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The Elphinstone Review is the University of Aberdeen's student-led academic journal. Our aim is to publish the very best work produced by undergraduate students at the University, meanwhile providing students with invaluable experience of editing and writing for an academic journal.

Founded in 2015, The Elphinstone Review started as an Arts and Social Sciences journal. Since then, however, we have expanded our scope and are interested in receiving submissions from all subject areas. As a result, the editorial board each year ideally consists of students from all schools and all levels of study.

We hope you will enjoy this year's volume of The Elphinstone Review. Our hope is that you will find yourself inspired by its content and appreciate the outstanding work produced at The University of Aberdeen.

# The Elphinstone Review

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# The Elphinstone Review | Volume 8: May 2022

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# Editorial

*Erin Potter, Johanna Alt, and Natalia Roleder*

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We are honoured to present to you the eighth volume of The Elphinstone Review which showcases the distinct disciplines and interests that the University of Aberdeen's undergraduate student body has to offer. This year's volume consists of articles representing the many different departments at the university, including English Literature, History, Law, Marine Biology, Philosophy, International Relations and Theology. In compiling all these varying topics into one student-led disciplinary journal, it represents excellence and a curiosity for knowledge amongst our authors, editors, and our readers. Despite the challenges that Covid-19 has had us face during the publication of this volume, the nine articles we present to you helped this journal grow further and offer unique points of discussion we hope you enjoy.

While the reviewing and editing process is not an easy one, it was made possible by the hard-work and dedication shown within our editorial team, and it made the process that much more fulfilling. We would like to extend our gratitude to Christopher Knight from the school of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture for his continued admin support and kind guidance. Furthermore, we would like to thank Mariana Consoni Rubio, a former Head Editor of this journal for many years, for supporting us and offering advice when we needed it. We would also like to thank the Development Trust Student Fund for their financial support that made the printing of this volume possible. Finally, we are most thankful to our team of editors and authors, who worked together to make the articles in this journal reach their polished and best condition.

To our readers, we sincerely hope you find inspiration and encouragement when reading Volume VIII of our journal and enjoy your experience with it as much as we enjoyed having the opportunity to work with the authors in the creation of it.

## ***The Elphinstone Review***

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*The opinions expressed in the articles presented hereafter do not necessarily reflect the views of the institution, the editorial board, or the contributors. They should be viewed as exercises of academic criticism intended to spark intellectual debate.*

# **From the Common Security and Defence Policy to a Common European Armed Forces? – Exploring the Conditions for Founding a Common EU Army.**

Enni Leponiemi<sup>1</sup>

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*The propositions and oppositions of creating a common European security authority exist in non-intersecting circles in a Venn diagram. The propositions of creating a common EU army have persisted for years but the convergence of military strategies has been relatively slow, due to the sensitive nature of security and defence policies. Currently, the European Union defence policy remains in the hands of European governments and the EU member states work collectively under the intergovernmental Common Security and Defence Policy. This paper assesses whether the foundation of the common European Union army is required for the European defence cooperation to respond to the numerous security threats the EU is facing. By exploring the scopes, limitations, and theoretical approaches of the current security frameworks, this paper shows that it is still quite ambiguous what a common European army would mean and there is no clear blueprint of how a common army could be created. This paper also notes that considering the reluctance of the EU member states towards transferring power to a supranational institution on security policies, the intergovernmental military alliance NATO remains the key security actor in Europe and forming a European military union remains only as a vision.*

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## Introduction

The idea of creating a European army is by no means new, however the EU faces an increasingly aggressive Russia, which broke the European security order in 2014 by illegally annexing Crimea (Meyer, 2005; Bergmann & Müller, 2021). The conflict expanded significantly when Russia started a large-scale military build-up near the Eastern Ukrainian border in 2021 and launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which shifted the entire European security order. Moreover, the insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly deadly conflicts in Syria and Libya, have exacerbated the 'migration crisis.', which has also caused political turmoil in Europe. (Bergmann & Müller, 2021). The instabilities have intensified the pressure to improve the EU's security policies, and propositions for founding the EU army have been brought up again by the EU leaders. For instance, the President of the European Union Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, proposed in the 2021 State of the Union speech that the EU needs a defence union, as "*there will be times where the European army is needed, and neither NATO nor the UN will be present*" (von der Leyen, 2021). Currently, EU member states work together under an intergovernmental Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) which was institutionalised in the Treaty of Lisbon and entered into force in 2009 (European Parliament, 2021). The CSDP sets the guidelines for defence cooperation in Europe but lays a notable worth and meaning to collaboration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, inside the Union, security is still perceived as a national issue. Member states are reluctant to transfer power to the EU level, fearing it would weaken national security. Therefore, this essay will argue that with the current framework for European security, a common EU army is not required for defence cooperation. although, it could benefit the EU by making security more efficient and less expensive. Firstly, this paper will explore the scopes and limitations of the current defence framework – Common Security and Defence Policy. Secondly, this paper will assess the "Europeanization" of the defence policies through the application of theoretical perspectives such as constructivism and neofunctionalism. Thirdly, it will assess popular opinion

towards European security. After the necessities needed for the possible creation of an EU army are examined, this essay will criticise the increasingly tight relationship with NATO, provide a realist critique of the Europeanization of the defence policy and assess how founding a European army would change the nature of security and defence politics in Europe.

## **The Current Frameworks of the European Union's Security Policies**

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is the European Union's current framework for cooperation and coordination in the fields of defence and crisis management. The CSDP covers a wide range of policy areas, from humanitarian and rescue operations to peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation (Tardy, 2016). In other words, this policy sets the EU's political and military structures, allowing for military and civilian missions and operations in the EU and abroad. Notably, most of the CSDP missions (so far) have been civilian in nature (Arcudi & Smith, 2013). The CSDP strategies are made in the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), composed of foreign and defence ministers from all EU member states. The institution remains intergovernmental, which means that the decisions are made in unanimity. When the CSDP remains a set of intergovernmental policies, several military units adhere to it. One of the notable military units of the European Union is the The EU Battlegroup, which reached its total operational capacity in 2007. The EU Battlegroup consists of approximately 1500 troops based on the coalition of member states (European Union External Action, 2016). The battlegroups are declared to be capable of reacting and deploying to possible conflict situations within days – although, as of 2022, these forces are still yet to be used.

Next, this paper will examine the EU's conception of being a 'normative' or a 'civilian' power. The idea of creating an EU army stems from the instabilities of the Cold War and the bipolar world where the European Union would act in a "soft balancing" role (Pollack, 2012). This is still seen to this day. Smith argues that the EU is pursuing a more liberal

approach to global strategic action and implementing “soft power” rather than the more military-focused strategy (Smith, 2011; Hyde-Price, 2006). Therefore, the EU represents itself as mainly a civilian power to "devoid of the need for armed force" and not as a security actor (Sjursen, 2006). However, defence cooperation is needed to manage crises and maintain peace in Europe, thus, the EU is still actively involved in strategic military planning, taking place around the critical security challenges, by an ongoing normative convergence between national strategic cultures (Meyer, 2005; Smith, 2011). In the long run, one of the European defence goals seems to be creating an increasingly autonomous European defence entity which is always ready for deployment if needed. One could argue that these EU preparations and further developing EU strategies can be interpreted to be gradually moving ahead towards the common European army.

The theoretical approaches that support this development are constructivism – from a constructivist perspective, national military strategic cultures which derive from formative historical experiences are the central determinants of states' defence policies. Therefore, the constructivists argue that the "Europeanization" of the security policies and creation of a "European strategic culture" is due to the changing social and political norms. However, the neofunctionalists argue that deepening the integration on defence matters is not likely to happen until there is a crisis or a threat significant enough that the member states realise that the only way to respond to it is to form a European defence union. Illustrating this by applying Jones, Kelemen and Meunier's 2006 theory of "failing forward" to explain the dynamics of European integration to the security and defence policies, failing intergovernmental approaches in crisis situations result in incomplete solutions and inefficient decision-making. In the neofunctionalist dynamics, this would lead to further crisis. And then, in turn, it would eventually lead to deeper integration (Bergmann & Müller, 2021). In the light of the European defence cooperation, responding to a crisis would lead to establishing a supranational institution which would be a gateway to escape the throughout effects of anarchy in the international order. This could

suggest that in order to respond to these security challenges efficiently, the formation of a European army could be a solution.

### **When and How Could a Common EU Army Be Created?**

Next, the conditions necessary to create an EU army are examined in more detail. The EU is not a sovereign actor in and of itself but rather serves as a vehicle for the collective interests of its member states (Hyde-Price, 2006). Therefore, in order to create an EU army, there would need to be a shift from intergovernmental decision-making to forming a supranational institution. In recent years, there has been significant progress toward building a European defence union. As of 2016, new developments and new various projects in the areas of security and defence have been proposed and launched within the Commission's and European Parliament's 2014-2019 mandates (Lazarou & Dobрева, 2019). Furthermore, in 2017, the European Commission launched the European Defence Fund (EDF), comprising 5.5 billion euros per year in order to “coordinate, supplement and amplify national investments in defence research, development of prototypes and in the acquisition of defence equipment and technology” (European Commission, 2017b). This seems reasonable, as there have been instabilities in Europe that have raised questions about whether European defence cooperation should be centralised. However, the centralisation would also mean that creating a defence union with armed forces would, arguably, indicate a shift in the EU policy from humanitarian rescue tasks and crisis management towards defending the EU territories and external borders. (Cramer & Franke, 2021). In other words, the shift of focus from maintaining peace inside the European Union to the territorial defence of the Union would have a significant and irreparable effect on the EU’s relations with other states. Therefore, forming an EU army would fundamentally change the European Union’s role as an international actor. That would enable the EU to gain more “hard power” instead of “soft power” in the global system. However, from a realist perspective, “soft power” is not enough for ensuring the security and safety of the Union and playing a powerful player in the

international arena. The realist perspective emphasises the role of individual states as significant players in the international system, which limits the capabilities of international organisations to respond to military threats (Hellman & Wolf, 1993). To illustrate, the EU's primary response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has remained economic, whereas the individual member states have sent military and arms aid to Ukraine. The Council of the European Union has stressed the importance of coordinated economic sanctions against Russia, and the Council stated "the EU and its member states would continue to provide coordinated political, financial, material and humanitarian support" (Council of the European Union, 2022).

Keeping these changes in mind, the idea that the European Union should have a more significant role in the area of security and defence has become increasingly popular among European citizens. According to the 2017 Eurobarometer, which surveyed Europeans' attitudes towards security, 75% of the respondents favoured the common EU defence and security policy, and a majority (55%) were in favour of creating an EU army (European Commission, 2017a). In the March 2018 Eurobarometer, 68% of the respondents believed that they would like the EU to take more responsibility for defence and maintaining security (European Parliament, 2021). Likewise, French President Emmanuel Macron and the former German chancellor Angela Merkel have been firmly in favour of the EU army. To illustrate, Merkel proposed in her 2018 speech to the European Parliament that looking at the recent developments in Europe, the EU must "work on a vision of one day creating a real true European army" (Merkel, 2018). Moreover, an important thing to note is that the foundation of a European army is also on the official 2019 manifesto of the European Parliament's European People's Party (EPP), which currently has the highest proportion of seats in the European Parliament. Therefore, the positive attitudes toward common EU defence policy and the potential EU army suggest that there would be a solid mandate to build an EU army as the citizens and some state leaders support it. However, many European countries, particularly those bordering Russia in Eastern Europe, are opposed to the idea of an EU army, fearing that it would undermine NATO's role in

Europe and even lead to the withdrawal of the US military force from Europe.

Despite the described mandate for a common European defence union, it is not entirely clear what forming an EU army would mean and what kind of actions would be needed from the member states. The Treaty of Lisbon does not generate initiatives that would compromise national autonomy in military planning, and military cooperation is based on intergovernmental cooperation between member states. One could argue that although the national strategic cultures are still relatively inelastic and slow in convergence. The "intergovernmental bargaining" is inefficient as it tries to balance all the diverse opinions – it has been proven that member states respond by again agreeing to the lowest common denominator solutions (Bergmann & Müller, 2021). Arcudi and Smith argue that this happens for two reasons: EU member states still disagree on the fundamental purposes and engaging in CSDP operations, and as a result, all operations need to be bargained on a case-by-case basis (Arcudi & Smith, 2013). Therefore, security and defence policy remains predominantly a competence of the member states with different military strategies.

There are certain obstacles to European military and civilian missions, such as the lack of central European headquarters for the military and – more importantly – the lack of funding. Technically, there have been several missions where the EU battlegroup could have been needed and used; however, the CSDP has been difficult to enforce due to a lack of supranational authority, particularly in terms of military plans of action. It is also vital to note that the CSDP operates, most notably, through soft and civilian techniques. The intergovernmental nature of the policy means that the CSDP cannot breach member states' own security policies, and states can contribute whatever they want to the CSDP. For these reasons, a single member state could block a deployment. Furthermore, there is scepticism and reluctance towards deployment. This was illustrated in the missions in Mali, where the EU established missions to train the Malian Armed Forces in 2013 to restore peace and stability in the region (EUTM Mali, 2021). This

caused divides between member states as the mission was only backed up by ten member states. It could be argued that the concept of an EU army is useless unless it includes supranational supervision over the funds and troops supplied by member states. However, this is unlikely to happen as member states are keen to defend their independence and own interests.

## **The Role of NATO in the European Security**

As highlighted in the Treaty of Lisbon, NATO cooperation is significant for the European Union as they have currently 21 member countries in common. The relations between NATO and the EU were institutionalised in the early 2000s. In the 2002 NATO-EU Declaration in a European Security and Defence policy, it was assured that the EU has access to NATO's planning capabilities for the EU's own military operations. Since then, they have strengthened their cooperation during the past few years across 74 projects where the organisations have agreed to concentrate on progress, military mobility and counterterrorism (European Union, 2016). It was stated in the European Union 2016 Global Strategy that "NATO remains the primary framework for most Member States (European Union, 2016)" At the same time, the EU emphasised the complementarity of NATO and its own security mechanism CSDP, stating that the cooperation "must not influence the security and defence policy of those Members who are not members of NATO." (European Union, 2016). In other words, this means that the EU aims to intensify the cooperation with NATO but still respect different institutional frameworks and the decision-making autonomy of the member states. The discourse in the European Union's global strategy highlights that the security of Europe and North America is interconnected. Both the EU and NATO highlight the importance of tight cooperation between the two institutions – they both operate within the same values – liberal democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Nevertheless, the EU benefits from having access to NATO's military assets and capabilities.

Furthermore, the Treaty of Lisbon clearly states that national defence policy, including NATO membership or neutrality, is still relevant, which states that defence cooperation remains an intergovernmental affair. Despite current political developments, creating the EDF and talks about the "need of forming a European army", according to the EU High Representative Mogherini, the "European army" is not in the making (European Parliament, 2021). This means that there will not be a NATO duplicate. This means that, for now, it is still unlikely that a supranational defence authority that would be superior to national defence forces and the governments will be conceived. The significance of NATO and NATO's role in the European security order increased remarkably when Russia launched the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. EU member states, such as Finland and Sweden, who have stayed out of NATO due to their military nonalignment policy, are showing growing support for the countries to join NATO (Yle News, 2022). This highlights the importance of having a common security actor in Europe. Therefore, the most realistic scenario is that NATO cooperation will be deepened and widened even further. In other words, it is unlikely that a European army will be formed, and as is the thought that there will be any attempts to replace NATO with another defence organisation. Any such attempt to replace NATO will result in an institutional and political relations crisis with no way out, likely exacerbating the consequences of disparity and uneven development (Demetriou, 2016). Furthermore, competing with NATO would be inexplicable because NATO has always been led by European General Secretaries (Demetriou, 2016).

On the other hand, NATO's important position in EU defence has been questioned by the council as there have been some instabilities in EU-NATO relations. For example, former US President Donald Trump called NATO "obsolete" (Reuters, 2017) and threatened in 2016 that he would abandon NATO if its European member states would continue to fail to meet their funding obligations (BBC, 2016). Michael E. Smith (2011) argues that, unlike the EU, NATO is "not welcome as a peacemaker in many parts of the world". There have been differences in interests between NATO and the EU, and these can be seen, for example, in the actions in the Middle East – the



EU prefers political settlement by the active involvement of the international community, but Trump acted in an isolationist manner and pulled the forces from Syria in 2019 (Petrov;Schütte;& Vanhoonacker, 2020). This illustrates that even if the EU and the US have the same kind of goals – the means to achieve them are different. Having said that, NATO is only a functional partner for the EU when NATO’s and the EU’s interests align. It has been argued that the EU’s dependence on NATO has weakened the need for Europe to equip itself. Furthermore, it has been argued that the EU is bandwagoning on US power (Demetriou, 2016; Dyson, 2013). Therefore, US supremacy influences the development of security policies in Europe and thus restricts the EU members into a secondary role. The EU also agrees to this NATO supremacy rather than developing the CSDP even further (Demetriou, 2016).

All the previous arguments considered, one must also consider if the EU’s resolutely intergovernmental nature of a defence structure has fallen short of its own benchmarks and ambitions against this backdrop of apparent neo-functionalism (Posen, 2006). The neorealists critique that the material powers and the current “balance of power” limit the measure of convergence in European defence and security policies in the EU member states (Posen, 2006). As NATO remains an intergovernmental organisation, it seems easier to develop defence cooperation with NATO even further. One could argue that there are institutional constraints in the central role of member states in CSDP. According to Hyde-Price and his neorealist critique, the states are still seen as the primary international actors (Hyde-Price, 2006). Member states are reluctant to challenge the status quo and share their defence strategies and assets due to the believed negative consequences on national security and thus weakening their economic and military power. No state can know what the other states are doing; therefore, the realist perspective concludes that this is why the movement towards converging the defence strategy and sharing of assets and forces will be limited. This is demonstrated by Snyder in the “alliance security dilemma” that “when no state has any desire to attack others, none can be sure that others' intentions are peaceful, or will remain so; hence each must accumulate power for

defence” (Snyder, 1984). As a result, the member nations will primarily want to be able to protect themselves and pooling their sovereignty on defence matters would necessitate a significant effort on the part of the individual states. Therefore, one could argue that although the defence union seems to be beneficial to an extent, as it would be more efficient in deployment and costs-wise, there are still limits on how much EU member states are willing to deepen their cooperation on defence matters.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, there seem to be two core drivers for the CDSP – the first being a goal to build a distinct EU military identity, while the second is a seemingly paradoxical yet sensible mechanism for boosting the EU's civilian qualities (Sjursen, 2006; Bergmann & Müller, 2021). Moreover, the European Union has created its own foreign and security policy discourses independent from its member states to create a common European defence union (Rieker, 2006). However, due to Common Security and Defence policy's intergovernmental nature, this convergence towards the defence union is slow. Then again, this EU security discourse has simultaneously influenced the member-states own views on security. Considering the reluctance towards forming a European military union, this has, arguably, led to even deeper defence cooperation with NATO. Of course, there will always be a need to converge the defence and security policies in Europe, but that will most likely happen through NATO, as its intergovernmental nature is more suitable for the member states than giving up the right to maintain their own military strategies. As a result, while the CSDP is feasible with effective soft power mechanisms, military action for the EU is too intergovernmental to have any effect. Thus, the concept of the European army appears highly unlikely than the further development of the CSDP, which has already had an impact through other soft and civilian means.

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## Artistic Telephone; The Significance of Afrofuturism in Rivers Solomon's *The Deep*

Freya Juul Jenson<sup>1</sup>

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*The rap group clipping. describes the game of artistic Telephone that is behind the creation of Rivers Solomon's 2019 novella, The Deep. The original mythology was created by the musical duo Drexciya, who inspired clipping., whose song then inspired Solomon. This mythology explores the effect of the Atlantic slave trade, where pregnant women were thrown overboard on the way to America. They were murdered; their futures, the futures of their children, stolen. Drexciyan mythology allows us to imagine a version of the story where the children of these women survived. This investment in Black futures is integral to Afrofuturism. Drawing upon the writing of Kara Keeling, Sofia Samatar, Saidiya Hartman, and Mark Sealy, this paper uncovers the possibilities in how knowing about your own past can be helpful in creating a better future. In doing so, this paper considers the portrayal of nonlinear time, speculative fiction, how Solomon engages with history, and how the game of artistic Telephone disrupts the idea of the sole artistic genius.*

*This paper deals with heavy topics, including racism, slavery, and suicide.*

The story of Rivers Solomon's *The Deep* (2019) begins in Detroit. Here, techno-electronic music duo Drexciya, consisting of Gerald Donald and

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James Stinson, created the original mythology. Their music inspired the rap group, clipping., whose song ‘The Deep’ inspired Solomon to write their novella of the same name. In the afterword to *The Deep* (Solomon’s version), clipping. describes this process as a game of artistic Telephone. Each time the story is told, it has changed, allowing for the world to be expanded upon. Each element of the story – Drexciya’s music, clipping.’s ‘The Deep’, Solomon’s novella – can be said to be part of Afrofuturism.<sup>2</sup> Kara Keeling describes Afrofuturism in her 2019 book, *Queer Times, Black Futures*:

Afrofuturism invests in Black futures, which are characterized by a type of wealth that cannot be measured by a predictable yardstick, wrenched open in utterly unpredictable queer times that refuse foreclosing on queer futures. (p. xiii).

Keeling hints at something that is rich and nonlinear. Other critics, such as Sofia Samatar, have argued that Afrofuturism is inherently American (Samatar, 2017, p.175). The ‘wealth’ that Keeling refers to can therefore be understood as the history shared by Black American people. It is this history that Afrofuturism is rooted in, and it is something that all participants of the game of artistic Telephone are concerned with. This essay will therefore investigate the significance of Afrofuturism in relation to Solomon’s *The Deep*. This will be explored through Mark Sealy’s concept of racial time, looking at how we can create something of meaning from a violent past. By looking at the use of new futures in Afrofuturism, I will explore how they are related to capitalism. Finally, I will look at how Solomon argues that one should engage with the past, and what possibilities lies in knowing about your own history.

In his 2019 book *Decolonising the Camera: Photography in Racial Time*, British curator and cultural historian Mark Sealy writes about the influence slavery has had and continues to have. Sealy describes how racial time is nonlinear: ‘In racial time, slavery does not end, it merely evolves,

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<sup>2</sup> Afrofuturism in simple terms is a cultural movement. Through the use of fantasy and science fiction, it imagines a more hopeful future for Black people.



changes shape and oppresses through different but equally violent regimes.’ (2019, p.115). Furthermore, Sealy describes how interacting with this violent past can allow for the generation of new meanings. Although his focus is on photography, specifically in the time surrounding World War II in the chapter describing racial time, there are ideas which can be useful in critical literary analysis. Sealy is concerned with the effects of the Atlantic slave trade. This is also the case of Drexciya’s original mythology, which *The Deep* is based upon. This mythology reimagines the story of pregnant women who were thrown overboard the ships on the way to America. These women were murdered. However, Drexciya imagines a story where they escape slavery instead. This is significant, because, as pointed out by Saidiya Hartman, the future of unborn children was predetermined under slavery: ‘The future of the enslaved was a form of speculative value for slaveholders. Even the unborn were conscripted and condemned to slavery.’ (2016, p.160). These unborn children were considered property of the slave masters, robbing Black people from any other future. Drexciya’s mythology, which Solomon’s novella is built upon, challenges this. To use Sealy’s terminology, racial time means that Black people in the US still experience the aftermath of slavery. Whilst the Drexciyan myth teaches us about a violent past, it also allows for new meanings to be created. After all, as explained by clipping. in the afterword of *The Deep*, Drexciya’s music was meant to be listened to and experienced in a community – at raves, parties, and concerts (2019). It is something very physical, and it is something that brings people together.

Knowing that the Drexciyan myth interacts with a violent past through speculative fiction, one cannot help but wonder how this is related to our present. As Keeling highlights, part of Afrofuturism’s use is as escapism. Due to the systematic oppression and racism experienced in daily life, Afrofuturism (and fiction in general) can offer an escape from reality, a breathing space. This space can also be used to imagine and unlock new futures, which may seem impossible in our own existence (Keeling, 2019a). There are traces of this in Solomon’s novella. Part of the story is told by Zoti, the first historian. For a long time, they live alone, the sole zoti aleyu who is left. When they take in zoti aleyu pups, Zoti strives to create a better world

for them, a big and strong society full of their kin. The futures Zoti dreams of are reflected in the names they give the pups:

Anutza, Ketya, Omwela, Erzi, Udu, and Tulo. Their names were words from the language the surface dweller taught us, and meant together, many in one, never alone, family, connected, and kinship. We are not ashamed that we put every hope and dream for them into what we call them. (Solomon, 2019, p.53).

The importance of names is noteworthy, since the names of Black people have been and continue to be Americanised. Just as Afrofuturism works as a tool for people to imagine new futures, Zoti imagines a future for their own kind within the text. This is further empathised not long after: ‘There could be zoti aleyu who know who their parents are, whose past is not a question mark.’ (Solomon, 2019, p.54). Once again, there are parallels to the Atlantic slave trade, where families were torn apart and taken from their homeland.

There are further links to be made between Afrofuturism, *The Deep* and our current world. Keeling uses Karl Marx’s idea of “poetry from the future” to discuss how Afrofuturism is anti-capitalist (2019b, p.81). This poetry from the future can be understood as speculative fiction. It is not only disruptive in its fragmented form and narrative, but also it ‘interrupts the habitual formation of bodies, and it serves as an index of a time to come’ (Keeling, 2019b, p.83). Marx’s idea of poetry therefore has a role similar to the one inhabited by Afrofuturism. By imagining new futures, one can inspire societal change. After all, if we can imagine a better world, why should we not be able to create it as well? However, Keeling is careful in the practical use of Afrofuturism, stating that ‘It does not provide a blueprint; it is prophecy undergirded with belief and tenacity.’ (2019b, p.84). Whilst Afrofuturist media can give people hope for a better future, it does not lay out a plan for how to achieve it.

Furthermore, the collaborative nature of *The Deep* disrupts the myth of the sole artistic genius. This erosion of the sole genius harms capitalism, since the concept that something has value due to the master behind its creation is destabilised. This is already apparent on the cover of the novella.

Here, Rivers Solomon is listed as the author, with Daveed Diggs, William Hutson, and Jonathan Snipes. Diggs, Hutson, and Snipes make up the L.A. rap group clipping.. As mentioned earlier, clipping.'s song 'The Deep' was the inspiration for Solomon's novella. In the afterword of *The Deep* by Solomon, clipping. states how they took inspiration from Drexciya's discography. By being honest about the creative process which led to *The Deep*, consisting of work done by multiple creators working with different types of media, this process is demystified. In doing so, literature and writing is democratised. It allows for people from different backgrounds to start telling their own stories. This is especially important when speaking of representation of marginalised groups, both in terms of Black people and the LGBTQ+ community. Solomon themselves uses they/them and fae/faer/faer pronouns, and this nonheteronormative approach to gender is reflected in their novella, where wajinru people determine their own gender. Black culture is also celebrated throughout the story, such as how a comb given to Yetu unlocks new memories (Solomon, 2019, p.24).<sup>3</sup>

One of the main themes in Solomon's novella is that of history, along with how to engage with it. In her role as the historian, Yetu is tasked with keeping the wajinru History. Once a year, she passes it on to the rest of her people as part of the remembering, before taking the memories back. Speaking of memories, Yetu explains that they 'lingered unpleasantly' (Solomon, 2019, p.9). Knowing about this violent past is therefore portrayed as something painful, which even leads to Yetu's attempted suicide (Solomon, 2019, p.101). However, this history is also portrayed as something that is an important part of identity. This is not only portrayed in the importance of the yearly remembering, but also when Yetu meets Oori, a human. When the two are talking about their history, Oori talks of her relationship to her history and her homeland: 'Oori shook her head and stood up from the water. "But your whole history. Your ancestry. That's who you

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<sup>3</sup> As explained by Yetu to her amaba: 'a comb was a tool the wajinru foremothers used in their hair [...]' (Solomon, 2019, p.24). It is only by touching the comb that Yetu is able to know this. The memory is stored in the object itself.

are.” (Solomon, 2019, p.94). When Yetu explains how painful knowing the history of her people, Oori responds:

I would take any amount of pain in the world if it meant I could know all the memories of the Oshuben. I barely know any stories from my parents’ generation. I can’t remember our language. How could you leave behind something like that? Doesn’t it hurt not to know who you are? (Solomon, 2019, p.94).

This implies that the pain that follows from a violent past is worth bearing since it allows for one to know about their ancestry and identity. To return to Sealy’s arguments, this violent past should be used to generate new meanings. This is apparent in *The Deep* as well. When Yetu returns to her people, whom she had left behind, she discovers a new way of engaging with the past:

But maybe she didn’t have to. Maybe, instead of taking the History from them, she could join them as they experienced it. Just like with the Remembrance, she could guide them through the remembering so it didn’t overtake them with such violence. They could bear it all together. (Solomon, 2019, p.148).

By taking on the remembering together, Yetu is no longer burdened with them. They can support each other instead. Since the Drexciyan mythology which Solomon’s novella is based upon is concerned with the Atlantic slave trade, it is implied that the Black community should carry the knowledge of it together as well. By doing so, one can create new meanings, as shown in *The Deep*. Here, Yetu is able to pass on the knowledge of how to breathe underwater to Oori: “‘Come,” said Yetu. Oori followed. This time, the two-legs venturing into the depths had not been abandoned to the sea, but invited into it.’ (Solomon, 2019, p.155). It is only because of her knowledge of her own past that Yetu can create something entirely new. Oori embodies the Afrofuturist idea of imagining new futures.

As exemplified above, Afrofuturism is highly significant in relation to *The Deep*. This is true in the ways in which the novella interacts with the past, present and future, both within and outside of the text. By building upon the Drexciyan myth, Solomon uses the violent past of the Atlantic slave trade to tell a new story, which offers an alternate future for the unborn children whose mothers were thrown overboard. This past is both part of the in-text world and our own. The story engages with the present in its function of escapism. Afrofuturism offers a breathing space from the systematic oppression and racism Black people experience. Although *The Deep* does not offer any solutions to this, it is still useful. Speculative fiction allows for readers to imagine a better world, inspiring them to change their own. This may be in changing the capitalist system we live under. The nature of *The Deep* itself disrupts capitalism. By being honest about the collaborative process, the idea of the artistic genius is destabilised, which is harmful to capitalism. Finally, *The Deep* is concerned with the future, just like Afrofuturism is. In the novella, it is shown that we can only create something completely new if we are aware of the violent past. It therefore seems that Afrofuturism is an integral part of Solomon's novella. Without the game of artistic Telephone and constant engagement with time, Solomon's version of the story would not have existed – in fact, its strengths lie in these very things. As stated by Yetu herself: 'No past, and no future, either.' (Solomon, 2019, p.74). It is only when we are aware of our past that we can start to imagine a future.

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# The Cold War Era of Ballet – Exploring Cultural Diplomacy and Political Propaganda in Soviet Russia

Harine Raaj<sup>1</sup>

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*Ballet gained prominence in Soviet Russia during the era of the Cold War. Cadra Peterson McDaniel argues that, during this time, ballet was perceived as a diplomatic tool to develop peaceful cultural relations between countries. Meanwhile, some argue that Russia used ballet as Soviet political propaganda, to gain political influence. Ballet thus became a very strong political, diplomatic, and ideological device for Russia to portray their political strengths. This research paper will begin by looking at the history of the Cold War and how the art of ballet developed in a country which was at the peak of war. Following this, the paper is separated into three main sections: The first will look at cultural diplomacy and will explore the Russian ballet companies, who sent their most prominent dancers abroad to showcase their amazing talents and to forge alliances between different states, including the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The second will look at ballet as a form of political propaganda, and how its international outreach fortified Russia's stance as the most powerful state in the Soviet Union. Finally, the third part will put into question how successful Russia was in using ballet as a medium for diplomacy and propaganda, and it will conclude that Russia's utilisation of ballet was successful only to a certain extent.*

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## **Introduction**

Ballet's cultural and political stance dates back to the Cold War era in Soviet Russia and has been used as an "ideological and diplomatic tool" to portray Russia's power and strength (Chao, 2017). Romero (2014) states that, even beyond the nature of the existing Cold War, ballet dancers were viewed as "cultural and political ambassadors" that helped form relationships between different countries (p. 685). Ballet has also prominently served as an assertion of Russia's position as the most politically, economically, and culturally advanced state of the Soviet Union. This essay will discuss and explore the cultural diplomacy and political propaganda that surrounded ballet in Soviet Russia during the Cold War.

The Cold War played an immense role in the development and evolution of ballet in Soviet Russia. Prior to that, in the eighteenth-century Russia had adopted the concept of "classical ballet" from France and Italy (Hamm, p. 66). In 1738, the first ballet academy was established in St Petersburg, followed by the birth of the "Imperial Russian Ballet", which is now known as the Mariinsky Ballet Theatre. Between 1953 and 1968, the period of "Thaw" had a profound effect on the evolution of ballet (Hamm, p. 66); it facilitated a period of liberalisation which enabled individuals to be more expressive in a strict and oppressive society governed by a communist regime.

## **Cultural Diplomacy**

Furthermore, ballet was perceived in a 'cultural' format (Searcy), with many researchers identifying it as a method of diplomacy (Searcy). By the early 1950's, the disbanding of the European colonial empires had resulted in the formation of new countries and the creation of new Cold War allies, primarily for Russia (Searcy). Within this timeframe, the Soviet Union sought to forge alliances with different states and thus began to cultivate their 'cultural diplomacy' by sending their most prominent dancers, from the best ballet companies, abroad (Searcy). This slow, strategic movement



commenced with sending their dancers to America (Searcy). In response, America requested their embassy to sponsor a similar state tour (Fosler-Lussier, 2015). This led to a peaceful development of cultural, diplomatic relations between Soviet Russia and the United States of America.

Over time, America and Russia decided to divide their programme of cultural diplomacy into two bisects. For the US, one part was sending their dancers on international tours (Searcy). The other part was organising cultural projects, which were organised by the United States Information Agency (Ansari, 2009). Russia developed a similar strategy and presented it in a different format with the inclusion of governmental bodies. Their cultural diplomacy policies were planned by the “State Committee for Cultural Ties”, who were known to have close links with the KGB (Gould-Davies, 2003, p.193). Additionally, the cultural diplomacy tours for Russia were organised by the “State Concert Association”, otherwise known as the Goskontsert (Tomoff, 2015). It was founded in 1958 with the sole purpose of arranging tours of foreign companies within the Soviet Union. The entire ballet programme was state controlled and financed, and was performed over 3000 times throughout Soviet Russia.

Subsequently, many studies were conducted to explore the depth to which the concept of cultural diplomacy played a significant role in Soviet Russia during the Cold War. One prominent figure in this field was Cadra Peterson McDaniel (2015), who stated that the primary aim for Soviet Russia was to use cultural diplomacy as a “tool” to inspire other countries to both admire ballet and adapt it to their culture (McDaniel, p.36). At one point, McDaniel (2015) also states that the Soviet Union utilised cultural diplomacy as a “weapon” (p. xvii-xxii). As a result, this provided ballet with the capability to propagate Soviet ideas through global tours: an idea which will be explored later on.

With that said, there were existing drawbacks to the cultural diplomacy displayed in the tours of both the Russian and American ballet dancers. For the Russian ballet dancers, the tour was the perfect opportunity to travel abroad and grasp new audiences through their performances.

Gaining global attention through new audiences would mean that more people would be inclined to adopt ballet into their daily lives and enjoy the fruits of entertainment. Meanwhile, for critics, the exchange of ballet dancers was a perfect opportunity to “gauge the success or failure of the American Ballet” (Searcy). For Russia, the failure of American ballet insinuated that they had more success with ballet than their counterparts.

Moreover, on May 1956, Khrushchev and Bulganin conducted a formal visit to the UK in order to supplement peace and watch the Bolshoi company (Gonçalves, 2019). This visit had essentially reinstated the tense Soviet-British political relations that already existed, but which had eventually been disrupted by further tensions; the ongoing diplomatic negotiations between the two countries had almost come to a hasty halt after the Soviet athlete Nina Ponomareva was accused of shoplifting (Edelman, 2017). However, the success of the ballet performance did come to a halt on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, 1956, due to the outbreak of war between Hungary and Russia. At this rapid surge of conflict, Russia decided to deviate from their diplomatic mission, using ballet to focus on harbouring stability and security in the newfound war with the Hungarians. They wanted the world to know that they were not solely occupied by the ongoing war and that their mission was to showcase their best ballet dancers’ artistic talents.

## **Political Propaganda**

Besides Russia’s display of cultural diplomacy, some believed that Russia was using its prestigious ballet dancers to produce Soviet propaganda (Searcy). It is very clear that the primary aim of this “propaganda” was to show the strength and power that Russia possessed during the Cold War. That said, Russia had been making Soviet propaganda since 1917, during the period of the “Bolshevik Revolution”, when many prominent Russian aristocrats fled Russia and re-established themselves in foreign countries (N.L, 2019). It is noted that over 30,000 of the wealthiest Russian citizens migrated to the USA (Searcy). As a result, the practice and teaching of

classical ballet continued in the United States, with many Americans finding the concept very intriguing.

Likewise, Russia's dissemination of political propaganda also extended to the United Kingdom, and was likewise portrayed through ballet tours (Gonçalves, 2019, p. 171). Here, the purpose of the ballet was to disguise Soviet propaganda as artistic expression, and thus covertly mitigate power, strength, and influence, as well as spread communism and Soviet ideologies. This initiated in 1956, when dancers from the Bolshoi Ballet Company came to London for a four-week tour (McDaniel, 2015, p. xvii-xxii). With over 20 performances and 50,000 spectators, ballet became a sensation among Londoners. Furthermore, regardless of the portrayal of communist propaganda, many people gathered to buy tickets for the ballet performance (Defty, 2003): for the people, ballet was a phenomenon which they had never witnessed or experienced before. Consequently, the ballet did not serve its function as Soviet propaganda in the UK but was instead perceived as mere entertainment.

### **Successful or Not?**

Although many thought that utilising ballet as a tool for fostering diplomacy and disseminating propaganda was a success for Russia during the Cold War, there were many who criticised this choice. Irving R Levine (1959) scrutinised the Russian government for allowing the ballet tour to take place. In his book, he states:

In Russia, where food is a problem, clothing is a luxury, housing is a joke and nothing is in large supply except propaganda, the Bolshoi Ballet carries on with an opulence undreamed of by Britain's Royal Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, or the New York City Ballet. (Levine, 1959).

He points out the insincerity of the Russian government: rather than focus on funding liberal arts, their primary aim should have been to upend the

extravagances of their past and focus on combating the current crises, such as poverty and unemployment. Other notable figures include John Chapman (1959), who wrote on “The Sunday News” that, while the Bolshoi Ballet had indeed appeared to epitomise the Russian culture, it did not “represent Soviet culture to any political degree”.

Whilst ballet may have proved to be successful to a certain extent, Russia’s internal crisis had caused significant issues which affected many of their tours. There were times where Russia was too actively influential and involved through its use of political propaganda, thus failing to catch the audience’s attention, especially when trying to connect with their own people. The primary aim of the ballet cultural exchange tours was to ease the geopolitical tensions, rather than promote self-opportunism. Likewise, for many of the dancers, who either had grown up as orphans or came from a poorer background, this exchange was their chance to express themselves both artistically and freely, and yet they often felt “disillusioned” by the state censorship (N.L, 2019).

Additionally, during the rise of the Cold War in 1961, Russia also faced a further setback to its intense political influences and lack of artistic freedom, due to the defection of one of its most renowned prodigal dancers, Rudolf Nureyev (Roache, 2019). Not only is defection considered an act of treason by the standards of Russian law and the federation, but it also resulted in public embarrassment, as the Soviets lost their international reputation as the epicentre of ballet. Overall, this illustrates that the Soviets’ controversial attempts to use ballet as a diplomatic and political tool did not prove to be a success after all.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, ballet played a vital role in Russia during the Cold War. Prominent ballet companies such as the Mariinsky Ballet and the Bolshoi Ballet were well known throughout many countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom. To this day, ballet continues to flourish, with so many artists and dancers going abroad on state-funded tours to showcase their talent and culturally enriched performances through various

productions. Likewise, Russian ballet remains an important part of their culture and Russia is still internationally recognised as a dominating force in the ballet industry. That said, it can be argued that, during the Cold War, ballet only functioned as Soviet propaganda and a tool for cultural diplomacy to a certain extent; while ballet did help foster relationships with other states, and thus serve as a device to promote cultural diplomacy, it ultimately failed Russia as a tool for propagating Soviet ideologies.

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## **In the Shadow of Violence: The Act of Witnessing in *Lost Children Archive* and *Ban en Banlieue***

Katerina Gort Tarrús<sup>1</sup>

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*Utilizing Valeria Luiselli's *Lost Children Archive* and Bhanu Kapil's *Ban en Banlieue* as case studies, this paper explores the act of witnessing in the aftermath of violence. Though quite different in size, subject matter, and literary approach, both explore vulnerability as a source of connection. Furthermore, by establishing the process of witnessing as an act of care rather than control, the novels re-define what it means to tell a story. Of the two, *Lost Children Archive* is the more traditional text, which tells the story of a family as they travel to the Mexican border, where they learn more about the violence inflicted on the children that attempt to cross. Despite this, Luiselli experiments with genre and form, embracing fragmentation and the strength of repeated witnessing. Kapil's novel builds on this idea of deconstruction even further by creating a novel that physically embodies the effects of violent erasure and interruption. *Ban en Banlieue* refuses to conform to narrative practices and instead breaks down form and language to expose how past violence disrupts and underlies the present. Furthermore, it is revealed that through their refusal to reduce or appropriate the violence endured by others, these novels are successful in conveying the gravity of the events they explore. Using literature as a point of contact between past and present, self and other, the novels concur that only through the continuous and collective witnessing of the violence inflicted on vulnerable bodies can real change occur.*

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*Then she sat down next to this body and placed a hand on the place where its chest would be, and another upon on her own (Kapil, 2020, p.58).*

‘To encounter another is to come into being via the threat of violence and the possibility of care’ (Pick, 2018, p.416). Through this encounter, individuals recognize their fragility and finite existence – the reflection of the self through another individual forces an awareness of one’s vulnerability. Despite the universality of vulnerability, it is unequally distributed among individuals and collectives (Pick, 2018). This imbalance breeds separation and othering, which, in turn, can result in violence; in the face of our weakness, the human ‘capacity for evil’ is unveiled (Vickroy, 2002, p.18). However, contact between vulnerable beings also allows for the opportunity for care. It derives from the conceptualization of vulnerability as a unifying force, blurring the boundaries between individuals in favour of a collective experience. It is therefore through this encounter that the act of witnessing is born, re-defining vulnerability as an empowering act of care, which embraces mutual dependency. In their respective novels, Bhanu Kapil and Valeria Luiselli use written language to bear witness to violence both past and present, creating a new form of trauma literature focused on connection. While approaching different events and employing distinct narrative techniques, *Lost Children Archive* and *Ban en Banlieue* both exemplify the importance of acknowledging the ‘ambivalence and doubts about successful retellings’, bringing awareness to the limits of both the medium and individual perspective (Vickroy, p.11). By outlining both an understanding and the refusal to simplify, reduce and contain human suffering, Luiselli and Kapil create a new expansive act of witnessing that embraces the need for collectivity, continuity, and care. Hence, the novels are examples of a process of witnessing that embraces vulnerability instead of taking advantage of it. By doing so, they create a sense of ‘entangled empathy’ where both the author and the reader can repeatedly and gently come into contact with the vulnerable other (Goodman, 2012, p.8). The novel is therefore not constrained to its pages, it is instead an act of becoming that

in turn transforms both past and present through active witnessing; the physical and metaphorical boundaries between life and death become blurred, allowing the echoes and shadows of the past to surface and entangle themselves with the present.

Written predominantly through the lens of the mostly autobiographical female protagonist, Luiselli's *Lost Children Archive* explores how a foreign body can come into contact with a vulnerable other and witness the violence inflicted upon them. This process of witnessing someone else's trauma can easily lead to the 'appropriation of other people's suffering' (Saal, 2011, p.456). The result is to unwittingly make 'oneself a surrogate victim' by taking their voice hostage instead of opening a space for having their story to be heard (Vickroy, 2002, p.21). Luiselli avoids this by focusing on the archival nature of her protagonist's role in witnessing. Although her drive to bear witness to the atrocious acts of violence and erasure inflicted upon these children is fueled by her connection to their suffering (a Mexican immigrant herself), not having experienced the border crossing makes the narrator, who is the reflection of Luiselli's own position, an outsider looking in, attempting to bring to light the atrocities faced by those more vulnerable than herself. By keeping the narrative anchored in this exterior witness, Luiselli can employ a variety of experimental techniques to expand the process of witnessing, without forgetting the implicit distinction between self and other.

One of the first striking elements of the novel is the lack of physical presence of the lost children. Instead, they appear in varying ghostly shapes: distant figures being ushered into a plane, crosses on a map or echoes in the desert. Their haunting presence in the novel symbolizes the treatment they have had to endure. These children are not only victims of physical violence, but also systematic othering and erasure. Through the exploitation of their vulnerability, the perpetrator (the US government) has effectively stripped these children of their humanity and can therefore justify the atrocities inflicted upon them (Pick, 2018, p.414). By thus representing the marginalized children, Luiselli points out their liminal presence in both the text and the space they inhabit. From the beginning of their journey, their

lives are suspended in time and space – perpetual movement becomes their new state of being. Furthermore, when, or if, they succeed in crossing the US border, they are held in cells where they must wait for an indefinite period of time. Instead of finding refuge, they are confronted with a country that refuses to accept them. They remain outsiders, the “other”, forced to continue to exist in the margins, still waiting for proper arrival and the chance to move forward. Luiselli effectively encapsulates this suspension by explaining: ‘They wait in long lines for lunch, for a bed to sleep in, wait with their hands raised to ask if they can use the bathroom. They wait to be let out’ (Luiselli, 2021, p.48). ‘[S]ometimes they never fully arrive. They become dots on the mortality maps’, their sex, assumed cause of death, and name all that officially ‘arrives’ in the United States (Montero Román, 2021, p.177). Others disappear, not alive or dead, suspended in a state of in-between. Regardless of the outcome, the children are frozen at the border – separated, traumatized, interrupted. Luiselli embraces the liminality of the child victims in her process of witnessing, creating a space that resists their erasure – an archive of their shadows, voices, and stories; a place to belong, be seen and listened to.

As a hybrid text, *Lost Children Archive* is co-constituted by several literary genres, and, therefore, the product of a constellation of ways of witnessing trauma. In utilizing memoir and fiction, along with more experimental elements like reenactment and archival data, Luiselli creates a multifaceted representation of trauma. This central aspect is shared by the two novels, as Kapil uses diversity of form and style to create her composite narrative in *Ban en Banlieue*. Through these different approaches, the ghosts of the lost and forgotten are recognized and brought to the surface, directly or indirectly. Furthermore, by focusing on the plurality of vulnerable bodies that haunt the text, Luiselli acknowledges the mass scale of the violence endured, and consequently the impossibility of witnessing and caring for each individual who has, is or will fall victim to the trauma of crossing the US border.

As the title implies, the novel serves as an archive of stories and voices, allowing a multifaceted view of the migrant children’s reality. The

first and predominant style of narration is that of a fictionalized memoir. This perspective allows the reader to identify with the role of the narrator as an outsider looking in. The reader is first made aware of their vulnerability in the face of that of others, and simultaneously of their privileged position of safety. It is in the comfort of this traditional style of trauma narrative that the idea of ghosts is first introduced. Described as the process of documenting the echoes and absences of individuals that are no longer present in the landscape they once inhabited, it brings ‘into existence an entire layer of the world, previously ignored’ (Luiselli, 2021, p.99). Although originally used for documenting the story of a historical Apache tribe by her husband, the narrator adopts this method to bear witness to the plight of the migrant children who, like the ghosts of the past, can only be encountered in their absence. This inability for direct contact is exemplified by the two daughters of the Mexican immigrant Manuela, whose haunting presences drive the narrator to uncover their story, and consequently that of all the migrant children who have fallen victims to the same violence and erasure. Once the narrative perspective has been established, Luiselli utilizes narrative fiction to create a story within a story, which she names *Elegies for Lost Children*. Attributed to the fictional author Camposanto, the fictional book reveals more of the violence endured by the children. By incorporating this element, Luiselli provides a deeper insight into the migrant children’s journey while at the same time maintaining sufficient distance so as not to appropriate their trauma. This technique constitutes a space where the shadows and echoes that haunt the narrative gain a physical form. Furthermore, Luiselli does not exploit her power over the narrative, as she purposefully excludes elements of the story that would describe gruesome acts of violence, instead allowing the reader to fill in the voids with their imagination. Accepting Sue Grand’s work on narrative (2000), Schwab suggests that stories are created to register a truth that cannot be complete in the simple telling of facts. Schwab expands upon this, claiming that ‘stories in “the likeness of.. life” reside in a transitional space between memory and forgetting’, which provides reason to include fiction as a valid and caring method of witnessing trauma (Schwab, 2006, p.95).

In the second half, the book experiences a shift in narrator, with the stepson of the woman taking on the role of witnessing. Luiselli explores a new form of witnessing through reenactment. Boy (the narrator) and Girl (his sister) proceed to create a ‘play of shadows’, a corporeal representation and witnessing of the lost children’s journey (Schwab, 2006, p.100). Paralleling the journey of the migrant children, Boy and Girl are exposed to similar circumstances and perils, shattering the illusion of safety. By ‘decentering the account of trauma [there can be a further understanding of the other, illustrating Butler’s shared ethics of vulnerability’ (Saal, 2011, p.455). No longer a foreign event, violence and trauma become a real fear, reflecting Anat Pick’s view on shared corporeality and the implicit connection between bodies through vulnerability (Pick, 2018, p.411). However, it is important not to equate solidarity to homogeneity. Although trauma as the result of the violent exploitation of vulnerability is pervasive, one must not lose sight of the witnessed event. Nonetheless, the execution of this passage is done in such a way that the lost children continue to take precedent, above the suffering of Boy and Girl. As the children wander, they bring the ghosts of the migrant children with them. This is physically represented by the carrying and reading of the book *Elegies for Lost Children*. The book also serves as a counterpoint to Boy and Girl’s journey, allowing for the connection between them, but pointing out the clear disparities that arise when attempting to equate them. Finally, the encounter between Boy and Girl, and the lost children can be interpreted as the boy’s need for contact with the children whose stories he has become so intent on witnessing. It remains a mystery whether they ever physically come into contact. However, arguably, it would not matter. What is significant is that through the act of witnessing, the boy can connect with the lost children, and it is this moment of care between them that encapsulates the core of all human encounters; through one another they recognize their vulnerability and therefore their mutual dependency.

Finally, the presence of unmodified archival data throughout the book underlines the narrated stories. By including maps that mark the places of death of child refugees, and the migrant mortality reports, Luiselli incorporates one final act of witnessing. This time, however, there are no

embellishments to accompany the horrifying reality of the hundreds of dead and lost children. In a novel that consistently erases names, the mortality reports are filled with them: Nuria Huertas-Fernandez, Josseline Hernandez Quintero, Vicente Vilchis Puente... The reports that had served to erase and forget the acts of violence inflicted on these children are now used to witness their deaths and their lives, making them part of history. The ghosts now become overwhelming – alive in the very landscape they haunt – a part of the ground, of the dirt.

Due to its multifaceted approach to storytelling, *Lost Children Archive* unfolds as the repeated act of witnessing, exploring different narrative styles and techniques to create a narrative that can begin to uncover the reality faced by the lost and erased migrant children. ‘Each and every act of witnessing is vitalizing as it breaks through a wall of traumatic helplessness and silence’; however, they are incomplete (Goodman, 2012, p.11). The flawed and limited nature of the various narratives employed in the novel proves the need for repeated witnessing, explored further in *Ban en Banlieue*. The only way to counter the systemic erasure of these vulnerable bodies is to tell their stories over and over, collectively and in constellation with one another (Román, 2021, p.167). Only through this constant act of encountering the vulnerable other will the magnitude of violence ever be known.

*Ban en Banlieue* creates a far more complex narrative than *Lost Children Archive*, relying on the fragmentation and deconstruction of both structure and language. The converging stories and narrative voices are interconnected and hard to distinguish from one another, emphasizing commonality through dissonance. Moreover, the format of the text breaks with tradition by relying greatly on the textual elements that are outside the story itself. It is in the introductory notes, for example, where Kapil introduces the haunting past that anticipates the event of witnessing. By acknowledging the two people, Nirbhaya and Blair Peach, whose deaths haunt Kapil’s writing, she establishes a presence in absence. Victims of a culture of racial erasure and othering, they symbolize a past of violence that was never acknowledged and therefore persists.

The result of this silencing is the creation of what Abraham and Torok call the crypt, as discussed by Schwab (2006). The silenced past and the ghosts that inhabit it fester in this liminal space, hidden from the surface. ‘Unintegrated and unassimilated’, they are cast out of historical continuity (Schwab, p.103). Neither forgotten nor witnessed, the traumatic past haunts the present from within. The only way to stop the encrypted past from shattering the present is through the act of witnessing – the slow resurfacing of the erased histories, acknowledging the trauma that engendered its creation. As argued by Cheryl Lawther, ghosts, even those encrypted, are essential for understanding how long-lasting the effects of mass murder, genocide, slavery or colonial oppression are. They extend far beyond the ‘moment of atrocity to engender trauma’, whose echo remains for generations. (Lawther, 2021, p.4). This act of touch between the past and the present, the dead and the living, not only releases history from the desperate grasp of the traumatized community, but it also means that ghosts can be seen, becoming symbols of resistance. No longer buried alive or entombed in the past, they mark the violence endured by vulnerable bodies: ‘[S]ome bodies don’t disseminate; they don’t degrade. Are never washed away.’ (Kapil, 2020, p.90). It is the process of learning to live with ghosts, as Derrida argues, that makes a future of care and justice possible (Derrida, 1994).

The haunting past generates the act of writing in the shadow of violence, which ‘moves beyond a narrow representational perspective of trauma toward a notion that emphasizes the responsive, interactive, and transformational quality of writing’ (Schwab, 2006, p.112). In the case of Kapil, the writing generated from silenced histories of violence required expanding the very meaning of what it is to tell a story. *Ban en Banlieue* is a novel that revolves around the story of Ban, however, ‘[t]he actual text itself [is only] the notes around and for’ the intended story, which ‘never materializes’ (Zhang, 2015). Furthermore, it is only one third of the novel’s totality. By constructing the novel in such a way, all parts are given equal weight in witnessing the encrypted past, including introductory remarks, concluding notes, and acknowledgements. ‘So much of *Ban [en Banlieue]* is composed and collected of things that don’t count (ibid). This provides depth to the characterization of Ban, placing her in a historical context, and

interweaving her being with the ghosts of others. It also emphasises the collaborative process of witnessing the past and creating a connection between self and the other.

The text, riddled with gaps and elusions, embodies the process of assemblage. Through the constant reconfiguring of fragments, Kapil recreates the act of returning to witness, touching ‘something lightly many times’ to create a connection within itself and with others (Higgs, 2011). Ban is consequently the result of many entities combined and re-combined constantly, witnessing each other in their entanglement. Ban exists in a realm of plurality. She is the ghosts of the vulnerable bodies from the past, the racialized other, the vulnerable woman; she is Kapil, as well as the reader. Ban, hence, much like Boy and Girl in *Lost Children Archive*, serves as a point of contact, her body a shared space of vulnerability. Through her multiplicity, she resists mastery, ‘a vector of refusal’ – refusal to being erased, forgotten, and reduced to a simplified form (Kapil, 2020, p.90). Through performance art, Kapil makes this refusal visible, using her own body as the physical embodiment of the past. It is via this re-enactment that Ban is able to become externalized, witnessed: ‘The past becomes present, through rehearsal, through repetition, [Kapil] lies down in performance, as a way to attempt to resurrect grief, a collective and individual past’ (Zhang, 2015). Through her caring corporeal performance, for and of Ban, Kapil acknowledges the specificity of place. Laying where she lay, vulnerable bodies intertwined with earth and mud, Kapil signals Ban’s absence with her body. This act of witnessing through performance marks what has been forgotten. It symbolises a space where the bodies of ghosts can be seen, bridging the void between past and present.

*Ban en Banlieue* is a book about what lies in-between. In contrast to Luiselli’s novel, liminality is no longer contained in the narrative; it is representative of this suspended state of becoming. Constructed from the fragmentations of the novel she could not write, *Ban en Banlieue* shows how the process of witnessing is interrupted by the irrepresentability of the suffering endured both by the vulnerable other and the self. Ultimately, the novel left incomplete constitutes an act of care. Kapil does not force a



definitive story, an action that would effectively bury the past. If Kapil had ignored the failings of language and completed the tale of Ban, leaving ‘the reader with the sense that the story has been told, consigned to the past’, the attempted act of witnessing would be perpetuating erasure (Craps, 2013, p.64). Instead, Kapil embraces fragmentation and incompleteness, acknowledging that there can be no beginning, middle and end to the story of Ban because there is no end to the violence that has engendered her presence. Healing can begin only through the continuous and collective act of observing the racial violence endured by vulnerable bodies, living with ghosts. Thus, the novel is a record of failure, not merely to witness but to tell the story of Ban: ‘A girl lies down on the sidewalk. Tiny mirrors are balanced in the ivy next to her face. I never complete this work; instead, I keep balancing and tilting the mirrors’ (Kapil, 2020, p.77).

In different ways, *Lost Children Archive* and *Ban en Banlieue* prove the capacity for care through shared vulnerability. They exemplify the importance of the repeated and continued act of witnessing by coming into contact with the other via various perspectives. Furthermore, the archival nature of the two novels allows for the expansion of witnessing beyond that of the individual. The novels, therefore, serve as points of contact, a physical space where collective vulnerability is reflected. It is now the reader’s turn to take on the role of witness, assembling fragments of the story to create a new point of contact, another layer to the act of witnessing. Collectively approaching trauma, embracing the mutual dependency among all humans, enables us to live with ghosts. Only by recognizing the need for continued and shared witnessing can the cycle of violence be broken, and erasure resisted.

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# An Oxymoron No More: Legal Culture and Practice Amongst Tsarist Peasantry (1889-1914)

Kieran Nimmo<sup>1</sup>

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*Academic study of legal cultures often ignores the rural. For scholars of Tsarist Russia, the world's most extensive countryside, combined with a disparate population, limited law enforcement officials, and class-specific laws have ingratiated the lawless peasant within historiography. However, cultures are democratic, and most Russians were peasants. Thus, to accurately characterise Russian legal culture, the countryside must be at the centre. As cultures are heterogenous, they can be contradictory. An analysis of the dissonances and similarities between the law as enacted by the Tsarist government and as practised in peasants' courtrooms simultaneously reveals a tendency for rule-based and informal jurisprudence. Similarly, this article considers vigilante justice as an indigenous expression of judicial culture. However, in looking beyond the violence of anarchy and considering its context, Tsarist peasants are shown to be rational. This article advances that both constitute peasant legal culture and practice and that attempts to privilege one over the other are futile.*

## Introduction

Until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, contemporaries and historians agreed that Russian peasants were too backward to understand, *never mind use*, courts and law.<sup>2</sup> However, in the 1980s, several scholars argued that the brutality

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<sup>1</sup> Kieran Nimmo's research interests lie in how subaltern groups reclaim agency through law in discriminatory legal systems, ranging from the abolition of slavery to the Bolsheviks treatment in British courts. A self-described law school dropout, he found solace in the University of Aberdeen's History Department.

<sup>2</sup> For historiographical examples, see Czap, 1967; Lewin, 1985. For contemporary opinion summarisation, see Frierson, 1986

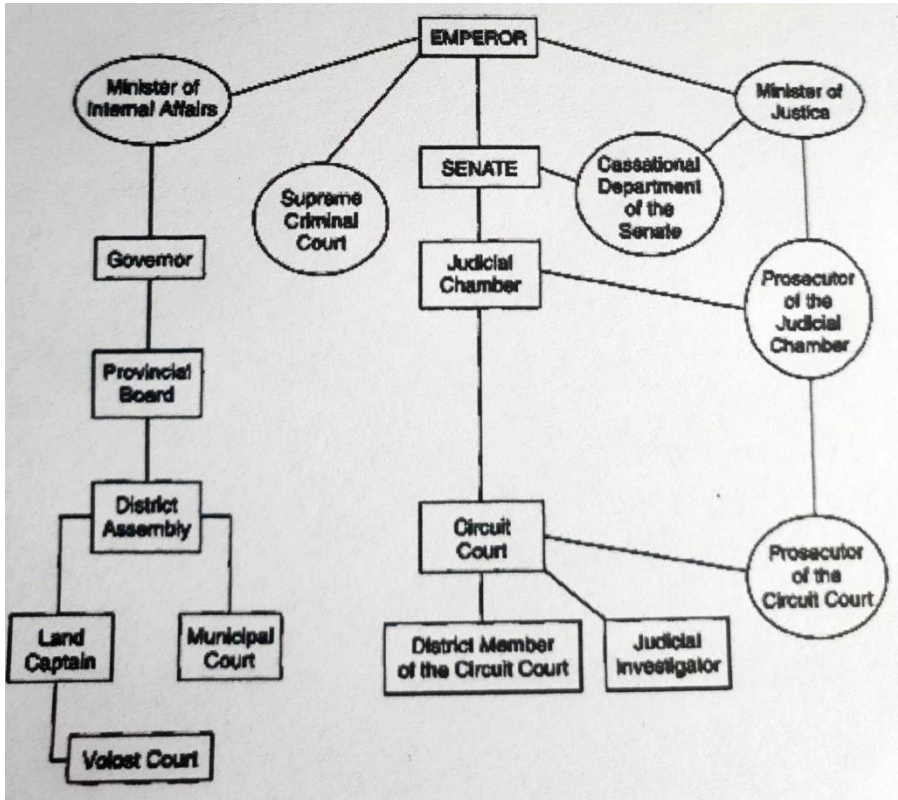
of *samosud*, a practice whereby ‘peasants took [legal] matters into their own hands’ (Frierson, 1987, p.55), obscured a complex system for punishing criminal acts (Frank, 1987). In the 1990s, access to newly opened ex-Soviet archives allowed Jane Burbank to show how peasants frequently and skilfully used courts (1995; 1999). The following considers *peasant legal practice* as all methods of dispute resolution (henceforth, MDR) used by peasants. *Peasant legal culture* will be defined as peasant legal norms elaborated through peasant legal practice. A peasant legal practice will be considered a norm if quantitative data supports its wide use or legal authority suggests a practice was widely accepted. This essay will argue that current historiography’s exclusive focus on either courts or *samosud* is flawed, concluding that peasant legal culture and practice were heterogeneous.<sup>3</sup> This piece is divided into three sections. The first examines peasant court usage and whether courts were evidence-based; the second explores how peasants adapted legal gaps to their needs; the last investigates *samosud*.

The following draws upon litigation at Volost’ courts between 1889-1914 (henceforth, the period). The Volost’ court was the lowest court in Tsarist Russia (see Figure I). Created in 1864, Volost’ courts were initially all-peasant courts, until 1889 when their jurisdiction was expanded to all rural inhabitants. However, litigants and judges were almost exclusively peasants (Burbank, 2004, p.55). Volost’ courts used laws that applied only to the peasantry. This meant peasant civil cases, cases between individuals over non-criminal matters, were decided primarily by ‘local custom’ (Popkins, 1999b, p.5). However, peasant criminal law applied statute, *The General Regulation on Peasants* (Burbank, 2004, pp.120-123). This piece uses sources primarily from Moscow and Riazan, and occasionally from Crimea, Tver, and Vladimir. All are considered within European Russia.

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<sup>3</sup> For an example overlooking courts, see Frank, 1999. For an example overlooking *samosud*, see Burbank, 2004

Figure I



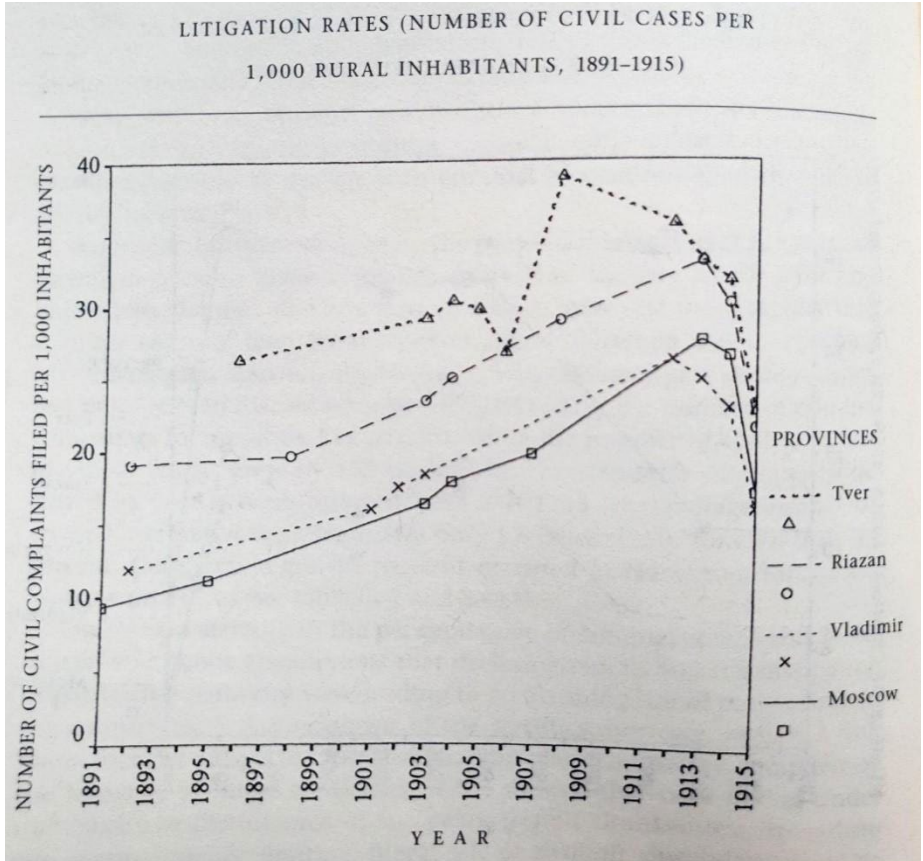
Source: Frank, *Crime*, p.47.

## Evidence-Based Jurisprudence

Peasants consensually and increasingly used courts to resolve disputes, as shown by growing caseloads. For example, in Moscow-province Volost' courts, ten civil cases per 1,000 inhabitants were heard in 1891, but by 1913, over 25 cases per 1,000 were heard (Gaudin, 2007, p.104). Similar growth occurred in Riazan, Tver and Vladimir (see Figure II), predominately due to peasants, who constituted 86% of Volost' litigants (Burbank, 2004, p.55). The above growth was consensual as only civil cases are surveyed. In

civil cases, peasant-litigants actively chose to raise disputes in court, rather than being forced to appear by prosecutors (Burbank, 2004, pp.49-53). Therefore, peasant legal practice increasingly and consensually used courts. As peasants could have resolved disputes elsewhere, but chose not to, peasant legal culture evidently trusted courts.

**Figure II**



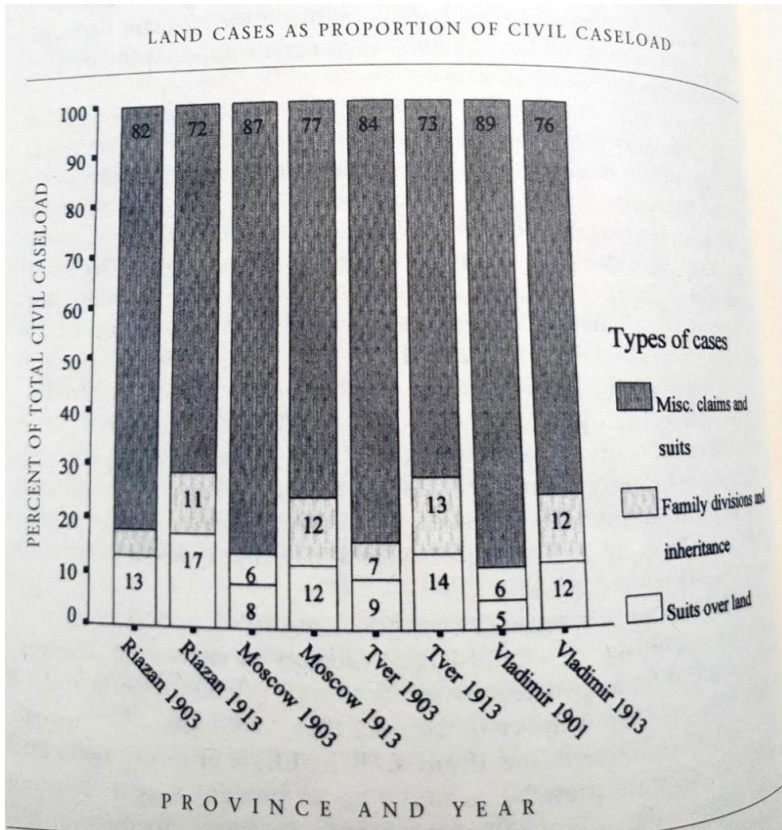
Source: Gaudin, *Ruling*, p.104.

Yet, Frierson argues that peasants distrusted courts; but this line of reasoning is superficial. They show 54.8% of civil cases in Nizhnesloboda Volost' concerned 10 rubles or less between 1887-1896 (1997, p.329). To

Frierson, the infrequency of high-value cases suggests peasants distrusted courts with valuable cases (1997, p.329). Burbank's data supports this trend between 1905-17, as a third of Moscow Volost' civil cases claimed 10 rubles or less (2006, p.37). However, money rarely changed hands in settling land disputes, as transferring ownership was more common (Popkins, 2000, pp.413-416). Thus, Frierson's reliance on monetary values overlooks cases involving land (land, family division and inheritance cases). Moreover, as cases involving land grew as a proportion of Volost' civil cases between 1901-1913 (see Figure III) and more civil cases were heard year on year, Volost' courts increasingly heard cases involving land (Gaudin, 2007, p.108). Because land was/is a valuable asset, this shows that peasants trusted courts with high-value disputes and nullifies Frierson's counterargument. ‘



**Figure III**



Source: Gaudin, *Ruling*, p.108.

Court records suggest Volost' court decisions were evidence-based. Burbank shows that an accused's plea, witnesses, and documentary evidence were cited most often in court decisions (2006, pp.38-39). As personal factors, such as bribery, were not mentioned in court records, Burbank argues that Volost' courts were evidence-based (2004, pp.188-191). For example, they suggest that as 62% of Moscow Volost' case records referred to documentary evidence, these decisions were evidence-based (2006, pp.38-39). They elaborate their quantitative findings using Aleksei Belov, who was accused of stealing 'boots, costing two rubles' but claimed he 'did not steal the boots' (Burbank, 2004, p.191). Fortunately for him, the police never

appeared at court, and he was acquitted for lack of evidence. Burbank argues this shows a defender's plea and witness evidence (Belov's) working together to create evidence-based jurisprudence (2004, p.191).

However, Burbank overlooks that all evidence is not equally convincing. For example, witnesses lacking ties to involved parties are generally most convincing. Such evidence existed in *Belov*, as the police submitted a report to court (Burbank, 2004, pp.49-53). However, judges ignored this documentary evidence, without ties to the accused, and instead acquitted on Belov's plea, the poorer quality evidence (Burbank, 2004, p.191). Further, Burbank's conclusion concerning witness evidence requires elaboration, as peasants often paid witnesses. The practice was so common that a contemporary wrote, 'it often happens that... [peasants] ...hire witnesses' (Frank, 1999, pp.213-214). Therefore, even if Volost' decisions were evidence-based, the evidence used was often not the best available, or was occasionally bought. This suggests that either Volost' judges were incompetent and failed to understand the importance of evidence, or factors such as bribery were significant.

Further, Burbank's exclusive reliance on court records is ineffective, as officials and records were biased. For example, Volost'-scribes, who authored court records, often acted as unregulated legal advisors for disputing parties, meaning they had an interest in who won (Poeranz, 1993, p.324). As scribes also advised judges on written law, legal advice which decided cases occasionally came from those with the opportunity and motive to alter case outcomes (Burbank, 2004, pp.175-178). Additionally, evidence from Crimea suggests that cases were only heard in return for bribes, meaning courts records are unlikely to represent a complete sample of cases (Kirmse, 2013, p.793). Taken together, arguing that Volost' decisions were evidence-based is overly simplified, and relying exclusively on court records is methodologically flawed. However, these counterarguments lack quantitative proof and only minimally prove that evidence-based Volost' decisions were not guaranteed. Yet, in making an effort to present records as evidence-based, court officials show evidence-based jurisprudence was a peasant expectation. Therefore, peasant legal culture valued evidence,

although peasant legal practice could not ensure decisions would be evidence-based.

Sentencing data suggests that Volost' court arbitrariness was widespread. As Volost' courts applied statutory law in criminal cases, sentences should have been consistently applied. Yet, corporal punishment sentences (henceforth CPS) varied significantly. Provincial-level variation can be explained by differing economic conditions, as CPS were primarily used for tax offences (Frank, 1997, p.404). However, economic conditions, and thus CPS, should have been more consistent at local levels. Yet, in 1890, 40% of Riazan's CPS came from just two out of twelve districts (Frank, 1997, p.408). Variation also occurred between townships. For example, in Riazhsk district (Riazan) in 1890, Pustotinsk Volost' court used CPS in 24% of cases, but neighbouring Troits-Lesunovsk, only used CPS in 8.6% of sentences (Frank, 1997, p.408). Both courts applied the same law in similar economic conditions yet differed by 279% in their usage of CPS. This suggests that sentencing depended more on the trial's location than evidence, implying Volost' courts were arbitrary and not evidence-based. As Volost' judges were exclusively peasants, this arbitrariness stemmed from peasant legal practice and culture.

Burbank argues that this arbitrariness stemmed from peasants' pragmatism, but this argument is flawed. The claim as evidenced with Kalinin, a peasant charged under Statute 43 for 'shameless...[acts]...connected with seduction of others in a public place' (Burbank, 2004, p.192). However, this was a police error, as statute 38 (illegalising unruly conduct) and 42 (illegalising public drunkenness) aligned more closely with Kalinin's actions. So, the judges changed the charge *after the case had begun*, and Kalinin was sentenced under statute 38 and 42 (Burbank, 2004, p.192). To Burbank, this shows judges' knowledge of written law and their pragmatism in fitting it to the circumstances (2004, p.192). *But what of Kalinin?* He may have prepared a defence, arguing his act was not seductive or shameless. These defences would acquit under statute 43, but not under 38 nor 42. In changing the charge, Kalinin's ability to defend himself was revoked. This suggests that peasant legal practice was

arbitrary, as the accused was not always given the right to defend themselves.

Tsarist laws were often inadequate for peasants. In examining how peasants adapted state law to their needs, an expression of legal practice and culture, free from non-peasant interference, is offered. For example, 'local custom' decided civil cases, but what constituted custom was never defined in legislation (Popkins, 2000, p.419). This created a definitional lacuna, which peasants filled with statutory law (applying only to non-peasants). For example, after Ekaterina Semenova left her matrimonial home, she sued her husband for maintenance, despite custom suggesting she forfeited that right. Yet, she won by invoking written law (Art. 106), obliging her husband 'to secure food and accommodation' (Popkins, 2000, pp.411-412). Similarly, Natal'ia Egorov won a share of her late husband's estate relying on statutory law, despite custom dictating the property be used to support her late husband's parents (Popkins, 2000, pp.413-414). Although Popkins argues this is an exposé of peasants' skilful use of statute, he does not go far enough; these cases represent a peasant solution to inadequate law (2000, p.424). As peasants plugged this gap with written law, which is more certain than custom, peasant legal culture valued consistency and respected state law.

### **Filling Legal Lacunas**

In filling legal gaps, peasants elaborated a desire for MDR to be backed by the state's authority. Protective litigation (henceforth, PL) is a legal process whereby courts confirm legal rights, despite no party disputing (Popkins, 1999a, p.60). Volost' courts had no authority to hear PL cases, yet they submitted to peasant demands and heard them (Popkins, 1999a, p.61). For example, in 1914, Stepan Ivanov Kriuchkov was confirmed as the sole heir to his father's property, despite no one disputing (Popkins, 1999a, pp.69-70). Similarly, Zaborov'e Volost' court confirmed Feodor Nikolaev as his father's sole heir to an 'immovable estate comprising [...] of private land' in 1911 (Popkins, 1999a, pp.76-77). This was despite property bought after emancipation, 'private land', being out with the Volost' courts' jurisdiction entirely. PL cases were so extensive that higher courts were forced to

retroactively approve them, suggesting PL had become ingrained in peasant legal practice (Popkins, 1999a, pp.62-63). These disputes could have gone to Village Assemblies or mediation, yet peasants chose courts. This underscores that peasant legal culture and practice understood, respected, and developed native strategies to draw upon the authority of state courts.

However, this should be caveated, as bribery also filled legal gaps. Customs' lacking definition meant it could be fabricated. For example, Irina Viktorova appealed a Volost' decision concerning her late brother's estate (Popkins, 2000, pp.422-423). Her appeal argued that her brother's widow bribed 'influential men of the village society' and prevented Irina from calling witnesses. Consequently, the Volost' court *discovered* 'a custom...[that]...a wife becomes the sole owner of all goods left by her husband' (Popkins, 2000, pp.422-423). Irina's appeal suggests that peasant legal culture opposed corruption by using appellate courts. However, the corruption originated from a Volost' court, suggesting the Volost' judges could be bribed. Further, corruption was seldom challenged, as complainers faced imprisonment for defamation if allegations remained unproven (Burbank, 1999, pp.152-156). Therefore, peasant legal practice did not actively eschew corruption, as *Viktorova* shows the Volost' courts were bribed. However, peasant legal culture is split, as Irina challenged corruption, but her brother's widow endorsed it.

The state inadequately punished arson and horse theft, creating a legal gap. Both crimes affected peasants acutely, as they resulted in the loss of agricultural materials (Worobec, 1987, p.284). One victim said he went to sleep a 'rich guy, and[...]woke] up destitute' (Frierson, 2002, p.173). However, the sentences were mild. For horse theft, they ranged from three months to one year of imprisonment (Worobec, 1987, p.284). Further, accused arsonists and horse thieves were unlikely to be punished at all. 50% of accused arsonists were acquitted between 1889-1893 (Frierson, 2002, p.163). Frank suggests that this was compounded by police understaffing, resulting in *fewer than 10%* of reported horse thefts being investigated (1999, p.130). Some constables oversaw 60,000 people 'with but four sergeants and eight guardsmen' (Galeotti, 2008, p.92). Therefore, crimes that rendered peasants *destitute* were rarely investigated, and when prosecuted, a

conviction was unlikely. This created a legal gap, as punishment was not proportional to the harm caused to peasants.

## **Samosud**

Peasants filled this gap with samosud that, whilst violent, drew authority from state institutions. For example, a 10-year-old boy and his father suspected of arson in May 1912 were questioned and released by police in Mikhailov district (Moscow). However, '[n]either returned home[...]. The boy's head had been severed' (Frank, 1999, pp.263-264). The brutality of samosud is evident. However, under Tsarist law, samosud was murder. Therefore, state institutions and officials' involvement seems anomalous (Frank, 1987, p.242). Nevertheless, in 1902, when police captured four horse thieves, a constable asked villagers, 'will they be tried or will you "teach them" yourselves?' (Frank, 1999, p.256). The crowd's answer, choosing the latter, resulted in three of the accused dying. Further, in Riazan in 1907, a Village assembly retroactively passed a 'death sentence' after villagers committed samosud. Signed by over 100 household heads, this shifted responsibility to the entire village, adopting the logic 'they can't send the whole village to Siberia' (Frank, 1999, pp.132-133). Drawing upon permissive police or retroactively seeking village assemblies' consent (created artificially by the state in 1861) demonstrates that peasants sought state institutions' approval for samosud (Popkins, 1999a, p.58). This signals that peasant legal culture only meted out samosud with the backing of state institutions and their circumjacent authority.

However, samosud was not exclusively murder. For petty crimes, it was rehabilitative and legally proportional, meaning punishments became harsher as harm caused increased. Frank argues that murder was reserved for the most detested criminals, like arsonists and horse thieves, but petty criminals were punished less harshly (Frank, 1987, p.256). For example, Kseniia Soboleva stole loom reeds in 1899. As punishment, she was paraded through her village with the reeds around her neck (Frank, 1999, p.252). This shows the proportionality of samosud, as losing loom reeds is far less severe than a horse. Therefore, it is rational that Kseniia was punished less severely

than suspected horse thieves and arsonists. Further, peasants forgave petty criminals with the aid of vodka. For example, Mikhail (surname unrecorded) bought two buckets of vodka to be forgiven for theft, but then returned home (Frank, 1987, p.247). The village elder requested another bucket. In protesting, Mikhail insulted him, which was a crime. Despite committing multiple offences, peasants forgave Mikhail after receiving yet more vodka (Frank, 1987, p.247). Because peasants forgave offenders, it underscores that their justice was rehabilitative. After being punished, petty offenders re-entered village society, albeit lubricated by vodka. Therefore, peasant legal practice and culture were proportionate and rehabilitative for low-level offenders.

Burbank argues samosud was all but non-existent in the period and does not merit consideration (2004, p.15). However, this is a mistake, as samosud constituted 1% of criminal cases before Circuit Courts throughout the period (Frank, 1987, p.240). Whilst 1% seems meagre, this must be considered against the growing court usage, peasant strategies to re-apportion blame making prosecution impossible, and the lacklustre investigatory skills of the Tsarist police. In short, the cases of samosud brought to court were certainly the minority. Further, whilst some more brutal cases of samosud reached the court, those involving public humiliation or compensation through vodka seldomly did. Therefore, samosud was likely prevalent throughout the period in European Russia and must be considered.

However, Frierson argues that samosud prevented a peasant legal culture from forming because of its brutality and illegality (1997, p.334). Firstly, it has already been established that samosud was not exclusively brutal. Further, like all English-language historiography, Frierson considers legal culture as constituted solely of positive elements. However, legal culture can be brutal, arbitrary, and corrupt, *but a legal culture, nonetheless*. Additionally, Frierson's objection misunderstands what law is. Fundamentally, law is a set of rules to maintain social control. As samosud punished crimes, it maintained social control in dissuading offenders and giving retribution to victims. Lastly, the suggestion that samosud's illegality prevented the development of legal culture ignores that peasants were

responding to a state-created legal gap. *Peasants made law where there was only anarchy*. Therefore, samosud was a legal practice and reflected peasants' legal culture.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, peasant legal practice and culture were multi-faceted throughout the period in European Russia. This defies existing historiography, which confines peasant legal practice to either the brutality of samosud or the officiousness of the courtroom, yet neither suffices for the period. Peasants increasingly relied on courts, expected evidence-based decisions, and adapted legal practice by drawing on written law and courts. On the other hand, peasant legal practice was marred by bribery, biased officials, arbitrary decision-making, and murder (through samosud). However, using samosud, peasants were forgiving, rehabilitative, proportional to petty offenders, and respected and relied on the state's authority. Thus, peasant legal practice was heterogeneous. It was not exclusively samosud nor courts, *but both*. Whilst heterogenous, legal practice trended toward state-run law and courts throughout the period, shown by increased court usage, protective litigation, and peasants' use of statutory law.

Peasant legal culture is expressed through peasant legal practice. Peasants increasingly trusted and used state law and courts, believed in the profundity of evidence, but was willing to abandon these virtues when beneficial. In using samosud, peasants were murderers and forgivers. In short, peasant legal culture was not homogenous. Scholars must abandon the framework limiting peasant legal culture to being litigious and respecting state law or being governed by violence and samosud. This dichotomy did not exist. Peasant legal culture was both.



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# Establishing Jewish Biblical Theology as Distinctive Corpora Through a Quantitative Semiotic Analysis of Peer-Reviewed Publications.

Leo Franks<sup>1</sup>

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*Jews have engaged with scripture for millennia. Recently, Judaism has undergone intensive modernisation. 'Recently' refers to the Jewish enlightenment, the Haskalah. In the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, the Haskalah oversaw Jewish thought's introduction to non-Jewish European intellectualism. Moses Mendelssohn, for instance, controversially translated the Hebrew scriptures into German. Non-Jewish theological academia has also undergone modernisation. By the mid-to-late twentieth century, it was enduring a fully-fledged crisis. Revisionist histories threw into disrepute centuries worth of Christian theological assumptions about ancient Israel. Christian academe's unabashed and continued reliance on the scriptures as exemplars of historical truth could no longer pass unfettered. In the late century, several Jewish thinkers attempted to formalise their field by these same academic, Western standards. These Jewish thinkers attempted to establish, originate and graph academic Jewish studies. In so doing, mainstream theology's grappling with positivism met the Haskalah. These Jewish theologians coined their academic iteration of Wissenschaft des Judentums (scientific Jewish studies) as Jewish Biblical Theology (JBT). Presently, only a handful of decades old, the boundaries of JBT remain dubiously defined. Its parameters are unkempt. Significant debate as to its character continues. In order to advance the notion that JBT is both a conceptual and academic reality, this article comprehensively historicises*

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*its formation. Followed by a review of theories of JBT, the article historicises through a quantitative, big-data, corpus-driven analysis of several thousand academic texts which relate to JBT. This innovative methodology provides a new basis for charting academic theological development. The article is the first of its kind in introducing such methods to theological studies.*

Jewish biblical studies is an almost mystical concept. Attempts to define the school prove utterly elusive. It is oxymoronic, for ‘biblical’ is so commonly associated with Christendom. In part, Jewish theologians study the Tanakh. The Tanakh is the Hebrew scriptures; if you will, biblical Hebrew. Jewish theologians have done so since at least 200 CE, with the ancient rabbinical commentary on the Tanakh, the Midrash. Before the commencing Rabbinical Talmudic period, in which the Midrash was consolidated and studied, Jewish theologians thought and wrote about the Tanakh. They did so in their process of writing the scriptures themselves. Jews themselves engage with scripture-based theology on a daily basis: Torah readings in a minyan, Rabbis’ sermons, yeshivas, *heder* (Hebrew school for Jewish children), synagogue attendance, etc. All this does not constitute studies, as we know it. In the secular West, study connotes academia. Scholarly authority is derived from participation in the academic establishment. In this framework, Jewish engagement with the scripture is not a formalised process. Jewish engagement is not equivalent to peer-reviewed publications in the sphere of academia, regardless of the extent of its philosophy. To legitimise the act of Jews engaging with scripture in this Western framework, several academics have sought to argue that Jewish biblical studies variably does, can and should exist academically. Like the Midrash’s Rabbis, yeshiva students, the Tanakh’s scribes, and heder pupils, these academics are Jewish theologians. Uniquely, they argue, their Jewish theology is scholarly proper. Hence, they demarcate their studies as a proper noun: Jewish Biblical Theology (JBT).

In order to advance the establishment of academic JBT, this article historicises the formation of the field. This occurs through the following stages. (i) This article deconstructs a large sample of peer-reviewed texts

which concern themselves with the Tanakh. (ii) Jewish and non-Judaic biblical theologies are then delineated from one another. (iii) The theological historiography of JBT is then established in qualitative terms. (iv) This formulation is actualised in its application to biblical studies publications. Through the utilisation of big-data corpus-driven semiotic analysis to biblical studies publications, a distinctive JBT corpora is established. Next, (v) the corpus is constructed, and the methodology outlined. Finally, (vi) this is deconstructed, and the results analysed. This innovative methodology provides a new basis for charting academic theological development.

## Theography

It is often noted that theological studies has experienced chaos and crisis towards the end of the twentieth-century (Collins, 2005). The emergence of revisionist histories and their overturning of the apparent assumptions of their Biblicist counterparts shook the academic world. As biblical theologians debated the extent to which bible-driven methodologies should be ceded to positivist and scientific *wissenschaft* (knowledge), an unruly and disorganised flock of academics sought to destabilise the status-quo further. They were concerned with the formal establishment of JBT. In his philo-historiographical essay on the typology of JBT, ZionyZevit attributes provenance for the first formal call to establish specifically Jewish biblical theology to a 1980s publication of the Israeli theologian, Moshe Goshen-Gottstein (Zevit, 2005, pp.289-312). Goshen-Gottstein abstracted contemporary Jewish theology. He argued that the canon and traditions should be studied in an academic manner.

That is not, however, to say that the concept of academic JBT was born of the 1980s. One of the original peer-reviewed journals on Jewish studies, *The Jewish Quarterly Review (JQR)*, began publication in 1888. The introduction to the first issue (1888) lamented the lack of academic Jewish theology. It determined itself the hopeful birthplace of academic JBT. Scholarship on JBT is self-consciously separated from the work of Christian theologians in that it caters for a Jewish readership:

Our definition of past Jewish literature does not stop short before the Bible, and Biblical exposition and criticism will frequently, it is hoped, find a place in our Review. [...] We owe our great thanks to the distinguished Christian scholar who has so materially increased the value of our first number; but we cannot refrain from expressing our hope that our magazine, if it live long enough, may be the means of securing to the subject and the method (both critical and religious!) of Professor Cheyne some Jewish followers and disciples. (*JQR*, 1888, p.2)

The academisation of JBT has not been a constant growing process since the turn of the nineteenth-century. Much of the published work is difficult to differentiate from rabbinical literature. It is characterised by rabbinical literary analysis. Citations are limited to the Tanakh and Midrash. For instance, no article in that first edition of *JQR* (1888) cites scholars for anything other than their commentaries on either text. This is representative of a linear progression in both academic and non-academic JBT. New work is enamoured with advancing and evolving traditional theological understandings. It is particularly concerned with the Torah.

Recent attempts to determine the theographic (historical-theological) development of twentieth-century Judaic theology has produced, at best, hazy results. Zevit (2005, p.290) surmises that the emergence of academic JBT is a process characterised by fuzziness and ill definition. When Goshen-Gottstein's loose reading of theology as any abstracting study of Jewish traditions is confined to academia, scholarly theology develops. In other words, academic theology can exist when Jewish traditions are studied in an academic context. When scholars engage with their peers through academic processes such as referencing and peer-reviews, academic theology grows more.

How this process could practically manifest itself in JBT has attracted differing propositions by academic Jewish theologians. Through distancing itself from mainstream theology, which is dominated by Christian-centric

academics' literary analyses and historicising of ancient Israel, Goshen-Gottstein's approach is typical of traditional Jewish theology. Indeed, he (1981, 1989) advocates isolating JBT from non-Judaic biblical theology. Another academic Jewish biblical theologian, Isaac Kalimi (2017, p.118), advocates JBT to refined entirely to Judaic literary analysis. Like Goshen-Gottstein, he argues that it should be distanced from mainstream academic theology. The authors of the chapters in his (2012) edited book follow suit. Laurence Edwards (2003) seemingly agrees in his conceptualisation of JBT. These proponents of Jewish theology advocate a system whereby self-reflective historical analysis is unrelated to their work in religiosity and hermeneutics.

By being so confined to assessing each other's textual analyses, these works risk leaving academia and entering into rabbinical exegesis. As Zevit (2005, p.329) puts it:

Studying what jazz musicians do is an academic discipline  
in the humanities; doing what they do is not; studying what  
theologians do is an academic discipline in the humanities;  
doing what they do is not.

As little is proposed to fill the vacuum created by such a statement, the terms 'theology' and 'JBT' are used by this essay to describe the work of those studying each other, the Tanakh and ancient Israel.

It would be the best part of a century after the *JQR*'s first issue before JBT began to consider its own linear track. Zevit's assessment of Goshen-Gottstein scrutinises what it means to be an academic of JBT. Due to confining himself to the study of Jewish academics of theology, Zevit (2005, pp.328-329) understands his work to be distinct from the traditional theological exegesis. However, for academic JBT to merely constitute the study of Jewish theologians would hamper the development of JBT. Publications would lose intertextuality with anything non-Judaic. Further, as this essay depicts, there are not enough academic Jewish biblical theologians to work with.



However, should JBT incorporate self-reflective study but not entirely constitute it, the field could flourish. The self-reflective study of academic publications is a facet of any academic discipline. In the sciences, this is the history of science; in history, historiography; in literature, literary criticism; philosophy, epistemology; and so on. For the purposes of JBT, this essay advances the term ‘theography’ as representative of the historiographies of theology. This essay partakes in a historical theographic analysis of theologoumena. This is, and is by consequence, the product of theological studies concerning Judaism. This is an adaptation of Zevit’s thesis into a self-reflective, historical mechanism of JBT.

There is, however, still a movement within JBT to bridge the history of ancient Israelite religion and biblicism. The Jewish biblical theologians Marc Zvi Brettler (1997) and Marvin Sweeney (2009, 2016) are much more sympathetic to utilising both history and literary analysis in JBT. Ehud Ben Zvi (2006), too, argues the importance of biblical texts as sources for historical ancient Israel studies, in a fashion similar to established non-Judaic theologians, such as Iain Provan (1995). Dalit Rom-Shiloni’s (2016) work also straddles rabbinical exegesis and historicising. Seemingly, it is established that JBT should either be concerned solely with hermeneutics, or be a conjunction of literary studies and histories of ancient Israel. Crucially, all the aforementioned theologians attempt to establish their theories through engaging with their contemporaries, rather than limiting themselves to the Sefer Torah, in their attempts to find a coherent and acceptable methodology. This process is one of the by-products of JBT entering into academia; they not only become academic theologians, but through the act of citation they become engaged in theography.

## **Construction and Methodology**

In order to assess the prevalence of JBT in publications that concern both, the histories of the ancient Israelite religion and theology in scriptural philology, this article applies a methodology of corpus-driven analysis. In establishing the JBT corpus, care has been taken to ensure reference to both theologies of exegesis and history. This is so that each branch of JBT is

properly incorporated. The process charts theographic development concerning Judaism and its scripture. This is, in one sense, a work of theology in and of itself. It is historical-theological literary criticism, with the replacement of the Midrash with a contemporary theological *oeuvre*. The sources analysed are comprised of academic journals' peer-reviewed biblical studies publications. This is deconstructed through quantitative semiotic analysis. A better understanding of JBT corpus is thus ventured.

This methodology follows general precedence set by Pierre Lack (2021). In building the dataset, the following constraints have been applied: (i) Databases storing past issues of journals were made use of, specifically the database Journal Storage (JSTOR). It is one of the most representative libraries of journal articles, providing access to over 2,600 academic journals. This is the first limitation of the dataset, as by course JSTOR does not have every article of every journal ever produced. The second (ii) limitation of the dataset is that the Boolean search function of JSTOR's Data For Research (DFR, <https://www.jstor.org/dfr/>) service was utilised. Not every publication of the twelve-million sources on JSTOR could be manually read and categorised for their relevance to the study of Jewish theology. Thus, a search was conducted for articles that contained relevant terms in their texts. This allowed for a consistent and simplistic method of ensuring relevance. The search was limited to works which are written in the English language and include either or both of the exact phrases 'ancient Israel' or 'biblical Israel'. In order to eliminate texts which merely mentioned these terms in passing, the texts had to also include at least one of the following exact phrases or words: 'old testament', 'bible', 'Pentateuch', 'Tanakh', 'Mikra', 'Hebrew scripture', 'Nevi'im', 'Ketuvim', or 'Prophets'.<sup>2</sup> This step allowed for the incorporation of both exegesis and historicising articles in the corpus. Third (iii), to ensure that the dataset consisted of theological works engaged with the works of other theologians, the corpus was limited

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the search function is not case sensitive. The Boolean script used for the search is as follows: (((("ancient israel" OR "biblical israel") AND (("old testament" OR "bible" OR "Pentateuch" OR "Tanakh" OR "Mikra" OR "Hebrew scripture" OR "Nevi'im" OR "Ketuvim" OR "Prophets")))) AND la:(eng OR en))

to book reviews. This restriction was imposed through the utilisation of metadata files of individual articles published online. It reduced the size of the data set from 10,839 publications to 2,955.<sup>3</sup> Fourth (iv), in order for consistency in analysis, publications of *Revue Biblique* were deleted due to their inclusion of foreign languages in the same documents as English reviews; reviews of *JQR* from before 1935 were deleted due to single documents containing multiple reviews; and, likewise, review essays of multiple works found in the *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* were deleted. This process reduced the corpus size further to 2,878 discrete academic book reviews concerning theology, ancient Israel and biblical studies. We know that, to varying degrees and for varying reasons, these reviews concern themselves with ancient Judaic scripture and the land from which that scripture emerged. None of these reviews are entirely confined to rabbinical exegesis, nor are all confined to historicising, they all have some form of context.

Aside from these methods of refinement, the created corpus received from JSTOR DFR consists of metadata and n-gram (contiguous word sequence) files for each review. It must be noted that JSTOR uses the software Apache Lucene StandardTokenizer to generate n-grams in datasets, as well as a filter of common words which would skew results.<sup>4</sup> Using the metadata in conjunction with the n-gram files allowed for the compilation of a corpus which was uploaded to the linguistic analysis software Sketch Engine (<https://www.sketchengine.eu>). When applied laterally to metadata, unigram (single word) files allow for word frequency analysis. Trigram (contiguous three-word sequences) files allow for the identification of phrases' trends. The lateral application includes, amongst others: diachronic analysis; analysis across book reviews associated with reviewers, that is, reviewed

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<sup>3</sup> For a list of the final data requested from JSTOR, see: JSTOR, *Data For Research*: <https://tinyurl.com/mr24676a>

<sup>4</sup> JSTOR's n-gram files ignore case sensitivity and filter the following words: "a", "an", "and", "are", "as", "at", "be", "but", "by", "for", "if", "in", "into", "is", "it", "no", "not", "of", "on", "or", "such", "that", "the", "their", "then", "there", "these", "they", "this", "to", "was", "will", "with". 'Data For Research: Technical Specifications', <https://www.jstor.org/df/about/technical-specifications>.

works and people reviewed; and analysis across journals. The corpus has several defining characteristics, aside from the aforementioned confinements. It consists of 237 discrete journals from 245 discrete publishers, up to 2,368 discrete reviewers and spans the years 1862-2018. It consists of 2,507,801 words and 26,428 unique trigrams which iterate more than five times across the corpus.

## Deconstruction and Results

Within academic theological biblical studies, the term ‘Jewish’ is a common one. This is relatively unsurprising. A study of both scripture and ancient Israel would seemingly concern early Judaism. The corpus finds 5,477 iterations of ‘Jewish’, at a rate of 2,066.33 occurrences per million words. To contextualise this, the term is the eighth most frequent of 15,133 discrete adjectives. The term is common amongst documents and the data does not lend itself to the argument that there is much distinguishing Jewish theology regarding ancient Israel from any other. Further to this, and perhaps more surprising in the academic context of ancient Israel, is the high rate of the use of ‘Christ.\*’<sup>5</sup> Figure One, below, depicts the diachronic frequency of ‘Jew.\*’ and ‘Christ.\*’. They have a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.94, suggesting that a variable (or variables) affects the use of ‘Jew.\*’ and ‘Christ.\*’ in an almost simultaneous fashion. The two lemmas appear adjacent to each other 326 times. ‘Christian’ is the most common word adjacent to the right of the lemma ‘Jew.\*’. Such a finding correlates with the thesis of Kalimi (2017, p.111), as well as that of the renowned non-Judaic theologian, James Barr (1999, p.255). Both claim that: ‘the handling of the Hebrew Bible by some Old Testament theologians has included considerable Christianizing’. Comparatively, the adjacent lemmas ‘Jew.\*’ and ‘theo.\*’ – such as ‘Jewish theology’ – is mentioned in a mere three per cent of all reviews. Figure Two, below, depicts the comparative diachronic progression of the two bigrams. Indeed, explicitly Christian theological publications lead

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<sup>5</sup> Sketch Engine necessitates Corpus Query Language for complex diachronic searches. “Christ.\*” treats ‘Christ’ as a lemma and searches for iterations of itself and all possible suffixes of the word, for instance ‘Christian’ and ‘Christians’.

the charge, with the flagship partisan theological journal *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* hosting three of the 110 hits. Staggeringly, *JQR* counts four iterations of the phrase. The trigram ‘Jew.\*’ ‘Bibl.\*’ ‘Theo.\*’ – Jewish biblical (or) bible theology (or) theologies – does not appear once across *JQR*’s seventy-four reviews. There are eleven iterations of this trigram across the entire corpus. With the data we have, though ‘Jewish’ is of concern to a huge proportion of book reviews, Jewish theology (in conjunction with the concept of ancient Israel) is a minute field in its own right.

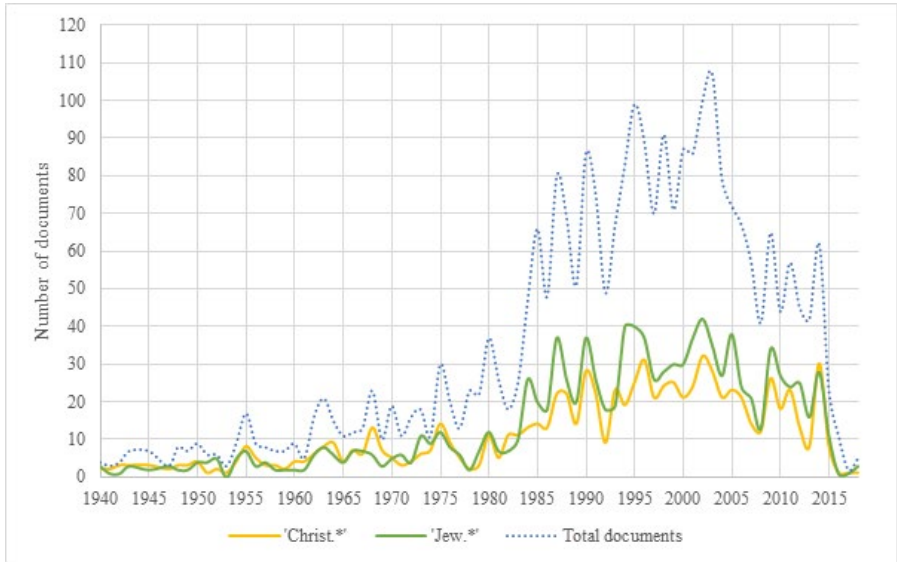


Figure One: Diachronic view of the lemmas ‘Christ.\*’ and ‘Jew.\*’, 1940-2018.

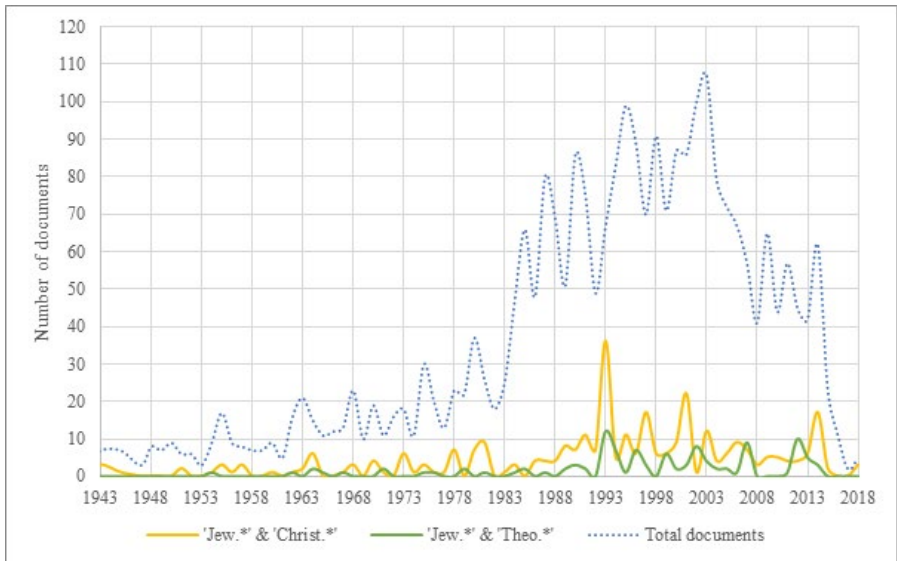


Figure Two: Diachronic view of adjacent lemmas, 1943-2018.

The theorists of the nature of JBT, outlined in the previous section, are iterated within the corpus. It is of note that these theologians began contributing to the corpus in 1977 (E. J. Revell). Of those mentioned, only Laurence Edwards has not published a book. Brettler and Sweeney both have large contributions to the corpus, with seventeen and sixteen reviews respectively. Figure Three, below, depicts this. There are 1,310 discrete surnames and 2,368 discrete full names of specified reviewers within the corpus. This analysis has not differentiated between discrete full names that refer to the same individual, such as ‘Marc ZviBrettler’ and ‘M. Z. Brettler’. It is thus found that Brettler has written 0.59% of the corpus and Sweeney 0.55%. To contextualise this, one of the most reviewed non-Judaic theological authors, William G. Dever, writes 0.45% of all reviews. The JBT academics’ contributions rise to 0.83% and 0.72% respectively, since their books first appear in the corpus, in 1987 and 1984. The average number of reviews written by discrete surnames is 2.29, or a contribution of 0.08%. This

is even in spite of common names such as ‘Smith’ being attributed a disproportionately high number of reviews. This data tells us that those who dub themselves as theologians of JBT are prominent within the mainstream theological academic, in spite of lacking methodological coherence across the school.

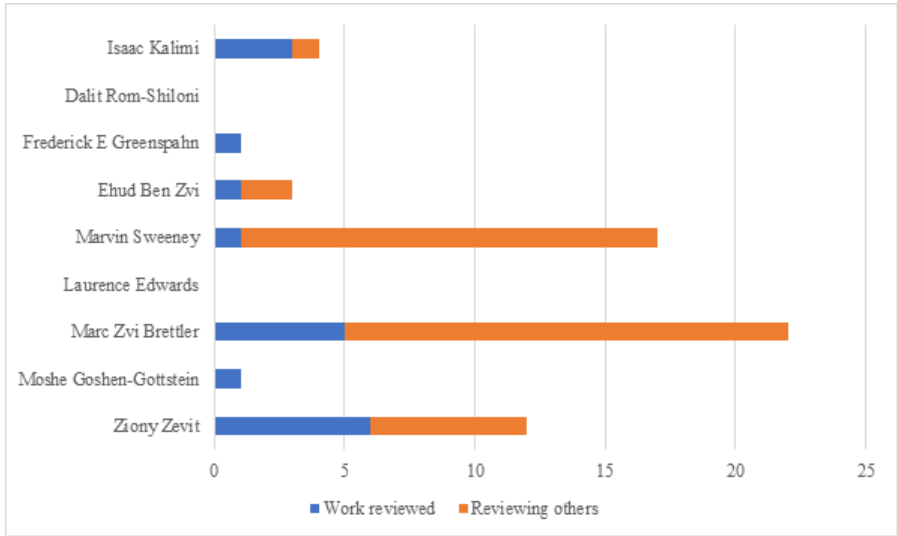


Figure Three: Self-proclaimed Jewish biblical theologians’ contributions, 1977-2018.

## Conclusion

Jewish theology of the ancient Israelite religion and the Tanakh does exist, we know that much. The fruit of this has been harvested by this essay and compiled into a corpus. This corpus has been stripped of spoilt fruit, so to speak, which would skew results. The size and remit of the corpus provides some insight as to the nature of biblical theology. Certainly, the creation of a corpus of texts applied laterally against metadata allows for a volume of new academic works to understand the state of theology. That is by no means to say that qualitative research should be replaced by some

futuristic machine of quantitative research. However, utilising big-data datasets allows for black-and-white evidence of progression within the field of theology. This essay has utilised such to chart the existence of a tiny subset of the mainstream theological establishment, JBT. The methodology applied has allowed for theory of a lack of JBT in mainstream academia to be ratified, has evidenced the so-called ‘Christianising’ of Jewish theology, and has charted the subtle but important contribution of some self-proclaimed theologians of Jewish biblicism to academic theology, from the last quarter of the twentieth-century. This essay provides a blueprint for a theographic analysis of theology, to be able to chart its development, process and facets.

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# Symbiosis in Marine Organisms: Insights into the Interconnected Life in the Ocean and the Threat of Environmental Changes

Lola Wilson<sup>1</sup>

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*As one of the most biodiverse habitats in the world, the oceans are filled with a vast array of interconnected relationships, which often promote survival and, in many cases, act as ecosystem support pillars. Anthropogenic climate change is becoming a growing issue worldwide, with demands on the oceans continuing to burgeon and hamper the true essences of these pivotal partnerships. Through exploring various examples of symbiosis in the ocean, this paper sheds light on how changing environmental conditions pose a threat to the long-term viability of these relationships and the economies that depend upon them. The symbiotic relationships discussed in this paper include the partnerships between sea anemone and clown fish, coral reefs and zooxanthellae, and, lastly, jellyfish and pelagic fish. Firstly, the dynamics of each relationship is discussed, followed by an analytical approach into the current and future implications for each species as ocean conditions continue to change. A long-term outlook is crucial in order to determine the urgency, and hence, the timeframe we have to reduce the anthropogenic pressures exerted on the ocean and the marine organisms within. Overall, it has become evident that humans are a leading cause of the environmental changes being observed in the global oceans, as demands on symbioses become increasingly arduous for marine organisms. Thus, it is imperative that a greater awareness surrounding these issues is raised so that changes can be made now, before it is too late.*

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<sup>1</sup> Lola Wilson is a third-year student studying Biological Sciences at the University of Aberdeen. She has a particular interest in climate justice and sustainability, and also enjoys playing sports, reading books and travelling. When she graduates, she would love to travel the world and aspires to make a positive difference.

## **1. Introduction**

In the vast expanse of the ocean the conditions are harsh and unforgiving, so marine organisms must adapt ways to cope with this demanding environment. The formation of symbiotic relationships between marine organisms have been key to allowing evolutionary adaptations to evolve much more rapidly than if they were influenced by competition or random mutations alone (Apprill, 2020). Thus, symbiosis has assisted evolution by allowing marine organisms to continue to thrive in their habitat and keep up with the fast-moving and dynamic ocean environment. Symbiotic relationships between marine organisms have been occurring for millennia, but species are now threatened with novel challenges that have never been encountered historically (Bijma et al., 2013). One of the largest and most prominent threats facing the global oceans today is anthropogenic climate change. Some of the major anthropogenic stresses exerted on marine organisms include coastal development, overfishing, noise pollution, and the impacts of climate change (i.e., changes in pH, temperature and CO<sub>2</sub>, and rising sea levels) (Bijma et al.). These stresses are presenting marine life with unprecedented barriers to overcome while putting pressure on symbiotic relationships (Honisch et al., 2012). This essay will explore some examples of marine symbioses and the adaptations that have subsequently occurred to allow each species to co-exist. Additionally, the imminent effects of climate change will be investigated in order to highlight what should be expected if ocean conditions continue to worsen due to anthropogenic climate change.

## **2. Types of Symbiotic Relationships**

By definition, the term symbiosis means living together and signifies a long-term, closely associated relationship between two or more differing species (Douglas, 2002). Each symbiotic relationship can vary depending on whether there is a beneficial, negative or neutral outcome for either party. For example, a mutualism is a symbiotic relationship that is beneficial as each species is able to cooperate and improve the survival chances of the other. On the other hand, parasitism is a symbiotic relationship in which

exploitation occurs at the expense of the host, leaving one species negatively affected. Furthermore, the level of dependency required by each species can either be obligate, when one partner relies on the symbiosis for survival, or facultative, when there is no survival pressure on the symbiotic relationship (Apprill, 2020). Similarly, the physical association between species can be split into endosymbiotic or ectosymbiotic. Endosymbiosis involves one species living either within the cells of its host (intracellular) or between cells (extracellular). Contrary to this, ectosymbiosis depicts an external association which involves either: constant contact (e.g., bacteria) or routine contact (e.g., cleaner fish) (Apprill).

### **3. Climate Change and the Oceans**

As the largest carbon sink on earth, the oceans have provided a vital shield from the escalating effects of climate change. Moreover, the oceans have accounted for the absorption of almost one-third of the total carbon released into the air, therefore reducing CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere (Bijma et al., 2013). Although this may seem positive, its effects are having detrimental impacts on sea life. This has resulted in more acidic ocean conditions, rising sea levels due to thermal expansion, and increased ocean temperatures which threaten habitats (Bijma et al.), all of which have major consequences on marine ecosystems and the economies that depend upon them. As ocean change occurs at a worrying rate never before seen for the last 300 million years (Honisch et al., 2012), one prominent area of uncertainty is the effects that this will have on marine symbioses, and the ocean ecosystem as a whole. Symbioses have been finely tuned through co-evolution over millennia, but how will these relationships cope with new constraints that aim to test the limits of these partnerships? This essay will now go on to look at some interesting examples of symbiotic relationships and describe the challenges that species face due to changing environmental conditions.

### 3. 1. Mutualism: Sea Anemone and Clown Fish

One of the most common mutualisms<sup>2</sup> in the ocean is between sea anemone (*Actiniaria*) and clownfish (*Amphiprioninae*). Sea anemones are sessile organisms, remaining connected to coral reefs at the seabed (Aprill, 2020). They contain stinging cells called nematocysts which act as a defence mechanism against predators but are also used to catch and paralyse prey. Living amongst sea anemones therefore provides clownfish with protection from predators and, in turn, the brightly-coloured clownfish attract prey, providing food to the sea anemone (Aprill). To combat the effects of the stinging cells, clownfish have developed a mucous-like coating over their bodies which provides immunity against the toxic tentacles of the sea anemone (National Geographic, 2019). Due to this symbiosis, the lifespan of clownfish are around six times higher than fish of equivalent size, conferring a clear advantage of existing in this mutualism (Aprill). Additionally, due to the sessile nature of sea anemones, clownfish are necessary to draw in a reliable food source. Thus, a mutualistic partnership is therefore essential for the survival of both species.



Figure 1: Clownfish swimming past a bleached sea anemone depicted by a white colouration. (Alison Barrat, 2015). Photo credits: Derek Manzello

As a result of thermal stress, caused by global warming, endosymbiotic algae are ejected from sea anemone cells and bleaching occurs thereafter. This can have pernicious consequences for clownfish survival. In a study by Norin et al. (2018), it was found that clownfish living amongst bleached anemones had a significantly higher metabolic rate and were shown to have produced increased quantities of the stress hormone cortisol. Similarly, Beldade et al. (2017) observed lower growth rates and a

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<sup>2</sup> As mentioned previously, mutualism is a close, beneficial partnership between two species. Each species has something to gain from the relationship as their dependency on each other strengthens over evolutionary time (Aprill, 2020).

reduction in the reproductive hormones, testosterone and oestrogen resulting in a 73% decrease in fecundity. Overall, this provides worrying evidence of a destabilising ocean ecosystem in the face of climate change. Nevertheless, clownfish have the ability to find healthy anemones using their olfactory senses and a study by Miyagawa-Kohshima et al. (2014) provides some hope that clownfish have the capacity to switch to a new host if their existing one becomes bleached. Despite this, as global warming worsens and ocean temperatures rise, the abundance of healthy anemones will continue to diminish and counteract the effect of this adaptation. This could potentially lead to the disappearance of both species if the current situation does not drastically improve.

### 3. 2. Mutualism-Parasitism Continuum: Coral Reefs and Zooxanthellae



Figure 2: Bleached corals from the Great Barrier Reef. (Klein, 2020). Photo credits: Victor Huertas

Arguably, one of the most threatened and severely impacted habitats in the oceans are coral reefs. Many corals have a symbiotic relationship with photoautotrophic dinoflagellates, *Symbiodinium*, also known as zooxanthellae. Initially, this relationship is mutualistic with the algae providing crucial support to the corals, especially in oligotrophic (low nutrient level) waters in exchange for photosynthates and a place to live (Stanley & van de Schootbrugge, 2018). However, under changing

environmental conditions, there is a strong selection pressure on the partner that can maximise their fitness potential- often at the expense of the host (Lesser et al., 2013).

Ultimately, the algal symbionts move along the mutualism-parasitism continuum by exploiting host corals during temperature increases (Neuhauser & Fargione, 2004). In a study by Baker et al. (2018), to test the extent of the conversion to parasitism<sup>3</sup>, it was found that during sub-bleaching temperatures (around 31°C), net primary productivity of corals decreased by 60%. Both the nitrogen and carbon concentrations received by the alga increased whereas, photosynthates received by corals remained the same. This unequal exchange of resources by the algal symbionts emphasises a cheating strategy used whereby the costs of the partnership outweigh the benefits. Overall, a reduction in coral fitness was concluded, meanwhile, the algal symbionts benefitted from exploiting their host. Ultimately, the outcome of this ancient relationship is currently endangered due to the threats posed by anthropogenic climate change. Additionally, despite being known to occur since the Triassic period, it is unclear what the future holds for this pair. Nevertheless, it has been predicted that the continued warming of the oceans will further weaken this association due to an evolutionary selection pressure towards the most adequate survivor (Lesser et al.).

Furthermore, the delicate and calcareous structures of corals are extremely sensitive to environmental changes and appear white when exposed to stress. This is due to the expulsion of algal symbionts which leave the transparent coral tissues exposed, revealing their skeletal structures. Evidence shows that since the first extreme mass coral bleaching event was recorded in 1983, these events have subsequently become more frequent, often resulting in mass mortality of vast reef areas (Harrison et al., 2018). An example of this is the Great Barrier Reef- the largest coral reef in the world which has been subject to three mass bleaching events in the space of a five-year period with many more predicted in the future (Ainsworth et al., 2016). Similarly, on a worldwide scale, bleaching events have become 4.5 times more frequent since the 1980's (Norin et al., 2018). If these figures continue

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<sup>3</sup> Parasitism is a partnership where only one species benefits to the detriment of its host (Apprill, 2020).



to escalate then the outcome could be catastrophic for the tourism industry, particularly in Caribbean countries that rely on the revenue generated from coral reefs as a source of income (Lachs & Oñate-Casado, 2019). Moreover, coral reefs also help to prevent coastal flooding and erosion during storms by minimising wave action. Without this crucial barrier, billions of pounds would be incurred in damage costs, further weakening the global economy (Hoegh-Guldberg, 1999). Finally, a quarter of all marine life are supported by coral reefs so a breakdown could have catastrophic consequences for ocean ecosystems across the world (Wagner et al., 2020).

### 3. 3. Commensalism: Jellyfish and Pelagic Fish

Another example of symbiosis is the commensalism<sup>4</sup> between jellyfish (scyphozoans) and pelagic fish. In this partnership, juvenile pelagic fish are characterised by swimming underneath the scyphozoan bell alongside the venomous tentacles of the jellyfish. This benefits the pelagic fish by providing a food source (i.e., zooplankton caught by jellyfish) and an element of protection from predators, overall increasing juvenile survival (Tilves et al., 2018). On the other hand, jellyfish have no beneficial gain from the

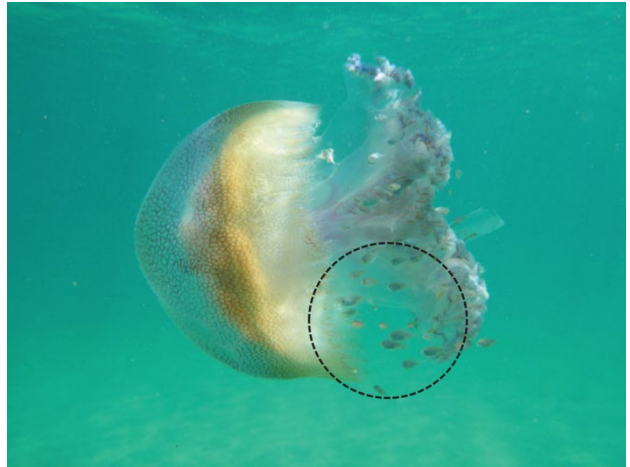


Figure 3: Commensalism between juvenile pelagic fish and a jellyfish (*Pseudorhiza haeckeli*). (Nagelkerken et al., 2016). Photo credits: James Brook

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<sup>4</sup> A commensalism is a close partnership between two species whereby one species gains some form of benefit and the other remains unaffected. For example, one species may gain protection from predators or even a food source whilst being closely associated with their partner (Aprill, 2020).

relationship and thus, remain unaffected. Most of the fish that form a commensalism with jellyfish are economically important to fisheries (e.g., pollock), emphasising the commercial reliability of this symbiosis.

Previous studies have found that rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels which result in ocean acidification and warming have had profound effects on the behaviour and perception of various marine species (Briffa et al., 2012; Nagelkerken & Munday, 2015). A study by Nagelkerken et al. (2016) on blue blubber jellyfish (*Catostylus mosaicus*) explored this idea further by simulating high oceanic CO<sub>2</sub> conditions to test the visual and olfactory senses of associated fish species. Generally, juvenile pelagic fish have no immunity from the deadly toxins present on jellyfish arms and tentacles, so they must frequently alter their position to circumvent contact. It was found that the effects of increased CO<sub>2</sub> (i.e., warming and acidification) did in fact, impede the ability of fish to form an association with jellyfish. This was because high CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations obstruct neurotransmitters in the brain of fish, leading to an impaired risk assessment of both, potential predators and, deadly jellyfish tentacles. Moreover, in some cases it also reduced the capacity of fish to acknowledge jellyfish as a potential partnership. Crucially, this suggests that under high CO<sub>2</sub> conditions as a result of climate change, fish undergo behavioural changes with a reduced capacity to perceive risk. This could potentially have long-term, repercussions on this symbiosis by altering the population dynamics of the affected fish species. Furthermore, the commercial impacts could be detrimental to the fishing industry due to an increase in juvenile mortality as a result of greater predation exposure.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, symbiotic relationships in the marine environment are complex and consist of many generations of adaptations and speciation. Overall, the aforementioned examples show how climate change presents a major threat to the dynamics of these relationships, food webs and the wider ocean ecosystem as a whole. Future work quantifying these varying factors are therefore essential in deepening our understanding of potential future outcomes for symbiotic species. Nevertheless, despite extensive knowledge

being known about terrestrial symbioses, information on marine symbioses is still largely insufficient. Moreover, most symbiotic interactions remain largely unexplored, despite the oceans containing more than two million known species. Further observation and understanding of the functionalities of these relationships will help drive forward advancements in the field and allow us to better comprehend future climate change impacts. Climate change and its influences on the ocean environment need to be accounted for so that future projections about ecosystem wide impacts as well as economical losses in fisheries and aquaculture can be determined. Furthermore, the majority of current studies have been aimed at coral reef habitats due to their vast abundance and accessibility. Ultimately, more attention needs to be drawn towards other, lesser studied species so that information can be collated and a future forecast can be formed. This will help to determine the extent to which climate change will negatively impact both life in the ocean and humans. Additionally, educating the public on the current situation and the importance of conserving the oceans for future generations will emphasise the urgency of the situation. Lastly, the future of many marine symbioses and the stability of ocean ecosystems will rely heavily upon the trajectory of human activities as climate change intensifies.

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# How Does the *Other* Construct My *Self*? An Analysis of Sartre and Beauvoir

Mathilde Communal<sup>1</sup>

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*This paper discusses the philosophical struggle to apprehend the relation between the self and the other in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Peeking into existentialism and phenomenology, we will see how Sartre constructs his idea of the Ego (and its transcendence) out of the Cartesian cogito and its importance in the public sphere. Further, we give an analysis of the look and its consequences for the self-other relation as well as Sartre's idea of the conflict between subjecting and subjected. This will lead us to the themes of intersubjectivity and importance of third parties' roles in the self-other relation. Then, we will take a closer look at the restriction of freedom that the other imposes upon the self. Finally, by looking at the work of Simone de Beauvoir, we will discuss the acontextual version of the self-other relation as seen through the lens of minorities. This will lead to re-evaluating the subject-object relation and finalising our idea of how the other participates in my own construction by the enrichment of Sartre's phenomenological construction.*

## Introduction

On the horizon of this world, the *other* stands alongside *me* – a reflection and refraction of my own *self*. Since post-Second World War Europe, philosophers have concerned themselves with the effort to define our relationship with the other. Understanding how one relates to others, to

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what extent one's freedom is influenced by them is a crucial task for apprehending the intention –behind wars – of destroying the other. Phenomenologists and existentialist philosophers bring a new definition of the self, although shaped by such as Descartes, Hegel, and Heidegger. In this stream of philosophising, we start from the self and meet the other, and we wonder: how does the other participate in *my* own construction? In this essay, I argue that while Sartre lays the foundation for describing how the other impacts my construction of the self, Beauvoir manages to improve this account by contrasting it with the concepts of ambiguity and cooperation. Focusing on the works of Jean-Paul Sartre – from the *Transcendence of the Ego* to *Existentialism is a Humanism* – this essay deconstructs his arguments to get a grasp of how his definition of the self<sup>2</sup> and consciousness, as well as his redefinition of the Cogito, poses the other as a necessity for my own existence. Then, we will establish the problematic of the subject-object tension in our relation with the other. Thirdly, we will look at critiques and problematics of this conflict and, more specifically, how I stand free from the other. Finally, we shall assess how the contextual work of Simone de Beauvoir countered Sartre's idea of radical freedom and how the *other* might limit my own ability to transcend and construct myself.

### **Transcendent Ego and the New Cogito**

Let us begin with the seminal work of Jean-Paul Sartre. In his search to answer questions of the self, Sartre gives an account of what the self is and, more specifically, how it is external to us. In doing so, Sartre employs phenomenology – the study of experience and structures of consciousness. We are introduced to his arguments in *Transcendence of the Ego*. Although this essay will not make its defence, it is crucial to note Sartre's account of the *self* to better understand the *other*'s nature. For Sartre (2004, p.12): '[the Ego] is a transcendent pole of synthetic unity.' That is to say, it is a unification of states, actions and qualities as a synthesis of consciousnesses that exist continuously, like an invisible centre of gravity. This corresponds to our contemporary vision of the self; indeed, nowadays, we crucially see

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<sup>2</sup> Also referred to as the Ego, in this work.

ourselves as more than a unique attribute. It is also essential to note that for Sartre our actions are mostly public. Phyllis Sutton Morris (1985) puts it in this way:

[The transcendent Ego] is not immanent in consciousness, but is rather an object for consciousness. Sartre insists on this point to the extent of claiming that the transcendent Ego is an object which others can know as well as I can, since my acts take place, for the most part, in public. (p.184)

This challenges the traditional idea that the self is a private entity. It also entails a “materialisation” of the self, conventionally abstracted and atomised. Rather, on a Sartrean account, we can be seen and therefore known to others. Such is the power of transcendence. Being external to us (as full persons), the Ego must be influenced by the *other* when it gives rise to the *I*. This is captured by Sartre when he declares *meaningful* acts – such as political or social actions – to be part of the public sphere. One rarely leads a revolution alone. Thus, by projecting itself onto the world, the Ego offers itself to the other. It is moulded not only by the *I*'s experience but by my *experiencing* the world – thus, experiencing the *other*.

However, Sartre's claim about the *other* goes even further in his later book, *Existentialism is a Humanism*. Here, he decomposes the Cartesian *cogito* argument – which he considers as foundational to the modern self – and deconstructs its very own axioms formulating it anew. To remind us what the argument is, in the seventeenth century, René Descartes brought forth the famous *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) assertion, which he had viewed as the absolute base for our knowledge – what makes knowledge possible is that *I* exist independently. Three centuries later, Sartre re-expresses this *cogito* by assuming the *other* to be the very condition of our own existence. He writes:

It is not only one's own self that one discovers in the cogito, but those of others too. [...]. Thus, the man who discovers himself directly in



the cogito also discovers all the others, and discovers them as the condition of his own existence. (Sartre, 1975, p.9)

From asserting the *other* as the condition for my existence, we get a clue of how the other makes me who I am. The other is involved in my being by their own existence. And to assert any truth of my being, I must *look* to the other. They are the condition of my existence and the knowledge of myself.

### **Scandal of the Look**

Let us then assess how I and the other interact in this search for self-knowledge. If establishing a new formulation of the *cogito* manages to display the existential link between me and the other, it does not give us a clear vision of what exactly this relation brings to the self. It is in *Being and Nothingness* that Sartre provides us with more answers. He brings forth the example of the keyhole problem (or the scandal of *the look*) to support his claim that I need the other for my consciousness to get from unreflected to reflected. What does this mean? Let us first explain what the scandal of the look is. Imagine a man [sic] peering through a keyhole, watching a scene without his act being known by the watched people. That is the state of pre-reflectiveness. However, by lack of discretion, he is seen by others and consequently becomes aware of it. His object of attention is therefore shifted from *seeing* to *being seen*. This new object is the other's look. The man has lost his power as a subject and is now reduced to being the other's object. The *other* has now taken place as the subject. That is the conflict of *the look*. As Julie Van Der Wielen (2014) writes:

“The look” analyzes our ontological relation with others. For Sartre the look is the archetype of our relation to others, meaning the experience of being seen by another, is the most fundamental relation we have to others. It is an experience in which the “object-other” I normally see is replaced by a subject for whom I am now an object which it sees. (p.58)

This phenomenological analysis of *the look* importantly clarifies what Sartre claimed in his earlier works. In our relation to others, there is a structure within our consciousnesses that can be described as reflective. A transcendent Ego is indeed an object that can shift from consciousness to consciousness, from *I* to the *other*. This presence of the other transforms my consciousness from unreflected to reflected. From which, I – as a being – cannot go back to any form of *mauvaise foi*.<sup>3</sup> I have become *seen*. It is a shame, pride, *etc.*, which is revealed to me by the other. At this very moment, they bring an extra addition to *who I am*. Another value to add to the synthesis which makes *me*. We can thus infer that who I am is in constant evolution and based on what I think people think of me.

However, this relation of Ego to the *other* comes at a cost. It is an unsolvable conflict of consciousnesses. A game of mutual objectification to remain subjecting and not subjected. Rather negatively, Sartre (2003, p. 364) writes: ‘conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others.’ We are in a relation of mutual servitude. A simple contact between two people initiates a forced subjugation to each other. In this state of affairs, both the other and I are enslaved. But as Sartre remarks in *Existentialism is a Humanism*, this view does not have to be inherently pessimistic. Ursula Tidd (2006) defends this contention by rearranging our way of viewing the self-other relation:

For Sartre, [transcendence] represents consciousness as “*un jaillissement*” or a “surging forth,” moving toward the realization of its own possibilities by means of the Other. The Other is therefore the means through which the Self might achieve its transcendence; and conversely, the Self’s transcendence is therefore prioritized at the expense of the Other’s transcendence. (p.229)

So, while the *other* constitutes the necessary condition for me to *be* and participates indirectly in the making of who I am through reflective consciousness, it is also the case that the *other* is an instrument that can be

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Bad faith’ term coined by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. Defined as the phenomenon of acting inauthentically.

turned against other people's transcendence. In a constant fight between being-for-myself and being-for-others, we must be wary of how to use this distorting mirror. This is the topic of this last section on Sartre.

### **Limits in Intersubjectivity**

Sartre (2003, p.263) writes: 'my original fall is the existence of the other.' This entails two points. First of all, it implies a loss of radical freedom – I am in the state of radical freedom when my *self* is alone and, more specifically, when the Ego is not transcending. However, due to this ongoing emulation between *I* and the *other*, my freedom is not so surely assured. My freedom is threatened. Furthermore, I feel as if the other fixes my possibilities, as I become an object. By plunging its *look* on me, it limits my possibilities of action as a revealed being. My choices remain mine but possibly limited by the other's look. So, what then? How to solve this ongoing conflict? For Sartre, it is either by using the *other* to construct myself through this reflective relation or by absolutely asserting dominance upon the other. On the one hand, there is the relation to the *other* as a subject; this is the case of love. On the other hand, the case of the other as subjected; this is the case of possession and treating the *other* as if they were nothing. But Sartre claims that both these options are necessarily a failure. For him, the conflict persists in either case.

Sartre hence treats this conflict as unsolvable. The possibility for cooperation – both serving each other in constructing the self – is only an illusion that we fool ourselves with. Consciousness instrumentalises the *other* to either flee or neutralise its freedom. It is a deeply pessimistic view of connected subjectivities (*me* and the *other*) or what is known as *intersubjectivity*. Sartre's contemporaries highly criticised this idea. Jean Wyatt (2006) elaborates on one of these critiques:

[Sartre] is often criticized for narrowing the account of ontology to the dual order of self and other and for neglecting the third term, the symbolic network of differentiated meanings and differentiated

objects within which the relations between self and other play out.  
(p.11)

By bringing up this ‘third term’, we could therefore ease this endless conflict. Acknowledging the presence of a third party – human, spiritual, contextual – allows this problematic choice of building myself or annihilating the other to be resolved. By narrowing down the situation to me and the *other* only, Sartre essentially disregards everything that is not (in direct contact with) us. However, as we will demonstrate later, we argue that this ahistorical and acontextual view reveals flaws in the way we actually construct ourselves through the other. This, we will establish more clearly when going through Beauvoir’s ideas.

We are left with this: if consciousness is nothing but a relation, if the Ego is a synthesis of consciousnesses, then the Ego is nothing but a synthesis of relations. Me, as *I* exist and externalise myself to the world, am merely an embodiment of my relations with things, consciousnesses, and *others*. On top of this, for Sartre, consciousness is intentionalised via nihilation. The other, in fact, is *the me* who is *not me*.<sup>4</sup> Hence, for Sartre, the *other* plays many roles for me. The other is my necessity for existence, the other is my coming to consciousness, the other is my distorting mirror, the other is my key to self-knowledge; but the other is also my eternal nemesis. However, we shall remind ourselves that, for Sartre, we are always radically free. Hence, as important as the role of the other is for me, I can always choose what I want to be and, supposedly, who I am.

### **Ambiguity in the Self-Other Relation**

Simone De Beauvoir’s philosophy is situated on the same stream as that of Sartre. As an existentialist interested in phenomenology, Beauvoir shares Sartre’s idea that the self is constructed as not-the-other. This underpins her account of women in *The Second Sex*:

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<sup>4</sup> Sartre writes : “autrui, en effet c'est l'autre, c'est-à-dire le moi qui n'est pas moi” in *Being and Nothingness*.

She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other. (Beauvoir, 2010, p.26)

Here, Beauvoir defines the woman as not-man, and women as not-men. We start to get a sense of how this negation of the *other* is impactful not only on the individual but on the group. But there still remains this conflict between subjugating and being subjugated. However, her philosophy takes a more optimistic stance than Sartre's. For Beauvoir, the essence of the human experience is *ambiguity*. This follows from us being simultaneously the subject and object, causing freedom and imperatives to be always balanced. It is this assumption that provides a new basis for analysing the self-other relation. While Sartre argued for a constant conflict between me and the other, Beauvoir favours a cooperative relation. As Ursula Tidd (2006, p.230) puts it: '[Beauvoir argues] that we need the Other to act as a witness to our actions, as receiver of our testimonies.' The *other* is not an object to be transcended anymore as the *other* is now a part of the self's definition. This clashes with Sartre's characterisation of the self's relation with the other.

There is now potentiality to our bond. The *other* is part of my intentionality, of my projects, of what sets me in the world:

To will that there be being is also to will that there be men by and for whom the world is endowed with human significations. One can reveal the world only on a basis revealed by other men. (Beauvoir, 1976, p.71)

This comes directly against the aforementioned idea of radical freedom of the self. It implies freedom in our coexistence and, more specifically, in the subject-object relation. The Ego, as reflected by the *other*, is an essential part of living meaningfully in the human world. Hence, as for Sartre, Beauvoir claims that I and the other are intertwined in our beings. However, for Beauvoir, instead of a conflict, the other brings revelation and new potentialities on which to ground myself. Through the acts of projecting

comes the possibility of building alongside. An authentic understanding becomes then possible.

Finally, in the last divergence from Sartre, Beauvoir sets her argument on the importance of context. Her main critique of Sartre's account of how the others impact my freedom – and hence my self – is his hidden premise of ahistoricity. By taking away all the context, Sartre avoided the issues of sexism, anti-Semitism, and racism, operating for centuries in the context of, for example, *patriarchal white power*. She discusses it in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (Beauvoir, 1976):

As we have already seen, every man transcends himself. But it happens that this transcendence is condemned to fall uselessly back upon itself because it is cut off from its goals. That is what defines a situation of oppression. (p.81)

This last quote highlights the limits in life faced by one with less privilege than another. Transcendence, *the look*, the reflection of consciousness, and mutual construction can be obstructed by the agent-independent forces. Hence, while Beauvoir agrees that we are free in our choices, her argument accounts for the oppressed minorities whose struggle Sartre skipped over in his notion of radical freedom. As a privileged individual, Sartre could not have conceived this idea, she argues. Only one belonging to a minority can observe and make the necessary adjustments to privilege-grounded arguments. Beauvoir's observations allow for a richer account of the self-other relation; they clarify how the other can limit my possibilities. However, rather than rejecting the account of her peer, she uses her critique to ultimately get a more accurate version of Sartre's phenomenology. Rather than a confrontation, Beauvoir's philosophy constitutes a union of ideas, surging with the exposition of the *I*, the *other* and how we mutually construct each other.

## Conclusion

While both Sartre and Beauvoir operate within the same stream of ideas, they have differences in approaches to the relationship between me and the other. Sartre began the debate through a new account of phenomenology. In her literary ways, Beauvoir employed this existing stream to bring down this philosophy to concrete and pragmatic answers, to the people. Being a woman and having experienced oppression was an essential part of her work. Beauvoir added to the self-other relation what Sartre could not – the limitation imposed on the self by the *other*. We have seen that Sartre's view is more individualistic, self-centred. I build myself; other people exist, and they can interact, but it is my work – *me*. Beauvoir sees others as more than participants. They are essential in the building of me as a reciprocal self. They are bounded to me, and we ought to work alongside in our freedom for our freedom. To settle for a definite answer: for both Sartre and Beauvoir, others are necessary to make me who I am. The chasm between these philosophers comes in a further step. Sartre's view of the self-other relation is conflictual. It does not inherently mean the other hurts me, but it gives a limited range of action of what the other can make me into. After all, I am radically free. For Beauvoir, this relation is a collaboration. While it can happen that this collaboration becomes flawed, it does not deny the importance of the other in who I am. Their philosophies constitute a contrast between logical minimalism and pragmatic realism. It is left to the reader as an exercise to create themselves from there.

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## Authority, Phenomenology, and Victorian Fiction: A Post-Modernist Approach to Colonialism, Race, and Gender in *She* and *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*

Paul Friedrich<sup>1</sup>

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*Phenomenology and literary theory ‘removing’ the author from their work are schools of thought that emerged in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, respectively. This essay explores how these ideas on interpreting fiction influence and alter readings of two works that precede them: H. Rider Haggard’s 1887 novel ‘She’ and Mary Seacole’s 1857 autobiographical ‘Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands’. Both works deal with topics still relevant today: race, gender, and empire. Confronting them with post-modernist thought can lead to new readings, often even opposing what their writers may have originally intended. The essay will first explain the more complex of the two debates, Foucauldian theory on authority, before applying it to ‘She’. Room will then be given to exploring phenomenology and how it applies to literature and specifically Haggard’s novel. Finally, it will apply these theories to ‘Mrs. Seacole’ with special consideration given to the text’s autobiographical nature and its creator’s special status within Foucault’s theory, as well as how Seacole’s reality may therefore diverge from the reader’s.*

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## Introduction

In literature, new ideas constantly overhaul preceding scholarship. Modernist phenomenological thought and post-modernist authorship theory arguably represent the most significant literary-philosophical advancements of post-Victorian times. This essay will examine how considering more complex notions of authority and a relativist, individualistic view of experience as developed notably in phenomenology can alter readings of H. Rider Haggard's 1887 novel *She*. It will also conduct an ancillary examination of Mary Seacole's 1857 autobiography *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* in a similar manner. Both writers most likely wrote their works largely in support of Victorian culture and imperialism. A post-modernist interpretation nevertheless reasonably justifies readings of the two works that subvert Victorian gendered, racial, and colonial ideology. *Mrs. Seacole* as a work of (purported) non-fiction differs significantly from *She*. A case study of two works so dissimilar can illustrate with some authority how such new perspectives may lead to new conclusions in readings of the wider canon of Victorian Literature, even if they are entirely incompatible with what their originator might have intended.

## Post-Modernist Authority

It is at this point critical to recall post-modernist philosophy on authority. Michel Foucault (1998, p.207), although he builds on the ideas of others, summaries and carries the removal or 'death' of the author, a concept first developed notably by Roland Barthes, to its contemporary conclusion: 'The mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence.' Removed from its originator, writing becomes an end to itself in purely aesthetic consideration. Foucault also criticises his colleagues' failure to properly consider the consequences of the author's disappearance. What Barthes celebrates, Foucault designates a menace, maintaining that the author must endure to prevent the unchecked proliferation of meaning. Although Foucault (1998, p.222) believes that we should strive towards a 'literature of anonymity', he also argues that until we develop an alternative

‘system of constraint’, the author must, in the very limited sense, remain attached to his work.

Foucault (1998) distinguishes between the ‘author’ and the ‘writer’ of any given discourse. The Foucauldian ‘author’ is variably situated on a continuum between a selection of relevant traits of the physical originator (the ‘writer’) on one hand and the narrative voice in his work on the other. Foucault also de-individualises the author in depriving the function of its role as originator: he reduces them to a mere mouthpiece of a wider discourse that has gained its own agency. In a summary of the debate, Alastair Hird (2010, p.297) quotes Julia Kristeva in her assertion that ‘any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.’ Foucault’s notion is essentially one of a sentient discourse continuously re-arranging itself to form new conclusions through writers as pawns of intertextuality.

## **H. Rider Haggard’s ‘She’**

We may now consider how these insights transform readings of Haggard’s *She*. The novel, narrated by the British gentleman Holly, follows its narrator and his ward, Leo, as they embark on a journey into unexplored Africa to discover the truth behind a mysterious artifact left to Leo by his father. A local chieftain, Bilali, leads them and their companions Mahomed and Job to the local queen, a fearsome and immortal being of unnatural beauty, Ayesha. The white queen resides in the ancient city of Kor. She soon discovers that Leo is the re-incarnation of Kallikrates, whom she once loved and insists he must bathe in the flame that granted her immortality. However, she dies in that same fire, her immortality revoked. This allows Holly and Leo to return to England with the former committing his story to writing before handing it to an unidentified frame narrator present only in the introduction.

In her discussion of contemporary conceptions of authorship, Rachel Buurma (2007) states that modern critics commonly constrain Victorian

notions to a system of supreme authorial secrecy and disclosure. This essay will initially pre-suppose this ‘God-author’ perception, before incorporating more complex approaches to authority. Haggard as God-author of his work allows for little deviation where race, gender, and colonialism are concerned. Neil Hultgren’s (2011, p.648) historiography of criticisms on Haggard’s work recurrently characterizes ‘the text as a manifestation of fears and anxieties about late Victorian culture’ in the nexus of gender, perceived savagery, and empire. Throughout the novel, Haggard crafts an association of masculine, rational traits with empire and juxtaposes this with femininity and primitivism. The wider generic context of romance fiction, including *She*, also commonly characterizes ‘the decline of modern culture as a fall into the feminine’ (Hultgren, 2011, p.651). Haggard fabricates this portrayal in a number of ways. For instance, Holly describes Amahagger women as ‘upon terms of perfect equality with the men’, also noting that in their culture ‘descent is traced through the line of the mother’ (Haggard, 1991, p.57). Instead of directly condemning the locals for this custom of matriarchy, Holly strikes the tone of an objective observer. A short two chapters later, members of the tribe Haggard designate as ‘wretches’, ‘murderess’, or ‘diabolical woman’, attempt the ‘horrible and incredible’ act of hot-potting Holly’s companion Mahomed (p.69). This diction adheres much more easily to cannibals than feminists, even if both of these designations went against mainstream Victorian values. Thus, when Holly concludes that the Amahagger are ‘with their devilish and ferocious rites by far the most terrible savages that [he] ever heard of’ (p.206), he condemns them in entirety; including by mere association their gender-egalitarian customs, despite Haggard never having directly attacked this much more defensible position.

This juxtaposition of associated values also becomes apparent in the novel’s main heroes, Holly and Leo, as opposed to its villain, Ayesha. The unnamed narrator of the frame narrative describes Leo as ‘without exception, the handsomest young fellow’ he had ever seen, ‘like a statue of Apollo come to life’ (Haggard, 1991, p.3). Statues of the Greek gods, especially Apollo, are in most cases depictions of martial, athletic men. While the unnamed voice considers Holly ‘as ugly as his companion [is] handsome’ (p.3), Haggard repeatedly emphasizes his physical prowess, for instance when he

saves Leo from drowning (p.39). These recurring descriptions drive home the association of strength and traditional Victorian masculinity with Holly and Leo. Ayesha, on the other hand, is the epitome of the beautiful and feminine. When She unveils, Holly remarks that her beauty is too intense for him to describe, although he nevertheless tries (p.105). He also remarks that her appearance strikes him as evil and that even its radiance cannot ‘hide this shadow of sin and sorrow’ (p.105). Haggard plays on the biblical associations of the female, the beautiful and the passionate with evil, a trait Ayesha demonstrates thoroughly through the utilitarian torture of maintaining her power over her subjects by ‘once in a generation [slaying] a score by torture’ (p.118). The diametrical characterisation of the two parties is now clear. Ayesha’s suggestion that the queen of Britain ‘can be overthrown’ at odds with the protagonists’ appalled reaction and assurance that their sovereign is ‘venerated and beloved by all right-thinking people in her vast realms’ completes the association of malicious femininity with the end of the empire (p.169). Ayesha’s downfall shortly afterwards as a direct result of entering the youth-giving flame further suggests she has been punished by God for insurrection against the natural order both in prolonging her life and in opposition to the divine right of Victoria to rule.

This narrative is archetypal of the romance genre, which commonly follows ‘stereotypically rugged, manly, and virile Englishmen in uncharted territories [...] as they encounter lost tribes and beautiful women’, which ‘reflects and creates fantasies that emerged from the avid imperialism of late Victorian Britain’ (Hultgren, 2011, p.646). This racial and propagandistic imperialist reading of *She* therefore becomes legitimized by the participation in its genre. Haggard’s biography also appears to confirm this with his time as colonial administrator, a supporter of both the Tories and the imperialist order (Hultgren, 2011). To Barthes and Foucault, Haggard the writer is not required to confirm this reading. Hird (2010, p.292) quotes the former’s assertion that ‘Godot has developed, because Godot expresses the particular properties of its time.’ Like *Waiting for Godot*, therefore, one must view *She*, its originator irrelevant, as the natural product of the imperialist discourse of its time. Its success and endurance prove that it resonated with Haggard’s audience. Whether Haggard intended the work as propaganda or simple

entertainment that only attained its racial and imperialist undertones by accident does not matter because regardless of the writer's intention, it reads as either. In fact, Haggard has already removed himself long before Foucault ever could: through the frame narrator, who most likely represents a version of Haggard and subsequently Holly, the author distances himself from the narrative. The unnamed narrator adds to this development by openly stating that he is unsure of the veracity of Holly's manuscript, although he declares it 'seems to bear the stamp of truth upon its face' (Haggard, 1991, p.6). Through this disclaimer, Haggard may have been attempting to disguise his likely well-known bias because he identified it as liability to his impartial credibility and therefore ultimately his agenda. This multi-layered dissociation of the narrative from its author betrays a keen awareness of an authority beyond that of the God-author and a subscription to the post-modern tenet that a text can still credibly function without a legitimating originator.

Although the individual, omniscient God-author divulging information at will certainly defined a part of especially early Victorian thinking, Buurma (2007) maintains that particularly during the *fin de siècle*,<sup>2</sup> alternative notions of authorship far ahead of their time had already taken hold. Due to the widespread and well-known use of pseudonyms and authorial anonymity, Victorians were well accustomed to the absence of the writer. Furthermore, as Buurma demonstrates with reference to contemporary criticism, the Victorian public knew that many of its authors did not exist outside, for instance, a team of writers published under a common name. The individualisation and centrality of the author, according to David Latané (1989), is a product of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is perhaps explained by considering Foucault's theory of peril in the unchecked proliferation of meaning. Latané (1989, p.110) writes that 'during the early Victorian period, when the opportunity to write and publish expands dramatically, power comes in conflict with knowledge.' The increasing ease of distribution coupled with the infinite hermeneutic possibilities without the author as a limiting factor could therefore have threatened the status quo to

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<sup>2</sup> The final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, characterised by social upheaval and chaos

the extent that the modern conception of the writer became a necessity. Only with Foucault's post-modern author-function could this development be reversed. It therefore comes as no surprise that Haggard's intentions for his work hold up in his absence as he, writing in 1887, would have been prepared for views on authority beyond the God-author. Although considerations of authority alone therefore do not radically alter portrayals of gender and imperialism in *She*, Foucault's theory still sufficiently removes Haggard from his work to allow for relativist discussions on truth and perception to complete this transformation.

### **Phenomenology and 'She'**

Haggard's teleology does not so easily survive phenomenologically informed readings. Maurice Natanson (1968, pp.219-220) claims that 'man in his natural attitude takes for granted [...] the assumption that everything just said holds equally well from the standpoint of the "other guy," the alter-ego.' Living prior to the phenomenological turn, Victorians would have subscribed to the notion of universal reproducibility of experience. Lorraine Daston (1992, p.603) confirms this in her history of objectivity, maintaining that 'eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discussions of perspectivity agree in both their means (de-individualization, emotional distance) and ends (universal knowledge of one sort or another).' This perspectival objectivity pre-supposes an objective reality accessible if one only eliminates individual bias.

The phenomenologists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century reject that notion. A prominent adherent of that school, Alfred Schutz, believes that 'meaning is a certain way of directing one's gaze at an item of one's own experience' (Natanson, 1968, p.223). Reality therefore only comes into existence through an individual's personal interpretation of sensory stimuli. We are as a result left with as many equally valid experiences as there are separate minds interpreting the subject matter. Wolfgang Iser (1972) applies the conclusions of phenomenology directly to literary theory: he asserts that the true meaning of any discourse lies somewhere between the text the writer creates as the

artistic pole and the unique personal experiences of its readers as the aesthetic pole, both of which in reconciliation with that text generate meanings. Foucault's theory is here re-iterated and enhanced; the author limits how far an interpretation may diverge from the text in that one must always still justify it reasonably with reference to the literature.

Unlike in the context of post-modernist authorship, Haggard's intended narrative crumbles when confronted with phenomenology. Without universal morality, Holly's superiority over the Amahagger relies entirely on Haggard's audience sharing his Victorian experiences and value system. Lacking this and viewed from a standpoint of cultural relativism, Holly and Leo become inconsiderate intruders who without a sound moral justification condemn and impede local customs. In England treason against the queen might carry capital punishment, similarly, Bilali, 'seeing that it was unlawful for any stranger to enter [Amahagger lands]', had ordered the killing of Holly and his companions, although this does not occur due to Ayesha's orders to spare them (Haggard, 1991, p.59). When the Amahagger attempt to hot-pot Mahomed, they are merely acting within the scope of their law considering that when She 'sent orders that [they] were to be saved alive she said naught of the black man' (p.73).

Although the Amahagger are fictional, Haggard goes to great lengths to render them life-like. They speak a dialect of Arabic which is within Haggard's style still represented in English. When writing dialogue in that dialect, he modifies his register to differentiate between the two: 'Who are ye who come hither swimming on the water?' (p.53). The somewhat archaic English used corresponds to the secluded nature of the Amahagger, who most likely speak an older version of Arabic. This representation of dialects as a realistic (although not naturalistic) element suggests that *She* also participates in literary realism in other ways. Curiously, Haggard himself, as Hultgren (2011, p.646) notes, promoted the genre of romance as an alternative to 'feminine' realism. The highly detailed descriptions of its settings and characters like Leo, Holly, and Ayesha establish his characters as realistic individuals who are in many ways life-like.



As such a life-like human character, Holly becomes fallible, namely in his perception of sensory phenomena. Presumably due to Haggard's effort to realistically portray his narrator, Holly has minor lapses in his memory. It is only reasonable to assume that in the years prior to committing his story to writing, Holly might have forgotten the exact appearance of, for instance, the inscriptions on the walls of the ruined city of Kor that Ayesha reads out to him. Haggard likely did not fully consider the implications of Holly's failure to remember such particulars, that, while insignificant to the plot itself, nevertheless prove Holly at least somewhat unreliable. Haggard thus forfeits the monopoly on truth possible intra-diegetically in fiction. Holly is therefore rendered subject to the real-world constraints imposed by the phenomenological standpoint that it is impossible to describe an objective reality outside of an individual's perception. To the audience, this fallibility then has the potential to extend universally to all aspects of Holly's narration. Haggard essentially leaves the reader with an unreliable narrator blundering through an unfamiliar culture which he attempts to categorize using only his English conceptions of morality. Read as such, *She* holds a self-ironic mirror to the coloniser, or even the present-day moral universalist. Every indication suggests that Haggard the writer would never sanction this interpretation. It nonetheless lies within the reach of Iser's (1972) artistic pole because the text reasonably justifies it when interpreted by a reader subscribing to phenomenological and relativist notions.

### **Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands**

*Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* requires special consideration because the functions of writer and narrative voice as the two defining elements of authority practically elide in the genre of autobiography. The autobiographical text follows the eponymous Jamaican bi-racial healer Mary Seacole on various missions to apply her talents. Her travels first take her to Panama, where she encounters citizens of the USA, slavery, and cholera, and then into the midst of the Crimean War. In this conflict between Britain and its allies and Russia, she establishes a hotel and

field hospital. The primarily white, masculine setting forces her to justify her presence in unconventional ways against racist and sexist ideals of the time.

Regardless of any opinions on race and gender Seacole might have held privately, we will first examine evidence that suggests she did not write to subvert Victorian ideology on these matters. Subsequently separating those functions of writer and author nevertheless supports such an interpretation.

The God-Author school of thought would invalidate any reading not aligned with Seacole's exclusive grasp on her narrative, especially as the writer of her own autobiography. In her consideration of gender, race, and location in Seacole's work, Sandra Gunning (2001, pp.949-950) surmises that the book was likely Seacole's attempt to 'recover from bankruptcy by publishing a lucrative life story.' Accordingly, 'Seacole showed little interest in social reform or domestic feminism' (p.951). Seacole's constant careful attempts at favourable self-presentation support this interpretation. Most notable among these is an entire chapter filled with references from her patients and customers (Seacole, 1984, pp.168-175). Despite this chapter reading like a résumé, Seacole maintains the illusion of humility, claiming that she simply does not have the heart to omit several of these references. Evidently, the perfection of her image ultimately succeeded with the establishing of the royally sanctioned Seacole fund for her pension (Gunning, 2001).

Seacole's attempts to please the British go further than references. She emphasizes her occupational hazard: 'one [shell] flew so near that I thought my last hour was come' (Seacole, 1984, p.208). Simultaneously, she disguises the financial aspect of her Crimean Venture by claiming that rather than in an attempt at profit, she established her hotel in Crimea only as a measure to sustain herself financially (Gunning, 2001). Such care to humour the British coupled with Seacole's financial stake certainly undermines any argument seeking to establish Seacole as a firebrand iconoclast.

A self-proclaimed creole, she also distinguishes herself from black identity, although she declares that even if she belonged to that demographic,

she ‘should have been just as happy and useful’ (Seacole, 1984, p.98), indicating that she did not necessarily view herself as superior due to her mixed-race ancestry. Instead, this distinction most likely serves to render her presence in the white setting of the Crimea more tolerable. Likewise, Gunning (2001) believes her self-portrayal as matronly serves to justify a feminine presence in such a masculine environment.

The absence of Seacole’s daughter Sally is of note here. The writer never mentions her despite a witness report that in reality places her at Seacole’s Crimean hotel (Gunning, 2001). Gunning believes that Seacole’s mother-son relationship with her clientele requires her to be childless, which is why she omits her daughter. This is one of few cases where Seacole the author becomes distinct from the writer: only the latter has a daughter. Seacole relies so heavily on this relationship with her clientele because it precludes the sexual. She therefore sheds her femininity in the sexual, passionate, and emotional contexts and embraces it in the Victorian domestic and maternal. If we recall the associations of the former type of femininity with the colonial and savage in *She*, this is a well-calculated move on Seacole’s part.

Despite likely only aiming to improve her image, Seacole ironically exactly in her support of the Empire undermines it when read from a post-modern perspective. For instance, she disproves racial narratives by demonstrating great professional skill and use to the Empire. Moreover, in rushing to alleviate the results of intra-European violence, she inverts the imperial narrative of uplifting the colonised from tribal violence: what could be more savage than the systematic killing of tens of thousands through semi-mechanized warfare as seen in Crimea? Lastly, Seacole also demonstrates the great effect to which the Victorian woman can thrive, even serve the Empire, far from the Victorian domestic sphere. While it is pure conjecture to infer this defiance of Victorian culture to be Seacole’s agenda as a writer, we can conceive of Seacole the author as disguising her intentions with the illusion of submission while shaping the opposite: a narrative of subversion.

## Conclusion

Latané (1989, p.109) invokes David Simpson's argument denouncing the Foucauldian lack of 'subjective agency within a model of history' as 'discourse determinism.' This concern is justified when considering Barthes' argument from the standpoint of a historian, where the complete lack of an author results in the total loss of political or socio-historical value one may gain from re-discovering the writer's intentions. However, Simpson's argument does not entirely account for Foucault's preservation of the author as opposed to the writer. A re-construction of the author as expressing his contemporary zeitgeist becomes invaluable in discovery of the pertinent discursive atmosphere in a cultural or literary-historical sense, which unlike the writer's case warrants the attention of the literary critic. Instead of personal agency, post-modernist philosophy can legitimize readings of societal agency, of sub-currents aside the beaten path of history and crucially, may even imbue past works with an immediate current relevance when held against an aesthetic pole planted firmly within the present. As a result, the nexus of race, colonialism, and gender in *She* and *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole* attains newfound value in a world that may be post-colonial but is certainly not yet post-imperial. The structures governing the world of those works are still present ideologically, if not physically in the present. Ideas on race and gender still inform thinking and policy. Primarily white western powers still exercise 'masculine' control over the historically 'feminine' global South, albeit more indirectly. To read Haggard's and Seacole's work through a more contemporary lens is to understand these contemporary dynamics and the thinking in which they originated.

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