English Literature in the World

FROM MANUSCRIPT TO DIGITAL
ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE WORLD
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CONTENTS

I  List of Contributors

9  Introduction

English Literary Studies: What Now?
Alcinda Pinheiro de Sousa, Alda Correia,
Angélica Varandas, Maria de Jesus C. Relvas

I. Interdisciplinary Crossways in Medieval Literature: Text and Image

25  Studying Medieval English Literature: a Defence
Angélica Varandas

33  The Panther and the Dragon – Two Battling Breaths in the Old English Physiologus
Miguel Diogo Andrade

49  Text and Image, Sound and (E-)Motion:
Re-viewing the Bayeux Tapestry in the Digital Era
Miguel Alarcão

II. The Renaissance: a Bridge between Two Worlds

59  “Ther’s Portugal, a good air:”
Eleazar from Lust’s Dominion, Felipe de África and the Construction of the Early Modern Alien
Jesús López-Peláez Casellas and Milagros López-Peláez Casellas

77  Portuguese Diplomacy and the Written Representations of Queen Elizabeth I: a Bridge between Two Worlds
Susana de Magalhães Oliveira

85  Iconographic Manuscripts: Reading some Portraits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I
Maria de Jesus Crespo Candeias Velez Relvas

III. Romanticism: Looking Before and After

99  Blake and Big Data: Literary Data as a Challenge to Literary History
Jason Whittaker
117  Reception: “Jane Austen 2.00”  
  Alcinda Pinheiro de Sousa, Ana Daniela Coelho, Maria José Pires

139  Not of a Meaner Sort: Some Chapbook Adaptations of Defoe’s Moll Flanders  
  Márcia Bessa Marques

155  A Testament of Strength: Mary Prince’s Slave Narrative and the Digital World  
  Mariana Bicudo Castelo Branco Cunha

IV. Reconsidering Modernism and Postmodernism

171  “The other I am”  
  — Poetics of Otherness in the Works of Emerson, Whitman and Fernando Pessoa  
  Nuno Ribeiro

181  Ludic Remediations of Late Victorian Literature:  
  Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink, by Artifex Mundi  
  Teresa Pereira

197  Re-imagining Art’s Body Politic after/with Modernism:  
  Views from the Digital Scene and More  
  Catherine Bernard
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Introduction
ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES: WHAT NOW?

Writing about “the basic paradigms that have governed the academic criticism of literature in much of the English-speaking world for the last century or so” (vii), Joseph North argues, in Literary Criticism (2017), that since the 1980s critics have been downplaying the public role of literary texts, only read “in order to understand and theorize the social” (10), and he calls for the creation of a new method of criticism characterised as follows:

[…] deeply concerned with the aesthetic and the formal; sensitive to feeling and affect both as forms of cognition and in their own right as crucial determinants of individual, collective, and historical change; able to move broadly, in something like a generalist fashion, across times, places and cultures; willing to use the literary as a means of ethical (or political?) education; […] its emphasis on therapeutic rather than merely diagnostic uses of the literary; […] committed in a deep and rigorous but still fairly direct way to a public role. (194)

Immediately after enumerating these features, North makes clear that, after all, they constitute purely and simply “a list of the signature strengths of the lost critical paradigm in its best form.” (194)

Quite recently (March 30 – April 20, 2020), North’s book was heavily criticised in a series of posts published by John McGowan on his Public Intelligence Blog. McGowan is one of the editors of The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism (2001; 3rd edition, 2018), which Sarah Boxer qualified, in “How Crit Finally Won Out Over Lit”, when it first came out, as “a self-deconstructing bombshell […] crammed with attacks on everything that anthologies depend on: paraphrase, authorship, biography, canonization, publishers” (np). Furthermore, and quoting from McGowan’s web page at the Department of English and Comparative Literature website (College of Arts & Sciences, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), he “teaches a wide variety of courses in American and British intellectual culture since 1800”, his work sitting “at the intersection of philosophy, political theory, and literary studies” (np). Now, in his first post on Literary Criticism [“Joseph North (One)”, March 30, 2020], after the introductory rhetorical question “So what’s new in the 2010s?” – a question implying the “something new” that may account for this ‘return to “criticism”’ – McGowan contends
that “North appears blind to the fact that a discipline is a commodity within the institution that is higher education”, and that, as such, literary criticism “has lost significant amounts of value over the past ten years within the institution, for reasons both external and internal.” Internally, McGowan had already pointed out that interdisciplinarity and writing across the curriculum were two of the innovations threatening “the hegemony of the discipline”, while externally, he had indicated two reasons: ‘the right wing’s concerted attack on an ideologically suspect set of “tenured radicals” along with a more general discounting (even elimination) of value assigned to being “cultured”.

And yet, in his third post, suggestively titled “Sensibility, Community, Institution” (April 3, 2020), McGowan considers North’s project “notable”, among other reasons, “for its raising the issue of institutions”, and he quotes from Literary Criticism: “[…] the problem facing the discipline is […]the problem of creating a true paradigm for criticism – the problem of how to build an institution that would cultivate new, deeper forms of subjectivity and collectivity in a rigorous and repeatable way” (126-27). Such an assertion leads him into the analysis of “the nature of the aesthetic”, characterised as follows in the fourth post (“Joseph North Four – The Aesthetic”, April 6, 2020): ‘Seeing aesthetically […] consists in a) a call to attend closely to this thing or situation, b) an attempt to call forth – through an act of imaginative interpretation – “aspects” of that thing or situation hitherto unnoticed or neglected, and c) the projection of “an attitude” (now I am drawing on Kenneth Burke) toward the thing or situation in question.’ McGowan believes he is at last capable of beginning to devise how literary criticism can “cultivate new, deeper forms of subjectivity and collectivity”:

Burke calls art “the dancing of an attitude” and every attitude “an incipient action.” […] the work stages an attitude, a stance, toward its subject matter – whether that be delight, indignation, curiosity, or a fascination with the technical difficulties of aesthetic representation itself. […] the work solicits a response from its audience. It woos the spectator […] to try on (at least for a time) that attitude as well. […] thus, […] to imagine the actions that would follow from adopting such an attitude in her own life. (np)

In fact, it was the perception of crisis in literary studies that generated North’s Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History, as well as McGowan’s recent discussion of the book, the word “crisis” suggesting, as stated in
Silvia Bigliazzi’s *Shakespeare and Crisis* (coming out this year), “any state of uncertainty characterised by individual or social anxiety and a need for reassurance” (7). *Literary Criticism* was published only one year before the first *English Literature in the World: From Manuscript to Digital International Conference* held, in 2018, at the School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon; and now that we are publishing this collection of essays, which emanate from the conference, and bring together various methods of critically reading different texts, McGowan’s renewed discussion of North’s book has just been posted. Indeed, the book can be said to share similar perceptions of crisis and to aim at similar ways of devising how literary criticism can “cultivate new, deeper forms of subjectivity and collectivity” (“Joseph North Four – The Aesthetic”), i.e. cultivate “aesthetic sensibility” (“Joseph North (One)”).

To keep in tune with our title, the “What Now” of English Literary Studies has also been a concern among medievalists who have recently been claiming new approaches both to Medieval and Medievalism Studies as well as to the relations between these two areas of study. Thomas A. Prendergast and Stephanie Trigg, in *Affective Medievalism. Love, Abjection and Discontent*, a book published in 2019, advocate that “we need to capture [...] changing attitudes to the medieval.” (np) And they specify:

> We [...] need to work with a lively sense of the changing disciplinary and institutional contexts of medieval studies, the various practices of medievalism inside and beyond academy, and indeed the current state of the humanities. And we also need to capture the affective history of our disciplines: the love, the abjection and the discontent that variously frame our approaches to the medieval past, and to each other. (np)

Both authors reinstate the idea that, even though Medieval and Medievalism Studies desire to recover the medieval past, that will always remain an impossible task: one thing is “the truth about the historic event”, other is “the knowledge that we produce about the event” (Prendergast and Trigg, np). However, this inescapable fact, instead of being a cause of affliction or melancholy, should be accepted and embraced insofar as “it enables us to take pleasure in and vitalise the study of the Middle Ages at a moment when both pleasure and vitality are sorely needed.” (Prendergast and Trigg, np).
In these times of crisis in the Humanities which urge for a reinvention of literary criticism, the Middle Ages continue to appear as a highly desirable object of study, although that desire does not correspond to a wish to bring back to the present a time now long gone in history. That desire should be envisaged as a desire for a desire, or better said, as a desire to keep on desiring the affection for medieval culture and its imaginary, an affection very similar to the love that, in the Middle Ages, was brought to every forms of knowledge and its transmission. And this “might be seen as a good thing because it guarantees the continuation of medieval studies, along with all its ongoing institutional, disciplinary and pedagogic practices, and its well-established social identities.” (Prendergast and Trigg np).

As Corinne Saunders states, “the body-mind opposition does not map neatly onto medieval thought, which emphasised the integration of thinking and feeling” (11). This mind and body interconnection inherited from classical medical *uctoritates* is present, for example, in the act of reading which combines a physical activity with sensory and cognitive experiences. Together, they concur to the formation of a memory, understood as “a mental picture” (Carruthers, 16), a *phantasm* (a representation) or an *eikón* (a copy). These *phantasmata* or memory images are “affective in nature – that is, [...] sensory derived and emotionally charged”. (Carruthers, 59). In fact, for memory to be successful, it implies the emotional labelling of the material, “making each memory as much as possible into a personal occasion by imprinting emotional associations like desire and fear, pleasure or discomfort”. (Carruthers, 60). Therefore, it is common that memory is closely associated with the heart since Antiquity until today, as we can testify in the expression “to know by heart” where “heart” is synonymous of memory. Reading in the Middle Ages is hence a complex process which fuses thinking and feeling, brain and heart, cognition and affection, not yet understood as duals or opposites, but totally combined in an “integration [...] crucial to literary representation and interpretation of mind, body and emotion, and to the notion of reading as affective across literary cultures”. (Saunders, 12).

It is precisely with the awareness of these facts in mind that the section of this book dedicated to the Middle Ages opens with an essay that calls attention to the fundamental importance of teaching and researching in Medieval English literature in Portuguese universities. Angélica Varandas defends that the very nature of Medieval Studies in general and the study of medieval English literature in particular should be taken as an example
of good teaching and research practices among scholars and academics due to its interdisciplinary nature.

The other two essays in this section not only reveal the interconnection of different fields of knowledge implied in Medieval Studies, they also demonstrate the intimate association between text and image in the medieval period that is encompassed in the title of the section: “Interdisciplinary Crossways in Medieval Literature: Text and Image”. The first essay, “The Panther and the Dragon – Two Battling Breaths in the Old English *Physiologus*”, by Miguel Diogo Andrade, offers an analysis of the Anglo-Saxon poem “Panther” in order to examine the antagonistic relationship between two creatures, both mentioned in the *Physiologus* and in medieval bestiaries – the panther and the dragon. In this sense, it explores medieval animal symbolism, and questions the centrality of voice in the bestiary and in its relation with the divine Word.

“Text and image, sound and (e-) motion: re-viewing the Bayeux Tapestry in the digital era”, by Miguel Alarcão, focuses on a video, available in Youtube, depicting an animation sequence of the 11th century Bayeux Tapestry, which was created as a student project for Goldsmiths University. Taking the Tapestry as an example, this essay ponders on several important questions, such as: Were medieval common people able to access the symbolic meanings within literary and/or iconographic texts? How can we understand the concept of literacy in the Middle Ages? How do we, in our own days, see and read medieval texts, and how can they be studied in the digital era? How can teachers resort to digital media in order to respond to the needs of their students? And last but not the least, in the author’s words, “how legitimate is it, deontologically speaking, to animate sources for the sake and purpose of pedagogy?”

If the understanding of the Bayeux tapestry demands the knowledge of the historical, social and political events that led to the Battle of Hastings, the illuminations of the *Physiologus* claim for an awareness of religious symbolism and biblical exegesis. Medieval authors themselves were very conscious of the multi-layered meanings of images which beg for close study and examination: instead of being regarded as objects they were envisaged as narratives, stories what must be read in the same manner as a written text.

Although the Middle Ages pioneered an intimate relation between text and image, this dialogue did not stop when the period came to an end. The above-mentioned interdisciplinary approach and strong interdependence of cultural manifestations reached a particular, outstanding dimension with
the Renaissance, which constituted a bridge between worlds, or connecting worlds. In effect, it thoroughly combined a myriad of specificities and characteristics, having coincided with an era of innumerable discoveries in every domain. In such a moment of intersection and fusion that, *grosso modo*, occurred between the 14th and the 16th centuries, tradition was articulated with innovation, the past merged with the present, ancient theories were considered in the formulation of new ones, while the classical, medieval and native substrata were mingled, according to new, experimental, complex processes, both in the art of the word and in the art of the image.

The present volume contains three essays that exemplify such creative early modern processes, two of them on writings, the third one on portraits.

The first essay, “‘Ther’s Portugal, a good air’: Eleazar from *Lust’s Dominion*, Felipe de África and the Construction of the Early Modern Alien”, by Jesús López-Peláez Casellas and Milagros López-Peláez Casellas, constitutes an enlightening work on an early-modern play that seems to exemplify all the dynamism and innovation of such a period, encapsulated in the challenging term ‘alien’: it was indeed a time when peoples met, when the world started to be known in its full dimension, and when the concept of ‘Otherness’ had to be re-evaluated, not only due to the contact with the amazing peoples who inhabited distant parts of the planet, but also to the new relations among the Europeans, as a consequence of a whole new organisation of territories and oceans. *Lust’s Dominion; or, the Lascivious Queen* was collaboratively written *ca.* 1599 by Thomas Dekker with William Haughton and John Day. As the authors point out, we perceive, upon a first reading, a spectacular façade of adultery, eroticism and lust, crimes, a civil war, boundless ambition, unbridled desire and numerous betrayals, amidst an immoral Spanish court, a symptom of which is Eleazar the Moor’s rise to power. However, as it is then argued, the text reveals itself as a sophisticated and polysemic play, not only full of intertextual allusions and producing a paradoxical relation with the Muslim alien, but also evolving in a constant dialogue with the various historical periods through which it lived, in terms of composition and staging. In the conclusion, the authors suggest a possible historical identity for Eleazar, the play’s villain – an identity which extratextually links him with early modern Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

The second essay, “Portuguese Diplomacy and the Written Representations of Queen Elizabeth I: a Bridge between Two Worlds”, by Susana Oliveira, constitutes another enlightening perspective on the concept of ‘Otherness’, at a time
when diplomacy, as we know it today, had its genesis. According to the author, ambassadors emerged then as metaphorical bridges between two worlds, in more than one sense. On the one hand, they were the channel through which sovereigns, who hardly ever met in person, communicated and negotiated; on the other hand, when ambassadors were simultaneously prolific authors, their writings became invaluable data, containing unique representations of the ‘Other’ with whom they had to negotiate personally. Furthermore, in their role of observers in foreign courts and countries, diplomats were required and expected to establish strategic approaches to diversity that involved sameness and difference, past and present, writer and reader. In our era, the early modern diplomatic correspondence, scattered in an immensity of libraries and private collections, presents itself as a fountain to be thoroughly explored, on another metaphorical bridge between manuscript and digital, once the 21st-century researcher may more easily peruse the letters from his/her computer without facing a series of restraints inherent to the access in loco.

In the third essay, “Iconographic Manuscripts: Reading some Portraits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I”, Maria de Jesus C. Relvas argues that early modern portraits constituted another sort of narrative pieces involving another sort of rhetorical devices. In fact, at a time when the art of the individual portrait was being largely developed, the representation of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I on canvas during the English Renaissance was determinant in the construction both of the Tudor myth, at a first stage, and of the English rulership of a new, wide world, at a second stage. Within a context full of dynastic adversities since the very beginning, the iconography of the two monarchs constitutes an elaborate form of writing through images, a metonymic narrative displaying their power, sovereignty and supremacy. By taking advantage not only of the rich iconographic works available in the cyberspace but also of the new means to observe, in ‘close reading’, their details, once museums and private collections may now likewise be visited from personal computers, Maria de Jesus C. Relvas focus on some 16th-century works and offers a reading of the narratives they display, namely Hans Eworth’s Henry VIII (1540-1550) and Marcus Gheeraert’s The Ditchley Portrait (ca. 1592), the latter depicting Elizabeth I. The analysis of these iconographic manuscripts is complemented with the reading of another Henry VIII (1530-35), this one attributed to Joos van Cleve, and of a closely related set (ca. 1575) attributed to Nicholas Hilliard, also depicting Elizabeth Tudor: The Pelican and The Phoenix portraits.
It can indeed be said that the essay opening the third section of our book – Jason Whittaker’s “Blake and Big Data: Literary Data as a Challenge to Literary History” – shares, with North’s Literary Criticism and McGowan’s recent discussion of North’s ideas, a perception of crisis in literary studies, as examined at the beginning of this introduction. According to Whittaker, Moretti’s ‘use of evolutionary theory as a way “to think about very large systems” has led towards a degree of “scientism”, a false application of scientific method in the humanities where, frankly, it is harder to replicate and generalise data – even more so than in the social sciences.’ Moreover, “Blake and Big Data” seems to aim at similar ways of devising how literary criticism can “cultivate new, deeper forms of subjectivity and collectivity” (“Joseph North Four – The Aesthetic”). On the one hand, Whittaker declares that he particularly likes ‘Eyers’ critique [of “scientism”] because he shows an awareness of many of the advantages of the digital humanities, whether preserving decaying archives or deploying new data mining techniques within scholarship, while distancing himself both from broadly neo-Romantic, uncritically aestheticist objections to digital humanities and the equally uncritical techno-evangelism.’ But on the other hand, he concludes from his research on Blake’s poem “And did those feet”, set to music as “Jerusalem” by Charles Hubert Parry: ‘Individual subjectivity never disappears, and Moretti’s taboo against close reading has been especially unhelpful to my own analyses of “Jerusalem”, where it is precisely the phenomenological, individual, subjective interpretation of the text that has produced a significant bifurcation in the reception history of the text in terms of political reception by left and right.

‘Reception: “Jane Austen 2.00”’ (the following essay, by Alcinda Pinheiro de Sousa, Ana Daniela Coelho and Maria José Pires) focuses on the intricacies of this area of interdisciplinary studies, based on the three categories characterised by Willis: “reception study” (“how readers and audiences interpret and use texts”), “reception history” (of “the afterlives of texts and/or [...] reading and [...] books”), “and reception theory” (“of interpretation, language and meaning itself”). Likewise, her definition of “acts of reception” – “forms of interpretation [...]”, conditioned by historically and culturally specific systems of reading [...] learned and practiced by individual readers [...] and producing a specific interpretation or reading which is most visible in the form of a new text [...]” – is discussed in relation to “Jane Austen 2.00”, an exhibition showing a selection of the objects created, as more or less audacious and successful experimental readings of Emma,
by various undergraduate and postgraduate students at different polytechnics and universities. Nevertheless, literary studies are still perceived here as being in a state of crisis, a fact made clear toward the end of the essay through the quotation from Berger’s “Hang a Right at the Abbey: Jane Austen and the Imagined City”: “In the same way a study of adaptation can efface the author of the source text, Bath attempts to efface the “real” Jane for a construct that chimes with its own manufactured sense of self.”

The possibility that an adaptation can efface the author of the source text is a problem also addressed in Marcia Bessa Marques’ “Not of a Meaner Sort: Some Chapbook Adaptations of Defoe’s Moll Flanders”: “With chapbooks, Moll Flanders took on a life of her own, with the authors responding to the wishes of an increasingly literate public.” Such a possibility is made even more clear through the reference to O’Malley’s “Poaching on Crusoe’s Island: Popular Reading and Chapbook Editions of Robinson Crusoe”: ‘O’Malley reaffirms that the main characteristic of the organic “relationship between chapbook and the original novel is not mimetic, but rather transformative.”’ Marques’ research also testifies to Whittaker’s declaration, quoted above, that he particularly likes ‘Eyers’ critique [of “scientism”] because he shows an awareness of many of the advantages of the digital humanities, whether preserving decaying archives or deploying new data mining techniques within scholarship’. In this case, the essayist explains that her “original purpose” depended entirely on that preservation and those “data mining techniques”: “After an extensive search, two chapbooks were selected, all freely available online, as facsimiles.” Nevertheless, at the end of the essay, a central problem in digital publishing is identified: “Although the modern access to these texts in digital versions fails to recreate the smell, feel and excitement which the original readers must have felt as a new chapman arrived in town, their contribution to our understanding of reading habits and tastes remains invaluable.”

“A Testament of Strength: Mary Prince’s Slave Narrative and the Digital World”, by Mariana Bicudo Castelo Branco Cunha, closes “Romanticism: Looking Before and After”, the third section of our book, further testifying to Whittaker’s declaration that ‘preserving decaying archives or deploying new data mining techniques within scholarship’ are some of the advantages of the digital humanities. Cunha even emphasises that she has chosen “Mary Prince, and her narrative because The History […] is an exceptional case study for the impact of Digital Humanities on our shared culture.” Through a close
reading of Prince’s book, the essay finally induces us to accept that it can
be classified “as a first person account of a woman’s life and struggles”, and
concludes that “The History of Mary Prince, despite the hurdles it faced, is
a testimony of intelligence, strength and agency.” We are thus coming back
full circle to Whittaker’s “Blake and Big Data” for, in the same manner as
this essay shares a perception of crisis in literary studies with North’s and
McGowan’s, Cunha shares, in “A Testament of Strength”, these authors’ con-
viction that literary criticism can “cultivate new, deeper forms of subjectiv-
ity and collectivity” […] i.e. cultivate “aesthetic sensibility”.

The questions discussed by Joseph North and referred in the beginning
of this introduction – the reappraisal and reinvention of literary criticism,
its need to bring cultural change through the strengthening of the imagina-
tive faculties of readers and not through the historicist-contextualist existing
mode of literary studies, more focused on analysing than on transforming,
his plea for a more interventionist criticism - are in tune with many of the
problems raised by modernism. North argues for a model of criticism based
in aesthetic education and the cultivation of subjectivity, something that
could reconnect literary studies to social and political life. Modernism and
postmodernism give us a fertile soil for this debate.

Beyond reconsidering the definitions, origins, places, locations and arti-
sans of early modernism, the twentieth century New Modernist Studies con-
solidated the importance of the visual turn, brought to light the attention to
space and mapping, to which digital media gave a different modulation, and
showed the power of transnational exchange. The tendency to take various
forms that are plural, recurrent, global, relational and sometimes contradic-
tory, includes interdisciplinary dialogues, the extension of chronological and
genre frontiers beyond classic models and the consideration of intersections
of artistic media, cultures and borders. The new communication technologies
and the increasing globalization of capital made the avant-garde movements
appear simultaneously in the margins and the center (Geist and Montléon).
With it came the use of mass media and the manipulation of public opinion
for the commodification of art. Dealing with this calls for an aesthetic educa-
tion and also for a social and political awareness that includes the integration
of subjectivity.

The last essay of this section - Catherine Bernard’s “Re-imagining Art’s
Body Politic after/with Modernism: Views from the Digital Scene and More”
approaches this debate. It explores, through the analysis of three digital texts,
the dialogue between avant-garde, digital art and electronic literature, showing how these texts enable the involvement of the user-reader and the creation of an intelligent and embodied practice that can draw a space for a body politic. The Electronic Literature Organization (https://eliterature.org/) defines electronic literature, generally considered, in N. Katherine Hayles’s words, as “digital-born, a first-generation digital object created on a computer and (usually) meant to be read on a computer”. Although the concept has been theorized and critiqued in a variety of ways, it remains ambiguous because its forms are difficult to define and its traits constantly evolve and juxatopose. Heckman and O’Sullivan consider it should be understood as a construction whose literary aesthetics emerges from computation - a system of multimodal forces with the word at its center; it must, essentially, be electronic and literary.

But is this possible? What about the sense of aesthetic continuation between Modernism and the “new” lands of digital literature? Catherine Bernard emphasises the common traits relating the avant gardes to digital literature, namely the rebellion against cultural hegemony, the stress on experimentation, a poetics focused on the “medium” and the attempt to reactivate a political agenda. She suggests that the involvement of the user reader may redefine the boundaries of subjectivity, laying the ground for a redefinition not only of reading but also of interpretation as part of a shared experience, as is visible in the examples presented. All in all, the article makes us reconsider literary and artistic change and the progress of art.

Teresa Pereira’s “Ludic Remediations of Late Victorian Literature: Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink, by Artifex Mundi” explains the Artifex Mundi adventure game as a steampunk product and interprets late Victorian social atmosphere behind its patterns. The essay is a very inviting illustration of some of the questions raised by electronic literature. The concepts of remediation, immediacy and hypermediacy and invasion fiction are explained and articulated with the description of the artefact (video game); then, its characteristics are compared with some of the characteristics of invasion fiction and in the final part of the essay, the author presents some concluding remarks regarding the relation of the game to twenty first century cultural trauma.

Nuno Ribeiro’s “The other I am” — Poetics of otherness in the works of Emerson, Whitman and Fernando Pessoa” explores the influence of Whitman and Emerson in the genesis of Fernando Pessoa’s poetics of alterity. As to Whitman this is evidenced through the reference to Pessoa’s Private
Library copies, through the parallels drawn between Whitman’s passages on the plurality of the self or on dreams, and Pessoa’s writings on the same question and also through the influence of free verse. As to Emerson, his essay “The Poet”, with the notion of metamorphic and multiform character that transcends individuality and the assertion that metrics is not essential, is presented as a crucial influence on the Portuguese poet. One would say that the challenge for twenty first century intellectuals will be to find the multiform character of art amongst an overload of information, propaganda, technology and commodification.

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Works Cited


I. Interdisciplinary Crossways in Medieval Literature: Text and Image
Studying Medieval English Literature:
a Defence

ANGÉLICA VARANDAS

The study of Medieval English Literature has been highly neglected by the Portuguese academia: there are only two PhD thesis in the area of Medieval English Literature in Portugal, as well as very few translations of medieval English texts into Portuguese. This is obviously a major setback for the study of English Literature in our country, since medieval texts and their contexts of production and circulation comprise the cradle of the long English literary tradition, and it is certainly impossible to understand modern literary phenomena without knowing its origins and heritage. Thus, the study of the Middle Ages, in general, and of medieval literature, in particular, is of paramount importance, once it constitutes the roots of Western thought – our infancy, as Eco declared (65) – and is a beacon to guide us in academic research, as Classen also underlines in *The Handbook of Medieval Studies*:

Of course, we would not be what we are today without the Middle Ages, and any modern university that claims to live up to minimal standards of current academics, especially in the Humanities, will have to acknowledge first and above all the fundamental significance of Medieval Studies both for teaching and research. (xxii)

As it happens within all areas of Medieval Studies, research in medieval literature necessarily demands an interdisciplinary approach. One cannot dissociate the literary text from its historical and social context, for sure, neither from other aesthetical forms, such as illumination or sculpture, or from philosophical thoughts and ideas. The nature of the literary text itself is that of an open space, insofar as it is authored by all who have contributed to its production, as well as by those who wish to enrich it with their commentaries, clarifications and continuations. In 1972, Paul Zumthor used the term *mouvance* to allude to this unique characteristic of medieval literature (70-1). Since then, many other critics have contributed to the understanding of the medieval text. One of them is Thomas Farrell who, in 1995, decided to apply Bakhtinian theory to the study of the medieval manuscript,
and edited *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices*, a series of articles in which the key concepts of Bakhtin are referred to medieval texts and genres. Although the Russian author only rarely made reference to the Middle Ages, his perspectives are extremely relevant when adapted to medieval literature. In one of the instances in *The Dialogic Imagination*, while mentioning the medieval period, Bakhtin states:

> The relationship to another’s word was equally complex and ambiguous in the Middle Ages. The role of the other’s word was enormous at that time: there were quotations that were openly and recently emphasized as such, or that were half-hidden, completely hidden, half-conscious, unconscious, correct, intentionally distorted, unintentionally distorted, deliberately reinterpreted and so forth. The boundary lines between someone else’s speech and one’s own speech were flexible, ambiguous, often deliberately distorted and confused. Certain types of texts were constructed like mosaics out of the texts of others. (69)

Therefore, medieval manuscripts are, par excellence, spaces of clear intertextuality, polyphony and dialogism, as Robert Sturges underlines in “Medieval Authorship and the Polyphonic Text: From Manuscript Commentary to the Modern Novel”, one of the articles in Farrell’s books:

> This multiple, indeterminate authorship contributes to the polyphony of medieval manuscript texts; they are intertextual, they are open to refashioning by their readers, and their authors dissolve into a multiplicity of voices in a much more literal fashion than is the case with any text produced in a print culture. (123)

The medieval manuscript is therefore regarded as a “point of intersection for a multiplicity of voices and languages” (Sturges 136): the voices of scribes, commentators, translators, performers, as we have seen, as well as the voices of the *auctoritates*, as those which, although no longer present, can still be heard among the folios – the *voce paginarum*, in the words of the twelfth-century philosopher John of Salisbury in his *Metalogicon*: “Fundamentally letters are shapes indicating voices. Hence, they represent things which they bring to mind through the windows of the eyes. Frequently they speak voicelessly the utterances of the absent.” (*apud* Camille 1985: 31). The voices of the pages thus create a singular polyphony which is also present
in the dialogue maintained between text and image, as we have mentioned in
the introduction to this volume, which in most cases signals the oral charac-
ter of medieval culture in general, as Michael Camille points out:

[...] both text and image are secondary representations external to, but always
referring back to, the spontaneous springs of speech. [...] It was not the image,
which in the twelfth century could be termed ‘natural’ but the present and direct
voice, of which both the picture and script were the conventional signata. (32)

In fact, European medieval culture was predominantly oral: the vast
majority of texts circulated orally or aurally, since the acts of reading and
writing were held by very few. This called for a literary practice based on
assonances that could be savoured by listeners and by readers. Medieval lit-
erature demands to be listened to, as well as performed:

People in the Middle Ages treated books rather as musical scores are
treated today. The normal thing to do with a written literary text, that is, was to
perform it, by reading or chanting aloud. Reading was a kind of performance.
Even the solitary reader most often read aloud, or at least muttered, the words
of his text – performing it to himself, as it were – and most reading was not
solitary. The performance of a text was most often a social occasion. [...] The
writers composed most often for the performing voice – speaking, intoning,
chanting or singing – and the expressive effects which they contrived tended in
consequence to be boldly and emphatically shaped for the voice to convey the
ear. (Burrow 47–8)

Yet, this is not the only reason behind the centrality of voice in medieval
culture. If we exclude the period from the 19th century onwards, the Middle
Ages was probably the time in which there was a deepest interest in language
and in the nature and function of verbal signs. Medieval thinkers profoundly
reflected upon the relation between sound (voces) and things (res), develop-
ing complex sign theories, such as that of Saint Augustine, leading eventually
to the problem of universals which divided realists and nominalists and cre-
ated a gap in European universities.¹

¹ Cf: Augustine, De doctrina Christiana (On Christian Doctrine)
When Zumthor states that “the Middle Ages is the place of the ressonance of a voice”, he is highlighting many of these aspects which are also determined by the will to comprehend the word as a derivation from the Logos with which God created everything that is. The writing of men, although imperfect and incomplete, intends, nevertheless, to attain God’s perfect writing, condensed in the two books created to our salvation: the Book of Nature (written by God with His own finger) and the Sacred Scripture. As such, medieval writing is assumed to be an echo of the Word of God being therefore metaphoric, or better, allegorical, alluding to the Logos and to the power of creation, as Derrida mentions:

Comme c’était le cas pour l’écriture de la vérité dans l’âme, chez Platon, c’est encore au Moyen Âge une écriture entendue au sens métaphorique, c’est-à-dire une écriture naturelle, éternelle et universelle, le système de la vérité signifiée, qui est reconnue dans sa dignité. (27)

The Middle Ages are, in fact, the time when the words, understood as signs, intend to be closer to the primal voice of the Creator, as Derrida again states:

La ‘science’ sémiologique ou, plus étroitement, linguistique, ne peut donc retenir la différence entre signifiant et signifié – l’idée même de signe – sans la différence entre le sensible et l’intelligible, certes, mais sans retenir aussi du même coup, plus profondément et plus implicitement, la référence à un signifié pouvant ‘avoir lieu’, dans son intelligibilité avant sa ‘chute’, avant toute expulsion dans l’extériorité de l’ici-bas sensible. En tant que face d’intelligibilité pure, il renvoie à un logos absolu auquel il est immédiatement uni. Ce logos absolu était dans la théologie médiévale une subjectivité créatrice infinie : la face intelligible du signe reste tournée du côté du verbe et de la face de Dieu. (25)

The polyphonic intersection of voices in the medieval manuscript is still interconnected with the role of the memory in a society where the book has, above all, a mnemonic role.

2 “Le moyen âge en tant que lieu de résonance d’une voix” (Zumthor 18).
3 This is a common metaphor in the Middle Ages. Hugh of Saint Victor, in the Didascalion, states that “the entire sense perceptible world is like a sort of book written by the finger of God.” (apud Bloch 20)
All these reasons concur to invest the medieval manuscript, and therefore medieval literature, with a deep intricacy that certainly anticipates much of what later will be done in the modern novel. This means that medieval literary texts not only provide modern and contemporary authors with themes and motifs, but they also constitute the foundation of many of the rhetoric strategies that will be highly developed by subsequent writers. Sturges confirms that “the manuscript text may have several ‘centers’ or, indeed, [...] may be more radically decentered than any nineteenth-century novel.” (126). It is also in the Middle that literature echoes “the discovery of the individual” as “one of the most important cultural developments in the years between 1050 and 1200.” (Burrow 40). From this time onwards many medieval writers start to sign their own literary productions, thus displaying their own authority and, simultaneously, distancing themselves from that same authority by assuming an original individuality.

And although early Middle English literature, as Burrow sustains, does not “provide any very striking instances of the ‘discovery of the individual’” (40), many later English writers definitely start to reflect upon the relation between authority and poetic individualism, between truth and fiction, and about their role as authors. At the same time, they also begin to establish new narrative strategies and literary techniques that would later define modern literature, such as the invention of different \( \textit{personae} \) with several narrative voices and points of view, as well as the emergence of the narrator as distinct from the author. In Kimmelman’s words, “the poet of the later Middle Ages found numerous and increasingly ingenious ways of insinuating, of weaving into the very fabric of poetry the modern claim – \( \textit{ego auctor} \).” (7) In England, this “poetics of authorship”, as Kimmelman calls it, was notably evident in the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, even in those which anticipate his \textit{magnum opus} \textit{The Canterbury Tales}, such as \textit{The House of Fame}.

Obviously, the abovementioned aspects related to medieval literature and to medieval English literature in particular do not deplete all its idiosyncrasies, crucial as they are to understand the development of thought from the manuscript to the digital.

Without the study of medieval English literature in Portugal, we are certainly depriving ourselves of understanding medieval texts \textit{per se} and mainly their enormous contribution to English literature in general, as well as to other national literatures, such as the Portuguese one, for instance. We are also excluded from the dialogue it maintains with other art forms,
from the relation it establishes to diverse models of thought and behaviour, either social, historical, political, religious, or others. In depriving ourselves of the study of English medieval literature in the Portuguese academia, we are segregating ourselves from an ample critical debate about literature in general and limiting ourselves to historical periods that are orphaned from their origins.

In addition, we are also oblivious of the most unique lessons that medieval texts have to offer. Although five hundred centuries separate us from the Middle Ages, the way literature was produced, received, and understood has still much to enlighten us as common readers, or as teachers and researchers. Its uniqueness, its openness, its intertextual nature and, of course, as we cared to underline, its transdisciplinarity, implying a close and serious dialogue among fields of thought, should give us a clue on the way we should look at the literary phenomena and all other areas of research. This is evident for all the medievalists since they are all well aware that their research necessarily implies this kind of approach, as Pearsall remarks:

For myself, I try to see everything I read from the Middle Ages in the light of what I have learnt about medieval history, medieval painting, medieval social, religious, and political practices and ideas, as well as about related literatures, but I remain someone who thinks about ‘literature’ as a special case of art and communication and not an undifferentiated form of ‘text’. (224)

Interdisciplinarity is indeed a keyword in Medieval Studies, as Pearsall himself makes clear in his own definition of the term: “Medieval Studies, as I understand the term, [...]is a name given to the practice of interdisciplinary teaching and research in the areas of study relating to the chronological Middle Ages.” (127)

However, it is certain that, although this interdisciplinarity is extremely appealing for the researcher in Medieval Studies, it is also very demanding. Classen notices that “Medieval Studies embrace virtually each and every field of human activities and ideas, whether literature, fashion, the arts, religion, technology, agriculture, banking, or architecture. But this amazing spectrum also proves to be a remarkable challenge.” (xvii). This complexity becomes much bigger when we bear in mind that the Middle Ages, chronologically speaking, lasted for ten centuries and it is too broad a period to be comprehended in its entirety. When speaking of medieval literature, for instance,
James M. Powell declares that it is “a field so vast as to defeat the hope that it might be embraced, let alone encompassed, by any single scholar.” (278). This fact is revealing of another lesson Medieval Studies have to offer: humbleness. In fact, as medieval thinkers themselves, “every medievalist is a student throughout his career, for the deeper the digs, the wider the gaps.” (Classen xxix).

In 2015, the four areas of the School of Arts and Humanities in the University of Lisbon – History, Language Sciences, Literatures, Arts and Cultures, and Philosophy – joined together in order to create a Post-Graduation in Medieval Studies. In spite of that, much has yet to be done to develop this area of expertise in Portugal. Regarding the study of medieval English literature, this Post-Graduation has contributed to rise an interest in medieval English texts, in their relation to their contexts of production and circulation and in their dialogue with other fields of knowledge. At the same time, it also helped students to understand the phenomenon of medievalism and how popular culture today resorts to the medieval period mainly in cinema, TV series, computer games, amidst other contemporary forms of summoning the medieval past. Again, without the study of medieval texts, be they literary, iconographic or other, it is impossible to understand Romantic medievalism, some aspects of contemporary modernism and post-modernism, as well as many cultural expressions, namely those that Eco coined as neo-medievalism, as well as the core of the vast majority of Fantasy writing and much of Science Fiction: “Despite many challenges of linguistic, institutional, administrative, financial, and even political nature, Medieval Studies [...] continue to provide a major framework of learning and a source of inspiration for anyone interested in Western civilization and the related cultures.” (Classen xxix). Fortunately, there seems to be emerging a group of young researchers, albeit still small, who can add to the place of Medieval Studies within Portuguese investigation and teaching.

As Classen states, it is the very nature of the medieval manuscript and the intertextual essence of Medieval Studies that we have been highlighting so far that turns them into an example that should be followed in university teaching and researching, not only in the Humanities, but also in all other areas of knowledge. And, as Classen reiterates, it is almost ironic that the Middle Ages, in spite of having ended long ago, in spite of sometimes being considered as obsolete or outdated, distant and forgettable, should be envisaged as a means to promote interdisciplinarity and dialogue amid
investigators and disciplines, and held as an example to the expansion of critical perspectives and to the improvement of knowledge inside universities. He advocates “[...] the absolute need to work in an interdisciplinary fashion in Medieval Studies” and he adds: “In this sense, as I believe, this field sets a standard for many other disciplines. Almost ironically, Medieval Studies have much to offer for the future of the academy. (Classen xxii).

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The Panther and the Dragon
– Two Battling Breaths in the Old English Physiologus

MIGUEL DIOGO ANDRADE

This paper starts with an overview of the Old English poem “The Panther” to examine the antagonistic relationship between two creatures in the Physiologus and the medieval bestiaries: the panther and the dragon. For the purposes of this study, Charles Kennedy’s translation of the poem into Modern English was used, which can be found in Early English Christian Poetry, New York UP, 1963, pp. 226-227.

1. "The Panther" and the Old English Physiologus

Lo! We have learned of a wondrous beast
Living in far lands, famed among men,
In mountain caverns making his home.
His name is Panther, as men who know
In their writings tell of the lonely rover. (Kennedy 226-7; “The Panther” 9-13)

“The Panther” is a poem found in the Exeter Book (Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501), one of the most important codices of Anglo-Saxon literature, which was copied circa the second half of the tenth century. Let us begin with a brief description and contextualization of the poem: it is an Old English poem that describes the natural characteristics of the panther (as understood at the time), offering an interpretation of those features under the light of medieval Christian allegory. One can find two other similar allegorical poems describing animals in the manuscript: “The Whale”, and another poem, whose title is difficult to establish, because it is extant only in a fragment. It is often referred to as “The Partridge”, since it is the bird generally thought to be described, although there is no direct reference to its identity.

These three poems form a group in the Exeter Book, about which much has been theorized. It has been firmly established, however, that they belong
to the textual genre of the *Physiologus* narratives, representing the earliest European vernacular *Physiologus* attested (Curley xxviii). These are the main hypothesis regarding their origin: the three poems may constitute a fragment of a non-extant more extensive Old English *Physiologus*; or they may be a complete textual group, similar to a small-sized *Physiologus*, which would contain a selection of three creatures, each of them representing a dimension of the animals of the Creation, meaning creatures 1) of the earth; 2) of the sea; 3) of the air (Peebles 571-579).

We do not intend in this article to explore the never-ending intricacies of the poem’s textual genealogy, but it is nevertheless important to frame the tradition to which it belongs. The *Physiologus* was probably written in Alexandria around the second century AD, in an original Greek form of which we have no extant copies. Built on the theoretical foundations of Neoplatonism, the *Physiologus* adheres to the principle that the natural world reflects a heavenly archetype and that there is an intelligible similitude between the two. Hence, an allegorical reading can be applied to the “book of nature” in order to better understand the “book of God”. In the specific case of the *Physiologus*, we face an anthology of brief narratives about animals, some of them considered marvelous, others considered natural nowadays (in the medieval times the marvelous and the natural were not totally separate categories). Those narratives describe in a formulaic way the nature and qualities of the animals, subjugating them to an allegorical interpretation based on the Christian Scripture (Varandas 5). As such, the *Physiologus* did not accurately describe the natural world, it rather focused on the transmission of doctrine through the allegories.

The *Physiologus* had a swift circulation, serving its didactic function of conveying doctrine in a simplified manner. By the fifth century it had been translated into several vernacular languages belonging to cultures influenced by the Greek Church, such as Syriac, Arabic, Armenian and Ethiopic. According to P. T. Eden in his introduction to the edition of the *Theobaldi Physiologus*, the first reference to a Latin translation of the text can be found in 496 A.D., in a decree from pope Gelasius, who prohibited it as heretical (2). Despite this, the *Physiologus* eventually became an integral part of Western European culture. It was reproduced in dozens of manuscripts and also translated into European vernacular languages, e.g. English, Icelandic, German and French. Its text was continuously reworked, and numerous versions emerged, resulting in a long and complex textual history. The several
The Panther and the Dragon – Two Battling Breaths in the Old English Physiologus

Manuscript lineages and various textual branches have generated much academic discussion and debate. In its historical transmission, the Physiologus was quickly enriched with information taken from other encyclopedic works, most prominently the Etymologies by Isidore of Seville (circa 626-630). This tradition would reach its peak in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the advent of the Anglo-Norman bestiaries, a direct consequence of the Physiologus (Varandas 6). While the critics are divided regarding the organization and differentiation of the several textual branches between “bestiaries” and “physiologi”, texts that fall within either definition can arguably be treated broadly as belonging to the same genre (Kay 118).

As mentioned, these texts did not remain static and, depending on the various versions, the creatures included in the works changed, as did the order in which they appeared. The beings would be often listed according to the categories in which God created them in the book of Genesis, namely terrestrial>winged>maritime – a disposition that we may perhaps consider proto-taxonomical since, e.g., the lion is often the first animal to be listed, as it was considered the most dignified, followed by the other big cats. Likewise, the chapters on different serpents are often all collected together¹. We would like to highlight that 1) the Physiologus appears in a Greek alexandrine context; 2) it has an enormous influence throughout all Europe; 3) its text is amplified by using other authors. The Anglo-Saxon Physiologus, as it appears to us in the Exeter Book, is an heir of this tradition, whether it be considered as an excerpt from a complete Physiologus or a small cycle complete within itself.

2. The dragon as enemy

After these brief introductory lines, let us summarize the poem “The Panther”. The panther is described as a beautiful and marvelous animal, with a motley and shiny coat, gentle temper and friendly towards all the beings of Creation. After feeding, it rests on its cavern for three days, and then it emerges and opens its mouth to let out its charming roar and, more importantly, a delicious fragrance – this is the characteristic of the panther that we aim to put under scope in this study.

¹ Alternatively, the structure may be more doctrinal, for example, organized to illustrate via animal allegories the way of Christ through life (Kay 127).

Alternatively, the structure may be more doctrinal, for example, organized to illustrate via animal allegories the way of Christ through life (Kay 127).
When, fain of his fill, he tastes of food, / After each meal in the mountain caverns / He seeks his rest in a secret spot. / There the Great Warrior a three days’ while / Heavy with sleep sinks into slumber; / And on the third day endowed with glory / The Mighty One wakens straightway from sleep. / Out of the beast’s mouth melody cometh, / Loveliest music; and after that strain / A fragrance rises from the fields of earth, / A breath more winsome, sweeter and stronger / Than any savour, than flowering spice / Or fruits of the forest; more excellent far / Than all earthly treasures. “The Panther” (Kennedy 226-7)

The smell of the panther’s breath is stronger and sweeter than all odours, and can be felt at the greatest distance, attracting all beings, men or beast. The panther is explicitly to be understood as Christ, and its breath as the goodness that God distributes upon all the inhabitants of the world. Its slumber is equated to the three days after Jesus’ death on the Cross. Thus, the emergence of the panther is to be connected with the resurrection of Christ and its gift to the world. Therefore, the animals flocking to its presence are an allegory of the faithful following Jesus. This friendliness is almost all-encompassing: “He is full of kindness, friendly to all” (Kennedy 226-7). However, throughout the length of the poem, there is a single exception in this relationship to the rest of the animal kingdom: the dragon, mentioned three times on the text, is the single creature which shuns from the panther’s breath and thus is its enemy.

I believe it is relevant to note here that, for much of the medieval world, the dragon was a creature in everything similar to the serpent, being frequently identified with it even in its morphology. Its uniqueness derives mainly from being the biggest of the serpents, though progressively a different image of the dragon began to spread: a hybrid creature, which often presents itself with the head of other animals, lion-clawed and bird-winged, generally bipedal. Throughout the centuries, the dragon increasingly appears as winged and reptilian, although not always spitting fire, such as it is predominantly pictured nowadays. Of the dragon, Isidore says in the *Etymologies*:

4. The dragon (draco) is the largest of all the snakes, or of all the animals on earth. [...] It is crested, and has a small mouth and narrow pipes through which it draws breath and sticks out its tongue. It has its strength not in its teeth but in its tail, and it causes injury more by its lashing tail than with its jaws. 5. Also, it does not harm with poison; poison is not needed for this animal to kill, because
it kills whatever it wraps itself around. [...] It is born in Ethiopia and India in the fiery intensity of perpetual heat. (Isidore 255; 12.4.4-5)

This excerpt of Isidore, however, does not totalize the early medieval conceptions of dragons in Christian literature. In the “The Panther”, the dragon is mentioned twice as a venomous serpent, statements that directly contradict the Sevillian bishop’s information. In the poem, the dragon is first spoken of when it is highlighted the fact that the panther is friendly to all: “Save the Dragon only with whom for ever / He wages eternal, unceasing war / By every means of hurt he can muster” (Kennedy 226-7). In the medieval imagination, the dragon could be thought of as a natural creature, which was a part of the world, as most serpents were – Isidore treats the *draco* in such a way –, but, at the same time, it was also reminiscent of the Devil, due to its presence in the biblical book of Revelation, where it is depicted as adversary to the Archangel Michael. In the poem, the connection to apocalyptical symbolism becomes explicit when it is said: “None will he assail save the venomous Serpent, / His Ancient Foe whom I spoke of before.” (Kennedy 226-7); and it is reinforced when, in full explanation of the allegory, the panther is referred to as God and the following is stated:

So is the Lord God, Giver of joys,  
Kindly to every creature of earth  
With all loving gifts, save alone to the Dragon,  
The Author of venom, the Ancient Foe  
Whom once He bound in the bottomless pit,  
Fettered him there, by force constrained him  
In the grip of the flames. (Kennedy 226-7)

In the above passage, we find a direct reference to the imprisonment of the dragon in Hell, which can originally be found in Revelation:

He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. (Rev 20.2-3)
The book of Revelation thus establishes a new figure of the biblical dragon, searching for characteristics with which to dress up its monster in older biblical books\(^2\). Let us look at the description of the dragon’s first appearance in Revelation:

Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. (Rev 12.3-4)

The great fiery dragon is immediately identified with the serpent of Genesis and with Satan: “The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world [...]” (Rev 12.9). This is the symbolism that was passed on to the medieval imagination, through the biblical text, in most works where the dragon is present, such as hagiography and the bestiaries. It is also the primary meaning associated to the dragon in “The Panther”: the Devil personified.

3. The classical legacy

We will now take notice of another characteristic that would have been closely associated with the dragon, at least in an initial moment of the *Physiologus* text: its poison. In order to do so, we will take a step back into the classical origins of the medieval dragon.

In truth, the idea of the dragon in the medieval Christian world and in the texts that form its nucleus seems to develop through classical forms and models, flourishing inside a Latin Roman world and within the Greek Christian mental repertoire. The *Septuaginta* itself, a Greek version of the Old Testament texts used by the primitive Christians and the Fathers of the Church, develops in the

\(^2\) In the Old Testament, the beings closest to the dragon are the great sea monsters, “tanninim”, about which much is said in *Day, God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 1985. The Leviathan from Job is to be identified with this kind of creature and the Book of Job is the main influence on the description of the apocalyptic dragon. Specifically, notice should be taken of the descriptions of the Behemoth and the Leviathan in Job 40-41, as tough-scaled monsters of devastating strength, one of which – the Leviathan – spits fire. In the transmission of these texts to the Greek world, with the translation of the *Septuaginta*, these beings lose the individuality that their names grant them and they are treated with the same words used for dragons in the classical world – namely *drakón*. More on the translation issues in Kiessling (167-177).
Alexandrine context of the third century BC, by Jews that made the Greek cultural milieu their own. Thus, the *draco* of hagiography is profoundly imbued with the abundant classical heritage of fights against draconic beings, be it dragons “pure” in form, or hybrids of serpents, such as the Chimera. Although in the classical period the dragon is not highly differentiated from a serpent in its form, the epithet *drakōn* or *draco* seems to have been reserved for particularly mighty or mythologically significant serpents (Bile 126-131). To give a few examples of greater fame and impact: the slaying of the Hydra (Ogden, *Sourcebook*, 51; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.5.2; *circa* 100 AD) and of Ladon, the guardian-serpent of the Hesperides (Ogden, *Sourcebook*, 58; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.5.11), by Heracles; the Python killed by Apollo (Ogden, *Sourcebook*, 40; *Homeric Hymn* (3) to Apollo 300-309, 349-73; *circa* 590 BC); the dragon of Ares slayed by Cadmus (Ogden, *Sourcebook*, 113-115; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.28-98; 8 AD); or the *drakōn* of Colchis, fooled by Jason and Medea (Ogden, *Sourcebook*, 127-128; Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.123-166; *circa* 270-245 BC). One of the stand-out characteristics associated to the classical *drakōn* or *draco* is its venom (from which, perhaps, comes the association of the dragon with fire, from the burning pain that it causes)\(^3\). It is precisely on the poison that we intend to focus in this study. Even if one disregards the dangerous effects of biting, the poison of the *drakōn* is pernicious – it infects the waters and fields, poisoning and polluting them. In fact, by emanating poisonous vapours, the dragon is lethal not only when he is alive but also after he dies. Daniel Ogden mentions that:

> [... ] more often than fiery, the *drakōn’s* breath was conceptualized as poisonous and pestilential, and indeed the *drakōn’s* poisonousness was celebrated less often in the context of its biting and envenoming than in the context of its blowing out of noxious and destructive fumes that could kill in their own right, and its corrupting of the air with these. (*Drakôn* 226)

The very corpses of dragons and large serpents are unwanted and should be eliminated so that normality can be restituted – we see this in Valerius Maximus (*circa* 13-37 AD), where he, summarizing Titus Livius, mentions the serpent of the river Bagrada, killed during the First Punic War (by a Roman legion, with ballistae no less), whose cadaver polluted the river to a point that the soldiers had to change location of their camp:

\(^3\) Regarding this association in the classical world, see Ogden, *Drakôn*, pp. 218-226; for the same in the medieval world see the article of Alan K. Brown, “The Fire-Drake in ‘Beowulf’”, 440-443.
In the end, they attacked it from all sides with stone missiles hurled from ballistas, and it collapsed under the rain of heavy blows. The snake seemed more terrible to all the cohorts and the legions than Carthage itself. Because the waters were contaminated by its blood and the region was polluted by the pestilent gases of the recumbent corpse, Regulus removed the Roman camp from that point. (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 142; 1.8)

This notion is transmitted to the first Christian texts which mention dragons, where they are not necessarily fought or killed, but sent away when saints and sacred men cross themselves or pray for God’s help. Venomous dragons can be found in some Latin and Greek texts of the first centuries of Christianity. In the *Acts of Silvester B* (circa 500 AD), the crisis that needs to be solved in the city of Rome is precisely a pestilence spread by a dragon worshipped in a pagan temple:

> There was a most monstrous dragon in the Tarpeian rock, on which the Capitol is located. [...] This dragon suddenly and unexpectedly came up and, although it did not come out of this hole, nonetheless it corrupted the air around about with its breath. As a result of this came the death of people and, in great measure, mourning for the death of children. (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 221; 1)

In the *Acts of Philip* (fourth century), the apostle fights several dragons which attack him with fire and venom: “At once there stood amongst the snakes a huge dragon of around a hundred cubits, all soot, and it belched forth fire and a great deal of venom in a bursting torrent.” (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 210; 11.5). The motif of the venomous dragon persists through the next centuries of hagiographical writing.

In several Christian texts, the need to distance oneself or get rid of the dragon’s remains is also inherited from the classical world. Aldhelm’s tale of

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4 We find it, for example, in the texts of the Anglo-Saxon Aldhelm, who, in the *De virginitate* (seventh century), highlights the “pestilential blasts” of the dragons fought by Saint Hilarion (Ehwald 1919, 266-67 qtd. in Ogden, *Sourcebook* 229) and Saint Victoria (Ehwald 1919, 308-309 qtd. in Ogden, *Sourcebook* 233-234). The poisonous breath also shows up in the serpents of Clément of Metz, as related in Paulus Diaconus’ *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 242-244; 782-786 AD), in the three dragons faced by the Breton saint Samson of Dol in the *Vita I Sancti Samsonis* (Ogden, *Sourcebook*, 240-241; circa seventh to eighth centuries AD) or even in the famed dragon of Saint George, in the *Golden Legend* by Voragine in the thirteenth century (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 252-255).
Hilarion, for example, mentions the burning of the dragon’s corpse. To illustrate this, we can also take into account Saint Donatus’s dragon-slaying, as told by Sozomenus in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*circa* 440s AD), where the corpse of a fallen dragon is pulled away by oxen after its death, so that it does not infect the air:

> And indeed, as I was told, the natives dragged it off to the nearby plain with eight yoke-pair of oxen and burned it, so that it would not befoul the air when it rotted and render it pestilential. (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 231; 7.26.1-4)

An analogous destiny awaits the dragon’s corpse in Saint George’s legend. Similarly in *Beowulf* (indisputably the most famous Anglo-Saxon poem), the corpse of the dragon is pulled away and thrown to the depths of the sea: “and they pushed the dragon, / the worm, over the cliff, let the waves take him/ and the flood engulf the guardian of the treasures” (Alexander 111; 3128-3130).

In a variety of confrontations with dragons or serpents, classical or Christian, another characteristic that can be pointed out is the symmetrical fight: the use of fire against fire, venom against venom (Ogden, *Drakōn* 215-246). We must remember, again, that fire and venom are sometimes equated or appear side by side. Going back to the example of Heracles, he kills the venomous Hydra by burning the stumps of its neck (fire *vs* venom) and kills the *drakōn* Ladon with arrows imbued with the venom of the Hydra itself (venom *vs* venom). Another mode of battling the dragon occurs in Plinius (Plinius 608-609; 11.115), by using another kind of emanation. It is stated that dragons can be opposed by the breath of two specific animals: the elephant (that sucks them out of from where they are hiding) and the deer (that burns them); “*elephantorum anima serpentes extrahit, cervorum urit* [...][The breath of elephants attracts snakes out of their holes, that of stags scorches them]” (Rackham 608-609).

In the Christian world, poison is not directly turned against the dragons; but those who oppose them often use an equivalent weapon. Saint Donatus, of whom we have already talked about, slays his dragon by spitting in its mouth, overpowering the venomous spit of the dragon with his saintly saliva. Likewise,

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5 We add that Christine Rauer argues very convincingly that, among other examples, this passage of *Beowulf* is a strong evidence of the hagiographical influence on the composition of the famed Old English poem (120-124).
it is necessary to oppose good odours and air purification to polluting stench and pestilence. Thus, we can take notice, for example, of the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas*, where Jesus destroys a viper by blowing into a poisoned wound it had caused (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 194-195); in the aforementioned *Acts of Philip*, Saint Philip purifies the air by sprinkling holy water into the fumes produced by the dragon; in the *Martyrdom of Saint Marina*, while facing a dragon in her cell, the saint crosses herself and prays to God in the following way:

The holy servant of God made a cross on her forehead and over her whole body and prayed with tears and said, ‘Lord, chase this wicked wolf and mad dog and *its stench away from me*. And let the sweetness and goodness of your Holy Spirit [literally ‘breath’, *pneuma*] come to me’. (Ogden, *Sourcebook* 245; 26)

The breath of God is thus capable of blowing away the noxious fumes that the dragon, standing in for Satan, brings with its presence.

We should therefore bear in mind that the dragon is a venomous or poisonous creature in most primitive Christian texts as well as in the hagiographical tradition. It should also be noticed that the dragon is often fought in equal means – with either the same weapons it uses, or with weapons that relate to them, operating in the same elements. Both are ideas transmitted from Classical Antiquity, about which Ogden concludes:

[... we shall ask whether, for all that they are underpinned by a new and extraneous ideology, the early hagiographic dragon-fight narratives can properly be considered the direct heirs of our pagan *drakōn*-fight narratives. The answer is an emphatic yes, and the justification for this is their deployment, with only minor modifications, of the stock-in-trade of the symmetrical-battle motifs of pagan *drakōn*-fight narratives. (*Drakōn* 383)]

4. The oral confrontation of panther and dragon

Coming back to our primary source and to the conflict between the panther and the dragon, the specificities of the “eternal war” that the panther imposes on the dragon are not elaborated on – it is described with detail only on the allegorical plane, as the eternal war between Christ and the Devil.
However, in other examples of this description both in Physiologus and bestiaries, we can easily notice that what drives the dragon away is the roar of the panther and its odorous breath. When the dragon smells it, he becomes dormant and cannot move. This is well described in the Theobaldi Physiologus:

From his throat there comes such an odour, and so sweet – it surpasses all perfumes in its excellence. [...] only snakes, when the panther roars, either flee or become numbed in body, and lie hidden in their holes, and are not to be seen at that time. (Theobaldus 70-73; 13)

Or in the Aberdeen Bestiary:

Physiologus says of it, that it has only the dragon as an enemy. [...] gives a great roar, and from its mouth comes a very sweet odour, as if it were a mixture of every perfume. When other animals hear its voice, they follow wherever it goes, because of the sweetness of its scent. Only the dragon, hearing its voice, is seized by fear and flees into the caves beneath the earth. There, unable to bear the scent, it grows numbed within itself and remains motionless, as if dead. (Aberdeen University Library, Univ Lib. MS 24, f. 9r)

This is also obvious in the numerous iconographical representations that illustrate the episode, where the dragon is hiding6. In the same images, the other animals congregate around the panther when it lets loose its breath, often graphically represented by wavy lines coming out of its mouth7.

I would like to suggest that the panther’s breath stands in clear opposition to the dragon’s poison, a remnant of classical tradition which, as we have seen, influenced Christian culture. However, in bestiaries, the dragon is rarely depicted as poisonous. Instead he is described mainly as a constrictor. The illumination in MS. Douce 308, f.104v is one of the rare examples of bestiaries where the dragon, its tongue out and crouching above a sickly man, overtly represents venom and disease. This illumination comes from a version of the Bestiaire d’Amour by Richard de Fournival, where it is stated: “The dragon never bites anyone but licks them with its tongue, poisoning everything his

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6 See the illuminations on the mss. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 1444b, f. 249v and Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 1511, f. 13r, which well illustrate its state of paralysis.
7 See the illuminations on the manuscripts MS. Bodley 602, f. 20r and MS. Bodley 764, f. 7v.
tongue touches. So do many false-speaking people, who lightly pass on to others what they have heard from one.” (Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 308 f. 104v). This absence of venom in most bestiaries might be explained by the interference of the work of Isidore of Seville. As shown before, in this work, the bishop dissociates the dragon from venom to make the strength of its tail its most-valuable asset. However, the image of the venomous dragon (from the classical world and hagiography) may have initially justified and accentuated the symbolic strength of the dragon’s presence in the panther episode. It was an image also present in the dragon lore of Anglo-Saxon literature, as the above-mentioned works of Aldhelm and Beowulf clearly show. The key to the opposition of these two animals in a Physiologus context could then reside exactly in the trait of the panther that chases the dragon away: its breath.

In the bestiaries, breath is often equated with voice – in this very episode, the panther emanates its odour by roaring while leaving its lair. In several of the animal allegories, the voice and breath are symbols of the Word of God and its creative power, an association that is extended to several expressions of orality – see the Lion, whose cub is born dead and resuscitated by the roar or breath of its father (illustrated, for example, in the illumination of ms. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 1951, f. 18r); or, equivalently, the female bear, that licks her born-dead amorphous cubs, bringing them back to life (as seen in the illumination of MS. Bodley 764, f. 22v). As we have seen above, those are connections also present in hagiography, where the Breath of God is a weapon summoned against serpents and dragons by the followers of Christianity.

We do not intend to say that sweetness of breath serves only a positive symbolic function. The manuscript context of “The Panther” illustrates the dual symbolism of breath particularly well. In “The Whale”, the poem which follows “The Panther” in the Exeter Book, the eponymous animal uses breath, of a perfumed and fragrant kind, just like the panther’s, to lure unsuspecting fish into its mouth – which is, evidently, to be understood as the Devil’s work, signifying the vain and earthly delights with which he attracts humankind to Hell (Kennedy 229). Both animal narratives often follow each other in several versions of the Physiologus, marking an explicit contrast of breaths and making the versatility of symbols evident: odorous breath may serve both ends of the allegory.

More frequently, however, the symbols of the Word, namely life-giving blowing and breathing (among which the panther’s), are opposed by analogous symbols that procure to annul or contradict this symbolic expression. To
quote Alison Syme regarding corporal taboos in bestiaries: “Breath – of God, life, and of spirit – is contrasted to negative animal functions of the mouth […]. The opposite of life-giving breath is suffocation, which is the demonic dragon’s *modus operandi.*” (Syme 165). Therefore, the dragon in the bestiary fights the elephant by suffocating it, enfacing it with its body. This type of struggle is first referred to by Plinius concerning the dragons of India (Plinius 24-27; 8.11).

We would like to note that the appearance of the dragon in the panther’s description does not seem to occur before the *Physiologus.* Plinius, for instance, when speaking of the panther, mentions its pleasing breath but does not refer the dragon (Plinius 48-49; 8.23). This means that the author of the *Physiologus* must have adapted his classical sources, altering the animal narrative to fit the Christian allegory (Curley xxv-xxvi). What we are trying to say is that the *Physiologus* may be among the first texts to introduce the “breaths” of both panther and dragon in a symbolic opposition: cure versus poison, Christ versus the Devil. As “The Panther” belongs to this tradition, the roar of the panther contrasts to the dragon’s poison as well. In the bestiaries, however, the dragon is rarely mentioned as venomous: its usual behavior consists in disappearing in the bowels of the earth after listening to the panther’s roar and smelling its sweet odour. This may have to do with the fact that these narratives received a considerable influence from Isidore, who never refers to the panther’s breath nor to the dragon’s venom, even though he speaks of the antagonism between both animals (Isidore 251; 12.2).

Hence, the *Physiologus* and the bestiaries appear to be the only texts where we can find this unique combination. The dragon is inserted as the most evident representation of the Devil, as an antagonist to the panther, now representing Christ. The dragon’s inherent pestilence could easily be fought with the opposition of a benign element of the same nature. Accordingly, the fragrant breath of the panther pushes away the bad scents and disease brought by the dragon’s presence. This reinforces the strength of the allegory Christ *vs* Devil; the dragon, “author of Venom”, is constantly fought by the panther, whose benevolent breath keeps the Enemy and its harmful emanations away. The prevalence of Good over Evil is thus fulfilled in an everyday animal allegory which perpetuates itself throughout time.

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8 See the illumination in the manuscript British Library, Harley MS 4751, f. 58v.
9 Plinius, in fact, depicts the panther as using its sweet breath to attract prey. It seems then to have been originally used against the other animals as a predatory tool.
In the illustrations of this combat, the dragon generally hides its head among the rocks. The illuminations where the dragon dares to face the panther by spitting fire or venom are very rare. However, illustrated examples of the dragon’s breath do exist: see the ms. Kongelige Bibliotek, Gl. kgl. S. 3466 8º, Folio 17v, in which the panther and the dragon’s breaths are depicted in the same style, making it unclear, in the dragon’s case, if we are dealing with venom or fire; furthermore, the dragon is facing away, not seeming to put up much of a fight. The *Bern Physiologus*, dating from around 830 AD, was the only manuscript that I found where an image shows a dragon challenging a panther. In this illumination (Figure 1, ms. Burgerbibliothek Bern, Cod. 318, f. 15r), the dragon, which takes the form of a small serpent, appears to be spitting fire directly at the panther, instead of running away as is most commonly seen. The same manuscript (ff. 17r-v) also presents other illuminations with similar dragons, which seem to spit fire against their enemies – namely a deer and the Peridexion tree. Notably, we are dealing with the oldest extant illuminated *Physiologus* (George and Yapp 53), with an iconographic style reminiscent of classical models.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we intended to underline the idea that the *Physiologus* is a product of a cultural context in which the dragon was represented as prominently venomous and that this characteristic might explain why this animal first found its way into the panther episode. I meant merely to offer some possibilities of interpretation and, while looking at the text, to highlight a relationship that could be established between the two creatures representing two opposites alongside the same axis – that of the symbolic meanings associated with breath.

In the context of Christianity, saints will take up arms against dragons, as much as the classical heroes had done before them, but, instead of using swords, bows and stones, their weapons are faith and prayer. Saints often use holy vapours to combat poisonous odours, establishing a relationship of symmetry or parallel opposition between both fighters. I believe that the same happens in the panther’s episode, where the animals fight one another with two antithetical battling breaths. The Word, symbolically embodied by the roar and the breath, is the panther’s weapon against the Devil, the venomous serpent par excellence. Its insidiousness, signified by pestilence and
poison, contains the potential to mislead humankind. Both creatures are thus associated with the oral dimension of the Word: the orality of one answers the orality of the other. The observation of these “natural” creatures allows us to understand the message which is transmitted in the moral plan: in both text and illumination we see reflected the uncontestable superiority of the power of God facing the Devil, and the narrative serves its doctrinal purpose.

Works Cited


**Illustrations**

Text and Image, Sound and (E-)Motion:
Re-viewing the Bayeux Tapestry in the
Digital Era

MIGUEL ALARCÃO

To Professor Maria Angélica Varandas

“A vista chega antes das palavras” (Berger 11)

First of all, I would like to thank the Arts Faculty of the University of
Lisbon and ULICES for allowing me this opportunity to return to a subject
dealt with in two articles (Alarcão, “Corpo” and “Cometa”), although I will
be exploring it from a more practical and pedagogically oriented point of
view.

The battle of Hastings (14 October 1066), an historical ‘prologue’ to
the Norman Conquest and its literary representation(s) and narration(s),
inspired, among others, Edward Bulwer-Lytton (Harold, the Last of the Saxon
Kings, 1848), Charles Kingsley (Hereward the Wake, 1866), Rudyard Kipling
(“The Anvil”, first published 1911) and Julian Rathbone (The Last English
King, 1997). But the momentous events of 1066 were obviously committed
to writing long before the invention of the printing press (fifteenth century);
suffice it to mention the chronicles and annals, coeval and otherwise, like

1 The digital edition of the tapestry (Foys, 2003) includes (in Background/Library/Catalogue)
selections from the main primary sources on the Norman conquest: see, for example, the
poem Carmen de Hastingae Proelio (circa 1068), by Bishop Guy of Amiens (circa 1014-1074/5),
the Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum (circa 1071-1077), by William of
Poitiers (circa 1020-1087?), and the Gesta Normannorum Ducem (circa 1070), by William of
Jumièges (circa 1000- ?). Other sources date already from the twelfth century: the Historia
Novorum in Anglia (1109-1115), by Eadmer, a Canterbury monk (m.1124?), the Gesta Regum
Anglorum (circa 1125), by William of Malmesbury (1087/96?-1143?), the Historia Ecclesiastica
(circa 1124), by Orderic (or Ordericus) Vitalis, monk at St. Évroul (1075-circa 1143), and the
unfinished Roman de Rou (circa 1170-1175), by Wace, a canon at Bayeux (circa 1100-circa
1174), better known for the coverage of Arthurian legends in Roman de Brut (circa 1154).
some versions of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Garmonsway 194-200 *passim*). Nevertheless, in the late eleventh-early twelfth century England, still in the age of the manuscript, how many people would have been able to literally *read* such information? Surely, not many... In fact, a traditional view of the concept of “literacy” – one restricted to the basic skills of writing, reading and counting – would largely fail to apply to medieval society, considering the extremely low percentage of those skills held by our ancestors. We must therefore take a broader and more pragmatic view of “literacy” and contemplate other forms of teaching and learning prevalent in the Middle Ages, namely oral, aural and visual literacy... and it may be worth adding, by the way, that the appeal of (and to) images, rather than just “words, words, words,” as Hamlet might put it, is something that present-day students can easily and instinctively relate, react and respond to.

Considering then the specific material nature of our primary source (misleadingly called “Bayeux Tapestry”, rather than “embroidery”...), we will neither be discussing here the development “from script to print” (to borrow a title from H. F. Chaytor) or “from memory to written record” (M. T. Clanchy) nor the relationship between “orality and literacy” (Walter J. Ong). But McLuhan’s glimpse, in the early 1960s, is still worth sharing:

> What will be the new configurations of [...] literacy as [...] older forms of perception and judgment are interpenetrated by the new electric age? The [...] electric galaxy of events has already moved deeply into the Gutenberg galaxy.

(330)

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2 The Parker Chronicle (Until 1070), The Worcester Chronicle (1079) and the Laud/Peterborough Chronicle (1154). Of all these, the Worcester Chronicle provides the longest account whereas the shortest one comes from the Parker Chronicle: “In this year came William and conquered England; and in this year Christ Church [Canterbury] was burned, and a comet appeared on 18 April.” (Garmonsway 196)

3 Michael Camille draws attention to the fact that “Whereas we tend to think of vision in passive terms, as the reflection of inverted images upon the retina, medieval people thought of it as a supremely active power. [...] In a world thick of presences, unseen as well as seen, images of things were far more powerful than they are today.” (19)

4 As António Luís Ferronha points out, “Os alunos vivem numa iconosfera, vivem numa videoesfera, vivem e respiram imagens, crescem rodeados de imagens, nesta civilização [...] que se transformou numa autêntica iconocracia.” (9) and “Para Henri Hudrisier, o maior paradoxo é que nós vivemos num mundo de inflação de imagens e pensamos sempre debaixo do poder do texto”(31)
Half a century on, this vision has obviously materialized, as Suzanne Lewis recalls:

Assaulted at every turn by sounds and images, words and pictures, we live in an age dominated by electronic and print media. Although medieval experiences of visual and verbal messages [...] were perhaps less ubiquitous than ours, they were nonetheless [...] powerful and influential, shaping the ways in which people felt and understood their world. (xiv)

[...] the Bayeux Tapestry’s imaged discourse constitutes a deliberate attempt to conflate past and present, here and there, speaker, audience, and characters, in a transparency of meaning that can be felt to exist beyond the text, beyond words. (134)

Before I proceed, let me quote one of our hosts:

Se Texto é tudo o que pode ser lido (no sentido de interpretado), então todas as manifestações culturais e artísticas se traduzem numa textualidade que, por essa mesma razão, não é apenas característica da escrita [...]. No Texto são explorados os modos de significação que se traduzem quer de forma escrita quer [...] oral e, na nossa perspectiva, também [...] pictórica. (Varandas 257)^5

This extended notion of text(uality) is all the more important, because, as Shormishtha Panja et al. argue in the Preface to Word, Image, Text: “Although interdisciplinarity has transformed literary research, it is, for the most part, confined to the relationship between literature and the social sciences. In comparison, the interrelationship of the arts has been a somewhat neglected domain of exploration.” (ix)^6

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^6 To Mikko Lehtonen, “The foregrounding of printed texts in our culture in general and in literary studies in particular has suppressed the fact that literature exists as a part of a larger whole of signification. This whole consists of speech, music, other visual signs, etc. Hence, I suggest a new object of theorising: Literature in the context of all signifying practices. [...] the printed word does exist as such but is always accompanied with other cultural forms. Hence the currently quite established concept of intertextuality should be supplemented by the concept of intermediality – intertextuality transgressing media borders.” (50)
According to these views, which we share and endorse, looking at the Bayeux Tapestry – an intricate visual narrative\(^7\) and a multilayered ‘needle-script’, clearly meant to be exhibited and seen – might be an effective and straightforward way of teaching and learning about the Norman Conquest for all those who, back in the Middle Ages, would not be able to read written sources. Likewise, I assumed that undergraduate students who, although (e-)literate, might not be willing to read books, chapters and articles about 1066\(^8\) would probably respond better to a visual presentation of the Tapestry and hopefully learn something from it. And, like I once wrote, there is much to be learnt:

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[…], além da excelência artística propriamente dita, a tapeçaria de Bayeux possui um valor histórico-documental incalculável, legando-nos representações realistas de traços e práticas civilizacionais e materiais do quotidiano medieval, da arquitectura civil e militar ao vestuário e equipamento bélico, da construção e do aperfeiçoamento dos barcos à caça, sociabilidade e alimentação, das relações de suserania e vassalagem aos rituais seculares e litúrgicos, etc. Paralelamente, a conjugação simbiótica entre estímulos visuais e sugestões auditivas, amplificada pelo dinamismo que da peça se desprende, justifica uma ilustração […] das suas virtualidades sinestésicas e cinéticas. (Alarcão, “Corpo” 74)\(^9\)
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Grounded on my own teaching experience, the following four ‘ways of seeing’\(^10\) will illustrate the pedagogical potential of the Tapestry:

\(^7\) Suzanne Lewis regards it as “[...] one of the first large-scale visual narratives that can be recognized in retrospect as a full-blown medieval conception of pictorialized text.” (2), adding that “The most distinctive and obvious strategy that separates the Bayeux Tapestry from contemporary texts telling the same story is its material visualization of the events.” (30) In terms of genre, according to Lewis, the Tapestry dwells on, and binds together, the conventions of history, epic and panegyric. Likewise, to Martin K. Foys et al., “As a medieval artefact, the Bayeux Tapestry is [...] a real outlier: it is art; it is chronicle; it is propaganda; it is multimedia; it is narrative experiment; it is monumental spectacle; it is a storehouse of eleventh-century medieval objects, crafts and customs; it is a cultural icon (and modern commodity); and it is literally the fabric of history.” (xii)

\(^8\) “[...] agora os jovens já não pertencem à Galáxia de Gutenberg, pertencem à Galáxia de Marconi.” (Ferronha 30)

\(^9\) As Richard Brilliant puts it, “by energizing the viewer’s eye, the image could indirectly stimulate both the recollection of the noisy accompaniment of battle and its rehearing through the reactivation of memory.” (in Foys et al. 71)

\(^10\) Expression borrowed from the title of John Berger’s book.
1) I started taking Wolfgang Grape’s book with me to the Faculty, so that students might have a look and pass it around. All in all, I would say they were mildly interested, perhaps vindicating Richard Brilliant’s remark that “Works of visual art, like the Bayeux Tapestry and other pictorial representations of battle, may provide explicit, demonstrative imagery of [...] conflict between contending forces [...], but, alas, they are silent. They seem to lack the power to convey the noise of battle (...), precisely because they have no accompanying soundtrack.” (in Foys et al. 71)

2) In 2003, my Faculty’s research group on Medieval Studies organized a conference entitled “O Corpo e o Gesto na Civilização Medieval”,11 whose proceedings came out in 2005. Bearing in mind Michael Camille’s assertion that “medieval pictures cannot be separated from what is a total experience of communication, involving sight, sound, action and physical expression.” (qtd. in Varandas 234), my paper included a film-like digitalization of the battle scenes in Grape’s book, synchronized with the first part of Carl Orff’s O Fortuna (Carmina Burana). When listening to the way the rhythm accelerates, the volume increases and the different instruments are pressed into service, it will not be difficult to imagine the countdown for the battle and the development of the fight itself.


3) Also, in 2003, a digital edition of the Tapestry came out, and so, rather than Grape’s book, I started taking Martin Foys’ CD-ROM with me to the Faculty. Due to the amount and detail of historical, geographical and bibliographical data, the students were impressed, but something seemed still to be missing... After all, as Richard Brilliant has forcefully put it:

War is very loud. The din of battle, the shouts of struggling men, the crash of arms, the clash of charging warhorses, the blaring of trumpets – these were common to the [...] medieval battlefield and to those who participated in such violent, deadly actions. Survivors remembered both the

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11 Reviewed by Pedro Picoito in História.
experience of battle – [...] the overwhelming noise, the groans of stricken comrades, [...] the war cries that summoned them into action – and its aftermath – the calls that marked [...] victory or defeat. (in Foys et al. 71)

In the clash of arms, there is sound; in the scream of wounded men and horses, there is sound; in the battle cries of fighting men, there is sound; in the pounding of horses’ hooves, or in the rhythmic strides of marching men, there is sound; in the call of trumpets, in the beating of drums, there is sound: the sounds of war. (76)

4)
And so we reach the last section, combining, after our title, text and image, sound and (e-)motion:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtGoBZ4D4_E&feature=related (4:24)

All things considered, the medium may not (always) be the message..., but it can certainly help! In the scope and framework of “digital humanities”, a final point for debate remains: even though we, as 21st century teachers – not just lecturers, authors, researchers, supervisors, academics... –, should be able to ‘surf’ what the late Alvin Toffler (1928-2016) has called “the third wave” (1980), how legitimate is it, deontologically speaking, to animate sources for the sake and purpose of pedagogy?

Works Cited


II. THE RENAISSANCE:
A BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS
1. Introduction

Reading race, racism or racialism in the early modern period has been conventionally considered an anachronism by many scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed, most criticism of early modern English plays from the 1990s onwards has frequently rejected approaches to these texts attempting to examine racial conflicts. These studies – they argued – are based on trans-historical continuities, which they blatantly reject. In other words, many of these scholars claim that so-called race-studies wrongly assume the existence of a similar, if not identical, notion of race and racism both in the early modern period and today. Mary Floyd-Wilson, for instance, argued a few years ago in *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* that “early modern ethnology is not racialism” (2003: 11); by this she meant that whatever kind of discrimination or prejudice based on ethnicity, skin color, complexion etc. we may encounter in, say, Shakespeare’s plays, cannot be linked to what we call ‘racism’ or ‘racialism’ today. A very similar view has been endorsed, more recently, by Jean E. Feerick in her *Strangers in Blood: Relocating Race in the Renaissance* (2010: 3-9). Linda Boose, on her part and setting the tone of the discussion, had already claimed that it was difficult to find, in early modern texts, something that we can convincingly call racist or racialist, since these elements cannot “legitimately be defined as a systemic form of prejudice” or be associated with “biologically empirical” differences (1994: 36). This is interesting, and very relevant for our discussion here, since Boose is openly stating that it is these two elements – ‘systematicity’ and ‘biological empiricism’ – that have become the cornerstone of the refusal to acknowledge racism in the early modern period.
In what seems to be a more nuanced approach, Michael Neill has argued that “it is important to recognize that the entire language of ethnic difference has been transformed in the intervening centuries” (2006: 123). Neill explains that neither ‘racism’ nor any equivalent term was used in Shakespeare’s time, which – at least according to the Oxford English Dictionary – is true: the first apparition of the word ‘racism’ in the English language dates from the early twentieth century. However, it should also be noted that the word ‘race’ as “ethnic group” was first used as early as 1547, and by 1612 it already pointed at any group of people “forming a distinct ethnic set” (OED online). So while it is true that ‘racist’ or ‘racism’ were not to be found, in their twenty-first century sense, in the vocabulary of the English Renaissance, it is no less true that the belief in the existence of ‘races’ or ‘ethnic groups’ distinguished by their ‘complexion’ (in the early modern sense of ‘skin color’ or ‘physical constitution’) did exist in the early modern period. This complexion – it was believed – involved personality traits and intellectual characteristics which applied to the ethnic group, _qua_ group, as a whole.

Furthermore, the still influential view that, unlike current forms of racial discrimination, the early modern English lacked a systematic approach to racism is becoming doubly questioned today. In other words, early modern approaches to ethnicity are not as ‘fluid’ and ‘unsystematic’ as it is frequently assumed, whereas our own, twenty-first century, takes on this issue are not rigid, ‘scientific’ or unproblematic at all. For Lara Bovilsky, although racial experience in the Renaissance is certainly different from our own approach to race today, “these differences may also be overestimated” (2008: 14). In her _Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage_ (2008), while granting that terms such as ‘Moor’ or ‘Black’ were quite flexible (2008: 17) and that “membership in racial groups is less discrete and indelible during the Renaissance than we take it to be now” (2008: 14), she asserts:

First, [...] race is not now, and indeed has never been, a matter merely of biological categories, phenotypes, or fixed identities; second, [...] the past is neither as fluid as has been nearly universally assumed, nor the present as rigid (2008: 9).

To be sure, some scholarship of the last two decades has provided new and relevant insights into our understanding of race and racial relations in early modern England, disturbing long-held notions of race in the sixteenth
century and today. In some cases, though, it does not seem to have been properly acknowledged, which has contributed to the traditional denial of the pertinence of addressing race as an early modern category of study. This is the case, for instance, of the still insufficiently examined existence of black slaves in early modern England. As is well known, it was commonly thought that the first black Africans arrived in England not earlier than the 1550s (this is the conventional view first expressed by E. H. Tokson in his seminal *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688*, of 1982). Then, it was agreed, encounters with black-skinned Africans only became relatively frequent between 1560 and 1600, and the slave trade officially started in England not sooner than 1563, with John Hawkins. Early forms of slavery in the West, it was concluded, exclusively involved the Portuguese and the Spanish. Yet, German scholar Gustav Ungerer has convincingly argued in his *The Mediterranean Apprenticeship of British Slavery* (2008) that this timeline has to be reconsidered. Ungerer’s breakthrough book-length study on the direct involvement of the early modern English in slavery and the slave trade, demonstrated that British slavery can be set back to the 1480s, that is, several decades earlier than conventionally thought. This has had important consequences for our understanding of race and racial relations, and for the symbolic function of ethnicity in the construction of an English identity based on a semiotics of colour. The examination of a number of late sixteenth century plays – such as the one addressed in the present work – has significantly profited from this awareness.

2. The Battle of Three Kings, Portugal and Muley Xeque

In the summer of 1578, a mostly Portuguese army led by King Dom Sebastião (Sebastian) landed in Northern Morocco with the intention of overthrowing sultan Muley Abdelmalek and restoring the earlier ruler, King Sebastian’s ally Abdullah Mohammed, to the throne. The latter, known in England as King Abdallah, was the nephew of Muley Abdelmalek and of Ahmad, later called ‘al-Mansur’ (the victorious) (Pennell 122-36). Dynastic strife in Morocco had started four years earlier, in 1574, when the second Saadian king Abdullah al-Ghalib (who was the father of Abdullah Mohammed and brother of Abdelmalek and Ahmad), left the crown to his son instead of appointing his brother Abdelmalek as his successor, like Saadian inheritance rule decreed. Abdullah Mohammed, however, after receiving the crown from his father could
only rule for two years since he was toppled in 1576 by his two uncles Abdelmalek and Ahmad, the late king’s brothers, after the battle of al-Rukn in March 1576 (Pennell 129-31, Bunes and Alonso xx-xxvii, Asín 24-55).

Between his defeat in 1576 at the hands of his uncles in the aforementioned battle, and the summer of 1578 when, helped by the King of Portugal, he confronted them in one final battle, Abdullah had repeatedly – but always unsuccessfully – tried to recover the Moroccan crown. Significantly for what follows, in these campaigns he frequently had his infant son, Mawlay al-Shayk (1566-1621, known in Portugal and Spain as Muley Xeque), riding by his side (Asín 58-61).

Convinced – among other reasons – that this Moroccan civil conflict could help him expand Portugal’s dominions in Northern Africa, King Sebastian of Portugal tragically decided to help put Abdullah back on the throne, although his efforts to obtain some military assistance from Spain’s Philip II were fruitless. Quite on the contrary, King Philip unsuccessfully tried to dissuade the Portuguese monarch from taking part personally in the clashes, and complained to the German ambassador, Khevenhüller, that King Sebastian “tiene buena y santa intención pero poca madurez. Le he persuadido de palabra y por escrito pero no a aprovechado nada”¹ (Kamen 177). Eventually, apart from some hundreds of mercenaries sent by Philip II and a small contingent of English Catholics (led by the notorious adventurer Thomas Stukeley), the Portuguese ventured into this enterprise alone (Kamen 177-78).

The Battle of Alcácer Quibir (also known as the Battle of Majacin River or of Three Kings) took place on 4 August 1578, outside the cities of Ksar-el-Kebir and Larache (and by the shores of Majacin River), and signaled the end of the dynastic conflict in Morocco. The Portuguese suffered a terrible defeat and three kings, namely Abdelmalek (the current Moroccan ruler), Abdallah (the formerly dethroned king) and the king of Portugal, Dom Sebastian himself, lost their lives (Pennell 129-31, Asín 59-61).

As a consequence of King Abdullah Mohammed’s death and the collapse of his cause both his brother Muley al-Nazar and his twelve-year old son Muley Xeque were taken to Lisbon by the Portuguese by the end of the year. But, contrarily to what we may think, Muley Xeque – King Abdullah’s infant son – did not vanish into history.

¹“(Sebastian) has a holy and good intention, but he lacks maturity. I have tried to persuade him, both by word of mouth and in writing, but to no avail.” Our translation.
The two Moroccan noblemen had become useful geopolitical tools in the context of the conflicting relations existing among England, Morocco, Portugal and Spain. So, both initially stayed in Lisbon for more than a decade, being hosted at Martín Correa da Silva's home and later in Alvalade, until they were forced by the ruler of the so-called Iberian Union, King Philip II, to move to Carmona, near Seville, in 1589. While in Andalucía the young prince Muley Xeque converted to Christianity and, after being baptized, took the name of Felipe de África (Asín 64-68, 85-88, 128-30).

We know that – after a short stay in Andújar, near Jaén – Muley Xeque was ordered to leave Andalucía in 1593 and instructed to settle in Madrid, where he was – like he had been in Lisbon, Carmona and Andújar – treated as a royal prince. He was awarded some of the highest Spanish dignities (Grande of Spain, Knight of the Order of Santiago), as a reward for his turning into a Christian, which was heralded as a major success for Philip II’s image among European rulers (Bunes and Alonso lxi-lix). Firstly in Valdemorillo near Madrid, and later in Madrid at the Goyeneche Palace in the Barrio de las Musas (where he was a neighbor of Miguel de Cervantes and even befriended Lope de Vega), Muley Xeque/Felipe de África became a notorious personality not the least for his big retinue of Moorish servants. We also know that he became a controversial figure for the Spanish court since he seems to have established some inappropriate contacts with discontented Moriscos (Spanish baptized Muslims), something that could not be tolerated by Spanish authorities (Asín 193-97, Gianolio 35-40).

Popularly known as the Príncipe Negro, his activities in Portugal and Spain never went unnoticed, his movements being registered in several documents of the period, from the first direct contact with Philip II (in Lisbon, probably in June 1581) to his last days. Interestingly, there is some evidence that his whereabouts were closely followed by, among others, English spies who duly informed Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Council of the relations and contacts made by the prince among the Spaniards and abroad (Asín 190, n 33).

Eventually, after the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1609, the presence of a Moor so close to the monarch became a source of unrest for the Spanish court and, consequently, he was forced to move to Italy, near Milano, where he stayed until his death, around 1621 (Asín 196-97, Gianolio 46).

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2 Lope even wrote a play about him, Tragedia del rey don Sebastián y bautismo del príncipe de Marruecos (1618).
The play

*Lust’s Dominion, or, the Lascivious Queen* is a complex tragedy of contested and dubious authorship partaking of the main characteristics of at least three theatrical subgenres. Whereas it can be defined as a revenge tragedy, it also develops some of the defining features of both the so-called Turk plays (plays which include Muslim characters as villains), and of the sexually explicit plays which became quite popular at the turn of the century on London stages (Sánchez 11-31).

The characters from *Lust’s Dominion* are placed in a context of extreme cruelty, violence, and exoticism, where they are confronted with Christian, white and English values embodied by heroic characters. The action is based on a Moorish prince, Eleazar, who is depicted as a morally corrupt and uncannily clever and resourceful character who has become, through marriage, a member of the Spanish nobility, very close to the royal house. In his past life he was the Prince of Fes and Barbary, apparently captured at some point by the Spanish and taken prisoner to Madrid. When the play starts, Eleazar has already become such a privileged alien that he is a member of the exclusive group of courtiers and counselors allowed to be present when the King of Spain dies in act one, scene one.

Indeed, Prince Eleazar is shown to be reasonably well integrated, at least formally so, within the country’s aristocracy, not the least through his marriage with María, a Spanish young noble daughter of one of the main royal counselors, Álvaro. Partly because of this marriage Eleazar seems to have conceived unrealistic hopes of, despite being an alien, becoming a leading member of Spanish nobility, which he despises and hates.

The wickedness of Eleazar seems to know no bounds, and he devises plots to betray, torture and kill, plans which he seems to enjoy beyond their

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3 *Lust’s Dominion, or, the Lascivious Queen* (henceforth *Lust’s Dominion*) is a collaborative play written by Thomas Dekker, John Day and William Haughton, and very likely based on an earlier (and now lost) play by John Marston originally titled *The Spanish Moor’s Tragedy*. It was originally attributed to Christopher Marlowe, and although Marlowe has been discarded, on solid grounds, as the sole author of *Lust’s Dominion* we are persuaded (and have argued elsewhere) that the playwright from Canterbury may have had a hand in a (now also lost) ur-text. Although *Lust’s Dominion* must have probably been staged between 1599 and 1600, it was only published in 1657 by Francis Kirkman. For a comprehensive examination of the inception and editorial evolution of the play, see Cathcart; see also López-Peláez and Cuder (20-26). All references from the 2019 edition by López-Peláez and Cuder.
actual usefulness to achieve his purposes. In most cases he does not show mercy to his enemies, and his boundless ambition and self-trust encourage him to proudly proclaim his evil ways and his superiority over any Spaniard he may come across.

Much of this confidence and belief in his preponderance proceeds from his scandalous and adulterous relationship with no less than the Queen of Spain, Eugenia, who has been the Moor’s mistress for years. This affair is so open and shameful that it is rumored in Spain that some of the Kings’ sons may be Eleazar’s. The opening of the play, which must have surely been shocking for readers and audiences of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, reveals to audience/readers an erotic scene including two young boys apparently involved in a homoerotic scene plus Eleazar and the Queen Mother, the latter begging sexual favors from the Moor while – at the other end of the royal palace – the King of Spain is, surrounded by his children and courtiers, at the gates of death.

QUEEN MOTHER [to Eleazar]
... I prithee smile:
Smile on me, and these two wanton boys,
These pretty lads that do attend on me,
Shall call thee Jove, shall wait upon thy cup
And fill thee Nectar: their enticing eyes
Shall serve as chrystal, wherein thou may see
To dresse thy self, if thou wilt smile on me.
Smile on me, and with coronets of pearl,
And bells of gold, circling their pretty arms
In a round Ivory fount these two shall swim,
And dive to make thee sport:
Bestow one smile, one little little smile,
And in a net of twisted silk and gold
In my all-naked arms, thy self shall lie.
(1.1.46-60).

This opening scene of a very explicit erotic content very clearly intends to present an English Protestant audience with the corruption of King Philip’s ‘most Catholic’ Spain; this effect is reinforced by dramatizing not only a case of female adultery but one involving the royal house and in which the trespassing
lover is not only an alien and a Muslim, but a blackamoor. But the play’s title’s allusion to a ‘dominion of lust’ does not stop there, since the play is full of cases of sexual perversion/transgression: Philip’s successor to the throne, King Fernando, will try to seduce, and later rape, Eleazar’s wife, the young and virtuous María. Eleazar, on his part, will voluntarily offer his wife to the king, sacrificing her – and his own honor – for the sake of advancing his political agenda. And the crown’s preeminent nobleman and highest Catholic official, Cardinal Mendoza, lusts after the Queen Mother, Eugenia, showing to be ready to sacrifice his vows and Spain’s future in exchange for satisfying his desire. In short, the portrayal of Catholic Spain, the leader of the Counter-Reformation, displays a kingdom ruled by lasciviousness and desire, in which everybody lusts after somebody else, so degraded that a North-African wicked and corrupt courtier may get to the throne and become the “negro king of Spain” (3.5. 24).

The corruption dramatized in the play inevitably leads to extreme disorder. More specifically, a civil war in which the king of Portugal – in a twist of historical events – intervenes with a considerable amount of good sense, in what seemingly was a demonstration of the playwrights’ sympathies for the Portuguese cause during the Restoration War. To be sure, a civil war was the most feared conflict at the time, a turmoil from which Eleazar hopes to profit by presenting himself as the only person able to save Spain from this decadence and self-indulgence. The portrayal of Muslim aliens freely inhabiting the country may be interpreted as a symptom of social disease, as well as the cause of civil conflict (Drakakis 114-121).

Eventually, the play shows that there is a handful of honest and virtuous characters: Prince Philip, the King of Portugal, noble Hortenzo and Princess Isabel, who defeat Eleazar by outwitting him, restore order and contain the subversion that the Moroccan Prince inoculated into Spain. The new King, another Philip, starts his reign with a decree that – combining the political and the ethnic – significantly marks a new age for the realm: the play concludes with the announcement that all the Moors will be expelled from Spain.

KING PHILIP

And for this Barbarous Moor, and his black train,
Let all the Moors be banished from Spain.
(5.6.182-183).
The fact that, by the time the play was first printed in 1657, Christopher Marlowe was taken to be the author deserves some consideration in the context of the play’s involvement with the presence of aliens in London. In May 1593 (only a few days before Marlowe was murdered) a bill appeared on the wall of a London church attended by Dutch immigrants. This note, known as the Dutch Church Libel, rallied against the presence of immigrants in London, claiming that there were too many of them and they all had to be deported; the text actually threatened with killing them if they did not abandon the city immediately. This event, which has to be inserted in the context of anti-alien prejudice in London (like the infamous Evil May Day of 1517 and other similar xenophobic outbursts in London, more than thirty in less than a century) was especially intriguing. Indeed, it acquires great relevance for our text, because it included phrases lifted from some plays by no other than Christopher Marlowe, and was signed by one “Tamburlaine,” who – as many Londoners knew well in the late seventeenth century – was the main character of Marlowe’s popular tragedy Tamburlaine, the Great of 1587 (Dimmock 207-09). Thus, regardless of a potential Marlovian connection with some earlier version of the play, there seems to be some link between, on one hand, Marlowe and the anti-alien prejudice associated with him, and – on the other – Lust’s Dominion, a text in which an alien, the Moor Eleazar, has the leading role (28).

4 The textual history of the play is quite complex, and we have dealt, but we’d like to simply mention one issue since it is directly linked with the play’s inter- and extra-textual dimension. Among the various hypotheses regarding the play’s sources and origin (the now lost play The Spanish Moor’s Tragedy, the possible existence of an ur-text, collaborative authorship etc...), some of which are based on solid philological evidence, we find the Marlowe authorship controversy. Christopher Marlowe appears as the author of the play in the first editions, and even some early copies have both printed and handwritten attributions to Marlowe. This possibility was ruled out some decades ago, but we do believe that it was perhaps too hastily so, given the significant amount of Marlovian echoes contained in Lust’s Dominion. That Marlowe might have a hand in the drafting of a preliminary version of this play (as the 1657 edition by Francis Kirkman suggests) becomes especially interesting in the context of the ongoing processes of construction of aliens in early modern England (Lopez-Peláez and Cuder 13-20).
3. Eleazar

Villains were not conventionally intended to become the main character of an early modern play, although it occasionally happened. In *Lust’s Dominion* the action evolves around the villainous Eleazar, who leads plot and dialogues and utters most monologues and soliloquies. The Prince of Fes becomes throughout the play a palimpsest, that is, a multilayered text with several levels of meaning, a crossroads of discourses of various kinds: political, ethnic, and religious, among others, which explains why he is open to so many different interpretations. None of these can give a full account of Eleazar, or of the play as a whole for that matter, but we would like to stress one in particular: Eleazar’s role as an alien, as a foreigner, and as a religious and political Other.

Such a character as Eleazar cannot be comprehended without an awareness of what a sixteenth and seventeenth century audience and readership would make of his ethnic and religious alterity. That Eleazar is a Moor and a black-skinned man is essential in order to understand the multiplicity of meanings he produces, just like his behavior as an irreligious stranger in the midst of Catholic Spain (and being staged for a mostly Protestant audience).

It must be remembered that blackness was considered since at least the Middle Ages a sign of evil, and the moral link between skin-color and human nature was not lost to the Elizabethans and Jacobean...
having being neglected for centuries, because it skillfully dramatizes the tension between two cultural constructions: a residual approach to skin-color as a protean notion, not necessarily carrying a stable link with moral nature (which Eleazar at times seems to endorse), and an emergent racialist conceptualization of difference (which most Spaniards represent).

Consequently, allusions to the skin-color of Eleazar and of his servants, both suggesting either a fixed or a fluid association with morality, abound in the play, and come from practically all the main characters. Thus, Eleazar is repeatedly called a “divel” and a “hel-begotten fiend” (in 4.1.24 and 1.3.123), a “damned Negro” (4.2.33), and “that damned Moor, that Devil, that Lucifer” (2.1.52). But, similarly, we perceive an inconsistency in the characterization of Eleazar’s ethnicity: thus, in the second scene of act one Eleazar defines himself as a tawny (or white) Moor, and this, we know well, frequently introduced an important difference for Elizabethans: “Although my flesh be tawny” he claims (1.2.9). The play at times seems to simultaneously resist and endorse the essentialist belief in an identification between soul (or goodness) and skin-color that pervades so many Elizabethan texts. Thus, to Cardinal Mendoza Eleazar shouts: “Cardinall, this disgrace, shall dye thy soule, as Inky as my face!” (1.4.32-33), and he also warns his servants “Your cheeks are black, let not your souls look white” (2.2.81). The implication is, of course, that the cardinal’s soul, which should be white, may turn as black as Eleazar’s face, and that the Moors’ souls could be, unlike their skin, white. This tension between a protean and an essentialist approach to ethical qualities and skin-color articulates the whole play.

In terms of religious allegiance the play manifests a similar ambiguity. Eleazar is presented as a Spanish Moor, that is, a Morisco or a Spanish baptised Muslim. This means that, like the historical Muley Xeque We already mentioned, Eleazar is, at least nominally, a Christian. Yet, the play at times depicts Eleazar as someone closer to Persian sun-worshippers (ie, Zoroastrians), or to the ‘heathen’ Indians whom the Portuguese and the Spaniards encountered in the Americas and about whom the Elizabethans knew so little, than to actual Muslims or Catholics. This assumption seems to be reinforced by both the Cardinal and Eleazar himself, who in acts two and three mistook Muslims for Indians (a confusion that we, incidentally, also find in Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus). Thus, the Cardinal tells Eleazar: “To beg

7 The best approach to Moriscos, their historical significance, tragic end and function still is, to my knowledge, Caro Baroja’s Los moriscos del Reino de Granada.
with Indian slaves I’le banish you” (1.3.158), and later Eleazar himself: “By heavens great Star, which Indians do adore” (4.3.95). It becomes apparent in the play that Eleazar stands closer to superstition, or to plain irreligious beliefs, than to Islam, and in any case the play does not bother to explain in some detail what, if anything but himself, does Eleazar believe in.

The conventional approach to the play, though, suggests that only through the eventual expulsion of all the Moors from Spain in act five (an act that obviously resonates with Philip III’s expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1609) is social order completely restored, an order that a Christian court overrun with black and devilish heathens could not achieve otherwise. The play then in this interpretation appears to eventually resolve the ambiguity that it creates by dramatizing the figure of an extraordinarily wicked character, one who is presented as irredeemably evil and under a completely negative light. With a main character such as Eleazar, who is constructed as an utterly dishonest individual who enjoys torturing others, immoral and treacherous, willing to prostitute his wife in exchange for the satisfaction of his ambitions and who despises even his closest allies, it would appear that the play, which is so plural and open in terms of inter- and pre-textual references, can only be interpreted from a monological and conservative standpoint. Yet, in Elizabethan drama few things are what they appear to be.

4. An alternative reading

We may wonder, then, who this Eleazar really is. The ‘Negro Prince’ claims in the play to suffer the constant affronts and slights of most characters: at bottom, and regardless of his power, he is an alien, a foreigner, only precariously accepted in the Spanish court from which he is expelled in the first act. But, unlike many other black characters in early modern drama who manifest a certain sense of inferiority on account of their ethnicity or religion (like the Shakespearean Morocco from Merchant of Venice, or Othello from the homonymous tragedy), Eleazar proudly displays his skin-color as a signal of his identity in the midst of an all-white Spanish setting: thus, he swears “by the proud complexion of my cheeks” (3.4.13) to take revenge for his wife’s death. His color becomes his protective shield and, within his acknowledged wickedness, far from feeling sorry for his nature he rejoices in it: to “provident creation” he shouts: “thanks for my face” (2.2.68).
Considered from a theoretical perspective, what Eleazar performs (as Homi Bhabha theorized when dealing with the notion of ‘hybridity’, and Khalid Bekkaoui brilliantly applied to this play) may be considered as a disturbance of the authoritative representations made by the forces of race, sexuality, violence, and cultural differences, somehow similar to what in the colonial discourse is known as the “strategic reversal of the process of domination” (Bhabha 111, Bekkaoui). This process, which the play exemplifies in a remarkable way, subverts the ongoing discrimination by means of a counter-cultural appropriation of the terms employed by those who try to script the victimized individual or character. To be more specific and to return to the play, we are persuaded that by proudly acknowledging the skin-color of Moors and their difference with Christians, the play refuses to show an apologetic or subordinated Eleazar. Indeed, the Moroccan Prince actually appropriates the definitions Spaniards try to script him with, emptying them of any coherent meaning and consequently cancelling its power to harm him. Mockingly, Eleazar manipulates prejudice, that is, he takes advantage of the discrimination he is subjected to in order to elude, for instance, the accusation of committing adultery with the Queen through an ironic and daring reference to his allegedly evil nature as a Moor:

ELEAZAR
The Queen with me, with me, a Moore, a Devill,
A slave of Barbary, a dog; for so
Your silken Courtiers christen me.
(1.2.6-8)

Eleazar is clearly not daunted because of his condition and situation: a foreigner in Spain, a Moor in a Christian court. If the play at one point seems to be interested in producing an alien ‘naturally’ inferior to Christians, to Spaniards and to the English, Eleazar resists to be thus scripted. Despite being in a hostile setting, he does not hesitate to threaten anyone who happens to stand in his way. And he similarly shows his ability to adapt to any environment. When threatened with banishment from Spain, he replies:

8 Bhabha writes: “Hybridity [...] is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the ‘pure’ and original identity of authority)” (111).
Hah, banish me! S’foot, say they do!
Ther’s Portugal a good air, and France a fine Country;
Or Barbary rich, and has Moors; the Turke
Pure Divell, and allowes enough to fat
The sides of villany; good living there:
I can live there, and there, and there,
Troth ‘tis, a villain can live any where
(1.4.15-21).

In other words, Morocco, France, Turkey, Portugal, and evidently Spain, the villain Eleazar can play the game of white Christians “any where.”

Furthermore, unlike other tragic heroes or villains Eleazar knows and enjoys humor. True enough, it is a villain’s sense of humor and consequently based on the suffering of others, but we must not forget that those ‘others’ are the Spaniards who murdered his father in Morocco, who took away his kingdom, who now treat him with scorn and interfere in his rise to power. In a display of cynicism which can also be understood as a comic episode, Eleazar claims to enjoy the moans and whines of his tortured prisoners, whom he calls “birds” singing “sweetly;” after hearing the insults that all the prisoners throw at him, he exclaims: “Oh sweet airs, sweet voices”, and then concludes that “there’s no musick like to miserie” (5.5.18). He also threatens to play a game of tennis with the heads of his prisoners, then pretends that the chain around Prince Philip’s neck is a necklace, and finally announces his intention to place the Cardinal’s corpse, once he has killed him, in his bedroom in the position of forgiving his sins (in act five, scene five). Black humor if you will, but one that makes Eleazar, rather than a stock figure, more human than we might have expected him to be.

The play also manifests a concern with the concept of the ‘enemy within’, a preoccupation the relevance of which is reinforced through the King’s eventual expulsion of all Moors from the realm. This fear, which the play eventually and totally exorcizes by means of the defeat of the transgressive Muslims, explains the containment of the transgressive threat posed by Eleazar and his Moors in their bold attempt to subvert, from within, the social and political order in Spain. And it is here that we can observe one last

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9 We find Richard Marienstrass’s approach to this notion in the context of Shakespearean drama extremely useful; see Marienstrass (102-113).
example of the way in which Eleazar confronts the ruling system through his ‘strategic reversal of the process of domination.’ Eleazar and his small contingent of Moors challenge Spaniards in Spain (in Madrid, we must assume), but the Moorish Prince is so cunning that he, the alien, succeeds in turning his enemies into unwilling foreigners in their own country. In act three, scene four, and exploiting the King’s lustful desire for María in order to attract him and his counselors to the Moor’s castle, Eleazar does not only murder the King but captures Spain’s nobility, now foolishly fallen in his trap: no longer in their own country, Eleazar warns them:

Bend not your dangerous weapons at my brest:

**Thinke where you are, this Castle is the Moors,**
You are inviron’dº with a wall of flint.
The Gates are lock’d, Purcullessesº let down.
If Eleazar spend one drop of blood.
(3.4.34-38; our emphasis)

5. Conclusion.

But we think we have not fully answered our earlier question, or explained why an English early modern play should stage a ‘Spanish Moor’ interacting with King Philip of Spain, or the King of Portugal, in the context of the expulsion of the Moriscos. To be sure, various scholars have approached *Lust’s Dominion* as an early modern topical play on account of the important historical issues it addresses, such as the conflicts between the Earl of Essex, Walter Raleigh and the Cecils, or Oliver Cromwell’s access to power during the Protectorate and more specifically his flirtation with the English crown precisely in 1657 (Cathcart “‘You will crown him’” 268-74). The examination of historical allusion in the play, or reading the play against the setting of England’s two crises of government, authority and legitimacy (in 1599 and 1657, precisely when the play was staged and then printed), seems to be much more than a critical pastime. Consequently, in this same vein we may as well wonder why the playwrights placed a Moroccan prince in King Philip’s court.

According to Eleazar’s own words, his father was defeated twenty years ago. He explicitly says: “Within the circle of twice ten years” (5.1.89). Earlier,
he had explained how as a consequence of that defeat he, Eleazar, became a subject of the King of Spain:

ELEAZAR
... my father,
who with his empire lost his life,
and left me captive to a Spanish tyrant
(1.1.11-13)

Through this speech the play informs us of when and why Eleazar arrived to the Spanish court. Considering that we have argued that the play was composed around 1598-99, ‘within the circle of twice ten years’ means that Eleazar’s father was defeated in 1578 or, in other words, at the aforementioned Battle of Alcácer Quibir. This would imply that the play’s “great Abdela, King of Fesse” (Eleazar’s theatrical father) may be interpreted as a dramatization of the Sultan Abdullah Mohammed II, who was defeated at such battle.\(^\text{10}\) And if the play’s Abdela seems to be modeled on Abdullah Mohammed II, then his theatrical son Eleazar may, at least to a certain extent, stand for his historical son, the Muley Xeque whose turbulent life and adventures as a baptized Moorish prince in Habsburg Spain we summarized earlier. Muley Xeque, like Eleazar, became a member of the Spanish court and stood very close to the King on exactly the same dates; like him, Xeque converted to Christianity, and (also like our Negro Prince) alarmed Spanish counselors (and probably the King himself) by establishing close contacts with subversive Moriscos, who were feared in historical Spain for their disruptive potential to provoke a civil military conflict (which they had achieved in the 1570s), just like the one Eleazar and his followers brought about. Also like Eleazar, Muley Xeque kept his own Moorish retinue and resided in his own palace (at the crown’s expense), and both also had a first-hand knowledge of Portugal and especially of one of his kings.

The historical Muley Xeque was eventually forced to leave Spain right after the Moriscos were expelled: that was the final stage of his Spanish rise to precedence, becoming clear that he had always been a pawn in a game of high politics, eventually becoming a liability. The theatrical Eleazar, who

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\(^{10}\) To be more precise, Sultan Abdullah was not actually defeated by the Spaniards, although the latter supported his rival, Muley Abdelmalek.
certainly is far more threatening and dangerous than the historical Muley Xeque, defied the state and almost succeeded, but eventually suffered a similar fate, wiped out from the face of Spain’s court. In the end, all of them – Muley Xeque, Eleazar, and ‘all the Moors’ – became irredeemable Others who could not be assimilated into a Christian state. Eventually, they will all be, both in Philip III’s all-too-real edict of expulsion and in the fiction of an English play intended for an English audience, banished from Spain.

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The young Elizabeth Tudor admitted that “the invention of letters seems to me the most clever, excellent, and ingenious” (11). Historians and biographers have long made use of letters to shed some light into the past, and one often finds personalis (private letters) and negotialis (letters of affairs) as primary sources in their works. In this context, diplomatic correspondence, which belongs to the latter category, stands out as a significant contribution to our understanding of the past, a sort of a metaphorical bridge between two worlds: the past and the present.

In the early modern period, monarchs rarely met in person. Charles Beem highlights the importance of the ambassadors’ reports, as well as of literary and iconographic depictions during Elizabeth’s reign, a “queen who never left her kingdom” (iii). Therefore, ambassadors may also be perceived as metaphorical bridges, in the sense of being the channel through which the nations communicated and negotiated with one another: they were their sovereigns’ ears and eyes in foreign courts, and the success of foreign affairs depended largely on them.

Diplomatic correspondence encapsulated, therefore, invaluable information sent to their home courts, much of which included the ambassadors’ own representations of ‘Otherness’. According to James Young, the ambassadors’ written descriptions of ‘Otherness’ may be considered representations, since “all conditions of being a representation can be met by a description”: the authors intended to represent an “object”, and their readers recognised that the ambassadors’ descriptions stood for the “object” (Young 130). And, as Emma Mason observes, historians are particularly indebted to such foreign accounts of ‘Otherness’, by virtue of the ambassadors’ penchant for detailed and witty descriptions.¹ Ambassadors become, once again, a metaphorical bridge, for they connect sameness and difference, in the sense that

¹ Especially with reference to the French ambassadors to the Tudor court, Eustace Chapuys and Charles de Marillac, (History Extra “Through Foreign Eyes”, 30th November 2016).
they are required to establish alternative strategic approaches to diversity, while simultaneously connecting to their familiar references of ‘self’ and ‘sameness’.

The reference to the concepts of sameness and difference used here pertains to the ancient Greek sameness/difference duality, that traditional principle of a ‘either/or’ choice, still common today, notwithstanding the complexities of contemporary societies. In present times, just like in the early modern period, one tends to group similarities and separate them from what is different. This categorising and generalising approach undermines today’s fundamental discourses of societal equality and inclusiveness. It is, therefore, stimulating to bring the early modern diplomatic descriptions of ‘Otherness’ to bear on issues of contemporary concern on difference and sameness.

In this light, this article aims at analysing the representations of the Tudor Queen Elizabeth through the eyes of the resident ambassadors based at her court. Moreover, it also intends to address a rather paradoxical element in the use of ambassadorial correspondence among primary sources. In fact, although the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance stands out as the longest-established coalition in history, dating back to the fourteenth century, one hardly ever finds references to the Portuguese ambassadors’ written accounts at the Tudor court. Therefore, this paper is also an attempt to compensate for such neglect, while it simultaneously suggests some of its underlying probable causes.

The analysis of early modern ambassadorial correspondence is closely associated with the modern form of diplomacy which was being shaped in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, namely with the creation and the subsequent proliferation of resident embassies throughout Europe. Keeping a resident ambassador in a foreign court meant, among other things, that a sovereign could expect a constant flow of information. Nevertheless, all resident ambassadors in London during Elizabeth’s rule must have been aware of the extant wide net of English intelligence, especially under Walsingham’s instructions, which might have included the disregard for the diplomatic correspondence inviolability. Therefore, ambassadors’ written accounts were often a practice of “writing between the lines”, as Leo Strauss observed (24), while contemporary analysis of such documents must include a practice of “reading between the lines”, as Patterson suggested (7).

It is interesting to note how ambassadors engaged in their written duties, according to comparatively different ways: some composed very detailed
and descriptive missives, others favoured brief observations in short letters; some ambassadors wrote daily, others were not so industrious. One cannot dissociate these different descriptions of the ‘Other’ from the sovereigns represented by the ambassadors. In fact, the most powerful and demanding governments expected – and were dependent on – everyday information. Such was the case of Venice, as Mattingly observed, whose Senate encouraged their ambassadors to include a wide range of topics in their reports, such as the country’s geography, history and economy, governmental structure and habits (107).

The Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Michiel, wrote a detailed report of England to the Venetian Senate, on the 13th of May 1557, which follows the above-mentioned Venetian model (CSP Venice 1041-1095). Michiel comprehensively describes the country, the city of London, the merchants, the navy, the army, Queen Mary, her debts and her love for King Philip, to mention but a few of the matters included in the ambassador’s lengthy letter. To the present analysis, however, it is significant to focus on the ambassador’s account of Princess Elizabeth Tudor:

My Lady Elizabeth... is now 23 years old. She is a young woman, whose mind is considered no less excellent (bello) than her person, although her face is comely (gratiosa) rather than handsome, but she is tall and well formed, with a good skin, although swarthy; she has fine eyes and above all a beautiful hand of which she makes a display; and her intellect and understanding are wonderful... As a linguist she excels the Queen... She is proud and haughty, as although she knows that she was born of such a mother, she nevertheless does not consider herself of inferior degree to the Queen, whom she equals in self-esteem” (CSP Venice 1041-1095)

The imagery in this passage clearly shows the author’s attempt to create a favourable mental picture of Elizabeth Tudor in the mind of his readers. Meaningfully, Michiel makes reference to Elizabeth’s fine eyes, the ‘eyes’ being a significant and ever-present Renaissance motif, the microcosm evoking of the macrocosm, the stars, the light and, therefore, Knowledge and Beauty. The ambassador describes Elizabeth’s hands as her most outstanding beauty feature, of which she is well-aware. But for Michiel, Elizabeth’s physical and psychological traits are intertwined – the Princess’s mind is considered no less excellent than her outward appearance. The ambassador builds
up Elizabeth’s physical description in terms of antithetical ideas of beauty – her face is gracious rather than pretty; she has a good skin, although swarthy – and that structure of contrast is amplified by the repetition of the conjunction “although”. Moreover, Michiel also employs the comparison device to assert Elizabeth’s greater linguistic skills than those of the Queen’s, and their equivalent sense of self-esteem. The author justifies the Princess’s traits of pride and overconfidence as features inherited from Anne Boleyn, thus juxtaposing the qualities of both daughter and mother. As a whole, this excerpt exemplifies a very sympathetic representation of young Elizabeth, while it also suggests how ambassador’s correspondence may be associated with the paradigms of the Renaissance, namely Beauty and Knowledge.

Forty years later, the French ambassador, André De Maisse, presented his court with an equally long and detailed description. Elizabeth was then 65 years old and she had been the Queen of England for 39. The ensuing passage is a glimpse into De Maisse’s account:

She looked at me kindly… She was strangely attired in a dress of silver cloth, white and crimson... This dress had slashed sleeves ... with other little sleeves that hung down to the ground, which she was for ever twisting and untwisting... She kept the front of her dress open, and one could see the whole of her bosom... Her bosom is somewhat wrinkled as well as one can see... but lower down her flesh is exceeding white and delicate, so far as one could see... On her head she wore a garland... and beneath it a great reddish-coloured wig. As for her face, it is and appears to be very aged. It is long and thin, and her teeth are very yellow and unequal... and on the left side less than on the right. Many of them are missing so that one cannot understand her easily when she speaks quickly (57-58).

Through the eyes of the French ambassador, one comes across a matured, wrinkled, almost toothless woman, wearing a red wig, dressed in a rather revealing fashion, and yet still elaborately and opulently adorned. De Maisse’s written depiction constitutes a clear contrast to Elizabeth’s projection of her public persona, as confirmed by the official portrait commissioned three years later, The Rainbow Portrait. For political purposes, this iconographic depiction represents an ageless, beautiful Queen, the personification of strength and wisdom, lavishly dressed and adorned. Although De Maisse’s physical depiction of the English Queen differs from that of
Elizabethan propaganda, both representations concur in what the ambassador captures in the following lines: “Her figure is fair and tall and graceful in whatever she does” (58).

Notwithstanding Michiel’s and De Massie’s contributions, Bertolci remarks that ambassadors were “the most biased group of observers”, for they were conditioned by their political agendas (83). However, it is also important to consider Beem’s and Levin’s perspective, which points out that when Elizabeth’s image was presented to Europeans in portraits, coins and miniatures, people would want to know “if the portraits they saw were [the] genuine likeness of the queen” (19). Then, those who met the Queen in person, like the ambassadors, could certainly be called to confirm as to the accuracy of the Queen’s image representation.

Quite a different approach on how ambassadors described Elizabeth may be found in the Spanish and the Portuguese ambassadors’ correspondence. These written representations tend to focus both on Elizabeth’s psychological traits and on her political temperament.

Clearly, one should not disregard that the Spanish ambassadors represented England’s arch-enemy. They were among the most prolific diplomatic writers, often making quite direct remarks on the English Queen in their letters, which also often resulted in falling into Elizabeth’s displeasure, whenever the letters were intercepted by her agents. One of the many examples of such bluntness comes to light in the letter sent by Bernardino de Mendoza to the Spanish King, on the 4th of May 1581, in which he describes the Queen’s politic nature:

> It was this knowledge [of military matters] which allowed me to present a bold front to the Queen on many occasions after I saw how abashed she was when I gave her smart answers, and it has been of advantage in making her more modest than if I had treated her softly (CLSP 113).

Subliminally embedded in Mendoza’s representation of the Queen’s political figure is the ever-present patriarchal thought that depicted Elizabeth as a woman. As such, she was required to conform to the virtue expected of the biblical concept of women as “the weaker vessel”: modesty (First Epistle of Peter 3:7). Besides, in Mendoza’s opinion, the English Queen was also a fierce enemy of the Catholic faith. Ultimately, in the Spanish ambassador’s account of the audience with Elizabeth, he – the man and the Catholic – becomes the dominant political character.
In a clear contrast with the Spanish ambassador’s rather open and audacious depiction of the Queen, the Portuguese ambassadors’ correspondence is characterised by unfailing circumspection – and political correctness – regarding the depiction of the ‘Other’. They do not engage in direct observations and clear-cut descriptions, although one may find in their correspondence scattered, mostly implied, remarks about the Queen’s qualities and her political conduct.

The Portuguese archives in Torre do Tombo hold a collection of manuscripts containing the letters written by the Portuguese ambassadors to their sovereign. Those manuscripts have been digitalised, thus providing access to the original account to twenty first century readers. This new pathway paved by the digital era also emphasises the idea of ‘a bridge between two worlds.’ One of those letters is from the Portuguese ambassador Francisco Pereira, who wrote to the Portuguese Public Treasury overseer, on the 4th of April 1559, simply arguing that the Portuguese would be better served by “showing their teeth” to the English (my translation; *Corpo Cronológico* 1.106.61). Clearly, the ambassador was suggesting that the Portuguese crown should act more harshly towards the English, who were then continuously threatening the Portuguese trade on the African coast. But instead of presenting a blunt accusation regarding the Queen’s covert support of her subjects’ enterprise, the Portuguese ambassador focuses on the Portuguese attitude towards the English, while the representation of the Queen’s character is subtly implied.

In another instance, on the 7th of June 1562, the Portuguese ambassador, João Pereira Dantas, addresses the Privy Council on Elizabeth’s ambiguous orders:

> [The Portuguese king] will never say that [The English Queen] proceeded with such cautel [caution], but as the words are doubtful, he desires her by the express commandment of his master to change them (*CSP* Elizabeth 10:74-90).

Again, the Portuguese ambassador refers to Elizabeth’s elusiveness and deception as *caution*, and points out that the Queen must replace “doubtful” words with others, which would result in a clear interpretation, not only by her subjects, but also by the Portuguese government. In fact, the state of affairs between Portugal and England had become so serious that Portugal threatened to break the Alliance with England, thus ending all the commercial trade between the two nations, if the English subjects did not
discontinue their trade in the Portuguese territories. The Queen let the situation drag on as much as possible. Even before such financial loss to the Portuguese crown, the Portuguese ambassadors refrained from openly criticizing the Queen. There is, however, one letter written by Francisco Giraldes to the Portuguese King, on the 28th of January 1578, in which he mentions that he did not have an audience with the English Queen because she was not feeling well. He adds: “I know that she feigned this indisposition to me” (CSP Elizabeth 12:464-482). Nevertheless, this apparent variation in the Portuguese written image of Elizabeth’s character may be explained by the fact that this is a letter written in cipher; thus, this direct remark regarding the Queen’s insincerity was not supposed to be known.

As a whole, the Portuguese ambassadors’ written depictions of the English Queen focus on her political attitude and on the psychological traits underlying it. This probably constitutes the first reason why the Portuguese ambassadors’ accounts are disregarded as sources in early modern studies, for they often wrote between the lines about Elizabeth’s political character.

Other reasons may lie in the fact that this correspondence is rare, due to the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and subsequent fire, the nineteenth century Napoleonic invasions, or because it remains forgotten in the private collections of the ambassadors’ families.

A final reason may be the condition of these records: the surviving correspondence is dispersed in numerous archives throughout Europe, still waiting to be assembled and catalogued. To sum up, the difficult access to these records, together with the challenging interpretation of their contents, may explain why we rarely find references to the Portuguese ambassadors’ written accounts of the Elizabethan court.

Stuart Hall notes that representations are the construction of meaning through language, and that they consequently connect meaning and language to culture (15, 16). Elizabeth’s representations by the Venetian, the French, the Spanish and the Portuguese ambassadors provide, in their own and unique approach, significant insights into the way this iconic English Tudor Queen was construed by some of the most powerful sovereigns in Europe. Therefore, as I suggested, these diplomatic written accounts stand as a multi-faceted metaphorical bridge between two metaphorical worlds: past and present, manuscript and digital, writer and reader, sameness and difference.
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Iconographic Manuscripts
Reading some Portraits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I
MARIA DE JESUS CRESCO CANDEIAS VELEZ RELVAS

As it is well known, the Tudor dynasty was characterised by fragilities right from the beginning, in 1485. Although the long period of disruptions caused by the Wars of the Roses came to an end with the successful foundation of a new House, Henry VII and all his descendants would face serious problems of several kinds, at an era of deep changes. The construction of the Tudor Myth was therefore a necessary, crucial strategy, based on propaganda policies carried out in two major moments and through two major means: the first moment was set in motion by Henry VII and provided mainly by historiographers; the second one was started by Henry VIII, took consistency in a crescendo and reached its zenith with Elizabeth I, through a munificent iconography deeply interwoven with literature, promoted by the ethos of the new court society, its literary circles and patronage policy. In fact, following the somehow gloomy, austere reign of the first Tudor, the merry court of his son, a microcosm of receptions, performances, pageantry and tournaments, brought about the beginning of the real new age after the Wars of the Roses. In cultural terms, namely in art and literature, there was indeed a substantial difference between the two reigns, certainly explained by the European context, in general, and the situation of England, in particular. Henry VIII embodied the aspired union of dynastic lineage, and inherited a comfortable financial situation. His reign marks the beginning of the Renaissance court society in England, centred in the paradigmatic image of an educated prince, although the effective blooming of the nation would occur later, under his daughter Elizabeth’s rule, due, among other reasons, to the ‘king’s great matter’ and the lack of investment in the maritime enterprise.

The portraits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, kept in public and private collections, constitute peculiar manuscripts, i.e. elaborate forms of writing through images, metonymic narratives, displaying power, sovereignty and supremacy. It is irrefutable that the immersion in material museums and galleries will always constitute a unique, exquisite experience; but it is also undeniable that virtual visits to art repositories, not subdued to space or time
constraints, along with the digital means to interact with the works, have originated a whole new approach, perception and reception. My analysis of the portraits was rendered possible precisely by such circumstances and tools.

As it happened in other European states ruled by powerful dynastic houses, the individual portrait acquired a specific dimension with father and daughter, in a Renaissance context shaped by three chief factors: the importance of the human being, advocated by Humanism; the centrality of the ruling Prince, according to recent concepts; and the role of the monarch, who had simultaneously become Head of State and Head of the Church, within a different social-religious framework.

The art of the early modern portrait was developed in Flanders, Burgundy, Italy and France. In England, a great amount of art works of previous times had been destroyed, while many of the surviving samples were copies of lost originals, as a result not only of the Lancastrian-Yorkist struggles but also, ironically, of the Henrician Reformation. The major influence from Flanders started in the 15th century and was mostly felt throughout the English Renaissance because the monarchs would continuously hire Flemish artists. In fact, apart from Nicholas Hilliard, the majority of the visual artists was of foreign origin, with Hans Holbein the Younger occupying an outstanding role in a nation that had banished religious art and was cultivating Classicism mainly and outstandingly in the art of writing, not in the art of painting. Therefore, the portraits, in varied forms (large pictures; miniatures; heraldry) and materials (canvas; wood; jewellery), constitute the main asset of what survived from the Renaissance artistic production in England. Moreover, at a time when copyright and royalties were inexistent (at least in today’s form and concept), one has to consider the way works were produced, involving masters and their apprentices, copies after originals or after other copies, co-authorship, as well as a large number of unsigned samples, now labelled ‘unknown artist’, ‘after’ (someone), or ‘attributed to’ (someone). All the portraits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, in general, and the ones I chose to ‘read’ here exhibit a myriad of meaningful, complex elements susceptible of dissection, analysis and interpretation; I will therefore select and observe the elements that, according to my view, are relevant for this reflection.
Hans Eworth’s full-length portrait of Henry VIII was painted in the mid-16th century and contains an inscription regarding its authorship (H.E. FESIT [fecit] = ‘Hans Eworth made it’), although it may have had the contribution of apprentices and/or assistants. Be that as it may, the portrait was composed after Holbein’s 1538 Whitehall Palace mural, and belongs to a set of other works that stem from that work, whose only remnants are a piece of a drawing by Holbein himself and a posterior copy by Remigius van Leemput. All the existing paintings, many of them anonymous, constitute variations on the same theme, having taken the king’s tall, massive body and position, delineated by Holbein, as model.

Eworth establishes a deep contrast between the dark background and the two bright, colourful elements assembled in perfect articulation: the
figure of the king and the emblem of the Order of the Garter. Henry’s grand pose, especially displayed through the way he stands and looks, is then multiplied through a series of motifs that emphasises such pose. Three predominant tonalities – white, red, gold – contrast with a surrounding darkness, and compose both the elaborate, luxurious attire, complemented by a profusion of valuable jewels, and the emblem’s three parts: the circular Garter, displaying the Order’s motto (‘Honi soit qui mal y pense’); the monarch’s coat of arms, framed by the Garter; and the Tudor crown, surmounting the Garter:

Henry’s white hose, bathed in a striking, almost immaculate whiteness, together with his huge legs and feet set firmly apart, seem to highlight the strength of his power and to reinforce his position in the realm. On the other hand, the English monarch was/is sovereign of the ancient, prestigious order, dedicated to the patron saint of England, St George, since its foundation. In Henry VIII’s reign, the Garter’s cerimonial celebrations became outstanding in the court and in the Church of England, with the second Tudor as Head of both. By strongly articulating king and emblem on the canvas, Eworth seems to be highlighting issues particularly sensitive to the dynasty, namely ancestry, legitimacy and sovereignty.
Henry VIII, attr. Joos van Cleve (1530-35)

The portrait attributed to Joos van Cleve depicts a younger Henry, also exhibiting an assertive, powerful look, also clad in an elegant, rich, sumptuous outfit, adorned with valuable jewels. In fact, among the aristocratic and diplomatic circles of his time, Henry was reputed to be “the best dressed sovereign in the world”.

The secular dimension of the ruling Prince results, however, diminished in this half-length portrait because ultimately it is the religious issue that is emphasised, in several ways. The king is holding a scroll that displays a Latin verse by Mark (16:15): “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature”. Let us bear in mind that Henry VIII, an educated man also in religion, had been a fierce Catholic prior to the schism with Rome. In 1521, he wrote the work *Defense of the Seven Sacraments* and was entitled ‘Defender of the Faith’ by the Pope. In this portrait, composed when he was already married to Anne Boleyn, i.e. after the schism, the scroll with the inscription seems to encapsulate the complexity and duality of the times, so powerfully personified by the monarch and rendered effective by...

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1 According to the Venetian ambassador Sebastiano Giustiniani, in 1515 (Hayward 2).
his polemic, *sui generis* Reformation. The scroll seems to merge such duality, both in form and content: on the one hand, it is written in Latin, thus emphasising the king’s role as Defender of the Faith; on the other hand, because the king had meanwhile become Head of his Church, it may be seen as an incentive within the process of consolidation and propagation of Anglicanism, which, as we know, would eventually result in a strong commitment between Protestantism and Catholicism, as the Edwardian and Elizabethan Articles of Religion testify.

Let us now observe a full-length picture of the daughter Henry VIII had with Anne Boleyn.

*The Ditchley Portrait*, by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (ca. 1592)
In *The Ditchley Portrait*, Elizabeth Tudor also stands and displays her power through a series of symbolic and metaphorical elements. The most remarkable one, an “emblem” of another sort, appears at the bottom of the canvas. England, represented by a map, lies *at* and *under* Elizabeth’s feet. This outstanding exhibition of supremacy is mitigated by a gesture of delicacy and protection, conveyed by the tips of her white shoes – that, somehow, seem to be floating over England – and by her right hand. In fact, this is a subtle metonymic depiction of another ‘new-era-within-the-new-era’. Elizabeth had then become the undisputed Tudor descendant and the anointed ruler of a nation in literal expansion, as represented by the small vessels on the sea and by the sea on the globe. The defeat of the Spanish Armada, in 1588, had been the corollary of a series of other determinant, related victories: of the English queen over the Spanish king; of Anglicanism over Catholicism; and of the English presence in the seas and overseas.

Gheeraerts’s canvas is considerably more elaborate than Eworth’s in terms of iconographic techniques. The background is divided both vertically and horizontally into two plans, one composed by darkness and lightness, the other one by earth and sky. The queen, who stands in the centre, in the division lines, unites them, with her back to the turmoil of a thundering night and her face looking at a bright, clear day. By embodying the continuation of her dynasty, she constitutes the transition from the past instability to the present prosperity. The Tudor rose on the ruff is emblematically and abundantly replicated in the jewels, gown and mantle, symbolising the new age, meanwhile consolidated. The monarch stands between earth and sky, clad in white, and bathed in whiteness. According to the Neoplatonic concepts, in particular, and to the worldview of early modern times, in general, this sovereign simultaneously amalgamates the essence of the idealised lady of Renaissance poetry. She is receiving the beams of the spheres and irradiating them, through her pearls, dress, mantle, shoes and, above all, through herself, thus establishing the cosmic correspondences.

Similar to her father’s iconography, Elizabeth’s also comprises two half-length portraits with a religious significance, although much subtler in her case.
The set composed by *The Pelican Portrait*, cromatically darker, and *The Phoenix Portrait*, cromatically lighter, attributed to Nicholas Hilliard, displays two small, highly meaningful elements that are almost concealed amidst the intricate textures and jewellery. As it happens in van Cleve’s work, the monarch’s courtly, secular dimension results diminished by the iconic power of both birds, in the form of jewels placed at the centre of her chest.

In *The Pelican Portrait*, the jewel, highlighted by one of the queen’s delicate white hands (a recurrent element in her iconography and also relevant in *The Phoenix*) represents extreme devotion and self-sacrifice:
In medieval times, it was believed that the bird wounded its own chest and fed the young with its own blood to prevent starvation, thus powerfully symbolising Christ’s Passion and the Eucharist: while Jesus gave His blood to save mankind, the Eucharist celebrates His Sacrifice and provides spiritual nourishment. In the aftermath of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, the Tudor sovereignty (underlined both by the Tudor rose and the Tudor crown in this portrait) did prevail.

In *The Phoenix Portrait*, the Queen is holding a rose (the ever-present Tudor rose) placed close to her heart and slightly under the amazing bird, either securing it or drawing attention to it:
Phoenix and rose seem therefore to be inextricably united. As we know, according to the ancient culture, the immortal bird with colourful feathers and a gold and scarlet tail lives from 500 to 1000 years; it then ignites, and a young bird is born from its ashes, starting a new life-cycle. In Christianity, it symbolises resurrection and, due to the way it gives life to another being, is also associated with the Virgin Mary.

Elizabeth I did effectively incorporate a series of crucial dimensions in a nation that was being regenerated from the disruptive ashes of a recent past. Both portraits – *The Pelican* and *The Phoenix* – materialise such dimensions: each bird at her chest highlights her role as the leader of a new Church and, as the monarch who never married, underlines her total devotion to her subjects. Within such a context, the image of the Virgin Queen, unique and chaste, was then being profusely cultivated, both through the art of painting and the art of writing.

Due to a series of contextual factors, the early modern worldview wisely merged tradition with innovation, at a time when the King/Queen was still King/Queen by the grace of God, and His microcosmic, earthly correspondent. The portraits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I constitute, above all, displays of the ‘Body Politic’ of the monarch, icons of power, majesty and supremacy, transposed to the opulence that covers his/her ‘Body Natural’. The concept of the ‘King’s two bodies’, so pertinently delineated by Ernst Kantorowicz, is intimately related to other key issues, such as the investiture of royal power and the belief that the ‘King’s Body Politic’ never dies, as epitomised in the motto “The King is dead. Long live the King”.

The portraits of both monarchs are not only striking examples of such conceptual, original worldview, but also ingenious means to impress the viewer and to emphasise the Tudor royal supremacy. Amidst a profusion of jewels, cascades of pearls, embroidered silks, rich velvets, delicate lace, every iconographic detail is emblematic and paradigmatic; in the words of one of Elizabeth I’s most accomplished courtier poet, Sir Philip Sidney, every iconographic detail is indeed a literal “speaking picture” (Sidney 100) in the construction of the Tudor power of image.

In the 21st century, the iconographic works have certainly gained an impressive new dimension because they have reached a wide, diversified range of beholders who are constantly “travelling” in the cyberspace and perusing the virtual art repositories. I am sure that the two most outstanding protagonists in the construction of the Tudor propaganda and the
consolidation of the Tudor myth – the royal father and his royal daughter, whose portraits were approached in the present essay – would have been thrilled to have such an imaginably wide audience.

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Iconographic Works


III. Romanticism: Looking Before and After
Introduction

This essay explores potential circumstances in which quantitative approaches to literary data may help us understand aspects of the reception of Blake’s works dealing with the history of references to Blake’s poem, “And did those feet”, which was set to music as “Jerusalem” by Charles Hubert Parry in 1916. The stimulus for it and the original talk on which it is based has been the work I have undertaken over the past two years on the history of “Jerusalem”, stretching back to Blake’s original composition of the stanzas included in the Preface to Milton a Poem until the EU Referendum in 2016, with a focus on the century since Parry set Blake’s words to music. While working on the book, I kept a spreadsheet with references collated from written texts and audio recordings in particular, eventually amassing a dataset comprising some 600 entries. The data collected offers a sufficient series of examples to make me think differently about ways of reading the hymn, and this essay is intended as a preliminary working through some of the theoretical issues surrounding the employment of digital techniques in the field of reception studies and digital humanities.

Any discussion of quantitative methods with regard to Blake’s work carries an intrinsic warning, for Blake himself admonished readers against an over-reliance on what he called “Druidical Mathematical Proportion of Length Bredth Highth” (Milton 4.27, E98). As we shall see later, an important reaction against recent statistical analyses has included what are often loosely dubbed “romantic” oppositions: actually, more often than not this is intended as a derogatory term, but as a Romanticist I believe there are actually some valid criticisms against a reliance on quantitative methods (as opposed to, say, subjective phenomenological readings) that should always be borne in mind. My own use of statistical analyses is intended as a practical method that – in what are actually very
limited circumstances – may help us build a picture of some aspects of the reception of Blake’s work. Blake scholars have relied on datasets for the best part of a century now: Geoffrey Keynes’s 1921 *A Bibliography of William Blake* included a list of Blake publications, which was then supplemented and superseded in 1969 by G. E. Bentley’s *Blake Books* and its various supplements in book form and as articles in *Blake, An Illustrated Quarterly*. Recently, I have been writing much more about settings of Blake to music, and Donald Fitch’s 1990 book, *Blake Set to Music*, has become an indispensable reference work.

The subtitle of this essay, “Literary data as a challenge to literary theory”, invokes a text that has long been important to my own reception work, Hans Robert Jauss’s essay “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory” (the original German text of which was published in 1970 and then translated into English in 1982). Jauss was writing at a time when periodization of literature was (rightly) falling into decline, but his own approach – which overlapped with elements of what would become fashionably known as New Historicism, as well as the materialist techniques of figures such as Jürgen Habermas – was a significant step in reconsidering how an audience’s reception of literary texts changed as the “horizon of expectations” evolved over time. Jauss offers a particularly compelling example of this with regard to the diverging receptions of Ernest-Aimé Feydeau, who published his literary sensation *Fanny* in 1857, the same year as Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*. As Jauss observes, *Fanny* went through thirteen editions in one year while Flaubert’s formal innovations initially found little success. Though *Madame Bovary* had few admirers at first, however, they were tenacious, passing on their passion for Flaubert to each new generation so that eventually it was *Fanny* which came to seem the outmoded novel.

Today, we have a fairly simple way to test Jauss’s hypothesis, which certainly seems correct on an intuitive level. Google’s Ngram Viewer, which as of 2015 had scanned more than 5 million texts, allows a rapid search of certain phrases. Entering the search terms Ernest Feydeau and Gustave Flaubert certainly seems to support Jauss’s explanation of audience reception of the two authors.
As can be seen above, during the 1860s and early 1870s, it is Feydeau who is referenced more, and yet from 1875 this situation reverses so that, some twenty years after the publication of *Madame Bovary* and *Fanny*, it is Flaubert who eclipses the reputation of his friend, as Feydeau lapses into obscurity by the end of the century. It should be noted, however, that Jauss’s hypothesis requires a degree of refinement, particularly when compared to the data from the *French* corpus.

Jauss’s reading, which suggests a transformation of the horizon of expectations, so that the bestseller Feydeau is overtaken by the formal experimenter Flaubert, does not seem to apply: almost from the very beginning Flaubert appears to match Feydeau, although as in the English corpus there
is an explosion of references from the mid-1870s onwards. It should be noted immediately that the above charts, which indicate references to both authors in various journals and books, are no indication of sales and so this measure of popularity is not included. It is very likely that the trial of Flaubert and the publishers of La Review de Paris, which serialised Madame Bovary, meant that there were many more references to the author than could be expected from the number of actual readers, but this is a hypothesis that is difficult to test and – something of a running feature throughout this essay – indicates how cautious we must be when employing quantitative techniques.

An entirely non-cautious (and increasingly notorious) example of the appeal of Big Data came from Chris Anderson in 2008 in an article for Wired entitled, “The End of Theory”. In it he observed that:

At the petabyte scale, information is not a matter of simple three- and four-dimensional taxonomy and order but of dimensionally agnostic statistics. It calls for an entirely different approach, one that requires us to lose the tether of data as something that can be visualized in its totality. It forces us to view data mathematically first and establish a context for it later... Petabytes allow us to say: “Correlation is enough.” (Anderson np)

Anderson, who frequently makes grandiose statements in order to attract attention, has been refuted carefully and methodically by scientific researchers such as Sabina Leonelli, who demonstrates how Big Data is almost inevitably a highly selected phenomena with results drawn from social, political and economic factors, and Fulvio Mazzochi, who shows how petabytes of data enhance the testing of hypothesis rather than replaces them. This essay, then, has no real intention of arguing that the end of theory is nigh after Anderson, although some of my work in recent years has been much more influenced by that of Franco Moretti, who made a particularly forceful argument for rethinking methodologies in the digital humanities nearly twenty years ago now in his spectacularly titled “The Slaughterhouse of Literature”:

But of course there is a problem here. Knowing two hundred novels is already difficult. Twenty thousand? How can we do it, what does knowledge mean in this new scenario? One thing for sure: it cannot mean the very close reading of very few texts – secularized theology, really (‘canon’!) – that has
radiated from the cheerful town of New Haven over the whole field of literary studies. A larger literary history requires other skills: sampling; statistics; work with series, titles, concordances, incipits – and perhaps also the ‘trees’ that I discuss in this essay. (Moretti, 208)

In *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, Moretti argues that the use of quantitative methods allows us, by viewing “fewer elements” (i.e. individual texts), to have a “sharper sense of their overall interconnection”. Actually, a fairly careful rereading of *Graphs, Maps, Trees* led me to have a greater appreciation for what are, actually, quite moderate claims by Moretti: unlike Anderson, he is not attempting to make grandiose claims for the end of literary theory but seeking to demonstrate some noticeable trends within literary history. That said, his use of evolutionary theory as a way “to think about very large systems” has led towards a degree of “scientism”, a false application of scientific method in the humanities where, frankly, it is harder to replicate and generalise data – even more so than in the social sciences. A more extreme version of this is, for me, to be found in the work of Joseph Carroll, who, in papers such as “Three Scenarios for Literary Darwinism” (2010), seeks to excise the vagaries of postmodernism from literary theory.

The tendency towards scientism in the work of theorists such as Moretti has been cogently critiqued by Tom Eyers, who argues that the tendency towards neo-positivism in Moretti (and also Stephen Ramsay’s influential *Reading Machines*) results in an “uncritical positivism at the very moment that [it] affirms an apparently critical historicism.” (Eyers np) I particularly like Eyers’ critique because he shows an awareness of many of the advantages of the digital humanities, whether preserving decaying archives or deploying new data mining techniques within scholarship, while distancing himself both from broadly neo-Romantic, uncritically aestheticist objections to digital humanities and the equally uncritical techno-evangelism. I do not necessarily subscribe to his adoption of Althusser as a model for a new “speculative” formalism that can synthesise history and form, but he makes many pertinent observations regarding Moretti’s process that have influenced my own thinking, most notably the warning against assuming a uniform model of literary consumption to generate data from distant reading. Individual subjectivity never disappears, and Moretti’s taboo against close reading has been especially unhelpful to my own analyses of “Jerusalem”, where it is precisely the phenomenological, individual, subjective interpretation of the text
that has produced a significant bifurcation in the reception history of the text in terms of political reception by left and right.

Actually, my reservations regarding Moretti’s model stem less from what he does explicitly in works such as *Graphs, Maps and Trees* and *Distant Reading* than the reductive tendency that emerges in so-called “literary Darwinism”. While a potentially contentious response towards this would, in my opinion, follow Deleuze’s consideration of empiricism (after Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead) as the conditions for the production of novelty rather than a reflection of the “real” world, untangling that important thread will take place in a much more convoluted direction. Here I shall simply observe a tendency in some of the social sciences, including communication studies, to employ “postpostivist” methodologies. As Allen, Titsworth and Hunt observe in their handbook on *Quantitative Research in Communication*:

A key component of the scientific method is verification and absolutism – that through replication, theories become “verified” and accepted as universally true. Although application of the scientific method to the study of communication and other social sciences was very popular at one time, more contemporary theory embraces a postpostivist approach that does not rely on absolute truth. From this perspective, theories are assumed to be good descriptions of human behaviour, but exceptions are expected because of unique circumstances and the tendency for some unpredictability to be present in any situation. (Allen, Titsworth and Hunt 8)

As such, a postpositivist approach to the data I am using to describe some of the reception of the Blake-Parry hymn “Jerusalem” follows this understanding: the data considered below is far from complete and exceptions are to be expected. It is a tool for a heuristics of understanding rather than any attempt at a complete hermeneutics.

**Methods for Collecting Data**

One thing became absolutely clear when preparing for this essay: although I have generally tended not to use quantitative techniques in my own work (one exception being for a chapter in *William Blake and the Digital*
I have worked with a considerable number of students in the fields of Journalism and Media Studies, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level; as such, sorting through my data demonstrated a number of flaws in my methods for collecting data. Mainly this was due to the fact that I had not initially intended to produce any form of quantitative analysis, and the desire to do so emerged from the number of references to the Blake-Parry hymn which showed definite patterns in some areas. As such, there is a number of limitations in the method for collecting data which ultimately affects the analysis which follows.

My principle methods of data collection were threefold: serendipity, that is by reading through any number of books/listening to recordings that I knew referenced the hymn; more systematically using Google’s NGram Viewer to examine the digitised collection of some five million texts; finally, by using online music databases such as Allmusic and Discogs, these two including 20 million and 150 million texts. While the number of texts included in the NGram Viewer is considerable, this should be placed against a corpus of 25 million books scanned as part of Google Books (which itself is only a small portion of an estimated 130 million titles worldwide as of 2010).

While the method of data collection was not planned in a structured way as I would have intended, had quantitative analysis been planned for from the very beginning, essentially arising from an extended bibliography, nonetheless it represents the most comprehensive collection of data for this topic ever collated. The work is not yet complete – there are, for example, some suspicious gaps in periods such as the 1940s that make me believe that more works remain to be found. In addition, I would like to collate references in news media to the hymn, although preliminary work I have undertaken here indicates that I will have to do a lot more cleaning of data (when a newspaper refers to “Jerusalem”, it’s usually the city rather than the hymn).

Analysis

Bearing in mind the above limitations, nonetheless the final data set provides some interesting correlations that can be visualised in a number of ways, beginning with a simple scatter plot that shows some of the frequency of instances referencing the hymn since Alexander Gilchrist’s publication of the *Life of William Blake* in 1863.
Unsurprisingly, the chart above shows Blake’s poem/Parry’s hymn being referenced more frequently as time progresses, but we should be wary of rushing to two conclusions that would establish causal relations between the data shown here and the reception of the Blake-Parry hymn.

First of all, the distribution of frequency data would appear to demonstrate an exponential growth which appears to begin some time around the 1990s, but it is perhaps more likely that the eventual shape will be closer to an S-curve, with a saturation of references in the selected media occurring in the twenty-first century. Following from this, the temptation is to discuss the above frequency data in terms of the popularity of “Jerusalem”, but this cannot be demonstrated causally from the data despite the apparent simplicity of a correlation between recorded frequencies over time.

Consider the following graph:
Figure 3: Church of England participation data, 1960-2016.

This chart, taken from the Church of England’s *Statistics for Mission 2016*, shows a fairly familiar trajectory of long-term decline in the Anglican church. Whereas nearly 7 percent of the population defined itself as Anglican in 1960, that figure had dropped to less than 2 percent in 2016, and regular church attendance had dropped from around 3.5 percent to slightly more than 1 percent between 1968 and 2016. Of course, because the population of the UK has increased during that time, it would still be possible for this decline to be matched by a growth in absolute numbers, but by 2016 the actual number of church goers had dropped to below one million. The reason why this is significant to a discussion of “Jerusalem” is that CofE churches use the hymnal *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, which includes “Jerusalem”: there is no statistical data collected on how often particular hymns are sung at church, but it is not an entirely unreasonable assumption that in one area at least – singing in church – the Blake-Parry hymn is *less* popular now (or at least performed less often) than it was some fifty years ago.

Because my research on the reception of “Jerusalem” traces its use across certain types of media (books, audio recordings, television and film, in particular), it cannot begin to answer whether the hymn is more or less popular in absolute terms, only that it is more prevalent within those media in the
twenty-first century than it was during the twentieth century. Certainly the hymn is sung at public events, such as cricket matches and Last Night of the Proms, so it may indeed be more popular in absolute terms, but I have not collected the data to verify this. Nonetheless, the data set as it stands throws up certain interesting items: thus, for example, while I expected a surge of instances in 1976 during the Queen’s silver jubilee (and there was, indeed, a small rise in occurrences), the greater frequency is actually during 1973, mainly due to a slight flurry in audio recordings, including that by Emerson, Lake and Palmer on their album *Brain Salad Surgery*. There is, however, no obvious correlation between this increase and external events, unlike the more dramatic surge in frequency during 2011 (32 instances) and 2012 (29 instances), where “Jerusalem” was clearly recorded and performed more regularly because of the royal wedding of William and Kate Middleton and the Olympic ceremonies/golden jubilee the following year. Similarly, a spike in 2000 was due to the selection of the hymn as the official song for Euro 2000 by Fat Les, with the track being included on a number of compilation albums that year.

There has, then, been a greater media use of “Jerusalem” in the twenty-first century, but this has also been a period of greater deviation between the number of instances each year as the following chart demonstrates:

![Figure 4: Median incidents across selected time periods for 100 years of “Jerusalem”](image)

Each of these three fifteen-year periods demonstrate that the median for instances of “Jerusalem” increases considerably. In the decade and a half when Parry first set Blake’s poem to music, the median was one appearance a year, representing the fact that, while occasionally it appeared in some
format more than once, there were also years when it did not appear at all. By the 1970s, this was no longer the case, although the median has only risen slightly to 3 occurrences each year on average. In the first years of the twenty-first century, by contrast, the median is 16 instances a year with a much wider range between the various data points.

The following charts illustrate similar points in a slightly different fashion, showing the distribution curves for incidents of the lyric “And did those feet”/”Jerusalem” in three different sets. In the first, covering the entire period from 1863 to 2016 (a population where \( N=150 \) because in this data set there are a few instances where no data was collected), the mean is 3.84 with a standard deviation of 6.137. What is significant about these numbers is that, across 153 years, the number of instances in the median of references to the text are very low because, for more than half a century, taking off during the second half of the twentieth century, one thing that does become evident from the data I have collected is that the driving force behind this increased media saturation is audio recording, as the second chart demonstrates:

**Figure 5:** Instances of “Jerusalem” by medium.
The majority of media formats where “Jerusalem” occurs is via audio (whether live performance – only noted rarely in my statistics and not including regular events such as Last Night of the Proms – or, more commonly, audio recordings). While music comprises more than half the instances within my data set, before the 1970s audio recordings at least are rare, and it is during the CD-revolution that takes place during the 1990s that instances of “Jerusalem” appear most often, participating in the wider renaissance of classical music brought about by the innovation of the CD. Indeed, it is possible that a final tailing off of those instances could reflect the decline of CD in recent years, although this correlation cannot be proven and, in any case, could be reasonably expected to have occurred earlier in the preceding decade. In general, however, the data collected do seem to indicate that at least partially the wider media reception of “Jerusalem” corresponded to a transformation in audio recording technologies: the hymn became part of the backing track for the nation because, as with so much other music, innovations in technology meant that it was easier to produce and distribute.

This data, visualised in different ways, does point to a similar conclusion: that “Jerusalem” has been more widely distributed across media formats as the century since Parry set it to music, and that this growth has been driven by audio recordings. I will not lie, such conclusions are hardly
earth-shattering and would have been guessed as “common sense” by any number of commentators, but it is useful to see the evidence demonstrating such a clear trend. Two other examples also demonstrate the value – and the limitation – of such augmented reading, one of which actually shaped my own understanding of the reception of the hymn and another of which indicates the danger of false positivism when employing quantitative methods.

The following chart also deals with the categorisation of music:

![Figure 7: Musical categories of audio recordings of “Jerusalem”](image)

This chart – drawing largely on self-identified categories of recordings (whether emphasising a choir, pop music, by a military brass band, etc.) – is an effective way of seeing immediately some of the ways in which those recordings of the hymn have been categorised. It is an exercise in taxonomy which, while hardly surprising in some respects – the vast majority of instances are orchestral or choral arrangements – does indicate a few interesting examples, one of which I shall follow up below. The one point to make about this visualisation is that it obviously does not help with tracking instances across time: in many cases, this is not especially relevant, but occasionally – as in the categories of sport and music for royal occasions – it disguises the fact that such uses are very recent (largely post-2000) and thus indicate changing attitudes towards/uses of “Jerusalem”.

The final example is not a musical one, but deals rather with one of the most evocative phrases from Blake’s poem – “dark Satanic mills”. The chart below indicates the frequency since 1900 where the phrase has been used separately from the hymn to illustrate some aspect of society or other thought:
For some time, I have been rather adamant that Blake’s phrase has nothing to do with the industrial revolution and, in my opinion, is only tenuously connected with the Albion Flour Mills constructed in Southwark which burned down in 1791. Yet it becomes clear that, after some tentative references in the 1910s (the first instance I can find of the phrase outside of simple repetition within the poem as a whole), the phrase really begins to gain currency from the 1950s onwards. I am not entirely confident of my data to be sure that the dip in the 1970s is entirely satisfactory, but certainly from the 1980s onwards it becomes embedded in popular culture – both in Britain and internationally – as a phrase used to invoke the worst excesses of industrialisation and mechanisation. Of the fewer number of instances where it is used to refer to something else, a significant proportion of these arise from scholars pointing out that it does not refer to the industrial revolution.

This is another example of what Jauss refers to as the changing “horizon of expectations”: as the phrase “dark satanic mills” is used more frequently to refer to industrialisation, so more people refer to it the same way. Admittedly, alternative uses have also increased (some of these directly oppositional) but in the main part this is a case where the meaning of the phrase has definitely changed since Blake wrote down those words. While I disagree with this usage in many respects as not that which Blake intended, I am also interested in the spread of the term: while it does not represent the author’s original meaning, it has a much more effective use or exchange value as a term describing the industrial revolution. When people use those three words, they call up a period in history extremely effectively and the phrase serves as a microcosm of the ways in which the poem as a whole has been transformed throughout its reception history.
Conclusions

The conclusions of my research at this stage are still fairly tentative. Regarding the value of quantitative analysis, in some cases it demonstrates the obvious (that instances of “Jerusalem” increase as time progresses, and that this really is a twentieth- and twenty-first century text, with its reception doubtlessly driven by Parry’s setting the hymn to music). Even in those cases, it may be of use – for example in terms of showing how prevalent the phrase “dark satanic mills” becomes in the latter part of the twentieth century – and in other circumstance it offered me patterns that I was not expecting, such as the usage of the hymn in wedding services from the early 2000s onwards.

To me it is obvious that more work needs to be done: I consider my data set fairly representative of the hymn, but am not yet fully confident that it offers a suitable population sample throughout the full twentieth century, and as such I cannot say whether certain gaps (most notably in the 1940s) are significant or the result of my flawed methods of collecting data. Nonetheless, some of the evidence that is emerging is compelling to me and this is a project that I wish to continue. The next steps are to ensure that the data set as it currently stands is as complete as possible, while also considering the option to include other media references from news sources.

It should also be noted that the data here has been analysed in a largely descriptive fashion. While I would like to answer certain questions, for example whether a person’s political stance predisposes them to listen to “Jerusalem”, I cannot answer this in anything but an anecdotal way. As Allen, Titsworth and Hunt observe, quantitative analysis is very good at answering questions as to what is happening, but not why. To begin to find solutions to these and other questions would require a mixed methodology incorporating qualitative approaches.

Regardless of certain specific gaps in the data discussed here, there is a more general conclusion that I believe can be drawn upon already, and that is how quantitative analysis compels us to reconsider the text in new ways. Before continuing on this line, it is very much worth remembering the following admonition by Blake taken from his annotations to the works of Joshua Reynolds: “To Generalize is to be an Idiot To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit—General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess” (E641). I have been very cautious in some of my own generalisations, and I am critical of the positivist assumptions in some approaches.
to digital humanities which assume that data reveals us truth. Likewise, although I can understand why Moretti argues against close reading the majority of my own work on “Jerusalem” consists of some 90,000 words of close reading of four quatrains, what I consider to be one of the most important works in England in recent decades.

But when we survey data as a whole, contracting and expanding our senses as Blake describes the Eternals in *The [First] Book of Urizen* (E71), then we can see different forms, have a sharper sense of the interconnection between those forms as Moretti suggests. For example, while the vast majority of musical recordings are classical, for most of them the significant difference in musical terms is whether they use Elgar’s arrangement or Parry’s: that difference is noticeable, but most other elements of the recording are not. As such, it is the collation of musical settings into different genres and branded formats that becomes important, indicating whether the music is being aimed at a sporting, military, traditional or more easy-listening audience. This is where “distant reading” comes into its own.

In such cases, quantitative analysis of “Jerusalem” does, I would argue, become useful (with such usefulness always being recognised as limited). Alongside the task of hermeneutics, of interpreting the text, it provides a form of literary heuristics, indicating the parameters within which the text operates among a wider audience. It cannot be used to tell us what the hymn means for its various audiences, but it does offer in broad terms some insights into how the text comes to be used in different times and circumstances.

**Works Cited:**


Readers, Writers and *Northanger Abbey*

“Oh! It is only a novel!” [...]; or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language.

(Austen, *Northanger Abbey* 43)

Austen’s language use in this passage from *Northanger Abbey* (Vol. I, Chapter V) has the power to make us feel, almost instantly, the ironic tone that characterises her narrator’s opposition to the detractors of the novel as a literary form. Such a feeling can be made intelligible on the basis of the contrast between the derogatory colloquial expression “Oh! It is only a novel!” and (emphasised by the repetition of the adverb “only”) the clean, superlative sentence “only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language.” (our emphases)¹ In her 1989 Introduction to the above quoted Signet Classic edition of *Northanger Abbey*, Margaret Drabble (our contemporary novelist who acknowledges Austen as a kind of challenging literary mother) did indeed concur with this reading of the controversial passage from the novel: “[...] at the end of Chapter 5 appears Jane Austen’s celebrated defense of the form [...]” (IX our emphasis). Moreover, Drabble reiterates her interpretation by focusing on the conversation between Catherine and Isabella in the following chapter: ‘And she [Catherine] also delicately reminds us that the pleasures of the Gothic mode

¹ "*Northanger Abbey* had the longest gestation of any Austen work: published posthumously in 1818, it was first drafted in 1798-9, revised in 1803 and prepared for publication in 1816, so inhabiting three historical moments.” (Todd 36) Throughout this study, we will be quoting from Drabble’s edition of the novel (1996).
are not the only rewards of fiction; Catherine tells Isabella that her mother “often reads” Richardson’s *much weightier work, Sir Charles Grandison*, and we learn that she herself has enough judgement to find it “very entertaining” [...] (IX our emphasis).²

However, Drabble’s reading seems to obliterate a crucial element in this part of the two characters’ conversation – Isabella wonders why Catherine has not yet read Mrs. Radcliffe’s novel: “It is so odd to me, that you should never have read *Udolpho* before; but I suppose Mrs. Morland objects to novels.” Catherine then replies that her mother does not object to novels; quite the contrary, she certainly enjoys reading novels: “She very often reads Sir Charles Grandison herself; *but new books do not fall in our way.*” (46 our emphasis) It becomes obvious, after all, that Mrs. Morland does not appreciate all types of novels – she places the traditional novels of the past at the top of the hierarchy implicit in her choices, the new ones at the bottom.³ Now the inescapable question is: what relevant criteria does Catherine’s mother use to distinguish the traditional novels from the new ones?

As we very well know, the objects to be compared are Anne Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Samuel Richardson’s *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*.

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² In February 1997 (in an interview with Emily Auerbach for the public radio documentary “Jane Austen and the Courage to Write”), Drabble (also a biographer and a critic) said (in response to the interviewer’s question – “When you came to write novels yourself, do you think your acquaintance with Austen had an effect on how you wrote?”): “I find my own novels are in a perpetual dialogue with Jane Austen. There are quite a number of writers who I think of perpetually when I’m thinking of plot or subject, content, moral dilemma, the scope of the novel, the possible range of the novel. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say I think of Jane Austen nearly every day when I’m not writing and every day when I am. She’s a constant presence, and it is as though in my head there were a debate with her. I don’t see her as a human being answering it. *It is a debate with her as a writer*, and with Virginia Woolf and George Eliot, and one or two others who mean a great deal to me and whose solutions to various formal problems in the novel continue to perplex and exercise me. So she’s a very constant presence.” (Baker and Nadel 254, our emphases)


³ “Jane Austen dramatized it [Samuel Richardson’s *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-4)] for her family to perform. It depicts a virtuous man resisting temptation who offers wise counsel and whose wisdom rescues two women from disastrous marriages and reunites them with their alienated parents.” (Baker 254)
Grandison. If we endorse Drabble’s reading, quoted above, *Sir Charles Grandison* is “much weightier” than *Udolpho*, and Catherine ‘has enough judgement to find it “very entertaining”’ (our emphasis); as such, we will have to ponder the two key words “weightier” and “judgement”. Considering the context in which the comparative adjective “weightier” (modified/intensified by the adverb “much”) is used, it most certainly has a positive meaning – “serious”, “influential”, i.e. “valuable”; similarly, “judgement” (quantified by “enough”) has a truly positive meaning too – “discernment”, like in “as much discernment as needed”. Mrs. Morland therefore appears to prefer traditional novels over new ones, Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison* to Radcliff’s *Udolpho*, mostly based on moral criteria; or should we say moral-istic? Additionally, her daughter is intelligent enough to derive pleasure from reading *Sir Charles Grandison* or, at least, this is what she tells Isabella. One thing is clear, Drabble seems to have been convinced by Austen: ‘[...] she herself [Catherine] has enough judgement to find it [*Sir Charles Grandison*] “very entertaining” [...] Catherine may be uneducated, but *she is not [...] uneducable: she is still in the process of forming her taste.*’ (IX-X our emphasis)

For her part, Marilyn Butler (who edited and introduced *Northanger Abbey* for Penguin Books in 1995) proposes a discordant reading of the passage from volume I, chapter V, that opens our study, characterising it as “Austen’s mock-solemn defence of the novel in I, v” (XIX). Butler (a Professor of English at Cambridge and Oxford, and a leading literary critic in Austen’s process of canonisation) is determined to interrogate the generally accepted interpretation that Drabble seemed to be just sanctioning in 1989, i.e. “Jane Austen’s celebrated defense of the form” (IX). The irony triggered by the fact that Butler is using a sentence with the exact same structure, and almost the same words used by Drabble cannot but intensify the opposition between the novelist’s apparently direct statement that Austen is defending the novel *tout court* against its detractors (“Jane Austen’s celebrated defense”) and Butler’s claim that there is more to it than a straightforward defence of the new literary form, that such a defence is ironic (“Austen’s mock-solemn defence”), implying a perpetual oscillation of convergent diverse meanings.4

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4 Appointed in 1986 as King Edward VII Regius Professor of English at Cambridge University, Marilyn Butler was the first woman to hold the post. She was the first female Rector of Exeter as well, a formerly all-male Oxford University college. Furthermore, Butler’s *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (1975) played a decisive role in the late-twentieth century canonisation of
Nevertheless, Butler corroborates the theory that *Northanger Abbey* constitutes, to a large extent, a defence of the novel as a new literary form, and she advances her own reading of a different passage, in Vol. I, Chapter XIV, where Catherine Morland, the heroine, Henry Tilney, “unique among the men who end up married to a Jane Austen heroine” (Graham), and his “submissively silenced” (Gester 126) sister Eleanor intervene:

The conversation at Beechen Cliff reads very differently, then, accordingly to who is reading. Austen challenges us to pick up her text’s play of allusion; anyone who does not, but reads the scene at the level of the beginner Catherine, has lost a layer of ironic comedy, and a key cross-reference to current claims for women’s place in culture as *readers and creators of genres of their own*. [...] the first round goes to Eleanor, Catherine’s knowledgeable ally, for defending the use of fiction (that is of invented speeches and trains of thought) by some older historians. This is a more skilled, informed debating point than Austen’s mock-solem defence of the novel in I, v, and it catches Henry where he is vulnerable – for he has already conceded ground to fictional history at its most extravagantly fictitious, by acknowledging how much he enjoys the historical novels of Ann Radcliffe. (XIX)

Anyway, the underlying question here is, once again, whether we can conclude beyond any doubt that Henry is being sincere when he declares at the beginning of their conversation: “The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid. I have read all Mrs. Radcliffe’s works, and most of them with great pleasure.” And how seriously can we take his description of his body’s reaction to the novel? – “*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, when I had once begun it, I could not lay down

Austen, as emphasised by Stafford in her introduction to *Jane Austen’s “Emma”* (20-21); additionally, Butler’s study was crucial in the canonisation of the Romantic era fiction. As to the ironic character of Austen’s defence of the novel in *Northanger Abbey*, consider the following examination of the concept of irony presented by Hutcheon in *Irony’s Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony*: “I am suggesting here that we stop thinking of irony only in binary either/or terms of the substitution of an “ironic” for a “literal” (and opposite) meaning, and see what might happen if we found a new way of talking about ironic meaning as, instead, relational, inclusive, and differential. If we considered irony to be formed through a relation between people and also between meanings – said and unsaid – then, like the duck/rabbit image, it would involve an oscillating yet simultaneous perception of plural and different meanings.” (64)
again; I remember finishing it in two days – *my hair standing on end the whole time.*” (107-8, our emphasis) In fact, after reading this hyperbolised, caricatural description of his “pleasure in a good novel”, i.e. *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* we are led to feel that we cannot take him too seriously.5 Later in the same scene, Eleanor seems to give us some good reasons to be suspicious, and more so does Henry himself:

“[...] Miss Morland is not used to your odd ways.”
“[...] Tell her that you think very highly of the understanding of women.”
“Miss Morland, I think very highly of the understanding of all the women in the world – especially of those – whoever they may be – with whom I happen to be in company.” [...]
“Miss Morland, no one can think more highly of the understanding of women than I do. In my opinion, *nature has given them so much, that they never find it necessary to use more than half.*”

“We shall get nothing more serious from him now, Miss Morland. [...] But I do assure you that he must be entirely misunderstood, if he can ever appear to say an unjust thing of any woman at all, or an unkind one of me.” (114-15, our emphases)

It could be said that the crafty well-wrought irony that shapes this dialogue between sister and brother (characterised by his parrot-like nonsensical repetition of her words) irrevocably activates the possibility of different interpretations, more or less subversive, that will be generated by various readers both in line with the novel and with their various life experiences. This fact was attested to by our analysis of the differences in Drabble’s and Butler’s interpretations of the same passage from *Northanger Abbey,* considered by Claire Grogan, in the introduction to her edition of the book, as Austen’s “[...] most overtly literary work [...] a novel about other novels, their influence, and their readers.” (17)

The two following analyses of the hero and the heroine corroborate the multiplicity of valid, and sometimes apparently conflicting interpretations that can be produced by different readers. From Graham’s perspective, in “Henry Tilney. Portrait of the Hero as Beta Male”, Henry does sincerely “think very highly of the understanding of women”:

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5 In relation to reading as a physical act, see Warhol.
[
he [Henry Tilney] seems a bit like yet another Henry who falls for the object of his pedagogy, Professor Higgins of Shaw’s
Pygmalion and the spinoff musical
My Fair Lady. Like Henry Higgins, Henry Tilney seems to take for granted the
rightness of his instructing a young, unsophisticated female pupil. Should we
see this as patriarchal privilege with a smile on its face but a scepter, ruler, or
riding crop at the ready? Do apparent benevolence and evident humor mask a
condescending attitude toward women? In Higgins’s case yes; in Tilney’s, almost
certainly no. (Our emphases)

On the other hand, the heroine of the novel (according to Gester in
“Rereading Jane Austen. Dialogic Feminism in Northanger Abbey”) “[...] makes mistakes, but she comes to self-knowledge and knowledge of the society she enters through experience and the exercise of her own judgement. [...] Like Austen’s other heroines, Catherine is not tested for purity but for her ability to think and judge aright from the authority of her own experiences, often in the face of opposing male wisdom.” (119, our emphases) Who is after all Henry Tilney? Graham’s benevolent and evidently humorous man who sincerely thinks “very highly of the understanding of women”? Or Gester’s male whose wisdom Catherine has often to oppose in order to be able to develop “her ability to think and judge aright from the authority of her own experiences”? Or both, in a perpetual oscillation of convergent different meanings?

Text-to-Text and Text-to-Reader Reception

“From the structure of human brains and the personal histories of individual readers to the material, economic and social structures which influence the production and distribution of texts, a vast number of interdependent factors are involved in acts of reception.” – says Willis in Reception (7). Here, Willis adds cognitive and neurological factors to the list of material and internal constraints of texts circulation proposed in Warner’s Publics and Counterpublics (2002). Such constraints are defined as “multiple and multi-levelled actors and forces, drawn from many different domains of human experience and social life.” (6) Plus, they are classified as material and internal – the former indicate “the means of production and distribution, the physical textual objects themselves, the social conditions of access to them”, the latter point to “the ‘forms of intelligibility’ which determine the kind of
reader that will be able to understand a given text [...]”. These interdependent constraints, namely the novelist Margaret Drabble’s anxiety about Austen’s influence, and that of literary realism in general, as well as the academic Marilyn Butler’s conquered power to be a leading scholar in Austen’s process of literary canonisation were no doubt decisive for their different interpretations of the celebrated, controversial passage from Northanger Abbey, volume I, chapter V, examined in the first part of this study.6

Willis differentiates the theories and methods of reception into two categories: text-to-text and text-to-reader. We will start by observing the text-to-reader reception apropos of Butler’s role in the process of Austen’s canonisation. In the wake of Guillory’s “The Ethical Practice of Modernity: The Example of Reading” (2000), Willis further distinguishes professional from lay readers and, by citing Lang, she emphasises that all readings produced by any of those two types of readers are relative to multiple factors:

[...] literary-critical readings are not neutral, but situated within a particular interpretative context and community, just like the Smithton readers. For this reason she believes that any attempt to refer to a generalized ‘reader’ simply ‘obscure[s] the way interpretive differences flow from differences in the subject position, geographical location and educational training of readers’. (90)7

Such relativism may lead us easily – too easily – to the single, and now apparently obvious, conclusion that the readings produced by professional readers are not necessarily better than those experienced by lay readers, just different. In fact, although beyond the scope of our study, what is at stake here is the particularised analysis of the differences between the two types of reading. Taking one step further, it is the object of the professional readers’ work itself that has to be re-examined, starting with the hypothesis that what

6 Concerning Drabble’s relationship with literary realism, see Bromberg, “Margaret Drabble’s The Radiant Way: Feminist Metafiction”.

The Dark Flood Rises (2016) is Drabble’s latest novel, and the first to be translated into Portuguese (2019); she was in Lisbon to promote her book as video-recorded in: “Margaret Drabble apresenta «Sobe a Maré Negra»” (2019) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HH-wtnKIEZGA. (Accessed 3 April 2020)

On Butler’s outstanding academic career, and the role she played in the process of Austen’s canonisation, see n4 supra.

7 Smithton is the fictional name given by Radway to a small mid-western American town where she studied a community of women readers.
distinguishes the professional from the lay readers is the former’s capacity to describe and characterise the different processes of reading (and, for that matter, of writing as well), the differences between lay and professional readings, and how to validate both types of reading.

We will now move on to considering the second category of theories and methods of reception proposed by Willis – text-to-text – in respect to the relation between the contemporary novelist Margaret Drabble and Jane Austen. The text-to-text reception implies the concept of tradition thus defined in *Reception*: “We necessarily write and read within a tradition, a series of texts which form the matrix of possibilities against which we understand new texts as repeating and transforming earlier texts and conventions.” (60, our emphases)\(^8\) Moreover, these new texts are intertextually related not only to previous literary works but also to other art forms, as highlighted in Sanders’ *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006), quoted by Willis: “[…] they [texts] are also built from those [systems, codes and traditions] ‘derived from companion art forms’ such as ‘art, music, drama [and] dance’ in ‘an ever-expanding network of textual relations.’” (40)\(^9\)

Pushing her argument even further, Willis points out other diverse forms of text-to-text reception created within our contemporary cultures, including the so-called “embodied reception”, a name she borrows from Kirkpatrick’s “Toward New Horizons. Cosplay (Re)imagined Through the Superhero Genre, Authenticity, and Transformation”, and she emphasises that Kirkpatrick considers cosplay (fans dressing up “as fictional characters from media texts”) “a mode of embodied reception and an interpretative act”:

Such active, embodied encounters [e.g. embodied reception] include live-action role-play, medieval re-enactment and Renaissance/Medieval Fairs – activities and experiences which often fall outside the boundary of the narrowly textual. These encounters highlight the ways in which texts are received,

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\(^8\) As to how Drabble has dealt with Austen’s influence, see n2 supra. We should bear in mind that Drabble, a critic as well, wrote about Austen, and gained notoriety as editor of the 5\(^{th}\) and 6\(^{th}\) editions of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*.

\(^9\) It should be noted that, in the second edition of her book, Sanders adds “media” to “companion art forms” when she declares: “[…] they [literary texts] are also built from systems, codes and traditions derived from companion art forms and media”; she further adds “film, and now digital culture and computer science” to the previous list of art forms – “art, music, drama [and] dance” (4-5).
read, imitated and transformed by interpreters in manifold media and modes, from literary or filmic adaptations to various forms of performance practice, from the staging of a Shakespeare play to cosplay at fan conventions or costume parties. In all these activities, interpretation and the production of new texts cohabit: reading and (re)writing are intertwined with one another, and interpretation is a productive and creative act, not simply a passive act of receiving or correctly decoding a message. (66, our emphases)

In fact, defined by Willis as “reception study” (“how readers and audiences interpret and use texts”), “reception history” (of “the afterlives of texts and/or [...] reading and [...] books”), “and reception theory” (“of interpretation, language and meaning itself”) (1), reception provides a theoretical framework full of research potential when it comes to the studies of filmic adaptations, and more specifically of the so-called phenomenon of Austen on screen, considered by Cartmell, Corrigan and Whelehan, in their introduction to the inaugural issue of Adaptation, 2008, “a discipline in [its] own right” (3). Although the current debates in theorising adaptation are not at stake here, we will at least posit that, with or without Austen as a case in point, the combination of adaptation studies and reception studies should be further researched, in line with what can be inferred from Andrew’s declaration made quite some time ago, in Concepts in Film Theory, 1984: “Adaptation is a peculiar form of discourse [...] Let us use it [...] as we use all cultural practices, to understand the world from which it comes and the one toward which it points.” (106) In view of this emphasis on text-to-text reception, we will quote a passage from “Emma in Los Angeles: Remaking the Book and the City”, Stern’s cogent analysis of Clueless (1995, dir. Amy Heckerling), an extreme example of Austen film adaptations:

[...] Is it necessary to have read Emma in order to make sense of and truly enjoy Clueless? Well, if you are familiar with Emma you can have a lot of fun entering into a kind of guessing game – identifying the parallels and deviations or transformations. Then again, if you are the sort of person who has read Emma, you might not in fact get a lot of the other more contemporary allusions. Clearly Clueless appeals to different audiences who bring to the movie different

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10 Considering the challenge posed here by Andrew, and particularly in relation to Austen’s Emma, see Coelho.
knowledge and expectations but what makes it particularly fascinating is that it actually assumes, through the heterogeneity of its references and allusions, that quotidian knowledge is informed by and woven out of a diversity of cultural practices – not distinguishable according to “high” and “low” markers. In this context Los Angeles is figured not simply as imitation of or a deviation from Highbury, but rather as an intertextual site spun by the movies, television series, MTV and a variety of remakes and adaptations. (225, our emphasis)

III. "Jane Austen 2.00"

Produced by the project “Receiving | Perceiving Jane Austen” (mid-2017 to mid-2019), on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the novelist’s death (2017), Catálogo da Exposição | Exhibition Catalogue “Jane Austen 2.00” (Sousa) presents us with the project background context – i.e. what Sutherland calls (quoting Henry James) Austen’s “fortune with posterity” (12):

The 200th anniversary of Jane Austen’s (1775-1817) death in 2017 was commemorated in Britain and around the world in a multiplicity of celebrations, ranging from the purely academic to the openly popular. Since the late 20th century and much due to adaptations of her work for film and television, Austen’s star has been rising, turning her into a pop culture icon unlike any other writer. [...] these celebrations have taken many and diverse forms across the globe, from the creative BookBenches of the “Sitting with Jane” project in Basingstoke to the celebratory exhibitions from which the British Library’s “Jane Austen Among Family and Friends” and the Bodleian Library’s “Which Jane Austen?” are but two, among many examples. (11-12, our emphases)

“Receiving | Perceiving Jane Austen”, a sub-project of the ongoing broader project “Receiving | Perceiving English Literature in the Digital Age” (2016- ), was developed in two phases. The outcome of the first phase

11 On the theorising of adaptation, see Leitch. With reference to combining adaptation studies and reception studies, see “Adaptation as Reception: How Film Historians Can Contribute to the Literature to Film Debates”, the Introduction to Scholz’s From Fidelity to History: Film Adaptations as Cultural Events in the Twentieth Century.
(7 April 2018) consisted of a panel discussion – “Meeting Jane Austen in Portugal | 2017” – among the organisers of the Portuguese celebrations of her work: the conference “Jane Austen 200. Portugal”, held by the National Library of Portugal and the Centre for English, Translation, and Anglo-Portuguese Studies, in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition “Jane Austen in Portugal: (Con)texts” (10 May-1 July); the one-day conference for undergraduate and postgraduate students (7 December) put together by the University of Évora; and the international conference “Jane Austen Superstar” (11-12 December 2017) organised by the Catholic University of Portugal. The panel discussion was followed by “A little tea if you please” 2.00’, a gastronomic performance during which we tasted some of the boldest readings of *Emma* created by our team.\(^\text{12}\)

The second phase of “Receiving | Perceiving Jane Austen” produced an exhibition, “Jane Austen 2.00” (held at the School of Arts and Humanities Library, University of Lisbon, 8-30 April 2019), showing a selection of the objects created as readings of Austen’s *Emma* by the various undergraduate and postgraduate students at the different partner institutions listed below:

Receiving | Perceiving Jane Austen included undergraduate students from the curricular units of Motion Graphics (ESCS – IPL) [Escola Superior de Comunicação Social – Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa | School of Communication and Media Studies – Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon], Graphic Production and Advertising (ESCS – IPL), Interaction Design I (FAL-UBI) [Faculdade de Artes e Letras – Universidade da Beira Interior | Faculty of Arts

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\(^{12}\) “Receiving | Perceiving English Literature in the Digital Age” is being developed in the University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies (ULICES), funded by FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia), the Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology. Two other sub-projects – the first, in 2016, focusing on William Blake, the second, in 2017, centred on Angela Carter – were developed by “Receiving | Perceiving English Literature in the Digital Age”, as referred in *Exhibition Catalogue Jane Austen 2.00* (9-13).

Although it is not possible here to address the multiple questions raised by Sensation and Perception Studies, we recommend *Perception and Its Modalities* edited by Stokes, Matthen and Biggs, and we quote from their introductory essay, “Sorting the Senses”: “The discussion thus far has touched on many questions. How are improvised stimuli built into rich perceptual experiences [...]? Is perception always modality specific or can it be multimodal [...]? What can we learn by investigating senses other than vision [...]? What can we learn through a careful reappraisal of vision [...]? How should we think about individuating the senses, and, more broadly, how do the senses interrelate [...]?” (16)
and Letters – University of Beira Interior] and English Cinema (FL – UL) [Faculdade de Letras – Universidade de Lisboa | School of Arts and Humanities – University of Lisbon], along with the MSc in Innovation in Culinary Arts (ESHTE) [Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo do Estoril – Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies] students and MA students from the curricular units of Multimedia Communication (ESCS – IPL), and Advanced Typography (FArq – UL) [Faculdade de Arquitetura – Universidade de Lisboa | Lisbon School of Architecture – University of Lisbon]. (Sousa 13)

The objects created by all these students are enumerated, reproduced and described in the Exhibition Catalogue, and classified in the following manner: “[...] videos, an interactive web app, packaging, food, websites and other internet-based platforms and posters [...]” (Sousa 16). It must be added that we are using the word “object” literally as a physical thing, just as it is used by Wells, in Reading Austen in America, to qualify books “as unique objects”, with the history of book trade helping to explain “how editions came to be: who – i.e., publishers, printers, and binders – created the actual books and how they were advertised and distributed to readers by booksellers and libraries.” (2-3) It is also possible to establish a parallel between our use of the word “object” and Willis’ definition of “acts of reception”: “[...] all acts of reception are forms of interpretation [...] conditioned by historically and culturally specific systems of reading [...] learned and practiced by individual readers [...] and producing a specific interpretation or reading which is most visible in the form of a new text [...]” (33-34, our emphasis). The objects created by “Receiving | Perceiving Jane Austen” can thus be considered as our students’ visible interpretations or readings of Austen. Among these interpretations, the two posters reproduced below stand out as visually appealing re-creations of their source portraits of Austen: one, announced the panel discussion “Meeting Jane Austen in Portugal | 2017” and the gastronomic reading “A little tea if you please” 2.00’ (Figure 1), the other, advertised the “Austen 2.00” exhibition (Figure 2).
Figure 1: Poster for “Receiving | Perceiving Jane Austen” (2018). Graphic design by Ricardo Bonacho, 84.1 x 118.9 cm. Based on Jane Austen (c. 1810), by Cassandra Austen, pencil and watercolour sketch, 11.4 x 8 cm.

Figure 2: Poster for the exhibition “Jane Austen 2.00” (2019). Graphic design by Ricardo Bonacho, 84.1 x 118.9 cm. Based on Illustration by Helena Morais Soares.

Figure 3: Cassandra Austen, Jane Austen (c. 1810), pencil and watercolour sketch, 11.4 x 8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure 4: Engraving by William Home Lizars (1869). Printed in James Edward Austen-Leigh’s A Memoir of Jane Austen. Based on James Andrews’s watercolour commissioned by Austen-Leigh.
The two posters were designed by Ricardo Bonacho: the first (Figure 1.), based on the authenticated portrait of Jane Austen, the sketch made by her sister Cassandra (Figure 3.); the second (Figure 2.), based on Helena Morais Soares’ portrait of the novelist done after the engraving by William Home Lizars (Figure 4.). Let us highlight now Willis’ definition of academic reading as an intellectual “mode of response [to texts] taught at university” which “proceeds through formal analysis, historical contextualization and political critique” (90). These were the models of professional reading selected by Bonacho to design the first poster which, though rigorously keeping to the authenticated image of Austen, recreates it as a sort of close-up of the novelist – her large eyes appearing to have grown even larger than in Cassandra’s draft and, framed by the lettering, her clear cut-face seeming to be about to pop out of the poster to interpellate us viewers. On the contrary, (personally invited by “Receiving | Perceiving Jane Austen” to create a portrait of the novelist) H. M. Soares was provided no academic reading guidelines whatsoever for how to proceed. Hers can be thus classified as an act of lay reading, “oriented around immersion in a fictional world, narrative suspense and identification with characters” (Willis 90). Moreover, Soares’ personal history did indeed shape her reading: the illustrator had been recently invited by Favilli and Cavallo to create a portrait of Frida Kahlo for their very popular, and very critical of gender stereotyping, *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls. 100 Tales of Extraordinary Women* – in fact, Kahlo’s colours and floral motifs, reworked by Soares, reverberate not only in the portrait of the Mexican artist but also in that of Austen (Figure 2.).

Nonetheless, our boldest experimental readings of *Emma* were certainly the gastronomic ones, created, for “A little tea if you please” 2.00’, by the MSc in Innovation in Culinary Arts of the Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and

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In relation to the origins and earliest stages of Favilli and Cavallo’s project, and for a reproduction of Soares’ portrait of Kahlo, see “Beautiful World: Sleep on, Princesses, while the ‘Rebel Girls’ Wake up”; concerning the huge popular and commercial success of Favilli and Cavallo’s two books, see Laity.
Hotel Studies, class of 2017-18. We began by asking the teachers and their students to read the opening three chapters of the novel in their source language, and to compare them with Vaz de Carvalho’s Portuguese translation (Austen 2016), which was proposed as the first instance of the reading/rewriting process they were about to initiate. In fact, bearing in mind Parrill’s view that *Emma* is remarkable among Austen’s novels “both for its limited setting and its sense of community” (107), these chapters were chosen because they introduce, in a well-wrought condensed form, the heroine’s tight community. The next step consisted in asking our readers to focus on how Emma is constructed, having been previously explained that she is, in the Austenian canon, the only protagonist to title a novel. Finally, they were provided with some academic reading guidelines, during a master class which started with the close-reading of the memorable description of Emma opening the first chapter: “Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.” (Austen, *Emma* 3, our emphasis)

Moreover, teachers and students were invited to view and compare the opening scenes of the Miramax *Emma* (1996, dir. Douglas McGrath), then the latest film adaptation of the novel, with the opening scenes of the, until today, most recent adaptation for television, the BBC mini-series *Emma* (2009, dir. Jim O’Hanlon), and to further compare both openings with the book chapters they had read. Considering that adaptations may be studied as acts of reception, such comparisons allowed us to observe the labyrinth of very diverse, but closely interrelated readings, writings, viewings, re-readings, re-writings and re-viewings potentiated by these three objects – the novel, the film and the mini-series or vice-versa. In conclusion, and given that Austen’s literary fortune now does not depend exclusively, or perhaps even mainly, on her novels being read, and/or their film and television adaptations

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14 Two other series of gastronomic readings had been previously performed by “Receiving | Perceiving English Literature in the Digital Age”: the first, focusing on William Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in 2016, the second, on Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, in 2017; on the interrelation between food studies and literary studies, specifically in the case of Carter, see Pires, *Dealing with Appetites: Angela Carter’s Fiction*, and Bonacho, Pires, Viegas, Coelho and Sousa, “Angela Carter: Receiving Literature Through Food & Design”.

15 The *Emma* quotations are taken from The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen.
being viewed, our postgraduate students of the Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies were encouraged to ponder the myriad ways in which we are exposed to the English novelist these days, e.g. through touristic experiences, as described by Berger in “Hang a Right at the Abbey: Jane Austen and the Imagined City”: “To walk around Bath today is to experience a reconstruction of Jane Austen’s life in the city, an experience filtered through the many film and television adaptations of her novels [...] In the same way a study of adaptation can efface the author of the source text, Bath attempts to efface the “real” Jane for a construct that chimes with its own manufactured sense of self.” (138)

Let us then focus on the opening of the novel. Its title – *Emma* – and the initial paragraph can indeed be read as a single sentence beginning with a first name, followed by an implicit obvious question – “Emma (Emma who?)” – and by an also predictable answer which gives us her family name – Emma Woodhouse – as well as her very brief description, physical – “Emma Woodhouse, handsome” – and socio-economic – “Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever and rich” (Austen, *Emma* 3) – a description expanded in the rest of the paragraph. It can be further claimed that, from the very beginning of the novel, its narrative voice is apparently keen on describing and presenting the heroine as a spoiled young lady whose family name carries with it the economic, social and cultural privileges which turned her into a snob. And yet, the use of “seemed”, in “seemed to unite”, emphasises the non-assertive character of the statement that Emma united “some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.” One cause of distress will be immediately disclosed after the two first pages of the novel – “intellectual solitude”. In fact, at the beginning of the narration, Emma is described as having been just left alone by Miss Taylor – less a governess than a friend in Mr. Woodhouse’s family for sixteen

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A new film adaptation of *Emma*, directed by De Wilde, has just been released in the UK, in February 2020. Larson’s ‘How Autumn de Wilde Made “Emma” So Edible’, published in *The New Yorker*, constitutes just an example of how different acts of reception of this female-directed film will generate the crossing of new different readings of the novel and of Austen herself.
years – who has just become Mrs. Weston. This newly married “friend and companion such as few possessed, intelligent, well-informed, useful, gentle”, is gone with her husband, and the heroine, even if she had “always wished and promoted the match”, cannot but feel left behind with Mr. Woodhouse, a father who is incapable of meeting her “in conversation, rational, or playful”, i.e. a father who, however affectionate, is “no companion for her” (Austen, Emma 5).

Mr. Woodhouse, an inveterate narcissist, is also described as a “valetudinarian all his life, without activity of mind or body” (Austen, Emma 5), who constantly whines about marriage and food, Miss Taylor’s marriage and wedding cake being no exceptions. Thus, although long, we will remember a passage from the penultimate paragraph of the second chapter of the novel, which may be re-read through “Matchmaker”, a most representative gastronomic interpretation of Emma created by the students of the MSc in Innovation in Culinary Arts, reproduced below (Figure 5.):

"...he [Mr. Woodhouse] was no longer teased by being wished joy of so sorrowful an event [Miss Taylor’s marriage]; and the wedding-cake, which had been a great distress to him, was all eat up. His own stomach could bear nothing rich, and he could never believe other people to be different from himself. [...] he had, therefore, earnestly tried to dissuade them from having any wedding-cake at all, and when that proved vain, as earnestly tried to prevent any body’s eating it. He had been at the pains of consulting Mr. Perry, the apothecary, on the subject. [...] and [...] he could not but acknowledge, (though it seemed rather against the bias of inclination,) that wedding-cake might certainly disagree with many – perhaps with most people, unless taken moderately. With such an opinion, in confirmation of his own, Mr. Woodhouse hoped to influence every visitor of the new-married pair; but still the cake was eaten; and there was no rest for his benevolent nerves till it was all gone. (Austen, Emma 17-18, our emphases)"

17 In Wilkes’ words, George Henry Lewes, one of Austen’s earliest critics, was already trying, by 1859, “to distinguish Austen from other novelists by pointing out that ‘instead of description, the common and easy resource of novelists, she has the rare and difficult art of dramatic presentation’, disclosing her characters ‘as they reveal themselves’. In this respect, ‘she has never perhaps been surpassed, not even by Shakespeare himself’.” (34)
Tasted for the first time during the performance “A little tea if you please” 2.00, and for a second time at the exhibition “Jane Austen 2.00”, “Matchmaker” – a mini-individual wedding cake – was deeply anchored in the analysis of Mr. Woodhouse’s narcissistic traits of valetudinarian and whiner about marriage and food, even though its title pointed to Emma’s central trait of relentlessly meddler in other people’s private lives; in this way, the ambivalent relation between the mini individual wedding cake and its title apparently reproduced the traditional interpretation that the close, systematic interaction between the two characters is decisive for Emma’s coming of age. On the contrary, the selection of the ingredients used in preparing the cake appeared to indicate that, in an unconventional manner, Mr. Woodhouse’s concerns about food quality were taken seriously (or at least some of them) in so far as baking powder (still non-existent in Austen’s time) was not even contemplated by these readers of *Emma* who prepared the dough with caramel sugar, along with a filling of red fruits and apple compote, and a simple coating of butter icing.\(^{18}\) “Matchmaker” was definitely not

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\(^{18}\) On the economic, social and cultural impact of baking powder, Civitello declares: “Baking powder is important because its existence poses a basic question: What is food? It is something that nourishes? Or simply something we ingest? Chemical additives in food are routine in the twenty-first century, but they were new in the nineteenth. Baking powder, bleached white
a neutral reading of *Emma*; in Willis’ words it has to be “situated within a particular interpretative context and community” (90). Created nowadays (when food and nutrition are recognised as a priority on the world agendas), and created by the students of the MSc in Innovation in Culinary Arts, (which distinctively values its connection with the professional industry), such a reading can lead us to question (in line with what Stewart does in “The Fools in Austen’s *Emma*”) the generally accepted interpretation that Mr. Woodhouse is a simple character, i.e. “Matchmaker” can lead us to further examine whether there is nothing more to Mr. Woodhouse’s concerns about food quality than a mere trait of neurosis. But that is another story...

**Works Cited**


—flour, and saccharine, invented at approximately the same time, were some of the products that broke down the dam for the chemical flood in foods. [...] food in the United States became not farm to table, but factory to table.” (2)


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Not of a Meaner Sort: Some Chapbook Adaptations of Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*

MÁRCIA BESSA MARQUES

When the eponymous heroine of Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740) envisages looking for another position, she insists that it has to provide “a little time for reading” (109). Modern readers are unaware whether Pamela is thinking of the books available in the library at her new employer’s house or if she has other reading materials in mind. Certainly, Pamela’s world is suffused with reading and writing, the two sides of literacy.

Rogers suggests that “two-thirds of the male population, one-third of the female, had attained basic literacy by the middle of the eighteenth century”, distinguishing between social classes, with the poorer people not being able to do much more than sign their name. However, when “urban artisans and journeymen” are taken into consideration, literacy levels rise, reaching 75 to 85 per cent in the late seventeenth century (Rogers, “Books, Readers and Patrons”, 220-221). Suarez believes that during the first half of the eighteenth century, the number of readers grew from 1,267,000 to 1,894,000 (11), which generated an increasing variety of readers. The steady growth in the number of schools and schoolmasters, as confirmed by maps of their distribution, was certainly a contributory factor: “some sort of teacher was almost always within walking distance for a determined child in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries” (Charlton and Spufford, 25). Consequently, the need for teaching and learning materials increased and many of these were in the form of chapbooks.

Itinerant sellers distributed an astonishing selection of reading material. They would purchase a variety of goods in the countryside in order to sell them on the way to London, where they were able to acquire a range of textiles, sewing materials, accessories, as well reading material¹. This included almanacs, which proved immensely popular towards the end of each year (Raven, *Publishing Business*, 202). Guidebooks, history and geography works, original stories and children’s tales, fairy tales, nursery rhymes

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¹ Nevertheless, chapbooks with local stories were frequently printed by regional printers.
and fables also featured in chapbooks. Finally, ballads (the first chapbooks) and songbooks, cookbooks, chivalry tales, execution accounts, religious guides, spelling books and abridged bestsellers remained in great demand throughout this period (Suarez, 18). Regarding works of fiction, the most sought-after authors were Defoe, Swift and Bunyan; the latter remembered reading chapbooks as a young boy, the kind of reading which had left a powerful impression on him. “Literacy could thus provide access to knowledge of many kinds, to the distant events of the day, to historical facts and interpretations, to the secrets of nature (...) to the Scriptures and to the proliferating vernacular literature of the English Reformation.” (Wrightson, *English Society*, 158) Similar to other goods displayed, coveted and acquired (legally or illegally) at this time, in whatever format, books contributed substantially to the (re) construction and (re)configuration of identities through their consumption.

Naturally, “books (...) became prominent exemplars of the new decencies and conveniences gracing the homes of the middling sort” (Raven, “The Book as a Commodity”, 89). In the form of chapbooks, they took up more space in the homes of different readers, both rural and urban. Unsurprisingly, increasing literacy meant that in the early days chapbooks’ producers had to adjust to these initial stages. Not only did chapbooks contribute to a significant increase in the popularity of novels and in literacy rates among a wider public but they also became part of an array of goods bought, sold, exchanged, borrowed and stolen in the eighteenth-century cultural landscape.

Numbers and variety speak of an increasing appetite and demand for such reading material. Charlton and Spufford report the surprising number of 90,000 chapbooks in the inventory of Charles Tias, a London publisher, in 1664 (38). This prodigious output from just one source reveals the immense popularity of these works. One of the most well-known booksellers of chapbooks, Dicey and Marshall, published over 140 different titles during the eighteenth century, including versions of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* (Ashton, xi),² distributed in Manchester, Newcastle and Stirling.

In a nation of shopkeepers, the legal status of itinerant pedlars was never high. Starting in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, there are records of complaints against them lodged by traditional traders (Shesgreen, 7).

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² The British Library holds at least three versions of *Moll Flanders* printed by Dicey and Marshall, published in 1750, 1760, and 1760; however, they are only available in the Reading Rooms.
From 1697, “any ‘hawker, Pedler, Petty Chapman or other Trading Person or Persons going from Town to Town’ had to buy a four-pound licence if he or she intended to trade elsewhere than at markets and fairs.” (Shammas, 236-237). In this year, over 2500 people paid the fee in England and Wales, with 25 per cent listing the London area as their area of residence. White mentions a remarkable example of the harsh treatment street traders were subjected to: “a clampdown near Christmas 1738, (...) [when] many hawkers were arrested and imprisoned, their goods forfeited.” (197). Under the 1744 Vagrancy Act, pedlars found selling goods without a licence could be committed to a house of correction, commonly known as Bridewell, which meant that pedlars continued to be lumped in with vagrants by the middle of the eighteenth century. These street sellers were also called hawkers (on account of the verb which means advertising goods by shouting) or pedlar (a word from Middle English, probably a variation of “pedder”, presumably from “ped”, that is, pannier, the basket used to carry goods for sale). However, the designation which became associated with this type of popular reading material was “chapman”, derived from Old English cēapman, from cēap ‘bargaining, trade’ (Oxford English Dictionary).

According to contemporary trade cards, country chapmen were occasionally offered discounts on several goods, such as clothes, accessories, and cutlery. These goods were conveyed in capacious bags, “baskets, on their heads, or strapped to their bodies” from London to the country. (Lambert, 53). Without a physical establishment, chapmen had little need for a trade card and they resorted to crying their commodities. As a result, they “operated within a network of low-price and narrow-margin parameters”, which “functioned as a parallel, but almost separate, sector of the book trade.” (Raven, The Business of Books, 5). Nonetheless, their contribution to the invaluable impact of chapbooks on the coeval cultural landscape can hardly be overestimated.

The term “chapbook” is a later creation, deriving from chapmen, who retailed them. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term dates from 1824. Earlier names included “small godlies” (with morality tales), “small merries” or “penny merriments” (featuring jokes and amusing stories), and “pleasant histories” (containing legends and abridgements of contemporary works). They have traditionally been linked to “ruder readerships than the more cultivated audiences for learned and technical works as well as for novels and finely printed verse and plays.” (Raven, Publishing Business, 40-41). Nevertheless,
other scholars believe that the distance between readers lay more in the price than in the ability to comprehend the texts: “the humble consumer of chapbooks was not separated from more prestigious books by an inability to read them but by an inability to afford them.” (Simons, 179). Despite prices remaining “remarkably stable from the late seventeenth century until the late 1780s”, there was a considerable variation in the price of reading material, ranging from pamphlets and chapbooks, which could be acquired from a penny to sixpence, to octavos, the standard format for novels, which might retail for about five shillings (Feather, 244). On a more practical note, the diminutive size and extension of chapbooks were not only perfectly suitable for the bags carried by chapmen over long distances (Brewer, 146), but also for the amount of leisure time (or lack thereof) enjoyed by these readers.

Chapbooks were created either as octavos or duodecimos, generally ranging from six to 24 pages, sold without cover, just like other works. Bookbinding had ceased to be associated with particular presses since the late sixteenth century and books were sold unbound as gatherings sewn together with flimsy and temporary paper coverings. Not all readers could afford to have their books bound professionally, which diminished the survival rates of chapbooks. Even though they were generally read by a significant number of people (both silently and aloud), they were very rarely ever present in wills as they frequently deteriorated and the paper would be sold to paper mills to be recycled or used to light pipes or fireplaces.

Their low status led to the use of overworked types in the printing, of reused woodcuts for the illustrations, of thin thread to join the pages, and of paper of inferior quality. As a consequence, they were deemed ephemeral and transient, which can be confirmed by them being frequently anonymous and without publication dates; many had the tag “Printed this Present Year”. Were it not for the dedication of a few keen collectors, very few chapbooks would have survived in order to become available to this generation of digital readers. Writers such as Samuel Pepys and James Boswell gathered chapbooks of distinct types. The diarist assembled such a collection that it was

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3 As far as size is concerned, an octavo is generally 15 x 23 cm (the average size of a hardback), whereas a duodecimo is commonly 12.5 x 19 cm (similar to a typical paperback). Measurements are width x height.

4 A gathering is a group of sheets in a book ready to be sewn.

5 Until the late eighteenth century, paper was made by hand in a costly and demanding process, and it could add up to 60 percent of the cost of printing (Kelly, 270).
organised in several volumes, now stored at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Boswell’s pursuit seems to have arisen out of a nostalgic interest associated with a love of collecting books.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, lawmakers tried to control the printing of works deemed dangerous (“Seditious, Treasonable and Unlicensed Books and Pamphlets”) by introducing the Licensing Act in 1662, which was renewed in the following year and again in 1665. The Stationers’ Company was in charge of its enforcement although with limited success and frequent accusations of de facto monopoly over profitable sections of the printing industry. Failure to reach an agreement with the different parts involved led to the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695. Therefore, abridgements and chapbooks continued to proliferate and their producers (creators and / or booksellers) to thrive across the country and the American colonies. Even the enactment of the Copyright Act of 1710, which safeguarded the authors’ rights for 14 years, to be renewed until their death, making provision for substantial fines, failed to deter less scrupulous chapbooks’ authors and printers from achieving “the ‘appropriation’ that often marks the practice of popular reading.” (O’Malley, 19)

By the time Defoe published *Moll Flanders*, in 1722, chapbooks had already become a significant and distinctive part of eighteenth-century bookscape, to borrow a term coined by Raven “to explore possible approaches to the various histories of place and space in publishing and bookselling” (Raven, *Bookscape*, 5). From the beginning, adaptations revealed a marked tendency to provide closure and to have the heroine conform to literary conventions, by creating both wills and epitaphs, as well as aligning the text even further with criminal autobiography, as evidenced by the absence of preface and greater emphasis on the major episodes. These are the result of crucial decisions about the features to emphasise (such as the marital and criminal adventures) and those that could be downplayed to cater for the interests and skills of prospective readers and to conform to their expectation of chapbooks. In Bellamy’s words, “other purveyors of the story sought to contain Moll within discursive conventions that derived from earlier genres (...) Different audiences were served by different versions of the text” (17). The success of *Moll Flanders* was due to the readers’ identification with Moll’s struggles, failures and victories. With chapbooks, Moll Flanders took on a life of her own, with the authors responding to the wishes of an increasingly literate public.
This first edition of *Moll Flanders* cost five shillings (Bree, xxvii), the same price as *Robinson Crusoe*, published almost three years earlier. After being announced in the *Daily Post* on 26th January 1722, the first edition of *Moll Flanders* was made available, as promised, on the following day by William Chetwood and Thomas Edlin (Bree, xxvii). The title page of the first edition supplies the basic information, with summary, the printer's shop sign doubling as an address, but without a device or the author's name:

THE | FORTUNES | AND | MISFORTUNES | Of the Famous | *Moll Flanders*, &c. | Who was Born in Newgate, and during a | Life of continu'd Variety for Threecore Years, | besides her Childhood, was Twelve Year a | *Whore*, five times a *Wife* (whereof once to her | own Brother) Twelve Year a *Thief*, Eight Year a | Transported *Felon* in *Virginia*, at laft grew *Rich*, liv'd *Honest*, and died a *Penitent*. || Written from her own memorandums. || LONDON: Printed for, and Sold by W. | chetwood, at Cato’s-Head, in Ruffel- | street, Covent-Garden; and T. edling, at | the Prince’s Arms, over-againſt Exerter-Change | in the Strand. MDCCXXI (Title page of first edition)

This first edition included an eleven-page preface and 424 pages of text, in octavo, which amounted to twenty-eight gatherings (Kelly, 270). Two issues of the second edition, titled “corrected”, were published in July, 1722: one by John Brotherton and another one by a group of publishers namely Thomas Edlin, William Chetwood, William Mears, John Brotherton, C. King, and J. Stag (Rivero, ed., *Moll Flanders*, vii). The preface was reduced to four pages and the text to 366, reducing the number of gatherings to twenty-four. So as to save on paper, the printers decided on a smaller font for the preface, compressed whole paragraphs, deleted lines, modified the syntax, and eliminated comments (Kelly, 270). Due to the considerable cost of paper up to the end of the century, reducing the number of pages on a book

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6 The *Evening Post* confirmed the publication on 27th January. Edlin had already registered the book at the Stationers Hall on 12th January (Kelly, 269)

7 The vertical lines mark line endings. The double vertical lines are used to stand for the horizontal lines framing the assertion ‘Written from her own Memorandums’. This title page is reproduced by most editors, such as Bree, Kelly, Rivero, and Starr. The date (1721) refers to the Julian calendar in use in Great Britain until 1752; in the Gregorian calendar, this was 1722.

8 This association of publishers, called a conger, had been a common practice since the previous century and its purpose was to ensure financial security and success. In this particular case, Edlin promoted the alliance by advertising shares in order to print a shortened second edition.
that was still a success should prove profitable, even taking into account the expense of resetting the type (Kelly, ed., *Moll Flanders*, 270). By the end of 1722, a third edition had appeared, in two issues, the first “printed for John Brotherton, and the other by the group of six printers of the second issue of the second edition (Kelly, ed., *Moll Flanders*, 269). According to Kelly, this edition was actually “a reissue of the ‘second edition, corrected’ with a new title page” (Kelly, 269).

A few months after the first edition, the novel was serialised in two newspapers, the *London Post* and the *Kentish Post*. Neither of them followed Defoe’s text faithfully, with the former already laying the groundwork for a very well-known version of *Moll Flanders*, T. Read’s version, dated by the British Library to 1723:

*The Life and Actions of Moll Flanders. Containing, Her Birth and Education in Newgate; her Ambition to be a Gentlewoman [...] Her Second Settlement, and happy Success in Virginia, and Settlement in Ireland; her Estate, Penitence, Age, Death, Burial, Elegy, and epitaph. Adorn’d with Cuts suitable to each Chapter*

This edition is available online and it contains about 190 pages in duo-decimo (although not all of them are numbered correctly), a considerable reduction from the original. Apparently to distance it from Defoe, this edition “Printed and sold by T. Read” lacks a preface. It was sold at one shilling. Another innovation is the use of chapters; each of the nine chapters is preceded by a summary of its content and a set of three plates. The need for illustrations in reading material which catered for “an age dominated by the sense of sight” (Mackie, 58) led to a range of chapbooks with illustrated title pages and images to accompany the text even though that could increase the price in order not to affect their quality. Read’s edition, on which most chapbooks were based, bears an illustration of the narrator as the frontispiece, above a poem whose first line reads: “See here the Wonder of the Britiſh Land”. Furthermore, it relies on an even longer summary title, which exhibits “such prolix synopsizing, seizing upon that story’s salacious content as energetically as any advertisement.” (Barchas, 65). Modern readers can only imagine chapmen using these detailed and exhaustive titles as advertising cries while going around the villages in order to entice new customers and retain old ones.

A satirical couplet published in *The Flying Post*, seven years after the first edition, makes a less than flattering comment on the novel’s readership:
“Down in the Kitchen, honest Dick and Moll / Are studying Col. Jack and Flanders Moll.” On the other hand, an earlier critic had aligned Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders with “the Biographers of Newgate, who have been as greedily read by People of the better Sort, as the Compilers of Last Speeches and Dying Words by the rabble.” The remark suggests that the work was accessible in libraries at their employers’ houses in its original edition or that believable and appealing versions thereof, such as abridgements or chapbooks, could be obtained at a reasonable price. Whatever the readership and the number of versions, the variety proves the success of the novel and the enduring appeal for distinct audiences, to which a range of producers aimed to cater for.

Concerning Moll Flanders, Hunter records “seven chapbook editions that amounted to brief plot summaries”, until 1800 (390n12); however, more recent estimates indicate 29 chapbooks distributed between c. 1750 and c. 1828 (Bellamy, 17). Regarding these versions of Moll Flanders, Rogers asserts the lack of “any organic relationship with the classic text (...) they treat their subject as a legend, an object of common property, and ignore the precise literary mechanics of whatever book it is that lies behind their production.” (Rogers, Literature and Popular Culture, 186). They “are hasty, formulaic, with no sense of tempo or climax” (Rogers, Literature and Popular Culture, 196). Naturally, analysing each of these items would be beyond the scope of this article; furthermore, not all of them are available online, which was the original purpose. After an extensive search, two chapbooks were selected, all freely available online, as facsimiles. Both testify to the continuing appeal of Defoe’s novel into the nineteenth century, as well as into Northern Ireland and Scotland. Nevertheless, they approach the text in different ways. O’Malley reaffirms that the main characteristic of the organic “relationship between chapbook and the original novel is not mimetic, but rather transformative.” (22)

The first one is titled The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders. It is held in the Cleland collection of the National Museum of Northern Ireland,

11 On the other hand, the greater popularity of Robinson Crusoe would generate 151 chapbooks between 1719 and 1819 (O’Malley, 18).
along with many others, mostly songs and ballads, dating from the late eighteenth century and the first decades of the following century. The producer (“maker”) is recorded in the website as “Public Printing-office”, although there is no reference to the dimensions or the materials. The title page bears no imprint, just the location and date. The copy is not very well-preserved, with the top, bottom and outer margins slightly frayed. The lines are justified, but all four margins differ in size. Despite this irregularity, there are 29 lines in pages three to six, the ones with full text. On the one hand, the practice of printing nouns with capital letters is rarely found here; on the other hand, the printer is still using the long s [ʃ] when the letter occurs at the beginning or in the middle of a word, a custom which had already vanished in other parts of the country.

The second chapbook is held in the Lauriston Castle Collection, based on the National Library of Scotland, which comprises about 2,600 Scottish chapbooks, besides works from England and Ireland. It is entitled The History of Moll Flanders and the reference to the producer is more complete: “Printed and Sold by M. Randall.” Although there is no indication of the date, the website dates it as 1813-1820, probably the dates during which this publisher was active. On the title page, there is information about the place where it was created: Stirling, just like in the Northern Irish example. The Library website also provides details about its size: fifteen centimetres, which corresponds to an octavo. It seems to be very well-preserved. The lines are justified, with very narrow left and right margins, as well as bottom margins on pages seven, eight, nine, 20, 21 and 23, which seem to have been cut as a result of the manner in which the gathering was opened. There are between 27 and 30 lines on the pages without illustrations.

The Scottish example is three times longer than the Northern Irish one: with 24 pages altogether, with a blank second page, that is, on the back of the title page, which shows a different level of sophistication and an effort at emulating conventional books. On this subject, Randall has included a footnote on page 17, mimicking the first edition. When Moll has already been imprisoned at Newgate, she hears a few lines of a poem: “If I swing by this string, / I shall hear the *bell ring, / And there’s an end of poor Moll.” Although in Defoe’s work the last word is “Jenny”, because it is being uttered by a fellow

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12 An imprint is a printer’s or publisher’s name, address, and other details in a book or other publication, which could be used to publicize their wares.
inmate with that name, the rest is copied from the original, including the footnote, also with an asterisk, below a horizontal line. Whereas this footnote is reduced to “St. Sepulchre’s”, Defoe’s note is more complete: “The Bell at St. Sepulcher’s which Tolls upon Execution Day” (Defoe, 215).

The heading of the first page, unnumbered, presents a horizontal band, with scrolls, very much in the style of decorative designs on contemporary furniture, something which is lacking in the first chapbook, which, after the main title on the second page, launches into the text. Regarding accidentals, features such as capitalization, italics and punctuation, the Scottish printer has abandoned the long s [ʃ] and the only words with capital letters are the ones referring to places and names, initiating our modern practice.

Whereas the Northern Irish specimen, by all accounts, a much cheaper and modest production, lacks any illustration, the Scottish one is accompanied by five illustrations. The first one, on page four, depicts a lady offering something to a young girl, presumably the elder brother’s mother, since it belongs to that episode. The second image appears on page six, portraying a man holding what seems to be some sticks; in this case, it may refer to one of two husbands, the draper or her half-brother, since the image features between those episodes. The third picture is on page 11, concerns her Lancashire husband, the highwayman, and it shows an occasion in which he attacks a stagecoach. The fourth image, on page 18, regards the priest who was sent by Moll’s Governess to help her in prison. The final one is on page nineteen and it shows the ship, supposedly the one on which Moll and her husband set sail to America. All the images have been printed in the centre of the page, with space between them and the text, on the left and right, top and bottom.

In the first chapbook, the text of Moll Flanders appears to be the first in a collection, since the title page and the first page of the text are unnumbered, but the following page is numbered “3” at the top, centred, until page “8”. This page only includes the final four lines of “Her Epitaph”, followed by “FINIS” centred, with a double border (parallel to the previous word) to separate the text from the subsequent contribution: “THE SKY-LARK”, apparently unrelated to the preceding narrative. There is no indication whether the poem continues onto the next page or if it was printed there to fill in the available space in order not to waste valuable paper, which was the case in other chapbooks.

The title page adopts the customary summary title:
The | FORTUNES | AND | MISFORTUNES | OF | MOLL FLANDERS, | WHO WAS BORN IN NEWGATE | And during a Life of continued variety for sixty years, was seventeen times a whore, five times a wife, once to her own brother, twelve years a thief, eleven times in Bridewell, nine times in the new prison, eleven times in wood-street Compter, six times in the pothouse; try Compter, fourteen times in the gatehouse, twenty-five times in Newgate, fifteen times whipt at the Cart's tail, four times burnt in the hand, once condemned for Life, and eight years a transport in Virginia; at last grew rich, lived honest, and died penitent. Printed in the Year, 1805.

Not only does it supply the details lost in the ensuing narrative, but it also mirrors Moll's familiar numerical obsession, where the narration becomes entangled with enumeration (Lynch, 84), visible in the etymology of the verb “tell”, from the Old English tellan ‘relate, count, estimate’, of Germanic origin (Oxford English Dictionary).

When readers compare this summary title to the Scottish one, the similarities they share are considerable, with the language conveying what Barchas calls “the mercantile lingua franca of Moll’s story” (Barchas, Graphic Design, 63), the business sociolect of numbers, dates and years ("threesore", "five times"), contracts made and broken ("a wife"), illegal activities ("a whore", "a thief", "transported"), and the constant rotation of the wheel of fortune ("FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES", “at last grew rich, lived honest, and died penitent.”).

The | HISTORY | OF | MOLL FLANDER'S, | WHO WAS BORN IN NEWGATE; AND, | During a Life of continued varieties, for threesore [sic] years, was twelve years a whore, five times a wife, whereof once to her own brother; twelve years a thief; was eighteen times in Bridewell; nine times in New Prison; eleven times in Woodstreet Compter; six times in the Gatehouse; twenty-five times in Newgate; fifteen times whipt at the cart's tail, four times burnt in the hand; once condemned to die; eight years transported to Virginia: and at last grew rich, lived honest, and died a penitent. Written from her own Memorandum, and adorned with Cuts. STIRLING: Printed and Sold by M. Randall.

Notwithstanding this attentiveness to details shown by M. Randall, a few mistakes occur in the title page: “threesore” for “threescore”, and “Memorandum” as the plural form, which should be either “memoranda” or “memorandums”, as in Defoe’s first edition.
The printer adopts a first-person narrative, resorting to the third-person narrative in order to provide closure with Moll’s will, death and funeral. Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* has been left intentionally open, a decision justified in the Preface: “We cannot say (...) that this History is carried on quite to the End of the Life (...) for no Body can write their own Life to the full End of it, unless they can write it after they are dead” (Defoe, 6). As a matter of fact, a third-person narrator could have been introduced at the end, as many authors had done before and as chapbooks’ producers would do. However, Faller suggests that Defoe himself was unsure about an appropriate ending, by playing on the meaning of the verb “to finish”. The author took up “the Pen employ’d in finishing her Story” (Defoe, 3), in the sense of all the revision work and perfecting that had gone into producing this text, which is encapsulated in the subsequent phrase: “has had no little difficulty to put it into a Dress fit to be seen, and to make it speak Language fit to be read” (Defoe, 3). If the author was able to put the finishing touches in the narrative, he could have gone further and written a conclusion: “Perhaps Defoe did not quite know Moll’s life might be brought, as criminal biographies always were brought, to a definite conclusion, that is, to some clear ‘application’ or meaning in the end.” (Faller, 106) On the other hand, chapbooks’ creators had no such qualms and both producers of the works being analysed locate Moll’s burial place in St Mary’s Church, Virginia, whereas the readers of the first edition last hear of Moll in England, “where we resolve to spend the Remainder of our Years in sincere Penitence, for the wicked Lives we have lived.” (Defoe, 268) Neither chapbook has Moll returning to her native country, but both provide closure in the form of a burial. A third-person narrator in the Scottish chapbook records the way in which Moll, sensing her imminent death, draws up a will and is buried “with great solemnity, being interred in St. Mary’s church in Virginia” (*The History of Moll Flanders*, 24). In the other chapbook, the third-person narrator carries on with the narration until her funeral: “He was buried in St Mary’s Church, James-town, Virginia, and her death was much lamented by all who knew her. On her tomb is the following Epitaph.” (*The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders*, 7). This consists of an octave, in which the lines struggle to fit the page, and it reminds the reader of Moll’s progress from Newgate to her unconventional existence and final resting place in the land to where she was transported.

The unusual decision to use a third-person account throughout the Northern Irish chapbook may have enabled a greater concentration in
the narrative and a reduction in size to 8 pages even though the narration itself only occupies five and a half pages. However, the compression leads to some episodes being removed from this work, turning it into a kind of enumeration of events, featuring only the essential elements of the story, as if it were whetting readers’ appetite for further developments. On the other hand, the Scottish chapbook sketches out a substantial number of episodes, from her birth; her adoption in Colchester; her affair with the elder brother; her marriage to the younger one, then to a draper; her stay in the Mint; her marriage to her half-brother and her reunion with her mother; her return to England and the affair with the Bath gentleman (even copying Defoe’s play on words with her appellation of “Sir Walter Cleave’s lady”); the banker; the Lancashire husband; her meeting the midwife or Governess; her many adventures, as Moll calls them, when referring to her life of crime; her arrest and sentence to be transported; her reunion with her Lancashire husband and with her son by her half-brother; her inheritance and life in Virginia, where she dies.

Despite both works being anonymous, their authors deal with names in opposite ways. The Northern Irish producer devises names for Moll’s husbands while the Scottish one replicates Defoe’s practice of using initials and long dashes for supposedly well-known characters, when her mother refers to former convicts who are now honest citizens of the colonies. Neither author uses dialogue in the text produced, which diminishes some of the energy and zest for life felt by readers of the original Moll Flanders.

In conclusion, these chapbook adaptations of Defoe’s Moll Flanders illustrate the coeval taste for criminal biographies and the possibility of empathy with a downtrodden female character who was able to rise from a life of poverty. In Spufford’s words, “the chapbooks are crude unsubtle, earthy, uncompassionate, but full of movement and violence, sex, vivid imagery, and better or worse jokes.” (249) Not only did they contribute to a significant increase in the popularity of novels and in literacy rates among a wider public but they also became part of an array of goods bought, sold, exchanged, borrowed and stolen in the eighteenth-century cultural landscape. Although the modern access to these texts in digital versions fails to recreate the smell, feel and excitement which the original readers must have felt as a new chapman arrived in town, their contribution to our understanding of reading habits and tastes remains invaluable.
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A Testament of Strength:
Mary Prince’s Slave Narrative and the
Digital World

MARIANA BICUDO CASTELO BRANCO CUNHA

Introduction

Nowadays we seem to rely on digital tools, for more or less everything. I certainly relied on them for the research I conducted for this essay. Thus, even though I will be discussing a work from the nineteenth century, a time when the internet was close to two-hundred years away, this very information was obtained thanks to that exceptional research instrument without which we cannot imagine our life today. According to David M. Berry in “The Computational Turn: Thinking About the Digital Humanities”: “Email, Google searches and bibliographic databases are becoming increasingly crucial, as more of the world libraries are scanned and placed online” (1). This demonstrates the importance the internet has as one of the main digital sources of what we know. If it is through the World Wide Web that we find information, then what is present in a database, the results it shows us, will determine how much we can know about a subject, which in return will impact the papers, articles, books, videos and other work produced and shared on that very subject.

Hence, the story of Mary Prince, or any theme, is today heavily dependent on what the digital world says about it. I have chosen Mary Prince, and her narrative because The History of Mary Prince is an exceptional case study for the impact of Digital Humanities on our shared culture. I wish to explore the role Mary Prince and her work play within the legacies of slavery, a movement highly dependent on the digital. Most importantly, I would like to honour Mary Prince’s own legacy, by bringing to light her high prowess and the reasons why she has not been as acclaimed as her male counterparts.

In order to tell this story, we have to travel back and forth in time, something only possible in a digital world. So, let us go back to nineteenth century Bermuda, West Indies, the birthplace of Mary Prince, who in 1831 would see her life narrative published in London. The History of Mary Prince – A West Indian Slave, related by herself remains the only known slave narrative by a
woman published in the British Isles. What originated the idea for this essay was, interestingly, the fact that I found and read this narrative online, for free. *The History of Mary Prince* is available to anyone with an internet connection on Project Gutenberg. Naturally, in 1831, access to a slave narrative was not as widespread as it is now, since illiteracy rates were much higher than they are today, and people could not afford to buy the book. Still, there were many who were able to read it, as can be demonstrated by the fact that there were three editions in its publication year.

*The History of Mary Prince* is a complex and heart-wrenching real-life tale. In it, Prince relates her life since childhood, a time she calls “the happiest period of my life, for I was too young to understand rightly my condition as a slave, and too thoughtless and full of spirits to look forward to the days of toil and sorrow” (7). Indeed, Prince is sold and resold, being owned by 5 people over the years, torn away from her family as a child, and later separated from her husband, when The Woods, her final owners, took her to England. In a vivid and perceptive narration, Prince details the personalities of the different people who bought her, each seemingly worse than the other. But none as evil as Mr. and Mrs. Wood. Their possessive nature was such that they would not part with Prince even when she was ill. Moreover, Prince makes proof of her wit and courage, as she stands up to the floggings of Captain I, and the sexual violence of Mr. D. Later, she tries many times to buy her freedom, with money she secretly earned, but The Woods are ruthless in their authority over Prince. A persistent fighter, Mary Prince comes to find herself released from this way of survival in her forties, with the help of the Anti-Slavery Society and its secretary Thomas Pringle, who eventually takes her as a servant.

State of the Art

Before developing my subject, I will summarize what has been written about Mary Prince and her narrative, in order to show what my work brings of new to the discussion. As such, I have assembled ten essays written about Mary Prince and her narrative, between 1992 and 2017.

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1 Phillis Wheatley’s *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* was published in 1773 in England, although she was American.
The first essay, “The Heartbeat of a West Indian Slave: *The History of Mary Prince*”, was written by Sandra Pouchet Paquet, who states that *The History*\(^2\) is a personal story as well as a historical and cultural one (131). The author uses the metaphor of the heart: Prince’s heart is strong although her body is weakened (143). In comparison with later texts, Pouchet Paquet is not as critical of *The History*’s editor Thomas Pringle as other scholars will be. The 1994 essay, “Claiming an Identity: Caribbean Women Writers in English” by Brenda F. Berrian, focuses heavily on the culture of the Caribbean while dissecting Prince’s text. Berrian notes the racist terms of endearment used towards Prince as a child, which she only truly understands as an adult, and the important role of Prince’s mother as a protector (136). The author underlines how Prince is very aware of the cultural dynamics of power in the West Indies saying “the Caribbean woman’s search for humanity is intertwined with her cultural and sexual heritage” (203).

After a seven-year gap, “I Will Say the Truth to the English People: *The History of Mary Prince* and the Meaning of English History” by Kremena T. Todorova is published in the fall of 2001. This essay takes a different approach by describing the complexity of Prince’s role in the publication of her narrative, as Todorova criticizes Thomas Pringle, the propeller of the publication, due to his editing of the text because he “turns Mary into an other” (291). The author declares that the sexual abuse Prince suffered is almost erased, she notes Pringle’s obsession with proving Prince’s Christianity while also having a critical opinion of her (294). Todorova considers Prince as a threat to Englishness, which is the root of Pringle’s apparent animosity towards her, since he defends a so-called superior English morality, versus an inferior West Indian morality (296). In the following season of the same year, Barbara Baumgartner’s “The Body as Evidence: Resistance, Collaboration, and Appropriation in *The History of Mary Prince*” was published. This work focuses on how Prince’s broken body leads to strength in resistance, as she appropriates it and uses it to reach her goals. Moreover, Baumgartner highlights Prince’s rich use of figurative language, which goes against racial stereotypes and also gives evidence of Prince’s management of her own fertility, along with the ingenious use of her illness as a type of leverage to obtain what she desires (258-260). Like Todorova, Baumgartner accuses Pringle of exerting control with his editing of the text, and charges the editor with the

\(^2\) From here on *The History of Mary Prince* may be referred to as *The History*. 
sexualization of Prince whilst using her life story to help the Anti-Slavery Society (262). In this essay the tumultuous legal quarrels about the truthfulness of the narrative are brought to light (263). This happened because the last owners of Prince were not happy with the way they were depicted in the narrative, and as such Prince was forced to detail private aspects of her sexual life in court (The History 100-103). This issue is also developed by Janice Schroeder in “‘Narrat[ing] Some Poor Little Fable’: Evidence of Bodily Pain in The History of Mary Prince” and ‘Wife-Torture in England’” (2004), as she recounts the episode when Prince had to strip and show the scars on her body, because there was a need to prove the veracity of the text (269-270). This humiliation comes as a consequence of Mary Prince being a black woman with questionable sexual behaviour in early nineteenth century England. Schroeder therefore considers this text as humanitarian narrative, showing Prince’s resistance against others and against the appropriation of her text (272-273). The year before, a short essay by Gillian Whitlock, entitled “Merry Christmas, Mary Prince” refers to the discovery that Canadian auto-biographer Susanna Moodie (née Strickland) was in fact Mary Prince’s amanuensis for the slave narrative (441).

In “‘I Know What a Slave Knows’: Mary Prince’s Epistemology of Resistance”, Mary Jeanne Larrabee continues the trend of praising The History as a revolutionary text that goes against slave stereotypes, since through publishing a written work one claims literacy as humanizing, noting the importance of such civilized mediums to the Enlightenment mindset (454). Moreover, Larrabee considers Prince’s epistemology as alternative because it relates to the living experience, she tells of what is felt in the flesh (458). In 2009, Mathew Shum’s ‘The Prehistory of The History of Mary Prince: Thomas Pringle’s “The Bechuana Boy”’ aims to show that the poem “Bechuana Boy” is a good companion to The History, namely because they are similar religious redemption stories. Shum writes of the black boy obtained by Pringle (a slave), as in the poem the boy has a pet springbok, a symbol of slavery, since the poem does not provide respect for the Bechuana boy, rather, he is himself considered as a pet (305-306). The theme of religious tameness is present in the poem, which follows a Christian abolitionist agenda (317). This religious aspect is also present in The History, seemingly to please British readers and provide atonement for less suitable aspects of Prince’s identity (316).

3 The narrative of the poem takes place in South Africa, where Pringle lived at the time.
According to Shum, there are parallels between the two texts but they are restricted to what Pringle could control, therefore evidence of Prince’s resistance remains (322). Three years later, in “Pringle’s Pruning of Prince: The History of Mary Prince and the Question of Repetition”, Jessica L. Allen addresses issues of collaboration and authorship. She states that regarding censorship, Pringle’s biases affected the final text (511). In the paratext, there is a condescending and patronizing feeling and, ironically, Pringle repeats himself in this paratext (518), repetition being a characteristic of creole Pringle edited out. As explained by Allen, this happened because creole was not considered a dialect (514). Finally, published in 2017, “Island Squalls of Indignation: The Rhetoric of Freedom in The History of Mary Prince” is an essay in which Dyanne Martin begins by pondering on the authenticity of The History concluding: “these critics’ assertions do not change the overall importance of Prince’s narrative, nor do they attenuate the legitimacy of the subjects she presents in her text” (309). The author then summarizes the events of The History, noting “Although Prince experiences the brutality of slavery in all its forms, she manages to subvert the strictures of oppression and repeatedly defy her oppressors” (314).

In conclusion, I identify the main themes in the literature about Mary Prince as issues of the body, epistemological resistance and criticism of Thomas Pringle. It is noteworthy that all the essays above mentioned were published in the United States of America, considering Mary Prince is more of a British colonial figure. Yet there seems to be a lack of interest in her life and work in British and European academia. Perhaps this is a symptom of the preference for male slavery personalities.

In the last decade a new interest in the history and stories of slavery has emerged, in various mediums. Films like Amistad (1997, Spielberg), Django Unchained (2012, Tarantino), 12 Years a Slave (2013, McQueen), The Birth of a Nation (2016, Parker) have been critically acclaimed, and some reached mainstream success. What is more, the internet has witnessed the birth of many databases related to the slave trade. However, this digital aspect of the legacies of slavery is yet to be explored in depth, as seen in the reviewed literature. In analysing the current output regarding stories of slavery, we perceive a disparity when it comes to the female perspective and experience. Accordingly, I here establish that media regarding the legacy of slavery, The History of Mary Prince and the work published about The History fit within the field of Digital Humanities, as we can access these different sources through
the use of computers and digital tools (Berry 2, 4). Of all these slavery related films, none has a female protagonist. Interestingly, it was in television that an enslaved woman’s story was told, in the mini-series The Book of Negroes (2015), but without receiving as much publicity and thus without having as much impact as the other stories. This is the state of media in the 21st century. What was the situation in the nineteenth century?

**England the Saviour – the Colonial and Imperial Context**

Prince faced particular challenges when her work was being published, under the domineering editing of Thomas Pringle, the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. His influence over the narrative has been critically analysed by Barbara Baumgartner in her 2001 essay “The Body as Evidence: Resistance, Collaboration, and Appropriation in The History of Mary Prince”, often referenced by other scholars who make similar claims, such as Jessica Allen in her 2012 article “Pringle’s Pruning of Prince”. And indeed, it is clear that The History of Mary Prince was a work of propaganda or was meant to be one. Pringle tries to smother the actual narrative in between his writings, with a preface, an appendix to validate the story, and an extra narrative about an African slave. We know he pruned certain aspects of the narrative to fit his agenda or, should I say, his bias. Specifically, Mary Prince came to testify that she told her amanuensis, Susanna Strickland,4 about her relationship with a man known as Captain Abbott before she was married, but this information was excluded from the narrative. The contradiction in Pringle’s character and motivation lies in the fact that he censored Prince’s sexuality, which fits the Victorian view, yet he made public precisely what he tried to hide, by creating legal quarrels that led to Prince speaking twice in court, revealing her premarital sexual life, which ultimately might have been damaging for her case (Salih xxix, xxx).

The issue of genre emerges as a relevant discussion, due to the particularities surrounding this text. As Todorova explains, most authors describe The History as an autobiography, even when they use other terms to refer to the text, such as “testimony” and “memoir” (287). Moreover, in The Intimate Empire Whitlock also writes about Mary Prince’s work as an “autobiography”,

4 Later Susanna Moodie.
thus I want to consider these definitions, which according to Todorova are “the most controversial” aspect of The History (287). Whitlock is unwavering when it comes to her classification of the only known work of “an unlikely autobiographer” (10). Yet, Whitlock discusses extensively “the struggle to authorize Mary Prince as an autobiographic subject in the History itself” (12). Clearly, her goal is to prove Prince’s legitimacy as an author, nonetheless, she must recognize the very complicated context of the production of this so-called autobiography:

Prince’s autobiography is a particularly complex instance of oppositionality at work in the text, for there is both the explicit agenda of the anti-slavery intelligentsia, her champions who employ her text as an instrument in their campaign for reform; and beyond this the manoeuvrings of the narrator herself within the prescriptions and formulations of the slave narrative which authorize her to speak. (The Intimate 14)

The History can be seen as an autobiography, but we must use caution when doing so. This text has been censored and altered according to a specific agenda. In fact, the very creation of The History can be owed to the designs of the man who brought public humiliation to the author of the story he so eagerly desired to be associated with. Furthermore, there was great concern regarding the veracity of the narrative, to the point that Pringle vouches heavily for it, and more shockingly, Mary Prince had to strip her body as the ultimate proof of her word. Prince is never believable enough for her new “allies”: “Only an ex-slave might speak with authority of the atrocities of slavery but, of course, black women were not authoritative speakers” (The Intimate 21). Interestingly, Todorova proposes the classification of testimony as a good one since it bears a more public essence and Mary Prince knew that she was telling her story to a specific audience (288). Although this is undoubtedly true, I do not wish to become entangled in the oppressive cloud that hovers over The History. Whitlock details the relationship between Prince and her amanuensis, who seemed to be close friends, but Strickland had particular constraints or allegiances as a white woman about to be married. Her affection for Prince did not erase their differences: “she is also in every sense Prince’s foil: the white English woman who is able to embody the precepts of femininity, domestic respectability and innocent womanhood, an Englishness that casts Prince as ‘the other woman’” (The Intimate 17). In dissecting all the pressures put on Prince and on her life’s narrative one may wonder how much of it is truly authentic and how much is manipulated to
serve another’s goals of selling the text and receiving praise for helping an ex-slave. Ultimately, though without these English hands we would not have a History of Mary Prince, still we must not let their motives taint the truth of Prince’s work. Despite the constraints Mary Prince faced, despite the propaganda purpose of editing and publishing her text, one can nevertheless read her History as a first person account of a woman’s life and struggles, although this text cannot be regarded as an autobiography in the sense we generally attribute to it. Mary Prince did not have the full freedom to speak without judgement and prejudice. As a previously enslaved black woman surviving within an imperialist white supremacist patriarchal system her reality was something to be moulded by others. The readers of the time would know of the relentless floggings but not of the sexual violence, they would know of Prince’s religious marriage but her sexuality would be erased (Todorova 293). It appears that Pringle wanted to use Mary Prince – for the purposes of the publication of the narrative her image had to be pristine, but later the editor of The History had no problem in putting Prince in a situation where her character was put into question. Or rather, the stereotype of her race and gender was confirmed when she was laughed at while testifying about her affair with Captain Abbot and his infidelity with a supposed friend of Prince (The History 102). It is telling that Prince’s voice alone was not good enough, and Pringle’s attempts at owning her experience and knowledge are splattered on the edition. Perhaps he saw this opportunity to publicize himself as a good Samaritan, the man who helped Mary Prince, the man who wrote about the horrors of slavery in the poem “The Bechuana Boy”. Ironically, I would argue that, in his obsession with proving his moral superiority, Pringle reveals what seems to be his underlying essence. According to Matthew Shum, in his 2009 essay “The Prehistory of The History of Mary Prince: Thomas Pringle’s ‘The Bechuana Boy’”, while in South Africa, it appears Pringle acquired this black boy from the colonial government, at his own request. An act he seemingly tried to hide. Perhaps, because of his condescension towards Prince, Pringle ignored or failed to see that he made possible the publishing of a ground-breaking story. The History of Mary Prince, despite the hurdles it faced, is a testimony of intelligence, strength and agency.

In his book Colonial Desire (2005), Robert Young details the ambiguities of the Victorian ethos, the society that sheltered and objectified Prince. I note Young’s overall assessment that English culture had (and has) an obsession with desiring the other in a possessive manner (Young 2, 3). Sex and
race appear to be two sides of the same coin, to own the other is to have sexual power over the other. Furthermore, according to Philippa Levine in the chapter “Sexuality, Gender and Empire” the colonies, like the West Indies, were imagined as a land of lewdness and depravity:

Colonial environments came to be seen as sexually distinct from Britain: sexually loose, sometimes predatory, and frequently excessive. Sex in colonial surroundings needed greater regulation and control than in temperate Britain where reason outswayed passion, and where the curbing of sexual appetite was, by the nineteenth century, a mark of good breeding and proper behaviour. (134)

We must not commit the mistake of thinking that everything was solved when slavery was abolished in 1834. Race theories flourished in the nineteenth century, in the work of the white man, or Buckra, as Mary Prince would have said. Among them I note Joseph de Gobineau, Robert Knox, Thomas Huxley and William Z. Ripley (Young 9, 88, 497). As Levine states, imperial power was exercised namely through sexualized racial classification:

Nineteenth century biological theories of racial hierarchy were not new in stressing racial difference. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, trading intensified contact between Europeans and other peoples. Race and sex – ‘the whiteness of English women and the blackness of African men’ – became a concern. Scientists saw racial difference vividly illustrated in sexual characteristics. Larger genitals were equated with smaller brain size. Sexual excess became the mark of inferiority. (136)

As such, we come to realize that sexual dominance is integral to colonialism, as a movement ruled by white men, who both desired and were repulsed by their female colonial subjects.

A Testament of Strength

As we understand, white imperialism was not encouraging protest from its subjects, since this threatened the status quo, thus, there was fear of losing overarching power, embodied in the anxiety about slave uprisings (Boulukos 87). Ultimately, keeping the subaltern in a powerless position was essential to this type of system, as Spivak has noted in her analysis concerning the voice of the oppressed in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in 1983. This imperial dominance worked in two main ways. With the savage stereotype, by reducing them to
wild beasts, the empire stole the people’s right to agency, thought and discourse. And within the abolitionist movement, despite its good intentions, there was a fear, even if unacknowledged, that the black individual might take over. This was the reason why the fight for abolition was never completely about gaining equality for people of African origin, but largely about proving the moral superiority of the English. In fact, Anthony Trollope and Charles Darwin considered the sin of slavery as atoned with its abolition, as noted by David Olusoga in his 2016 book, *Black and British, A Forgotten History* (238). Furthermore, I return to Thomas Pringle, who in retrospect used the opportunity of publishing Prince’s narrative and taking her as a servant to publicize his benevolence. In spite of this, as other scholars, like Mary Jeanne Larrabee, in “I Know What a Slave Knows”: Mary Prince’s Epistemology of Resistance’ (2006), have concluded, the essence of Mary Prince’s resilience, intelligence and knowledge was impossible to mask. So much so, that she lives on as the antithesis of what the imperial machine wanted her to represent. According to Sandra Paquet in “The Heartbeat of a West Indian Slave”, “Mary Prince’s heart is the caged bird that sings the definitive song of freedom to let her people go” (143). At the end of the day, the British Empire and its people profited and thrived off of slavery and the slave trade, many people became rich through the suffering of others (Olusoga 346). This richness lives on today, for modern Britain still bears the legacy of slavery in private and public institutions.

In light of the previous analysis, I wish to call the readers’ attention to a project from University College London, *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, headed by Catherine Hall. It is one of the many online websites offering vast information about slavery. The data found there comes mainly from the registers of the slave compensations people were awarded, as this was the only way to get the slave owners to accept the abolition of slavery (Olusoga 230).

Before Prince, only men had published their slave narratives. These individuals, Ignatius Sancho, Olaudah Equiano, and Ottobah Cugoano, became well-known, and enjoyed a certain degree of popularity, to the point that we still have their portraits. All of these men, whose invaluable work was crucial in changing the public opinion on slavery, were celebrated as is shown by the fact that their image was (re)produced and preserved. How important is a portrait? More than one might think. For the digital world is a visual one; we learn and communicate heavily through pictures, still pictures or moving ones. The legacy of these people lives on in many visual forms: they have
statues, sculptures, they are featured as characters in films and series. Mary Prince has two plaques commemorating her, one in London, and one in her birthplace, Bermuda. In 2014, the stage adaptation of The History had its debut in Paris, France, headed by the actress Souria Adèle, who embodied Prince in a monologue style. This appears to be the first time Mary Prince has been represented in the theatre or other mediums. Once more, I note how the interest in The History continues to come from outside Great-Britain, the nation where Prince attained her liberty and made a name for herself. I do not think Prince was of less consequence than her male contemporaries, but she was a woman, a black woman. Ironically, we could argue, this aspect only makes her work more relevant, as female slave narratives are scarcer.

In spite of some missing pages in The History of Mary Prince, her work is but one click away, since it is available on Project Gutenberg for free. Furthermore, the website maryprince.org, created by Margôt Maddison-MacFayden, is one of many online resources with information about the Bermudian figure. Thus, we must realize the importance of Mary Prince within the legacy of slavery, as an example of free digital access, one that needs and deserves to be more explored.

Conclusion

To conclude, any imaginary depictions can never make up for whatever may have been lost, so I would like this to be a reminder of the value of images in our digital culture, and possibly our dependence on them. Imagine we were able to find an authentic portrait of Mary Prince and how that would change her literary fortune. Note the example of Dido Elizabeth Belle, the adoptive daughter of Lord Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of England, and how the rediscovery of a painting featuring her eventually produced a film about her life, Belle (2013, Asante). The nonexistence of a portrait of Mary Prince speaks volumes; if no one truly bothered or had interest in painting her, then it was a symptom of the bigotry within the abolitionist universe and in Victorian England. If such a work exists or existed and is lost, we do not know. However, one would not be too surprised if Thomas Pringle had

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5 Souria Adèle is a French actress born in Algeria, her parents are from Martinique.
been involved. There is also the possibility that a representation of Prince has not been unearthed because of her relative low-profile. Mathew Shum states:

With Mary Prince it is death of another kind, a death from archival inanition, since she completely vanishes from view after Pringle fails to secure her right to return to the West Indies as a free woman. In an astonishing reversal of her public visibility in 1831, Prince simply drops out of the archive and becomes, for reasons that remain completely unknown, a non-person. (315)

Indeed, Mary Prince’s date of death is unknown, like much about her life after her narrative is published. In spite of her notability and historic relevance, Prince’s biography has a void, there is not a face that we may say belongs to her and her figure seems to float adrift in the vast ocean of the digital universe. This odd gap in Prince’s story is perhaps not so strange since her mediatic narrative was controlled by men who used her work for propaganda purposes. Therefore, once she had served such purpose she disappeared. Whatever the case maybe, Prince’s legacy lives on, and hopefully will continue to be remembered. If everyone can read her powerful words, then everyone can be empowered and enlightened by them. “[...] she [...] asked me who had put freedom into my head. ‘To be free is very sweet’, I said [...]” (31).

In the new digital world, we can find power to resurrect or bury knowledge, I hope this essay contributes to call attention, once more, to Mary Prince’s eloquent story of suffering and resistance.

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IV. Reconsidering Modernism and Postmodernism
“The other I am”
— Poetics of Otherness in the Works of Emerson, Whitman and Fernando Pessoa

NUNO RIBEIRO

The works of Emerson, Whitman and Fernando Pessoa provide several elements that enable to understand the construction of the concept of poetics of otherness. Indeed, throughout Fernando Pessoa’s writings one finds several evidences of the presence of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s and Walt Whitman’s thoughts, which contain important data for the constitution of a poetics of Pessoa’s heteronymic otherness. The importance of Whitman’s work for Pessoa’s literary creation is highlighted by Eduardo Lourenço in a text entitled “Walt Whitman e Pessoa” [“Walt Whitman and Pessoa”] — gathered in the book Poesia e Metafísica: Camões, Antero, Pessoa [Poetry and Metaphysics: Camões, Antero, Pessoa] —, where one reads the following statement about the importance of Whitman to Fernando Pessoa’s heteronymic creation, particularly in relation to the outbreak of the heteronyms Alberto Caeiro and Álvaro de Campos:

[...] the heteronyms, as textually materialized, are the result of the outbreak of Pessoa’s universe confronted with Walt Whitman’s universe. Alberto Caeiro and Álvaro de Campos were to Pessoa the way he integrated the effulgent impact of Whitman without disintegrating by that contact.¹

[...] os heterónimos, tais como textualmente se concretizaram, são o resultado da deflagração do universo de Pessoa confrontado com o universo de Walt Whitman. Alberto Caeiro e Álvaro de Campos foram para Pessoa a maneira como integraram o impacto fulgurante de Whitman sem se desintegrar ao seu contacto.] (167-168)

The importance of the Whitmanian work for Pessoa’s literary creation is evident from the books present in Fernando Pessoa’s Private Library, where

¹ All translations from Portuguese are of our responsibility.

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one finds two books with texts by Walt Whitman: 1) an edition published in 1895 with the title *Poems by Walt Whitman*, corresponding to a collection of Whitman’s poems, in which Pessoa left the signature of his pre-heteronym “A. Search” (CFP, 8-664 MN: \(^2\) Whitman, *Poems* \(^1\)); 2) an edition published in 1909, entitled *Leaves of Grass*, containing the signature “Fernando Pessôa” and the date “16.5.1916” (CFP, 8-580: free endpaper).

Concerning the first book — *Poems by Walt Whitman* —, the fact that the book contains the signature of Alexander Search is significant as it allows to attest the relation between Whitman and the creation of, at least, one of Pessoa’s pre-heteronyms, being therefore an important element for the thematization of the poetics of otherness in Pessoa’s and Whitman’s works. Other significant fact — which constitutes a detailed object of study by Patricio Ferrari in an article entitled “On the Margins of Pessoa’s Private Library” — is that one finds Alberto Caeiro’s name as marginalia in two passages of the book *Poems by Walt Whitman* present in Pessoa’s Private Library. \(^3\) These evidences led Ferrari to consider that the book *Poems by Walt Whitman* would most likely have been the sole source of access to the direct reading of Whitman until the acquisition of *Leaves of Grass* on 16 Mai 1916, and that the reading of *Poems by Walt Whitman* took place in two distinct periods corresponding also to two different readers: 1) the period from approximately 1906 to 1910 in which the reading is attributed to the pre-heteronym Alexander Search; 2) from around 1910 to 1916 in which Fernando Pessoa, in his own name, becomes the reader. \(^4\)

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\(^2\) The acronym “CFP” refers to Casa Fernando Pessoa (Fernando Pessoa’s House), where one currently finds Fernando Pessoa’s Private Library. The numbering after the acronym CFP corresponds to the catalogue reference of each book present in Fernando Pessoa’s Private Library. For the transcription of Pessoa’s Private Library texts, we use the following symbols:

- XXXXXX — underlined segment
- [←|]XXXXXX — section marked with a left vertical stroke
- [M←: XXXXXX] — marginalia inserted on left

\(^3\) The book *Poems by Walt Whitman* contains the following references to Alberto Caeiro: 1) an English marginalia passage that states “explanation for Caeiro’s” (4), which is placed next to the poem “I Sit and Look Out” quoted in the introduction to *Poems by Walt Whitman* (cf. Ferrari, “On the Margins…” 44-45); 2) a passage of marginalia placed next to the verse “(What have I to do with lamentation?)” (CFP, 8-664 MN: Whitman, *Poems* \(^30\) of the poem XLIV of *Song of Myself*, which says “á Caeiro” [sic] [“in the manner of Caeiro”] (cf. Ferrari, “On the Margins…” 46-47).

\(^4\) In this respect, see the following statement by Patricio Ferrari in his article “On the Margins of Fernando Pessoa’s Private Library: A Reassessment of the Role of Marginalia in the Creation and
As for the edition of *Leaves of Grass* signed by Fernando Pessoa with the date “16.5.1916” (CFP, 8-580), Susan Brown leaves the following clarification, in the sequence of the reference to the two editions, with Whitman’s texts present in Fernando Pessoa’s Private Library:

His other copy of Whitman is entitled *Leaves of Grass*, The People’s Library Edition, 1909. It is signed “Fernando Pessoa” with the date 16.5.1916. This book contains all the poems of Whitman’s definitive “deathbed edition” of *Leaves of Grass* except for the two annexes, “Sands at Seventy” and “Good-bye My Fancy.” (“The Whitman-Pessoa...” 14)

Besides the problems concerning the references to Pessoa’s literary personalities in the books kept in the Portuguese author’s Private Library, one also finds throughout the poems of *Leaves of Grass* a set of considerations that provide numerous parallels with themes developed in Pessoa’s observations related to heteronymic creation, supplying, as well, important information with regard to Whitman’s and Pessoa’s poetics of otherness. An example of this occurs in part 5 of the section entitled “Song of Myself” of *Leaves of Grass*, where one finds the famous Whitmanian expression “the other I am” (CFP, 8-580: Whitman, *Leaves* 42). Throughout *Leaves of Grass*, one finds the relation between the problem of otherness and the multiplicity of the self, as can be seen in part 51 of “Song of Myself”, were one reads the following passage: “Do I contradict myself?/ Very well then I contradict myself, /(I am large, I contain multitudes.)” (CFP, 8-580: Whitman, *Leaves* 95). In this excerpt from *Leaves of Grass*, which is marked with a marginalia symbol (“#”) in the copy of *Poems by Walt Whitman,* one finds precisely the topic of the multiplicity, which would became the centre of several Pessoa’s considerations about the heteronymic phenomenon, as the following passage from one of the Fernando Pessoa’s most famous excerpts about the plurality of the self:

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Development of the Pre-heteronyms and in Caeiro’s Literary Production”: “This book, perhaps Pessoa’s only direct access to Whitman until 1916, when he acquired a more complete edition of *Leaves of Grass*, underwent the ownership and the usage of two different writing-readers and reading-writers: Alexander Search (circa four/five years) and Pessoa (who kept it until his death, but who most likely used it between c. 1910 and 1916). As a result, the underlining, markings, and marginalia belong both to different periods and different owners.” (p.38)
I feel multiple.
I’m like a room with countless fantastic mirrors that twist for false reflections a single central reality that is in none and is in all.

Such as the pantheist feels wave and star and flower, I feel several beings. I feel myself living the lives of others, incompletely in myself, as if my being partook of all men, incompletely of each, individuated by a sum of non-selves synthesized in a false self.

[Sinto-me múltiplo.
Sou como um quarto com inúmeros espelhos fantásticos que torcem para reflexões falsas uma única central realidade que não está em nenhum e está em todos.

Como o panteísta se sente onda e astro e flor, eu sinto-me vários seres. Sinto-me viver vidas alheias, em mim incompletamente, como se o meu ser participasse de todos os homens, incompletamente de cada, individuado por uma soma de não-eus sintetizados num eu postiço.] (Pessoa, Teoria 149-150)

In part 1 of Whitman’s poem “The Sleepers” one reads likewise the following lines, which evoke themes present in the texts of heteronymic reflection: “I dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dreamers, / And I become the other dreamers.” (CFP, 8-580: Leaves 393). These lines were also underlined by Pessoa in the copy of Leaves of Grass and refer to the theme of the relation between dream and otherness, which occurs among Pessoa’s considerations about the heteronyms. A posthumously published document about the genesis of the heteronyms — where Fernando Pessoa mentions some aspects that he would later develop in the letter of 13 January 1935 — provides important clues regarding that subject:

Since I was a child, I always had the need to enlarge the world with fictional personalities, my rigorously constructed dreams, envisioned with photographic clarity, understood within their souls. I was no more than five years old, and as an isolated child, wishing only to be so, were already accompanying me some figures of my dream — a captain Thibeaut, a Chevalier de Pas — and others who I’ve already forgotten, and whose oblivion, as the imperfect memory of those, is one of the great misses of my life.

This simply looks like that childish imagination that entertains itself with giving life to toys or dolls. Yet it was more: I didn’t need dolls to design these
figures intensely. Clear and visible in my constant dream, exact human realities for me, any unreal toy would spoil them. They were people.

Moreover, this tendency did not pass with childhood, it developed into adolescence, became rooted in its growth, and finally became the natural form of my spirit. I have no personality today: as much as I am human, I have divided it among the various authors whose work I have been the performer. I am today the meeting point of a small humanity of my own.

[Tive sempre, desde criança, a necessidade de aumentar o mundo com personalidades fictícias, sonhos meus rigorosamente construídos, visionados com clareza fotografica, compreendidos por dentro das suas almas. Não tinha eu mais que cinco anos, e, criança isolada e não desejando senão assim estar, já me acompanhavam algumas figuras de meu sonho — um capitão Thibeaut, um Chevalier de Pas — e outros que já me esqueceram, e cujo esquecimento, como a imperfeita lembrança daqueles, é uma das grandes saudades da minha vida.

Isto parece simplesmente aquela imaginação infantil que se entretém com a atribuição de vida a bonecos ou bonecas. Era porém mais: eu não precisava de bonecas para conceber intensamente essas figuras. Claras e visíveis no meu sonho constante, realidades exactamente humanas para mim, qualquer boneco, por irreal, as estragaria. Eram gente.

Além disto, esta tendência não passou com a infância, desenvolveu-se na adolescência, radicou-se com o crescimento dela, tornou-se finalmente a forma natural do meu espírito. Hoje já não tenho personalidade: quanto em mim haja de humano, eu o dividi entre os autores vários de cuja obra tenho sido o executor. Sou hoje o ponto de reunião de uma pequena humanidade só minha.] (Pessoa, Páginas 101-102)

However, if it is a fact that the reading of Walt Whitman’s work provide significant elements for the constitution of Pessoa’s poetics of heteronymic otherness, there are also in Emerson’s work, particularly in as essay entitled “The Poet”, numerous elements that influence not only Whitman’s work, but also Fernando Pessoa’s literary creation. The importance of Emerson’s essay “The Poet” for the first version of Leaves of Grass, published in 1855, is pointed out by Rodrigo Garcia Lopes in a text entitled “‘Uma experiência de linguagem’: Whitman e a primeira edição de Folhas de Relva (1855)” [“‘A language experience’: Whitman and the first edition of Leaves of Grass”], where one reads:
A crucial fact occurred in 1842: Whitman attended a lecture by Emerson entitled “The Poet,” a true poetic and “transcendentalist” view of life. Whitman was most impressed, describing the experience in an article for Aurora, the newspaper he worked at the time, as “one of the richest and most beautiful compositions, both for its matter and style, we have heard anywhere, at any anytime”.

[Um fato crucial se deu em 1842: Whitman foi assistir a uma palestra de Emerson cujo título era “O Poeta”, uma verdadeira aula de visão poética e “transcendentalista” da vida. Whitman ficou impressionadíssimo, descrevendo a experiência num artigo para o jornal em que trabalhava na época, o Aurora, como sendo “uma das composições mais ricas e belas, tanto por seu assunto quanto por seu estilo, que jamais se ouviu em qualquer lugar, em qualquer tempo”.] (Whitman, Folhas de Relva 233)

In respect to Fernando Pessoa, the importance of Emerson’s work for the Portuguese author is evident by the presence in Pessoa’s Private Library of a volume with the title Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson (cf. CFP, 8-172), which contains — among the several texts gathered in that volume — the essay entitled “The Poet”. In one of Pessoa’s diaries one reads the following note, dated “15/2/1913 (Sábado)” [“15/2/1913 (Saturday)”] (Pessoa, Escritos 108), regarding the Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Folheei, sem ler, o Emerson” [“Leafed through, without reading, the Emerson”] (108). In this excerpt, Fernando Pessoa provides the indication that he had leafed through Emerson’s book without reading it on the date indicated in the diary. That the reading of this book has actually happened is indeed confirmed by the several underscores and other reading traces throughout the volume of Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The repercussion of Emerson’s reading can be seen in one of the pages of Pessoa’s aesthetic and literary criticism, where the Portuguese author discusses and problematizes the interpretation that the American essayist provides of Goethe’s Faust:

Emerson sees in Goethe’s Faust the defect of being too “modern”. This is not what he feels; the interpretation is bad. What he really feels is that the “Faust” is not fully intuitional, but, as inspired like all poems, thought about and too much thought about.

[Emerson vê no Fausto de Goethe o defeito de ser muito “moderno”. Não é isso que elle sente; a interpretação é má. O que elle realmente sente é que o
“Fausto” não é intuicionado completamente, mas, posto que inspirado, como todos os poemas, pensado e pensado demais.6] (Ribeiro, Souza, *Fernando Pessoa & Goethe* 186-187)

In this text, Pessoa refers to and comments on Emerson’s criticism on Goethe’s *Faust*, according to which the defect of this work consists in being excessively modern. It is precisely this criticism one reads in Emerson’s text entitled “Poetry and Imagination”, specifically in the following passage that was read and marked by Fernando Pessoa: “[...][To know the merit of Shakespeare, read “Faust.” I find “Faust” a little too modern and intelligible]” (CFP, 8-172: Emerson, *Works* 445).

In a fragment of a text from Pessoa’s Archive entitled *William Shakespeare, Pseudonym* [William Shakespeare, Pseudonym] one reads, as well, Emerson’s name alongside Walt Whitman’s, Bismarck’s and Mark Twain’s, concerning the discussion of Shakespeare’s identity:

To the most impartial or delicate this revelation of the Shakespeare-man caused indignant amazement. Already in the dawn of the strangeness in the critical horizon, emerges the typical revolted exclamation of the poet Coleridge: “What? Are we to have miracles in sport? Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?” And from Emerson to Walt Whitman, from Bismarck to Mark Twain, a more or less instinctive, more or less skeptical revolt, trying more or less to explain or displace the problem, was creating around the personality of the actor William Shakespeare a tacit doubt, an uneasy unwillingness to accept him as identical to William-Shakespeare-poet.

[Aos mais imparciaes ou delicados esta revelação do homem-Shakespeare causou indignado pasmo. Já ao raiar a estranheza no horizonte crítico, surge a typica exclamação revoltada do poeta Coleridge: “O quê? então temos milagres de brincadeira? Então Deus escolhe idiotas para transmitir aos homens as verdades divinas?” E de Emerson a Walt Whitman, de Bismarck a Mark Twain, uma revolta, mais ou menos instintiva, mais ou menos sceptica, mais ou menos tentando explicar ou deslocar o problema, foi creando em torno da personalidade do actor William Shakespeare uma tacita duvida, uma inquieta má-vontade

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6 According to the original orthography. We follow the original orthography of Pessoa’s texts, in the case of quotations from critical editions of the Portuguese author.
However, in order to understand the relation between Emerson’s work and the poetics of otherness it is necessary to take into consideration what the American essayist indicates in the essay entitled “The Poet”. An important clue to perceive the connection between “The Poet” and the problems concerning the poetics of otherness is expressed in a passage, where Emerson — defining the poet as representative — distinguishes between the poet as a complete man as opposed to the various partial men:

The breadth of the problem is great, for the poet is representative. He stands among partial men for the complete man, and apprises us not of his wealth, but of the common-wealth. The young man reveres men of genius, because, to speak truly, they are more himself than he is. They receive of the soul as he also receives, but they more. (CFP, 8-172: Emerson, *Works* 82)

In this passage, Emerson makes explicit that the poet is representative, standing among partial man as a complete man, that is, as one who is capable of transcending his own partial individuality. According to Emerson, the poet’s representativeness, as one who transcends partial men, consists precisely in the ability to envision, beyond his own individuality, what the others dream. This is precisely what is asserted in “The Poet”:

The poet is the person in whom these powers are in balance, the man without impediment, who sees and handles that which others dream of, traverses the whole scale of experience, and is representative of man, in virtue of being the largest power to receive and to impart. (83)

However, the capacity of envisioning what others dream results, according to Emerson, from the metamorphic and multiform character that distinguishes the poet’s vision, who is capable of continuously transforming himself into what he sees, as the American essayist states in “The Poet”:

As the eyes of Lynceus were said to see through the earth, so the poet turns the world to glass, and shows us all things in their right series and procession. For, through that better perception, he stands one step nearer to things, and
sees the flowing or metamorphosis; perceives that thought is multiform; that within the form of every creature is a force impelling it to ascend into a higher form; and, following with his eyes the life, uses the forms which express that life, and so his speech flows with the flowing of nature. (86)

Another important aspect of the essay “The Poet” concerns the statement that metrics is not essential to poetic writings:

Our poets are men of talents who sing, and not the children of music. The argument is secondary, the finish of the verses is primary.

For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem, — a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing. (83)

The claim that metrics is not essential to poetry would become a fundamental element both for Walt Whitman’s poetics and Pessoa’s appropriation of Whitmanian free verse in the poetry of the heteronyms Alberto Caeiro and Álvaro de Campos. About the influence of the absorption of Whitmanian free verse in the poetic construction of Caeiro and Campos, one reads in Fernando Cabral Martins’ *Introdução ao Estudo de Fernando Pessoa* [Introduction to the Study of Fernando Pessoa]:

In Pessoa’s English language readings, it’s important to highlight the case of Walt Whitman, whose relevance begins with the invention of free verse, a compositional novelty that, in turn, will find in the poetry of Alberto Caeiro and Álvaro de Campos the first great Portuguese examples.

[Nas leituras de língua inglesa de Pessoa, importa sublinhar o caso de Walt Whitman, cuja relevância começa pela invenção do verso livre, novidade composicional que, por sua vez, vai ganhar na poesia de Alberto Caeiro e Álvaro de Campos os primeiros grandes exemplos portugueses.] (25)

All the elements hitherto referred allow to understand how the works of Emerson, Whitman and Fernando Pessoa provide fundamental data for the theoretical-literary understanding of the poetics of otherness, as well as the different ways that this concept was incorporated in the texts of these three poets and thinkers.
Works Cited


Ludic Remediations of Late Victorian Literature:  
_Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink_,  
by Artifex Mundi  
TERESA PEREIRA

1. Introduction

In _Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink_ the player enters an anachronistic version of the nineteenth century and adopts the role of Evangeline Glass, a secret English agent who is asked to travel to Hochwald, a small mountain town at the foot of the Barber family castle, by her old friend, Dr. Ambrose Ink, one of the greatest minds behind the steam revolution which took place in the world\(^1\) where the game is set. Ink visited Hochwald in an attempt to understand why several cities of the entire world were being devastated by unexplainable earthquakes. After uncovering the truth regarding the earthquakes and telling Glass that he wished to confide to her what he had discovered, Ink disappeared mysteriously. Glass is then tasked with the mission of finding Ink and figuring out what he had determined. In order to do so, the secret agent must traverse the Victorian inspired town of Hochwald, talk to its inhabitants and solve several types of puzzles. Fortunately, Glass is assisted by Matthew, a mechanical crow created by Ink, and quickly ascertains that Gerhard Barber, an evil engineer of German descent, is behind the earthquakes and the disappearance of Ink.

The video game\(^2\) described above can be characterised as an adventure game. Similarly to various games of the same genre, _Clockwork Tales: Of Glass_

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\(^1\) Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the concept of world, it is perhaps worth addressed that an understanding of the term mentioned above would involve becoming familiar with the idea of possible worlds, as well as with texts such as *Ways of Worldmaking* (Nelson Goodman, 1978), *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Marie-Laure Ryan, 1991), “Defining Virtual Worlds and Virtual Environments” (Ralph Schroeder, 2008), “Narrative Ways of Worldmaking” (David Herman, 2009), *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation* (Mark J.P. Wolf, 2012), “Story/Words/Media: Tuning the Instruments of a Media-Conscious Narratology” (Marie-Laure Ryan, 2014), “Converging Worlds: From Transmedial Storyworlds to Transmedial Universes” (Jan-Noël Thon, 2015) and *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology* (Alice Bell e Marie-Laure Ryan, 2019).

\(^2\) For a definition of the concept of video game, see Chapter 3 of *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction* (Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Jonas Heide Smith and Susana Pajares Tosca, 2016).
and Ink requires deep thinking and a great amount of patience. These skills should be employed by the player to uncover a mystery, namely the one revolving around the aforementioned earthquakes and the disappearance of Ink. In order to do so, the player adopts the role of the protagonist, specifically Glass - although the game does come with a bonus chapter, where Ink is the playable character -, and is faced with puzzles of various kinds. One of the types of puzzles presented to the player is called hidden object puzzle, in which the player is shown specific items and must find them among several objects. The items can then be combined to form tools that will be useful either on later puzzles or on subsequent occasions. Another type of puzzle displayed by the game tasks the player with finding the correct object that will fill in a space that has been left in blank. Although puzzles such as the ones described above are fairly easy, others are of a mathematical nature, requiring logic and deduction. If the player finds such puzzles overly difficult, the game possesses a hint system, designed to aid the player. Additionally, it should be stressed that, similarly to what happens in most adventure games, even if the player fails to solve some of the puzzles mentioned above, there is absolutely no risk of the main character dying or of the player losing. If the player is unable to solve a problem, the game will simply not advance until a solution has been found.

The following paper asks the question of whether or not Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink is a steampunk remediation of invasion fiction. The question asked by this paper seems of particular pertinence, given that, to date, no studies have focused on the relationship established between neo-Victorianism, steampunk, remediation and video games. While there are some articles related to the subject of neo-Victorian video games, such as “‘The Dark Descent’: Amnesia’s Debt to Victorian Physiological Psychology” (J. Stephen Addcox, 2016) and “A Strange Case of Angry Video Game Nerds: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde on the Nintendo Entertainment System” (M. Napolitano, 2019), and despite the existence of an extensive bibliography related to neo-Victorianism and adaptation — which, to Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O’Flynn, can be characterised as a transcoding process that encompasses, among other things, remediations (181) —, there are no analysis of neo-Victorian video games as remediations of Victorian literary works or genres. In order to answer the question presented above, this article has been divided in five different parts, including this introductory section. The second part considers the concepts of postmodernism, neo-Victorianism and steampunk and argues that the aforesaid video game should be characterised...
as a steampunk text. The third section presents the fiction of invasion and relates its main themes to the subjects approached by *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink*. The fourth part argues that the game under analysis remediates invasion fiction. Furthermore, links between the game and the concepts of immediacy and hypermediacy are established. Finally, the last section makes some concluding remarks.

2. Postmodernism, Neo-Victorianism and Steampunk

Postmodernism is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Chris Baldick, 2015) as a disputed term that took centre stage in the late twentieth century, being regularly “applied to a cultural condition prevailing in the advanced capitalist societies since the 1960s, characterized by a superabundance of disconnected images and styles – most noticeably in television, advertising, commercial design, and pop video” (288). Postmodernity is thus said to be a culture marked by “fragmentary sensations, eclectic nostalgia, disposable simulacra, and promiscuous superficiality” (288), where “the traditionally valued qualities of depth, coherence, meaning, originality and authenticity are evacuated or dissolved amid the random swirl of empty signals” (288). When applied to literature, postmodernism may be considered a continuation of “modernism’s alienated mood and disorienting techniques”, as well as an abandonment of modernism’s “determined quest for artistic coherence in a fragmented world” (288). The postmodernist thus favours “self-consciously ‘depthless’ works of fabulation, pastiche, *bricolage*, or aleatory disconnection” (288). Hutcheon, in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), also defined postmodernism, claiming that “the postmodern is, if it is anything, a problematizing force in our culture today” (xi), given that “it raises questions about (or renders problematic) the common-sensical and the ‘natural’. But it never offers answers that are anything but provisional and contextually determined (and limited)” (xi). Hutcheon additionally argued that “postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges” (3).

Neo-Victorianism is regularly related to postmodernism. Dana Schiller, author of “The Redemptive Past in the Neo-Victorian Novel” (1997) and one of the first critics to describe what she considered to be a new subgenre of the historical novel, characterised neo-Victorian fiction as “those novels
that adopt a postmodern approach to history and that are set at least partly in the nineteenth century” (558). According to Schiller, neo-Victorianism’s connection to postmodernism results from neo-Victorian novels’ “revisionist approach to the past” (540) and attempt “to achieve recursively postmodern imaginations while maintaining a sense of a referent” (541). Since Shiller’s statements, several other authors, such as Andrea Kirchknopf, have related neo-Victorianism to postmodernism. Kirchknopf, in Rewriting the Victorians: Modes of Literary Engagement with the Nineteenth Century (2013), even advocated using the term post-Victorian instead of neo-Victorian, given that the concept “incites a more explicit association with postmodernist discourses, and viewed from that context, similarly to the term postcolonial and postnational, it expresses a purpose of reviewing rather than replicating earlier accounts and routines” (31). Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn also acknowledged neo-Victorianism’s debt to postmodernism in Neo-Victorianism: The Victorians in the Twenty-First Century, 1999-2009 (2010), arguing that the neo-Victorian genre includes texts which are “self-consciously engaged with the act of (re)interpretation, (re)discovery and (re)vision concerning the Victorians” (4). Self-consciousness is essential given that “just as not all narratives published between 1837 and 1901 are Victorian, so all fictions post-1901 that happen to have a Victorian setting or rewrite a Victorian text or a Victorian character do not have to be neo-Victorian” (6).

Given neo-Victorianism’s relation to postmodernism, it does not come as a complete surprise that the texts that were initially characterised as neo-Victorian had a close connection to postmodernism, as is the case of Jean Rhys’ Wide Sargasso Sea (1966) and John Fowles’ The French Lieutenant’s Woman (1969). Several other texts associated with neo-Victorianism, such as J.G. Farrell’s The Siege of Krishnapur (1973), David Lodge’s Nice Work (1988), Charles Palliser’s The Quincunx (1989), A.S. Byatt’s Possession (1990) and Angels and Insects (1992), Graham Swift’s Ever After (1992), Sarah Waters’ Tipping the Velvet (1998), Affinity (1999) and Fingersmith (2002) and Michel

3 As Chris Barker and Emma A. Jane explained in Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice (2016), “[t]he concept of text suggests not simply the written word, (...) but also all practices that signify. This includes the generation of meaning through images, sounds, objects (such as clothes) and activities (like dance and sport)” (13). The authors added that “[s]ince images, sounds, objects and practices are sign systems, which signify with the same mechanism as a language, we may refer to them as cultural texts” (13). Therefore, the term text may be applied not only to novels, but also to video games, as well as to other cultural products.
Faber’s *The Crimson Petal and the White* (2002) and *The Apple* (2006), also displayed postmodern attributes. The most common postmodern trait found in the texts mentioned above is self-reflexivity, persistently celebrated in scholarly analysis of neo-Victorian works, as can be perceived by observing the previously addressed definition of neo-Victorian proposed by Heilmann and Llewellyn, where metafictional strategies and self-reflexivity take centre stage. According to Nadine Boehm-Schnitker and Susanne Gruss, authors of the introduction to the book entitled *Neo-Victorian Literature and Culture: Immersions and Revisitations* (2014), which they themselves edited, such celebration of self-reflexivity “exclude[s] texts from neo-Victorian scrutiny that are well worth analysing” (3), as a result of its clear differentiation between self-reflexive historical fiction set in the nineteenth century – which, given its “knowledgeable revisitation of the Victorian” (2), is characterised as neo-Victorian – and other historical fiction works set in the same time frame. The “neo-Victorian canon” (9) thus formed implicitly replicates, as the authors put it, “conservative ideas of ‘highbrow’ vs. ‘lownbrow’ literature” (9), or even media, for it favours self-reflexive literary works set in the nineteenth century over other types of media texts set in the exact same historical context. Boehm-Schnitker and Gruss argue against such exclusion and replication, given that they believe that “media which prove immersive, affective or nostalgic in their engagement with the nineteenth century” should not be readily ignored by neo-Victorian scholars. Likewise, Marie-Luise Kohlke, author of “Mining the Neo-Victorian Vein: Prospecting for Gold, Buried Treasure and Uncertain Metal” (2014), defends the adoption of a more inclusive definition of neo-Victorian, as can be perceived by reading the following quotation: “I advocate employing ‘neo-Victorian’ (…) as a generic and integrative umbrella term to encompass virtually all historical fiction related to the nineteenth century, irrespective of (…) the extent of narratives’ self-consciousness, postmodernism, adaptivity or otherwise” (27).

Among the immersive, affective and nostalgic media texts that should not be promptly excluded from neo-Victorian scrutiny are those typically related to steampunk. Mark Llewellyn, author of “What is Neo-Victorian Studies?” (2008), initially defined steampunk as “a term for fantasy and

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4 According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Chris Baldick, 2015), self-reflexive is a “term applied to literary works that openly reflect upon their own processes of artful composition. Such self-referentiality is frequently found in modern works of fiction that repeatedly refer to their own fictional status” (326-7).
speculative fiction narratives that combine ideas drawn from the industrialised, steam powered Victorian landscape and project them into the future or a warped version of the past, frequently the nineteenth century” (181). Llewellyn solely mentioned steampunk as a literary style, referring to *The Difference Engine* (1990) and to *The Diamond Age, or A Young Lady’s Illustrated Primer* (1995), works which were respectively written by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling and by Neal Stephenson. Afterwards, Rachel A. Bowser and Brian Croxall, in “Introduction: Industrial Revolution” (2010), found themselves faced with the task of clarifying what steampunk was. The authors argued that all steampunk artefacts share the impulse to invoke Victorianism. This impulse implies the production of literary texts placed “in Victorian London” or “in a futuristic world that retains or reverts to the aesthetic hallmarks of the Victorian period” (1). Furthermore, these texts “deploy Victorian subjects” or “incorporate anachronistic versions of nineteenth-century technologies” (1). Jeff Vandermeer then sought to critically assess steampunk in *The Steampunk Bible: An Illustrated Guide to the World of Imaginary Airships, Corsets and Goggles, Mad Scientists and Strange Literature* (2011), where steampunk’s development from “a literary movement to a way of life and a part of pop culture” was described (9). Vandermeer additionally formulated the following equation: “STEAMPUNK = Mad Scientist Inventor [invention (steam x airship or metal man/ baroque stylings) x (pseudo) Victorian setting] + progressive or reactionary politics x adventure plot” (9). Such a description sought to summarise the allure of steampunk, which was described as “simultaneously retro and forward-looking in nature”, evoking “a sense of adventure and discovery” and embracing “divergent and extinct technologies as a way of talking about the future” (9).

*Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink*, advertised as a steampunk video game which contains a “rich steampunk world” (Artifex Mundi, n.d., n.p.), displays several of the aspects associated with steampunk. On the one hand, the world in which the story takes place “retains or reverts to the aesthetic hallmarks of the Victorian period” (1), as Bowser and Croxall put it, by displaying characters dressed in clothes which are clearly associated with the Victorians. Ink, Barber and Glass are seen wearing bowlers, bustles, cravats, crinolines, lace gloves, spats and topcoats. Glass even shows up in goggles. Additionally, rivets, ornate embellishments, rich woods and materials such as brass, leather and copper can also be recognised, all of which are commonly associated with steampunk. On the other hand, the characters mentioned
above are connected to “anachronistic versions of nineteenth-century technologies” (Bowser and Croxall, 1). Ink is one of the masterminds of the steam revolution and is supposed to be the author of several inventions, although the only one the player ever comes across is a steam crow, named Matthew. Furthermore, Barber is an engineer, responsible for the invention of a steam prosthetic which he himself uses, of an army of steam robots, of a steam myriapod and, more importantly, of the tremor machine which is causing several cities of the world to crumble, among other steam powered gadgets. Given that most of his creations are used for malicious purposes, Barber could be characterised as a mad scientist inventor, an element that Vandermeer included in his equation, as was previously discussed.

While the “steampunkness” of Clockwork Takes: Of Glass and Ink seems to be obvious, the link established between the video game and Victorian fiction is not that straightforward. The next section will thus attempt to show the similarities established between the video game under analysis and the fiction of invasion.

![Figure 1: Evangeline Glass accompanied by Matthew, the mechanical crow.](image_url)
Figure 2: Dr. Ambrose Ink.

Figure 3: Gerhard Barber and his steam robots.
3. Invasion Fiction

According to Ailise Bulfin, author of “‘To Arms!’: Invasion Narratives and Late-Victorian Literature” (2015), an alarmist body of popular fiction appeared in the period between 1870 and the beginning of World War I (1914-1918), during the increase of imperial rivalries. This type of fiction could be described “as a paranoid under-current to the brash and widespread confidence of jingoism in the late-Victorian period” (482), displaying concerns regarding the imperial expansion of Britain, which could lead to an invasion attempt, either by an envious European power or by a spiteful colonial subject. Invasion fiction narratives often employed a cautionary and hysterical tone, which is clearly reflected in William Le Queux’s *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894). In this distraught text, Le Queux describes the bloodthirsty invasion of England by both Russia and France. The aftermath of such a ruthless march is described in the following quotation: “The defences of London had been broken. The track of the invaders was marked by ruined homes and heaps of corpses, and London’s millions knew on this eventful night that the enemy were now actually at their doors” (282). The author adds, “[t]he people were in a mad frenzy of excitement, and the scenes everywhere were terrible. Women wept and wailed, men uttered words of blank despair, and children screamed at an unknown terror” (282). Thus, “London, the all-powerful metropolis, which had egotistically considered herself the impregnable Citadel of the World, fell to pieces and was consumed” (292).

Bulfin claims that this type of fiction appeared following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. As the author argues, “[t]he speed and decisiveness of Germany’s unexpected victory over France made a powerful impact not just on the countries involved, but on all the European imperial powers, especially Britain” (484). The modern military techniques and technologies employed by Germany thus started to pose a threat to Britain. As George Bernard Shaw stated, “[s]uddenly Germany beat France right down into the dust, by the exercise of an organised efficiency in war of which nobody up to then had any conception. There was not a State in Europe that did not say to itself: ‘Good Heavens! what would happen if she attacked us?’” (13). Also alarmed, George Tomkyns Chesney (1830-1895) wrote, within months of the conflict’s end, *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), in an attempt to warn Britain of its vulnerability if Germany decided to invade and conquer it. The work provoked a public outcry which prompted a “public campaign for military ‘preparedness’” (484), as
Bulfin put it. Additionally, the text was responsible for what Brian Stableford described in *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890–1950* (1985) as “the almost unique feat of starting off a literary tradition single-handed” (30). This tradition could be characterised as “a proto-science-fictional body of work” (Bulfin, 484) which had as its main theme the initially unfavourable but ultimately fruitful invasion of Britain by the forces of the countries which appeared to have adopted the most antagonistic attitude towards Britain at the time of the texts’ creation. Therefore, fictions produced in the 1870s focused predominantly on Germany, which was replaced by France and Russia in the 1890s and which returned to the forefront in the first years of the twentieth century. From the 1890s onwards, the fiction of invasion started to speculate about the outcome of Great power alliances and the creation of futuristic airships and submarines.

Much like invasion fiction, *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* describes the invasion and subsequent destruction of not only Britain, but also the whole world. The earthquakes that led Ink to Hochwald are the first stage of this hostile incursion and the tone employed by the scientist regarding them can clearly be qualified as hysterical. In fact, right at the beginning of the game, Ink states the following words: “Yet another unnatural earthquake. Sixth one this month. Stronger too. I need to investigate this personally. All evidence points to Hochwald Village, but I’ll have to find definite proof. I might need your help, Evangeline. Because if I’m right, we’re all in grave danger” (n.p.). The second stage of the invasion will take place after Barber finishes manufacturing his army of steam robots. During the game, Glass discovers the factory where the robots are being built and once again a distraught tone is used. As soon as the agent enters the golem factory, where numerous disassembled robots are displayed, she states “All these body parts make me uneasy” (n.p.). This type of hysteria is seen in several other moments of the game, namely at the end, when Glass enters the tremor machine and declares gloomily “I feel like I’m inside a clock... a clock of doom, that is” (n.p.). The intrusion described above, similarly to invasion fiction, is being led by a foreign German engineer. Although not much is said about Barber’s background, Gerhard, the engineer’s name, is of German origin, as is the name of the village in which the Barber’s family castle is located, which literally means high forest in English. Additionally, even though Barber speaks solely in English, he does so with a German accent. Finally, it should be stressed that the game displays futuristic versions of Victorian technologies, as was addressed above and as was often seen in invasion fiction.
As this section has attempted to show, *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* adopts many of the literary conventions of invasion fiction. The steampunk text under analysis is thus indebted to the literature of invasion. Nevertheless, video games are fundamentally different from novels, which means that the game also alters the genre previously examined. Therefore, this paper argues that invasion fiction is being remediated by *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink*, as will be asserted in the next part of the paper.

4. Remediation, Immediacy and Hypermediacy

The concept of remediation was coined by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin in their seminal study *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (2000). Throughout the text, the authors argued that media are not autonomous and are in everlasting exchange with other media. Both authors agree that “a medium is that which remediates” and “[i]t is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media” (65). Accordingly, what characterises media is their ability to adapt, remodel and transcode the aspects and attributes of other media. Bolter and Grusin both guaranteed that “[m]edia are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other, and this process is integral to media” and that “[m]edia need each other in order to function as media at all” (55). Additionally, “remediation operates in both directions: users of older media such as film and television can seek to appropriate and refashion digital graphics, just as digital graphics artists can refashion film and television” (48). Therefore, newer media refashion older media, as well as older media reshape newer media.

*Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* could be regarded as a remediation of invasion fiction. As was argued in the previous part, the game’s debt to the genre mentioned above is indisputable, given its mention of many of its themes, such as invasion, hostile foreign intruders and futuristic technologies. Nevertheless, *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* is profoundly different from invasion fiction novels, which is a direct consequence of its status as a digital fiction\(^5\) text. The divergence between invasion fiction and the game

\(^5\) In “Immersion, Digital Fiction, and the Switchboard Metaphor” (Ensslin et al., 2019), digital fiction is defined as “fiction written for and read on a computer screen, that pursues its verbal, discursive, and/or conceptual complexity through the digital medium and would lose something of its aesthetic and semiotic function if it were removed from that medium” (322).
under analysis is obvious if the narrative structure adopted by *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* and the theme of invasion are considered.

Most of, if not all, the invasion fiction novels published during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century presented a linear narrative. If *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* was structured in the same way, the player would not be able to do anything besides following the story written by the game designers, for any deviation or delay would ruin the narrative. As a result, the game under analysis resorts to branching, one of the most commonly used ways to organise video game narratives and a concept that implies the existence of multiple paths that the player can choose from within the same narrative. Given that it adopts a branching structure, *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* presents various chapters, within which the player must perform certain actions, namely solve puzzles. While all the players must go through these chapters in the exact same way in which they have been arranged by the game designers, there is a great amount of flexibility as to the order of the tasks that constitute each chapter, which offers the player a small sense of freedom.

Furthermore, while the fiction of invasion focused on the favourable invasion of Britain, the game’s goal is to impede such an incursion. Perhaps such a difference derives from the fundamental disparities that separate games from novels. In *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds* (2011), Jesper Juul mentioned that the main goal of a game must be one which the player would like to achieve in the “real” world. As Juul argued, “it is hard to imagine an *Anna Karenina* game based on Tolstoy’s novel where the goal of the player is to commit suicide by throwing his or her character under a train” (161). Therefore, players may only want to play a game if they are able to relate to the objective of that game, something that readers simply do not need to experience. Taking into consideration Juul’s thoughts, it seems much more probable that a player would prefer to stop an invasion than to play a game where an invasion was inevitable. Therefore, players are logically given the power to prevent Barber’s plans.

Furthermore, “digital fiction can be largely text-based (e.g. hypertext fiction) or utilize multi-modal forms of storytelling (e.g. narrative videogames)” (322).

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that there is an increasing number of video games that take place in post-apocalyptic worlds or that approach traumatic subjects, which does not seem to compromise their success. Among these are lucrative video games such as *The Walking Dead: Season 1* (Telltale Games, 2012), *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) or *Horizon Zero Dawn* (Guerrilla Games, 2017).
Remediation operates with two opposite modes of mediation, which Bolter and Grusin refer to as immediacy and hypermediacy. While immediacy is interpreted as the “style of visual representation whose goal is to make the viewer forget the presence of the medium (…) and believe that he is in the presence of the objects of representation” (272-73), hypermediacy depends on a “style of visual representation whose goal is to remind the viewer of the medium” (272). If immediacy refers to the invisibility of mediation, hypermediacy stresses the multiplication of the signs of mediation. Despite being clearly contradictory, immediacy and hypermediacy represent the “double logic of remediation”, in which mediation is simultaneously concealed and magnified. According to the authors, these two modes of mediation make “the twin preoccupations of contemporary media: the transparent presentation of the real and the enjoyment of the opacity of media themselves” (21).

The game under analysis works with the two modes addressed in the previous paragraph. To fulfil the insatiable fascination with immediacy, *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* attempts to immerse its players in its world. The concept of immersion in relation to digital fiction has been of rising interest since the late 1990s and the early 2000s, as the authors of “Immersion, Digital Fiction, and the Switchboard Metaphor” (Ensslin et al., 2019) pointed out. During this time, Marie-Laure Ryan published an influential work associated with the concept of immersion, namely *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (2001), later reedited and republished with the title *Narrative as Virtual Reality 2: Revisiting Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (2015). Here, Ryan argued that immersion can be described as a transportation of sorts, given that it is a form of “fictional recentering”, by which “consciousness relocates itself to another world (…) and reorganizes the entire universe of being around [it]”, which ultimately leads to a “[relocation of] consciousness itself to another world” (73; Ensslin et al., 323). Ryan additionally proposed a typology of immersion, according to which immersion can be identified as ludic, “a deep absorption in the performance of a task (…) independent of the mimetic

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7 Jan-Noël Thon has refuted Ryan’s metaphor of transportation, stating that there is no literal transportation of the reader or of the player. Instead, he ‘propose[s] to conceptualise the computer game player’s experience of psychological immersion as resulting from a shift of attention to and the construction of situation models of certain parts of the game’ (Thon, 2008, 33; Ensslin, 2019, 323).
content of the game”, or as narrative, “an engagement of the imagination in the construction and contemplation of a storyworld”8 (246). Taking into consideration Ryan’s definition and typology of immersion, it can be argued that the player of *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* is psychologically transported to the steampunk world in which the game is set and that this immersion is both of a narrative and ludic character, given that the player becomes deeply engrossed in the video game’s narrative and puzzles. However, immediacy depends on hypermediacy. While trying to immerse the player, *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* presents an interface where the player can interact with a steam bugs’ collection, inspect a journal containing important information, ask for assistance and select one of the several options of the menu. The cursor on the computer screen should also be acknowledged. So, while immediacy abolishes the act of representation, hypermediacy acknowledges the act of representation and renders it visible.

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5. Concluding Remarks

This paper set out to answer the question of whether or not *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink* could be characterised as a steampunk text which remediated invasion fiction. In order to do so, the article was divided in five different parts. Following the introduction, the second section claimed that the game mentioned above was a steampunk text which displayed a Victorian aesthetic, as well as anachronistic versions of typical nineteenth-century technologies. The third part focused on invasion fiction, striving to present it and to relate it to *Clockwork Tales: Of Glass and Ink*, while the fourth section stressed the relationship established between the aforementioned game and the concepts of remediation, immediacy and hypermediacy. Given that not many works have combined the concepts addressed above, this article hopes to have contributed to the rapidly expanding field of neo-Victorianism and to have laid the groundwork for future research into the relationship established between neo-Victorianism and steampunk and digital fiction which, in one way or another, remediates Victorian fiction or genres.

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Anyone interested in the long journey from manuscript to digital, furthermore in a globalised context, will of necessity want to look into the artistic and literary practices that have emerged with the spread of digital media. These practices have further complexified the entanglement of the arts as well as their intermedial dialogue, but they have above all made the already unstable period boundaries between Modernism and postmodernism even more questionable. They borrow from a vast array of interconnecting languages – literary and/or artistic – that cross-fertilize each other and allow the different media to converge, while re-fashioning our collective aesthetic experience along the way.

The present volume captures something of this versatility, with its insistence that every new revolution in the publication and circulation of literature opens “new pathways” that necessarily harbour a promise of renewal and inventiveness. The topographical metaphor is enlightening regarding our geographical critical imaginary. Joseph Franck’s late Modernist intuition of the ascendancy of “Spatial Form in Modern Literature” – the three-part essay was published in *The Sewanee Review* in 1945 – still remains valid. We still like to think of literature’s evolution in spatial terms. Franco Moretti’s “abstract models for Literary History,” his “graphs,” “maps” and trees,” or the reading protocols initiated by the new technologies of literary cartography may thus be seen as distant variations on the spatial turn of modernist literary aesthetics.\(^1\) In line with the “spatial turn” heralded by geographer Edward Soja in his essay *Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertion of Space*

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in Critical Social Theory, we thus witness a convergence of the Modernist emphasis on spatial form with a more general attention to the spatial dynamics of cultural practices. Digital technologies give the spatial metaphor inherited from Modernism and post-modern geography renewed purchase on our understanding of literary phenomena in our global age and maybe on aesthetic experience itself. The cartographic metaphors we use to map out literary phenomena have always been “metaphors we live and think by” to paraphrase the title of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s famous 1980 essay. As the editors of a recent volume devoted to “Literary Mapping in the Digital Age” also insist, digital media give this spatial turn yet a different inflection, as they “reflect [our] common interest both in how digital technologies create new ways of conceptualising and practicing literary map-making [and] in how such map-making in turn changes the way we use and think about digital technologies” (Cooper, Donaldson and Murrieta-Flores 3). Digital technologies of mapping thus seem to give the modernist emphasis on spatial form a new lease of life, in which spatial poetics are taken into unexpected directions and are as if reloaded for our digital and globalized age.

Yet conversely, we may be all too prompt to think that the “new pathways" opened by digital media cut across hitherto uncharted territories. The “new pathways" may in fact retroactively be charting grounds already explored by modernism and the avant-gardes. The “new" lands of digital literature, with what they suggest of untapped emotion and mind-altering experiences, may in fact yield uncannily remediated experiences, that always take us back to the injunction to “make it new"; experiences, in other words, that are both subversive and always already familiar. Such a sense of aesthetic continuation has been to a great extent overlooked, although the modernist promise of enfranchisement still underlies recent literary and artistic experimentations with digital media. Such a continuity between modernist aesthetics and contemporary literature and art working with digital media should give us pause; it should once again bring us to reflect on our “mapping” of literary and artistic change and on the periodic boundaries we erect to chart the progress of art.

The present exploration of that sense of continuity will more centrally bear on the reactivation of the political agenda of the great avant-gardes. The distinction between Modernism and the avant-garde is a crucial one if we want to ponder digital art’s relation to its own historicity. Peter Bürger in his 1974 essay, Theory of the Avant-Garde – the text was translated into
English in 1984 –, insists on the very specific function of experimentation for the avant-gardes. The avant-gardes’ rebellion against cultural hegemony implied working against the supposed autonomy of art. From Dadaism to the Futurists or the Vorticists, the sense of rebellion enlisted formal experimentation for a revolution that was meant to shake hegemonic structures to the ground. In one of the rare essays to focus on the continuity between Modernism and digital literature, Maria Engberg and Jay David Bolter also turn specifically to the puzzling legacy of the avant-garde to be found in digital art’s own emphasis on experimentation. Turning to Peter Bürger, but also to Johanna Drucker’s *Contemporary Art and Complicity* and then to Jacques Rancière’s own rearming of experimentation for a politics of change in *The Politics of Aesthetic*, Engberg and Bolter choose to highlight the way cyber-textual works aim not so much at “break[ing] established conventions” but at “experimenting in an attempt to create new conventions” (Engberg and Bolter 4). As the Constructivist experimentations testify, art was for the avant-garde artists literally at the vanguard of social and political change.\(^2\) Undoing the bond of aesthetic categories was instrumental to enfranchising the mind and such emancipation was anything but immune from history in the making, and the stridency and plastic agency of Dadaism remains to a large extent uncontested to this day.

Many of the characteristics of the avant-gardes’ forays into the aesthetic unknown are still to be found in digital literature and art. Above all, what these two moments have in common is an emphasis on the medium itself and on the materiality of the aesthetic experience. As we will see, the truth to the medium principle and the way it conditions the cognitive and hermeneutic function of art are still crucial to the poetics of electronic literature and to contemporary art engaging with the new forms of interaction offered by digital media. Contemporary practitioners of ergodic literature seem to have appropriated Marshall McLuhan’s motto “the medium is the message,” an iconic slogan that itself seems to echo with the modernists’ cult

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\(^2\) Beside Vladimir Tatlin’s *Monument to the Third International* (1919), one may mention less spectacular, although no less politically revealing works like El Lissitsky and Kazimir Malévich’s “Sketch for Curtain for the Meeting of the Committee to Combat Unemployment,” (never produced), a 1920 gouache and watercolour sketch now in the collections of the National Tretjakov Gallery, Moscow, in which abstract experimentation is perceived to be the visual and artistic extension and embodiment of political revolution.
of medium-specificity as expounded by Clement Greenberg himself, in his defense of Abstract Expressionism.

Pairing McLuhan and Greenberg might seem forced. What any passing immersion in electronic literature will reveal however is the lasting centrality of a medium-oriented poetics and the concurrent conviction that engaging with the medium, with its formal constraints as well as its formal potential – its codes in other words – entails a broader reflection on the politics of form. More specifically even, for many artists working with digital media, such self-reflexiveness is premised on a poetics of visual literacy that addresses the very modalities of visual agency, in ways that are not so distinct from the image-blasting propounded by such avant-gardists as Ezra Pound or Wyndham Lewis.

This poetics could be summed up in the following propositions:

- Both digital art and the avant-gardes aim at defamiliarizing visual experience, through a critical and often counter-intuitive treatment of the medium;
- Such defamiliarisation entails a transcension of the high and the low regimes of image-making and iconicity, as well as a repurposing of the intermediality favoured by the avant-gardes;
- Such self-reflexive take on the medium opens a radical exploration of the way we collectively make sense of such revolutions of the eye.

All these premises are subsumed under a poetics of difficulty and reader or spectator involvement that defines both the avant-garde and what Espen J. Aarseth defined as ergodic literature in his essay: Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature (the essay was published more than twenty years ago and has had a lasting influence on digital literature theory).

To the lament on the alienating or narcotic effects of digital immersion or of distraction, Aarseth opposes a poetics of electronic literature premised on a new form of medium-specificity eliciting its own literacy and a re-training of attention. Insisting on the integral involvement of the user-reader in the processing of cybertexts, Aarseth appropriates a term from physics – ergodic – from “the Greek words ergon and hodos, meaning ‘work’ and ‘path’” (a coinage particularly apposite to the present volume) to understand the specific kind of engagement and agency involved in the processing of cybertexts: “In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text.” Quite explicitly, this “nontrivial effort” is of a
physical nature, that distinguishes ergodic literature from other forms of readerly engagement: “During the cybertextual process, the user will have effectuated a semiotic sequence, and this selective movement is a work of physical construction that the various concepts of ‘reading’ do not account for” (Aarseth 1)

My contention in this chapter is that such multi-modal involvement carves out a space for a body politic, in which the involvement of the user-reader redefines the boundaries of subjectivity and thus lays the ground for a redefinition not only of reading, but of interpretation as part of a shared experience, a commonwealth of reading, that may partly have its roots in the political poetics of the avant-garde.

Repurposing intermediality

One of the defining traits of such multi-modal, polysensory poetics is the way it repurposes the intermediality of the avant-garde. Jason Nelson’s 2010 Sydney’s Siberia, a Flash interactive poem is a case in point.\textsuperscript{3} Nelson – a hypermedia poet and artist – composed this interactive poem while in arts residency in Newcastle. Inspired by his immersion in the city, it offers an interactive visual immersion in the fabric of the city:

I soaked in enough local lore and culture and hidden secrets to create a large scale digital poem. Sydney’s Siberia is an infinitely zooming, mosaic generating, entirely interactive artwork that explores Newcastle through 121 poetic image/tiles. As with most digital poems there is no accurate way to describe the experience, and instead these works demand play and exploration.\textsuperscript{4}

The poem’s visual fragments are photo-textual vignettes, all traces of Nelson’s flanerie around Newcastle, brittle shards of an elusive experience that also capture in synecdochic fashion the tangibility of urban experience.

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\textsuperscript{3} http://secrettechnology.com/sydney/ Accessed 11/07/19


that is intimately reminiscent of the experimentations of Situationism, one of the avatars of avant-gardism. But even before we delve into the labyrinthine depths of the flash poem, our gaze must accustom itself to a hybrid code, mixing a contact sheets aesthetics with framing effects and generating the fractal infinite click syntax of the visual poem.

One of the main poetic shifts engineered by hypermediality lies in the rhizomic expansion of the text; a text that branches off infinitively and yet that infinitely loops back upon itself, the clicks bringing us back to an end- lessly reconfigured mosaic of embedded screens. American novelist Robert Coover’s early defense of hypertext literature may be of help here to understand the specific logic of a poem like *Sydney’s Siberia*. In his keynote address at the 1999 Digital Arts and Culture Conference held in Atlanta, Coover stresses the way the rhizomic poetic syntax of electronic literature pluralizes poetic language in more subtle ways than intermediality might do:

> And I continue to feel that, for all the wondrous and provocative invasions of text by sound and image, all the intimate layering of them and irresistible fusions, still, the most radical and distinctive literary contribution of the computer has been the multilinear hypertextual webwork of text spaces, or, as one might say, the intimate layering and fusion of imagined spatiality and temporality. (Coover)

Coover’s argument is more complex than his embrace of ergodic narrative might suggest. His argument loops back on itself – like Nelson’s own poetic experimentation – and retroactively folds back the exploratory logic of ergodic literature on the always already heuristic intent of literature at large:

> It will be obvious by now that I am still in love with the word, still faithfully wed to text, and especially literary text. Reading such text remains, for me, the most interactive thing that we as humans do, converting these little black squiggles on white backgrounds into vast landscapes, ancient battlegrounds and distant galaxies, into events more vivid than those on the news or the streets outside with characters we know better than we know our own families and friends. That’s what writers invented: this enlargement of our imaginative powers. (Coover)
Espen Aarseth had already intuited that hypertext narrativity renegotiated the narrative logic at work in literature at large, the introduction of his essay opening on a section entitled “The Book and the Labyrinth.” Marie-Laure Ryan, in her essay *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, even goes further in her questioning of the specificity of digital literature, as she reads the experimentation of ergodic narrative as merely extending the immersive potential of all narratives but also as working against that potential, thus inducing an alienating effect threatening to dismember the reader’s imaginary:

The hypertextual network may convey an exhilarating sense of mobility, but the cost of embracing space in its globality is an alienation from its locality that prevents growing roots in any given site. [...] The body of the reader’s imaginary persona in the fictional world would have to undergo a dismembering to take all the roads at the same time and to overcome the nagging feeling of missing something along the way. (Ryan 202)

Ryan’s emphasis on the reader’s body, like Nelon’s immersive poetics are of crucial importance. They both point to the reembodiment of the reader’s visual literacy, to its physicality; and rather than pondering the mute question of the respective virtues of traditional, linear narrative and of hypertextual narrative, one should stress the uncanny return of the reader’s body in our critical understanding of the reader’s experience produced by electronic literature.

**Of ergodic bodies**

Robert Coover sees all too clearly that what is shown at work in electronic literature is a reflexion on the phenomenology of reading, its embodied quality, an embodiment that is suppressed by more traditional forms of narrative immersion and that is, on the contrary, flaunted by hypertextual narratives. In order to stress the physicality of reading, Coover turns to one of the most emblematic texts of electronic literature, Shelley Jackson’s *The Patchwork Girl* (1995). In that hypertext novel, Jackson imagines a feminine version of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, an intuition that, as Coover understands, is allegorical of the literary phenomenology entailed by hypertext literature:
The very choice of the central metaphor of *Patchwork Girl* was alone a stroke of genius: the patching together of a new body, whether of flesh or text, from linked fragments of other bodies, also of flesh, also of text, once dead, now given new life, new form, if somewhat strange and “monstrous.” [...] From the outset, this patching together of a physical body from disparate but harmonious parts was linked to a similar patching together of story materials, the body becoming text, text body, a traditional theme given its true hypertextual configuration with this multiply coded, larger-than-life patchwork girl. “You could say that all bodies are written bodies,” Jackson wrote, “all lives pieces of writing... [...] Hypertext is the banished body. Its compositional principle is desire. It gives a loudspeaker to the knee, a hearing trumpet to the elbow... Hypertext is the body languorously extending itself to its own limits, hemmed in only by its own lack of extent.” (Coover)5

The feminist repurposing of Mary Shelley’s novel lays bare the political unconscious of the source text. In a complex and paradoxical anatomical analogy, the hypertext allows us to delve into the hypotext and to re-articulate its machinic vision. It achieves a work of completion in more than one sense, *The Patchwork Girl* narrating the creation of the Creature’s female companion whom Dr Frankenstein denied his own creature and her emancipation, each of the five sections taking us down a different path of the stem story and branching into sub- or side-narratives. As has been amply shown by critics who have turned to Shelley Jackson’s cybertext novel, *Patchwork Girl* reappropriates Mary Shelley’s visionary reflection on the posthuman for a critical multi-modal exposure of the reification of the feminine body and a post-modern reflection on identity-formation. Borrowing from epistemocratic criticism and also from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, as well as from Donna J. Haraway’s cyborg theory, Arnaud Regnauld has shown to what extent the Creature is a patched-up machine-woman (Regnauld 2009 and 2010). But, as Donna J. Haraway insists in her “Cyborg Manifesto,” the hybrid machine-man holds up a mirror to our own humanity and we are accountable to him and to ourselves:

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Our bodies, ourselves; bodies are maps of power and identity. Cyborgs are no exception. [...] The machine is not an it to be animated, worshipped, and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, and aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; they do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they. (Haraway 180)

The intermediality of The Patchwork Girl and its multimodality duplicate and enact the engagement Haraway calls for. We are somehow responsible for the way we patch up the narrative. One may object that the serendipitous logic of hypermediality on the contrary deprives us of our sense of responsibility, since we need to trust to the interface and can only make do with what it delivers. But one may also argue the opposite: the lateral, rhizomic progression of our reading, its highly processual nature do in fact activate a different form of engagement with the body of the work, as much as with its narrative combinations. The intermediality is nothing new of course and The Patchwork Girl has often simply been defined as a graphic novel. One may even argue that combining intermediality and a poetics of chance was already the technique the Surrealists developed precisely with the pseudo-genre of the Cadavre exquis (The Exquisite Corpse) in order to explore the poetic and even cognitive potential of chance and serendipity. And one can only be struck by how often the figure thus produced already has something of the hybrid, uncannily modified nature of the cyborg body.6

Interactivity complexifies the poetics of chance by combining chance with what might be defined as co-authoring, as was already the case with the surrealist Exquisite Corpses. The processual montage of the narrative, its actual piecing together is placed in the hands of the reader whose immersion in this narrative of forking paths produces an agency of sorts, tentative, precarious, yet necessary for the text to take shape. B.S. Johnson – a self-avowed heir to the high Modernists – paved the way for such experimentations with reader engagement in his experimental novel The Unfortunates, published in 1969. For this “book in a box” as the novel was soon to be categorised, Johnson had invented a narrative format that also necessitated the reader to take a very active part in the co-production of the text, the novel being made

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of individually bound leaflets the reader can read in the order she chooses, only the first and last chapters being identified as such. Johnson’s aleatory structure has been read as a precursor of ergodic literature (Mitchell). And one cannot either overlook his acknowledged debt to Joyce and the linguistic collage of *Ulysses* and of *Finnegans Wake*. Literary and artistic filiation may follow winding, forking paths, and the poetics of difficulty and of active participation in the co-production of the text seems to have been granted renewed centrality with interactive ergodic literature.

As Amy J. Elias insists, categories developed to come to terms with the new interactive formats of performance or installation art may come handy here and she chooses to borrow from curator and art historian Nicolas Bourriaud’s concept of relational aesthetics to also understand the interactive authoring at work in new media art. For Bourriaud, the new interactive formats of performance and collaborative installation art bridge the gap opened by the frontality of the art object, its distance and supposed autonomy. The new strategies of art on the contrary insert the work in what he defines as “the continuum of a lived arrangement” (Bourriaud 104).

Interestingly, to explore the relational aesthetics of ergodic literature, Amy J. Elias turns not only to digital literature but also to print literature to explore the hermeneutic and cognitive system of ergodic literature: her key examples are Mark Z. Danielewski’s intermedial novel *Only Revolutions* (2006), that radically subverts the linearity of language and explores the graphic possibilities of the calligram; Elias also turns to Steve Tomasula’s new media novel *TOC* (2009), published initially on DVD and also available as an iPad app since 2014, a novel that is programmatically collaborative, as some eighteen artists worked jointly on the novel. Often described as a pastiche of Joyce, whom Danielewski acknowledges as one of the main influences on his work, *Only Revolutions* imposes on the reader a form of rhizomic, lateral reading, that will necessarily proceed in a non-linear, aleatory manner that the author cannot control. Danielewski was to push the visual experimentation further in his novel *The Familiar*, a series of five volumes, whose complex layout once again borrows from the visual economy of Apollinaire’s calligrams. The reference is however not only to Modernism: Danielewski’s experimentations look back to a more distant and maybe more foundational visual language: that of medieval codices. Meaning is articulated through visual distraction, but the visual memory of past formats and visual idioms also aims at reactivating a form of cultural continuum that expresses itself
through our physical engagement with a complex textual architecture that is both unfamiliar and uncannily familiar.

All these experiments rely on a shifting dialectics of defamiliarization and repurposing. The conventional regime of narrative is defamiliarized and its linearity broken up, fragmented, to be reassembled under the aegis of a different interactive regime in which the reader’s experience becomes more explicitly multi-modal. Different, rather than radically new: since such defamiliarisation has always been what avant-garde aesthetics has been about, with its displacement of the beautiful and its destabilisation of established aesthetic hierarchies.

However, what digital media allows in contrast with the iconic avant-gardes is the generation of a different sensorium, in which the body of the observer is integral to the technologies that interact with it and in which understanding is also an enacted co-production. Such a shift is not specific to digital literature, but characterizes a vast tract of contemporary aesthetics, many of the premises of digital literature being shared by artistic expressions resorting to digital media, from installation art to performance and dance. A specific entanglement of the body and the work is generated that determines a different form of aesthetic agency, a different form of entanglement of work and reader/spectator as artist Chris Salter has pointed out about performance, the words also fitting the sensorium of digital literature:

There are certain characteristics of performances that distinguish it from other forms of knowledge making, namely: (1) an interest in enaction or doing, (2) real-time-dynamic processes over static objects or representations, (3) engagement with the temporal moment of the present, (4) embodiment and materiality, (5) immanent experience, (6) the effect of both human and nonhuman presence, and (7) transmutation and reconstitution. (Salter xxiii)

One of the specific components this new sensorium has often hooked itself on is the letter, the stem form of linguistic combination. I would like, in the last stage of my argument, to focus on that smallest of interfaces, an interface that in fact engages the hermeneutic potential of our body in complex political ways. One example is Brian Kim Stefans’, aka Reptilian Neolettrist Graphics (RNG), *The DreamLife of Letters* (2001). The poem is a response to another poem by poet and critic Rachel Blau DuPlessis that had been
circulated as part of a litserver roundtable. Stefans rearranged DuPlessis’ words in a lettrist manner and then organized them into a silent kinetic Flash poem. Reminiscent of various trends of experimental poetry, from the lettrist poems of Jackson Mac Low to the holopoetry of Eduardo Kac and to kinetic art, The Dreamlife of Letters enlists the digital moving image to a phenomenology of the poetic experience that intensifies our visual relation to the letter, its graphic mutations and endless morphing. In all these experiments, our memory of the stratified language of forms is embodied in our visual engagement with visual idioms that engineer meaning as both textual and visual, both of the present and of the past, a past present in the intertextual traces left by experimental poetry.

The last work the present analysis will turn to shifts the point of view further and complexifies the dialectics of experimentation and reenactment further. Grounding aesthetic experience in an act of collective remembering, it reflects on the fashioning of a digital commonwealth that is accountable both to the past and to the present. Magna Carta (an Embroidery), by Cornelia Parker was commissioned by the Ruskin School of Art at the University of Oxford and the British Library for the 800th commemoration of what is considered to be the founding document of England’s unwritten constitution. It consists of a 13 meter long embroidery of the Wikipedia entry for Magna Carta, as it appeared in English Wikipedia on June 15th 2014.

The work is a collective one in more than one way: as the reproduction of one of the pages of the most emblematic collaborative websites / platforms of the web, it connects directly to our contemporary sense of the collective, of the possibilities offered by globalized digital media. Embroidered by more than 200 individuals who will, for most of them, remain anonymous, it offers an enacted projection of the collaborative work of the platform. Anonymity takes on an added meaning here as the “main bulk of the text of the Wikipedia page was embroidered in various prisons by inmates under the supervision of Fine Cell Work, a social enterprise that trains prisoners in paid, skilled, creative needlework.” The illustrations and emblems were embroidered by members of the Embroiderers’ Guild, embroiderers from the Royal School of Needlework and the embroidery company Hand & Lock. Some emblematic
words were painstakingly embroidered by people who had all been, in one way or another, concerned with social liberty issues: Baroness Doreen Lawrence, the mother of Stephen Lawrence, the youth who was the victim of a racist murder in 1993 chose to embroider the words “justice,” “denial” and “delay,” in reference to the denial of justice the case became emblematic for. Edward Snowden picked the word “liberty” and Eliza Manningham-Buller, the former head of MI5 the word “freedom”; Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales for his part chose the word “user’s manual.”

Magna Carta (an Embroidery) finds its roots in a long history of collective narratives fashioning Britain’s imagined community: from The Bayeux Tapestry to the complex and shifting narrative of the UK’s parliamentary monarchy. Bringing together digital media and the ancient tradition of embellished texts, it is a projection of the layered fabric of Britain’s collective identity; but whose identity one might ask? The identity produced by the great narrative of modernity but also that of the multitude that has contributed to the making of Britain’s collective body.

The work cannot be grasped at one glance. One has to peruse it, to become engaged with its detail, its letters in order to fathom its letter, as well as its spirit. Reembodied, slowly rematerialized, the embroidery gives the web gravitas but also makes more tangible how, everyday, it fashions our body politic; and that consciousness is brought home through a collective act of embodiment, of physical engagement with a text that is both a historical trace and a collaborative work of the present.

Parker’s collaborative work is an extreme instance of how contemporary artists revisit and reinvent our body politic for our digital age. Yet, what Magna Carta also makes tangible is the way digital media fashion a sense of historicity that is anything but amnesiac, but in fact reinvents our cultural bond with the past, weaves it together with our sense of a shifting present. Cultural globalisation makes that sense of historicity further entangled in ways that our analysis cannot begin to broach. Yet, the poetry and art inspired by digital media also tell us of the lasting legacy of avant-garde experimentation, of the urgency for art to still act as a praxis, as an intelligent and embodied practice, impermanent and trans-historical.
Works Cited
