POLYPHONY

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EDITORIAL

This inaugural issue of *Polyphony* has been a year in the making. As undergraduate students ourselves, we started *Polyphony* to celebrates the innovation and academic merit of Undergraduate writing at The University of Manchester. And the name *Polyphony* is a constant reminder of what we stand for: a diverse array of pieces written by different students, about different texts, from different perspectives working harmoniously to enrich our academic environment.

In this issue you will find seven fantastic essays and three pieces of creative writing. From translations of two Old English poems, *Deor & Wulf and Eadwacer*, to an original poem about young love in Manchester, from a close reading of *Ulysses* to a close reading of *Call Me by Your Name*, this issue aims for both breadth and depth. We are excited to have a beautiful piece of travel writing about Palermo, Sicily, and a brilliantly absurd short story set in apocalyptic New York City, sitting among essays looking at the works of Angela Carter and Virginia Woolf, Mohsin Hamid and Eavan Boland. The undergraduate students published in these pages offer fresh perspectives on issues of identity, feminism and nationalism, as well as exploring present-day concerns such as mental health and climate change.

I hope you enjoy reading the first ever issue of *Polyphony*.

Devi Joshi
Editor in Chief

The Walk Home

HARLEY WENG U PUN, Creative Writing

We are stumbling through satin streets
as the horizon glows on Oxford Road.

The sky is plum when we reach uni.
You do a handstand, then another—

I collect your cartwheels in front of the archway
and make you our poster boy for the day.

The sky is peach on the Curry Mile, the music
we play blends right in — it's chewed bubblegum pop!

The cold air is sweet and so still it's almost surreal.
For the first time in months, my blood, it slows.

    "I could walk this road forever."

The sky is blue in Platt Fields,
the sun, on you—

Your eyes! Your eyes!

    "Wait, look at mine!"

Our eyes! They're as big as the sun!

'Political community' and the Figure of the Refugee in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*

REBECCA BEVINGTON, English Literature

The instrumental power of imagination in constructing national identity forms the crux of political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Anderson emphasises retrospective imagination for its role in constructing a unified national memory, creating an 'image of antiquity, so central to the subjective idea of the nation'.[1] As strong as this unified nostalgic thinking is, some have suggested that it obscures the need for a more progressive, innovative political imagination in order to navigate challenging current phenomena, such as the pressure of globalisation bearing down on the fixed structures of nation states. Speaking about his dystopian novel *Exit West*, Mohsin Hamid considers the power of imagination:

> It allows us to imagine futures that are not bound by the tyranny of the past and the present [and] in the political domain we are seeing a real failure of that. People are struggling to articulate ways forward that don't look like the past.[2]

This essay will argue that, through fiction, *Exit West* imagines a world beyond nation states through its use of magical devices which release the text from some of the geographical, political and temporal obstacles that currently confound international freedom of movement. I will approach the text by exploring its presentation of the refugee experience throughout chapters 8 and 10, which actualise the sociopolitical developments that might occur as nation is de- and re-constructed.[3] I will also explore the connection between magical realism and postcolonial literature, and propose that the genre also has significant applications to postnational writing.

Firstly, I will examine the central argument of Giorgio Agamben's vision of refugees as the 'sole category' in which a future beyond nations can be imagined, before exploring their role within *Exit West*.[4] Fifty years on from Hannah Arendt's original essay of the same title, Agamben's 'We Refugees' reflects on her contemplation of the futility of the Jewish refugee experience.[5] Whilst Arendt's central argument focuses on the figure of the non-assimilating refugee as 'the vanguard of their peoples',[6] Agamben develops this idea through a broader critique of the 'trinity of nation/state/territory'.[7] He exposes the incompetence of these structures, which 'make nativity or birth [...] the foundation of [their] own sovereignty', at sufficiently representing and accommodating for the unprecedented growth of refugees.[8] Agamben asserts we must 'abandon without misgivings' the concept of nation-states and rebuild political community with refugees at the centre. Hamid tests out this diagnosis and its possible consequences through the perspective of the two protagonists, Nadia and Saeed.[9] Having been forced to flee their homes, families

and occupations, Hamid deliberately leaves the 'city of their birth' unnamed, alongside the unspecified 'militants' (p. 187) it was lost to, which reinforces the immense proportion of refugees worldwide and their diverse cultural or geographical backgrounds. The characters can be seen to embody Arendt's vision of refugees 'keep[ing] their identity'. Nadia continues to wear her traditional black robe despite her lack of religious conservatism as a visible marker of her identity: '[she] chose to, because it sent a signal, and she still wished to send this signal' (p. 110). Likewise, although markedly more committed to religious principles than Nadia, Saeed continues to 'join his fellow countrymen in prayer' (p. 148), another visible element of his identity and origins.

In Chapter 8, Hamid reveals his use of the characters to personify divergent reactions to the apparent apocalypse that unfolds as nations are deconstructed. Nadia can be seen to represent a progressive, radical ideology, embracing the chaos in the wake of change; 'she saw all these people of all these different colours in all these different attires and she was relieved [...] a new time was here, and, fraught or not, she relished this like the wind in her face on a hot day when she rode her motorcycle' (p. 156). Conversely, Saeed remains deeply bound to an emotional connection towards 'a house of people from his country' (p. 147), evoking strong feelings of familiarity and acceptance in him. Saeed's attitude partially reflects that of the oppressive nativist extremists, relying on the existence of a threatening 'other', described by Hamid as 'something tribal' (p. 146), to find community and acceptance. Saeed recognises the potential for violence in himself and feels 'like he was rotting from within' (p. 152). However, Hamid carefully presents Saeed's perspective to underscore the enduring importance of a cultural or religious 'unisonance' within a community, which he is careful to acknowledge as a powerful element of nationalism; Benedict Anderson reflects, 'it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love'.[10] Saeed's participation in the group prayer raises the importance of this familial, accepting love: '[it] made him feel part of something [...] and for a wrenchingly painful second he thought of his father' (p. 148). In this way, Hamid is acknowledging that elements of patriotism begin with the 'self-sacrificing', visceral bond of blood, birth and territory, but can quickly dissolve into violence and hate.[11] Saeed's experiences as a displaced refugee, particularly having lost his mother to ostensibly patriotic extremist violence, remind him of the dangers of this self-segregating philosophy, aligning with Agamben's view that refugees occupy a space beyond the 'inscription of bare natural life', which erodes the basis on which nations assert sovereignty.[12] The protagonists' perspectives therefore present the journey of two differing ideologies as they move through a seemingly apocalyptic 'world full of doors' (p. 152).

I will now explore how Hamid employs the 'doors' to further deconstruct the concept of nation.[13] Suzanne Baker in 'Binarisms and duality: magic realism and postcolonialism' writes: 'a narrator

of magic realism accepts most or all of the realistic conventions of fiction but introduces "something else," something which is not realistic, into the text [...] woven in seamlessly.'[14] The obvious magical device woven into Exit West is the appearance of 'doors', transforming mundane 'closet doorways' (p. 6) into portals defying the laws of physics and transporting individuals to far-away locations. Hamid incorporates the fantastical feature of door-portals to principally imagine a future world where movement is unfettered by the numerous limitations of travel, enabling an environment where virtually anyone can migrate, expediting the growth of refugees globally and transforming Agamben's prescient warning into a matter of immediate importance.

Whilst this reality is rather straightforward, the use of magical realism does not serve a purely logistic purpose. Baker asserts the symbolic consequences of this genre for postcolonial writing: 'the deployment of magic realism in literature can signify resistance to central assimilation [...] which is the dominant style of imperialism'.[15] If magical realism delivers postcolonial intellectual impetus because of its ability to occupy and undermine two binarily opposite categories, such as coloniser/indigenous, so too is it able to deconstruct the binary prerequisites of nationalist ideologies by occupying the space in between diametrically opposing categories of citizen/stateless, included/excluded; or, in Agamben's words, 'political life (bios)' and 'bare life [...] (zoe)'[16] As identified by Arendt, the refugee identity also occupies a contradictory, dualist space: that of the 'super-patriot'[17] and the 'enemy alien'.[18] I propose that Hamid is far more sensitive to the power of binary deconstruction offered by magic realist writing, and harnesses it to not only meet the logistic requirements of envisioning a global refugee crisis, but also to conceive of a world which no longer relies upon the Eurocentric, imposed notions of reality and order, and can therefore approach the issue of citizenship with greater fluidity.

Baker also proposes that the 'objective and dispassionate narrator who maintains a tone of complete equilibrium' is another core feature of magic realist writing, and this can be seen through Hamid's third-person omniscient narrative, which offers minimalist description throughout much of the text.[19] The frank, unsentimental language, such as 'the apocalypse appeared to have arrived [...] and life went on,' (p. 215) lacks any of the aesthetic imagery that might be employed in other fiction; instead, it is pragmatic, following the fast-paced plot to mirror the protagonists' utilitarian needs for survival. Further to this, the magical doors are illustrated briefly and ambiguously as 'dark, darker than night [...] the heart of darkness' (p. 6). Whilst Hamid's authorial reticence serves to draw no more attention than necessary to the doors in a bid to reinforce the truth of their existence from the characters' and narrator's perspectives, there is a deeper layer of symbolism on offer here. The doors, as the underlying magical device of the novel, represent the 'indigenous' side of the 'coloniser/colonised' dichotomy described above.[20] The repetition of 'dark' emphasises the doors as black spaces rupturing white, European areas, and subvert the inscription of whiteness inherent in colonial notions of reality. These neutral thresholds can be viewed as conduits to allow an environment which allows for Agamben's suggested spaces of 'aterritoriality', where the borders of

nations are 'perforated' by refugee groups, and political communities exist 'in exodus one into the other', whilst bearing postcolonial significance to undermine nationalistic dualisms.

I will now focus on an area where these subtle motifs of darkness/lightness are cemented in Chapter 8. Hamid employs colonial dichotomies to his full advantage during his comparison of 'Dark London', the affluent boroughs of Chelsea and Kensington suddenly saturated with refugees, and 'Light London' (p. 142), which remains intact as a capital city. It is difficult not to see Hamid's biting critique of the gross surplus wealth of these boroughs, with luxurious, extraordinarily expensive homes being left empty as the property of a tiny percentage of the population, and he accordingly balances this inequality by conjuring 'a black hole in the fabric of the nation' (p. 126) here. It is interesting to note that not only does Hamid's simplistic and sometimes repetitive language invert preconceived notions of whiteness, by plunging a wealthy area into darkness and filling it with 'dark bodies', but also with the casual introduction of the terms 'native' and 'migrant' (p. 136). Hamid reappropriates the noun 'native', inscribed with the racism of colonial history towards indigenous peoples, and uses it to refer to those living in the desirable, wealthy places; in this way, the dehumanising, Eurocentric colonial gaze is turned back onto the descendants, and beneficiaries, of its perpetrators. At the same time, 'migrants' (rarely called 'refugees', which echoes the powerful opening sentence of Arendt's 'We Refugees': 'In the first place, we don't like to be called "refugees"')[21] enter the natives' homeland to find safety and prosperity, inverting the colonial power structures which sowed instability and poverty into the homelands of the indigenous. The use of postcolonial discourse furthers the text's aims to show how there is a future beyond the accepted wisdom of the day, and in much the same way as the overwhelming might of colonial empires came to an end, so too will the current structure of nations evolve to better meet the needs of 'growing portions of humanity'.[22]

Finally, I will consider the fictional future city of 'Marin' in Chapter 10. As Nadia and Saeed find the opportunity to build communities outside of 'bare life', and as the fallout of the refugee crisis finally settles, the birth of new modes of 'political life' can be seen.[23] Imagery and the exploration of the senses is finally incorporated: 'the place was a taster's paradise,' 'a great creative flowering' (p. 217), emphasises 'a' assonance which produces a rhythmic effect that mimics and amplifies musical and creative freedom in Marin, contrasting with the silence, enforced through law or necessity, which pervades the rest of the novel. A key area of this section is Hamid's introduction of the 'plebiscite movement', which seeks to create a 'regional assembly' to exercise moral authority, so 'greater justice might be less easily denied' (p. 219). Hamid dismisses the practicalities of such an assembly a little too easily; it is difficult to imagine that the creation of new kinds of power and government would be so swiftly accepted by existing and competing political groups. However, as the original structures of nations have been irrevocably changed, and as the novel presents 'the whole world' (p. 218) as being in a state of migration, this imagined future society does actualise Agamben's model of 'reciprocal extraterritoriality' at work; in accordance with his view, any political community comprised of migrants could not 'make nativity or birth [...] the foundation of [its] own sovereignty'.[24]

To conclude, *Exit West* turns a powerful critical gaze onto the structures which fail to account for the increasing numbers of those with no choice but to leave the country of their birth; in a world where technology now supports full global mobility, Hamid exposes the archaic nature of nations through magical realism, using doors as a metaphor for the opportunities that could enable new ways of life, if we were not bound by conceptions of 'included' and 'excluded' individuals within political communities. At the end of the novel, Hamid notes that 'a door was opening up' for Nadia, 'a door [...] shaped like a room' (208), implying that the doors throughout the novel represent full international freedom of movement, and the next 'doors' to appear would support other human needs — having a safe place to live and to build community. In this way, Hamid poignantly reminds us that a more prosperous, egalitarian and peaceful world is not too far away, and that even after seemingly apocalyptic times, life will progress.

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[18] Ibid. p. 112

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[20] Baker

[21] Arendt, p. 110

[22] Agamben, p. 117

[23] Ibid. p. 116

[24] Ibid.

Nationalism and Feminism in Eavan Boland's Poetry

CATRIN STEWART, English Literature

This essay is a discussion of Eavan Boland's status as a nationalist poet of Ireland, in conjunction with her feminist ideologies, using Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection alongside Benedict Anderson's definitions of nationalism and national identity. The essay discusses Boland's poems *Woman in Kitchen*, *Anorexia*, *Mise Eire*, and *The Woman Changes Her Skin*, focusing on themes of geography and place, borders of the body and displacement, and Boland's tone and lyricism. Ultimately the debate aims to discern whether Boland's nationalist ideologies are strong enough to override her feminist ideas and thus characterise her as a nationalist poet.

Eavan Boland may be well known for poetry that addresses Irish identity and nationalism, but perhaps a more visible element of her poetry is its feminist themes. Boland sees the two as connected in 'the power of nationhood to edit the reality of womanhood', utilizing ideas of nationalism to create feminist poetry.[1] In order to address this question, I will be reading Boland's poetry through the lens of feminist critic Julia Kristeva, to argue that the feminist aspects of Boland's poetry override the nationalist themes. Kristeva's theory of abjection in her book *Powers of Horror* allow us to demonstrate how the notion of the abject — the thing that is 'opposed to *I*' and 'neither subject nor object'— emerges in Boland's poetry, and how this separates her from Ireland, making it problematic to characterize Boland as a nationalist poet.[2] Boland's poems demonstrate how she is disgusted by what nationalism, and its androcentrist structures, has done to her identity.

Before beginning my analysis, I will define nationalism in terms taken from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Anderson asserts that nationalism is made of 'cultural artefacts of a particular kind' that command profound 'emotional legitimacy'.[3] Boland's poetry may adhere to being a cultural product, associated directly with the Irish nation, but her poetry does not command emotional legitimacy towards the nation, but rather against it. I will seek to demonstrate these statements by investigating the themes of identity, horror, religion and motherhood in both Boland and Kristeva's work.

Whilst Kristeva is an important name in feminist scholarship, it must be noted that more recent scholars have questioned her work for its relevance to feminist studies as the movement progresses and modernizes. Judith Butler has written in such critique of Kristeva, focusing on her insistence upon the identification of the chora with the maternal body.[4] The issue with this association is that the feminine object or subject is placed outside of the universal or particular binarisms so that she is 'neither one nor the other, but the permanent and unchangeable condition of both'.[5] Here Butler is showing how Kristeva's insistence on the feminine and maternal as an example of the chora displaces women and allows them no part in society, not unlike the criticism that Boland makes of nationalism's immortalisation of women as icons, which puts them in a space that

is unreal or, as Boland's title indicates, 'Outside History'. Whilst I acknowledge these problems in connecting Kristeva and Boland to define Boland's poetry as primarily feminist rather than nationalist, there are still beneficial readings to be taken from Kristeva that will help facilitate an understanding of Boland's poetry. Kristeva's language in *Powers of Horror* is distinctly geographical as she discusses borders and the placement of the self, which leads us to a discussion of geography and nationality in relation to the abject, as I will demonstrate using Boland's poems *Woman in Kitchen*, *Anorexia*, *Mise Eire*, and *The Woman Changes Her Skin*.

In Boland's essay *Outside History*, she asserts that 'women have moved from being the objects of Irish poems to the authors of them'.[6] Whilst this seems as if Boland believes there has been a move towards agency and independence for Irish women, using Kristeva's writing can show how Boland's poetry, alternatively, conveys a loss of identity in this move. She becomes 'neither subject nor object' of her poetry or of the Irish nation. This not only separates Boland from her ideas of nationalism, but Boland becomes, in this action, 'outside' of history, past and present, eradicating her identity. Boland continues in her essay, suggesting that when a woman, once part of the idea of the nation, is 'simplified', she 'becomes the passive projection of a national idea' without independent thought or ambition.[7] The woman is present in neither her own body or as part of the nation, she is 'neither subject nor object' of her own life or of a national narrative.

We can see the evidence of this loss of identity within Boland's poetry in the relationship between the poem's speaker and the poem's subject. In *Woman in Kitchen*, the entire poem describes a woman other than the speaker, saying 'She watches', 'She stands'.[8] The pronouns distance the speaker from the female subject of the poem yet the emphasis on sensual details such as the 'noise' and loss of 'sight' creates an intimacy that suggests a relationship between the two, perhaps even that they are the same person, the speaker alienated from her own body.[9] Moreover the third stanza sees Boland use free indirect discourse to connect the speaker and subject further. She observes that 'the kettle in the toaster is a kingfisher swooping for trout above the river's mirror', an imaginative and vivid picture that only the subject would know.[10] This idea of distance between speaker and subject is more explicitly demonstrated in *Anorexic*, where Boland mixes the pronouns 'my' and 'she', 'her' and 'I'.[11] She also refers to her body as separate from her self; 'My body is a witch. I am burning it.'[12] This lack of identification also adheres to Kristeva's statement that abjection 'is above all ambiguity' as Boland is neither author nor object, despite her statement of movement to authorship in *Outside History*.[13]

Such ambiguity is also a theme distinct in the setting of her poetry. Often, the subject of the poem is more focused on where, rather than who, the poem is describing. The subject of *Woman in Kitchen* 'has nowhere definite to go: she might be a pedestrian in traffic.'[14] Her place in her own home is uncertain, let alone as part of a nation. Andrew J. Auge points out this 'exilic sense of displacement' that is

prevalent in Boland's poetry, yet he says that this intersects with 'a profoundly lyric sensibility'.[15] I would contest this to suggest that Boland's poetry does indeed have a sense of displacement, but that it is combined with abjection in that it creates feelings of unease or disgust rather than lyricism, which has positive connotations. The language that Boland uses to describe setting is similar to Kristeva's; she describes the space that surrounds the dejected as 'never *one*, not *homogeneous* [...] but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic.'[16] This catastrophic division is more evident within Boland's writing in relation to displacement than lyricism.

This brings me onto a discussion of the tone of Boland's poetry, in relation to Kristeva's assertion that the abject is immoral and sinister. Her most significant example of this is the corpse, which is 'the most sickening of wastes, [...] a border that has encroached upon everything.'[17] For Kristeva, the corpse is the ultimate example of the abject, crossing the border between life and death, creating feelings of horror and disgust. We may also examine Benedict Anderson's discussion of death in relation to nationalism, to demonstrate how ideas of the abject and nationalism come together within Boland's poetry to distance her from the role of a nationalist poet. Anderson says that cenotaphs and tombs of unknown soldiers are the most indicative examples of modern cultures of nationalist as they are 'saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings.'[18] Despite the tomb being empty, simply the *idea* of a soldier who has died for his country is enough to invoke emotion within a nation. Boland's work combines the concepts behind both Anderson and Kristeva's discussions of death to distance her from nationalism. For example, when Boland writes 'So when the king's head / gored its basket — / grim harvest' she is referring to the execution of Charles I.[19] By combining a reference to a famous event in British history, especially one that was such a victory for the Irish, with the description 'grim harvest', Boland evokes nationalist discourse but condemns it with words of disgust. Not only does Boland sit on the border between disgust and fascination towards nationalism, embodying Kristeva's theory that the abject is what crosses borders, she does this in reference to death and horror, adhering to the emotions Kristeva describes.

In *Anorexic* Boland further demonstrates this crossing of borders through the depiction of the female body. In the lines 'heaving to hips and breasts / and lips and heat / and sweat and fat and greed' Boland is depicting the subject purging her body of what she believes to be bad things.[20] The use of the repetition of the word 'and' creates a vicious and relentless rhythm that speeds as the reader progresses to the harsher language of 'sweat and fat and greed' and simulates the rhythm of heaving or gagging, making the lines that much more visceral. The purging of the abject in this scene is synonymous with the desire to erase the female body, akin to the erasure of female identity as discussed earlier. These depictions of erasure or a lack of substance can show how nationalist, androcentric discourses have led to female detachment or hatred towards the self.

This idea of self-hatred formed through nationalist ideas can also be linked with religion. Born in Dublin, Boland's roots are heavily influenced by the Catholic religion that dominates the culture of Southern Ireland. The patriarchal structures that form nationalism are also found in religion, notably Catholicism, and this combination of the two in Boland's poetry creates a strong sense of female

erasure. Kristeva states that abjection of self is proof of the ultimate humility before God, and we may use *Anorexia* to show how Boland portrays herself as the abject in order to give herself to God, as her nation's religion has taught her to undervalue herself. This idea is represented through a resentment of flesh and the body. Boland shows this immediately and frankly in the first line; 'Flesh is heretic'.[21] As Boland portrays the anorexic subject, she uses religious allusion to demonstrate how her identity is overtaken by masculinity. She is described as 'Thin as a rib', evoking the concept of Eve taken from Adam's rib.[22] Furthermore, the lines 'How warm it was and wide / once by a warm drum / once by the song of his breath' display a desire to return to being Adam's rib, not only erasing her own physical presence and identity but also doing so by returning to a state where the male dominates.[23] Here, Boland's subject of Anorexia experiences abjection, becoming the subject of disgust, and her method of tackling this is to erase her femininity, and evoke a time of religious and patriarchal structures that are so inextricably linked.

Finally, I will address the theme of motherhood in Boland's poetry and how this distances her from the status of 'nationalist' poet. We may view this in two ways: Boland's role as a mother herself, and Boland's relationship with Ireland as her 'mother'. Auge uses Kristeva's theory here to point out that her depiction of mother as a 'split subject' can be used to view Mother Ireland, and that in this, 'Boland elicits a conception of national identity, that like maternal subjectivity, is open to heterogeneity'.[24] *Mise Eire* can help us explore this concept most effectively. With the title meaning 'I am Ireland', Boland is asserting the nationalist theme of the poem, and moreover, it is parodying Patrick Pearse's poem of the same name. Whilst Pearse evokes the image of the Hag, a personification of Ireland, Boland condemns it, listing images of 'real' women of Ireland instead such as the 'woman of a sloven's mix', a prostitute 'who practices the quick frictions' or the 'woman in the gansy-coat' instead of idealised and unrealistic icons of Ireland.[25]

Boland's *Mise Eire* addresses the idea of what it is to be an estranged child of Ireland. The line 'My roots are brutal' has a dual meaning — either the roots of Ireland are violent and terrible enough to make her say 'No. I won't go back', or alternatively, they are brutal in their strength to hold her in the grips of Ireland.[26] In this line we can recognize Kristeva's 'split subject'. As a daughter of Ireland, Boland (or the speaker of the poem) is split in her desire to be part of the nation but the resentment she feels towards nationalism. This division is also portrayed in the contradictory language of the poem. Despite the 'homesickness' she 'won't go back'.[27]

As well as evoking Mother Ireland, Boland also becomes the mother in lines such as 'I am the woman [...] holding her half-dead baby.'[28] Not only does she, in this moment, border the role of both daughter and mother, her child is 'half-dead', reminding us of the earlier discussed horror aspect of Kristeva's theory. Boland also refers to 'a new language' as 'a kind of scar', a scar as a signifier for death and the bordering of the inside and outside of the body.[29] The baby is a reminder of such abjection, one that has been created by Mother Ireland, as the women have had to migrate from Ireland. The nationalist discourse that iconizes women retracts from the real experience of maternity and places pregnant women and mothers in a space outside of society, just as the theory of the abject is embodied

through the pregnant body bordering life and death, internal and external.

Although I have connected Boland's poetry of motherhood with Kristeva's discussions of maternity it must be acknowledged once again that Butler has written considerable criticism against Kristeva's discourse on maternity. Butler asserts that Kristeva's writings on motherhood are not feminist but actually only 'a temporary and futile disruption of the hegemony of the paternal law', and that her theory depends on the 'stability and reproduction' of this law that she is seeking to displace.[30] Yet Boland's engagement with maternity and motherhood can be seen as a distinct rejection of such paternal structures. Whilst still embodying Kristeva's ideas of abjection, her separation of mothers and the nation is a criticism of structures that have forced the separation, not a dependence upon them. Boland's poetry replicates the stereotyping of the androcentric tradition that it critiques.[31] It's a Woman's World does this by using the idea of history being dominated by men, employing bathos to move from 'milestone[s]' to 'the loaf left by the cash register', contrasting male history with women's domestic lives. Boland writes that 'our windows moth our children to the flame of hearth not history', replicating the problem that a mother's life is domesticated, with the 'hearth' instead of part of a larger 'history'.[32] However, this separation of the mother from nationalist history is still feminist as it is a criticism of the place women are forced into. They have the potential to be 'star-gazers, fire-eaters', yet they are bound by their culture. The poem ends with the line 'just my frosty neighbour coming home.'[33] By ending on 'coming home' Boland reinforces the idea that mothers always have to return to domestication, even if their mouth has become 'a burning plume' just moments before.[34]

Boland, in her essay *Outside History*, claims that 'in all of this, I did not blame nationalism'.[35] It may seem to the reader that, despite her repudiation of Irish national history, she is still a nationalist poet. However, by returning to Benedict Anderson's discussion of nationalism, it can be maintained that regardless of the 'emotional legitimacy' of her poems, the subject of this emotion is always against the nation and in favour of female experience. Her essays may still contain nationalist ideas, albeit new and edited ones, but as a poet, Boland is distinctly anti-nationalist in relation to Ireland. My discussion of her poems in tangent with Julia Kristeva's theory has facilitated this assertion, and furthermore demonstrated that Boland's poems lie in a feminist realm, suggesting that perhaps it is more accurate to characterize her as a postcolonial feminist poet due to her renegotiation of the idea of the nation in a more favorable light for women.

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[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso, 1991) p. 4

[4] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the discursive limits of "sex"* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 15. Accessed 26 December 2017 via https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9780203828274. The chora is a concept taken from Plato that defines the chora as a space or interval. Plato on occasion describes the chora in reference to maternity, the womb being an example of it.

[5] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 16.

[6] Eavan Boland, 'Outside History', in *Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time*, (London: Vintage, 1995) pp. 123-153 (p. 126)

[7] Boland, *Outside History*, p. 136

[8] Eavan Boland, 'Woman in Kitchen', *Collected Poems*, (Manchester: Carcanet Press Limited, 1995), p. 76

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Eavan Boland, 'Anorexic', *Collected Poems*, (Manchester: Carcanet Press Limited, 1995), p. 58-60

[12] Eavan Boland, 'Anorexic', p. 58

[13] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 9

[14] Boland, *Woman in Kitchen*, p. 76

[15] Andrew J. Auge, 'Fracture and Wound: Boland's Poetry of Nationality', *New Hibernia Review*, 8, 2004, pp. 121-141 (p. 122)

[16] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 4

[17] Ibid., p. 3

[18] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 9

[19] Eavan Boland, 'It's a Woman's World', *Collected Poems*, (Manchester, Carcanet Press Limited, 1995), pp. 79-80 (p. 79)

[20] Eavan Boland, *Anorexic*, p. 60

[21] Ibid., p. 58

[22] Ibid., p. 59

[23] Ibid., p. 59

[24] Andrew J. Auge, p. 123

[25] Eavan Boland, 'Mise Eire', *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet Press Limited, 1995), pp. 102-103

[26] Eavan Boland, 'Mise Eire', p. 102

[27] Ibid., pp. 102-103

[28] Ibid., p. 102

[29] Ibid., p. 103

[30] Judith Butler, 'The Body Politics of Julia Kristeva', *Hypatia*, 3, (1989), pp. 104-118 (pp. 105-106)

[31] Andrew J. Auge, *Fracture and Wound*, p. 122

[32] Eavan Boland, *It's a Woman's World*, p.79

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Eavan Boland, *Outside History*, p. 136

Deor & *Wulf and Eadwacer*: A Translation With Commentary

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WULF AND EADWACER

To my people, he would be as a gift.
They would receive him: bear arms.
    There is a difference between us.

Wolf sits on an island: I on another.
The island is closed off; surrounded by fen.
And too, on the island — are cruel, savage men.
They would receive him: bear arms.
    There is a difference between us.

Wolf, I have followed your sorrowful journey
In rainy weather, while I sat in mourning.
When the battle-bold one enclosed me in his arms,
It was a pleasure: and yet it hurt like a harm.

Wolf, my wolf, it was pining for you
That made me sick: your seldom passing through
and my grieving heart, not lack of food.

Are you hearing me, my watchman? Our wretched son
could be borne by an eagle to woods.
Simple to slit that which was never sewn:
Our song together.

DEOR

Weland, through slithering chains

    suffered sorrow.

This resolute man

    played host to much hardship:

He had as companion

    sadness and longing,

wintry-cold misery.

    Woe was often felt

since Nithad

    laid fetters upon him,

supple sinew-bonds

    on a good man.

That ended one day, so this also may.

To Beadohilde, never was

    her brothers' death

so sore in her heart

once the realisation

    as her own circumstance,

that she was pregnant.

    became transparent

without fear

    Never could she think

    of what must come.

That ended one day, so this also may.

Of the affair of Maethild

    we have heard:

all bounds were surpassed

    by the Geat's devotion

such that unhappy love

    deprived her entirely of sleep.

That ended one day, so this also may.

Theodoric ruled

    for thirty winters

The Maering's stronghold

    that was known to many.

That ended one day, so this also may.

We have learned

    of Eormanric's

beastly mind,

    that ruled folk of the wide
    Goth kingdom.

That was a cruel king.

    Many warriors sat,

bound by worries,

    ever-expecting sorrow,

wishing often

    that the reign

were overcome.

That ended one day, so this also may.

The sorrowing man sits,

    cut off from joys

in darkening spirit,

    it seems to him

that his suffering

    will never cease.

I think then

    that throughout this world

the wise lord

    causes change often.

To many a man,

    he grants favour,

certain success;

    to some he deals out woe.

Of that which I will say

    of myself, this:

That, I, for a time,

    was Hodeninga's poet,

loved by my lord.

    My name was Deor.

For many winters I possessed

    a good position,

loyal master,

    until Heorrenda came.

The song-skilled man

    received the land-entitlements

that the protector of warriors

    once gave to me.

That ended one day, so this also may.

COMMENTARY

These two poems, although similar thematically in certain ways, are very different in their tone, and my translations aim to reflect this. Both are poems about loss and sadness — in the case of Deor, a longing for what once was, coupled with a sadness for the present, and in the case of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, a longing for what perhaps never even was, a relationship seemingly defined by absence. However, Deor's tone is much more that of a lament, with examples of mythical and historical tragedies that passed by and the refrain of comfort "*Þæs oferode, ðisses swa mæg*" (translated here as "That ended one day, so this also may".) My translation, as discussed in more detail below, aims to reflect this with a solemn and accurate translation prioritising the meaning of the original and laying the poem out in a format inspired by the original poet's presentation (with each line having a first and second half). *Wulf and Eadwacer* is permeated by the language of longing, in this case for the titular Wulf, but follows a much more straightforward narrative, eschewing allusions to specific myth in favour of simple description of the speaker's feelings. Its placement in its source text before a riddle-hoard, as well as a certain amount of ambiguity to the modern day reader, speaks at a playful and multifaceted side that arouses questions in the reader, and that is something I have tried to capture through my choice of words in the translation.

When translating *Wulf and Eadwacer*, I endeavoured where possible to maintain the ambiguity of the original and produce a text that would work well when read orally, keeping the listener/reader's attention. Primarily, this is accomplished through a mixture of rhyme and alliteration. The poem follows a simple a/b rhyme (or half-rhyme) scheme, for the most part, allowing lines to flow from one to the next — see lines 5-6, for example, or the use of the half-rhymes journey/mourning in lines 9-10. While translating, however, I was conscious not to forsake meaning for rhyme: where a rhyme naturally arose, I would use it, but where searching for one would impede the accuracy of the translation, I simply let it be. Assonance and alliteration are also used for poetic effect — for example, "...That made me sick: your seldom passing through..." (14, emphasis added). The intended result is a poem that works both written down and read aloud, with added layers (discussed below) when heard out loud.

Wulf and Eadwacer is placed among riddles in the Exeter Book, and has been the subject of much differing interpretation over time. Critic Peter S. Baker writes of the riddle-like ambiguity of the poem that it is "demanding of a reader's attention, as a riddle is", before clarifying that the ambiguity is used in this context to increase the tension and emotional power of the poem, as opposed to simply for "good fun".[1] Baker, in fact, produces a reading of the poem that is remarkably unambiguous, arguing (for example) that the 'lac' of the first line is in fact merely a 'gift', and not a sacrifice or offering as could be interpreted, and asserting that much of the perceived ambiguity arises from scholarly interpretations that assign multiple common meanings to words that in fact change depending on context. While Baker's argument is assertive and innovative, I find it less than convincing. One of the quirks of humanity is how little we have changed; consider the similarity of graffiti on a wall today to that found on the walls of ancient Greco-Roman ruins.[2] The use of language, then, that could mean something different in a different context (but read 'properly' has one meaning) does not necessarily preclude the possibility of a text produced to be intentionally ambiguous. Many modern jokes and lyrics rely on the double meanings of words, even where the second meaning is archaic or infrequently used. There is also evidence that *Wulf and Eadwacer* was meant to be read with multiple meanings, with its placement in the Exeter Book immediately preceding a collection of riddles.[3] For this reason, I chose to mimic the perceived ambiguity of the original in my translation where possible, producing a 'riddling' translation that addresses the ambiguity by simply accepting it as a vital part of the poem. One of the universal difficulties of translation is that it is never possible to do quite the same thing in quite the same way. Thus, I have tried to do the same thing (ambiguity) in a slightly different way in my rewriting. One ambiguity in the

original is the phrase *a ðecgan* (line 2), which can be translated either as the welcoming, "to feed", or the rather more hostile, "to kill", according to Baker.[4] A literal translation would give the idea that were Wulf to present himself, 'they' would either kill or feed him. When translating, I found it difficult to identify a word in Modern English that encompassed the possibility of both welcoming and killing someone, so chose to eschew the reference to feeding in favour of maintaining aural ambiguity through the phrase "bear arms"/"bare arms". When read out loud, the nature of the bear/bare/bear homophone allows for three possibilities:

(1) That 'they' receive Wulf, and bear arms against him.
(2) That 'they' receive Wulf, and welcome him with bare arms, unadorned with armour.
(3) That 'they' receive Wulf, and are partially or wholly ursine.

The first interpretation also contains an homage to quasi-contemporary culture in the form of a reference to the 2nd amendment of the US constitution (allowing citizens to bear arms). This ambiguity, as well as the reference to a (increasingly politically loaded) phrase common in contemporary culture, demands the reader's attention described by Baker above. In addition, it raises questions that rely on personal interpretation for an answer (at the very least, when read aloud). This is one example of my attempt to create ambiguity and to update the original text for a modern day reader. Another is the interpretation of lac in the first line — I chose to use the relatively straightforward 'gift' for two reasons. Firstly, 'gift', in and of itself, in this context, is inherently ambiguous: Wulf may be 'as a gift' to the tribe because they miss him and hope for his safe return, or because he is hated by the tribe and they would welcome the chance to attack him. In this way, some of the original "gift/sacrifice" ambiguity is preserved. Additionally, the use of the word 'gift' adds a second layer into the reading to a bilingual reader such as myself: in German, the word translates directly to 'poison', either literal or figurative.[5]

However, the ambiguity of the text may, at times, resolve itself into a narrative that is in essence quite tragic. A woman weeps over the loss of her loved one, no matter the form her loved one takes. One example of this comes in the problematic lines 16 and 17, referring to the 'wretched whelp'. We may ask ourselves who the 'whelp' is, but none of the possible answers take the form of a satisfactory ending to this song-riddle. Seiichi Suzuki argues that Wulf is the son of the narrator, fighting in the military far away, that Eadwacer is her husband, and that the narrator fears that her son may be destined to die in war.[6] He argues that the ambiguity of lines 16-17 arises from a grammatical misinterpretation, suggests that the ambiguity can be resolved by a grammatical re-structuring that presents 'earnme' (wretched) as 'earne' (eagle), producing the line: "Please listen, Eadwacer. An eagle may carry away our son, Wulf, to the wood." (Here, Suzuki argues, the carrying away by an eagle is a metaphor for the son being fated to die in battle).[7] Taking inspiration from this interpretation, I

have used it in my own translation, presenting the lines as a worried wife addressing her husband ("Are you hearing me, my watchman?"). I chose to use the word 'watchman' in my translation both due to ambiguity over whether it was a given name or a role, and because I wanted to create the dichotomy of the one who is in danger and absent, versus the one who is present and ensures safety. Turning to my translation of *Deor*, the more serious and solemn narrative of the original text (compared to *Wulf and Eadwacer*) drove me to produce an accordingly more serious and solemn translation. This is evident even from the presentation of the poem: whereas *Wulf and Eadwacer* is laid out much as a modern poem might be, for *Deor* I chose to use a structure roughly imitating the a-verse/b-verse that edited versions of Old English texts are frequently laid out in. (See, for example, the poem's presentation in Marsden's *Old English Reader*).[8] Rather than attempting to modernise *Deor* somewhat - as a did to an extent with *Wulf and Eadwacer*, trying to create a bridge between the modern world and the past - I decided to present the poem in keeping with its traditional layout, and keep as close to the original meanings of words as possible, favouring literal translations.

Craig Williamson writes on the difficulty of translating an unspeakable language with an invisible author, using the analogy of a dance. While we can analyse the poetry left behind, listen to and engage with it — while we can dance with this other author, follow their steps, imitate and update — something of this dance will always remain a mystery.[9] This is true with *Deor*. There are a number of problems with trying to translate and understand the poem from a modern perspective and as a modern reader, with the foremost being the multiple references to figures and events of history, many of which we know little or nothing about today. As readers and listeners, we can engage with the poem, enjoy it, discuss its structure — but we are left with a number of questions, regardless of our understanding. Who is the speaker? Where is he writing from? Who are the figures he references, such as Maethild and her devoted Geat? As a translator, I felt there were two options available: first, in an attempt to update the original poem, to make the enigma more accessible and understandable to a modern reader, or second, to simply translate what was in front of me as best I could, understanding where possible and leaving mysteries where they stood. The former would involve a great deal of conjecture, something which, because of the amount of historical canon involved would be at best disrespectful (and at worst a simple failure, because of the amount of understanding that I, as a modern day reader, lack), I chose the latter, and left the Anglo-Saxons with history impenetrable but intact. This is not to say, however, that I did not update the poem in other ways. While I endeavoured to produce a translation that had aural appeal, as in *Wulf and Eadwacer*, a literal approach to translation meant that a great deal of alliterative appeal was lost in the process. In some places, part of the original survives, and I tried to preserve this where possible

— for example, line 6 of the original's "**s**woncre **s**eonobende on **s**yllan monn" (emphasis added) becomes "**s**upple **s**inew-bonds on a good man". However, elsewhere this alliteration was lost entirely: line 24 of the original, "**S**æt **s**ecg monig **s**orgum gebunden" (emphasis added) becomes "Many warriors sat / bound by worries".

Creating an Old English poem in Modern English, I felt it important to copy my old dance-partner's moves, and mimic some of the quirks of Anglo-Saxon texts: here I am thinking in particular of the compound words that Williamson draws attention to, and *Deor* lacks the playful ambiguity of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, but nevertheless has a number of areas in which a word can be translated in two or more ways. For example, the opening line "Weland, him be wurman...", in which 'wurman' is presumed to stem from 'wyrm', serpent/worm, may also be presumed to be a metaphorical reference to bonds or swords restraining Weland.[10] I wanted to keep a respectful and sombre tone, but also wanted to maintain the original poetic ambiguity and metaphor, so used the translation "through slithering chains" (line 1). The original metaphor is preserved, as is the mental image of serpentine bonds restraining and sorrowing Weland: the physical objects seem to come to life, taking on the states of both animal and object at once. Elsewhere, I have endeavoured to nod to dual meaning and ambiguity by creating plays on words from the original Old English. The original Old English of line 10 reads (in reference to Beodohilde's pregnancy) "ðæt heo gearolice ongieten hafde", or "once it had been clearly realised" [that she was pregnant]. I played on the idea of gearolice, 'clear' of sight or of knowledge/understanding according to the Bosworth-Toller, using the phrase 'became transparent' to encompass both meanings of the original Old English.[11] In this way, I copied my partner's dance moves - even if not perfectly.

Lastly, I wish to turn to the section of the poem I spent the most time on: the narrative refrain of "Þæs oferode, ðisses swa mæg." The phrase has been translated in a number of ways, by a number of people; the venerated Heaney, for example, translated it as "That passed over, this can too." in his version of *Deor*.[12] I felt this lacked a certain poetic and aural appeal, and wanted to create something more emotive and lyrical, while maintaining the detachment of 'ðisses swa m æg' as the "statement of probability, expressing future surmountal of trouble" identified by L. Whitbread, who asserts that the refrain is absolutely impersonal - recommending the translation "Old troubles have passed, and present ones may."[13] To this end, I settled on the phrase "That ended one day, so this also may", trading the idea of movement/passing by for a more hopeful (but still ultimately impersonal) idea of the ending of misery, and producing an a/b verse that both rhymed and had an equal number of syllables in each half.

Overall, the translation process was highly fulfilling, if difficult. I tended to opt for remaining close the original Old English when in doubt, but tried to inform my translation using critical theory, or at least understand why I disagreed with it. Where possible, I used Old English quirks such as

compounds and double meanings, although I tended to refrain from litotes due to wanting to make the poems relatively accessible to a modern day audience, who would be likely to miss the understatement in favour of a literal understanding, and favour ambiguity allowing for multiple interpretations. The result is a portfolio of poems, two of which are shown and ˄nglo-Saxon and contemporary

ɜuity of Wulf and Eadwacer', *Studies in Philology*, 78.5 (1981), pp. 39-51 (p. 41)

[2] Roger S Bagnall, 'Informal Writing in a Public Place: The Graffiti of Smyrna', *Everyday Writing In The Greco-Roman East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011) pp. 7-26 (p. 11)

[3] Richard Marsden, 'Wulf and Eadwacer', *The Cambridge Old English Reader*, 2nd ed (St Ives: Cambridge University Press, 2015) pp. 383-386 (p. 383)

[4] Baker, p. 43

[5] Collins German Dictionary [online], s.v. 'Gift', online at: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/german-english/gift [Accessed 21/05/2018]

[6] Seiichi Suzuki, 'Wulf and Eadwacer: A Reinterpretation and Some Conjectures', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 88.2 (1987), pp. 175-185 (p. 182)

[7] Ibid, p. 183

[8] Richard Marsden, 'Deor', *The Cambridge Old English Reader* (pp. 365-369)

[9] Craig Williamson, 'On Translating Old English Poetry', *"Beowulf" and Other Old English Poems* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2011) pp. 1-18 (p. 2)

[10] Marsden, 'Deor', p. 367

[11] Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary [online], s.v. 'gearolice', http://bosworth.ff.cuni.cz/047114 [Accessed 22/05/2018]

[12] Seamus Heaney, 'Deor', *The Word Exchange*, ed. Greg Delanty and Michael Matto (New York and London: Norton, 2012) pp. 47-49

[13] L. Whitbread, 'Text-Notes on Deor', *Modern Language Notes*, 62.1 (1947) pp. 15-20 (p. 20)

"This is madness": The Liminal Space Between Sanity and Insanity in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*

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Since the advent of modern psychiatry, the term 'insanity' has become obsolete from medical literature, but is still used in the courtroom to determine an individual's culpability. According to Louis Sass in his book *Madness and Modernism*, this is because 'madness', often conflated with 'insanity', has historically been conceptualised as irrationality and a lack of introspective self awareness.[1] Sass focuses on Schizophrenia, a psychosis within which an individual is prone to what Dr. Thomas Claye Shaw called 'delusions or false ideas'. In his famous lecture to graduate medical students, 'On the Mental Processes of Sanity and Insanity', Shaw pointed to the paradoxical nature of the term, and the subsequent difficulty in defining it.[2] Allen Thiher has argued that this difficulty lies in the fact that psychiatry has no universal theoretical model, and is subject to historical determinations of language, which are beyond human control.[3]

Language transcends the limits of perspective, and plays an important role in defining insanity in Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway*.[4] Woolf has long been known for her distinct narrative style and intense focus on the inner worlds of her characters. I will be using Sass' understanding of madness as Psychosis, Shaw's discussion of the paradoxical nature of insanity, and Thiher's theories of selfhood and consciousness to argue that, in *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf utilises focalisation, thought representation, and characterisation to blur the distinction between characters and behaviours that are explicitly, or otherwise, 'insane', and those that are more socially acceptable and 'sane'.

Emil Kraepelin, prominently known as 'the father of modern scientific psychiatry', described insanity and madness as 'an inner world' (Thiher, p. 228). Interpreting this inner world, then, is a subjective experience for an observer. Virginia Woolf's use of free indirect discourse might allow readers insight into the thoughts and feelings of her characters, yet the question of whether characters have insight into their own behaviour, a marker of 'sanity', is more elusive. Insight is conventionally defined in psychiatry as 'a correct attitude to morbid change in oneself' and agreeing with this definition implies agreement that schizophrenics, or the 'insane', lack true insight (Sass, P. 351). In some ways, Woolf's characters Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith do lack insight. They are paranoid, afraid, and in denial that their preoccupations and delusions are far from reality. Septimus insists he has a 'perfect' brain despite seeing visions of Evans, his dead friend (p. 77). Clarissa is constantly preoccupied with ageing, dying, and whether people are trying to hurt or embarrass her. She is impulsive, often behaving 'emotionally, histrionically' (p. 43).

Vivid descriptions of her as she 'sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on' suggests a simultaneous sense of interiority and exteriority, much like a narrative that shifts between the narrator's perspective, and that of her characters (p. 5-6). Readers do not know who is speaking here: Woolf, acutely aware of her characters' inner states, in spite of their ignorance; or Clarissa, being voiced through Woolf. Being 'outside, looking on' suggests a sense of dissociation between the mind and body. This dissociation is characteristic of what Sass terms 'Dehumanisation' or 'Disappearance of the Active self', and is not uncommon in descriptions of individuals suffering from a mental illness (Sass, p. 31). Comparing Clarissa to a 'knife', a sharp tool capable of splitting and fragmenting things that are whole, with relative ease, conveys an uncomfortable sense of unpredictable danger. Not specifying what constitutes the absolute 'everything' heightens this sense of danger, and brings into question whether the narrative really is providing insight to readers, let alone indicating whether it is possessed by the dangerous, unpredictable, and potentially 'insane' characters within.

Although chronic dissociation is characteristic of psychosis, Woolf shows that it can also be a tool that allows for a form of self-reflexivity that is external to introspection. Much scholarly work on madness and insanity points to a lack of rationality and reason as an underpinning symptom, due to which the mad often believe that their delusions are real. Septimus considers this in thoughts that Woolf makes readers privy to, as he reflects on his state of mind. 'He could reason; he could read. He could add up his bill; his brain was perfect; it must be the fault of the world then - that he could not feel' (p. 77). Here, Septimus acknowledges that reason is an important element of sanity, suggesting some level of insight into the perception of those that are considered insane. However, he sees sanity purely as cognitive ability. A sense of uncertainty is felt as he reaches his conclusion, that it 'must be' the world's fault. How sure is he, of his absolute assertion? The vague and nonspecific nature of the 'it' followed by the reason, almost as an afterthought, entertains the possibility that he may be lashing out, unsure of why he is distressed.

Septimus is, in a sense, correct in blaming 'the world'. It is revealed to readers that Septimus has witnessed his friend Evans being killed in the war, and possibly has what was referred to as 'shell-shock', and would be referred to today as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a product of world events, external to himself, and out of his control. Sass asks if madness might derive from 'a heightening rather than a dimming of conscious awareness, and an alienation not from reason but from the emotions, instincts, and the body?' (Sass, p. 4) Septimus' inability to feel, his 'alienation' from his emotions, gives him a uniquely distanced perspective, a 'heightening' of conscious awareness. This brings into conflict the ideas that the 'mad' lack reason, insight, and awareness, considering

that characters considered insane are exercising these very traits, albeit in ways that are unacceptable to society.

Sass argues that the 'enshrining of reason' can 'splinter the unity and authenticity of the human being', and that madness should not be perceived in terms of reason and rationality (Sass, p. 4). If we consider the idea that human beings have an 'authentic' sense of selfhood, then we risk forgetting that, like many of Woolf's characters, human beings are multifaceted. Woolf's characters are portrayed as having facets that often come into conflict with one another. In the opening of the novel, the narrator describes how Clarissa 'had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown. This being Mrs Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs Richard Dalloway,' (p. 8), setting a precedent for the viewing of characters, not as single beings, but parts of themselves. 'Mrs Dalloway' is described as having 'charming manners' and complying with rules of society - being a good hostess (p. 157). This, I would argue, is represented as the 'sane' part of her, visible to other characters who perhaps do not perceive her as delusional.

References to 'Clarissa' seem to appear more often when she acts 'with a sudden impulse, with a violent anguish' (p. 111). These are only a few examples in a pattern that one can identify with close reading, but Woolf herself, through Clarissa's focalised lens, presents readers with the paradox that when her character is perceived as 'Mrs Dalloway', she becomes 'invisible; unseen'. It can be argued that this means it is not possible to view only her 'sane' self, and that she does not identify with this part of herself, as it does not really exist, except in the minds of other characters. Despite tensions between the two parts of herself, and feeling 'unknown', Woolf also describes Clarissa looking in the mirror and seeing an image of herself as 'pointed; dartlike; definite' (p. 31). Is Clarissa/Mrs Dalloway the only character that can truly know who, or what, she is? There is a tension, then, between being able to put one's finger on a character and label them as one 'definite' thing, and the idea that insanity, as Thiher argues, like any psychiatric concept, is subject to 'language games' and shifting definitions of the self (Thiher, p. 234).

When thinking, then, about how other characters perceive insanity, 'language games' become all the more relevant. A prominent example of this is Sir Walter's refusal to use the term 'madness', and instead 'called it not having a sense of proportion' (p. 85). Woolf's use of 'madness' suggests that the term existed and was very much in use, but deliberately not used by Sir Walter, who would have been concerned with offending the sensibilities of his genteel clients by calling them 'mad', as the term carried stigma. Woolf's mention of one instead of the other, however, implicitly suggests that they were synonymous, even though 'proportion' is vague, and does not at all clarify the pathology or nosology of 'madness'. Sir Walter - whom I would argue would have been a supporter of Kraepelin's 'scientific' understanding of madness — prescribes, with no scientific basis, arbitrary amounts of rest, telling his clients they need to reach a specific body weight in order to restore 'proportion' to their lives (Thiher, p. 234). Woolf has both a direct and indirect opposition to this idea, calling 'divine proportion' his 'goddess', suggesting that characters like Sir William, appointed by society to make the distinction between sane and insane, obey a dogmatic and arbitrary approach to treating mental illness, exoticising and fetishising 'proportion' (p. 87).

Readers can sense anger in the narrator's voice as she says 'this is madness, this sense; in fact, his sense of proportion' (p. 88) supporting Shaw's notion that there is no such thing as 'disorder'. 'It is only our imperfect knowledge', Shaw says, 'of the way in which cause and effect interact which limits our forecast of what must happen by absolute necessity' (Shaw, p. 211). Sir William lacks this understanding, which Woolf reiterates in her sardonic mockery of the term 'proportion', when she refers to Millicent Bruton as having 'lost her sense of proportion' for exaggerating (p. 95). Millicent is not deemed insane or mad by any of the other characters, and her exaggeration is harmless. In referring to a literal loss of a sense of proportion, Woolf highlights the ridiculous notion that an arbitrary concept can define whether an individual is in need of a psychological intervention. The brevity of this reference weighs heavily on the mind of a reader who has associated 'proportion' with madness, institutionalisation, and medical authorities like Sir William, who believe they have the answers to what it means to be 'insane'.

Medical authorities are not only interested in labelling and defining characters like Septimus, but in controlling their behaviour. This control, I would argue, is what Shaw termed 'new automatism' which he describes as 'the grinding influence of oppression' that 'maintains what is called "order" but what is really injustice [...] the tyranny of the strong over the weak' (Shaw, p. 211). Sir William embodies this tyranny in claiming that if his treatments based on arbitrary values were to fail, he would resort to using his societal connections, and police force 'which, he remarked very quietly, would take care, down in Surrey, that these unsocial impulses, bred more than anything by the lack of good blood, were held in control' (p. 89). It is chilling to consider what it means to 'take care' of, and 'control' people, and the lack of specificity; the quiet stating of this fact suggests that measures were not meant to treat, or help these individuals. There is something sinister about being expedited away from London, hidden away from society, and any external accountability. Sir William's understanding of madness, therefore, is based on eliminating 'unsocial impulses', reducing people down to how acceptable their behaviour is in accordance with preconceived notions about their bloodlines as the greatest determining factors. These factors, are, of course, not based on any scientific or medical understanding of an individual's state of mind, and instead are a reflection of Bradshaw's disturbing and oppressive elitism that serves only those who he deems his equals in society. The fact that this reasoning is not explicitly mentioned to the other characters or any of their families exposes an underlying knowledge that Bradshaw's idea of 'order' is really injustice, and his abuse of power here could almost be seen as sociopathic, lacking empathy for anyone of 'bad blood'.

This sinister sense of injustice at the hands of esteemed medical professionals is also characterised in Woolf's focalised narrative through Septimus' thoughts, as he explains that he feels condemned [...] to death' for his 'sin', by 'the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils', that he terms 'human nature' (p. 80-81). Septimus' descriptions of 'blood-red nostrils' bring to mind a demon or monster of some sort, rather a human being. The stark contrast illustrated by the juxtaposition of 'human nature' with monstrous imagery suggests a greater contention: the idea that medical authorities; the likes of Holmes and Bradshaw, act under the guise of humane and

well-intentioned help, yet are secretly monstrous, and are the very causes of Septimus' madness. In his lecture, Shaw describes how limiting the expression of human nature means that 'force has to be used and the nascent trend of excitement must be nipped in the bud by the law'. Interestingly, he makes the point that if a mad man (like Septimus) were to act in this manner, it would be considered unacceptable, 'and yet [...] no one accuses the perpetrators of insanity' (Shaw, p. 214). Woolf refers to Septimus' inability to feel as a 'sin', alluding to the fact that these men, these 'perpetrators' act as deities operating under a rigid and dogmatic approach. Her use of the term 'human nature' in this manner highlights that Septimus' pain and helplessness are attributed to what Shaw shows is a flawed understanding of how people are supposed to act, and behave, and an inclination to call them 'insane' for not fitting this mould.

David Rosenhan, who conducted an experiment to investigate whether it is possible to distinguish the 'sane' from the 'insane', asked the simple question: 'Do the salient characteristics that lead to diagnoses reside in the patients themselves or in the environments and contexts in which observers find them?'[5] In this essay, I have argued that answering this question is difficult, for various reasons. Neither Clarissa nor Septimus can fit neatly into a box. Woolf's focalisation exposes the contradictory nature of their behaviour and thought processes with expectations of the 'insane'. Furthermore, multiplicity of character, shifting ideas of the self, and Woolf's use of free indirect discourse blurs the line between various facets of

characters, and between author and character, bringing into question whether there really is a static, objective reality or context within which to define 'insanity'. The inhumane, illogical, and contradictory opinions of characters representing medical authority suggests that even they are unable to truly understand and distinguish between the two states, and in a different context, their behaviour might be considered 'insane'.

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A Close Reading of Joyce's *Ulysses* (pg. 33, ll. 3-25)

CIARA HEALY, English Literature

Ulysses is a text that resists our attempts to impose meaning on it, and this passage is no exception. In much the same way as the individual struggles to find meaning in the irregularities and commonalities of ordinary life — and thus turns to God, Nation, or Government — the text proves to the reader that searching for a singular meaning or purpose is, as the narrator states, ultimately 'futile'.[1] *Ulysses*, then, is a novel that eschews meaning. The larger ideologies or institutions that attempt to chain the individual to a singular meaning or purpose are called into question. Stephen must reject their history in order to transcend it. In this sense, the themes in the passage reflect those that belong to the text as a whole. However, the passage also poses a radical challenge to the patriarchal authorities that have governed society and the individual. Joyce leads us back to the only true authority there is — life, begotten by woman. This is perhaps the only authority that Stephen ultimately cannot shake, as he is haunted by images of his dead mother.

One of the ways in which authority over the individual is reasserted or challenged is through pedagogy. In this passage in particular, Stephen battles with conventional modes of teaching which involve the act of copying answers.

> Stephen touched the edges of the book. Futility.
> - Do you understand how to do them now? he asked.
> - Numbers eleven to fifteen, Sargent answered. Mr Deasy said I was to copy them off the board, sir.
> - Can you do them yourself? Stephen asked.
> - No, sir. (p. 33, ll. 5-10)

This direct exchange between Stephen and Cyril explores the uneasy relationship between teacher and student, or author and reader. How can Cyril know the answer to be true if he does not understand the process by which he got there? It is the ability to think creatively and counter existing knowledge that encourages dissent. Stephen favours modes of teaching that help the individual to think rather than police their thoughts. Mr Deasy's mode of teaching discourages this. This is evident in the very structure of their conversation. Stephen is questioning Cyril, forcing him to think for himself. The first time he does this, Cyril automatically repeats what he has been instructed to do by Mr Deasy. Eventually, Stephen breaks through and Cyril is forced to admit that he does not know how to do the sums for himself. This is evidence that this pattern can in fact be broken, that we can move away from traditional or established modes of teaching and learn to think for ourselves. This exchange is perhaps a microcosm of a larger exchange happening between the text and the reader. In *Ulysses*, Joyce avoids conventional modes of storytelling. Woolf describes the way in which 'he disregards[...]whatever seems to him adventitious, whether it be

probability, or coherence, or any other of these signposts which for generations have served to support the imagination of a reader whose called upon to imagine what he can neither touch nor see'.[2] Without these 'signposts' the reader is no longer afforded the benefits that come with an orderly structure or a classical narrative. The multiplicity of perspectives and styles means there is no single authority in the text that the reader may depend upon in order to derive meaning from it. Just as Stephen is trying to break away from these dominant and centralised authorities, so too, then, is the reader. The text demands our critical and interpretive labour, just as Stephen's method requires his pupil to interact with rather than imitate him. This new pedagogy is democratic rather than elitist. In a much freer way we are encouraged to make our own interpretations rather than work towards the pursuit of a singular truth.

In breaking away from these outdated modes of teaching, Stephen finds himself in constant conflict with the past. Conventional thinking views history as a linear progression, the gradual triumph of progress — but for Stephen history is a tale of conflict and struggle, the ongoing clash between past and present. The authority of the various institutions and ideologies that Stephen attempts to break away from rest on these foundations. The State, the Church, the Nation — the weight of history is behind them. Stephen must therefore reject the past in order to transcend its legacies. However, this is complicated by his own emotional and psychological ties to the past. Stephens' perspective will always be shaped by the institutions that educated him. He still uses arcane references despite his resistance to outmoded systems and institutions: 'His mother's prostrate body the fiery Columbanus in holy zeal bestrode' (p. 33, ll. 17-18). This Columbanus refers to the Irish monk who abandoned his mother to spread the gospel across continental Europe during the dark ages. In much the same way, Stephen abandoned his own mother in her dying hour, but for lack of faith. His reference suggests that he will always see the world through the lens of religious philosophy and Catholic dogma. Stephen's refusal to say a prayer by his mother's bedside is mentioned by Buck Mulligan in the first episode: 'You could have knelt down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you' (p. 4, ll. 9-10). For Stephen this is a matter of principle. It is a statement of his refusal to acknowledge the existence of God and therefore the authority of the Catholic Church. And yet in this section he is still haunted by the image of her 'prostrate body' (p. 33, l. 17). He may have rationalised his decision, but emotionally he is still burdened by guilt. He fears he is digging up her memory rather than burying it. But is this not what the text itself is doing? *Ulysses* breathes new life into the most ancient of tales. The text reinvents a classical form to serve a modern purpose. T. S. Eliot described this as 'a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'.[3] Yet in this passage we do not find order. The past converges with the present to horrifying effect: 'A poor soul gone to heaven: and on a heath beneath winking stars a

fox, red reek of rapine in his fur, with merciless bright eyes scraped in the earth, listened, scraped up the earth, listened, scraped and scraped' (p. 33,ll. 22-25). It is an image of destruction, of chaos. Note the repetition of the fox's action, this is not the first nor the last time that Stephen will be plagued by thoughts of his dead mother, as we see throughout the text. It is not only Stephen, but the text itself that carries the burden of the past. *Ulysses* is as much a response to the old as it is a rallying cry to the new. Perhaps, as Stephen discovers, the past cannot be entirely forgotten.

This idea is most fully realized in Stephen's vision of motherhood. In biological and reproductive terms, the closest one can be is to their mother.

> Yet someone had loved him, borne him in her arms and in her heart. But for her the race of the world would have trampled him under foot, a squashed boneless snail. She had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own.(p. 33. ll. 12-16)

Stephen's personal history allows for a real connection between Stephen and his pupil. Prior to this his interactions with the class had been distanced and cryptic. The narrative technique encourages our compassion and empathy for Cyril, who despite being 'ugly' (p. 33, l. 11), must be loved by someone. Stephen's interior monologue gives depth to a character we would otherwise overlook. Declan Kiberd notes that Sylvia Beach described the author as having 'treated everyone as an equal, whether they were writers, children, waiters [...] he confided in her that everybody interested him and that he had never met a bore'.[4] One could argue that *Ulysses* takes the same approach. It takes place on an ordinary day, with ordinary people, describing ordinary events. Perhaps the most radical statement of all is declaring everyday life as the modern epic. This is explicitly realised through childbirth, the most ordinary and extraordinary event to take place in a person's life. In order to create new life the mother gives of herself: 'She had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own'. In a sense, it parallels the Catholic Eucharist in which wine is transformed into Christ's blood and then drunk by his followers to replenish them spiritually. It is a ceremony that Buck Mulligan parodies in the opening of the text. In this passage it is inverted, or perhaps reverted back to 'the only true thing in life' (p. 33, ll. 16-17). It is woman that gives of herself to replenish her child physically, and she does this by allowing it to literally drain her blood in the womb. This act of life-giving has been appropriated by male figures, but it is the mother that begets life, not the father. It is from her that new life springs forth. The myth of paternity is based on a premise that is inherently flawed. If men are not made to create, perhaps they can only repeat the mistakes of the past, by digging it up over and over again. Of course, the birth of Cyril is juxtaposed with the death of Stephen's own mother. This suggests that there must be death in order to create new life. This is reflected in the very form and language of the text. The traditional novel must die, or be killed mercilessly by the author, in order to forge a new form that does more than simply imitate what came before.

As much as *Ulysses* tries to resist the past, it is beholden to it. It is forged in response to the very ideologies and institutions Stephen so desperately resists, and yet still clings to. But ultimately, this passage reveals that it is not the burdens of Nation, State or Church that prove unshakable, but a mother's love. The history Stephen cannot bare to part with is his own. While the language he uses may be shaped by the institutions that educated him, his view of the world is defined by his mother and her passing. *Ulysses* is a text that goes out of its way to reject any meaning that is imposed by external forces or institutions. Perhaps the only true meaning is the most simple one, the physical act of giving life.

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A Close Reading of the Closing Scene of *Call Me By Your Name* (2017)

MOLLIE SIMPSON, American Studies

Call Me By Your Name is a film of unrelenting steely beauty and aesthetic tenderness.[1] The closing scene is exemplary of how the observational, naturalised mise-en-scene creates emotional impact on the spectator, combining realism and performativity to add cathartic dimensions.

The ending begins with a deep focus, wide-angle tracking shot that exposes us to each element of the scene in a seemingly unbiased projection. Elio leads the shot as he walks through a doorway and towards the fireplace, before pausing to flip a coin. The framing subtly moves in his direction as he walks, the camera then tilting down to show him sat beside the fireplace. The spectator is therefore positioned observationally in direct and central relation to Elio, the subject of the shot. The centralisation of subject representation gives the spectator a sense of unity and control over the scene.[2]

While the spectator is given the illusion of control, *Call Me By Your Name* maintains its sense of realism through use of diegetic light. This scene is entirely lit by the burning fireplace, the soft glow of the Hanukkah Menorah, and the white light seeping in from the window. This choice of natural, diegetic lighting amplifies the atmosphere of realism, and viewers are invited to accept each aspect of the scene as true.

Once Elio sits beside the fireplace, the scene cuts to an extended close-up shot. Sayombhu Mukdeeprom's use of a close-up shot places the spectator at Elio's inverse. In Jacques Lacan's view, this scene acts as a mirror to the spectator, inviting us to identify and reflect the emotion portrayed.[3] Viewing Chalamet's emotive performance face-on adds a personal dimension to the scene that invokes catharsis and draws us out of the immersive naturalism of Guadagiano's mise-en-scene and into a mode of identification. The realism of diegetic light is contrasted by the use of non-diegetic music. The close-up shot of Elio in front of the fireplace is overlaid with Sufjan Stevens' *Visions of Gideon*, the swan song of the soundtrack tailored to the film. The use of a specified soundtrack adds a dimension of transmedia, and nods to the process of pre-production, a subtle but tangible indicator that we are watching a film. The emotive flow of the song moves with Chalamet's performance, and as we follow the song to its close, the background, lost in the shallow depth of field, becomes filled with Elio's family. He turns to face them, the song finishes, and the screen fades to black. Our view of the scene is revealed to be less objective, less placed in real time, and more dependent on the character of Elio, and the span of a single four minute song.

The combined effect of these audio and visual perceptual techniques creates a naturalised mise-en-scene contrasted with hidden subjectivity and the element of transmedia. We are reminded in this closing scene of the dual power of *Call Me By Your Name*: to present authenticity side by side with artistry. It is at once immersively natural and performatively stylistic, the overall effect cathartic and beautiful. This paradox of the meta-filmic juxtaposed with realism is at the heart of what makes *Call Me By Your Name* so intensely resonant and powerful: complexity masked as simplicity, superficiality embedded within authenticity.

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An Extract from *The Island of Traditions*

LUCIA CANNIZZARO, Creative Writing

Arriving in Palermo, we get lunch at the Antica Focacceria San Francesco, the oldest, and most famous, bakery in the city. We order the classic arancini alongside the lesser known schiticchi, panelle and crocchette — fried bits of Sicilian street food that use only the finest local ingredients. I rub my hands together as it arrives, as eager to eat as I am to see the rest of the city.

Dad takes us to the Ballarò market. He knows his way. My Granddad was born and raised here, and we all proudly carry our Sicilian surname around the world. Arriving at the market is like stepping back into the 60s. Most people here are regulars, they know what they want and which stand to get it from.

An old couple stand hunched together, analysing a pig's thigh. Their eyes, behind thick lenses, are still trained to find the best slice. A woman works her way from stall to stall, picking the freshest vegetables for her family tonight. She hurries past a group of old men who, like us, are simply strolling around, savouring each moment.

"Pesce fresco!" "Signora, guardi quant'è grasso 'sto maiale!" The shouts of the merchants bounce around from each corner of the market. Their arms in the air, vying for our attention.

Their hands are rough in different ways. Wrinkled if they are fishermen, always busy with their hands in water. Callous if they are farmers, with that odd bit of stubborn dirt they can never seem to wash off. The butcher's hands are covered in blood.

The smell is as chaotic as the place. The stench of fish refuses to mix with the aged smell of cheese. Exhaust fumes from a passing scooter cloud the citrus smell of fresh lemons.

As we leave the market, I look up above it all. In a gap between the glowing coloured tents that protect the stalls from the afternoon sun, I see a woman with what seems to be her granddaughter, looking out from their small balcony. My sister and I smile at them both, and above the fading clatter of the market, I hear the grandmother say, "Come on Chiara, say Hi to the girls." The child's puffy hand lifts up to wave at us. There is truly a variety of palms in this place.

'The capture, breaking and ownership of women': Critiques of the Sadean Male in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*

HANNAH WARDLE, English Literature

Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*[1] has long been subject to criticism from writers such as Patricia Duncker for the ways in which its short stories, which are 'often described as a group of traditional fairy tales given a subversive feminist twist',[2] present male and female heterosexual dynamics. Although Carter's stories overtly depict female sexuality and pleasure, Duncker disputes that this alone does not justify feminist interpretations of Carter's fiction. For Duncker, the very fact that these 'celebrations of erotic desire' are written within the 'straight-jacket' of the fairy tale form means that the messages they deliver are inherently patriarchal. Carter may be attempting to tell stories of female sexual liberation, but ultimately her female characters are still victims of male sexuality concerned with the 'possession, the capture, breaking and ownership of women'.[3] Whilst this destructive male sexual desire is prevalent within her stories, I would argue that Carter uses the fairy tale form, as well as depictions of male sexuality, to draw attention to, and criticise, the violence and oppression which is inherent within them, rather than, as Duncker claims, allowing it to exist unchallenged. This essay will demonstrate the ways in which *The Bloody Chamber* does not contribute to the patriarchal hierarchies of traditional fairy tales, but rather deconstructs and reinscribes the patriarchal fairy tale form to condemn violent male sexuality. By looking first at how form and style work towards this effect throughout the collection, and then examining representations of male sexuality within the stories, 'The Bloody Chamber' and 'The Snow Child', I argue that, through critiquing patriarchal sexual relations, Carter advocates sexual pleasure outside the oppressive confines of male sexuality.

The tales in *The Bloody Chamber* are often interpreted as retellings of fairy tales; thematically, the stories mirror classic fairy tales such as 'Beauty and the Beast' ('The Courtship of Mr Lyon', 'The Tiger's Bride'), 'Little Red Riding Hood' ('The Were-Wolf', 'The Company of Wolves', 'Wolf-Alice'), and Charles Perrault's version of the French folk tale, 'Bluebeard' ('The Bloody Chamber'). This is problematic to Duncker as fairy tales have historically reproduced patriarchal hierarchies, subjugating women and reducing them to the status of perpetual victim. According to Duncker, the fairy tale form is one of the earliest forms of narrative a child will be exposed to, and therefore stories which fall into this genre act as a 'structure of educational propaganda'.[4] The messages in these stories are absorbed by children as part of their early socialisation as children internalise these power structures and apply them to their surrounding environment and social relationships. Therefore, Duncker claims that the convention in classic fairy tales of women and girls as victims is a 'process by which women are taught fear

[...] as a function of their femininity'.[5] It is this intrinsic misogyny which leads Duncker to believe that Carter cannot successfully create a feminist depiction of female sexuality within the literary landscape of fairy tales, for the very nature of the fairy tale is to uphold such patriarchal values and are disseminated among younger generations.

However, there is a certain effectiveness in reworking and altering classic, well-known stories, which simply would not exist had Carter's stories of female erotic desire not taken the form of fairy tales. Retelling a traditionally masochistic story such as 'Bluebeard' in a way which empowers the heroine and undermines the violent sexuality of the dominant male, as Carter does in the collection's opening tale, 'The Bloody Chamber', prompts readers to draw direct comparisons between Carter's version and the original. The story is told, in Carter's version, from the narrative perspective of the female character. The narrator repeatedly refers to her husband (who we discover later to be the villainous 'Bluebeard' character) as her 'Marquis' (p. 4), referencing of course the Marquis de Sade, which foreshadows the revealing of the character's sadistic nature. Taking a well-known story and retelling it from a female perspective, as Carter does, allows us to critically view the destructive masculine sexuality which is prevalent within many traditional tales, and draw comparisons between the new interpretation and the 'original' to highlight the problematic areas of familiar fairy tales which we may not have recognised. Although Duncker may be right to note that the stories Carter deals with do contain themes of violent masculinity and female oppression, she fails to acknowledge how the changes Carter makes actually draws attention to these ideas and the ways in which they can be damaging. As Merja Makinen writes, 'Carter argued that Bloody Chamber was 'a book of stories about fairy stories' [...] and this ironic strategy needs to be acknowledged'.[6] Carter's retellings are not simply altered versions of fairy tales, but are stories which bring to light the ways in which these traditional stories work to subjugate female sexuality whilst celebrating male sexual dominance. It is through this choice of form that Carter achieves an irony which allows her to criticise traditional views of male and female sexuality — writing fairy tales does not make Carter complicit in supporting these views, but rather allows her to directly challenge them.

The story which is most overtly concerned with 'the capture, breaking and ownership of women', which Duncker claims is intrinsically tied to male sexuality, is the collection's eponymous opener, 'The Bloody Chamber'.[7] Male sexual expression is portrayed in this tale through the motif of consumption: as Oana Urulescu notes, 'the flesh of women, most often girls with awakening sexuality, maidens, is described in terms of food'.[8] The narrator of 'The Bloody Chamber' describes herself, after being undressed by her husband, as being 'bare as a lamb chop' (p. 1), whilst the comparison between herself and young lamb's meat emphasises her youth and innocence,

foregrounding her powerlessness. This also depicts her as an object of consumption for her husband's enjoyment. She is 'his bargain' (p. 11), something won and possessed by him, for him, to devour and enjoy — the idea of her pleasure is completely omitted as she is objectified through these metaphors. She is the young, fresh meat which the beastly male preys on; her frailty is contrasted with his carnal violence within this sexual encounter.

Here, the typical conventions of male and female sexuality are presented in exaggerated terms, which signifies the imbalance of power in sex and the dehumanising effect this can have upon women. Andrea Dworkin's writings in 'Pornography: Men Possessing Women' reflect these ideas, explaining how depictions of sex too often show 'the normal and natural sadism of the male happily complemented by the normal and natural masochism of the female'.[9] This heterosexual power imbalance has become so normalised in erotic fiction that it is expected that the woman will submit herself to the destructive desires of her male partner. When considering how she portrays this power imbalance in *The Bloody Chamber*, we may be inclined to agree with critics who, as Madelena Gonzalez writes, suggest Carter is 'complicit with male dominance', after all these carnal metaphors depict the exact kind of sexual relationship which Dworkin claims is oppressive to women.[10] However, the ending of 'The Bloody Chamber' sees the Sadeian male character punished for his destructive masculinity after sexually dominating and brutally murdering several of his female partners. His death at the hands of the narrator's mother symbolises the uprising of women against — and liberation from — the violent force of male sexuality. This, then. cannot be said to be a tale complicit with male dominance, for it portrays clearly the downfall of the sexually dominant male at the hands of liberated women. While this particular tale details the destructive force of male sexuality, its ending is a clear criticism of this force, and even more importantly demonstrates that women must, and are capable of, escaping from its oppressive powers.

Despite being the shortest of all the ten tales in *The Bloody Chamber*, 'The Snow Child' is one of the most impactful pieces, particularly in the ways it presents violent and destructive male desire. A page long, it is finely constructed with symbolic imagery and intricate choices of language. Although Duncker claims that Carter neglects to address the ways in which 'male sexuality' is 'linked with power and possession', the language used in the opening of this particular tale would suggest otherwise.[11] The narration begins in the historical present tense; we are told that 'the count and his wife go riding' (p. 105) in midwinter. This tense is associated with stories or jokes which are told by mouth, emulating the style of traditional fairy tales which were told and passed on through speech rather than writing. Carter again reappropriates and reinscribes the fairy tale form, despite Duncker's belief that the fairy tale form reproduces patriarchal power structures. This idea is emphasised in the story as the characters are introduced: whilst 'the Count' is referred to by his title, the female character is initially called only 'his wife', reducing her to an accessory of the dominant male (p. 105). Male ownership is taken to its extremes when the Count describes a female 'child of his desire' (p. 105), who then appears before him, provoking jealousy in the Countess. The phrasing here appears to be deliberately ambiguous. This can be read simultaneously: that the girl who he has constructed from his imagination is the child

he paternally wishes for, or that she is the ultimate object of his sexual desire, fusing the two ideas, encouraging readers to consider how men might sexually assert themselves over women, taking a possessive role over them as a parent might 'possess' their child. The diction used within the short opening section of the story is indicative of the developing themes of male sexual authority through Carter's use of symbolism.

Carter continues to use symbolism throughout the rest of the 'Snow Child' which evokes not just possessive male sexuality, but also destructive male sexuality. Duncker specifically calls this: 'the capture, breaking and ownership of women'.[12] First the Count symbolically 'destroys' his wife, through humiliation as his desire for the child grows and the Countess becomes jealous, she gradually becomes undressed as her clothes appear instead on the child, until she is 'bare as a bone' (p. 105) in the snow. His desire for the young girl, and neglect of his wife, drives the countess to a level of jealousy which leaves her physically vulnerable, stripped of her protection in the cold winter landscape. This is the first instance of the Count's sexual desire having a destructive effect on the female characters, which continues as we see the child of his creation prick her finger and bleed to death on a rose she is ordered to pick by the Countess. This shedding of blood can be read to symbolise her menstruation and reaching sexual maturity, as the Count's immediate reaction upon seeing the girl bleed and fall to the ground is to 'thrust his virile member into the dead girl' (p. 106)— even though she is now dead, the Count must use her, having reached maturity, for his sexual gratification, emphasising the idea that the girl is no more than an object of desire to him. Immediately after this, the girl melts until there is 'nothing left of her' (p. 106); as soon as she reaches sexual maturity she is used as a sexual object, emphasised by the fact that she is in a passive state of absolute death when the Count defiles her, and is then destroyed completely by this act of male sexual dominance. Finally, the rose which culturally symbolises romantic love — and now comes to symbolise the girl's death — is presented to the Countess by her husband. This conventionally romantic offering from husband to wife is tainted as the symbols of love and death are combined, summarising in one simple gesture how heterosexual relationships can be violent and destructive towards women. By offering his love, he is also offering his ownership and destruction of her, highlighting perfectly the ideas presented by Duncker about male sexual dominance.

Whilst Patricia Duncker rightly observes that the fairy tales which informed the stories of *The Bloody Chamber* play a role in the transmission of patriarchal ideas of female passivity and male ownership, she fails to acknowledge the ways in which Carter uses this format as a way of challenging such ideologies.[13] Writing within this genre allows Carter to draw attention to the misogynistic themes of traditional fairy tales and create new stories which demonstrate just how harmful dominant male sexuality can be for women in heterosexual relationships. It is also important to consider the context from which Carter was writing this collection: Hera Cook diligently notes that it was widely accepted 'prior to the 1970s that, with few exceptions, women were passive in relation to physical sexual activity'.[14] Therefore not only is *The Bloody Chamber* an effective criticism of violent male sexuality today, but it was — at the time of its publication — ground-breaking in recognising and challenging issues concerning

how male/female sexual interactions were viewed. Carter was one of the first female writers to challenge these previously assumed notions of male sexuality, writing fiction which sympathised with women who were oppressed by male sexuality, as well as encouraging them to seek liberation, which is why *The Bloody Chamber* remains an iconic feminist text today.

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Autumn in New York

JACOB THOMPSON, Creative Writing

It was a warm June morning when the first autumn leaf drifted down from the old London plane tree. A lone groundsman paused in his patrol to observe its descent, watching as it came to rest on the waters of Central Park reservoir. In a hundred and fifty years the old tree had never once shed early, and though the leaf's presence on that midsummer morning struck the groundsman as particularly peculiar, in the end he figured it was just a freak event, not worth a second glance, and probably nothing to worry about.

Never had he been more wrong. For though the Old London plane tree was the first in the State of New York to start shedding early, it was by no means the last. Within a week, all the trees in the greater Manhattan area had turned prematurely deciduous, their green leaves bleeding red and crisping brown, licked away by the city-wide breeze. Groundskeepers and landlords across the city grumbled and grouched as their gutters filled up with leaves, their aching backs the first collective victim of the autumn to come.

For soon the early fall had spread beyond the city's boroughs to the state's distant borders, and a large scale investigation had to be launched. Mayor Edward Folsom, three years into his first term and eager to earn a second, called upon every expert in the region to help, promising Washington that there would be no need to send in the National Guard just yet. Every botanist, ecologist and dendrologist in a hundred miles flocked to the city's motels, each eager to be the first to discover the root of Manhattan's malady, their long-dormant doctorates stirred at last to be touted above their breakfast buffets.

But the autumn was not to be intimidated. For all of the sap-samples collected, research tents erected and quadrats lost to the city's shrubberies, no scientific explanation could be found as to why the trees of New York had decided, so suddenly, to give up the ghost. Folsom's marauding scientists uncovered only two clear facts: firstly, that the early autumn extended no further than the New York State line, and secondly: that though the leaves were falling from every tree in the state, there was not a single bare branch to be seen. The leaves, they found, were endless, sprouting again and again, and yet always yellowed, ready to fall.

When City Hall's press releases revealed the lack of progress, the media set their teeth into the scandal, and Mayor Folsom could only watch as he lost his grip on the city. Folsom's Failure, read Thursday's headlines, Compostable Coward, Friday's, and by Sunday the New York Times had dubbed him the Mayor of Mulch. The press felt vindicated, if not exactly pleased, when the ongoing leaf-fall began to affect the city in increasingly dangerous ways. Road accidents surged tenfold as tyres lost traction in the compost, sewage networks in the lower-west side overflowed and filled the streets with refuse, and down a narrow back-alley in Sheepshead Bay a ninety-year old widower met her doom. Too weak to shift the sodden leaves that had submerged her ground-floor porch, and lacking a working telephone due to an ongoing dispute with AT&T, she starved to death in the space of ten days, alone and aching with hunger.

The death toll steadily rose, and Folsom cast aside his pride, calling upon the National Guard for help. The President, a man with less patience than hair and less hair than an orange, ordered the Guard to strike hard and fast, arming them with an abundance of chainsaws and all the propane they could carry. But for all their steel and all their pomp not a single tree could be felled. At every instance, in each park and back-lot in the city, the saw-toothed blades met trunks as hard as titanium, glancing from their bark as sparks flew left and right. When they tried to burn the trees, the wood would only scorch and chip, never catching alight or warping under the flames. In awe of the autumn's power, and eager to not to set the whole city alight, the President saw no other option but to evacuate the populace. Step down, my good man, he urged Mayor, we've done all that we can. Go with your people to Pennsylvania and wait for the autumn to end. But Folsom, a kid from the Bronx more arrogant than he was confident and more confident than he was smart, was not going down without a fight. If he couldn't end the autumn, he figured, then who the hell could?

He called a secret meeting in the basement of City Hall, refusing to move an inch until his engineers and xylologists could come up with a plan. The cause of the fall, he proclaimed, might have evaded them so far, but its symptoms were easy to spot, and where they couldn't rip out the roots they must try to strip the branches! Ninety-three donuts and seventy-five cups of coffee later, the plan had been drawn up. As the leaves could not be curtailed they would instead be contained, swept from the streets by a convoy of snowploughs, compacted at scrap yards around the city, and stacked in derelict areas of Queens and Brooklyn. The work began at dawn, and in the days that followed a golden brown skyline grew tall over the city, towers of leaves blazing with light come every sunset, some of them stretching so high that they threatened to outreach the Chrysler building.

Folsom would not stop there. A strong believer in the power of one stone to kill two birds, he called upon the unemployed and homeless to keep the city's airports functional. They flocked to JFK, La Guardia, Long Island, and Albany International, where for a day's hard raking they received a living wage, plus an all they-could-eat lunch buffet. The highways presented a different problem, being too long to sweep, and so Folsom ordered the construction of fifty jumbo wind turbines, each one sixty feet tall and thirty feet wide. Erected at regular intervals along the busiest stretches of the roads, they blew the rogue leaves upstate, to be the bane of the Rust Belt's rotting verandas and some other mayor's new problem. With the roads re-opened, those who wished to evacuate revved up their old jalopies and sped away, whilst those brave enough to stay on hunkered down to weather the storm.

Not all, of course, had suffered from the premature fall. The birds and the beasts had profited from Folsom's containment strategy, building nests and dens in the foundations of the condensed leaves.

The grey squirrel found itself especially comfortable, and their population rocketed to record numbers. At first the fuzzy creatures seemed a novelty, met with a smile as they dug for acorns and cigarettes in the porches of Broadway's hotels. Folsom tossed nuts to them from his office window to take his mind off his little apocalypse, and laughed as they scurried and scrapped in the gutters of Gracie Mansion. But when the breeding didn't stop and the squirrels began to outnumber the leaves, their public image rapidly deteriorated. With every pizza crust they consumed they grew fatter and more vicious, until soon they seemed like rats with bushy tails, shitting in every doorway and teaming up to overturn dumpsters.

On the evening of July the sixth they officially outstayed their welcome. Folsom, enjoying an anniversary dinner with his wife of seventeen years, found himself parted from his chocolate mousse by an aide with an urgent telephone call. Numerous reports had been made of an incident in front of Joey P.'s deli on 21st Street, involving a particularly large pack of particularly large squirrels. Joey P.'s had, for many years, been renowned for having the best whole-wheat bagels in the tristate area, but from that unsavoury evening onwards it was known only as the spot where little Mike O'Connor, lover of Spiderman and Saturday morning cartoons, had been dragged into the sewers by a horde of hungry rodents.

Promising his wife that they'd rearrange dinner, the Mayor returned to City Hall, and there he ordered an immediate change in focus from leaf containment to rodent eradication. A citywide announcement was made: for every sack of dead squirrels brought to cremation centres, one could receive $25 and a two-for-one movie ticket to any general release film. The massacre that followed provided a welcome distraction to the ongoing autumn, every bullet fired and corpse collected drawing the city's residents deeper into pleasant distraction. But Folsom knew that the tide of leaves was still rising, and it was only a matter of time before the city's banks would be breached.

Whilst everyone was busy shooting squirrels and watching movies, the Hudson River, long-since forgotten beneath a blanket of decay, had swollen higher and higher. Despite the best efforts of the coastguard and their numerous meetings with Folsom's crisis crew, the question of the waterways went unanswered. In truth, the Mayor could see no solution. If the rain held off for another week, he thought, they'd have a breakthrough, figure out some way of draining the river or barricading the bays, if they could just have a little more time. But a light drizzle on July fifteenth drowned his desperate hopes.

As the rain fell the water levels rose, and soon enough a flood of foliage choked up over the riverbanks, sweeping into south-side's lowest streets. Battery Park vanished within the first half hour, Castle Clinton received a new moat, Greenpoint turned golden all at once, and even Lady Liberty dipped her toes in the water, her island reduced to an islet by the swamp of sodden leaves.

The Whitehall Terminal was breached in turn, and this time Folsom refused to stand by and watch, taking to the river in a flotilla of dinghies to save the Staten Island Ferry. Ropes were tossed to and fro as he hollered pointless orders into a megaphone, and when the coastguard found they stood less chance of tying the ferry down than the Yankees did of winning the world series, the Mayor realised just how useless he was, one more life jacket in a dinghy full of

shiny heads and deep regrets. Swept along by the current of leaves, the ferry escaped upriver, entering Brooklyn Heights with a fanfare of screeching metal as fire escapes tumbled left and right, ripped from their red-brick blocks. The Mayor's party turned their rudders and fled to Little Italy, itself fast becoming Little Venice, all wayward dumpsters floating downriver like a fleet of green-shelled gondolas.

With so many streets waterlogged the leaf containment unit could no longer operate, and the trees never stopped shedding, not even for a moment. The waters could not be held back, and neither could the wind. Soon the leaf-towers in the derelict zones came crashing down. Whole blocks vanished as they tumbled into the canals, the subway lines were made impassable once and for all, and to go outside became a deadly proposition, so terribly deep did the channels of leaves now run.

Folsom floated on home to Gracie Mansion, along with his crews, and there he admitted defeat at long last, sinking into a cold midsummer of long nights, cheap whisky, and a thousand missed calls.

No matter how many leaves they might dredge, he lamented, and no matter how many dams they might build, the cold breeze of autumn would not cease to blow. The others who remained in the city came to the same conclusion in their own time, and those still able to leave did so, wading out on foot or cobbling together rafts from street signs and telephone wires. For those that still remained there was little to do but wait. A coldness had slipped into their hearts, despite their warm scarves and woollen jumpers, and they, like Folsom, had given up hope. For autumn, ever since the first so many millennia ago, has always brought with it the bittersweet melancholy of a year turning in on itself, of a story coming to a close, of a romance fading to unfeeling gloom. Autumn, for all of its colour, is a time for the blues.

And with an endless autumn came endless woe. It wasn't the leaves that killed New York, but the unmissable heartbreak of October, filling up every moment of August like static pouring out over a good record. The miasma worked its way into each and every heart, every stolen kiss, every makeshift date and every last phone call. Decade-long marriages fell to pieces in days, young couples forgot how to love, and fifteen hundred engagement rings vanished overnight, bartered for scraps of food or else tossed into the Hudson River.

Folsom never did rearrange his anniversary dinner. So busy he was with the plague of leaves, he let his poor wife languish alone, leaving her to face the last days of the city with no comfort save the mansion's staff. She could leave New York if she wished, be it by airlift or private boat, but what would be the point? The autumn had already spread to her heart, and in the end all she could bring herself to leave was her husband. One evening she stepped out of the mansion's front door in a warm coat and a pair of good boots, and with her resolve all but rotted away, she vanished into the mire.

The story of the Folsom's was not unique, and as the leaves of love withered and died all around so too did New York's chances of survival. None were immune to the fall, and on the sixteenth of August, his fifty-fifth birthday, Mayor Folsom stole away in the early hours of the morning, to a rowboat he'd stowed on the banks of the east river. He rowed southward with the sunrise, and the gulls, grown fat on the bounty of wayward fish, watched him go,

bobbing along with their heads hanging low, their reverence broken only by brief squabbles and snatches at passing sturgeon.

His city was still a beauty, Folsom thought to himself as he rowed, despite all the leaves and the loneliness. A real looker, sullied only by the sicksalt smell of the rotting leaves, their stench stinging at his nostrils as he drifted downriver to Main Street Park. There he docked on a narrow beach, and walked the rest of the distance to the Brooklyn Bridge, his socks sodden with river water, his head hung low. Some passers-by did still recognise him, some hollered or spat their regards, but by then none truly cared what became of the poor old Mayor. They were headed the same way, mostly, and so they walked together in silence, their hands tucked deep in the pockets of their overcoats and their scarves drawn tight around their necks. When they reached the approach to the bridge, they found that a queue had already formed, snaking down the asphalt toward the waterways. Folsom joined at the back, and quietly awaited his turn, all the while yearning for a spring he'd never see.

The morning passed away, person by person, the queue slowly shuffling to the bridge's highest point. Soon, it was Folsom's turn to approach the edge of the precipice, watched on by so many citizens with nothing left to say. He stepped up onto the lip of the barrier, the wind urging him on, and tugged the rough wool of his coat tight around him. The autumn breeze blew out the last flicker of warmth within him, and his withered heart all turned to mulch, he cast himself adrift. Another followed, as all soon would, in the days and weeks that followed.

Such was the nature of the fall of New York. Some say there are survivors still, those with the strongest hearts and minds, still wandering the streets in hope of spring. But the squirrels, in their wisdom, know the truth. They sit along the raised line of the D-Train every night, and gaze down at what remains of old Manhattan. It's hard to say what they might make of it all. But still, one can imagine that there's beauty in the way the river shines, glistening with rose-gold rings, their diamonds all aloft.