὸν ἐτίομεν ἶσα θεοῖσιν
Ἀργεῖοι, νῦν αὖτε μέγα κρατέεις νεκύεσσιν
ἐνθάδ' ἐών τῷ μή τι θανὼν ἀκαχίζευ, Ἀχιλλεῦ.'

ὣς ἐφάμην, ὁ δέ μ᾽ αὐτίκ᾽ ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν·
'μὴ δή μοι θάνατόν γε παραύδα, φαίδιμ᾽ Ὀδυσσεῦ.
βουλοίμην κ᾽ ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν ἄλλῳ,
ἀνδρὶ παρ᾽ ἀκλήρῳ, ᾧ μὴ βίοτος πολὺς εἴη,
ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.

Linguistic – Narratological Analysis

465–467. In these specific verses, the direct dialogue from the previous lines (463–464) is interrupted as Odysseus, acting as a secondary narrator, continues his narration to the Phaeacian audience about the other souls he encountered. This narrative transition is marked by the choice of vocabulary, as there is no apostrophe or vocative at the beginning of these verses, unlike in the preceding (463) and following (473) lines. By encapsulating his dialogue with Agamemnon within the noun *ἐπέεσσιν*, Odysseus indicates the completion of that conversation and prepares to shift his focus to the other souls he met in Hades.

This approach to narration is further reinforced by examining the tenses and temporal markers utilized in these lines. The use of the Aorist and the Perfect establishes a past narrative sequence with events that are completed and distinctly bounded. In the verses under consideration (465–467), this phenomenon is evident. The secondary narrator, Odysseus, constructs a timeline marked by chronological indicators through temporal adverbs (*μὲν* and *δ᾽*) (Rutger, 2017). Additionally, there is a palpable effort to build emotional tension, emphasized by the references to feelings of sorrow (*στυγεροῖσιν*, *ἀχνύμενοι*, *κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες*) (Bakker, 2009).

The Perfect tense (*ἕσταμεν*) is employed to convey a situation that remains ongoing, reinforced by the secondary temporal clause (*νῶι μὲν ὣς... χεοντες*), which frames the narrative within a specific timeframe from Odysseus's perspective (Lloyd, 2018). This ongoing emotional state is abruptly interrupted with the appearance of the remaining shadows, particularly that of Achilles, which is introduced through the use of the indefinite tense (*ἦλθε*).

Furthermore, the phrase *νῶι μὲν ὣς ἐπέεσσιν ἀμειβομένω* is a recognizable Homeric formula, reappearing in this rhapsody and in various other instances throughout the *Odyssey* (including v. 225) to indicate the conclusion of Odysseus' encounter with one soul and the beginning of dialogue with another (Janse, 2020).

465–466. In verses 465–466, the combination of these lines forms an Intonation/Information Unit characterized by the use of the enclitic postpositive (*μὲν*), which occupies the second position. Given that there is enjambment between these two verses, with the meaning of verse 465 being completed in verse 466, this interpretation can be supported. The enclitic postpositive (*δ᾽*) appears again in the second position in the next verse (467), creating a new information unit (Janse, 2020).

One could argue that these two verses consist of not one but two separate information units included within the broader narrative. The first part of verse 465 (*νῶι μὲν ὣς ὥσιν ὤμειβομένο*) indicates the completion of the dialogue between Odysseus and Agamemnon, while the remainder of the verse, combined with verse 466, shapes the emotional state of both heroes. As the secondary narrator recounts his continued journey to Hades, he conveys the emotional weight he shares with Agamemnon.

This emotional filtering presented by Odysseus as he reflects on his experiences in Hades serves as a form of focalization, highlighting the intense emotions involved. This emotional charge is pivotal to the unfolding narration, as it is at this moment that Achilles appears, with whom Odysseus will later engage in conversation. The emotional context will lead to a deep immersion in the subsequent verses (De Jong, 2014).

467–468. Formulaic Homeric types are evident in these two verses. Patronymic epithets, such as *Πηληϊάδεω*, are a common linguistic feature for ancient Greek heroes (De Jong, 2012). For instance, Achilles is frequently referred to in the *Iliad* with the same patronymic designation. Additionally, the phrase *ἀμύμονος Ἀντιλόχοιο* appears in the *Iliad* as well (*Ψ* 522).

In these instances, the verses can be viewed as not being attributed to the internal secondary narrator (Odysseus), but rather to an external primary narrator, who operates covertly in this rhapsody. The Homeric narrator is often invisible, with their presence obscured by comments or reflections. Thus, the repetition of these formulaic expressions suggests the influence of this external narrator, reinforcing the traditional structure and characterizations within the narrative.

467–469. The souls of the deceased warriors are presented in these verses in a manner that reflects the relationships they shared in life. Alongside Achilles, the souls of Patroclus and Antilochus—dear friends and fellow warriors of Achilles—are depicted in the same setting. Unlike other points in Rhapsody *λ*, where the names of multiple souls are often omitted, here they are specifically named (Ameis et al., 1900). This choice by the narrator may stem from the fact that all these figures are comrades of Odysseus, prompting him to acknowledge them by name.

Furthermore, the inclusion of Patroclus and Antilochus serves as a narrative framework that sets the stage for the forthcoming dialogue between Odysseus and Achilles. It is also possible that the naming of these heroes corresponds to the order in which the souls appear before Odysseus. In previous encounters recounted by Odysseus, such as his meeting with his mother, the souls are shown arriving in succession. Therefore, it could be inferred that in this instance, each soul presents itself in chronological order.

As Odysseus converses with Agamemnon, he adopts a panoramic perspective, serving as the secondary focalizer within this narrative framework (De Jong, 2014). This suggests that the souls appear progressively before him. The use of the coordinating conjunction *καὶ* further reinforces this chronological order, as it indicates a connection between each shadow he perceives in front of him, linking their forms within his visual field over time.

469–470. In verse 469, the use of the referent *ὅς* is notable. This pronoun can typically serve as a neutral anaphoric deictic; however, in this context, it may take on a demonstrative function (De Jong, 2012). The narratee has already been informed about the specific hero being discussed through the previous verse (468), which references the name of Aedes. This establishes a common ground between the narrator and the audience, to which the subordinate clause of verse 469 adds new information (De Jong, 1997).

Specifically, Odysseus, as a secondary narrator, conveys to the Phaeacians, as well as to the audience of the *Odyssey*, the heroism and superiority of Aedes in terms of appearance and deeds. However, in verse 470, he clarifies that Aedes is not superior to Achilles. This clarification serves to elevate Achilles' characteristics, particularly in light of the forthcoming conversation between Odysseus and Achilles.

The linguistic choices made by Odysseus as a narrator thus contribute significantly to the narrative structure. They support the assertion in verse 478, which designates Achilles as the best among all the Achaeans, while simultaneously shaping Odysseus' perspective on Achilles' heroism (Chantraine, 2013). Moreover, the decision to mention Achilles' name in verse 467 before those of the other companions underscores his superiority, reinforcing the expectation that he would be the first soul Odysseus encounters after Agamemnon, given the hierarchical value assigned to heroes.

469. In this particular verse, the Imperfect tense (*ἔην*) is employed to indicate an ongoing situation within a specific timeframe, viewed from the perspective of the character, in this case, the secondary narrator, Odysseus. In Hades, Odysseus observes only souls that have taken on the form of shadows (as demonstrated in his interactions with his mother in earlier verses of Rhapsody *λ*). It appears that Achilles, as a soul, does not present a distinctive form compared to the other souls. His superiority is derived from his actions during his lifetime. This leads to the conclusion that the use of the Past Participle likely refers to the period when Achilles and his companions were alive, during which their forms could be differentiated.

The use of the Imperfect reinforces the narrative mode, providing a brief and focused description of the narration regarding Aedes (and, by extension, Achilles), while simultaneously introducing a pause in the narrative flow on the part of Odysseus (Rutger, 2017). The mention of Achilles' external appearance (*εἶδός*) further connects linguistically and narratively to verse 475, where the term *βροτῶν εἴδωλα* is used, highlighting the connection between their identities in life and their current states in the Underworld (Bakker, 2009).

470. In verse 470, the designation *μετ' ἀμύμονα* can be interpreted in two ways: it may indicate that the Achaeans join with Achilles, making him their leader, or it could imply his exclusion from them. This same term was previously used in reference to Aedes (468) (Ameis et al., 1900). The transition from the descriptive mode to narrative mode, as the secondary narrator resumes the account of his interaction with Achilles' soul, may lend credence to the latter interpretation of the prepositional modifier.

Achilles, as noted earlier, surpasses the other warriors and souls, positioning him as the one who engages in conversation with Odysseus. The repeated emphasis on the designation *ἀμύμων* for both heroes likely highlights a shared understanding of their heroism. Furthermore, the use of the preposition *μετ'* suggests a differentiation or exception for Achilles, reinforcing his unique status among the other figures in the narrative.

471. As in verse 467, in this verse the secondary narrator employs the temporal conjunction *δὲ* after an Aorist (*ἔγνω*), signaling the shift from descriptive to narrative mode. The first intonation unit, which ends with the personal pronoun *με*, aligns with the caesura of the verse and introduces the narrative mode by marking the start of Odysseus' new encounter with Achilles, leading into their dialogue. The remainder of the verse contains a formulaic expression characterizing Achilles (*ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο*), which fits within the descriptive mode (Rutger, 2020).

In this verse, the word order appears somewhat unconventional, as the personal pronoun (*με*) is separated from the cognitive verb (*ἔγνω*) to which it relates, placed at the end of the first intonation unit. One possible explanation could be the parallelism with verse 467, where for the first time in Rhapsody *λ*, Odysseus' contact with Achilles is referenced. Additionally, the metrical structure may have influenced this particular arrangement of words.

472. Although one might argue that the repetition of this verse in verse 154 suggests it is a formulaic expression of the Homeric narrator, it seems that its occurrence at these two specific points in the rhapsody is due to the intense emotional state of the souls when they see Odysseus before them.

Additionally, the use of the participle *ὀλοφυρομένη* by the secondary narrator to convey Achilles' emotional state facilitates a smooth transition to Achilles' focalization and perspective. In this way, Odysseus embeds Achilles' viewpoint into the narrative, signaling to the audience that the direct speech, which follows and contains Achilles' words, is charged with strong emotions.

473. This line consists solely of vocatives. Just as Odysseus used several adjectives when narrating to the Phaeacians, employing typical formulaic Homeric terms, Achilles in this verse applies similar adjectives to Odysseus. It marks the first time Achilles directly addresses Odysseus, making the use of the vocative necessary. The vocative here highlights the discursive mode, emphasizing the interaction between the narrator and his addressee.

The exact same vocative had previously been used by another of Odysseus' comrades-in-arms, Agamemnon. This phrase, therefore, not only reflects the typical adjectives fellow warriors would use among themselves but also marks the transition from Odysseus' communication with Agamemnon to his interaction with Achilles.

The line is divided into two intonation units: the first refers to Odysseus' lineage (*διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη*), and the second (*πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ*), following the caesura, highlights his renowned cunning.

474. In this verse, Achilles' focalization becomes particularly intense for the first time in his speech, as he offers a qualitative assessment of Odysseus' journey to the Underworld. By characterizing this act as *μεῖζον ἔργον* (a great deed) and posing a somewhat inappropriate question (given that Odysseus' greatest challenge is his return to Ithaca), Achilles' focalizing presence is strongly revealed. This moment underscores Achilles' perspective on the magnitude of Odysseus' actions, shedding light on how he perceives the gravity of such feats in the context of life and death.

475. This verse begins with the adverb *πῶς* and the verb *ἔτλης*. Achilles' phrase can be understood as equivalent to the question, "How did you find the courage?" Through this, Achilles achieves two things in addressing Odysseus (Ameis et al., 1900). Firstly, it reinforces Achilles' earlier characterization of Odysseus as brave (*σχέτλιε*), explaining Achilles' astonishment at Odysseus' daring act. In the previous verse (474), Odysseus' descent into Hades is portrayed as one of the most challenging tasks for any living mortal, leading Achilles to believe that Odysseus could scarcely undertake anything more difficult (*μεῖζον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μήσεαι ἔργον*). Secondly, this question allows Odysseus, in his response (478–480), to briefly explain the purpose of his descent to Hades.

Simultaneously, this verse also touches upon the narrative space where the events unfold. Throughout the narration of Odysseus' journey, the general setting is Hades, where his interactions with the souls take place. However, considering that mortals cannot enter the Underworld (even with divine assistance), this descent might be a fictional construct created by the secondary narrator. Thus, the descent becomes more of a hypothetical or dream-like setting, turning Hades into a symbolic frame rather than a literal one.

There is no detailed description of Hades in the verse, which could be attributed to the narratees' pre-existing mental map of the Underworld, rendering further description unnecessary. The only reference to the setting comes through the verb *κατελθέμεν*, and specifically its participle form, suggesting that Hades is a subterranean space. Achilles reinforces this notion with the word *Ἄϊδός* and the adverb *δε*, which provide indirect deixis to signify the location to the audience.

476. In this particular verse, Achilles, as narrator, refers to the existence of the souls in Hades. He describes the dead using the Present tense (*ναίουσι*) to emphasize the continuous arrival of these souls to the Underworld. This ongoing, unbounded action is symbolic of the mythological understanding of life after death. Within the discourse between the secondary narrator, Odysseus, and Achilles, Achilles as a psyche informs Odysseus about the perpetual flow of the dead into the Underworld. The use of the Present (*ναίουσι*) here can be characterized as a generic-habitual present, fitting within the descriptive mode of Achilles' narration (Rutger, 2017).

The enjambment in this verse does not contribute to the progression of the narration or the plot. However, this linguistic choice serves to justify the appearance of the word *εἴδωλα* in the second half of the verse. These "idols" lack physical substance and no longer possess their minds. This idea aligns with what Odysseus learned from his mother, Anticleia, who informed him that souls need to drink blood in order to communicate with the living (Rutger, 2020).

It appears paradoxical, however, that Achilles includes himself among the souls he calls *ἀφραδέες*, those who lack their own minds. Yet, in verse 471, Achilles recognizes Odysseus without the necessity of drinking blood. It is possible that, given Anticleia's earlier explanation, Odysseus' narratees—the Phaeacians—are already familiar with the process of communicating with the souls, and thus the reference to drinking blood is omitted here to maintain the narrative's flow without slowing down time.

477–478. These verses feature a typical Homeric formula, frequently employed by the secondary narrator (Heubeck, 1989).

In verse 477, the pronoun *μιν* refers to Odysseus' interlocutor, Achilles. This is further clarified in the following verse, where Achilles' name is explicitly mentioned, confirming the identity of the individual being referred to by the pronoun.

Verse 478 marks the beginning of Odysseus' response to Achilles. Just as Achilles, in verse 473, addresses Odysseus with specific formulaic adjectives, Odysseus reciprocates by adopting a similar approach, using corresponding terms of respect and acknowledgment toward Achilles. This mirroring of speech reflects the mutual regard between the two heroes, reinforcing the thematic continuity within the dialogue.

479–482. Verses 479–482 serve as Odysseus' response to Achilles' question in verse 475. In these lines, Odysseus explains the purpose of his descent into Hades and reintroduces the theme of his *nostos* (return home). He begins by clarifying that his journey was undertaken to meet Tiresias (verse 479), and then shifts the narrative back to the subject of his *nostos*.

This structure of Odysseus' response is reflected in the differentiation of the corresponding intonation units. Initially, through the phrase *ἦλθον Τειρεσίαο κατὰ χρέος*, Odysseus provides the main reason for his descent into Hades. The prepositional modifier *κατὰ χρέος* is used here to emphasize that the journey was made out of necessity or obligation (Ameis, 1900).

By framing his answer this way, Odysseus effectively dismisses Achilles' earlier implication (verse 475) that he undertook the journey to achieve seemingly impossible goals or to continuously surpass himself. Odysseus makes it clear that his descent into Hades is centered on the search for Tiresias, as part of his broader quest to return to Ithaca. In verses 481–482, Odysseus further elaborates on the sufferings he has endured, explaining that he is a prisoner of his journey (Heubeck, 1989). This indirect refutation of Achilles' assumption is reinforced by the negation *οὐ* and the particle *γάρ*, which serves to provide justification for his journey to Hades.

482–483. The unbounded actions discussed in the previous verses, regarding Odysseus' reference to the time frame of his return to Ithaca and the impossibility of achieving his *nostos*, are also evident in the present verses, though they now pertain to the exceptional qualities of Achilles. From the end of verse 482, we see the reaffirmation of a theme related to Achilles' personality traits, which began in verses 478–479 with Odysseus' direct address to him (*σεῖο δ', Ἀχιλλεῦ*).

In verse 483, the focus shifts to the heroism and greatness of Achilles, who is described as the happiest of all men (*μακάρτερος*). The use of negation (*οὔ*) and the impersonal pronoun (*τις*) emphasizes Achilles' unbounded supremacy over all others in terms of happiness. His joy is portrayed as unmatched by anyone, past or present.

This unbounded supremacy is also evident on a temporal level, with the use of the necessary temporal adverbs. Specifically, there are references to both the past (*οὔ προπάροιθε*) and the future (*οὔτ' ἄρ' ὀπίσσω*), where the double negation related to Achilles' happiness expands into a temporal generalization, illustrating the enduring and absolute nature of his contentment (Rutger, 2017).

483–486. In these specific verses, the contrast between temporal levels and the local context of Achilles' actions as a hero becomes evident. Odysseus, in essence, reflects on both Achilles' past and his current state.

The primary reference point for each temporal level and local context is Achilles' death, which marks a shift in his role and actions. The adverb *πρὶν μὲν* is used, followed by the participle *ζωὸν*, to establish the timeframe during which Achilles was alive. The use of the Imperfect tense (*ἐτίομεν*) further emphasizes the unbounded and recurring honor paid to Achilles by his comrades throughout his life. This functions as an *analepsis* (flashback) to Achilles' life, situated within the broader flashback that Odysseus is recounting to the Phaeacians. Given the high esteem in which the other heroes held Achilles, this scene is imbued with great emotional weight (Rutger, 2017).

In verse 485, the narration shifts forward, focusing on Achilles' state of being and actions after his death. Since the time of the secondary narration is situated within Odysseus' journey to Hades, the timeframe of Achilles' existence among the souls of the dead aligns with the moment of the secondary narration (Rutger, 2020). Thus, no temporal adverb referring to life after death is used; instead, the adverb *νῦν* highlights the synchronicity of the narration. The narrator also employs the present tense (*κρατέεις*) in combination with the noun *νεκύεσσιν*, which contrasts with the participle used in the previous verse.

The present tense here carries a dual meaning. It indicates both the temporal metaphor of Achilles' continued supremacy as re-enacted by the secondary narrator, Odysseus, and the notion of his permanent authority within the realm of Hades. This suggests that Achilles' dominance is not just a past fact but a present and ongoing reality in the afterlife (Bakker, 2009).

486. A characteristic element of this specific verse is the deixis achieved through the use of the local adverb *ἐνθάδ'*. Here, a shift occurs from the local context in which the narrator and the narratees find themselves during the primary narration to the setting of the secondary narration in Hades (De Jong, 2012). The narrative focus transitions away from the island of the Phaeacians and the palace of Nausicaa, moving instead to the Underworld, which now serves as the backdrop for the secondary narration.

This shift signifies a relocation to the narrative world, creating a space that exists within the imagination of both the narrator and the narratees, distinct from their actual spatio-temporal reality.

The use of deixis in this context emphasizes the contrast between the tangible world of the Phaeacians and the more abstract realm of the Underworld, highlighting the imaginative nature of this transition.

487. After the typical Homeric formulaic phrase used at the beginning of the verse, the speech transitions to Achilles. His name was mentioned in the preceding verse (485) when Odysseus addressed him. In this instance, the use of demonstratives (*ὁ δὲ*) serves to reaffirm the topic at hand (Janse, 2020). As Odysseus hands over the speech to Achilles, the focalization shifts to Achilles through the use of direct speech, allowing his perspective to come to the forefront (De Jong, 2014).

488–491. In this passage, Achilles seemingly rejects Odysseus' assumption that he is happy in the Underworld. He explicitly states that he would prefer to be a much humbler man among the living than to reign over the dead. This strong denial reflects Achilles' emotional state and underscores his longing to return to the world of the living.

This perspective paves the way for interpreting these words as a peak moment, following the vivid and intense expression of his aversion to Hades and his opposition to the ideals of happiness previously mentioned by Odysseus. Achilles' emphasis on the value of life, even in a more humble form, highlights the profound disconnect he feels with the notion of happiness in the afterlife.

Discussion – Conclusion

In this analysis of the dialogue between Odysseus and Achilles in Rhapsody *λ* of Homer's *Odyssey*, we observe a rich interplay of narrative techniques and emotional depth that significantly enhances the thematic resonance of the text. The use of varying tenses, particularly the transition from the Aorist to the Present, underscores the duality of Achilles' past glory and his current state as a shadow in the Underworld. This temporal layering allows for a profound exploration of heroism, as Odysseus navigates the complexities of memory and loss while engaging with the heroic ideals represented by Achilles.

The structured progression of the dialogue, marked by direct addresses and the use of demonstrative pronouns, emphasizes the intimacy of the exchange between the two heroes, highlighting the contrasts between their experiences and perceptions of life and death. The shifting focalization between Odysseus and Achilles provides a nuanced understanding of their respective emotional landscapes, enriching the narrative's complexity.

Moreover, the interplay of deictic elements and the careful orchestration of the narrative space contribute to a heightened sense of immediacy and engagement. The use of specific formulaic expressions reinforces the connections between the characters while also echoing broader themes of fate and divine influence within the mythological framework.

In summary, the passage illustrates a sophisticated integration of narrative techniques, temporal shifts, and structural elements that collectively deepen the emotional intensity and thematic richness of the Odyssey. Through the intricate portrayal of Odysseus and Achilles, Homer crafts a compelling dialogue that resonates with the enduring complexities of heroism, mortality, and the quest for identity within the context of the afterlife.

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St. Paul as the Paradigm of a Christian Way of Life: Kierkegaard's Climacus Writings on Faith/*Pistis*

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Abstract:

This article examines how Søren Kierkegaard engages with Classical-Hellenistic-Roman thought to root modern day Christian faith in ethical practice and the pursuit of truth. Kierkegaard challenged Greek and Jewish perspectives on Christianity by advocating a form of scepticism that, arguing against the attainability of *ataraxia*, embraces faith (*pistis*) as a conviction that transcends rational understanding (influenced by Aristotle's *Rhetorica* and *Ethica Nichomachea*). He contrasts the Jewish objective rituals with the Christian emphasis on inwardness, urging a life driven by personal faith and truth (influenced by Saint Paul's works and disputed works such as Acts of the Apostles). Kierkegaard seeks to return to a primordial form of Christianity, as exemplified by St. Paul, where Christianity emerged not in the context of early childhood, but within a complex political milieu marked by deep Jewish spiritualism and Greek scientism. This analysis reveals that Climacus views faith not as mere belief, for example turning the question of Christ's resurrection into a 'yes' or 'no', but as a deeply personal and passionate commitment to a way of life that confronts life's inherent challenges, uncertainties, and paradoxes. Interpreting Christianity as a way of life — distinct from Greek and Jewish traditions — has significant implications even today, as Christians reflecting on St. Paul's teachings and Kierkegaard's insights are likely again to become distinct subjects, much like early Christians did in their time.

Keywords: Ethics, Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Scepticism, Faith, Pistis, Truth, Conviction, Kierkegaard, St. Paul, Aristotle.

> To treat it as though Christianity were an invention of Johannes Climacus is precisely a biting satire on philosophy's impudence towards it (Kierkegaard, *Papers and Journals*, 45 VI A 84).

Introduction

The inquiry into the relationship between Søren Kierkegaard and St. Paul the apostle's work has been limited, despite Kierkegaard's frequent and extensive references to Paul throughout his oeuvre. Moreover, when researchers do examine the relation between Kierkegaard and Paul, their focus is on explicit mentions of Paul's epistles, while largely overlooking the implications present in Kierkegaard's Climacus writings (Barrett and Stewart 2010, preface ix).

In *Philosophical Fragments* (1844) Climacus adopts the stance of having forgotten about Christianity, characterized by an amnesia. In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (1846), he openly declares he is not a Christian and explores the process of becoming one. The latter, I shall argue, is answered by a return to antiquity, or to the primordial form of Christianity for which Paul is an exemplar, absolving the amnesia previously mentioned. Thus what Climacus sets out to do is to communicate the old way of Christian life as handed down by the early Christians (Kierkegaard 2009, 209). Additionally, for Climacus this discussion does not just involve an amnesia towards the historical situatedness of antiquity, this form of amnesia also manifests itself in the present. One can understand this in terms of continually forgetting oneself, and thereby, de facto, ethical and religious existence. In other words, the importance is not just placed on a return to antiquity, we are also amnesiac in the sense that we continually lose sight of our ethical and spiritual commitments in the present moment. Through this exploration, the faith, as can be found in the Bible, and the philosophical faith or *pistis*, as can be found all throughout antiquity, are brought closer together.

At the time of Kierkegaard writing the pseudonymous *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, various developments led to the Pauline legacy to be under stress. Christian scholars doubted the authorship of multiple Pauline epistles. As Lori Unger Brandt notes: "The sheer variety of interpretive options tended to undermine the certainty traditionally associated with faith and threatened to defer all religious commitments until the scholarly disputes had been resolved" (Barrett and Stewart 2010, preface xi-xii). Kierkegaard, troubled by these disputes, felt the need to explicate the significance of faith in a situation of decreasing academic consensus, while having to contend with contested interpretations of Paul (Barrett and Stewart 2010, preface xi-xii). Consequently, Climacus ended up being more concerned with having faith, than as to the question of what faith is. One has nevertheless to assume Kierkegaard, under his Climacus pseudonym, approached used material carefully and deliberately. Furthermore, this led Brandt to conclude that Kierkegaard, familiar with all these discussions, was heavily influenced by philosophers such as Johann Gottfried Herder and Friedrich Schleiermacher, whom emphasized individual piety and living a Christian way of life.

During Kierkegaard's first, yet unpublished, Climacus work: *De omnibus dubitandum est* (1842-1843), Kierkegaard emphasizes his pseudonym as someone preoccupied with Greek and modern philosophy. As the subtitle to the first part (*pars prima*) states: "Johannes Climacus Begins to Philosophize with the Aid of Traditional Ideas," (Kierkegaard 2013, 127). This work, and later *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, reflects Kierkegaard's interest in Ancient Greek philosophy, and in particular: Aristotle. His engagement with Aristotle was at its height after studying Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann's *History of Philosophy* (*Geschichte der Philosophie*) during his time in Berlin. Kierkegaard's preoccupation with Aristotle started to show in his journals after his return to Copenhagen in March 1842 (Carlisle 2005, 15). Aristotle's philosophy is a significant element in Kierkegaard's Climacus writings and serves as a recurring reference point throughout this article.

In conclusion, Climacus draws extensively from the Classical-Hellenistic-Roman periods. Ultimately a dialogue with Paul can be discerned, although Climacus is not withholding to filling in the gaps where Paul's epistles proved to be either ambiguous or inconclusive. He also does not steer away from disputed works, and rather enthusiastically employs them. In a similar vein, Climacus took a delight in referencing the truth speaking non-Christian, such as Aristotle, and also Socrates (Barrett and Stewart 2010, 255). In regards to Paul, Kierkegaard reads Paul in a similar manner as he reads Abraham. He imagines the pathos of the individual, envisaging emotions and motivations to more profoundly comprehend the nature of the story (Barrett and Stewart 2010, 195). Ultimately, what emerges is a fascinating discourse on biblical and philosophical faith or *pistis*, enlightening not only our understanding of the past but also illuminating our path forward.

At the heart of our exploration from here on out is a detailed examination of faith, or *pistis*, as presented in the works of Climacus. To navigate this inquiry, we must first address the fundamental question: What entails the Christian way of life? Answering this sets the stage for our next inquiry: How does having faith manifest within Climacus' interpretation of a Christian way of life? By examining Kierkegaard's construction of this discourse, particularly in light of Paul's distinction between the Greek, Jewish, and Christian way of life, we seek to clarify the multifaceted nature of faith (*pistis*) through distinct cultural contexts. This explorations helps us to elucidate what it means to have faith, or *pistis*, for Climacus.

The Greek, the Jew and Paul

For Climacus, becoming a Christian is not merely about having been baptized or choosing one day to become a Christian; it is about changing one's way of life, or mode of existence. Climacus' inquiry concerning the primacy of existence leads him to place his contemporaneity in relation to the Hellenistic-Roman period, drawing on Paul's distinction between the Jew and the Greek (Kierkegaard 2009, 295-296). These distinctions have in common that they each focus on existence, an ethos, or simply, a way of life. Our objective is to delineate these distinct ways of life. For now, it is sufficient to recognize their common emphasis on one's 'existence-inwardness', i.e. subjectivity or spirit, essentially the subject's transformation within oneself to which the Hellenistic-Roman period was heavily indebted (Kierkegaard 2009, 33).

Climacus observed that the emergence of Christianity occurred within a complex milieu, marked by a deep Jewish spiritualism and Greek scientism. Therefore, Climacus distinguishes it from the modern practice of teaching Christianity from a young age. Had Christianity in antiquity emerged in the same manner, the role of apostles would have been redundant (Kierkegaard 2009, 301).[1] This implies that the apostles' existence and role were necessitated by the sophisticated and mature intellectual milieu of the time of Paul's writing.

The complexity of this discussion is heightened by acknowledging that the opposing Greek and Jewish ways of life, though distinct from the Christian way of life, are not diametrically opposed. Instead, their characteristics are highly interwoven, allowing for nuanced differentiation. This concept of discernment through contrast is echoed by Climacus, who asserts that to truly embrace Christianity, one must initially stand outside its bounds. By comparing and contrasting the Christian way of life with those of the Jews and Greeks, we may gain deeper insights and advance our exploration of these differing, yet interwoven, ways of life:

> For anyone who has really become a Christian there must have been a time when he was not a Christian; there must, in turn, have been a time when he found out what Christianity is; and he must, again, provided he has not wholly forgotten how he existed before becoming a Christian, be able, by comparing his earlier life to his Christian life, to say what in his own case Christianity is (Kierkegaard 2009, 312).

This quotation illuminates our ability to understand the Christian way of life through a juxtaposition of 'before' and 'after' scenarios. This method not only aids in comprehending the essence of Christianity but also highlights the complexities involved in grasping the Christian way of life, such as the necessity of evaluating it on an individual basis. It is similarly asserting that adopting Christianity by choice, rather than by birth, is preferable. At present, the methodological approach of contrasting the distinct paradigms of Greek, Jewish and Christian ways of life will have to suffice in serving our inquiry.

Climacus references 1 *Corinthians* 1:23: "A Greek philosopher was truly a man who could think, and therefore it means something when Christianity defines itself as the teaching that is an offence to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, ..." (Kierkegaard 2009, 245-246). Christianity presented a radical challenge to Jewish expectations of the Messiah. The offensiveness was found in proclaiming a low-born man, born between animals, to be the supreme being on Earth (Kierkegaard 2013, 238-239).[2] For the Greeks, foolishness was found in the tales about Christ. This perspective aligns well with Paul facing mockery in Athens for proclaiming Christ's resurrection to the Greeks, as recounted in Acts 17:16-34. This leads us to two critical issues: first, a disdain for the notion of Christ as the supreme being, and second, a scepticism towards the nature of Christ. Exploring these issues offers deeper insight into the Christian way of life and a more nuanced understanding of Christian faith.

To summarize, Climacus observes that during his time, there was a lack of focus on existence-inwardness, i.e. one's subjective transformation. He concludes that both the Jewish and Greek ways of life, despite being opposing paradigms, at least represented legitimate approaches to life (Kierkegaard 2009, 245). We have furthermore shortly put our focus on examining the contrasting elements within these paradigms, a Greek scepticism and a Jewish contempt towards Christ. Climacus views scepticism and passion as means to further deepen our understanding of the Christian way of life and of faith (Kierkegaard 2009, 335-336). Examining these notions helps differentiate the Christian from Greek and Jewish ways of life, clarifying the essence of a Christian faith.

Scepticism and Faith

Starting off, Climacus sees scepticism as more than just mere doubt about knowledge claims, it delves into a deeper inquiry into the very framework of life and existence. It involves a retreat from immediate experiences and certainties (Kierkegaard 2009, 266). Climacus states:

> The Greek skeptic did not deny the correctness of sensation and of immediate cognition, but, said he, error has an utterly different basis - it comes from the conclusion I draw. If I can only avoid drawing conclusions, I shall never be deceived (Kierkegaard 2013, 82).

This quotation primarily highlights the distinction between Cartesian scepticism and Greek scepticism. Cartesian scepticism focuses on abstractly doubting sense perceptions, while Greek scepticism is concerned with the ethical implications of deception (Kierkegaard 2013, 211-212).[3] Climacus thus roots scepticism within the ethical, and therefore within existence. For the Greek sceptic it was most ethically advisable to avoid forming any strong opinions whatsoever. Climacus provides the following example:

> If, for example, sensation shows me in the distance a round object that close at hand is seen to be square or shows me a stick that looks broken in the water although it is straight when taken out, sensation has not deceived me, but I am deceived only when I conclude something about that stick and that object (Kierkegaard 2013, 82-83).

In this context, it becomes evident that the Greek sceptic would view it as ethically problematic to make affirmative conclusions in the face of uncertainty. This tendency to avoid definitive claims sharply contrasts with Paul's proclamation of Christ's resurrection, an event he did not witness firsthand. Consequently, Climacus criticizes the Greek sceptics for their inclination towards certainty, distinguishing it from the Christian paradigm, which embraces a shift towards embracing uncertainty. However, Climacus similarly to the Greek sceptic argues that true understanding comes from recognizing the limits of our knowledge and the inevitability of uncertainty. To make his argument, Climacus draws upon the teachings of Socrates, but the philosophical validity of his argument he derives from Aristotle.

Climacus interprets Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo* as initiating a unique form of scepticism, arising from his acknowledgment of the soul's immortality, without having any proof. Kierkegaard views Socrates' method of inquiry, which often leaves questions unanswered, as sharing similarities with scepticism, evident in Plato's *Apology* (Lippitt and Pattison 2015, 136-137). Here, Socrates' admission of his limited knowledge, a mark of humility, distinguishes him from those claiming false knowledge (Plato 2005, 83). Climacus sees Socrates' recognition of life's contingency and finiteness as reconciling the paradox of his scepticism coexisting with his belief in the soul's immortality—a belief that would typically be subject to criticism through the very method of questioning he advocates.

In this context, Rick Anthony Furtak introduces the notion of a Socratic *pistis*. He observes: "Like Abraham, Socrates abides by his beliefs in the context of finite existence, orienting his life in accordance with a conviction that is formed and maintained in the face of uncertainty" (Lippitt and Pattison 2015, 137). This perspective embodies a form of scepticism rooted in human finiteness that strives to make knowledge claims beyond what can be firmly established. Similarly, when a servant asked Kierkegaard for a solid conviction on the soul's immortality, Kierkegaard responded: "... that we are all equally ignorant on such points; that one had to choose between the one possibility and the other; and that conviction then comes in accordance with the choice" (Kierkegaard 2021, 195). Having a conviction is thus a matter of choice, similar as for the Greek sceptics it was a matter of choice whether one is deceived or not. The relation between conviction and *pistis* requires some further elucidation.

In his journals, Kierkegaard reflects on Aristotle's concept of *pistis* as outlined in *Rhetorica* and also *Ethica Nichomachea*. Aristotle introduces the idea of non-scientific knowledge, or practical wisdom (*phrónēsis*), which pertains to the realm of actual, contingent existence. Within this framework, he describes moral certainty or conviction using the term *pistis* (Kierkegaard 2009, 174).[4] Kierkegaard observes:

> *Pistis* in classical Greek is the conviction (more than *doxe*, opinion) which relates to what is probable. But Christianity, which always turns the natural man's concepts upside down and extracts the opposite, lets *pistis* relate to the improbable, to that which is not meant to be grasped. Only faith or *pistis* is knowledgeable to this realm of that which cannot be grasped (Kierkegaard, Papers and Journals, 50 X 2 A 354).

In this section, Kierkegaard juxtaposes the classical Greek conception of *pistis*, which is rooted in probability and conviction, with its reinterpretation in Christian faith. The Christian paradigm shifts the focus of *pistis* towards embracing the improbable and includes convictions that transcend human understanding, such as the resurrection of Christ. This redefinition significantly diverges from Greek scepticism, as it associates faith with the realm of the improbable, a domain Christians identify with the divine or God.

For Kierkegaard, as interpreted again through Climacus, human beings inherently seek to understand themselves. Climacus observes that Greek scepticism reaches a limit when all phenomena have been evaluated for their truth value, and progress then simply depends on the emergence of new phenomena (Kierkegaard 2013, 324). Although scepticism promotes a focus on subjectivity, it ultimately leads to a kind of annihilation, as the objective of subjectivity is continuous knowledge expansion. This perspective sees existence-inwardness, subjectivity or spirit, as a precursor to expressions affirming the improbable. However, Climacus emphasizes that we should only discuss these from a contingent, and finite standpoint. These aspects are already found in Socrates and Aristotle, yet find new meaning in the Christian faith and way of life.

To summarize, Christianity introduces a nuanced perspective, advocating for the affirmation of the improbable. Climacus states that if the Greek use of scepticism would win certainty, and does not lead to new doubts, then no Christian category could be sustained and Christianity would be abolished (Kierkegaard 2009, 281). In other words, Climacus asserts that a Greek sceptic is bound to a perpetual cycle of doubt. This is because achieving tranquillity, or *ataraxia*, would necessitate an end to doubting, yet this is contradictory to the perpetual uncertainty inherent in human experience. Socrates' conversational method exemplifies this contradiction, as it consistently demonstrates the ongoing nature of doubt and questioning. Therefore, Christian faith emerges as a logical outcome in a process of maturation. A mediocre doubter will always be the first to succeed in getting certainty, and thus the certainty achieved through conviction or Christian faith, is more notable. The Christian concept of faith is further characterized by a unique passion, which will be the primary focus of our discussion going forward.

Faith and Passion

In the previous section, we explored the concept of life's contingency and finiteness, underscoring the significance of subjectivity as a foundation for formulating statements oriented towards the improbable, as framed within the Greek sceptical tradition. This exploration is closely linked to the notion of passion. For example, one can be uncertain as to the truth of Christianity, but it would be more correct to say one thinks it true because one is a Christian. Similarly, Climacus refrains from making absolute claims about Christianity being the definitive religion. Instead, he places greater emphasis on the way of life it represents, rather than making propositional statements. Climacus contends that such a perspective necessitates a profound sense of passion, as becomes evident in the following:

> [today we speak of a] Christianity of the kind where Christ has become 'Yes and No', while in Corinth, as preached by Paul, he was not 'Yes and No' (2 *Corinthians* 1:19)! Existing subjectively with passion (and to exist objectively can be done only in distraction) is an absolute condition for being able to have any opinion at all on Christianity (Kierkegaard 2009, 234).

Climacus offers an interpretation of Paul's insights in 2 *Corinthians*, emphasizing the crucial role of the individual in their own faith. He articulates that while subjectivity is not the root cause of faith, it is a vital precondition—the 'condition of the condition'—for its genuine emergence. This perspective posits God as the primary grantor of faith, with the individual's subjectivity acting as a deep, passionate longing or *telos* for realizing one's potential as a Christian (Kierkegaard 2009, 234). In other words, God is the source of one's faith, yet inwardness is the centre.

The concept of *telos* requires further clarification, as it finds its origins in Aristotle's *Metaphysica*. Aristotle posited that all movement and change in the world can be rendered intelligible by insisting upon an underlying subject (God) that persists through change, and is called the 'unmoved mover'. This concept serves as a reference point through which all finite motions can be elucidated. In Aristotle's view, everything in nature has an inherent developmental direction toward an ultimate end, goal or measure, termed its *telos* (Kierkegaard 2009, 261). The concepts of potentiality (*dunamis*) and actuality (*energeia*) help to clarify this notion. Potentiality marks the inherent possibilities something like a seed contains, actuality marks the actual state of being, and end result of the potential being realized, e.g. a tree (Kierkegaard 2009, 287). The unmoved mover, as the cause of all motion, must be solely in a state of actuality, because something with mere potentiality need not exercise it. The reason for this is that any motion or change implies the existence of potentiality. In this context, God serves as the unmoved subject which moves all (Kierkegaard 2009, 261). Aristotle's viewpoint operates within a cosmological framework, where God serves as the eternal stabilizing element.

In contrast, Christians lacked a similar eternal being of God, as the realm of the divine was separated from that of the human. In this conception the individual has to anchor and empower the Aristotelian movement in some other way. The intensity of passion, pushed to its maximum by Christian faith, functions as a kind of finite approximation to eternity. Clare Carlisle suggests that Climacus in essence places the source of movement, as found in Aristotle, within the individual subject itself, fully exercised through a state of passion (Carlisle 2005, 16-18). Climacus writes: "… all idealizing passion is an anticipation of the eternal in existence, in order for one who exists to exist" (Kierkegaard 2009, 262). Climacus contends that passion offers a way to momentarily transcend existence, as seen, for example, in Abraham's faith. Yet, it is precisely this state of passion that provides the impetus to exist. For Climacus, passion is inherently related to a will to existence, and everything that tries to remove itself from existence, is hitherto dispassionate (Kierkegaard 2009, 514). In this reasoning, whenever people are dispassionate in their lives, their movement is stalled, as is their development.

Abraham's faith is one characterized by a deep sense of passion, which is why he is prominently featured as the model of Christian faith in *Genesis* 15: 6.5.[5] Moreover, Schleiermacher acknowledges Paul's perspective on Abraham as the archetype of Christian faith, particularly in Romans 4 where Paul asserts that Abraham was justified by faith alone, prior to Mosaic Law (Schleiermacher 2016, 61).[6] This discourse propels Climacus further into the realm of passion's and inwardness' significance. His argument is further rooted within the Pauline '*hos me*' principle – meaning: 'as if not' – as a new mode of existing. Paul urged the Corinthians to make use of the world as if they do not use it in 1 *Corinthians* 7:29-31. This is emphasized by Climacus when he writes about 'the eternal religiousness of hidden inwardness', i.e. the deeply personal and subjective aspect of faith:

> … someone with no religiousness at all cannot be offended by Christianity, and the reason the Jews were closest of all to being offended was that they were closest to Christianity. … Offence is possible precisely because the novelty is not straightforward but first has to dispel an illusion. … the novelty of Christianity has the eternal religiousness of hidden inwardness (Kierkegaard 2009, 452).

The hidden inwardness was offense to the Jews. The law handed down to Moses at Sinai held paramount importance in the Jewish understanding of their relationship with God, and permeated every facet of Jewish life. Adherence to this divine law set them apart from the Gentiles (non-Jews) and served as a cornerstone of their own identity. The Jews placed their trust in an objective God and safeguarded themselves against doubt and inner contemplation through their observance of ceremonies and rituals. In times of uncertainty, they could readily reference these rules as a point of certainty (Kierkegaard 2009, 398).

In contrast, for Christians, God was perceived as unattainable, as the realms of infinitude and finitude were fundamentally distinct, only bridged by the paradoxical arrival of Christ. Consequently, Christians had to turn their focus inward, as in the discussion on Aristotle. To exist in a mode of *hos me*, characterized by a hidden inwardness, entails a suspension of established laws, a delegitimization of the prevailing societal structure, and an emphasis on the triviality of one's existing social role. The novelty of Christianity is thus found in Paul's *hos me* principle. Thereby offending the Jews, and emphasizing the subjectivity in the Christian way of life. As Climacus references 1 Corinthians elsewhere:

> I can then say with truth: it is a matter of indifference whether or not one has been married, just as it is a matter of indifference whether one is Jew or Greek, free or slave. Marriage is still a jest, a jest to be treated with all seriousness, though without the seriousness resting in marriage itself, but rather as the reflection of the earnest of the God-relationship, a reflection of the husband's relation to his absolute τέλος [telos] and of the wife's absolute relation to her absolute τέλος [telos] (Kierkegaard 2009, 381-382).

Climacus highlights that relationships, whether with a human or the divine, are dynamic and not solidified by a single act, like a marriage contract. Rather, they require continual nurturing and renewal. This perspective extends to faith, which Climacus views not as a static state of contentment, but as a perpetual journey marked by ongoing renewal. Such a perspective intensifies the passion within Christian faith. This process of renewal positions faith as a finite attempt to mirror eternity, which, because it is never fully realized, demands continuous renewal. The displacement of the significance of marriage in relation to one's subjective *telos* or goal, which is now perceived as a form of hidden inwardness, exemplifies how Christianity altered the individual's relationship with the divine.

To summarize, the philosophical discourse presented here delves into the profound misalignment between the Jewish perception of spirituality and the essence of Christian doctrine as exemplified by Christ. This misperception was rooted in the Jewish belief that spiritual attainment was intrinsically linked to external indicators of divine favour. Christ, with his humble origins, stood in stark contrast to these expectations, embodying a form of spirituality devoid of the expected grandeur. This stark contrast formed the crux of Paul's teachings and subsequently influenced Climacus' philosophical reflections. For Climacus, this underscored the necessity of seeking spiritual growth through internal reflection rather than external validation.

Conclusion

In our exploration, we have delved into how Climacus, echoing the Classical-Hellenistic-Roman periods, strives to anchor Christianity in the realm of ethical practice (Kierkegaard 2009, 70). Although Climacus may be a mere creation of Søren Kierkegaard's imagination, his perspectives are deeply influenced by early Christian writings and dialogues. This context illuminates the significance of the statement on the title page: "To treat it as though Christianity were an invention of Johannes Climacus is precisely a biting satire on philosophy's impudence towards it" (Kierkegaard, Papers and Journals, 45 VI A 84). This quotation reveals both jest and earnestness, as Kierkegaard has skilfully presented the reader with concepts that appear novel, yet are steeped in orthodoxy (Kierkegaard 2009, 58).

Climacus begins with Paul's observation that Christianity is seen as foolishness by the Greeks and as offensive to Jewish beliefs. He challenges these views with a mature scepticism and a humility driven by a deep-seated inward passion. He revisits the ancient Greek concept of scepticism, highlighting its limitations in achieving tranquillity (*ataraxia*) and advocating for a more evolved form, one that acknowledges human uncertainty while embracing personal conviction (*pistis*). This revised scepticism aligns with the Christian narrative that leans into the improbable and paradoxical aspects of Christ through faith.

Furthermore, Climacus contrasts the Jewish reliance on an objective God, manifested through rituals, with the Christian emphasis on subjectivity or inwardness. He interprets Christ's arrival as the only breach in the unbridgeable gap between the infinite and the finite. This perspective compels a shift towards personal agency in faith, moving away from external validation. Climacus' notion of hidden inwardness underscores this shift, illustrating faith as a deeply personal journey, distinct from the Jewish emphasis on communal identity through rituals.

This analysis culminates in a nuanced understanding of the evolution of Christian faith from Greek and Jewish traditions. Climacus' integration of Christian faith within the Greek debate on scepticism, and its portrayal as an act of personal and passionate commitment, redefines the relationship with the divine. Ultimately, Climacus asserts that faith transcends academic discourse, being an affirmation of existence amidst its inherent challenges, uncertainties, and paradoxes. It represents a pivotal shift in attitude, suggesting that true understanding of faith lies not in knowledge, but in a subjective, passionate engagement with life's questions, a theme central to both Kierkegaard's and Paul's teachings. Christianity as a way of life—distinct from Greek and Jewish traditions—has significant implications even today, as Christians reflecting on St. Paul's teachings and Kierkegaard's insights are likely again to become distinct subjects, much like early Christians did in their time.

Endnotes:

1. Kierkegaard emphasizes the emergence of Christianity within a complex historical and cultural context, noting for example: "This, indeed, would have excluded the apostles, for I have no knowledge of them having entered [Christianity] as small children" (Kierkegaard 2009, 301).
2. The offensive nature of the figure of Jesus Christ is addressed in Kierkegaard's writing where he states: "Christ was to be born and live poor, abandoned, abased so as to show indirectly to everyone the contradiction of being simultaneously so high and so low" (Kierkegaard 2013, 238-239).
3. In *De Omnibus Dubitandum Est* Kierkegaard states that René Descartes later too came to a similar conclusion as the ancient Greeks, quoting *Principia Philosophiae*: "Errors do not depend so much on intellect as on the will ..." and adds: "(in belief, therefore, lies the annulled possibility that it could have been deceived)" (Kierkegaard 2013, 211-212).
4. In the footnote, Climacus notes that the ancient Greeks, including Aristotle, used the term *pistis* differently from how it is understood in the modern context. He points out that this difference, particularly as seen in Aristotle's *Rhetorica*, offers valuable insights into how this concept differs from the more widely recognized meaning of faith (Kierkegaard 2009, 174).
5. The title *Fear and Trembling* is a reference to St. Paul's letter to the Philippians: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" as found in Philippians 2:12, underscoring the passionate aspects as found in emotions, such as fear and terror (Kierkegaard, 2013).
6. Schleiermacher writes: "... Paul does view Abraham's faith as the prototype of Christian faith, and represents the Mosaic Law simply as something slipped in between" (Schleiermacher 2016, 61).

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Asking a Rabbi About His Fear: Shared Intention in an Early Modern Jewish-Christian Interaction

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Abstract:

This paper explores the intentionality of a captivating Jewish-Christian encounter in Amsterdam during the spring of 1657. It features Rabbi Nathan Shapira ha-Yerushalmi and a group of millenarian Christians led by the mystical chiliast Peter Serrarius. Rabbi Shapira, a renowned Kabbalist from the circle of Jacob ben Hayyim Tsemaḥ, was on a mission to raise funds for the beleaguered Ashkenazi Jewish community of Jerusalem. He was convinced that their collective woes were the dramatic overture to the Messiah's grand debut. Meanwhile, the Collegiants – a radical Protestant Christian group – were eagerly awaiting apocalyptic events around 1656. Richard Henry Popkin famously described this meeting as a "touching moment" in Jewish-Christian relations, particularly noting the Rabbi's surprisingly "philo-Christian" presentation of rabbinic texts. This study examines the source text by contextualisation and redaction. It shows that there was a shared intention, even if different agents participated for different reasons based on their own distinct religious tradition.

Keywords: shared intention, early modern Jewish-Christian interaction, Rabbi Nathan Shapira ha-Yerushalmi, Peter Serrarius, Collegiant, mystical chiliast, *Messiah-directedness*, *Tuv ha-Aretz*

Introduction

This paper examines the *intentionality* of a special Jewish-Christian interaction during the early modern period, occurred in Amsterdam in the spring of 1657, between an Ashkenazi rabbi from Jerusalem and millenarian Christian residents of the city.

The Rabbi, Nathan Shapira ha-Yerushalmi (c. 1600, Cracow – 1666, Reggio Emilia) was a renown kabbalist of the Lurianic school, sent as a rabbinical emissary by the Ashkenazi congregation of Jerusalem for fundraising among Jews of Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands to relieve their misery and financial stresses (Yaari 1951, 1:277-281). He had a strong belief that all the present afflictions, calamities, miseries, persecutions, and horrific massacres, which his people were enduring, were the *birth pangs of the Messiah*. The salvation of Israel is coming from 1648 and on (*Midrash ha-Neelam* in *Zohar* 1:139b; Silver 1978, 92, 184-185).

The Amsterdam millenarians were Collegiants, which means Christians from a radical branch of the Reformation without written articles of faith, without ecclesial hierarchy, even without church buildings, but with a firm faith in the Biblical prophecies about the End of Days, the apocalyptic time (Israel 2023, 261-288). They expected these events about the year of 1656 (Crome 2014, 195-196).

Richard Henry Popkin who wrote a groundbreaking article about the topic (Popkin 1984), called this as "the most touching moment in the history of Jewish-Christian relation" when the Rabbi told a consequently "philo-Christian" interpretation of the rabbinic sources (Popkin 1988, 23). Prior research has examined the Rabbi's mission in the context of rabbinic emissaries (Yaari 1951; Katz 1988) and Jewish transregional philanthropic networks (Lehmann 2014, 147, 178; Teller 2020a, 160-179), as well as its connection to the pseudo-messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi (Teller 2020b, 377-402; Scholem 2016, 73-74, 101), and its implications for early modern Jewish messianism and Christian millenarianism (Popkin 1984; Katz 1986; Wall 1988, 80-85). In this paper, I will examine this interaction at the "horizons of phenomenology" (Yoshimi 2023).

Phenomenology explores the structural dimensions of direct experience and its representation in human consciousness, with particular emphasis on *intentionality* – the directedness of consciousness towards objects. In classical Husserlian approaches to religion, this intentionality, such as the God-directedness of religious experience in Abrahamic faiths, constitutes an epistemic standing of religious belief, characterised by verticality (Smith 2023; Smith 2018; Wynn 2022; Steinbock 2007; Steinbock 2012). However, to map interreligious interaction, which involves planning and practical organisation, it is essential to examine shared intentions. Michael E. Bratman regards these intentions as a fundamental aspect of our shared understanding of ourselves as intelligent agents. In this context, a *shared intention* can be described as "an interpersonal structure of related intentions that serves to coordinate action and planning, as well as to structure bargaining between participants" (Bratman 1999, 109–129). The related intentions that constitute this interpersonal structure are "individual practical commitments with a social content" (Bratman 2022, 10). It is precisely because of this social content and practicality that a very important feature emerges in the interpersonal structure.

> And there can be such shared intentions even if different agents participate for different reasons: I might participate in our shared intention to paint the house because I dislike the color, whereas you participate because you dislike the mildew. Indeed, on the overall view in this book, such divergence of background reasons, and resulting partiality of convergence, is a common feature of our human sociality, both small-scale and institutional. (Bratman 2022, 10)

Discussing the interaction between the Rabbi and the Collegiants, I argue that their shared intention worked in this common way. My research demonstrates this through contextualisation, and a historical-philosophical analysis of a narrative about the sequence of those human experiences, which together built their interaction.

Sources

Peter Serrarius (1600, London-1669, Amsterdam), a respected leader of the Amsterdam Collegiants, wrote a letter in April 1657 to his friend John Dury, detailing the Rabbi Shapira's sayings, behaviour, and attitude, that convinced them of the Kabbalist's sincerity and his understanding of "the sacred mysteries concerning the Messiah". An extract of this letter survives in a nineteen-page printed pamphlet, titled *An information, concerning the present state of the Jewish nation in Europe and Judea*, published anonymously in London, in 1658 but attributed to Serrarius' English Judeophile millenarian friends, John Dury (1596–1680) and Henry Jessey (1603–1663). (Katz 1989, 126; Popkin 1984, 189; Lehmann 2014, 147; Wall 1990, 169) The pamphlet's aim was to support a new collection of donations to the poor Jews in Jerusalem. It detailed the critical situation of the Jews in the Holy Land and the earlier collection in 1656, and quoted Serrarius' letter without omission, for five and a half pages, as a reliable account (*An information* 1658, 11-16). Only two sidenotes indicate private opinions of the editors of the pamphlet.

There are two contemporary summaries based on the pamphlet: a fourteen-page long by Jessey's biographer, Edward Whiston; and one, long of six sentences by Nathaniel Homes, written in 1665. (Whiston 1671, 69-83; Holmes 1759, 104) The later was erroneously identified by some researcher as an independent narrative of Shapira statements. Holmes (or Homes, 1599–1678), also a Judeophile millenarian friend of Serrarius, explained in this paper how the millenarian expectation of the beginning of the messianic age was shifted from 1650 to 1666. Holmes probably did not intend to reproduce it in print, and it was not published until several decades later (along with a hostile description of the failure of millenarian and Jewish messianic hopes). The document, written on 26 December 1665, five days before the *annus mirabilis* began, does not give the names of the extracted letter's author or addressee, and refers to it by a different date. This suggests that he summarised from memory what he had read in the pamphlet several years earlier. This is readily comprehensible when one considers that 1655 was the year of the great London plague, a period during which people and books were constantly on the move under the tremendous pressure of the plague, as detailed by Daniel Defoe in his *A Journal of the Plague Year* (Defoe 1722). The significance of this version is given by the often quoted three sentences in what Richard Popkin called the theory of "multiple messiah" or "the messiah continually appearing in different forms." (Popkin 1992, 166. Popkin 2001, 91. Popkin 1984, 194) No other accounts of the interaction have surfaced, either from Christian or Jewish sources.

Shared emotion

Serrarius addresses this point later, after narrating the other elements of their interaction with Rabbi Shapira. However, the question of fear must be discussed first, as the core of religious experience lies here. The divine is revealed or inferred through states of feeling. In the presence of an overpowering, absolute might, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* is experienced in awe. This is simultaneously attractive and inspiring, but also evokes a sense of fear or dread. The other feelings are dependency, creaturehood, and a sense of inadequacy. These can only arise from a self-givenness and positive supremacy of the deity. The shared emotion of the individual experience of myself as dependent or even insignificant involves into a collective realm of the created finititude. (Steinbock 2007, 21-22) It can open the door to empathy, solidarity and even friendship, as can be observed in Serrarius' narrative.

> I could relate many other things of this kind, which shew a truly devout and humble mind: one thing I shall yet add; When it was askt of him, Whether he was not afraid of his life, chiefly he being a Jew, a people above all other Nations hated of all, through which he was to go? he did answer, If I look upon my self, I see my self altogether unworthy of any mercy at Gods hands, or that he should admit of my prayers; but that which gives me some Confidence of life, are the calamities and extream Straits of the poor at Jerusalem, and the merits of the Fore-fathers, and their Faith in God. I believe that their prayers will be of weight towards the Father of the needy. (*An information* 1658, 15-16)

We must acknowledge that it was a remarkable encounter where a Christian could pose this question to a Jewish interlocutor without appearing threatening: "Are you not afraid for your life, Jew?" Do not forget, we are in the age of the *gezeirot taḥ-tat* – the cruellest massacres of the so-called Khmelnytsky Uprising (1648-1657) –, the Russo-Polish War (1654–1667) and the Second Northern War (1655–1660), which destructed Poland the safe-haven of the German Jewry under the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Travelling for a Jew, as we can know from contemporary official documents or ego-documents, such as *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*, was very risky business in the 17th century Europe (not to mention the Levante), even in places far away from armed conflicts.

The answer is of a God-fearing Jew who does not trust in his own merit, but of the Forefathers (that is the *zakhut avot,* discussed in the rabbinic literature, for example in *b Shabbat* 55a). Rabbi Shapira's hope is based on the merits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as well as God's mercy on their descendants, especially the needy. For their shake, God will protect Rabbi Shapira to fulfil his mission.

R. Shapira's answer remained within the boundaries of rabbinical Judaism, as a Christian comment stressed "he speaks here like a legal Jew" (*An information* 1658,16. referring to Paul's Letter to the Romans, 10:2-3). However, Serrarius was unequivocal in recognising this attitude as the greatest asset of his own religion. He described it as a "humble and self-denying Spirit" and added, that "for my own part, I confess I think I see Christ in his Spirit; and I cannot but love him, and those that are like him, of which he saith many are at Jerusalem: for I esteem them the true brethren of him, that is, our Christ, and their Joseph." (*An information* 1658, 16)

Background reasons of the rabbi

We cannot overlook the fact that Serrarius and Shapira shared a religious experience. It was this that allowed Serrarius to recognise Shapira as a kindred spirit. Furthermore, we must acknowledge the Calvary and extreme destitution of the poor people of Jerusalem who required the special intervention of the Father of the needy.

The Ashkenazi community of Jerusalem had its own synagogue, rabbinate, and *beth-din* since the end of the 16th century (when the city had only five hundred Jewish inhabitants), and its members lived in a secure, closed building complex, financially and organisationally separated from the Sephardic community. Due to the scarcity of income and the Turkish tax burden on the community, its survival depended on external sources, mainly on the regular and substantial contributions of Eastern European Jews (Rozen 1985, 1-20, 99-108; Katz 1988, 245-247; Teller 2020a, 381; Wilke 2022, 272).

During the so-called Golden Age of the Polish Jewry, the donations from the Four Lands (Greater Poland, Little Poland, Galicia-Podolia, and Volhynia) were about thirty thousand *Reichsthaler* (that is about six and a half thousand pounds sterling), yearly. (*An information* 1658, 4) But from the Khmelnytsky Uprising, and especially from the *Swedish Deluge* in 1655 on (when the military of Charles X Gustav (1622–1660) invaded and take over almost all Poland), the donations from the Four Lands were drastically cut off. The "German Jews of Jerusalem" as they were called, "have been in great extremity of want…, and the taxes laid upon them by the Turks, being rigorously exacted, they were hauled into prison, their Synagogues were shut up, their Rabbi's and Elders beaten and cruelly used." (*An information* 1658, 5) "And of the 700 widows and poor Jews there" (Jessey 1656, 3-4) "in the year one thousand six hundred fifty five, … four hundred … dyed by famine" (*An information 1658*, 8).

We have no concrete data on Shapira's years in Cracow, and his person appears almost exclusively in Levantine and for the last decade of his life, Italian Sephardic sources. According to the contemporary David Conforte (c. 1618 - c. 1685), Shapira belonged to the *Beth midrash* of Jacob ben Ḥayyim Tsemaḥ (1584?-1667). Conforte also studied the Zohar there, noting that Moses Cordovero's (1522-1570) magnum opus, *Or Yaḳar* used as companion along with the Zohar. Conforte mentions him as "Rabbi Nathan Shapira Askenazi, who wrote some books on the wisdom of the Kabbalah" (*Ḳore ha-Dorot*, 49a). In David Cassel's classic 1846 Berlin edition, the entry refers to the period after 1630 but before 1650. As Tsemaḥ arrived in Jerusalem in 1640 and Conforte first stayed there in 1644, the information is *terminus post quem* to the latter date.

In 1654, Shapira, the chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi community of Jerusalem, was sent as a rabbinic emissary to Italy and Germany with another rabbi (*An information* 1658, 5). The name of his companion is not known. In the same year, Shapira met the Volhynian refugee R. Nathan Nata Hanover (d. 1683) in Livorno, Italy. R. Nathan Hanover was a Lurianic kabbalist and compatriot from Cracow. He proudly recounted their encounter in the introduction of his widely-read Lurianic collection's second edition (*Sha'arei Zion* Amstredam, 1671, 2b). He introduced him to Rabbi Moses Zacuto (c. 1610-1697), who became his friend and in the next year organised the publication of Shapira's *Tuv ha-Aretz* in Venice and edited the book (Teller 2020b, 389-390).

The *Tuv ha-Aretz* ("The Bounty of the Land") is a short collection from the Ḥayyim Vital's version of Lurianic kabbalah, mainly according to the redaction of Jacob Tsemaḥ with an explicitly messiantistic message. Its title refers to a Biblical promise in *Isaiah* 1:19, and unequivocally calls for the imminent coming of the Messiah to be prepared for by confessing, praying, fasting and studying the Lurianic teaching. As Bracha Sack has demonstrated, the opening section of the book contains the "mystical Zionist" teachings of *Or Yaḳar* on the unique character of the Holy Land. These teachings are drawn from R. Abraham Azulai's anthology *Ḥesed le-Avraham*, which organises them thematically. Shapira added his own reflections to the Cordoverian texts he copied from the *Ḥesed le-Avraham* of Azulai, derived originally from other Zohar commentaries, *Or Yaḳar* and *Or ha-Ḥamah* (Sack 1987, 372-379; Israel 2014, 171; Wall 1987, 171-172). The second part contains the *segulot* (formulaic remedies). The third part is the first printed publication of the Lurianic version of the midnight rite (Tiqqun ḥatsot laylah), namely midnight prayers recited in memory of the destruction of the Temple, the special *tikkunim* for the night of Shavu'ot, and for Hoshana Rabbah, as well as a *kinah* (lamentation) on the exile of the Shekhinah. The *tikkunim* later appeared also in R. Nathan Hannover *Sha'arei Zion*. (Horowitz 1994, 97; Goldish 2013, 174; Necker 2020, 93)

In the summer of 1655 Shapira travelled from Venice to Amsterdam, probably on a Dutch ship. He did not stay long, but we know from Henry Jessey's account of the Whitehall Conference that Menasseh ben Israel showed Cromwell some letters from Jerusalem in December, which were given to him by Rabbi Shapira (Jessey 1656, 4). From Amsterdam he gone to Germany. In November-December he was in Hamburg, where the Sephardic community decided to give one hundred *Reichsthaler*. (Cassuto 1909, 160; Teller 2020b, 392)

Shapira returned to Amsterdam a year later and turned to the wealthy Sephardic *Kahal Kadosh Talmud Torah* of Amsterdam. They refused to support the Jerusalemite Ashkenazim, however, without a specific request from the Amsterdam Collegiants, who had met "accidentally", they held a voluntary collection and presented him with a substantial sum (6000 *rijksdaalder*, that is 395 Venetian ducats) to help the impoverished and hopelessly indebted community, and what is more, they persuaded their English counterparts to donate an additional 212 pounds (about 500 ducats). The size of the donation from the Dutch Collegiants is well illustrated by the fact that the total donation from Dutch Jews was the same amount. (*An information 1658*, 4-5; Whiston 1671, 69-71; Yaari 1951, 277-280. Teller 2020a, 160-179; Popkin 1984, 191-192; Katz 1988, 245-266)

Shapira returned to Jerusalem in the spring of 1657, where he signed the credentials of the new rabbinic emissaries, R. Nahum b. Meir Jafo and R. Yoseph b. Mordekhai on the day of Lag baOmer (1 May 1657 / 5417). Serrarius, in a letter to Jessey dated 22 March 1668, reported the arrival of two new emissaries from Jerusalem, who had brought with them a receipt for the 1656 collection, a detailed letter from Shapira, and a letter from a Frater Mariano de Malco, which confirmed Shapira's stories of the plight of the Jews. (Yaari 1951, 280; Wall 1987, 178)

Acceptance of Christian donations led to a halachic dispute in Jerusalem, which was noted by the Christian donors, but the matter was finally settled by a rabbinical decision of Jacob Hagiz (1620-1674), who confirmed the permissibility of accepting donations under specific circumstances. The response, of an unknown date published in Hagiz, *Halakhot Ktanot* (Venice, 1704), was based on the argument that since the Christian donation had been transferred, accepted and forwarded to Muslim creditors, "there is no cause for concern." (Yaari 1951, 280; Katz, 1988, 254-255; Goldish 2008, 109-111; An information 1658, 6)

In late 1657 Shapira travelled again as an emissary, with the famous Baruch Gad document about the Ten Lost Tribes, however not to Amsterdam, but to Italy, where he settled permanently. (Yaari 1951, 280; Scholem 2016, 337-338) While the *Wagenseil codex* (Malkiel 2004, 141) does seem to indicate that he allegedly died on Sh'vat 21, 5422 (31 January 1662), according to Shapira's own autograph collection of sermons (The Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies, Budapest, Hungary Ms. K 34, vol 16v), he was still an active rabbi in Reggio Emilia in December of

1663. This information leads me to believe that the traditional date of death, Iyyar 1, 5426 (April 26, 1666), may be accurate.

Background reasons of the millenarian

Peter Serrarius, the mystical chiliast as his modern biographer Evangeline van der Wall typified him (Wall 1987), was an ardent Philo-Judaist, lexical Hebraist, Christian Kabbalist whose millenarian belief accounts due his keen interest in everything regarding the Jews and their "restauration" (sic!) from their "dry bones" (Ezekiel 37:4; Scholem 2016, 334).

Amsterdam, where Serrarius lived from 1630 for the rest of his life, had a unique atmosphere of religious tolerance and freedom with an impressive economic, social, and cultural presence of Sephardim, most of them with *converso* background (Bodian 1999) and a growing number of Ashkenazi Jews as well. Being a Walloon Calvinist theologian turned to a nonconformist Collegiant, Serrarius became a respected scholar and author of twenty-eight volumes, and acted as a one-person cross-religious hub for Jewish Messianism and Christian millenarism who worked in an influential international scientific network, which was justly called the *Republic of Letters* (republique des lettres). (Wall 1987, 7, 776-783; Goldish)

Many of the educated elite of the republique des lettres, especially the Judeophile millenarian Christians of the Hartlib circle, including Serrarius, whose library contained many books in Hebrew, had access to relevant rabbinic literature and a sufficiently secure knowledge of Hebrew to be able to interpret such texts (Burnett 2012; Kaplan 2006,186-215; Scholem 2016, 524). They wanted to know the revelations that God had given to Judaism concerning events related to Israel that were considered to be eschatologically crucial (Crome 2014, 105-107). Jonathan I. Israel aptly describes millenarians as "fringe Christians" (Israel 2023, 17).

The Latin *millennium*, and Greek χίλια ἔτη are equivalents of the term "thousand years". That's why millenarism and chiliasm are used synonymously. Nineteenth-century theology discusses this belief as "premillennialism", which places the millennial kingdom between the second advent of Christ, the *parousia* (*Revelation* 19:11-21) and the *Last judgment* before the white throne of God (*Revelation* 20:11-15). In early Christianity – until the Council of Ephesus in 431, which declared it heresy – Chiliasm was dominant, as it was simply an organic continuation of Jewish apocalyptic ideas of the Second Temple period. (Wall 2001, 44; Scholem 2016, 98, 333) Serrarius and his millenarian friends regarded anti-millenarianism as a prejudice, a partial blindness, and a grave sin of Christianity that was tantamount to rejecting Jesus as Messiah on the side of Judaism. Serrarius was convinced that Judaism and Christianity should complement each other, since both possessed a part of the truth. Christians know that the Messiah had to suffer on earth, and Jews know that he will one day reign as a glorious king in the same place, on Earth. (Serrarius 1657, 35; Wall 2001, 40; Serrarius 1665b; Wall 1987, 617)

Through his genuine concern Serrarius managed to create good relationship with a series of prominent Jewish scholar apart from Shapira, e.g., R. Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657), Baruch

Spinoza (1632–1677), and Isaac de Rocamora (1601–1684) that is why he was referred to as "*the good Christian friend, who lives here in Amsterdam in friendship with the rabbis*" (Scholem 2016, 335).

With his Philo-Judaist Christian friends, Hartlib, Jessey, Dury, and Comenius, Serrarius helped R. Menasseh's efforts for the readmission of Jews in England. He effectively helped Spinoza after the rabbinate excommunicated him and connected the young philosopher to the Royal Society and the scientific elite of England and whole Europe. His cross-religious activity is most conspicuous in his letters and pamphlets published in English between 1658-1666 about rumours and news of events (re-appearance of the Ten Lost Tribes, the emergence of Sabbatai Zevi and his prophet, Nathan of Gaza and their deeds, signs, omens, and portents, and repentance [*teshuva*] of the Jews) circulating in Judaism that aroused great interest among Christian contemporaries because of their interpretation in a millenarian context. (Wall 1988. 73-94; Popkin 2001. 91-106)

A sequence of human experiments

Serrarius gives a clear and detailed account about Rabbi Shapira's interaction with the Amsterdam Collegiants. One can reuduct four distinct situations and four corresponding agendas. All were of great importance both to the Jewish Jerusalemite Kabbalist circle of Tzemah – who was also from converso background – and to the millenarian Anglo-Dutch Hartlib circle.

I. Dispute about the Messiah: here classical Judeo-Christian polemical themes (the story of Joseph, *Genesis* 37-45 ; the suffering servant of God, Isa 53:4, 5) are presented.

Shapira arguments about the Messiah's spirit based on *b Sanhedrin* 98b, and *Zohar*, Vayakhel, 2:212a. The Biblical passage about the suffering servant is quoted in *Zohar* 2: 212a, where it is said that the Messiah will bear all the trials, pains and sufferings of Israel (כָּל מַרְעִין וְכָל כְּאֵבִין, כָּל יִסּוּרֵיהוֹן דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל), and he will be taken upon himself "in the hall of the afflicted" (הֵיכָלָא דִּבְנֵי מַרְעִין), which is in the heavenly Garden of Eden. If he did not do so, "there would be no one to bear Israel's suffering in the punishment for neglecting the Torah". As long as the Temple stood, Israel averted all the trials and suffering of the world by its service and presentation of sacrifices. "But now it is the Messiah who will turn them away from the inhabitants of the world." (הַשְׁתָּא מָשִׁיחַ מְסַלֵּק לוֹן מִבְּנֵי עָלְמָא) The *Zohar* emphasizes that this "diversion" is a temporary, worldly relief that does not apply to avoiding the sufferings of Gehinnom. Serrarius's reaction to the Messiah-centeredness of Kabbalistic teaching was a kind of reverence that led to an acceptance of spiritual communion.

> When I heard these things – wrote Serrarius – my bowels were inwardly stirred within me, and it seemed to me, that I did not hear a Jew, but a Christian, and a Christian of no mean understanding, who did relish the things of the Spirit, and was admitted to the inward mysteries of our Religion. (*An information 1658*, 13)

II. Religious meeting of the Collegiants: various aspects of the Messianic kingdom are encountered (high ethical standard: Sermon on the Mount: *Matthew* 5-7; supplication, intercession for his coming; and the Messianic Sanctuary, *Malachi* 3:1).

R. Shapira participated on a Collegiant meeting, probably held in the house of Serrarius in Prinzengracht, where he studied the Sermon on the Mount with them. The Collegiants have read the Dutch *Statenvertaling* (1637), and Shapira has read Sebastian Münster's (1488-1552) Hebrew translation, the *Torat ha-Mashiaḥ* (1537). He recognised in the teachings of Jesus ('Law of Jesus') rabbinical doctrines, in which 'the foundation and source of all wisdom is contained'. Because of the old, difficult to understand language of the text, Serrarius and his Judeophile millenarian friends (Dury, Hartlib) later asked Shapira to produce a Hebrew translation that would be more accessible to Jewish readers, but this was not done. (Popkin 1984, 197; Popkin 1988, 14) The Sermon on the Mount was an excellent choice, because Jesus in *Matthew* 5:17-19 clearly declare that he not came to abolish the *Torah* or the *Neviim*, but to complete. Not one yod, not one tag (ornamental flourish), will pass from the Torah until everything is accomplished. Cf. R. Jacob Emden's commentary on *Seder Olam Rabbah veZutta*, (Hamburg, 1757), Appendix, 32b-34b. (Brill 2010, 74-75) The question of the Messianic Sanctuary is discussed next, together with the messianic fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, as it could be seen as an introduction to that topic. It seemed beneficial to examine the prayer in the context of the other similar experiment for comparison, and so a separate chapter has been dedicated to this.

III. Discussion of the messianic fulfilment of the promise to Abraham: the eschatology of the Holy Land (*Gen* 15:18-21).

At the end of the collegiant worship, Shapira affirmed in response to a question from Serrarius about the scriptural passage on the restoration of the Temple (Mal 3:1) that the Messianic Temple, which is coming down from heaven and being built by God day by day, is not exclusively for the Jews, but also for those from other nations "who ever shall fear God in sincerity" (*An information* 1658, 14). Shapira's words were quoted anonymously by Serrarius in his Assertion du régne de mille ans (Testimony of the Millennial Kingdom, 1657), when he described the Temple descending from heaven, "whose outer court is on the ground, but the Holy Sanctuary, into which no one but the anointed of the Eternal can enter, rises above the earth", not touching the ground. (Serrarius 1657, 37; Wall 2001, 43; Wall 1987, 6, 185-199)

Shapira has given in his *Tuv ha-Aretz* a detailed Kabbalistic explanation of the messianic fulfillment of the promise for the inheritance of the Holy Land (*Genesis* 15:18-21) in the context of the covenant between Abram and God. From this, the sefirotic correspondence of the ten Canaanite nations and the interpretation of the three nations yet to be conquered (the three kof: *Kenites, Kenesites,* and *Kedmonites*) as a pattern of the "Kabbalistic triplex" were also incorporated into Serrarius' millenarian ideas. It can even be traced in his *Apologetica responsio* (1663) and *De Judaeorum* (1665), texts were written in the context of the theological debate between him and the

Groningen theology professor Samuel Maresius (Des Marets; 1599–1673). (*Tuv ha-Aretz*, 11a; Serrarius 1663, 15; Serrarius 1665a, 67 – see end note)[1]

IV. Dinner: the right way to pray (*Exodus* 17:8-12). Shapira's teaching on gestures of prayer (*An information 1658*, 15) based halachic and kabbalistic explanations: *Ramban on Ex.* 17:12. *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim* 95. (Idel 1987, 138. Fine 2021, 210-214) Prayer, however, as a religious experience through which the shared intention already observed in relation to emotions can be established, deserves special attention.

Shared intention by prayer

Prayer can be described as a profound decentering experience in which the self loses its preoccupation with itself and focuses instead on God (Benson and Wirzba 2005, 11-31). Being present at a prayer as an observer, separate from the religious community, is a particular experience, the structural description of whose impact, or transfer can be described by the conceptual framework of anthropological phenomenology. Such an experience was reported by Serrarius to have been experienced by R. Shapira on at least two occasions.

A. Supplication, intercession for the coming of the Messiah during the religious meeting of the Collegians. For Shapira, according to Serrarius, the prayers of Collegiants after the Bible reading proved to be key.

> … when at that meeting we had, not without Tears, and much devour Contrition of mind, made prayers for the Jews as well as for our selves, that God would blot out our sins and theirs, and remember his Mercy, and restore the holy Spirit which they had lost, &c. These things seemed very much to move him, and he made no doubt to affirm openly, that if there were but ten men at Jerusalem, who should thus with our heart pray for the coming of the Messiah, that without all doubt he would suddenly come. (*An information* 1658, 14)

Shapira was a great expert on prayer, he wrote specifically about the *kavvanat ha-tefila* (proper intention of prayer) in his unpublished three-volume Kabbalistic treatise, *Me'orot Natan*, considered his *magnum opus*. Meir ben Judah Leib Poppers (c. 1624-1662) specifically mentions – in the preface to Hayyim Vital's *Peri Ets Hayyim* (Korets, 1782), edited by him – that the substantial introduction to the section on the mystical meaning of the prayer was written by Shapira (*Peri Ezt Hayyim*, 3b). In Italy, Shapira and his friend Moses Zacuto were the main promoters of the Lurianic Kabbalistic prayer in the second half of the 17th century. As Moshe Idel has pointed out, weeping and repentance, together with the mystical "intention" (*kavvana*), are a particularly important element of the Lurianic prayer, both in the midnight rite mourning of the destruction of the Holy Temple and in the practice of the Kabbalistic prayer groups that were formed to promote the Messiah's imminent coming and to protect the Jewish people from the terrible events that preceded it (Idel, Kabbalah, 75-88, 197-199, sp. 75-76). I venture to suggest that Shapira's reaction may be seen as an expression of his realisation that the Collegiants' prayers for Judaism and for themselves with intent, tears and repentance are somehow equivalent to the Kabbalistic prayer groups praying near the *Gvilon*, the heavenly portal to the Heavenly Throne, directly above the place of the Sanctuary, as mentioned in the Zohar 2:209b and cited in *Tuv ha-Aretz*, 1a by him.

The structure of this experience can be described as an ethnographical event.

> …we can see a pattern of the anthropologist's affection by events: the emergence of a theme for thinking that at once challenges the ethnographer's assumptions – on display, for instance, in what retroactively appears as an equivocal question – and draws around itself a host of prior experiences which the ethnographer may now see in a different light. (Stephan and Throop 2023, 349)

B. Kabbalistic teaching on the poper gesture of prayer during a dinner. The second encounter with the praying Collegiants was shaped by the first. The handshaking was done, from this point Shapira, and his Collegiants friends felt that they understood each other. This offers an insight into why, during the table prayer at dinner, Shapira behaved not as an outside observer but as a teaching rabbi.

During the dinner at the Collegians', we came to understand that Shapira had indeed posed a question to his hosts, rather than the other way around. The Collegians prayed with their hands clasped and raised to the sky. (Sterrett 2018, 50-64.) When the rabbi enquired about the reason for this gesture, he was told "that it was of old the custom so to pray, derived from Moses, who in the mount prayed against Amaleck with his hands lifted up unto heaven" (An information 1658, 15; *Exodus* 17:8-12). The kabbalist employed a similar approach to that used with the question about the suffering servant. He used a kabbalistic interpretation of the biblical verse in question (*Exodus* 17:12) to distinguish between the two gestures that had been conflated. in the Collegiants.

> According to the Way of Righteousness [the Kabbalah tradition], Moses lifted his ten fingers to the heavens [Prov 25:3] to refer to the ten emanations and to hold fast to the One who fights for Israel [Deut 3:22]. This is the explanation and secret of the lifting of the hands [also] in the priestly blessing. (Ramban on Ex. 17:12)

Prayer with raised hands and prayer with folded hands are explained, with reference to the internal and external conditions required for the former and, beyond the halachic description of the latter gesture (*Shulchan Arukh*, Orach Chayim 95), its kabbalistic meaning (Hesed restrains the Din) is also referred. The mystical reason of the gesture used in Jewish prayer is considered to be central to the Lurianic Kabbalah (Idel 1987, 138. Fine 2021, 210-214).

Perhaps the questions of credibility that some researchers have raised could be addressed by considering the participants' behaviour during and after the interactions. To what extent can the statements made by the Rabbi be considered sincere? Could it have been a pragmatic, interest-driven scenario, whereby Shapira "received the money under false pretences" (Katz 1988, 252-253), or could it have been an earnest declaration of his personal belief? It would appear that Shapira has consistently remained aligned with the tenets of Lurianic Kabbalah, as he had previously articulated. He did not improvise; it seems likely that all his statements could have been made in the presence of his colleagues and other members of the Kabbalistic fraternity in Jerusalem around Jacob ben Ḥayyim Tsemaḥ. It could be argued that his Kabbalistic teachings about the purpose of prayer gestures were a tangible expression of his profound sincerity and friendship. In the remaining twelve years of his life (during which he wrote most of his works), Serrarius frequently made reference to what Shapira had said. It seems fair to assume that he never considered the possibility that the rabbi had misled him.

Conslusion

Shapira's ideas communicated in Amsterdam to the Collegiants did not differ from those he wrote in his book *Tuv ha-Aretz* ("The Bounty of the Land"), published in Venice in 1655, before the interaction. These Lurianic teachings of Shapira left traces in Serrarius' published books from 1657. This is evidenced by my contextualisation and historical-philosophical analysis of Serrarius' narrative.

At the beginning of the discussion, Serrarius referred to the fact that the brothers of the biblical Joseph thought their brother was dead, although he was alive. Shapira's Jewish colleague from Amsterdam took this as a provocation and was about to engage with the mystical millenarian in a debate about whether Jesus was alive. Shapira warned his companion that, according to Jewish belief, the Messiah had not yet come, and *his identity was unknown*. The Collegiants were convinced that, on the one hand, the accepting of Jesus as Messiah was only possible *by personal divine revelation* [*Matthew* 16:17; *Galatians* 1:15-16; *John* 6:69], and on the other hand, the calling of the Jews was explicitly within the Messianic jurisdiction, and so they also ceased the quarrel, which Shapira and his Jewish companion accepted. This mutual self-limitation created *a discursive space between the parties* in which the Jerusalemite Kabbalist could speak of the Messiah within the framework of Jewish tradition. At the same time, for Serrarius and his associates, the Messiah was identified with Jesus Christ, who would restore Israel (and by that he meant Judaism), establish the Millennial Kingdom [*Revelation* 20:1-6], judge the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat according to what they had done to Judaism [*Joel* 4:2, 12-14], and redeem all mankind. All parties were sincere. There was a more exciting and acute question for all of them: the Rule of the Messiah on the Earth.

The Bratmanian insight of shared intention, mentioned in the Introduction, is the key to understanding this dispute of faith, which was followed by a sequence of friendly human experiences concluding in shared religious emotions. It reveals a fundamental principle: when the parties exclude the key issue from their actual dispute, there can still be shared intention, even if different agents participate for different reasons based on their own distinct religious tradition. Matt Goldish described it in 2018 without grasping the concept and content of this shared intention. He wrote, "Jewish messianists and Christian millenarians were looking at each other as fellow-participants in a joint project of preparation for an imminent redemption." (Goldish 2018, 135) Yet they have a shared intention: *a Messiah-directedness*. This is a recurrent human experiment. There is no doubt that millennial Christian Zionists and religious Zionist Jews are still able to work together today for messianic plans by the same shared intention.

Endnotes:

1. *Tuv ha-Aretz*, 11a: "The general rule that can be deduced from the above is that the first three nations, the Kenites, the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites [*Genesis* 15:19], were not inherited by the Jews. It is only in the future that the Jews will earn them. This is indicated by the fact that the numerical value [170+167+204] of Kenites, Kenizzites, and Kadmonites, is the same as the numerical value [541] of Israel. Thus the name *Arets Israel* means that in the future it will include these top three. Today, the word Israel indicates Lo yarash [not inherited], that is, that the upper three have not yet been attained, but in the future Israel will refer to Li rosh [to me as head], indicating that those three will then be the heads of the lower seven. Hence it is that the first letters of the names of these three nations are ק ק and ק, which stand for קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ, indicating the triple sanctification of the Chochmah and Binah of the Keter of holiness."

   An information 1658, 14: „He observed that God promised to cast out ten Nations out of the land of *Canaan* for his sake, and would give their possessions to his Posterity, but that since the days of *Joshua,* no more but seven Nations have been cast out, *viz.* The *Hittites,* the *Perizzites,* the *Rephaims,* the *Amorites,* the *Canaanites,* the *Gergasites* and the *Jebusites:* the theee first, viz. The *Kenites,* the *Kenesites* and the *Kedmonites* are reserved for the times of the Messiah; which he would have to answer the ten *Sephiroth,* whereof the seven last are called by the Cabalists simply[הֵיכָלוֹת] הכלת that is, Palaces; but the three first taken together as one are called היכל קדש קדשים that is, the Temple of the Holy of Holies."

   Apologetica responsio, 15: „Since these things are reserved for the last times, when the people shall be truly sanctified by the blood and spirit of Christ the Messiah: which is confirmed by the Kabbalistic triplex (ק) - with which the names of the Kenizzites, Kenizzites, and Kadmoneans begin - which is the Is. 6. קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ i.e. Holy, Holy, Holy; and signifies that the people will be truly holy when this promise to Abraham is fulfilled in them."

   De Judaeorum, 67: „those Jews, to whom I have referred enigmatically, from the mystery of the Kabbalah, through the triplex (ק) *Genesis* xv, as being in every way and in all ways wholly sanctified..."

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Pauline Hopkins' Utopias: Fostering African American Futures through Third Space Ecologies

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Abstract:

What is important to consider when defining and creating a utopic vision? Pauline Hopkins' characters and worldbuilding in her 1902-1903 serial novel *Of One Blood, or the Hidden Self* reflects the dynamic negotiations that happen in third space ecologies while also challenging traditional notions of utopia. The third space is a location of identity formation, meaning-making, and differing power dynamics that are inherent in hierarchical spaces and lived theory of experience. Therefore, third spaces are revolutionary spaces where negotiations are made. Her final novel challenges the popular expectations of African American people in the early 20th century. Hopkins' utopian worldbuilding and activist endeavors lead readers to a clearer vision of how to move forward in a world that is dealing with racial tensions and environmental degradation. Her rejection of the cult of true womanhood and tropes like the tragic mulatta, as well as her interest in the sciences aid in her construction of bodily third space ecologies which are used to disrupt white Western ideology. By looking at literary depictions of third spaces, we can better understand how relationships with the land and the "other" are constructed and how fixed identities can hinder the human development of utopian futures.

Keywords: third-space, Hopkins, ecology, utopia, 20th century, proto-science fiction, bodies, African American, Africa

Ecology is a term that has many layers and can be used to codify different systems under one set of rules or mechanisms. Ecology alludes to the land around us, the biota that inhabits those spaces, and the intricacies that make up the human and non-humans that inhabit certain spaces. Looking at places and bodies as spaces is an important way of examining how complex assemblages are made and how movement is or is not enacted in meaningful ways. Some places and bodies lie outside the usual as they challenge or isolate the ecologies accepted under certain social norms. In that vein, we have spaces that are either fostered or pushed to the margins, existing in liminalities either with success or with a different set of obstacles to overcome to exist in the usual social order. As such, the theoretical and disciplinary uses of the term "third space" can be useful in defining and explicating places and bodies that live in this liminality. The third space is a location of identity formation, meaning-making, and differing power dynamics that are inherent in hierarchical spaces and lived theory of experience. The term comes from Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* where he used the term to discuss the creation of meaning when two other elements of meaning-making clash and come into conversation. Additionally, Sherita Roundtree and Michael Shirzadian define third space as a specific cultural and material position of the individual subject or place which is a collection of complex social assemblages that are informed by and informing each other by intra-acting with human and non-human agents and the dominant discourse. Therefore, third spaces are revolutionary spaces where negotiations are made. Pauline Hopkins' characters and worldbuilding in *Of One Blood, or the Hidden Self,* and her work as an activist reflect the dynamic negotiations that happen in third space ecologies while also challenging traditional notions of utopia. Third spaces can be places where inhabitants choose to live in a third space away from mainstream society like that of the isolationist Telassar in Hopkins' final story, published as a serial while working at the *Colored American Magazine* in 1902-1903, or they can be the situations or identities that are forced upon the human and non-human. Hopkins' utopian worldbuilding and activist endeavors lead readers to a clearer vision of how to move forward in a world that is still dealing with racial tensions and environmental degradation. By looking at literary depictions of third spaces, we can better understand how relationships with the land and the "other" are constructed and how fixed identities can hinder the human development of utopian futures.

Defining Utopia

Hopkins' story *Of One Blood; or, the Hidden Self* follows Dr. Reul Briggs, a white-passing African American man who can restore the life, or consciousness of people who are seemingly dead. He performs this life-saving procedure on a beautiful singer Dianthe Lusk, who he proceeds to fall in love with and marry. He is a rising star in medicine, so he hides his African American identity to continue his rise in society and the medical field. Dianthe does not remember anything of her past life, including the fact that she is also a white-passing African American. After Reul is sent to Africa on an expedition, she dies at the hands of their mutual friend Aubrey Livingstone who invited Reul on the expedition in order to take Dianthe away from Reul. Meanwhile, Reul is recognized as an Ethiopian king and long-awaited savior of Telassar, the hidden utopia at the center of the tale. In Telassar, he learns of the advancements in science that the people have been able to achieve despite their policy of isolationism. Reul using his scientific background as well as the knowledge of the people of Telassar learns about Aubrey's betrayal, Dianthe's death, and to return home. Upon his return, he finds Dianthe barely clinging to life but with enough energy to tell Reul the dark truth she learned from her grandmother Aunt Hannah that connects these main characters and to Telassar: she, Reul, and Aubrey are all siblings with Aubrey being their half-brother, a product of the rape that Aubrey's father enacted on their mother who was his slave and descendant of Telassar royalty. Upon learning the truth of his race, Aubrey kills himself and after Dianthe's death, Reul returns to

Telassar with Aunt Hannah. They live out their days in peace but with dread regarding the potential arrival of the white invaders now that Telassar isn't completely unknown to the outside world.

Hopkins uses specific 19th-century genre conventions to create her utopia vision of Telassar, so we must understand those conventions to discuss how utopia functions as a third space ecology. Utopia needs to be seen as first and foremost an interdisciplinary genre that takes from other genre conventions to create a new vision of the future. As a popular genre within 19th-century authors, popular utopian narratives were penned by white men who thought of futures beyond race distinctions and inherently white. The homogeneous population was then also instilled with the same values and cultural backgrounds. Courtney L. Novosat, in her article "'Gazing Hopelessly into the Future' utopia and the racial politics of genre in *Of One Blood; or, The Hidden Self*" goes into how race was treated in 19th century utopian narratives. Utopia became a popular genre because it allowed some relief from the racial tensions that overtook American discourse. Novosat asserts that "Given the racialized political tumult of fin de siècle America, it is unsurprising that a literary form offering a means to rewrite our national narrative would gain popularity among white writers and readers. Many white Americans likely found solace in utopian messages of future (racial) stability. Concerned by the growing din of nativist rhetoric, many perceived the nation's present as 'plagued' by the so-called Negro problem and immigrant problem" (2022, 176). As such, utopia was not a genre of equality due to the acceptance of difference, but rather because of the lack of differences in society. However, the ability to imagine a future where human and non-human differences take a different turn is malleable and a creative process not limited to the needs of white patriarchal belief systems. Therefore, we can see Hopkins' take on the genre of utopia and all its possibilities to subvert the white Western narratives that it usually espoused during her time. Because it was "Distinct from other genres, utopia's intertextual, hybrid, and multidisciplinary conventions allowed Hopkins an inroad for disrupting the mechanisms supporting race and gender prejudice, particularly the racialized discourses of science and history, which, like utopia, were dominated by white male voices in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Novosat 2022, 174). Utopia's intertextuality allowed Hopkins to create her version through Telassar where she could draw from science and histories of Africa and Haiti to disrupt the previous beliefs that African people and those decedent from them could not create an advanced nation that could become a peaceful power in the world.

One of the popular texts of the 19th century that Hopkins seemed to have taken and subverted while writing *Of One Blood* was Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward.* The narrative which is set in Boston, "tells the story of protagonist Julian West's century-long mesmeric sleep and awakening in a seemingly egalitarian society in the year 2000. In this idyllic new world, West finds that men and women both labor in the 'Industrial Army,' pay is equal across professions, and housing and goods are managed by the state" (Novosat 2022, 179). However, much about this future was less than idyllic as the social order of this future mirrored the white middle-class patriarchy of the 19th century. Novosat confirms that "In its private homes, utopia's gender hierarchy ensured that women also retained domestic duties and worked shorter hours to compensate for their fragility. Further, the utopia's conspicuous consumption, caste-based segregation, and Aryan-featured populace assured its white nineteenth-century readers that the creature comforts of middle-class capitalism, social mores, and expected racial segregation remained in the future" (2022, 179). Evidently, Bellamy's future utopia retained the racialized systems that Hopkins herself worked to fight as a writer and activist. As someone who would be aware of this text, she may have felt the urge to take on the genre of utopia in her final novel to fight a future where African Americans and women were still relegated to the same positions of disenfranchisement and invisibility as in her present. Certainly, "As a participatory and interventionist form, utopia not only traditionally borrows from other works but also enables Hopkins to disrupt the genre's own mechanisms for supporting race prejudice" (Novosat 2022, 182). Telassar becomes the utopia that Bellamy and other white-male authors of the time could not imagine with their limited and racist understandings of race and culture. When used in an American context, utopia was destined to become more than just a white vision of a white future. Hopkins practices literary extraction in her creation of utopia, "Yet the practice of literary extraction—as in quotations, epigraphs, and the widespread practice of commonplacing—occupied a critical position in the print culture of Walker's nineteenth century" (Insko 2020, 176). The history of the United States cannot withhold the narratives and the futures of African Americans, especially during Reconstruction when abolitionists were fighting for equal representation within the nation. It was essential for Hopkins to create a vision of Africa that could not only compete with the Western ideals of civilization but take it one step further and be the birthplace of civilization.

Telassar as Land and Home

Hopkins, utilizing the genre conventions of utopia, provides intricate and vivid descriptions of the fictional Telassar, making it imperative to look closer as to what kinds of people or bodies fit into this space. As a third space ecology created under a utopic vision, Telassar was meant to represent both the past and future of African society. Hopkins uses this common science fiction and utopia technique to pull from the histories of enslavement and displacement that she was well aware of to present an alternative to the present state of anti-Black and racist sentiments that were prevalent and growing during Reconstruction. Amber Foster, in her article "The Serial Novel, Nation, and Utopia: An Intratextual Re-Reading of Pauline Hopkins' *Of One Blood; Or, the Hidden Self*" determines that "Telassar becomes the fictional embodiment of what this black nation—modeled on ancient African societies—might one day become…Hopkins situates Africa as a nascent utopia, a prospective site of pan-African racial pride" (Foster 2019, 49). By doing so, she creates a space that allows for the negotiations of race, identity, and religion to occur. She also creates a future where Africans have agency over their society and land, juxtaposing this vision with the ongoing fight for agency in the United States. This space not only presented possibilities, but it also allowed readers to have something to fight for as the utopic possibilities were now presented to her vast readership through her serialized publication in the *Colored American Magazine*. The fictional Telassar then can be considered a third space ecology created by Hopkins to allow for a space where a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation can exist and develop. This fictional space was not meant to stay fictional or out of the reach of African Americans. Hopkins wanted Telassar to challenge people's views of Africans and descendants from African nations. She does this when Reuel discusses the Ethiopian capital Meroe which was their original destination. He states, "'Your theories may be true, Professor, but if so, your discoveries will establish the primal existence of the Negro as the most ancient source of all that you value in modern life, even antedating Egypt. How can the Anglo-Saxon world bear the establishment of such a theory?' There was a hidden note of sarcasm in his voice which the others did not notice" (Hopkins 2022, 270). The Anglo-Saxons, as Hopkins calls them, would have to come to some sort of realization of the atrocities that they had imposed upon African peoples if they were to recognize the ancient knowledges of Africa. The sarcasm in Reuel's voice is present since he knows he is not fully a white man and already seems to understand the foolishness of this idea of inferiority that many around him share. Through her narrative construction, readers would be able to see her underlying goals of not only making this a dream of Africa but a global Pan-African reality. Telassar could become the home for any who believed in the ideals of social equality espoused by Hopkins and other abolitionist writers who aligned with her beliefs.

A Black utopia is not as far-fetched as some may have thought in the 19th century as the framework for utopian thinking and Black nation-building was already set up through the common use of utopia as a literary genre and the example of Haiti as a nation which was able to not only gain freedom by successfully holding the first enslaved revolution in the colonized world. Hopkins did revolutionary work herself through her storytelling as her narratives gave people the hope and pride they needed to imagine a better future. Serpil Opperman, in her materialist ecocritical analysis of stories in her book *Ecologies of a Storied Planet in the Anthropocene*, maintains, "the Earth is a living planet where everything that is *is* a storied subject of an ever-enfolding planetary tale shaping the world while being shaped by that very world. Stories, in other words, create the world by which they are created and configure the very reality by which they are engendered" (Oppermann 2023, 1). Stories were not mere imagination, even when being presented through the speculative genres of proto-science fiction and utopia as Hopkins does. Narratives can create change as they are representative of the environment around us and everything and everyone has the agency to create stories and as such reality. Readers see these negotiations happen in the text as the expedition in Africa moves forward. As the band with which Reuel travels begins to slowly see some of the great ruins of Ethiopia, but before Telassar is revealed to Reuel and the readers, there is speculation and disbelief by Charlie Vance regarding the African's ability to create such advanced structures. He exclaims, "'Great Scott!' cried Charlie, 'you don't mean to tell me that all this was done by niggers?' The Professor smiled. Being English, he could not appreciate Charlie's horror at its full value. 'Undoubtedly your Afro-Americans are a branch of the wonderful and mysterious Ethiopians who had a prehistoric existence of magnificence, the full record of which is lost in obscurity'" (Hopkins 2022, 342). Here, Hopkins creates this conversation between Charlie and the English Professor to present a great African past. This begins to dismantle the conceptions about African inferiority that were rampant pre- and post-Civil War. Charlie is horrified by this knowledge because he comes from a long line of prejudice and racism. We know that he is Molly Vance's brother and comes from a wealthy white family, which leads readers to question where his family's money has come from since we know that Livingston's money most likely came from slavery since the family was known to own enslaved people. Hopkins also takes this moment to comment on the difference between the British and American views of Black people seemingly painting the Americans as more ignorant and perhaps more violent concerning their treatment of African Americans. In these lines, she is able to start setting the stage for the dismantling of the ideas that Black people are backward or unable to create a highly advanced society while showing that perhaps white Americans are the ones who are uneducated in the true history of humanity because of their part in colonialism and the enslavement of African peoples.

As mentioned earlier, Hopkins also uses her knowledge of Haiti and the Haitian Revolution to begin breaking down these racist ideals. She doesn't only look to Africa as a space of resistance or reimaging. As Mary Grace Albanese asserts in her article "Unraveling the Blood Line: Pauline Hopkins's Haitian Genealogies," "We might therefore consider the first Black republic as a potent 'black shadow' to *Of One Blood's* uncolonized kingdom Telassar, which like Haiti is threatened by the imperialist 'advance of mighty nations'" (2019, 229). This may be one of the reasons that Hopkins may have has for making Telassar a hidden kingdom as Hopkins through her work at the *Colored American Magazine* was very aware of how Haiti was doing economically and politically in the decades leading up to US occupation. Hopkins was "ever attuned to the nation's fragile sovereignty" (Albanese 2019, 229) as a young Black republic that still had to exist within the larger capitalist and racist global ecology. Because of this sociopolitical knowledge, Hopkins may have decided to make Telassar an isolationist and hidden kingdom to comment on the issues of interference that colonizing nations seemingly could not escape because of their greed and superiority complex. During the expedition to Ethiopia that Reuel takes we can see how these men viewed the land around them, looking for something of value to take but not respecting their surroundings or the history of the place. Hopkins writes:

> It was not a simple thing to come all these thousands of miles to look at a pile of old ruins that promised nothing of interest to him after all. This was what he had come for—the desolation of an African desert, and the companionship of human fossils and savage beasts of prey. The loneliness made him shiver. It was a desolation that doubled desolateness, because his healthy American organization missed the march of progress attested by the sound of hammers on unfinished buildings that told of a busy future and cosy modern homeliness. Here there was no future. No railroads, no churches, no saloons, no schoolhouses to echo the voices of merry children, no promise of the life that produces within the range of his vision. Nothing but the monotony of past centuries dead and forgotten save by a few learned savants (2022, 339).

At first Reuel and his comrades do not see any value in the land before them. The things that he values in the perceived modernity of the United States, however, are derived from the subjugation and stolen labor of the people who were native or descendants of Africa, the land he now sees as valueless. Even so, the expedition moves forward because of the capitalist need to find resources and treasures that can be extracted and brought back home to fuel that broken dream of American progress that Hopkins presents as only existing because of the enslavement of African peoples.

It seems that Hopkins distrusted the white man's ability to see a successful and rich Black nation and leave it alone without trying to take over it because of the Western history of colonization and dehumanization. As Jeffrey Insko notes in his chapter on extraction, "Capitalism's insatiable drive towards expansion and growth, its exploitation of material resources, and its need for 'cheap things,' to borrow a phrase from Jason W. Moore and Raj Patel, have created a world so deeply dependent upon resource extraction that it seems almost impossible to disentangle ourselves from it" (2020, 171). By making Telassar a self-sufficient, matriarchal society, Hopkins questions capitalism's ability to treat people and land with true humanity and respect since there had not been a very good track record of this happening in her lifetime. To protect this Black utopia, Hopkins had to create a material and social reality where extraction was impossible because "whatever the source and method, however, extraction always entails a degree of violence: cutting, pulling, plowing, digging, stripping, blasting, drilling, fracturing" (Insko 2020, 173). This violence is not only towards the land but the people that are a part of that space. Once Reuel is brought into Telassar he begins to learn about how the people used their natural resources not by stripping the land through overuse and overconsumption, but rather they are shielded from enslaving and extractive forces by the natural lush environment of their home. Ai tells Reuel how nature has aided in their isolation: "'You are in the hidden city Telassar. In my people you will behold the direct descendants of the inhabitants of Meroe. We are but a remnant, and here we wait behind the protection of our mountains and swamps, secure from the intrusion of a world that has forgotten, for the coming of our king who shall restore to the Ethiopian race its ancient glory. I am Ai, his faithful prime minister'" (Hopkins 2022, 424). Here we can see a glimpse of how the inhabitants of Telassar view their nation. Although they live in only a fraction of their land, they seem to appreciate nature's ability to keep them hidden from outsiders. The mountains and swamps are the protectors and Ai does acknowledge that this is just a bit of what used to be Meroe. Rather than opening up and leaving the safety of the mountains and swamps, the people have been able to foster a third space ecology where they can preserve the environment that we had previously seen as desolate when the expedition was walking through the Ethiopian desert. Telassar is not devoid of knowledge from the outside world due to their isolation. The people have been able to collect knowledge and artifacts from all over Africa and even the world by carefully having some members that go outside the city and bring back some key information from the developing world around them. Ai further informs Reuel about this way of life: "'Standing at the edge of the Desert, fertile in soil, rich in the luxuries of foreign shores; into her lap caravans poured their treasures gathered from the North, South, East and West. All Africa poured into this queenly city ivory, frankincense and gold. Her colossal monuments were old before Egypt was; her wise men monopolized the learning of the ages, and in the persons of the Chaldeans have figured conspicuously the wisdom of ages since Meroe has fallen'" (Hopkins 2022, 429). Ai informs Reuel about how they have surpassed other ancient civilizations, claiming that this part of Meroe is the cradle of civilization itself and has still been able to continue growing in knowledge even though they are unseen by the outside world. Hopkins through her character Ai asserts that the land, people, and the history of Meroe are much more rich than other civilizations which challenges Western colonial ideals of African and civilization. The people of Telassar take advantage of their invisibility and access to borders which are a site of turmoil and violent politics according to Umut Ozguc an international relations scholar. Oppermann determines that "borders for migrant ecologies represent a third space, 'an in-between space.' Ozguc's reading of the border 'as a space that gives rise to the emergence of multiple possibilities' recasts the border question in terms of its 'ambiguities, paradoxes, shifts, and continuities,' which enable migrant ecologies to construe the border as 'a socially, politically, and culturally constructed lived space'" (2023, 97). Although Telassar is hidden the people see the need for border crossing to keep advancing their society and to be aware of the dangers that surround them Telassar's borders work as a third space in and of itself by allowing for the exchange of information to occur and ultimately for the discovery of their long-lost king to finally happen, but even with his time in Telassar and his discovery of his roots Reuel still seems to bring in his American perspectives to the city which allude to a potential disruption of this balanced ecology.

Bodies as Third Space Ecologies

The characters in Hopkins' narrative must navigate the third space of mixed-race identity as Reuel must fight his white perspective which he has so long internalized due to his choice to pass as white and hide his Black heritage. As Reuel explores Telassar more, he is overcome by the lush and abundant landscape around him, but this landscape seems to bring him negative emotions regarding how the inhabitants of Telassar have used the land and shows his extractive tendencies. Hopkins notes this and reflects in her writing: "The character of the country improved as they neared the interior. Reuel noticed that this was at variance with the European idea respecting Central Africa, which brands these regions as howling wildernesses or an uninhabitable country" (2022, 493). There is a glimpse of acknowledgment regarding the white patriarchal view of Africa and a rejection of those beliefs as Hopkins clearly creates an alternative to those narratives. However, Reuel is not able to fully negotiate through his past knowledge and prejudice that he has build up until this point due to the partial rejection of his identity. This creates turmoil with in himself and he cannot fully see Telassar for what it is without it being a part of a larger global economy. Hopkins writes:

> He found the landscape most beautiful, the imaginary desert 'blossomed like the rose,' and the 'waste sandy valleys' and 'thirsty wilds,' which had been assigned to this location, became, on close inspection, a gorgeous scene, decorated with Nature's most cheering garniture, teeming with choice specimens of vegetable and animal life, and refreshed by innumerable streams, branches of the rivers, not a few of which were of sufficient magnitude for navigation and commerce. But Reuel remembered the loathsome desert that stood in grim determination guarding the entrance to this paradise against all intrusion, and with an American's practical common sense, bewailed this waste of material (2022, 493).

The end of this passage is extremely telling. His appreciation for nature can only go so far because of his American capitalist "practicality" echoing Insko's notion regarding capitalism's inability to keep from enacting violence on places and bodies (2020, 173). If Reuel sees that the inhabitants of Telassar are wasting their natural resources, then what can we expect will happen to the city under his rule? Hopkins goes back and forth here perhaps dealing with her views regarding whether African Americans should maintain their own spaces away from the rest of the world to avoid further abuse and extraction like that which had already occurred through slavery and that which was looming upon Haiti in the 19th century. What Hopkins does not do is reject the need for African Americans to learn about Africa. As Mandy Reid claims in "Utopia Is in the Blood: The Bodily Utopias of Martin R. Delany and Pauline Hopkins," "the convoluted plot lines of *Of One Blood* suggest, *all* African-Americans—educated or not, 'passing' or not—have the 'duty' to make personal, political, and cultural understandings of their glorious Ethiopian past work for them in the face of ongoing racial struggles" (2011, 95). Therefore, Hopkins uses Reuel's third space identity to debate what the goal of abolitionists in the United States should be. When change was imminent and debates about how to integrate African Americans into society overtook American politics and social discourse, understanding Ethiopian or African possibilities was key for Hopkins' advocacy for a more African-centric African American identity regardless of integration or separation from white society.

While this navigation of identity is used through Reuel to discuss the future of African Americans in US society, the negotiation of identity and self becomes nearly impossible for the female bodies in the text because of their gendered positions. The female characters in *Of One Blood* all work through third space ecologies themselves, but through their lack of agency Hopkins perhaps comments on another layer of American life that being the inequality between the sexes. In the article "Pauline Hopkins and the Death of the Tragic Mulatta," JoAnn Pavletich discusses the 19th-century figure of the tragic mulatta and claims that Hopkins had previously followed the trope in her prior writings along with the teachings of true womanhood. She explains, "The figure of the mulatto, or the tragic mulatta, a stock figure in nineteenth-century sentimental literature, sprung out of that century's confluence of abolitionist efforts and gender ideologies, emerging alongside and structured by notions of 'true womanhood' in antebellum America" (Pavletich 2015, 647). The tragic mulatta figure was always tied to true womanhood and it seems that by the time that Hopkins began writing her last novel, she no longer wanted to portray her mulatta figures as falling neatly into true womanhood. The reanimation of Dianthe and how her life is then overtaken by the men around her begin to fall under the trope of the tragic mulatta, however, her unheroic death at the end of the novel indicates that Hopkins no longer believed that Black women should live under the restrictions of true womanhood when that constructed ideology was based on white women's and patriarchal views on purity, piety, submissiveness, and domesticity. Dianthe is forced into the domestic space and gives into submissiveness and although she seems to hold all the traits of true womanhood, her death at the end shows the fragility of her position and essentially highlights that true womanhood cannot protect Black women from male violence and subjugation. When looking at how Dianthe agreed to marry Reuel we can see an example of this failure of true womanhood to give agency to Dianthe:

> She was conscious that he loved her with his whole most loving heart. She winced under the knowledge, for while she believed in him, depended upon him and gathered strength from his love, what she gave in return was but a slight, cold affection compared with his adoration… She did not answer at once, but looked at his plain face, at the stalwart elegance of his figure, and again gazed into the dark, true, clever eyes, and with the sigh of a tired child crept into his arms, and into his heart for all time and eternity (Hopkins 2022, 192).

She does not choose to marry Reuel because she loves him, but rather because it seems like it is what it is expected of her to do since he saved her. She sees that he wants her, and although she does not feel the same, it is expected by society that she will marry and become the proper housewife. Due to her circumstances, she chooses the first man who treats her well because it is the norm of the time—that she will become a wife and live a domestic life. Her tired demeanor during the acceptance of the proposal represents her giving into the expectations of society even though she does not fit in with them. Later, Dianthe has to fight off the advances of Aubre Livingston, who also wants her and is willing to murder his fiancé and send Reuel off to Africa to get his prize. Hopkins writes that "In vain the girl sought to throw off the numbing influence of the man's presence. In desperation she tried to defy him, but she knew that she had lost her will-power and was but a puppet in the hands of this false friend" (2022, 198). There is no power in Dianthe's personhood because she has been stripped of it through the loss of her identity. She is not able to successfully negotiate and advocate for herself because of her position as the tragic mulatta and a woman that was pushed into domesticity.

Ultimately, Telassar is a utopic third space ecology that fails to provide a stable vision of the future of Africa or African Americans in the post-Reconstruction era because of its hierarchical structure and isolationist ideology. The arrival of Reuel acts as a way for Hopkins to present the intricacies of building a Black nationhood, showing the possibilities that African Americans had while trying to disrupt outdated visions of blackness. However, Reuel's American perspective clouds his judgment, and we cannot be sure that Telassar will remain the safe space that it had been for centuries because of his capitalist vision. There is some hope provided by Hopkins as she appreciates the way in which the inhabitants of Telassar work within their third space ecology to advance and preserve their society. There is also hope in Hopkins' disruption of the ideals of the cult of true womanhood and the tragic mulatta trope. By bringing Hannah to Telassar, a survivor of colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal violence, and killing her tragic mulatta as a failed vision of true womanhood, Telassar may thrive and become a symbol of African possibility. Hopkins interdisciplinary work as an activist, editor, writer, and creative allowed her to work as a third space professional herself, working through all the mediums available and subverting white genre conventions to have candid conversations of what the future of Black civil society would look like. Hopkins creates a future for African Americans that is not perfect, but possible by fostering third space ecologies and rejecting outdated modes of negotiation.

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Finding Strength in the Natural World in Beth Brant's "Swimming Upstream" and Tomás Vallejos' "Piñons"

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Abstract:

Beth Brant's "Swimming Upstream," tells the story of a Native American woman, Anna May, who loses custody of her son due to her lesbian lifestyle and history with alcoholism. When her son drowns on a fishing trip with her ex-husband, Anna May finds herself struggling with alcoholic temptation. While on the brink of relapse, she watches an injured salmon fighting to swim upstream and leap over a dam. In doing so, she is symbolically reminded of her own strength. Similarly, Tomás Vallejos' "Piñons" tells the story of a young man grappling with his own sexuality amid his father's toxic masculinity. Feeling isolated and ostracized by his community and family, he, too, ventures into nature for solace and is reminded of his own strength through the symbolism of the piñon tree. Both Anna May and the unnamed narrator of Piñons find that while society seeks to stifle and silence their differences, in nature, differences are celebrated as miracles. These two stories of social outsiders emphasize the rejuvenating power of the natural world and suggest that reconnecting to nature gives strength of voice and identity to those who would otherwise be silenced by the patriarchal rules of society.

Keywords: naturalism, toxic masculinity, miracles, social outsiders, ecofeminism

Naturalism, a major influence on the literature produced during the 19th century, is still alive and well in two contemporary American short stories written by two very different American writers. In Beth Brant's "Swimming Upstream," a Native American woman, lesbian, and recovering alcoholic seeks solace in nature after the loss of her son. While on the brink of relapse, she watches an injured salmon fighting to swim upstream and leap over a dam. In doing so, she is symbolically reminded of her own strength. Similarly, Tomás Vallejos' "Piñons" tells the story of a young man grappling with his own sexuality amid his father's toxic masculinity. He, too, ventures into nature for solace and is reminded of his own strength through the symbolism of the piñon tree. These two stories of social outsiders emphasize the rejuvenating power of the natural world and suggest that reconnecting to nature gives strength of voice and identity to those who would otherwise be silenced by the patriarchal rules of society.

Both stories fall within the genre of literary naturalism due to the connection they make between nature and human beings struggling with external conflict. Gregory Phipps, in "American Literary Naturalism and Its Descendants" explains literary naturalism through definitions provided by other authors. He begins his article by referencing Jennifer Fleissner's remarks that "naturalist texts often feature depictions of a 'beleaguered soul struggling against external forces'" (qtd. in Phipps vii). Later in his article he also references Anita Duneer and her observation that "both postcolonial and naturalistic literature explore the 'plight of characters trying to maintain humanity and dignity while subjected to forces beyond their control'" (qtd. in Phipps xi). The genre of literary naturalism spans a vast amount of time, and thus, the external forces that the characters fight against change with the progression of the genre. Some of the earliest naturalist stories originated with the Puritans who came to America. Steven Frye, in "Naturalism and the Literature of the American West" explains that for the Puritans, the New World "was 'wilderness' in the deepest and most profound sense. It was a dark place where Satan's legions at first held sway, where they would be challenged and made new in a crucible that might purify them and make them prepared to set an example" (3). For the Puritans, the external force they were struggling against was the land itself, and "in fine proto-naturalist fashion it would be a harsh place of seeming indifference and suffering" (Frye 3). As the colonization of America expanded, American literature depicted The West as "a space of imagination that has been associated with progress and linked to hope and a sense that with time and intrepid effort the human species can transcend the material contingencies of scarcity and want" (Frye 1). The external forces characters fought against became not only battles with nature, but also battles with industrialism and other cultures.

While at first glance it doesn't seem that "Swimming Upstream" and "Piñons" fit this genre, as the characters are not struggling to survive against nature or machinery, the central conflict of each story is their struggle to survive against external forces. In the case of the narrator in "Piñons," he is up against the machismo beliefs of both his father and his Mexican American community. In "Swimming Upstream," Anna May is struggling against the stereotypes white society has placed on her while fighting her own internal struggle against alcoholism and grief. In these two stories, the external forces found within literary naturalism evolve into man vs. society conflicts. Gregory Phipps explains that

> Naturalism has always dealt with issues pertaining to race, class gender, and sexuality, but these categories—and their interactions—continue to acquire diverse meanings which are, in many cases, contrary to the meanings they carried in late nineteenth-century mainstream American society. (viii)

As the genre of naturalism has evolved, it has expanded to embrace stories about the lives of people like the unnamed narrator in "Piñons" and Anna May, characters who are often considered "other" by entrenched groups. By aligning themselves with nature and seeing their pain reflected in nature, these characters begin to heal despite the differences that mark them as other.

These concerns about naturalism are at the heart of Beth Brant's "Swimming Upstream" and Tomás Vallejos' "Piñons." The judgments and decisions of the white man's society are stacked against Anna May not only because she is Native American, but because of her past issues with alcoholism and her current lesbian lifestyle. Her failure seems, at the beginning, inevitable. How could anyone survive when so much is against them? Karen Lee Osborne's "'Swimming Upstream': Recovering the Lesbian in Native American Literature" argues that "it is a measure of Anna May's determination that she has managed to stay sober and to resist a victim identity" (200). While the narrator of "Piñons" arguably does not have as many layers of obstacles in his way as Anna May does, he is still fighting against the large force of machismo belief that has been ingrained in his Mexican American culture. To make it worse, he is not only at odds with his community but with his own family. In both these situations, the characters find themselves isolated from society and loved ones by their "otherness." This burden of "otherness" is the driving force that eventually leads each character to separate themselves from their communities. Richard Lehan, in "Literary Naturalism and Its Transformation," states that in literary naturalism, "the human burden involves adapting to the force rather than being destroyed by it" (229). If this is true, Anna May and the unnamed narrator in "Piñons" must decide to adapt to and accept their otherness or be destroyed by it.

From an early age, the narrator of "Piñons" finds himself the brunt of cruel jokes. His own brother mocks the way he walks. The narrator recalls, "I can still see all the kids laughing as he sashayed down the sidewalk, holding his arms tight against his sides, flipping his hands back and forth and wiggling his butt from side to side" (Vallejos 51). He finds no comfort from his parents when faced with this mockery, instead being told he's too sensitive. As a result, he comes to realize that he is different from everyone else around him without fully understanding why. Steven Frye mentions the idea of "associationism" which is "a notion of identity formation in which human beings are conditioned and defined by the environment in which they live and are nurtured" (4). Frye goes on to provide examples of various regions in the United States and the personality traits associated with those regions. For example, he states, "Those on the mercantile coasts are energetic as well as highly industrious and full of vivacity" (4). In the case of our unnamed narrator, he receives no nurturing in the environment in which he lives. He repeatedly refers to his community as "brutes" and says that the men act "like a bunch of pigs" (Vallejos 52). What seems to anger him the most is how the adult men attempt to condition the younger boys to act like the "brutes" mentioned by the narrator by encouraging them to fight each other in a boxing match. In a moment of bitter reflection, the narrator states, "and to top it all off, they made bets on who would win, as if Eddie and Abe were dogs or fighting cocks" (52). In this moment, the comparison of his siblings to animals used for human entertainment draws parallels between the treatment of children and the treatment of the natural world. In both cases, there is an unnatural treatment of the innocent as well as man's attempt to dominate and conquer his surroundings—both common themes seen in literary naturalism. The narrator is called names for not participating in these boxing matches, but rather than succumb to this pressure, and in turn lose his true identity, he separates himself from their actions and ventures into nature.

Anna May, in Beth Brant's "Swimming Upstream," is also at odds with her surroundings. In Karen Lee Osborne's article, she explains that by the time the story begins, "Anna May's self-esteem has already been damaged. She has felt the sting of racism for being an Indian and further disapprobation because of being a mixed breed, a recovering alcoholic, and a lesbian, not necessarily in that order" (200). She is doubly marginalized as "other" in her society not only because of her actions but because of her cultural background. She is not truly white, like the white Western society wants her to be, nor is she fully Native American in the eyes of her indigenous culture. As a result, she is displaced in both of her potential communities amid her grief. These cultural forces with which she is at odds are not a foreign subject in literary naturalism. Steven Frye, in his article, explains that "the idea that other cultures contemporaneously occupied the West was foreign to a nineteenth-century mind," and as a result, the conquering hordes felt that "the Native Americans were a people to be conquered, civilized, Christianized, and brought into a divinely ordained understanding of the ideal society" (4). This nineteenth-century belief about Native Americans is still evident in "Swimming Upstream." Despite her best efforts, Anna May is seen by the courts of white patriarchal society as "unfit" to have custody of her child "because she lived with a woman, because a woman, Catherine, slept beside her, because she had a history of alcoholism" (Brant 23). An argument could be made that she was denied custody because she was a lesbian; however, the prejudice against her seems to be more deeply rooted in her cultural background. Beth Brant does not make Anna May's lesbianism the central focus of the story. It is stated as fact, as one aspect of her person. Instead, the focus becomes her battle to remain sober in the face of her overwhelming grief.

In Karen Lee Osborne's article, she discusses the belief that "postmodern approaches to Native American literature are still based on Western models and/or assumptions about vaguely understood, overgeneralized 'Indian' modes" (192). As a result, literature often depicts Native Americans in stereotypical ways. For example, Native American characters are romanticized as the "all good, all natural, all spiritual" victims of white society, destined to become suicidal alcoholics (192). She goes on to say that this romantic view of Native Americans as constant victims "can be as dangerous as racism" (192). At the beginning of "Swimming Upstream," it seems that Anna May is destined to fall into the trap of this stereotypical Native American depiction. Even though she has been sober since before her son was born, the judge denies custody because of her history with alcohol, which seems to support the general stereotype that Native Americans are, and always will be, alcoholics. As Osborne explains, "If the Indian were not drunk, what then would he or she do?" (197). In the judge's eyes, because she is Native American, she is destined to fall prey to alcoholism again. When she loses her son a second time to death, Anna May's grief consumes her and becomes the ultimate barrier between her and the rest of her community. Now, not only is she excluded because she is a lesbian, Native American, and recovering alcoholic, but because no one else can understand how it feels for a mother to lose a child. It is this loss that isolates her from the last person to whom she is connected, her partner Catherine, because "Catherine didn't know what it was to feel the baby inside her, to feel him pushing his way out of her, to feel his mouth on her breast, to feel the sharp pain in her womb every time his name was mentioned" (Brant 27). Thus, her feelings of "otherness" are heightened because of her grief. This grief becomes so great that she buys a bottle of wine and drives out to Sauble

Falls. At several moments, descriptions foreshadow how close she is to suicide. For one thing, she blames herself for her son's death, thinking to herself, "she should have placated Tony, she should have lived alone, she should have pretended to be straight, she should have never become an alcoholic, she should have never loved, she should have never been born" (27). As Karen Lee Osborne so beautifully puts it, "these are the messages she has received from the world, and in her grief, they begin to insinuate themselves into her psyche [...] she has forgotten her own strength and value" (201). The final message, that she should never have been born, alludes to her desire to end her life and how close she is to succumbing to the victim stereotype. Once she arrives at the falls, her instability is further alluded to through the sign cautioning explorers, "WATCH YOUR STEP—ROCKS ARE SLIPPERY" (Brant 28). The falls are described as "narrow, spilling out on various layers of rock" (28). As she describes the dead fish on the rocks below laying "eyes glazed, sides open and bleeding" (28), readers can imagine her body sprawled out in the same way should she decide to jump.

What makes Anna May's story so beautiful, however, is how Beth Brant prevents her from falling into the stereotype of the suicidal, alcoholic Native American. Osborne explains that "Beth Brant, a Bay of Quinte Mohawk, is one of the few writers who has not only imagined the sociopolitical factors of Indian alcoholism, but also has focused on Indian political agency and what Indians do when they do *not* drink" (197). By not succumbing to the temptation to drink the bottle of wine, Anna May breaks free from this stereotypical depiction of Native Americans, showcasing the beautiful power of reconnecting to nature. Gregory Phipps explains that "if naturalistic literature can be 'pessimistic' and 'deterministic' in its focus, it can also be dialectical, showcasing how adherence to a single axis of thinking breeds contradictions that illuminate such axes in unexpected ways" (ix). In both stories, the main characters contradict the "single axis of thinking" that they are up against. In "Piñons," the unnamed narrator contradicts the belief that all men must be aggressive, coarse, brutes and instead proves to be thoughtful and sensitive. In "Swimming Upstream," Anna May proves that not all Native Americans are destined to be victims to white patriarchal society, nor victims of their own internal demons.

These epiphanies, however, only come to each character once they are removed from society and amid nature, even though they both have one person of comfort rooting for them. For the narrator in "Piñons," his safe person is Don Mateo, and the only character, besides the narrator, to allude to the powerful connection between humans and nature. Don Mateo tells him that piñons "'are the soul of the people who live here on these mountain slopes. They are rough and enduring, but sweet and delicate at the same time'" (Vallejos 52). It's not difficult to see the connection Mateo is making to the narrator at this moment. Like the piñons, the narrator has a sweet and delicate temperament, and it is this gentle behavior that causes him to be ridiculed by his community. Mateo powerfully reminds him, however, that he is also strong and can endure their ridicule. He symbolically emphasizes how special the narrator is through his description of the piñons, saying, "'they are rare. Always remember, son, those things that are most unusual in this world are miracles. They are special gifts to use. We shouldn't abuse them'" (52). In this moment, Mateo encourages the narrator to see how rare and miraculous his own differences make him because, if he can accept his differences, he will find strength in embracing his identity. In "Swimming Upstream," Anna May's safe person is her partner, Catherine. Through Catherine's character, it is made clear that Anna May needs to forgive. Amid Anna May's grief, Catherine begs her to forgive Tony for the death of her son. She pleads with her, "'It could have happened when he was with us... Forgive him, then you can forgive yourself'" (Brant 27). In this moment, Catherine tries to remind her that death, and fatal accidents, are part of existence. Along with not blaming Tony for the accident, she begs Anna May to stop blaming herself for not being the person society wanted her to be. Anna May cannot fully accept these things, however, until she watches the salmon attempting to swim upstream. When she sees the dead salmon on the rocks, it is a reminder that unexpected death is everywhere. The salmon, whom Anna May names Torn Fin, continues to swim upstream despite his injuries and becomes her symbolic spirit animal. Like him, she has been battered and bruised by the current of society telling her to swim the other way, to go with the flow of social expectations and to conform to the direction she is supposed to take in life. When Torn Fin successfully makes it over the dam to safety, Anna May is reminded of her own strength of identity. Through this symbolic connection, Brant "suggests that those oppressed by racism and homophobia must fight to preserve their identities" (Osborne 201). In this moment, Anna May finally finds comfort in knowing that she, too, can continue to battle social prejudice and her own grief and come out alive, though forever injured, on the other side.

In both "Piñons" and "Swimming Upstream," the main characters identify with an element of nature. This sense of connection between humans and nature is an aspect of literary naturalism that began to develop in the twentieth century. Rather than the theme of man's dominance over nature, a new type of story emerged in which "each earthly place would be a home, or community, to be shared with other living and nonliving things'" (qtd. in Nye 8). Vallejos and Brant, in their respective stories, draw attention to the powerful oneness humans could choose to have with nature. In both cases, the main characters find a home-like comfort and the sense of community they longed for once they are out in nature. David Nye refers to this type of story as a "recovery narrative" and explains, "essentially about remaking despoiled landscapes, this recovery narrative begins not with empty space waiting to be improved by new settlers, but with a place corrupted and degraded by human misuse" (20). While "Piñons" and "Swimming Upstream" don't specifically focus on natural places that have been misused by humans, the theme of misuse is present. In "Piñons," the narrator reflects on how aggressively his family treated the piñon trees during harvest season, recalling, "the grownups and my brothers and sisters shook the trees so hard it's a wonder they didn't destroy them all" (Vallejo 51). This abuse his family perpetrates on the trees is reminiscent of the abuse he faces. Just as they "force the piñons out" and "[twist] them out of shape" (51), they try to force out his effeminate qualities and twist his understanding of himself. Like the trees, it is a wonder he has not been destroyed by their abuse as he is consistently silenced by their comments and left questioning himself. Anna May in "Swimming Upstream" doesn't suffer such direct verbal abuse, but she too is emotionally abused. The patriarchal court system shames her for past mistakes and leads her to feel there is something innately wrong about her because she loves a woman. She is deemed unfit as a mother simply for being who she is: a Native American and a lesbian. It is this emotional abuse that leads to her inability to forgive herself for her son's death. In the case of both characters, the abuse they receive from society is what leads them to seek solace in nature.

Steven Frye, while discussing the era of Wild West stories, explains that the myth of the Wild West "has a basis in reality, but alongside it was the same experiences of hardship and daily toil that had driven people from regions east to a territory that was harsh and unforgiving, more naturalistic and bound to the conventional struggle for survival" (7). While neither character exists in a Wild West story, they both find themselves driven out of the harsh and unforgiving societies in which they live. The exile of otherness that they internally feel leads them to observe the struggle for survival in the harsh and unforgiving natural world. In "Piñons," the narrator observes the piñon trees growing against the steep canyon walls. He describes that "the trees there are windswept, as if they've been beaten low through more lifetimes than you can imagine," and he adds that "they are frozen in that awkward position, like an animal fighting for its life, locked forever in a struggle against some brute force" (Vallejos 53). Through his observations, the narrator realizes that these trees are not beautiful, and they are not perfect. Like him, they are awkward and constantly battered by "brute force." And yet, he believes "there is something brave about them" (53). It is their bravery amidst their harsh and unforgiving environment that eventually leads him to find his own internal strength.

In "Swimming Upstream," the narrator observes similar bravery in nature through Torn Fin's struggle to swim upstream. Torn Fin is described as large, with a dark body, and a torn dorsal fin. As Anna May watches him jump into the air, she sees his "underbelly, pale yellow and bleeding from the battering against the rocks, the water" (Brant 28). This description of his injuries is reminiscent of the emotional injuries Anna May feels because of her son's death. As a mother who has lost a child, she feels as though a part of her has been torn away, leaving her battered and bleeding in grief. In her current state, she can't imagine being able to survive her pain, and yet she still finds herself going through the motions of life. David Nye states that "most if not all Native Americans tell stories that express a sense of primeval oneness with the places they inhabit" (9). However, at the start of Anna May's story, she is so far removed from nature that during her "drive through farmland, bright autumn leaves, the glimpse of blue lake. She saw none of these, only the gray highway stretching out before her" (Brant 22). This description implies that she is living on autopilot, moving forward only by a natural instinct. She has lost her oneness with nature, and, as a result, has lost her sense of self. By the end of the story, however, as she watches Torn Fin continue to battle his way upstream, she closes her eyes, "almost ashamed to be a spectator at this act of faith, this primal movement to get to the place of all beginning—only knowing he had to get there. He had to push his bleeding body forward, believing in his magic to get him there" (29). Through his natural determination to persevere upstream, Anna May is reminded of her oneness with nature and her own ability to persevere.

The innate relationship humans have with the natural world is incredibly fascinating and has even lent itself to be explored as a branch of feminism called Ecofeminism. This branch of feminism draws on the concept of gender to analyze the relationship between humans and nature. Linda Forbes and Laura Sells, in "Reorganizing the Woman/Nature Connection" explain that "for ecofeminists, the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are intimately connected, and likewise, so is their liberation" (Forbes and Sells 20). They go on to explain the similarities between brutality of women and brutality of nature and give examples of how "animal battery accompanies many cases of domestic violence." They add that "women's menstrual patterns shift with the cattle industry's use of hormones to increase production, and women's daily use of cosmetics evokes the historical link between the beauty industry and animal testing" (20). While "Piñons" and "Swimming Upstream" have female and male protagonists, it is interesting to note that the primary reason the narrator of "Piñons" is abused by his community and family is because of his feminine qualities. He is sympathetic and maternal in his views towards nature. He is sensitive, delicate, and kind-hearted which are qualities all commonly associated with women. He doesn't fit his society's expectations for men, and therefore, this seems to make the men in his life feel they have a right to abuse him. In "Swimming Upstream," Beth Brant also "explores the tensions between the master narrative of patriarchy and the feminine" (Osborne 198). On top of being Native American and gay, Anna May is even more susceptible to the oppression of male society because she is a woman. In the eyes of the male-dominated legal system, she is a woman who fails to adhere to "the norms of the legal system, defined in the patriarchal language of the oppressor" (Osborne 198), and, therefore, she must be put in her place.

Thankfully, in the case of both characters, they can find the strength to fight against this oppression and "create a new language, a subversive action necessary to healing and survival" (Osborne 198) through reconnecting with nature. Richard Lehan explains that "primitive forces in both the Western and literary naturalism work in similar ways: as an agency of transformations. The primitive works in each form to transform the physically weak character into a physically strong and self-sufficient individual" (232). In the case of these two stories, rather than transforming from physically weak to physically strong, the characters transform from emotionally weak to emotionally strong. In "Piñons," prior to the narrator reconnecting with nature, he describes himself using the negative language of others. He refers to himself as "people like me" and says he is treated "like a misfit" (Vallejos 51). He goes on to say that he feels as though people look at him "like [he is] beneath contempt" (51). Later, while referring to his father, he says, "I'm supposed to feel like some kind of freak because he says I'm too delicate. He calls me a weakling" (53). What is interesting to note here is that these descriptions do not use the narrator's own words. In each case he describes how other people *want* him to feel about himself. This is similar to what is seen in "Swimming Upstream" when Anna May blames herself for her failed relationship with Tony and the loss of her son. When she thinks, "she should have pretended to be straight, she should have never become alcoholic" (Brant 27), Anna May allows the judgements of society to form her opinion of herself. Despite society's best attempts at silencing these characters for their otherness and lack of conformity, by the end of each story Anna May and the unnamed narrator find their own voice and strength of identity. The narrator in "Piñons" says the piñon trees remind him of "some fierce bird, like a hawk, with knotted talons clenching tightly in the soil" (Vallejos 53). With the obvious symbolic connection made between the narrator and the trees throughout the story, this is a pivotal moment in which the narrator begins to identify his own internal strength. He is not weak and delicate as his father claims him to be, but instead, he is a "fierce bird." Through his reconnection to nature, he too has "talons clenched tightly in the soil." In his case, he is clutching on to his own identity and believing that not all men must be aggressive, abrasive brutes. In the final sentences of the story, he finally shares his own opinions stating, "just because people don't appreciate something doesn't mean it has no place in the world" (53). He is refusing to allow himself to be silenced by social expectations, proving that he has finally found his own voice while reconnecting with nature. He no longer will allow the opinions of others to dictate how he sees himself. Instead, he says, "let them think what they want. I'm going out tomorrow to pick piñons the way Don Mateo told me to. Nice and gentle. The only way I know how" (53). In this moment, he fully embraces who he is through describing the way he will pick piñons, nice and gentle. He only knows how to be himself. His observations of the gnarled piñons trees' continual strength as they cling to the canyon walls remind him that all of God's creatures are imperfect and miraculous gifts, and he is one of them.

For Anna May, her sense of strength is slower to come because of how dangerously depressed and lost she feels. For her, Torn Fin's journey of survival becomes her own journey through grief. Karen Lee Osborne explains that "in several Native American tribal stories, salmon figure prominently, and in many stories, it is also common for humans and animals to exchange shapes" (203). Earlier in the story, she is described as looking twenty years older than her age. It is stated that her eyes "were a faded and washed-out blue. Her mouth was wrinkled, the lips parched and chapped" (Brant 24). She seems to figuratively be a fish out of water, unable to breathe due to her grief. As she thinks about drinking the bottle of wine, the description emphasizes just how disconnected she is from nature. Humans, like fish, need water to survive, and yet she thinks a bottle of wine—a man-made creation—will save her from her pain and "kill the deadness" (24). When she finally removes herself from society and observes the salmon in nature, her mind can quiet enough to realize her life journey is like that of the salmon swimming upstream. Many would argue that Torn Fin represents her son Simon, and while this might be true, Karen Lee Osborne argues that he also "becomes her own symbolic journey of death and renewal" (203). Simon, quite literally, died in the water just as the salmon died who were unable to leap to safety. Torn Fin, however, survives, just as Anna May will survive despite all the odds stacked against her. Like Torn Fin, she is scarred by the social abuse she receives for being a mixed blood Native American, a lesbian, and an alcoholic. For her "to carry all of these labels is to be scarred many times by forces that impede a life's journey" (Osborne 203). Anna May has been led to believe that she is no longer worthy of life. She even convinced herself that Simon was the only reason she had stopped drinking. Without him, what reason does she have to keep trying? However, as she watches Torn Fin's "tremendous push for life, this sacrifice of the torn and bleeding body of the fish, cannot be interpreted as an excuse for complicity in her own death" (Osborne 204). Through this primal instinct in the natural world to survive, she is reminded that giving up is not an option. She does not have to fall prey to being a victim of patriarchal society or of her own demons. As Anna May watches Torn Fin leap to safety, she sees an image of her son reflected in the water. Osborne explains that "the transformation Anna May imagines of the fish into her son is her own transformation, a transformation that involves a renegotiation of her own identity through shifting subject positions" (Osborne 205). At this moment, she stops playing the victim. She no longer views herself as an unworthy mother at blame for her son's death. She no longer believes that without him, there is no other path for her but alcoholism and suicide. With the image of her son in front of her, she is reminded that "her relationship with Simon continues even after his death and that Tony and she are connected through both the shared creation of life and their shared grief" (Osborne 205). Like Torn Fin whose torn dorsal fin makes it difficult to swim, she too is emotionally wounded in a way that will make her progress to keep living difficult. However, these wounds that they share are not fatal, and through Torn Fin's successful ability to leap to safety, she is reminded that emotional and physical wounds are part of life's journey. In the moment in which she calls out her son's name, Anna May has once again found her voice and the strength to reimagine her identity without him. She breaks free of the stereotype of the alcoholic, victimized Native American when she leaves the wine bottle untouched. The final sentence of the story, in which "she could still hear the water in her ears" (Brant 30) as she drives away, implies that she is no longer a fish out of water. She is now the scarred salmon who has leapt to safety. While the death of her son will leave her with scars that will never fully heal and will at times make it difficult for her to move forward, she now knows she *can* move forward and live with this grief.

It is clear upon reflection of each of these stories that where society seeks to silence and stifle differences, nature seeks to celebrate them. Tomás Vallejos' unnamed narrator of "Piñons" and Beth Brant's Anna May of "Swimming Upstream" could have suffered the terrible outcome of suicide had they listened to the negative opinions society placed on them. However, thankfully, by reconnecting to nature, they were instead reminded that "otherness" is in fact a miraculous gift that should be cherished and nurtured.

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Rejecting Machismo in Tomás Vallejos' "Piñons" and Edgar Gomez's "Malcriado"

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Abstract:

Both Tomás Vallejos' "Piñons" and Edgar Gomez's "Malcriado" feature unnamed narrators who are young Latino men coping with the reality of being gay. Both narrators come from families that value machismo and uphold violent ideologies. In "Piñons," the narrator's family prepares for piñon season, where they will pick the fruit from the trees and gather to roast the piñons. Each year, the family strips the trees for all they are worth, and the men spend the evening drinking heavily, boasting of sexual conquests, and encouraging fights amongst one another. In "Malcriado," the narrator is sent to visit his uncles in Nicaragua, who attempt to toughen him up by taking him to a cock fight and pressuring him to sleep with a woman. While both characters ultimately reject machismo, the narrator of "Piñons" is more easily able do so because of the affirmations of a trusted individual in his life; the narrator of "Malcriado," however, is completely alone even amongst family, and he is only able to take those first steps toward self-realization when he discovers that he may in fact be able to find a community of other people like him who will provide him future support.

Keywords: machismo, masculinity, LGBT fiction, Latino youth, affirmation

The theme of machismo or hyper-masculinity is visible throughout many Latin American literary works. In the case of literature written by gay men, the concept raises a difficult question. Within a set of values based on heterosexual masculine ideals, how is a gay man able to manage? This question is considered in two short stories, "Piñons" by Tomás Vallejos and "Malcriado" by Edgar Gomez. In "Piñons," the narrator reflects on the toxic behavior exhibited by his male family members during piñon season. The season is quite special, because the piñon trees "only bear fruit about every five to seven years" (Vallejos 1991, 51). The narrator was ten during the last season, but he is older now and recognizes that he is different from the rest of his family. Therefore, he is torn about how he will handle the family getting together to pick piñons and roast them the next day. In "Malcriado," the narrator's mother sends him to Nicaragua, where his uncles push him into various hyper-masculine activities, attempting to make "a man" out of him and "find out where my balls were, once and for all" (Gomez 2019, 80-81). While both of these characters ultimately reject machismo, the unnamed narrator of "Piñons" is more easily able do so because of the affirmations of a trusted individual in his life; the narrator of "Malcriado," however, is completely alone even if he is with family, but he is only able to take those first steps toward self-realization when he discovers that he may in fact be able to find a community of other people like him who will provide him with hope of future support.

While no criticism has been published on these two stories, the concept of machismo is certainly not new and has been explored in depth. According to Strong et al., machismo "involves the adroit wielding of power, usually physical in nature, to dominate women and men alike. It is the spirit of the conquistador extending itself into a more modern world" (2009, 20). They go on to note, "The positive dimensions of the macho ethos are self-respect and responsibility to provide well for one's family. The negative aspects include such things as reactionary and destructive behavior" (Strong et al. 2009, 20). Some of these destructive patterns can include excessive drinking, risky and impulsive actions, and physical or emotional abuse towards others. As Strong et al. argue:

> It may be that macho ideals once functioned well within the context of societies whose main concern was mere survival. As these ideals, which tended to flourish in agrarian, rural societies, clashed with the industrial and technological societies of the urban world, a new version of machismo may have evolved. (2009, 20)

This new version is a heightened, extreme variant that is often referred to as pathological machismo. In this version, Strong et al. explain:

> The man created by a machismo culture embodies paradox: he is confident, but suspicious; he is promiscuous, yet demands sexual fidelity from his women; he must emotionally and physically exhaust himself as he endeavors to conquer his world, yet he must not reveal that he is emotionally affected by life's hardships. (2009, 20)

Though the masculine ideals uplifted in machismo are not limited to Latino culture, they are often deeply ingrained in Latino communities. In their study comparing differences in macho viewpoints between American Hispanic and Anglo college students, Strong et al. point out that, "In general, Hispanic subjects tended to be more accepting of the 'male dominance' construct" (27). Overall, "Hispanic males were more rigid in expecting their wives or girlfriends to cook the meals, do the grocery shopping, wear little or no makeup, practice sexual fidelity, and have no checking accounts or credit cards in their own names" (Strong et al. 2009, 28).

Though the macho mindset is not standard for all Latino men, it is nevertheless prevalent. As some studies confirm, this is likely in no small part due to the hardships many Latino individuals and communities face in western civilization. Hendy et al. argue that within the U.S., Latino groups have traditionally experienced "social exclusion, stigmatization, discrimination at work and school, harassment, and physical threats" (110). Upon conducting a survey of over 1,500

Latino men living in the U.S., they conclude that, in men who strongly identify with their Latino heritage, aggressive machismo behaviors correlate with feelings of discrimination and loss of power. In particular, aggressive tendencies tend to increase as individuals experience heightened situations of inequality, such as “discrimination in employment, housing and social justice” (Hendy et al. 2021, 110). Thus, Hendy et al. believe that, for many men, traditional machismo serves as a coping mechanism to “make them feel more powerful” (2021, 110).

As the study from Hendy et al. supports, there are many Latino men who reject the “pattern of aggressive, retaliatory, chauvinistic behaviors” (2021, 110) often present in traditional machismo. Men with higher levels of education and men who report supportive and “strong social networks” (Hendy et al. 2021, 110) are more likely to favor caballerismo, with actions that focus primarily on gentlemanly concepts such as respect, chivalry, and integrity. Even so, machismo ideals have purported multiple aspects of Latino society for many decades, including literature and media. Grismer and Flanagan state that violence is often present in Latin American stories; they elaborate, “It is not only that the dramatic events of these stories are likely to involve combat and bloodshed; it is rather the obvious preference for the gory and the sensational” (1943, 162). Many Latin American works of fiction are fiery, passionate, and bloody affairs, with “innumerable altercations and knifings, drunken quarrels, beatings, murders” (Grismer and Flanagan 1943, 162) and other acts of violence that appeal strongly to the machismo mindset.

Given the deep roots of machismo in Latino culture, it is important to consider its effects on those who do not fit into its rigid structure. According to Hendy et al., gay men are much “less likely to report traditional machismo” (2021, 110). This is not surprising, given that in a machismo society, “being gay is the worst thing a man can do” (Estrada et al. 2023, 359). However, this individual rejection of machismo does not always undo the damage it may cause. In a study with a sample size of “152 self-identified gay, Mexican American men with ages ranging from 18 to 54” (2023, 360), Estrada et al. report that “the development and expression of same-sex desires and behaviors among men in a milieu saturated with traditional masculine ideology can lead men to internalize negative messages about homosexuality, resulting in internalized homophobia” (2023, 364-5). This mentality appears to hinder the production of Latino gay male literature. In an article published in 1999, Viego observes that, in contrast to an “explosion of published Chicana lesbian literary work over the last ten years” (114), there is only a mere “paucity of gay male Chicano work” (114). Viego seeks to “challenge the assumption that the conditions of emergence would be the same for a gay male Chicano, Latino discourse as they would be for a lesbian Chicana, Latina discourse” (1999, 118). Within a culture often steeped in machismo where many gay male writers must grapple with a sense of internalized “homophobia and sexism” (Viego 1999, 127), these writers must carefully navigate the ways in which they address the subject of homosexuality in their works. In some cases, they only broach the idea “by way of oblique, obtuse points of entry” (Viego 1999, 129). As Viego adds, “The refusal to be exhaustively forthcoming with regards to these matters is often times the very enabling condition for survival and defiance” (1999, 130).

It is important to note that, when gay male stories are written, they often face an uphill battle toward acceptance. This applies to stories of any format and in both Hispanic and Anglo culture in America. As Miller and Lewallen clarify, many individuals in the United States hold "little to no experiences with openly LGBTQ people, let alone ongoing relationships with people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Therefore, the media serve as their main exposure to sexual and gender minority people, lifestyles, and experiences" (2015, 360). Upon surveying portrayals of gay men on television with 107 American college-aged individuals, Miller and Lewallen determine that "it is not the content of the portrayal that activated a change, so much as the existence of the portrayal," and they add that "it seems as though the mere presence of a gay male portrayal can impact perceptions of gay men, as well as levels of homonegativity" (2015, 371). That is to say, many participants in the study view gay male characters in a more negative manner than straight male characters, regardless of the gay character's behaviors and mannerisms. The study suggests that this is especially the case for men, even those who align themselves along progressive ideologies, since "any type of televised portrayal elicited a more negative evaluation of homosexuals for Liberal than when the threat of the gay male character was not shown" (Miller and Lewallen, 2015, 372). As Miller and Lewallen are careful to note, "We might take this to indicate that the mere presence of a gay male portrayal is somewhat of a threat for males in our culture" (2015, 372).

That being said, many Latino creators continue to develop gay male stories regardless. Ocasio clarifies that gay Latino men have been publishing for decades, particularly in the field of autobiographies. Ocasio describes these writers, such as Reinaldo Arenas and Gil Cuadros, as "representative of an increasingly vocal gay Latino activism, either political, personal, sexual, or erotic" (1999-2000, 274). These works often dwell on the duality of the writer's identity; as Ocasio explains, "The gay Latino writer…although he is also writing from the ideological perspective of a person of color, deals with sexual issues outside the law, so that he becomes dually a marginalized being" (1999-2000, 275). This duality results in "clashes of these two cultural groups as they define their priority in the individual's psychological make-up" (Ocasio 1999-2000, 275). To address this theme, "gay Latino writers show a preference for an intimate narrative in line with the autobiographical Bildungsroman" (Ocasio 1999-2000, 276). For example, in Cuadros's *City of God*, the stories "display a varying degree of autobiographical content" (Ocasio 1999-2000, 276) and "have a common element: a male Latino character (usually a pre-teenage child or a young man) who as a marginal protagonist finds himself challenging the social limitations placed upon himself by a rigidly structured society" (Ocasio 1999-2000, 276-7). Machismo likely plays a role, as gay characters are "representative of the imposition of male chauvinistic and homophobic values present in daily Latino family life" (Ocasio 1999-2000, 277).

A narrative of this nature is certainly present in both "Piñons" and "Malcriado." Both stories feature a young unnamed narrator who is in the process of recognizing himself as a gay Latino male. The narrator of "Piñons" is almost seventeen years old. Though he is quite intelligent and performs "great in school" (Vallejos 1991, 51), he is ridiculed relentlessly for his effeminate mannerisms. He states early in the story that his "brother Eddie made fun of the way I walk. I was twelve then. I can still see all the kids laughing as he sashayed down the sidewalk, holding his arms tight against his sides, flipping his hands back and forth and wiggling his butt side to side" (Vallejos 1991, 51). His qualities clash with his society's norms, and he feels insecure as a result, stating, "I feel as if everyone is watching me. More and more, I'd rather be alone than have all those people looking at me with that terrible look in their eyes, like I'm beneath contempt" (Vallejos 1991, 51). Though the narrator of "Malcriado" is given no name in the story, there are strong hints of the plot being at least partially autobiographical in nature. After all, Gomez's memoir *High-Risk Homosexual*, published in 2022, "begins with a 13-year-old Gomez and his mother visiting her brothers in Nicaragua, where cockfighting and sex with a woman are supposed to turn Gomez into a man and stop him from being a 'malcriado'" (Burnette 2022). In "Malcriado," the narrator is twelve years old, and he is quite flashy and creative. He likes dancing and has ambitions of fame. He also enjoys crafting various female personas; for example, he explains that he is "working on a character named Grace Hodge. She collected Fabergé eggs and chain-smoked toilet paper. She was forgetting how to do a split" (Gomez 2019, 80). These talents are not appreciated by the patriarchs and matriarch of his family, who perceive them as a form of misbehaving. Both narrators clash with the expectations of their traditional machismo families, and both are pushed to change something about themselves.

As these characters are pressured into developing machismo, they encounter similar themes that disturb them. In "Piñons," the narrator expresses distaste for his father's physically aggressive tendencies. During piñon season, when the family comes together each evening to "roast the piñons" (Vallejos 1991, 52) they picked earlier in the day, the narrator's father and his friends often engage in blatant acts of machismo, or as the narrator bluntly states, "They start getting drunk and acting like a bunch of pigs" (Vallejos 1991, 52). This display often results in competitions to determine who has the most brute strength, typically in the form of "arm wrestling contests" (Vallejos 1991, 52). Once they have exhausted the idea of identifying the toughest man amongst themselves, the men move on to pitting the boys of the younger generation amongst each other. At this point, the competition of strength escalates into one of a more violent nature. No longer is a simple arm-wrestling competition sufficient; as the narrator explains, "They even got my brother Eddie and my cousin Abe into a boxing match. And to top it all off, they made bets on who would win, as if Eddie and Abe were dogs or fighting cocks" (Vallejos 1991, 52). Though the narrator is disgusted by the violence and refuses to partake in it, Eddie and Abe are unbothered and "[don't] mind" (Vallejos 1991, 52) being forced to fight one another. For them, these violent displays of machismo are typical and acceptable.

Encouraging violent flights is also a common part of life for the narrator's family in "Malcriado." Tio Andrés owns a highly popular cockfighting ring in town, and he brings the narrator one weekend while attempting to "make me a man" (Gomez 2019, 80). As the fights begin, the narrator is struck by the temperament of the roosters and the circumstances that led to their aggressive qualities. He muses, "Roosters trained as fighting cocks are isolated at birth, cut off from their flocks in tin-wire cages where they are bred to be combative" (Gomez 2019, 82). This breeding involves "a trifecta of insufficient feeding, lack of socialization with other chickens, and oftentimes drugs and hormones" (Gomez 2019, 82), and it eventually leads to "a strain of toxically masculine, hyper-territorial cocks that are easily triggered by the sight of females" (Gomez 2019, 82). Here, the narrator receives a stark realization about the machismo that his family upholds. Such a heightened tendency toward aggressiveness is not natural; rather, it must be cultivated under specific circumstances. Though the narrator does not quite appear ready to fully connect this idea to himself and his own family, these ruminations on the roosters' upbringing plant an early seed in his mind that extreme inclinations toward violence are not necessarily normal.

Though the narrator is sympathetic to the roosters and bait hens, the crowd cares very little for their pain. Instead, they are simply captivated by the bloodiness of the fights and their own financial bets. The narrator explains, "As the night dragged along, the gallera grew manic, the air filling with a wild, frenzied energy. The winners, electrified by their new money. The losers, furious to make it back" (Gomez 2019, 87). As the roosters stab "their steel blades at each other's throats" (Gomez 2019, 84) and as the crowd taunts the birds, their handlers, and each other, the narrator is uncomfortable and tries to turn his focus elsewhere. As he fixates on a particularly attractive handler "wip[ing] his bare chest with a dirty rag" (Gomez 2019, 85), he becomes aroused and faces a personal crisis. He explains:

> I couldn't look at the fight, where Marrón was tipped over and draining out as Rojito hacked on with his talons, couldn't trust myself not to look at *him*. I didn't know where to stare, so I shut my eyes. In the dark, I could feel Tio Andrés watching me, appraising me like one of his prized animals. (Gomez 2019, 85)

Unable to acknowledge his gayness but also unable to engage with the gruesome display in front of him, the narrator is stuck.

The fact that the families in both stories are prone to placing bets is an intriguing one to explore as it relates to machismo. In his exploration of poker as a sport, Schuck notes that masculinity and sport have long been connected in modern culture. Sports that are based in strategy, such as poker, rather than brute strength may be appealing to some men for the following reasons:

> [P]oker provides the opportunity for some individuals who might otherwise be marginalized along lines of masculine identity to participate in legitimized masculine identities that are based in some of the same characteristics as other forms of masculinity, including one's ability to endure physical challenge, one's effectiveness as a competitor, and one's ability to apply strategy. (Schuck 2010, 1620)

In a study on gender differences within gambling practices, Díaz et al. also point out that men tend to gamble far more than women. Primarily, they argue that this is because "men tend to be more sensation-seeking and risk-takers than women" (Díaz et al. 2023, 1801), and they are also "more susceptible to over-confidence" (Díaz et al. 2023, 1808). As it appears, the concept of gambling meshes well with the idea of machismo because it is a bold, high-stakes activity. Should the man be successful in his bet, his bravado and skillful strategic thinking are on full display. Through their betting practices, the family members in "Piñons" and "Malcriado" are able to assert their machismo in multiple ways. They demonstrate engagement in the violent sport before them, and they show their bravado in willing to take risks with their money. If they bet on the winner, they are able to highlight their tactical thinking and align themselves with the winner—in this case, the toughest boy or the strongest and most ruthless rooster.

While the male aggression in both families is evident in their enjoyment of blood sport, it also manifests in other ways. Essentially, both families have a habit of aggressive plundering and domination. In "Piñons," the narrator explains that, during piñon season, his family goes out to the trees and aims to strip them of every last fruit possible. As he describes:

> The whole family went and we spread tarps under the trees. Then we shook the branches till the piñons fell from the cones. And the little kids like me would hang from the branches and swing, sometimes until they snapped. The grownups and my brothers and sisters shook the trees so hard it's a wonder they didn't destroy them all. (Vallejos 1991, 51-52)

Here, there is no concern for the well-being of the trees, no consideration that the damage could kill the tree and thus eliminate the potential for piñons in the future, and no care for other families who may also wish to have some piñons. The family simply focuses on their one selfish goal, that of seizing everything that the trees have to offer as their own. Much like Strong et al. point out, this is a machismo form of dominance. The trees have something the family wants, and in their minds, it is theirs for the taking.

Additionally, the narrator of "Piñons" confesses that, when male members of his family fail to get what they want, they often react with anger. When the patriarchs encourage the boys to fight each other, the narrator refuses to partake. He states, "Because I wouldn't do it, they started calling me names. And my Dad was just as bad as all the rest" (Vallejos 1991, 52-53). The men are used to successful acts of domination and having others go along with their violent habits, and when the narrator challenges that, they lash out with anger. Indeed, the reaction that the narrator's father has to his son's mannerisms and entire personality is one of angry dominance. The narrator says that his father calls him "Delicado" (Vallejos 1991, 51), claims that he is "too sensitive" (Vallejos 1991, 51), and describes him as "a weakling" (Vallejos 1991, 53). The narrator serves as a point of flaw for the father. He is a son who fails to "start acting like a man" (Vallejos 1991, 52) and uphold his idea of masculinity, and he rejects his father's efforts to correct his behavior. As a result, the father angrily mocks and belittles him.

The theme of selfishly taking what one wants is also present in "Malcriado." At the beginning of each cockfight, two hens are placed in the arena to rile up the roosters. In the first fight, the roosters began "thrusting the blades attached to their spurs into the hens' necks" (Gomez 2019, 82) before attacking each other. At this point, the hens are removed and the narrator states:

> I watched a handler examine the more damaged of the two. After a brief once-over, he pressed her beak to his mouth and sucked out the blood lodged in her throat. He spat the red stuff into the clay dirt, then threw her back into a cage. (Gomez 2019, 83)

Neither the handler nor the crowd is worried about the hen's pain or whether she will die in her cage, for she has served her purpose. The men desire a cockfight, so they exploit the hen to start the fight. Once the fight begins, they have no qualms about discarding her.

The narrator's other uncle, Tio Iván, engages in his own form of exploitation when he takes his nephew to a bar the weekend following the cockfight. Here, they encounter Tio Andrés's former housekeeper, a young woman of roughly seventeen years who has "been fired for some reason no one wanted to tell" (Gomez 2019, 86). Tio Iván insists that the narrator try to woo her, claiming, "You can't tell me you don't want a piece of that" (Gomez 2019, 83). After the narrator and the woman dance, he quickly learns that Tio Iván has actually paid her to go home and sleep with him. The narrator observes, "This wasn't just about a boy losing his virginity, which is what I figured Tio Iván may have told her when he handed her the money. I was meant to lose something else entirely" (Gomez 2019, 86). Essentially, Tio Iván uses the former housekeeper to his advantage in his attempt to correct his nephew's sexuality. Though it is unclear exactly why she has been fired, one thing remains certain. Tio Iván has no qualms about exploiting her lack of income to pressure her into having paid sex with his nephew. Indeed, the text leaves open the possibility that the woman may have been fired to leave her financially vulnerable for this very purpose. By setting up this encounter, one that the narrator claims "neither of us wanted" (Gomez 2019, 87), Tio Iván pursues what he wants without regard for others.

As the patriarchs in both stories relentlessly dominate others in pursuit of their own aggressive desires, it is interesting to note that they face little to no backlash from the women in their lives. In "Piñons," the women in the family attack the trees as savagely as the men. When the narrator's father mocks him for his effeminate mannerisms, his mother "doesn't say anything. She probably prays to God every night that it's only a phase I'm going through" (Vallejos 1991, 51). In "Malcriado," the narrator's mother chastises him for wearing her fake nails, insisting, "It's not funny. And tus tios won't think so either" (Gomez 2019, 80). She enrolls him in karate classes to "toughen me up" (Gomez 2019, 79), but she drops him from the classes upon discovering him using his new skills to dance in a feminine manner. In moments of vulnerability, however, the narrator receives glimpses of affirmation from his mother:

> I thought of Mom's locked bedroom door. How she would emerge puffy-eyed after her fights with my stepdad and crawl into bed with me, ruffling my hair and telling me I was lucky I'd gotten her looks, that I should keep trying, because I was right, I was going to be famous. The next day, we'd act like nothing had happened. (Gomez 2019, 81)

Despite her affirmations in these brief moments, the immediate denial afterward prevents her from being a significant source of support in the narrator's life. In a toxic machismo culture, which as Strong et al. argue is "the antithesis of feminism" (2009, 20), there is little room for women to challenge the viewpoint of a man. Thus, these women are complicit in the dominant masculinity of their male family members.

With the men in their lives pushing them toward a harmful form of heterosexual machismo, and with the women in their lives facilitating this push, life naturally feels quite isolating for the narrators of "Piñons" and "Malcriado." Caught in a liminal position similar to the one Ocasio describes, these two narrators cannot help but identify with objects and individuals who appear to be helplessly trapped or fighting something that is pulling them against their will. In "Malcriado," the narrator has an older brother named Diego. Though the reader receives very little information about him, the narrator does share that Diego assists him with filming demo dance reels. When the narrator of "Malcriado" is sent to visit his uncles in Nicaragua, his mother makes it clear that "Diego couldn't come" (Gomez 2019, 80) with him. Perhaps she is concerned that Diego will defend and support the narrator, or perhaps she fears the narrator will somehow corrupt Diego with his homosexual tendencies. In either situation, the narrator is left alone with no potential ally. When Tio Iván hires Tio Andrés's former housekeeper to take the narrator's virginity, the narrator empathizes with her struggle, noting that she is "just doing what she had to do" (Gomez 2019, 86). He elaborates:

> This wasn't what she'd signed up for. How to get out of here? She would have to knock on the door, ask him to let us out. And would she still get paid if she didn't sleep with me? She didn't have a job. Did she even have enough cash for the cab ride home? No, she couldn't change her mind. She was trapped. (Gomez 2019, 87)

Like the narrator, this young woman is cut off from sources of support and pushed toward something uncomfortable and unnatural to her. They avoid outright confronting Tio Iván because they are helpless in their situation, much like the bait hens in the cockfight. As the narrator notes:

> How do you get the hens to take it? They're paralyzed, their wings clipped and feet tied. In their powerlessness, the hens used to provoke the night's fighters didn't even bother to cry out. I was learning to keep quiet too. (Gomez 2019, 82)

Isolated from support and forced into an environment where he feels he does not belong, all he can do is helplessly comply.

In a similar fashion, the narrator of "Piñons" is very blunt regarding the sense of belonging he lacks. As he reflects upon the lessons he received in grade school from nuns, who argued that God's universe is "like a giant patchwork quilt" (Vallejos 1991, 51) where "everything, every little stitch, has its place" (Vallejos 1991, 51), he ultimately concludes, "Sure. So they said. But they forgot to mention anything about people like me. I don't seem to belong in anybody's patchwork quilt" (Vallejos 1991, 51). He deeply values a sense of community. Despite the poor treatment he receives from them, he is quick to point out that he loves his family, and he looks forward to piñon season because of "the way the families get together in the evening to roast the piñons. I love the way the house fills with friends and relatives, all the kids playing and running around in the backyard" (Vallejos 1991, 52). However, because "my own family treats me like a misfit" (Vallejos 1991, 51) and because "my Dad and his compadres end up spoiling" (Vallejos 1991, 52) the evening gatherings with their toxic bravado, the narrator misses out on the community he cherishes so greatly.

Because of this, he seeks solace elsewhere, observing the quiet parts of nature that are often overlooked. He says, "I like to walk way out into the canyons and just watch. And listen" (Vallejos 1991, 53). In the quiet of the canyons, the narrator is free from the pressure of hearing "Mama, mumbling on and on, rosary after rosary. And Dad, telling me how God made men to be this way and women to be that way" (Vallejos 1991, 53). One thing the narrator finds particularly special about his trips to the canyons is the chance to be "among the piñons when there is no one else around" (Vallejos 1991, 53). Though they are not at all grand trees and stand "squatty and gnarled, kind of like old hunchbacks" (Vallejos 1991, 53), the narrator is still taken by them. As he states, "There's something brave about them. I don't know if I can explain it. It's not being brave the way my Dad tells me to be....No. it's something deeper than that. Something those pendejos wouldn't understand" (Vallejos 1991, 53). Ultimately, the narrator sees some of his own struggle within the trees. He observes that there is "something lonely about those trees, something lonely and tense" (Vallejos 1991, 53). When autumn arrives and the canyons dry up, he feels this connection even more so:

> I stand on the edge of the canyon and listen to my echo bouncing off the walls repeating itself until it fades away. The trees there are windswept, as if they've been beaten low through more lifetimes than you can imagine. Some are huddled and lopsided. Others have their branches splayed. They are frozen in an awkward position, like an animal fighting for its life; locked forever in a struggle against some brute force. (Vallejos 1991, 53)

The narrator sees these trees, alone, picked apart—the way families such as his own strip these trees for all they are worth during piñon season is clearly not lost on him—and forced into unnatural positions by harsh elements, and he cannot help but feel a kinship. Like the trees, the narrator feels isolated, with a community that shakes him down for what they want him to be rather than recognizing his true qualities and quiet strength.

There is, nevertheless, one supportive figure in the narrator's life that the narrator of "Malcriado" lacks. Don Mateo, an "old man who lives a couple of blocks away from us, in the projects" (Vallejos 1991, 52), imparts his knowledge on piñons to the narrator. As the old man teaches him about the trees:

> They're hermits. Kind of like those cloistered monks the nuns tell us about in school. Kind of strange.

> And very shy. Their seeds are like that, too. You don't barge in on them. You coax them from their little cells. Quietly. And gently. (Vallejos 1991, 52)

The trees have dignity singular to them, being the "soul of the people who live here on these mountain slopes. They are rough and enduring, but sweet and delicate at the same time" (Vallejos 1991, 52). Don Mateo's description strikes a chord with the narrator. His use of the word "delicate" is quite telling; while the father uses the word to disparage the narrator, don Mateo finds this trait to be a positive one in the piñons. In this way, don Mateo enlightens the narrator with the fact that his inherent qualities have worth, even if his family is blind to that. Don Mateo reminds the narrator that the piñons are valuable because "they are rare. Always remember, son, those things that are most unusual in this world are miracles. They are special gifts to us. We shouldn't abuse them" (Vallejos 1991, 52). He tells the narrator this "with a look of reverence I will never forget" (Vallejos 1991, 52), which suggests that he is aware the message is about more than trees.

Here, don Mateo affirms that the narrator is not just valid, but special, and he goes on to provide his own subtle thoughts toward the concept of machismo:

> That's why don Mateo says you should shake the branches gently. That way, you don't get any green piñons. Just the ripe ones that taste the best. Then you move on to the next tree, Leave the rest to ripen, he says, and come back another day. Or leave them for someone else. It makes more sense than tearing up the canyon the way my people do. (Vallejos 1991, 52)

Overall, don Mateo encourages a gentle form of nurturing over domination. He affirms the concept of recognizing the needs and strengths of the trees and supporting those so that they will be fruitful, rather than violently plundering them. Subtly, his words also condemn the family's attempts to belittle the narrator and demand traditional masculinity from him rather than uplifting that which makes him special and allowing him to thrive in the world. Because of don Mateo's influence, the narrator has the strength to reject his family's machismo. He declares that, though he looks forward to roasting piñons with his family, he will be "leaving before they start getting drunk" (Vallejos 1991, 52) and ruining the gathering for him. Though he begins the story by expressing doubt that there is a place for him on the patchwork quilt of life, by the end—once he has reflected on his situation and don Mateo's teachings—he muses, "Maybe those nuns were right after all. Just because people don't appreciate something doesn't mean it has no place in the world" (Vallejos 1991, 53). Emboldened with the man's affirmation, the narrator resolves to "pick piñons the way don Mateo told me to. Nice and gentle. The only way I know" (Vallejos 1991, 53).

With no figure like don Mateo in his life, the narrator of "Malcriado" lacks the self-conviction to be so defiant. He spends most of the story unable to acknowledge his gayness even internally, insisting that "if we didn't say it, it wasn't true" (Gomez 2019, 81). He believes in a possible truth to the concept that his gayness might be "just an awkward phase I was going through" (Gomez 2019, 82) and speculates, "Maybe I'd grow out of it, like a perm" (Gomez 2019, 82). While dancing with Tio Andrés's former housekeeper, he is hopeful that his uncles' attempts at correcting his sexuality are working. As he states, "for a moment the thought crossed my mind: I could really love her. This was it. I was growing out of it" (Gomez 2019, 84). Though he knows he is different from his family, the narrator nevertheless lives in a state of constant denial regarding the true nature of his sexuality. His uncles' methods for correcting him are upsetting and uncomfortable, but he still attempts to go along with them, because "As much as my family wanted me to be straight, I wanted it too. More, even. I would have pried off my fingernails to make myself like everyone else" (Gomez 2019, 87-88).

When Tio Andrés encourages him to place a bet on one of the roosters in the cockfight, he eagerly does so with a "desperate" (Gomez 2019, 88) tone to his voice, even though he is disturbed by his own "complicity" (Gomez 2019, 87). These thoughts and actions are the product of self-preservation from someone truly lacking in support. He likens himself to a lizard escaping after having its tail cut off, claiming "I could lose a part of me if it would save the rest" (Gomez 2019, 85). He becomes distressed while watching a defeated rooster fight to his death in a match, wishing the rooster would "just give up" (Gomez 2019, 85). He adds, "I tried to compel him with my thoughts. Save yourself, you idiot! If he stopped trying to fight back, the referee would call the match. He could quit. He could choose to live" (Gomez 2019, 85). The narrator clings to the idea that, much like a lizard who "can regenerate a lost appendage within sixty days" (Gomez 2019, 85), he can cut out his gayness and emerge as a straight man. If he can go along with his family and correct his sexuality—which is so shameful that he is afraid to even fully admit it to himself—then everything will be okay. By allowing his uncles to "make me a man" (Gomez 2019, 80), he hopes to move on with safety, inclusion, and acceptance.

Ultimately, the narrator's endeavors to gain machismo for his family's sake are unsuccessful. Nobody takes his bet at the cockfight seriously, and he and the housekeeper choose to sit quietly in a room together for however long they assume it takes "for a boy to become a man" (Gomez 2019, 87) rather than truly having sex. It is only while standing out on his family's balcony after both attempts at machismo have failed that he is able to speak the truth about himself. He confesses: "I leaned over the railing and regarded the neighborhood knowingly. It was important that I look knowing, because something big had happened, and the occasion called for me to know something big, and I did. I was...gay" (Gomez 2019, 89). Though he is finally able to be honest, he is not happy about it, still claiming that he "wanted not to know" (Gomez 2019, 89). His sense of safety is compromised, for if his uncles are willing to pressure him into heterosexual sex at only twelve years old "when they merely suspected me, I didn't want to know what the confirmation might bring" (Gomez 2019, 89). Any sense of security and potential belonging he once clung to has disappeared, and he is devastated about this realization.

His despair is interrupted by a group of individuals who appear to be either transgender women or drag queens, for the narrator describes them as follows:

> Tall, dark, and handsome. One wore a leopard print top and mini-skirt. Another a strapless black dress with a butterfly brooch. They were women, I thought, or maybe not. Maybe, now, I'd think of them as transgender. Back then, when I was still getting used to myself, they were just girly-boys. (Gomez 2019, 89)

Standing on the communal porch, the women playfully call up to him and ask to share the joint he is smoking. As he tosses the joint to them, he marvels at the fact that, despite their marginalization and the fact that they must work as prostitutes for a living, these individuals nevertheless "made it look fun" (Gomez 2019, 90). He observes, "These girls had found each other. In this country where until 2008 it was illegal to be gay, where same-sex marriage and the right to perform gender affirming surgeries still is—they found a place among themselves" (Gomez 2019, 90). With just a few playful words, the women are able to inadvertently give this lonely and distressed boy a shred of optimism about his future. He decides to keep his sexuality a secret from his family for now, not out of shame, but because "I wanted to know there was a place for me first" (Gomez 2019, 90). Though he does not yet have a fully affirming individual in his life, he has his first glimmer of hope that he may still be able to find belonging and community somewhere as a gay Latino male.

Though both narrators ultimately appear to be on the path toward rejecting the machismo of their families, their processes are different. The narrator of "Piñons" already has established support through don Mateo, so he is more easily able to firmly declare a rejection of his family's values. Conversely, the narrator in "Malcriado" lacks such support, and by the end is only just exploring the possibility that he may find someone to affirm him. Though they are at different stages of the journey, both are working toward upholding values comfortable to them and living their lives authentically, in "the only way I know" (Vallejos 1991, 53).

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Documenting War Crimes Onstage in Kyo Choi's *The Apology*

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Abstract:
This essay discusses Kyo Choi's play *The Apology*, which was first produced in London in 2022, as an example of activist theatre, meant not only to educate British audiences about the ongoing controversies over the so-called "comfort women" issue, involving Japanese military sexual slavery during World War II, but to move viewers to action. Choi's drama does so through a form of emotional documentation, which supplements and amplifies actual documents related to this war crime.

Keywords: "comfort women", military sexual slavery, World War II, human rights

Literature is always linked to the world beyond the text, whether for ill or for good. At its best, it can promote social justice, awareness, and empathy. Often, it intersects, too, with academic disciplines such as legal studies, gender studies, historical studies, and studies in global politics; then it becomes a pedagogical asset, giving research immediacy and enabling it to assume concrete and accessible form.[1] Theatre in particular can be a valuable educational force. It works with and for diverse communities, while bringing alive individuals and individual situations, both past and present; it invites audiences to learn and then to respond actively in order to create positive change, not merely to watch passively.

Within the framework of human rights activism, among the most important tools are documents and archives, as these help to establish and preserve records of injustice and abuse. *The Apology*, by the South Korean-born British playwright, Kyo Choi, which was first produced in London in 2022, is a notable example of a drama about the problem of documentation. It focuses on what happened when the known paper archives were inadequate to document a gendered war crime committed throughout World War II, and dramatizes how, in the early 1990s, a variety of Asian women—including survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery, their feminist supporters, and human rights workers—labored, fought, and also suffered to bring the truth to light. Choi's play not only recreates that process of recovering a hidden history, but also serves for the audience as a form of what we might call *emotional documentation*. It stages before their eyes the crimes of the past, along with the pain of those who felt compelled to come forward to testify to those crimes and, in doing so, to relive these horrors. And it also puts what occurred on a mass scale into an individual and very personal framework, centered on a small number of protagonists, whose fates the spectators are made to care about.

One of the questions this play raises is what it means, in the first place, to document a war crime—especially one that still is as little known to Western audiences, whether in Britain or throughout Europe and the United States, as the so-called "comfort system." This was an organized system created and overseen by the Japanese government, both before the official start of the Second World War and then throughout the first half of the 1940s, until Japan's defeat, and supposedly maintained for the benefit of the morale of the Imperial Japanese Army.[2]

It involved the trafficking of thousands of underage girls, along with women, across the Pacific, to military brothels in a variety of countries occupied by Japan—including China, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Many of the underage girls and women exploited by this system came from those countries, too, but the largest numbers were Korean, as Japan had invaded Korea in 1910 and continued to control its population and government. The girls and women were "recruited" by a variety of means, from coercion, to trickery, to threats, to the use of violence and force. Once confined to these military brothels, they were subject to daily rapes by Japanese soldiers and officers, as often as thirty to forty times a day. They were imprisoned there for months and, in some cases, for years. If they tried to resist or escape, they were beaten, tortured, or murdered, as examples to others. It is estimated that there were upwards of 200,000 victims of this system, but large numbers of them died from abuse, sickness, and also from being killed by their captors at the end of the War, to erase this living evidence of illegality and inhumanity.[3]

These underage girls—some as young as twelve, but most between fourteen and eighteen, with the majority sixteen or seventeen years of age—and the older women, too, were euphemistically called "comfort women." But the aging survivors who first came forward in the early 1990s to testify to the atrocities committed by the Imperial Japanese Army and overseen by the Japanese government throughout Asia in World War II have rejected that term. They and their feminist and human rights supporters refer to them instead as "military sex slaves." This is a designation to which successive Japanese governments have strenuously objected, doing so to this very day, insisting that no such enslavement was involved.

Rightwing Japanese nationalists, in particular, continue to assert—entirely without documentation—that these underage girls and women were merely sex workers, who volunteered and were well paid for their services. Recently, a new group of denialists have appeared, claiming that these underage girls and women must have signed legal contracts, agreeing to work as prostitutes, even though they have been unable to produce any evidence that such contracts ever existed. The denialists have no answer, moreover, as to how underage girls would have been bound by contracts, had those existed, nor how any contract would have made legal the assaults and beatings to which girls and women were subjected, while confined and prevented from leaving their imprisonment in these rape camps. But again, there are no documents whatsoever to prove that this situation was voluntary.[4]

Thus, the whole question of documentation itself is rightly the centerpiece of Kyo Choi's 2022 play, *The Apology*, as this has been and remains a fraught issue. So much has had to rest on the testimony of the survivors as to *how* they were made part of this so-called "comfort system," and of what happened to them while they were then appallingly victimized and exploited—with their individual trauma mirroring, of course, what was done to the many thousands who did not survive. As one of the protagonists of Choi's play—the fictional "Priyanka Silva," a Sri Lankan-born human rights worker assigned by the United Nations in 1991 to begin investigating reports of what occurred fifty years earlier and had been silenced ever since—says to a fictional American diplomat, regarding this matter of the survivors' testimony: "Isn't it bad enough that their lives are on hold, at the mercy of their former captors to validate their narrative. It's like they're still *enslaved* by the past" (Choi 2022, 67; italics in original).

This is not to suggest, however, that the archives are empty, and that there is no material evidence of the so-called "comfort system" itself. But certainly, there is nothing equal to the massive documentation of the European Holocaust. As everyone knows, there are extensive film and photographic records from the liberation of the Nazi extermination camps—contemporary images of the piled-up corpses of Jews and other targeted groups, as well as of the skeletal bodies of those still alive, starved and abused. As always, seeing is an important component of believing, and what remains to be seen of Japanese military sexual slavery is scarce in comparison and conveys little of its horror.

There is, for instance, a widely circulated photograph, now the property of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, that was taken by the Allied forces in 1944. It shows four young survivors, one of them pregnant. (Japanese soldiers were, technically, required to wear condoms in these military brothels. But survivors have said that there was no enforcement. If they protested the absence of condoms, often the individual soldiers would hit and kick them into submission.) Kyo Choi incorporates this photograph into her play, making the fictional character of "Bok-Hae," who is sixteen when forced by trickery into military sexual slavery, the pregnant girl in the image. This, of course, is precisely what historical fiction—and, moreover, its theatrical equivalent—can do so well: it turns large-scale events involving now-anonymous or forgotten figures into representations of flesh-and-blood characters, with backstories and with fates that unfold in front of an audience, engaging spectators emotionally and, in this case, politically, too.

Throughout *The Apology*, Choi's characters—especially the onstage recorder of testimony and the voice of conscience, Priyanka Silva—make clear why such figures are both unidentified and have been, by Western nations in particular, largely ignored, whether in 1944, or in the early 1990s, or even today. As Priyanka Silva puts it, "Nothing complicated about good ol' fashioned sexism and racism" (Choi 2022, 66). Choi's drama is a moral and dramatic exercise in combating both of these negative forces.

But *The Apology* is by no means the first play to try to bring attention to these past and present concerns, focusing on Japan's military sex slaves. Perhaps the most commercially successful, at least in the U.S., has been *Comfort Women: A New Musical*, which was staged in New York City at an Off-Broadway location in 2015, then revived in 2018, and produced again in Los Angeles in 2019. The musical, written by Dimo Hyun Jun Kim with several collaborators, is set in Indonesia in 1941, where Korean girls and women are imprisoned as military sex slaves. It largely represents sexual violence in stylized and non-graphic form, especially through dance. And it has, in effect, a positive conclusion, as it shows a few of the victims escaping their captivity and finding a way to return to Korea—an imaginary ending designed, in effect, as a gift to those victimized, by offering them a degree of agency onstage that was never possible in actuality.

Kyo Choi's *The Apology* is very different in tone, structure, and purpose. At one point, however, there is singing in this play, too. The character of "Bok-Hae," in her 1944 incarnation, is present onstage as a "ghostly" figure at the same time as her elderly self in 1991—a woman who has hidden her identity and taken the name of "Sun-Hee" (Choi 2022, 18). Bok-Hae begins singing a Korean folksong, titled "Doraji," about a bellflower. When her voice "falters," as the stage directions tell us, Sun Hee "takes over… louder and louder, clenching her fists. Tears flow down her cheeks" (Choi, 2022, 18). It is a moment in which two aspects of a fractured and damaged self are seen to come together, in shared and unresolved grief and pain. Simultaneously, these emotions are also generated in the audience in a way that no mere reading of a document or published testimony can fully convey.

Choi's play was produced in London at an Off-West-End venue, the Arcola Theatre, which bills itself as a space dedicated not merely to entertainment, but to community engagement.[6] Although the author of *The Apology* was one individual woman playwright, Kyo Choi, its development and production were very much a community-supported effort, involving Arts Council England, the British Korean Society, and North End Theatre, which is a venue committed specifically to advancing works by British Asian creators. In interviews, Choi has spoken about her dependence on research, preceding the writing of the play—of reading the many volumes of survivors' testimony; of looking closely at the January 1996 report by Radhika Coomaraswamy, who was Special Rapporteur for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which outlined Japan's legal responsibility for the war crime of military sexual slavery across Asia; and also of consulting documents—as some documents do indeed exist—attesting to the Japanese government's meticulous organization and oversight of the so-called "comfort system."[7]

One of these documents was made public by a former American Intelligence officer, Grant Goodman, who had discovered it immediately after the liberation of the Philippines, but had kept it in his personal files for fifty years, releasing it only after news broke in the early 1990s, with the public testimony of a Korean survivor, Kim Hak-Sun, about the responsibility of Japanese officials for her wartime suffering. Goodman later published his account of how he came to have this document in his possession, as well as why he decided to disclose this to a Japanese journalist. He called this account "My Own *Gaiatsu*: A Document from 1945 Provides Proof," using the Japanese word *gaiatsu* to refer to "foreign pressure" put on the Japanese government to accept legal responsibility and apologize to the survivors of the so-called "comfort system" (Goodman 2001, 142).

This document, however, merely proved that there was official Japanese governmental involvement in the oversight and the management of what were, in effect, rape camps. It did not touch upon the process by which underage girls and women were recruited, whether forcibly or through deception, for these sites of imprisonment, nor could it begin to communicate the stories of violence inflicted on the victims or the lifelong trauma that survivors experienced. For that, the testimony of the aged women themselves has been necessary. To bring this testimony before a wider public, as well as to make it relevant to present-day audiences, who are now more familiar with the concept of rape as a war crime and as a weapon of war than most people were before the 1990s, theatre has stepped forward and taken up this duty. That is precisely what Kyo Choi's *The Apology* did in 2022, garnering a great deal of positive critical attention and response from reviewers for the *Guardian*, the *Evening Standard*, and other British papers, both in print and online.

Choi's title, *The Apology*, employing the singular form of this noun, suggests that only one such act of admission of guilt and attempt at reparations is at stake. In fact, there are multiple instances of apology, of inadequate apology, and of non-apology all addressed in the course of the drama, some of them referring to actual historical events. The most famous of these is referenced throughout—the one known as the Kono Statement, which was issued by Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary in August 1993, admitting that the Japanese government had indeed overseen the "comfort system," but never clearly acknowledging that it had used force to recruit victims and accepting no legal responsibility for what happened to the girls and women in the so-called "comfort stations." Because of this, the ongoing absence of justice and the presence of unhealed psychic wounds haunts Bok-Hae/ Sun-Hee, the fictional character in Choi's play who is based on the real-life Kim Hak-Sun, the Korean survivor who first gave testimony in 1991. For Choi's fictional protagonist, there is no coming to terms with the wreckage of her life—the blighting of her young self, the ruin of her later years—without this justice and closure.

So damaged and haunted has the protagonist of Choi's play been that, in 1955— while living in Seoul with the Korean man who married her and behaved as though he were the father of the child she was carrying when liberated in 1944—she had run away, abandoning both her husband and her daughter, as well as changing her name. Her trauma, moreover, becomes intergenerational trauma. The audience meets that abandoned daughter, Yuna, at different stages of her life, until she learns in after years about her mother's hidden history.

But the crux of Choi's play is its focus not merely on this victim or on her irreparably damaged daughter; it is on the dramatization of multiple scenes representing Priyanka Silva's determined attempts to uncover the truth of what was done to the survivors and also to those who did not survive. She does so in order to be able to document what had been largely undocumented—and thus to trigger both a condemnatory statement by the United Nations and an official call for Japan to admit that it was both morally and legally responsible, then to apologize to and compensate the survivors, as well as to make this past episode an acknowledged part of its history, going forward. Audiences watch her interviewing Sun-Hee at different times in the early 1990s and increasingly losing her initial reserve and attempts at objectivity. She becomes instead an ally in a fight for justice, while bringing along the audience in this process. And that is the crucial moment—when the simultaneous learning curves of this sympathetic character and of the audience come together, resulting in a new political awareness both onstage and off.

There are complications and plot twists along the way, regarding Bok-Hae/Sun-Hee's marriage, as well as the tense and ambiguous relationship between Priyanka Silva and a fictional male US diplomat, who plays a double game. What is most important to emphasize, however, are two critical authorial decisions on Kyo Choi's part. One is to give the aged Sun-Hee the status not only of an activist, but of an artist, thus multiplying her agency and prominence. In fact, several of the actual Korean survivors who spoke out in the 1990s and became residents of the "House of Sharing" —as the group home created in 1992 and maintained for them in Seoul, allowing them to live together, is called—did produce works of art, usually autobiographical, depicting in visual terms what they either witnessed being done to others or what they endured themselves, under military sexual slavery.

Here, Choi makes her fictional character, Bok-Hae/Sun-Hee, a sculptor. In this play, she is, moreover, the creator of what has become the globally recognized symbol of the so-called "comfort women" and of their ongoing crusade for a legal resolution to this still unresolved historical matter. Sun-Hee, who is shown onstage sitting in a chair, a frozen figure, waiting, produces a representation in clay of Bok-Hae, her young self. The audience is meant to understand that she is thus the model for an actual, not fictional, work of public protest art—for what is usually known as "The Statue of Peace." This is a depiction of a young barefoot schoolgirl—a victim, rendered in bronze, who is seated next to an empty chair, in memory of those like her who did not survive.

The creation and public use of this statue was the idea of the South Korean organization that has, from the 1990s on, supported survivors and aided them in their quest for justice, the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. This bronze sculpture was first mounted outdoors, opposite the Japanese embassy in Seoul, in 2011, and its presence there occasioned fierce objections by the Japanese government. Since then, copies of it have been installed, controversially, in cities around the world. It was actually designed by a Korean couple, Kim Seo-kyung and Kim Eun-sung. But Kyo Choi takes dramatic license—literally—to make this an image both of and by her play's survivor-protagonist.

Choi's other important decision is not to end *The Apology* merely with her own fictional character's death and onstage funeral procession, carried out by means of a video projection, but with a video and audio montage. In this series of clips, Choi brings the past wrongs forward into the present and, moreover, moves beyond this one specific violation of women's human rights, to connect it with others—both historical abuses and more recent ones. These include instances of sexual slavery carried out by ISIS, the Islamic State, and also worldwide reports compiled by ACLED (the Armed Conflict Location Data) of "over 100 government-perpetrated sexual violence events since the beginning of 2018" (Choi 2022, 77). Choi also highlights reminders that the United States did not have clean hands, when it came to the military sexual exploitation of girls and women at the end of the Second World War, as the U.S. cooperated with Japan in the setting up of "a similar 'comfort women' station for American G.I.s until the spring of 1946" (Choi 2022, 77). And Choi looks, too, beyond sexual slavery alone, when it comes to matters of gender-based injustice, quoting a 2022 Global Citizen report about the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade, removing the right to abortion, which concluded that "women's choices and freedoms are threatened" (Choi 2022, 77). The final video clip, nonetheless, is of a "Wednesday Demonstration" in Seoul—one of the weekly protests outside the Japanese embassy there, demanding justice for the so-called "comfort women" survivors and a legal resolution to this historical war crime. Onstage, the last thing the audience sees is that same "Statue of Peace" outside the embassy—the sculptural representation of a young girl victim.

But merely looking is clearly not the last thing the audience is meant to do. Choi's dramatic presentation onstage of the heroic activism of both her fictional survivor—her version of Kim Hak-Sun, who was indeed a fighter— and of her fictional interviewer, who becomes the United Nation's Special Rapporteur by the end, thus reflecting the career path of the real-life Radhika Coomaraswamy—is an incitement to political action, locally and globally. By the time the curtain goes down, this play not only models, but demands from its audience, new and unflagging awareness, involvement, determination, and perseverance—an urgent push for justice, on behalf of the aged survivors who remain and in memory of those no longer living. And if the audience that leaves the theatre fails to act, Kyo Choi's play will accept no apology.

Endnotes:

1. For more about how other literary genres, beyond drama—including dystopian futuristic fiction, poetry, and memoirs in graphic form—have been used as pedagogical tools to educate young readers in particular about the subject of "comfort women" and to encourage activism, see Margaret D. Stetz, "New Genres, New Audiences: Retelling the Story of Japan's Military Sexual Slavery." *New Ways of Solidarity with Korean Comfort Women*. Ed. Ñusta Carranza Ko. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature, 2023. 113–131.
2. Information about the details of the "comfort system" and its various methods of implementation in different settings across the Asian Pacific may be found in a variety of texts, including the following: George Hicks. *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1995; Yoshimi Yoshiaki. *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*. Trans. Suzanne O'Brien. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995; Dai Sil Kim-Gibson. *Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women*. Parkersburg, Iowa: Mid-Prairie Books, 1999; Sangmie Choi Schellstede. *Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military*. New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 2000; Caroline Norma. *The Japanese Comfort Women and Sexual Slavery During the China and Pacific Wars*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016; M. Evelina Galang. *Lola's House: Filipino Women Living with War*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017; and Pyong Gap Min. *Korean 'Comfort Women': Military Brothels, Brutality, and the Redress Movement*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2021.

3. This commonly cited figure of 200,000 victims has been disputed by some historians, who point to evidence that it omits many thousands of Chinese girls and women forced into military sexual slavery after Japan's invasion of China. For more about this subject, see Peipei Qiu with Su Zhiliang and Chen Lifei. *Chinese Comfort Women: Testimonies from Imperial Japan's Sex Slaves*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
4. Recent controversies over this new form of denialism have been addressed by Anna-Karin Eriksson in "Representing the 'Comfort Women': Omissions and Denials in Wartime Historiographies in Japan." *Representing Gender-Based Violence: Global Perspectives*. Ed. Caroline Williamson Sinalo and Nicoletta Mandolini. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. 89–109. They are also the subject of a forthcoming edited volume: Pyong Gap Min. *Countering History Denialism: The Assault on Truth About 'Comfort Women.'* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2024.
5. The original production of this musical in New York City received mixed reviews from theatre critics, including a harshly negative one by Joseph Pisano: (https://www.theaterscene.net/musicals/offbway/comfort-women-a-new-musical/joseph-pisano).
6. More about the Arcola Theatre's community-enhancing mission may be found on its website: (https://www.arcolatheatre.com/about/what-we-do/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwg-24BhB_EiwA1ZOx8v2nd7QynkmXbN70y5j3dSSjGwnIcrJ5RglqLE1M9Qq22n-mgLE7hRoC3ZEQAvD_BwE).
7. See for example Maryam Philpott. "Cultural Capital." (https://mytheatremates.com/apology-arcola-theatre-maryam).
8. Details about Kim Hak-Sun (also called "Kim Hak-soon") and her testimony may be found, for instance, in Choe Sang-Hun, "Overlooked No More: Kim Hak-Soon, Who Broke the Silence for 'Comfort Women.'" *New York Times*. 21 October 2021. (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/21/obituaries/kim-hak-soon-overlooked.html).
9. In pointing out postwar guilt on the part of the U.S. military, when it came to the exploitation of girls and women, Choi echoes the findings of researchers such as Yuki Tanaka. See Yuki Tanaka. *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution During World War II and the US Occupation*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

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How Novelists Use Folklore as Weapons in Contemporary Revolutions of China: With the Examples of Lu Hsun, Hsiao Hung and Dai Sijie

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Abstract:

Folklore is often used in literature to express nostalgia and depict the everyday lives of a nation's people. There are few studies, however, on the role of folklore within Chinese revolutionary literature. Through interpreting three female fictional characters: Sister Xianglin in Lu Hsun's *The New Year's Sacrifice* (1924), the Little Child-bride in Hsiao Hung's *Tales of Hulan River* (1941), and the Little Seamstress in Dai Sijie's *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* (2000), I interpret how Chinese writers differently regarded folklore as weapons, either allies or enemies, to reveal the miserable lives of women in the fight for liberty during two of China's contemporary revolutions, the Revolution of 1911 and The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution held between 1968 to 1978. Folklore, in the context of these novels, is manifest primarily through references to folk sorcery cures, shamanic beliefs, and folk songs. Nevertheless, through the novelists' different attitudes to folklore, we can see the complicated and thought-provoking history of Chinese contemporary revolutions.

Keywords: Folklore, revolutionary literature, Lu Hsun, novelists, Hsiao Hung

Introduction

Chinese contemporary novelists often use folklore as a weapon, and their pens are compared to guns. However, studies about how authors use folklore as weapons to fight in revolutions are rare. Although novelists do not openly declare that they are using folklore as weapons to fight, the interpretation of folklore in literature, such as in my work, exposes this revolutionary function of folklore present beneath the literal words. The two crucial revolutions in contemporary China were the May Fourth Movement and the New Culture Movement in the Revolution of 1911, which followed the end of the last feudalism emperor of China, and the other one was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution held from 1968 to 1978. These two revolutions extensively converted Chinese cultures and traditions.

I put forward three writers and their works to illustrate the questions below: How do fiction writers use folklore as weapons in different periods of modern China? How might women be portrayed as protagonists in the struggle for freedom concerning China's revolutions? First, I will summarize the three novels, the writers and their writing backgrounds. Secondly, a structural diagram is made to compare and analyze the differences and similarities between the three examples.

The Death of Sister Xianglin: Lu Hsun and *The New Year's Sacrifice*

Lu Hsun (鲁迅 1881-1936) is widely regarded as the most excellent writer in contemporary China who practised and promoted vernacular Chinese (白话文) than classic Chinese in writing to make reading more accessible for commoners. He was the representative and leader of leftwing (radical) literature, a soldier using his pen to fight for democracy and freedom, a translator, an educator, and a professor. Lu Hsun's works exerted a substantial influence after the May Fourth Movement that began around 1916. He was highly acclaimed by Mao Zedong and the Communist regime after 1949. A Chinese writer compared Lu Hsun's role in the May Fourth Movement with Voltaire's in the Enlightenment of France (Chen 1976, 101).

New Year's Sacrifice (祝福) and the character of Sister Xianglin (祥林嫂) are some of Lu Hsun's most impressive works. Sister Xianglin was the servant of the Lu household. At the first time, Sister Xianglin gained the chance to work in Lu town through her diligent labour. However, the fact was Sister Xianglin escaped from her family after her husband died. Then, her mother-in-law sold and forced her to remarry in exchange for the money for her younger son's wedding. Unfortunately, Sister Xianglin was widowed the second time and came back to Lu Town for work again, and, more pitiably, her little son Ah-mao was attacked by wolves and also died. Sister Xianglin seems to have a mental disorder and tells her tragic tale over and over again.

Sister Xianglin's master is Fourth Uncle Lu—a local landlord who is the relative of the first-person narrator in this short story. In fact, Lu Hsun grew up in a similar landlord clan, which became a basic setting in his semi-biographical nostalgia serious novels. He created Lu Town, Lu clan relatives and neighbourhoods in his novels based on his life experiences.

The progressive youth, who is the incarnation of Lu Hsun, came back to Lu Town right before the New Year's celebration; he saw a beggar woman wandering in front of Lu's household. He recognized that she was Sister Xianglin, a servant maid in his uncle's house. He was not very clear about how she became a beggar. She asked him some questions: "Just the man I've been lookin' for. You know how to read books. You've been out there in the world and mustn't seen a thing or two. Now tell me... Is there *really* a soul after a body dies?...Then there's gotta be a hell too, right?...then dead kin are all gonna meet again, right?" (Lu 1990, 222). The young man was terrified by her questions and quickly escaped. The next day, he got the news that she had died on New Year's Eve. He began to recollect her story.

Lu Hsun contrasted the first and second impressions of Sister Xianglin: "[s]he looked to be twenty-six or twenty-seven and was on the whole rather pale, though her cheeks were rosy" (Lu 1990, 227). After widowing again, Sister Xianglin returned to Lu Town for work. Something became different: "She was much the same as she had been the first time... But her cheeks had lost the slightly rosy touch that had once relieved her general pallor. She kept her eyes averted; the spirited gleam that once had lit them was now gone, and traces of tears showed in their corners" (Lu 1990, 232). The vanishing of the slightly rosy touch on the cheeks indicates that Sister Xianglin will go on to have a more miserable life.

During the New Year celebration, the most important thing for people is to prepare sacrifices for entertaining the gods and ghosts. Preparing sacrifices became a thread that links together the stories of Sister Xianglin. The Fourth Uncle reluctantly accepted Sister Xianglin again, and he warned the Fourth Aunt privately:

> People like her may seem quite pitiable, ...she must have absolutely nothing to do with the family sacrifices. You will have to prepare all the sacrificial offerings yourself; otherwise they will be tainted and our ancestors will not accept them. (Lu 1990, 234)

If a widow is unacceptable, a remarried widow is unforgivable according to the morals of that time. Sister Xianglin lost the right to prepare for the New Year's sacrifice because she was a remarried widow. It separated her from others, reminding her that she was "guilty" all the time.

Mother Liu, who was a servant as well as a Buddhist and a vegetarian, "kindly" told Sister Xianglin that when she died, she would be split into two pieces because she married twice and should serve two men underground. She would be forgiven by people if she donated money for a doorsill in the temple to be her replacement to bear thousands of steps and tens of thousands of walks. Sister Xianglin used up nearly one year's salary to donate a doorsill and then appeared relaxed and happy. Nevertheless, donating a doorsill did not eliminate her guilt; people still thought she was unclean and prevented her appearance on the occasion of the sacrifice.

Fig. 1. Mother Liu telling horrible stories about the underground world (Lyell 1976, 221)

Following the approach of New Year, Sister Xianglin became particularly energetic. She thought she had been forgiven after the donation: "[w]ith complete self-assurance, she went to get the winecups and the chopsticks" (Lu 1990, 239). However, the Fourth Aunt again shouted, "Sister Xianglin, leave those there!" (Lu 1990, 239). Sister Xianglin "[j]erked back her hand as though it had been scorched and her face began to darken" (Lu 1990, 239). It made her feel desperate because she knew she could never change her fate whatever she did in her remaining years. She lost the desire to live and became more timid and dull. In the end, her master sent her out, and she died on New Year's Eve—the most important and happiest moment of the entire year.

Lu Hsun had an apparent attitude toward traditions, in other words, folklore. Although Lu

Hsun disapproved of some Chinese traditional cultures, such as superstitions, folk beliefs and the backward perspectives of three obedience and four virtues, which severely constrained women, his purpose did not aim at folklore. Folklore is just a weapon for him to fight in the revolution. His object or enemy was not traditional culture and folklore; his enemy was the obstacles, such as backward perspectives and feudal ethic codes, that held back progress. Essentially, he wanted to change the people who used folklore and lived in traditions set out by folklore, not to eliminate folklore altogether. How did he express these views in his works? He only utilized the negative aspects of folklore to depict a conservative society. His attitude to folklore and cultural heritage is vivid in the words below.

> He opposed those who would subvert the cultural heritage, although the epigonists and nationalists—those who would steer art back into the old rut—became his chief enemies. "Although the new ideas have never made much headway in China, many old fogies—young ones too—are already scared to death and have started ranting about national culture." "China has many good things," they assure us. "To chase after what is new instead of studying and preserving the old is as bad as renouncing our ancestral heritage." Of course, it carries enormous weight to trot out our ancestors to make a point; but I cannot believe that before the old jacket is washed and folded no new one must be made. (Semanov 1980, 120)

Lu Hsun put forward that one of his friends once said: "If we want to preserve our national heritage, our national heritage must first be able to preserve us" (Chen 1976, 103). It became his basic perspective on cultural heritage and folklore. In his time, the survival of the nation was the primary issue for the Chinese. Lu Hsun had to choose to put folklore as an enemy to construct a new life: "Of course, there must be destruction, but the purpose of destruction is to construct a new future" (Chen 1976, 326).

The Death of Little Child-bride: Hsiao Hung and *Tales of Hulan River*

Hsiao Hung's (萧红 1911-1942) true name was Zhang Naiying. She was born to a minor landlord family in what was then known to the outside world as Manchuria. Hsiao Hung was thought to be one of the most gifted fiction writers; most importantly, she was a feminist writer who enjoyed wide popularity among her contemporaries. More impressively, she was the only female writer allowed to participate in the small coterie of authors around the leading literary figure of the period, Lu Hsun (Hargrett 1977, 498).

Widely recognized as the most gifted but fleeting writer in China, Hsiao Hung died at a young age when she passed her 30-year-old birthday. She used a signature language style and sensitive emotions to depict a fictional world peacefully. However, under the tranquil description and graceful language style, she expressed the same radical opinions as Lu Hsun, who was her instructor and promoter. Her works were influenced a lot by Lu; however, she did not totally imitate him. Pollard praises Hsiao Hung's excellent works in *Tales of Hulan River*:

> The childhood sketches are personal to the author, and she participates as an onlooker in the dramas that take place in her family's compound, but there are general descriptions too of the temples, shops, trades and activities in the town, all of these separate gems. Hsiao Hung's style in this later work is poised and sophisticated, and her syntax orthodox. Her art of controlled irony can be presumed to have been learnt from Lu Hsun, under whose wing she had lived in Shanghai, but she outshines her master in imagination and humour. (Pollard 1981, 410)

Tales of Hulan River is a semi-biography novel with first-person narration—the naive and clear voice of a little girl. Although Hsiao Hung suffered through an emotionally wrenching childhood to rebel against the traditional values that so oppressed her countrymen and to live as a bohemian (Hegel 1980, 485), the fiction depicts the childhood memories and the affection between a little girl and her grandfather and the everyday life of Hulan River people.

The death of the little child-bride is the most impressive chapter in the novel. Hsiao's peaceful and allegorical words ironically create a little child-bride's short and pitiable lifespan. This little child-bride is killed by her mother-in-law's "unintentional" violent frustrations and diverse deadly folk cures. The first latent tragedy is that people do not realize they abide strictly by absurd ethical codes and common laws. In their minds, a child-bride should be timid, weak and, most importantly, obedient. People criticized the little child-bride: "What's this world coming to when a child-bride doesn't look anything like a child-bride ought to?" (Hsiao 1979, 231).

The second latent tragedy is that the mother-in-law does not think that beating a little child-bride is wrong. "As Goldblatt notes, Hsiao Hung here describes 'the individual tragedies experienced by people who, like the author herself, are brutalized by this violence they do not really understand'" (Hegel 1980, 486). "Whatever the situation, when things were not going well with her, her reaction was to hit someone. Who would that someone be? The answer was always the young child-bride... She wouldn't disappear from sight or run away (like a cat or a dog); she didn't lay eggs; and, unlike a pig, if she lost a few pounds it wouldn't make any difference, since she was never weighed anyway" (Hsiao 1979, 258). It means that in the perspectives of ordinary Chinese people in the 1920s, the lives of human beings were less worthy than those of livestock. It was the environment that Hsiao Hung and Lu Hsun devoted themselves to change: a society that lacked human rights and individual values.

Moreover, the abuses of daughters-in-law had been transmitted from generation to generation before 1949. It is believed that when the mother-in-law was young, she was beaten by her mother-in-law. Hence, there is a view of compensation to explain the relationships between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in old China: a bride was always violently or mentally abused; but did not feel upset, because the bride will become a mother-in-law someday. An old Chinese idiom says, "Finally the daughter-in-law becomes mother-in-law." On that day, she will do the same things to her daughter-in-law to compensate for the oppressions and tortures she experienced at a young age when she gained power over the household and the little bride.

The third latent tragedy is that people voluntarily contribute various folk sorceries to cure the child-bride as an experimental article, and they do not know they actually hurt her. The unreliable folk cures include burning a proxy doll as the replacement of the child-bride, making her eat a whole, unplucked rooster, using an herb blaster, and immersing her in hot water in a vat three times. Hsiao Hung stressfully depicted the shamanic bath in hot water.

> The young child-bride was quickly carried over and placed inside the vat, which was brim full of hot water—scalding hot water. Once inside, she began to scream and trash around as though her very life depended upon it, while several people stood around the vat scooping up the hot water and pouring it over her head. Before long her face had turned beet-red, and she ceased her struggles; standing quietly in the vat, she no longer attempted to jump out, probably sensing that it would be useless to even try. The vat was so large that when she stood up inside only her head cleared the top. (Hsiao 1979, 265)

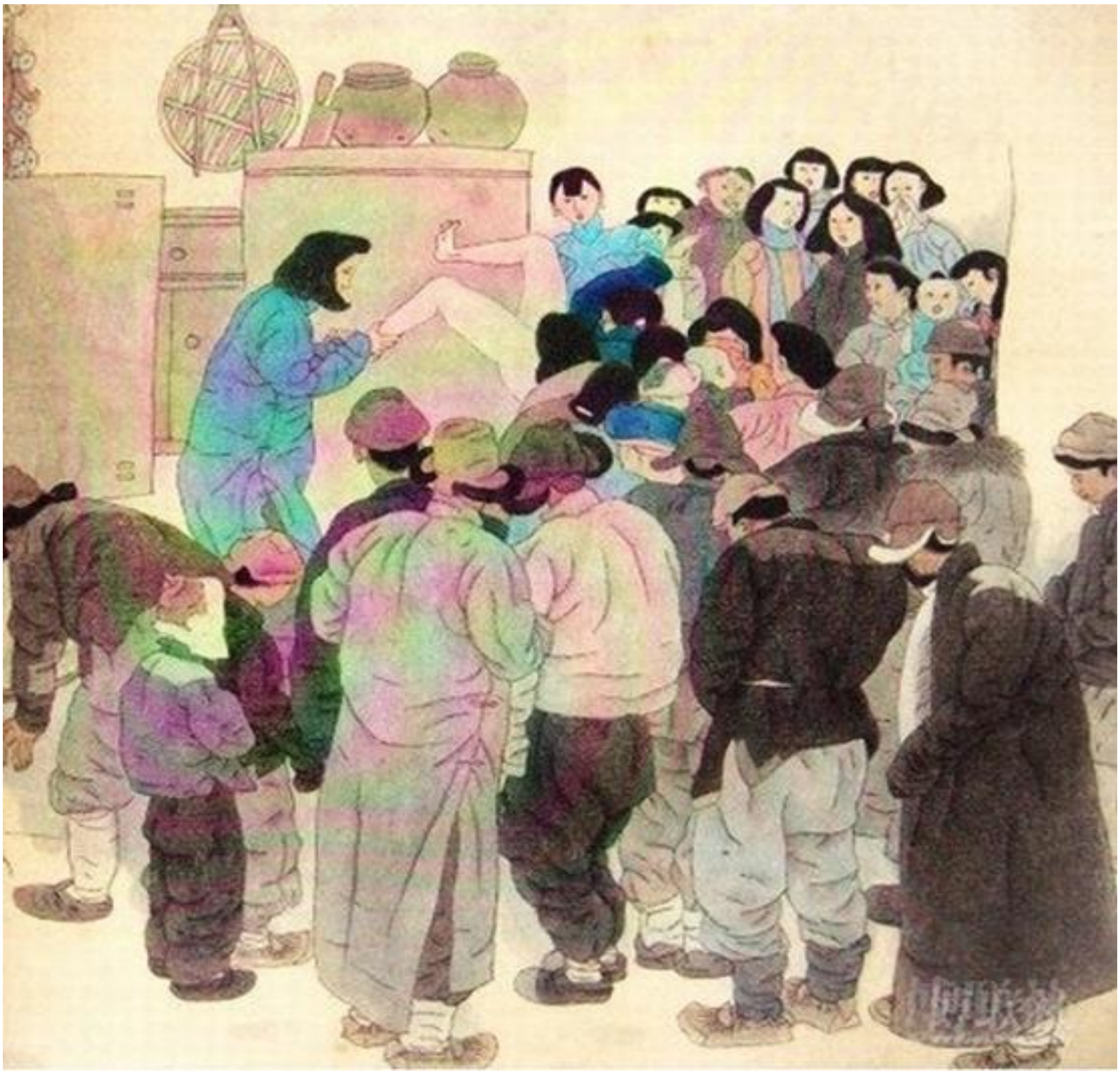

Fig. 1. The Little Child-Bride was bathed three times in scalding water (Illustrated by Hou Guoliang, 2007).
https://www.doc88.com/p-5406266883539.html

Firmly, Hsiao's calm language and indifferent distance incarnated her own position in the story. It is not difficult to tell that the indifferent observations above did not fit the voice of a five or six-year-old girl. Hegel points out Hsiao's unique writing style that contrasts cruel plots and poetic language:

> The strength of the novel lies in just such contrasts: the squalor of other houses in the compound jars against the beauty of the old man's garden; the joy of the child narrator is opposed to the sufferings of the child bride, whose similarly irrepressible spirit provokes the grotesque worries of her mother-in-law and the morbid curiosity of the rest of the town. (Hegel 1980, 485)

The little child-bride was bathed three times in scalding water, and each time, she passed out.

> At that moment the crowd witnessing the excitement yelled in panic, thinking that the girl had died, and they rushed forward to rescue her, while those of a more compassionate nature began to weep. A few moments earlier, when the young child-bride was clearly still alive and begging for help, not a single person had gone to rescue her from the hot water. But now that she was obviously to everything and no longer seeking help, a few people decided to come to her aid... How could she not be pained? Here was a sprightly young child whose life had suddenly come to an end. (Hsiao 1979, 265)

Hsiao Hung cannot stop asking why the onlookers did not save the child-bride when she still had consciousness. The people's ignorance resulted in these three latent tragedies and the miserable story of the child-bride. Actually, the true patients who needed to be cured were the healthy onlookers and not the child-bride. Scholars and writers around the May Fourth Movement and the Revolution of 1911, which ended feudalism history in China, thought that Chinese people possessed some negative characteristics, and they resulted in the tough history of contemporary China. People were indifferent and timid. They were so curious about everything but leapt back when a desperate situation needed someone to stand up. They cared about the pitiable people, but at the same time, they remained onlookers. Lu Hsun has similar criticism of the negative characteristics of the Chinese. He thought these characteristics caused contemporary China's disgraced history, such as lost battles with western navies. Chen analyzed it clearly:

> In Lu Hsun's opinion, the elimination of China's undesirable traits constituted the first step toward achieving individual liberation. His early literary career was an attempt to expose the undesirable characteristics of the Chinese people, to awaken the individual's self-consciousness, and to change the national spirit... China was in need of an uncompromising man like Lu Hsun to wake the millions from their self-complacency, mental apathy, and thousands of years of accumulated inertia. (Chen 1976, 105)

At the end of the story, the onlookers' superstitions and ignorance resulted in the tragedies of child-bride. Similar to Lu Hsun, Hsiao Hung used folklore as a weapon. Folklore elements in her story showed the author's perception of the foolishness of these people. She exposed the cruelty toward the miserable life of child-bride to wake people up and make them give up their harmful, backward perspectives and ethical codes.

Runaway Little Seamstress: Dai Sijie and *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*

Born in China in 1954, Dai Sijie (戴思杰) is a filmmaker and writer, and he left China in 1984 for France, where he has lived and worked ever since. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Dai Sijie was "re-educated" between 1971 and 1974. These experiences became the basis of his famous novel, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress.* The ten years of the Cultural Revolution eliminated the bourgeois elements and feudalist traditions and maintained the single communist proletarian culture. In the period, western culture, Chinese classic culture, bourgeois culture and folklore all became the enemies of the communist proletarian culture, which the government devoted to simplifying and controlling.

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress tells the story of two intellectual youths who were dispatched and re-educated to a rural region in Sichuan province during the Cultural Revolution. Their fathers, who are a dentist and a pulmonary specialist, have been declared enemies of the state and "reactionaries of the bourgeoisie." The youths experience arduous labours such as mining and agricultural work which they would never do in the city. Thankfully, there was a hidden beauty in the mountains, the Little Seamstress, Comforting their exhausted minds and bodies. Expectedly, they fell in love with the young girl. Luo, "a genius for storytelling," rapidly gains the heart of this beauty through many strategies, such as storytelling, narrating films and reading western novels.

Luo wants to culture the Little Seamstress and make her an educated lady. After the first meeting of the two boys and the girl, the narrator Ma asks Luo whether he has fallen in love with her; Luo replies: "She's not civilised, at least not enough for me!" (Dai 2002, 27). Watts analyses this statement: "The seamstress's individuality within her own rural environment is not enough to satisfy Luo, however, who casts himself as a latter-day Pygmalion in an attempt to turn her into a match more suited to his urban tastes" (2011, 35). Hence, in the whole book, Luo's goal is to culture this rare beauty who has grown up in an area isolated by mountains. Their lives become hopeful when they find the forbidden western novels which belong to another re-educated boy—Four-Eyes. Luo begins to read these books to her: "With these books I shall transform the Little Seamstress. She'll never be a simple mountain girl again" (Dai 2002, 100).

Indeed, the forbidden western novels have more meaning to the three young people. In their eagerness for knowledge, they do various works to get close to those books from Four-Eyes. Folklore, in relation to this intention, functions as a tool in three ways. First, the desire for books makes the two boys collect folksongs for Four-Eyes as an exchange. Four-Eyes has an opportunity to go back to the city. It requires him to collect folksongs and mail them to a journal press. However, he does not really appreciate the value of traditional folk songs; he utilizes them as a springboard to go back to the city. Hence, he fails when he tries to collect folksongs from the old miller. In exchange for western novels, Luo and the narrator decide to collect folksongs for Four-Eyes. Even it is very hard to dig treasures from the miller' mouth, for example, they have to eat the "jade dumplings with salty sauce"—pebbles dipping into salty water. "He dips them in salty water, puts them in his mouth, rolls them around and spits them out again" (Dai 2002, 64). Four-Eyes refuses to eat it, and the old miller refuses to treat him on his own side. On the contrary, the two boys happily spend a fantastic night with the poor, weird, but genius old singer and successfully collect many authentic folk songs.

Second, the positive attitudes to folklore that the two boys express show the writer's own preference. Four-Eyes belittles the 18 songs Luo and Ma diligently collected. He regards the songs as "shit" that cannot be published in an official journal because of their erotic and vulgar elements. However, Luo disagrees with Four-Eyes' judgement: "I thought he was great—his songs, his voice, his weird rippling stomach, and the things he told us. I'm going back there so that I can give him some money for his kindness" (Dai 2002, 77). When Four-Eyes adapts the folksong to a fake one with the style of flattering the Cultural Revolution and Chairman Mao, the narrator Ma heavily beats his jaw. The narrator, who represents Dai Sijie in the story, guards the authentic folklore. These are the two versions of old miller's folksong; the latter one is Four-Eyes' adaptation:

> Tell me:
> An old louse,
> What does it fear?
> It fears boiling water,
> Boiling bubbling water.
> And the young nun,
> Tell me,
> What does she fear?
> She fears the old monk
> No more and no less
> Just the old monk. (Dai 2002, 74)

> Tell me:
> Little bourgeois lice,
> What do they fear?
> They fear the boiling wave of the proletariat. (Dai 2002, 78)

Dai Sijie expresses his own attitudes to folklore by describing the defending actions of the two boys, and separates himself from being an accomplice of the Cultural Revolution. In that period, everything of traditional culture, such as folklore, is abandoned, as well as bourgeois literature and culture. Bourgeois culture and folklore are the common enemies of the Cultural Revolution. Hence, the bourgeois intellectuals show their compassion for folklore out of companionship. Dai Sijie's views about Cultural Revolutions are analyzed by Watts:

> In celebrating the personal and political freedoms represented by nineteenth-century French fiction, Dai criticizes the Cultural Revolution for persecuting a generation of middle-class Chinese, and for leaving a traumatic imprint on their collective consciousness. (Watts 2011, 37)

Third, folklore becomes the ally of the boys who intend to steal the books. In the celebrating banquet of Four-Eyes' release from re-education, five shamans whom Four-Eyes' mother invites forecast his fate and perform an exorcism ritual for him. This farce attracts the attention of all the village people and creates a chance for Luo and Ma to secretly get into Four-Eyes' house and steal the suitcase, which is full of forbidden novels. Besides that, shamans do not function substantively but with comic implications. It expresses Dai's conservative attitudes to superstitions and folk sorceries. Like Lu Hsun and Hsiao Hung, Dai Sijie uses folklore as a tool. His target is not folklore. Hence his reservations about folklore do not impact that he gets an alliance with folklore in his story.

As the novel progresses, the Little Seamstress learns about the outside world by reading foreign books. "Embracing a series of new literary role models, she fashions a bra based on an illustration from Madame Bovary, and, much to Luo's irritation, starts to imitate his city accent. She has her hair cut into a bob, and buys a pair of pristine white tennis shoes" (Watts 2011, 35). She is impregnated by Luo and subsequently gets an abortion. After that, she realizes that she should live a more colourful life. She runs away from Luo and Ma and starts a new life in the city. Luo's plan is successful because she has been cultivated, but he does not anticipate the ending: "She said she had learnt one thing from Balzac: that a woman's beauty is a treasure beyond price" (Dai 2000, 184).

A Crossover Comparison of Three Fictions and Their Uses of Folklore

Based on the diagram below, comparing three stories, I will analyze the similarities and differences in terms of the novelists' backgrounds, the novels' historical backgrounds, the settings of the novels, the female characters, the uses of folklore and the authors' attitudes to folklore:

	Lu Hsun (1881-1936)	**Hsiao Hung** (1911-1942)	**Dai Sijie** (1954-)	Similarity
	The New Year's Sacrifice (1924)	*The Tales of Hulan River* (1941)	*Balzac and Little Chinese Seamstress* (2000)	First-person narrative, Semi-biographic novel, nostalgic sentiments
Historical background of writing	The Revolution of 1911, May Fourth Movement & New Culture Movement (1919)	Aftermath of May Fourth Movement & New Culture Movement (1919), Anti-Japanese War (1938-1945)	21st century in France	Lu Hsun and Hsiao Hung had similar satiric writing style and May Fourth inheritance
Historical setting of story	The Revolution of 1911, May Fourth Movement & New Culture Movement (1919)	The Revolution of 1911, May Fourth Movement & New Culture Movement (1919)	The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)	Cultural revolutions

Sites of story	Shaoxing, Zhejiang, South-eastern China	Hulan, Harbin, Manchurian region of China	Yong Jing, Sichuan, South-western China	
Sister Xianglin	Servant. Widowed twice. Died			1. The female characters have no name. Show that they were controlled by a patriarchal society and could not be independent. 2. The destinies of female characters imply the fates of authors.
Little Child-bride		Sold as a child-bride. Violently abused by mother-in-law. Died		
Little Seamstress			Lover of two heroes. Escapes from home after being cultured by western literature	
Folklore use	1. New Year's Sacrifice. 2. Folk legend of hell. 3. Donate doorsill in temple to expiation	1. Folk medicine. 2. Folk cure methods. 3. Shamanic ritual and belief.	1. Folk cure methods. 2. Collecting folk songs. 3. Shamanic ritual and belief.	
Attitudes to folklore	Mostly negative	Mostly negative	Positive and respectfully	
Similarity	1. The authors were influenced by western perspectives and literature. 2. The authors respectively used folklore as tools in their works to cater to different revolutionary needs.			

First, the three writers have similarities and differences. Lu Hsun, Hsiao Hung and Dai Sijie come from different periods. Dai Sijie is still alive, while Lu Hsun and Hsiao Hung, born around the 1900s, died long ago. Lu Hsun and Hsiao Hung were writing about similar historical periods. They are influenced by the same historical period, even though the two stories were published nearly 20 years apart. Hence, Lu and Hsiao possess the same attitudes and perspectives on their stories. Even though the periods in the three stories are all cultural revolutions, this Cultural Revolution differs from the former. However, their stories share many similarities: they are first-person narrative novels. They are also semi-biographical novels which use the voices of a progressive youth (Lu Hsun), a little girl (Hsiao Hung) and the narrator Ma (Dai Sijie) to express the writers' incarnation. Finally, these three stories show authors' nostalgic sentiments toward their hometowns and past experiences.

Second, the three female characters in these three novels have similarities. 1. The female characters have no name. Sister Xianglin, the Little Child-bride and the Little Seamstress all are not true names for people. In the Chinese version, the name of the protagonist is called Xianglin Sao (祥林嫂). Sao, which was translated as "Sister" by many translators, means "elder brother's wife" and was used by extension as a general term of respect for married women (Lyell 1976, 142). Xianglin is her dead husband's name. From the beginning to the end, people do not know her family name and given name. The Little Child-bride is called the Little Wholeness Bride (小团圆媳妇) in Chinese, shows people's wish for a whole and happy life after the child-bride married. In fact, Jing Teng inferred that Sister Xianglin had a child-bride background (2009). The exchange of a child-bride was a symbolic phenomenon of feudalism. The little girl, who was generally several years older than the boy, was sold to a family where the boy was just a baby. The girl and the baby boy have a marriage by name only. In the meantime, the girl is the babysitter and labour force for the family. When the boy grows up to a marriageable age, the girl and the boy live a normal married life together. In Lu's story, Sister Xianglin's mother-in-law thus had the complete sovereignty to manipulate her life, such as selling her to her second husband.

If it is strategic to use anonymous titles to indicate Sister Xianglin and the Little Child-Bride because the narrators in the two stories are not very familiar with them. They are narrators' acquaintances either as a servant or a neighbour. However, why does the narrator of *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* still call his hidden lover "little seamstress"(小裁缝)? He knew her well and it was impossible to be unknown to her true name. Does Dai Sijie use the code name of the female protagonist for some hidden reasons? I infer that the three writers wanted to express women's oppressive positions and tragic fates through their anonymous titles. They have no name; therefore, they have no individual identities and human rights. The women were not independent and were severely controlled by the patriarchal society because their names were decided by their husbands (Sister Xianglin), identities (Little Child-bride) and occupations (Little Seamstress).

Another similarity among the three stories is that the destinies of female characters imply the fates of novelists. Lu Hsun and Hsiao Hung rebelled for democracy and freedom for Chinese people throughout their lives. The early death of the Little Child-bride forecasts Hsiao Hung's early death. Meanwhile, the escape of the Little Seamstress reflects Dai Sijie leaving China to go to France after the uprising ended. The departure of Little Seamstress shows the liberty and the pursuit of new life that Dai Sijie also sought.

Third, based on the above descriptions of folklore in the three stories, I suppose that the writers utilize folklore as their weapons to fight in these revolutions. Lu Hsun and Hsiao Hung regarded folklore with negative attitudes because they wanted to use the negative aspects of folklore to wake people up and make social progress. The folk legend about hell and the tradition of donating a doorsill in the temple as expiation are superstitious folk beliefs. Sister Xianglin was frightened by the legend and practised the tradition but did not change her fate and died. Folk sorceries and shamanic rituals killed the innocent child-bride in Hsiao Hung's story. In Dai Sijie's case, folklore becomes his colleague and friend. His attitude towards folklore and traditional culture is positive, and he guards "authentic folksongs" (Dai 2002, 76). Moreover, the three writers are greatly influenced by Western literature and perspectives. Lu Hsun said: "Whenever I am reading a Chinese book, I feel miserable and despondent. I feel as if I am living in an isolated world, divorced from the reality of human life. Whenever I am reading a foreign book, with the exception of an Indian book, I feel as if I am doing something, and coming into contact with human life" (Chen 1976, 109). In the whole book of *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, Dai Sijie illustrates the tremendous influences of Western literature on him and his characters.

Conclusion

Fiction writers in modern China treat folklore with different attitudes in different revolutions. I proved this by introducing three Chinese writers and their works from different periods. During wartime in China, intellectuals fiercely criticized all the elements of folklore which they deemed as negative, including superstitions, conservative natures and fraudulences, striving to construct a new China without old-fashioned ethic codes and negative Chinese characteristics. During cultural oppression of diverse cultures, they respect, praise and guard folklore, and unite with folklore to ally to fight against despotism. Folklore is always used in revolutionary literature as weapons, either allies or enemies.

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