





Frauke Reitemeier (ed.)  
Transfers and Transmutations

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## Transfers and Transmutations: Introduction

*Alina Wirries*

In this volume of the *Göttinger Schriften zur Englischen Philologie*, a range of Bachelor's and Master's theses on topics of Anglophone literature and culture is brought together that seem, at first glance, to be rather too diverse to find a topic that connects them all. They look at family ideals in Victorian literature and Cornish cultural identities, at questions of intertextuality and cosmopolitanism, at the depiction of violence and subversion; and they contain in-depth studies of texts by authors whose combined life-spans cover more than two thousand years: works by Ovid, Shakespeare, Shaw and Robertson, to name but some, form the focus of attention. The papers collected here are diverse not only in topic, but also in style and method. Yet all contributions cast a new light on their respective topics. What binds them together is an interest in changes: in the transfer of textual elements to a new audience, in changing cultural landscapes that are reflected in literary representations, in transmuting ideas and narratives to fit life two centuries on.

Kirstin Runge's paper opens the field with a close reading of the different versions of *Venus and Adonis* by Ovid and Shakespeare. Her thesis encompasses an in-depth analysis of the stories' characters and their respective significance for the unfolding of the storyline as well as an insight into how the depiction of the various animals that populate Ovid's and Shakespeare's worlds can be interpreted. While this may sound a well-rehearsed topic, she gives her analysis a different twist by focusing on questions of popularity: She considers Shakespeare's reputa-

tion with readers in his own time and outlines how his version of *Venus and Adonis* in particular influenced it.

The next paper in the collection shows a somewhat different side to Shakespeare. Anika Droste presents a piece on the depiction and function of violence, power and justice in Shakespeare's works. Unlike Runge, Droste does not focus on Shakespeare's popularity as such but argues that Shakespeare used the Elizabethan stage to address social issues. Her analysis of *Titus Andronicus*, *King Lear* and *Richard III* shows a widespread paranoia in Elizabethan and Jacobean times which resulted in psychological and physical violence, especially against women. Life, Droste claims, was felt to be confusing and dangerous; the concept of a stable and secure context that encompasses and explains everyone's position and function did not fit anymore. The outbreak of violence that the characters on stage experience reflect this, commenting on problems of how the state exercised authority.

In the following paper, Max von Blanckenburg dives into an analysis of family ideals in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Shaw's *Mr. Warren's Profession*, deconstructing concepts of the Victorian mother and father as well as of children and love and marriage. His theoretical background includes both New Historicism and gender theories. Famously, the role of (middle- and upper-class) women was ideologised as that of the 'angel in the house' in the nineteenth century. In reality, though, the situation was very different. In the course of his work, Blanckenburg describes the prevailing Victorian censorship which made voicing criticism against anything – but especially family ideals – difficult. His key argument on the basis of his analysis is that both Wilde and Shaw used their plays as a means of concealed criticism.

Marius Glowsky's work on intertextuality in James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and James Robertson's *The Testament of Gideon Mack* take us further into modern literature. Glowsky examines the structuralist assumption that Hogg's text acted as hypotext for *The Testament of Gideon Mack*, which therefore effectively becomes the hypertext. Glowsky discusses theories by various narratologists – Genette, Kristeva and Bakhtin – to formulate an analytical approach of his own. This he employs to show how the two texts build up on one another, and how Robertson transformed the already quite modern structure of Hogg's Gothic novel even further.

Benjamin Schlink's paper on the construction of Cornish identities moves us away from literary and towards more encompassing cultural concerns. Stuart Hall's and Benedict Anderson's theories on community and identity form the groundwork of Schlink's approach, but, as shown by his empirical work, have certain faultlines. Schlink's basic assumption is that Cornish people conceive of themselves as member of a separate Cornish nation which, however, does not exist in legal terms. Schlink can therefore use Anderson's concept of an imagined community for explaining his empirical result, as there are linguistic and also cultural factors that contribute to the Cornish perception of their cultural group;

however, attempting to use criteria distilled from Anderson's and Hall's theories in the context of nationalist thinking shows that both theories have to be amended. It is especially questions of linguistics, of the separateness of a particular language, that is not taken into account by either author, but also the fact that those who consider themselves as belonging to a Cornish nation do so by referring to Cornwall as a closely circumscribed geographical area. Working from an admittedly slender data basis, Schlink's contribution nevertheless points towards shortcomings in the theories used.

An innovative and in-depth paper on cosmopolitanism and the concepts of world citizenship by Nicolas Helm closes the volume. In his stylistically very different paper, Helm charts the nature of cosmopolitanism and its development from the classical up to the postcolonial age using various concepts by Diogenes, Kant, Bhabha and other theorists as his theoretical framework. His main interest is in analysing in how far postcolonial ideas of integrating different elements of national identities to form new 'inter-identities' are based on older Western concepts of cosmopolitanism. After all, today's wide-ranging processes of globalisation seem to erase national borders and point towards a more international and border-ignoring – i.e. cosmopolitan in the original sense of the word – localisation of identity.

Change, then, is the thread that runs through all of the papers: Runge and Glowsky both look at changes of genre, at the different uses of textual elements that one author takes from another, and situate these firmly in new cultural and literary contexts. Helm and Schlink discuss new approaches to questions of cultural identity and belonging; the one by ranging far afield, while the other lays the focus on a relatively small geographical area. Droste and Blanckenburg analyse the functions of canonical texts as indicators of social change and social criticism. Taken together, the papers do not only highlight new and interesting ideas on Anglophone literature and culture but also show a high level of analytical and critical competence.



# “Venus and Adonis” by Ovid and Shakespeare

*Kirstin Runge*

## 1 Introduction

It was 18 April 1593 when an *epyllion* – a narrative poem – entitled *Venus and Adonis* was registered at the Stationers’ Hall. This was the first work Shakespeare had printed. In the poet’s lifetime alone, there were six editions, 16 before 1640, in other words, William Shakespeare’s debut was a great success (Hyland 2003, 64-65).

There is a clear time structure to the poem. It begins in the morning (v. 1/1). Venus, the goddess of Love, woos the mortal Adonis more and more insistently, begging for kisses and embraces. Adonis, however, is too young still and shows no erotic interest at all. After noon (v. 177/8), Adonis’ horse runs after a stray mare and he blames Venus. Adonis wants to leave in earnest in the evening (v. 529/30) and Venus learns of his plans to hunt the boar the next day (v. 587/88). In vain, she tries to talk him out of it. Left behind, Venus spends the night singing a “woeful ditty” (v. 836), til morning comes (v. 856). Hearing his hounds, Venus runs after them (v. 870). Worried, she chases the sound, her fear changing into hope and back again, until finally she finds Adonis killed by the boar (v. 1029/30). She mourns for him, making up her own version of what happened, and makes her prophecy, which sounds as if she was cursing love (v. 1135-64). Adonis’ body

vanishes and a flower springs from his blood (v. 1165-70). Venus resolves to now look after the flower as if it were Adonis and takes it with her.

Having read the poem, several questions came to my mind: Why did Shakespeare decide to publish something under his own name? And why a poem? After all, he was already a successful playwright at that time. And is it the same story that Ovid tells? If Shakespeare changed anything, why did he do so?

In order to find answers, I will go through the poem step by step. The Latin epilogue from Ovid represents the well-known sources he used, changed and turned into something of his own. To see how he could do that, I will outline Shakespeare's education and afterwards take a close look at classical sources and draw detailed comparisons. But Shakespeare did not only use the classical authors Virgil and Ovid as sources, but probably also a poem by Joachim Camerarius and a painting by Titian. When examining a painting as a source for a piece of literature, it is especially intriguing to see how the author transformed certain elements into another medium. In the description of Adonis' horse, Shakespeare came as close to painting as anybody could using words. Next in the line of reading is the dedication to the Lord of Southampton. Some information on his biography and Elizabethan society are indispensable for the interpretation and have led to interesting results. After that the poem proper begins. Here, it is necessary to consider the background of the genre, the *epyllion*. In the course of this I will also include Shakespeare's relation to the so-called "University Wits", especially Christopher Marlowe. These well educated men might have led the man from Stratford to prove his knowledge of classical mythology by including several myths in his *epyllion* – exactly how and to what purpose, I will show in the following part. Afterwards, I want to focus on the two main characters, Venus and Adonis, and show how they are presented by the narrator. Apart from the two main characters, the poem features a remarkable number of animals.<sup>1</sup> I want to focus on those which seem most important, namely birds, the hare, the boar that kills Adonis and the two horses, which may be seen as replacing the lions from the *Metamorphoses*.

By providing background information in the order of occurrence I want to achieve a deeper understanding of the poem. After all, it is by now well established that Shakespeare knew classical authors and drew on them in his writing,<sup>2</sup> and in this paper I try to explain the changes he made from his sources.

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<sup>1</sup> For the animals, cf. especially Bates 2012, 336-39.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. e.g. Gillespie 2001.

## 2 May the Masses Admire the Ordinary

*Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo  
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.*

May the masses admire ordinary things; may fair Apollo  
offer me cups filled with Castalian water.<sup>3</sup>

These are the first words Shakespeare published, and they originally come from Ovid’s *Amores* 1.15.35-6. They certainly set the mood for what follows: This poem is not meant for the masses. Unlike his plays, it was written exclusively for an educated audience. William Keach calls the *Amores* “forbidden fruit”, it was not reconcilable with Elizabethan moral values (Keach 1977, 29). Yet, those who had read it regardless would have recognized and quite probably enjoyed the quote. Anybody accusing Shakespeare of reading the *Amores* would have been giving away they had done the same. Nevertheless, it is rather bold to use lines from a forbidden book for one’s entry into the literary world. By calling on the Muses for inspiration, the Elizabethan aligns himself with classical authors like Ovid. Moreover, after this epigram, it is not surprising to find Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* to be one of the main sources.

While any of his educated contemporaries would have been amazed at the changed character of Adonis as it is, a verbal quote of Ovid and an acknowledgment of classical traditions would surely strengthen this effect. According to William Keach, “adaptive transformations and departures are themselves extensions of the Elizabethan poet’s exploration of his Ovidian subject” (Keach 1977, 5).

### 2.1 Education

Many scholars have concerned themselves with Shakespeare’s knowledge of Latin.<sup>4</sup> There are numerous allusions to classical authors, mythological characters<sup>5</sup> or allusions to myths in Shakespeare’s plays.<sup>6</sup> The most diligent and complete approach to solving this problem has been made by Robert Kilburn Root (Root 1903). His work was the basis on which Thomas Whitfield Baldwin wrote his *William Shakspeare’s small Latine & lesse Greeke*, naming one reason for the uncertainty: “It was not Shakespeare’s habit to quote Ovid or any other poet, Latin or otherwise” (Baldwin 1944, 418). Direct quotations would help us to assess Shakespeare’s Latin skills. However, Baldwin is not entirely right: The epigram of *Venus and Adonis* is a direct quote (cf. p. 15). As Katherine Duncan-Jones and H. R.

<sup>3</sup> “Castalian water” means water from a fountain sacred to Apollo and the Muses and thus stands for inspiration (Duncan-Jones, Woudhuysen 2007, 127). All translations from Latin are my own unless stated otherwise.

<sup>4</sup> For the school system, cf. Greenblatt 1997, 44-45.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Theseus in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. the myth of Pygmalion in *The Winter’s Tale*.

Woudhuysen note (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen, 2007) these lines would have been recognized “as supporting Ovid’s claim to poetic immortality” by anybody who knew the *Amores* (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 11). They go on to argue that with the plague in London, fear of death and the wish for immortality were ever-present (12/13). Still, Shakespeare could have read Marlowe’s translation:

Let base conceited wits admire vile things,  
Fair Phoebus lead me to the Muses’ springs  
(Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen, 2007, 127)

Although rather liberally translated, the meaning remains the same: The poet is hoping to be inspired to write something extraordinary.<sup>7</sup> This obviously is a fitting quote for Shakespeare trying to establish himself as more than an actor and playwright. In addition to that, it shows the intention to prove to critics, such as Greene, that he did know his Ovid. Indirect quotes included in the text show us Shakespeare knew at least the contents of Ovid’s work.

## 2.2 Sources

There are various sources that scholars have found influenced Shakespeare’s *epyllion*. Some are fairly obvious, such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, a well-known book containing classical myths. Others are more obscure or only alluded to. For an example of the latter, see William Weaver’s “Untutored Lines” (Weaver 2012, 70/1), where the author shows how Shakespeare points to a Greek version of the myth featuring Ares instead of the boar in the three very first lines of the poem. In a detailed analysis I will show where Shakespeare deviated from original texts and offer explanations. For this purpose I have chosen sources from different times and genres. I will start with Virgil’s *Aeneid*, which has been argued to have shaped the character of Shakespeare’s Venus, just like Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*. I will proceed with Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, as “The Elizabethan epyllion-writer will frequently elaborate a moment from an episode in the *Metamorphoses* in a way which reflects his familiarity with the witty informality of the *Amores* or the *Ars Amatoria*, or with the impassioned rhetoric of the *Heroides*” (Keach 1977, 5). Shakespeare is no exception to this rule by William Keach. Afterwards I want to include the translation of Arthur Golding, Shakespeare’s contemporary and also a very likely source. Then I will analyze a version of the myth by Joachim Camerarius, another contemporary. The last source will be Titian’s painting which has been taken to inspire a reluctant Adonis.

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<sup>7</sup> Besides, Shakespeare quoted Marlowe directly in other places (cf. chapter 4.1.1).

### 2.2.1 Virgil's *Aeneid*

João Froes finds Shakespeare's Venus to be consistent with Virgil's in the *Aeneid* (João 1997, 303). In twelve books, the epic tells the story of Aeneas, who saves his father, son and Penates<sup>8</sup> from burning Troy. Aeneas and his fellow fugitives embark on their ships to find a new home. They face challenging adventures, finally founding the Roman Empire. Aeneas' fate is influenced by the gods, Juno's rage making her Aeneas' most influential enemy. Venus, Aeneas' mother, tries to ensure other gods' help for her son. However, the most important power is *fatum*, the fate, which even the gods cannot change. To compare Virgil's Venus to that of Shakespeare, I will analyze scenes from the *Aeneid*.

Venus first appears in Book I, verse 227. She addresses her father Jupiter, whom she talks to “*tristior et lacrimis oculos suffusa nitentis*” (I, v. 228), “very sad and her eyes wet with glittering tears”, obviously taking the matter very seriously. She reminds Jupiter of his promise that, with Troy destined to fall, the Trojans would eventually found the Roman Empire. But they continue to suffer and she fears that her father might not keep his promise (I, v. 229-253). Although she is the daughter here, she still seems like a worried, loving mother.

Disguised, she meets Aeneas in verse 325. The relationship between them is stressed: “*Sic Venus et Veneris contra sic filius orsus*”; “Thus spoke Venus and Venus' son began to answer”. She acts like a mother by trying to show her son the right way. He notes that she is not a mere human being and asks her where he is (I, v. 326-334). She answers, introduces the queen Dido and asks about him (I, v. 335-370). Aeneas disappoints the reader by only giving a summary of his story (I, v. 372-385).<sup>9</sup> He acknowledges Venus' help with the words “*matre dea monstrante*” (I, v. 382), “with my divine mother showing [me the way]”. His mother tries to reassure him (I, v. 387-401). When she leaves, Aeneas recognizes her and chides her for deceiving him (I, v. 407-09). She hides the wanderers from the eyes of others (I, v. 411-14).

Invited into Dido's palace, Aeneas sends for his son Ascanius. As a precaution against Juno (I, v. 662), Venus asks her son Cupid to take over Ascanius' shape, go to Dido's palace and make the queen fall in love with Aeneas (I, v. 657-660). Again, she wants to shield him. Later the reader also sees the tragic side to her protection: When Aeneas sails away, Dido cannot deal with the loss and commits suicide. It is not explicitly stated whether Venus anticipated this, but she did know Aeneas would eventually continue his journey and that Dido would stay with her people. Venus used the queen in her scheming.

<sup>8</sup> The Penates were figurines of ancestors that guarded a family as protective deities. Honoring them was important in Roman religion. The edition worked with and quoted from is Publius Virgilius Maro (1969). P. Virgili Maronis. *Recognovit Brevisque Adnotatione Critica Instruxit* R. A. B. Mynors. ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors. Oxford.

<sup>9</sup> He will tell Dido – and with her the readers – a more detailed version shortly.

After Dido has fallen in love, Juno takes action again (IV, v. 90-276). She approaches Venus and suggests to combine the two peoples, that of Aeneas and Dido's. Venus sees through her deceit and seemingly agrees. They arrange for Aeneas and Dido to consume a marriage Juno wants to establish. Afterwards, they do not try to conceal their affair anymore and found Carthage together. When Jupiter observes this, he sends Mercury to remind Aeneas of his task. In this passage Venus is rather self-confident. She sees how Juno wants to prevent the Roman Empire from being founded, but does not act. She goes along with it and relies on her father to solve the problem. In retro perspective, this was a mistake. Carthage will be a the future archenemy of Rome. Had Venus told Aeneas to leave Dido, that would have saved the Romans many wars. The reader gets the impression that Venus is not immune to mistakes. However, Virgil narrates this as etiology for the enmity between Carthage and Rom: It all goes back to a woman who did not want to let her lover go. This serves not only as an etiology, but also belittles the enemy. This instance might be neglected in a characterization, as it is necessary for reasons outside the text.

Venus appears once more as the caring mother, winning over both Neptune (V, v. 779-815) and her husband Vulcan (VIII, v. 370-404). The latter readily agrees to supply Aeneas with weapons. But he also says that he would have helped defend Troy (VIII, v. 396/97), but Venus apparently did not turn to him before. This is where the concept of the *fatum* is of crucial importance. Even Vulcan and Venus cannot change Troy's fate.

The beginning of Book VIII describes the terrible crimes of a king that the people can only fight under the leadership of a foreigner and they ask Aeneas to fight for them. While he is still pondering this, Venus sends the agreed-on sign (VIII, v. 523-529) to announce the imminent battle (VIII, v. 534-536). Already on his way, he receives Vulcan's weapons (VIII, v. 608-616). From a loving mother, one would expect to tell her son to be careful, but Venus encourages Aeneas to attack: "*ne mox aut Laurentis, nate, superbos aut acrem dubites in proelia poscere Turnum*" (v. 613/17); "do not hesitate soon, my son, to challenge either the proud Laurens or the fierce Turnus in battle". Again, Venus is very confident here, relying on *fatum* and her father's promise, on her husband's weapons and certainly also on her son's fighting skills and accepting her son's destiny.

In the beginning of Book X Jupiter calls for a council of the gods and requests peace between Italians and Trojans. The first to respond (X, v. 16-62) Venus recounts the Trojans' series of misfortunes and stresses their desperate situation, still fighting and homeless. Venus no longer reminds Jupiter of his promise to her, but seems to acknowledge her rival's victory: "*liceat dimittere ab armis incolumen Ascanium, liceat superesse nepotem. Aeneas sane ignotis iactetur in undis et quacumque viam dederit Fortuna sequatur*" (X, v. 46-49); "may it only be allowed to send Ascanius [i.e. Julius] away from the weapons unharmed, may it only be possible for my grandson to survive. For all I care, let Aeneas be tossed around in unknown waves and shall he follow whichever way Fortune has decided for him." This may well strike the

reader as betrayal. However, she does what Aeneas, always protective of his son, would want. Thus Venus is probably not as detached as one might think at first glance. It is more probable that, after considering the problem, she decides to opt for a compromise. She is rational, but nevertheless loving. In verses 330-32 the goddess once more proves her love for Aeneas by protecting him from any harm in battle: “*partim galea clipeoque resultant inrita, deflexit partim stringentia corpus alma Venus*”; “<the spears> partly bounce off <Aeneas’> helmet and shield unsuccessfully, partly gracious Venus deflects them after they have brushed his body.” Even if the armor that Venus gave to Aeneas cannot protect him from all the spears, she herself protects him from the remaining ones. Maybe this also explains why she could encourage him to seek a fight in Book VIII: She knew all along that she would be there to help.

Despite Venus’ support, Aeneas is deeply wounded. Because no mortal can help him (XII, v. 400-04), Venus, “*indigno nati concussa dolore*” (XII, v. 411), “shattered by her son’s ignoble pain”, creates a potion and secretly pours it into a kettle of water (v. 411-19). When Aeneas’ wounds are washed with this water, he is instantly cured (v. 420-22). Again, Venus stays in the background and comes “*obscuro faciem circumdata nimbo*” (v. 416), “after she has wrapped her face into an obscuring cloud”. She does not seek admiration.

All in all, we see Venus as a loving mother, helping Aeneas in any way she can. We do not really see her as the goddess of love, but rather she transfers this aspect to her son Cupid who makes Dido fall in love with Aeneas.

### 2.2.2 Ovid

In his book *Untutored Lines*, William Weaver says about *Venus and Adonis*: “The poem is ostensibly Ovidian, but Shakespeare draws on a number of Ovids. He has wrested the basic outline and some of the words of his tale from two episodes in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, drawn an epigraph (printed on the title page of the first edition) from an elegy in Ovid’s *Amores*, and invested the story with the mock didactic tone of the *Ars Amatoria*” (Weaver 2012, 79). With the epigraph the topic of another chapter (cf. p. 15), I will now focus on relevant passages from the *Ars Amatoria*, a mock didactic poem on love affairs, and the *Metamorphoses*, a history of the world from the creation up to Ovid’s time told in etiological myths, that is explaining how the world became what it was, for example the origin of certain plants.

Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*

Michael L. Stapleton sees Shakespeare's Venus as reminiscent of Venus in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (Stapleton 1997, 309). It is promising to take a closer look at the *Ars Amatoria* in order to find out exactly how Venus is portrayed here.<sup>10</sup>

In Book I, verse 512 of the *Ars Amatoria*, Venus and Adonis appear for the first time: "*Cura deae silvis aptus Adonis erat*"; "Adonis from the woods was suitable for the goddess' [i.e. Venus'] love". The context is a guide for proper grooming. Adonis is depicted as living by himself in the wilderness. While Adonis' famous beauty is omitted, no reasons for Venus' love for him are named. The narrator tries to prove that grooming basically guarantees winning a girl's heart and thus presents Adonis as an example of a less desirable, yet clean hermit from the woods. His winning Venus' heart is supposed to reassure the reader. This is ironic to any reader who knows about Adonis' beauty from the *Metamorphoses*. The narrator's attempt to withhold this crucial aspect renders him foolish, an effect Ovid certainly desired. However, this is not the only omission. In the *Metamorphoses*, Venus falls in love with Adonis after Cupid had accidentally cut her with one of his arrows. The *Metamorphoses* present her more as a victim and emphasize the irony of the goddess of love suffering from love.

Venus and Adonis are mentioned again in Book III, dedicated to female readers, verses 85/86: "*Ut Veneri, quem luget adhuc, donetur Adonis: Unde habet Aeneam Harmoniamque suos?*" – "May Venus be granted Adonis, for whom she is still grieving: Where did she get her Aeneas and Harmonia from?" This passage encourages the female reader to embrace love while she is still young and attractive. Again, the narrator cites Venus and Adonis as mythological example. Although Venus is still grieving, she does not reject love as such. She gives birth to Aeneas and Harmonia, who play such an important role in mythology that Venus' affairs with the mortal Anchises and Mars seem forgivable.<sup>11</sup> According to mythology Venus was married to Vulcan whose outer appearance is described as less attractive. The beautiful goddess thus takes up an affair with Mars. Shakespeare mentions this affair in his myth (v. 97-114). Still, he does not relate how the two were caught and embarrassed. In this aspect, Shakespeare's Venus is quite similar to Ovid's narrator of the *Ars Amatoria*, as both only narrate what supports their intentions. Both authors employ this method in order to create an ironic effect. So while the narrator in the *Ars Amatoria* tries to encourage the female to embrace love affairs, the effect would have been the opposite.

<sup>10</sup> All quotes are taken from Publius Ovidius Naso (2009). *Liebeskunst: Lateinisch-Deutsch*. ed. and transl. Niklas Holzberg. Berlin.

<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, one might wonder why the narrator did not refer to Cupid here. He is also called "Venus' son" (e.g. v. 762: *Veneris puero*) and certainly of the utmost importance, especially to lovers, the claimed readership of this work.

There also are numerous mentionings of Venus alone throughout the three books of which only the more interesting ones can be included here. The first of these is to be found in Book I, verses 83-87:

*Illo saepe loco capitur consultus Amori,  
 Quique aliis cavet, non cavet ipse sibi:  
 Illo saepe loco desunt sua verba disertis,  
 Resque novae veniunt, causaque agenda sua est.  
 Hunc Venus e templis, quae sunt confinia, ridet.*

In that place [i.e. the Roman Forum] the lawyer is often captured by Cupid,  
 He who supported others, he does not support himself:  
 In that place the eloquent often lacks his words,  
 A new situation occurs, and he has to carry on his own lawsuit.  
 At him Venus laughs from her temples, which are adjacent.

This mentioning of Venus serves a double purpose. First, it gives the setting of the scene, which is the Roman Forum, right next to Venus’ temple. Any Roman reader could have pictured the place exactly. Second, it shows how cruel love can be. Without mercy, Venus watches what her son, Cupid, is doing to lawyers and finds it amusing.

We find another interesting reference to Venus when the narrator talks about judging girls’ beauty (I v. 247-250):

*Luce deas caeloque Paris spectavit aperto,  
 Cum dixit Veneri “vincis utramque, Venus.  
 Nocte latent mendae, vitioque ignoscitur omni,  
 Horaque formosam quamlibet illa facit.*

In daylight and under the open sky had Paris looked at the goddesses,  
 When he said to Venus: ‘You overcome both of them, Venus.’  
 At night, flaws are hidden, any imperfection is forgiven,  
 This hour makes every girl beautiful.

The double mentioning of Venus’ name in one line is striking, the reader would expect an epithet here. Hence, the author must have deliberately chosen to repeat the name for emphasis. Attention is drawn to Venus’ beauty: Even in broad daylight she surpasses her rivals. She is the standard every girl should be compared to – at least according to the narrator. A future lover should do what Paris did and judge the girls during daytime.

There is another less positive Venus (I, v. 361/2):

*Pectora dum gaudent nec sunt adstricta dolore,  
Ipsa patent. blanda tum subit arte Venus.*

While the heart rejoices and is not constricted with grief,  
it opens up. Then Venus enters with flattering skill.

Venus not only enjoys it when Cupid makes fools of men, she also plays her part. In the following two verses, the heart is compared to Troy: While it was sad, it defended itself. When it was happy, it took in the horse carrying its enemies. The reader gets the impression that Venus is rather deceitful. But she can also help, as in Book I, verse 608: “*audentem Forsque Venusque iuvat*” – “good luck and Venus help the bold one”.

With Book II, the narrator wants to teach his reader how to keep a girl. This requires skill, and also help from Venus, her son Cupid and Erato, the muse of love poetry, who are called upon (II, v. 15/16). But although lovers depend on Venus’ help, they also have to fear her revenge. The narrator advises the lovers to be careful about what they write because girls tend to interpret a lot (II, v. 397/8):

*Laesa Venus iusta arma movet telumque remittit  
Et, modo quod quæsta est, ipse querere, facit.*

If Venus is hurt, she justly takes up arms and throws back the spear  
And she causes him to lament, in the way she has lamented.

Although she can be his accomplice, a lover needs to treat Venus with respect.

On the other hand, Venus did hurt her husband with her affair with Mars. That is the topic of verses 561-592. Vulcan catches Venus and Mars in the act and traps them, so that all the gods can make fun of them. However, this does not have the desired effect: Now that their affair has become public knowledge, the couple does not even try to hide it anymore. To the narrator the whole story is evidence that one should never spy on one’s girl. Controlling her is a husband’s task, if he cares to undertake it (II, v. 595-598). The obvious moral at least from the first part of this myth would have been not to cheat on one’s husband. But the end, Venus and Mars loving each other openly, changes everything and makes it a fitting example for the *Ars Amatoria*. In the beginning Venus is depicted as shy and reluctant. In the end, she shamelessly loves her admirer openly. For this, the narrator blames Vulcan, her husband. The self-appointed teacher of love also advises to restrict intercourse to the bedroom. His argument for this is that Venus always covers herself when she is naked (II, v. 613/614: “*Ipsa Venus pubem, quotiens velamina ponit, Protegitur laeva semireducta manu*”; “Even Venus covers, whenever she takes off her clothes, halfway bending backwards, her private parts with her left hand”). Here, Venus functions as the typical girl. Her behavior is what is to be expected from any girl.

In the beginning of the third book, Venus is not only an exemplary girl, she is now the girls’ advocate (III, v. 45-52). The narrator claims that the goddess herself came to talk to him and requested that he should write this third book. He was content that the girls should not know about the art of love,<sup>12</sup> but Venus thought this was unfair, as the girls had to face the men “*inermes*” (III, 46), “unarmed”. She orders the narrator to make amends for this state by writing a third book just for his female readers. It is noticeable that the narrator seems to have written the first book on his own account. He does mention that he learned his lessons from Venus (I, v. 7), but he is inspired by his “*usus*” (I, v. 29), his experience. That he wants to share with the men of Rome. Necessity dictates that he should write the second book, as the lessons from the first are designed to make a girl fall in love, not to keep her. The narrator wrote those two books by his own choice. However, with the third book he betrays his readership and provides counsel for the “enemy”, which would be out of character. Thus Ovid needs to provide his narrator with a reason that cannot be challenged, such as the goddess of love herself ordering him to write this book.

As we have heard about Venus sitting in her temple and laughing at the lawyer in love, we now see that she is not at all partial to the women. When they have been betrayed by men and lament on the Roman Forum, she also watches them (III, v, 451/52). Although she does not laugh at them as she did with the men, she is still described as “*lenta*” (III, v. 562), as calm. She watches the scene without emotions. This seems like a contradiction with her speaking up for the girls in the beginning of the book. Had she been watching the betrayed girls before ordering the narrator to write another book, the contradiction would be dissolved.

There are numerous occasions on which Cupid is referred to as Venus’ son.<sup>13</sup> Yet, this is not necessarily meant to allude to Venus’ role as a mother, but simply was a common way of bringing variation into a text. Together with epithets, references to parentage were often substituted for the name. Though Venus is spoken of as a mother here, there are no instances of her acting like a mother, it is not really part of her character.

The narrator, who up to now has spoken quite openly about love, now claims to be too modest to talk about intercourse in detail. That might have seemed improper. Again, Venus comes to his rescue and explicitly tells him to include this topic as well. After all, this is her foremost area of expertise.<sup>14</sup> This is another example of Venus as a kind of alibi for writing about a topic the narrator should not write about.

In the very end of the third book Venus is honored as patron of the work. The words “*cygnus descendere tempus*” (III, v. 809), “it is time to descend from the swans”,

<sup>12</sup> Cf. III, v. 43: “*Nunc quoque nescirent!*” (“If only they still did not know <about the art of love>”).

<sup>13</sup> E.g. III, v. 762: “*Veneris puero*”.

<sup>14</sup> III, v. 760: “*Præcipue nostrum est, quod pudet*” inquit “*opus*.”; She said: “What embarrasses you especially is my work.”

refer to the goddess' carriage pulled by swans. Accordingly, she has been leading the narrator's way in her own chariot. Neither the narrator nor the author can be held responsible for the work's content. Still, this strategy did not work out. When Ovid was banned, the *Ars Amatoria* was named as one reason.

All in all, Venus is represented as in favor of love and of being in love. She therefore supports the narrator in writing the *Ars Amatoria*. She is extremely beautiful and can be an exemplary girl, covering herself when naked, and also speaks up for the girls when she sees that the men have gained an advantage, namely the first two books of the *Ars Amatoria*. Venus will help a bold lover. Still, she needs to be treated respectfully, otherwise she will take revenge. Should a lover fail or bring him- or herself into a funny situation, she will not be sympathetic, she might even laugh openly. Her being a mother is not a significant character trait.

### Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid collected ancient myths on intricately interwoven narrative levels. William Keach states that "Ovid felt free to alter and elaborate the ancient myths as they came down to him, and even to invent new aspects of his mythological narrative, as long as the most important elements of the traditional version remained intact" (Keach 1977, 10). The meter of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a catalectic dactylic hexameter, catalectic meaning that the last hexameter is incomplete.<sup>15</sup>

The story of Venus and Adonis begins in Book X, verse 503 and ends in verse 739, the total being 236 verses. However, with Venus relating the myth of Atalante and Hippomenes to Adonis (v. 560-707), Ovid tells the myth of Venus and Adonis in 87 verses. As a story within a story, the narrator is the character Orpheus grieving over his loss of Eurydice. As an omniscient intradiegetic narrator, Orpheus not only includes direct speech, such as Venus' warning only to hunt harmless animals (v. 543-552), but also gives Adonis' words as indirect speech (v. 552). Although the setting is not specified, we know from the preceding tale of Myrrha that she fled to "*terra [...] Sabaea*" (v. 480) and asked to be transformed there. This is where Adonis is born and raised. Hunting with Venus, they wander through mountains and woods (v. 535). While Venus tells Adonis about Atalante and Hippomenes, they are lying in the grass underneath a poplar tree (v. 555/6). Adonis' hounds are chasing the boar, which is just about to leave the woods or the thicket (v. 711).

Ovid does not clearly state how much time passes in his version of the myth. The narrator tells of Adonis' birth (v. 503-514), gives a summary of his childhood (v. 519-524) and a cutback to how Cupid accidentally hurt Venus with one of his arrows, causing her to fall in love with Adonis (v. 525-528). Through two lengthy lists, one of places Venus does not visit anymore, including the Olymp (v. 530-

<sup>15</sup> The edition referred to is Ovid (2010). For the myth of Venus and Adonis, I referred to Ovid (2004).

532), and another of animals she is hunting (v. 537-539), the reader gets the impression that they have spent at least several days together. Nevertheless, she is not yet accustomed to the exercise of hunting all day (v. 554: “but the unfamiliar exercise has already tired me”), which she would be after a few weeks. The actual plot lasts one day.

After she has finished the story of Atalante and Hippomenes, Venus flies to Cyprus in her carriage (v. 708/9) and Adonis continues hunting. When the boar wounds him (v. 713-716), Venus has not reached her destination yet and turns around (v. 717/8). On her arrival she finds him already unconscious (v. 720/1). The metamorphosis lasts less than an hour (v. 731-735) and the episode ends with an etymology of the flower’s name (v. 737-739). Ovid clearly says that the flower grows out of the blood (v. 735: “when a flower of the same color grew from the blood”), so technically there is no real metamorphosis. Assuming that the actual body is not changed in any way, it is surprising that Venus does not bury her beloved Adonis but simply plucks the flower she caused to grow from his blood.

In Ovid’s version of the myth Adonis is already a grown man (v. 523). His feelings towards Venus are not clearly stated, but he does not reject her. He allows her to lean against and kiss him (v. 558/9).

### 2.2.3 *Golding*

In addition to the Latin text, I want to take a look at Arthur Golding’s English translation which scholars have proven Shakespeare referred to. Written “in fourteeners (seven accented syllables to the line), Golding rendered Ovid’s delicate detail in homey English idiom” (Kahn 2007, 76). If there are differences between Ovid and Golding, we can tell what Shakespeare found in which source and what stems from his own imagination. Should Shakespeare’s poem contain details from Ovid that Golding omitted, that would prove he read the Latin text. I only took into account the more significant differences, as some deviations are due to difficulties with expressing the Latin phrasing in English. In other places, Golding omitted words or made actual mistakes because he confused words. These are the most conclusive instances.

The first discrepancy in the myth of Venus and Adonis occurs in verse 583 in the description of the tree giving birth to Adonis. Here Golding has “and <the tree> shed forth teares as though shee there should drowne”. In contrast to this rather lively description of a flood of tears, Ovid states matter-of-factly “*arbor lacrimisque cadentibus umet*” (v. 509): “and the tree is wet from falling tears”. In verse 513 Ovid uses few words to describe Adonis’ reaction to coming into the world: “*vagitque puer*”, “and the boy cried”. Golding uses more words to describe the baby, “which cryde and wayld streyght way” (v. 588). Now that Myrrha’s is over Ovid’s narrator seems to be eager to tell the next myth. The only thing the reader needs to know is that Adonis is beautiful, and so his childhood seems to be depicted in fast motion. The translation slows down a little by adding more details in

several places, such as when talking about time that “mocks us to our face” (v. 596), where the Latin has only “*fallit*” (v. 519), “<time> deceives”. In Golding’s verses 598/99 we find a very significant deviation from the original: “that wretched imp whom wickedly his graundfather begate, and whom his cursed suster bare”. The words “wretched”, “wickedly” and “cursed” contain a judgment not found in the objective Latin text: “*ille sorore natus avoq̄ue suo*” (v. 520/21), “he, born from his sister and his grandfather”. Ovid merely states the facts, while Golding seems to feel the need to express that this is morally unacceptable. The original’s verse 523 contains a logical impossibility: “*iam se formosior ipso est*”, “now he is more beautiful than himself”. The manuscript tradition is consistent here, so that an error in the text is unlikely. Golding appears to correct this perceived error: “And every day more beawtiffull than other he becam” (v. 603).

In his verse 621 Golding adds detail once more when talking about the hunting Venus, who “cheerd the hounds with hallowing like a hunt”. Ovid says of his Venus “*hortaturque canes*” (v. 537), “and she incited the hounds”. However, Venus stays away from dangerous animals, such as boars, wolves, “*armatosque unguibus urso*” (v. 540), “and bears armed with claws”. The bears in the translation are not yet grown up, it seems, as Golding has “Bearwhelpes armd with ugly pawes” (v. 624).

Next on the list of animals to be avoided while hunting are the lions, “*armenti saturatos caede leones*” (v. 541), “lions, satisfied by the slaughter of a cow”. Golding’s lions “delyght in blood” (v. 625). With “*bos*” being the more frequent word for “cow”, Golding might have mistaken “*armenti*” (“of a cow”) for a form of “*amare*” (“(to) love”), especially as in a manuscript “*rm*” is easily mistaken for “*m*”. That would explain both the “delyght” and the omission of the cow. Golding leaving out “*armenti*” on purpose seems unlikely keeping in mind that he tends to add to the original. When Venus warns Adonis that lions do not care for the things she loves about him, the classical poet has “*non movet aetas nec facies nec quae Venerem movere leones*” (v. 547/48), “your youth does not move the lions, nor your beauty, nor those things that have moved Venus”. His translator elaborates: “thy tender youth, thy beawty bryght, thy countnance fayre and brave although they had the force to win the hart of Venus, have no powre ageinst the Lyons” (v. 634-6). He probably split “*facies*” up into “beawty” and “countnance”, as the Latin word signifies both and otherwise cannot be adequately translated. On top of that, Golding added adjectives (“tender”, “bryght”, “fayre and brave”) and emphasizes that all this sufficed to make the goddess of Love herself fall in love with Adonis. The fact that the lions are in no way affected by all this stresses their savagery.

Boars are even more terrible: “*fulmen habent acres in aduncis dentibus apr̄i*” (v. 550), “the boars have lightning in their curved teeth”. Golding’s boars differ slightly, his “cruell Boares beare thunder in theyr hooked tushes” (v. 638). This might just be a simple mistake, as thunder and lightning often occur together and may thus easily be confused. With no obvious reason for the substitution, it is also just as difficult to imagine tusks containing thunder as lightning. On top of that, lightning was

usually attributed to Jove, the father of the gods. It would therefore be a good choice to emphasize the threat this animal poses. Also, “thunder” and “lightning” both have two syllables of which the first one is stressed, ruling out the meter as a reason. It is more probable that Golding made a mistake here.

Despite Venus’ warnings to stay away from dangerous prey, Adonis does not listen to her, “*sed stat monitis contraria virtus*” (v. 709), “but bravery stands opposed to warnings”. The Latin word “*virtus*” brings to mind “*vir*”, “man”. Golding translates this nicely as “but manhood by admonishment restryned could not bee” (v. 832). On closer examination, there is an important difference between the original and the translation. In Ovid’s version, the reader gets the impression that Adonis explicitly does the exact opposite of what Venus asked. This behavior is reminiscent of a small child, not of the man (“*vir*”) implied in “*virtus*”. Golding presents a brave, more mature Adonis who had always been planning on hunting boars and cannot be restrained by a woman’s warnings. When the boar sees Adonis, it attacks and mortally wounds him. Upon hearing his cries Venus returns and finds him unconscious. In her grief she displays the traditional gestures, which includes that “*indignis percussit pectora palmis*” (v. 723), “she beats her breast with her unworthy/ innocent palms”. A translation of “*indignis*” necessarily has to be restricted to one of two possible meanings: Venus’ hands can either be unworthy of holding Adonis’ any longer, or they, as a *pars pro toto* representing Venus, are innocent because they had warned Adonis. With his “and beate upon her stomach with her fist” (v. 846) Golding avoids this decision by omitting “*indignis*”. It is also worth noting that Venus beats herself with her fists upon her stomach. Although the act of beating might have led to the translation “fist”, in ancient times a grieving woman would beat her breast, not her stomach. The Latin word “*pectus*” is far too frequent for Golding to have mistaken it for stomach. Hitting one’s stomach with a fist sounds more brutal, so maybe Golding wanted to stress Venus’ violent grief. Another possibility is that was unfitting to speak of the goddess’ breast.

The mourning Venus goes on to complain to the Fates, the goddesses of destiny: “*at non tamen omnia vestri iuris erunt*” (v. 724/25), “but not everything will be in your realm”. Golding’s Venus does not talk to, but about the Fates: “Yit shall they not obtaine their will in all things” (v. 847/48). On closer examination, there are further, more crucial differences. For one thing, any Roman reader knew that the Fates, the one power above all gods, could not be denied their will. So the only thing Venus can do here is to withhold a tiny piece, her grief and the memory of the lost Adonis. Another difference is that the Latin version hints at the imminent metamorphosis, as “*non [...] omnia*”, “not everything” is going to the underworld, but the flower growing from Adonis’ blood will remain in the world of the living. The memory shall last “*semper*” (v. 726), “forever”. And yet again, Golding proves to be more dramatic with his “while the world doth last” (v. 849).

The metamorphosis, in a way catalyzed by the nectar which Venus sprinkled, takes places as soon as Adonis’ blood has been “*tactus ab illo*” (v. 732), “touched by it (i.e. the nectar)”. Golding ascribes power to the nectar itself when he writes

“through the power thereof” (v. 855/56), not “through Venus’ power”. The description in Ovid makes the reader expect anything but a beautiful flower to emerge, as the blood “*intumuit sic, ut fulvo perlucida caeno surgere bulla solet*” (v. 733/34), “rose, as when a clear water bubble usually rises in reddish brown mud”. The metamorphosis we find in the translation is more picturesque: “the blood [...] did swell like bubbles sheere that ryse in weather cleere on water” (v. 855-57). There is no more mud and dirty red color, instead one thinks of blue skies, sunshine and a nice lake. This seems to go well with Adonis’ beauty in life and that of the flower about to emerge. So why did Ovid include this unpleasant scene? The reason might be Adonis’ violent death. A reddish brown swamp might not be too far from the truth. But apart from being realistic, this description also adds another dimension to how death is seen in the story. After all, a main topic is transience. Adonis dies in the bloom of life, his beauty at its height. He needs to become ugly and disgusting, to wither, before he can bloom again – this time for real – as a flower.

This flower will only last for a short while, its very fragility is part of its name, “anemone”. Ovid derives this name from the Greek word for wind, *ανεμος*, and claims that it is too perishable and blown away by its namesakes (v. 737-39). So this short, repulsive scene is inevitable if Adonis, or rather the memory of him, is going to live on in a flower. Death is part of life, and death can be ugly. This now raises another question: Why did Golding choose to change it? It is not likely that it was a mere mistake on his side. Even if “*bullā*”, “water bubble”, is not a common word, “*fulvus*”, “reddish brown”, certainly is. One way to explain why Golding favored clear water is that his description seems more realistic. Most people would recall seeing bubbles rise in a lake. Fewer, if anybody, have witnessed water bubbles rise in a swamp. When the flower has grown from the blood, Ovid compares it to that of the pomegranate tree (“*punica*”, v. 737). Golding does not name the tree, he just says “that same tree” (v. 859) He omitted the exotic tree, probably because most of his readers did not know what it looked like and hence the comparison would have been of no use to his audience. This would be a typical characteristic of Golding’s way of translating. When he had the chance, he tried to give the stories an English setting.

#### 2.2.4 *Camerarius*

After these examples of classical texts, I want to include a poem from a textbook by Swiss Joachim Camerarius, reprinted in William Weaver’s book *Untutores Lines*. Drawing from the *Metamorphoses* as a source as well, Camerarius introduces some of the changes scholars have found in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*. In 1540, Camerarius included his version of the myth as “*Narratiumcula Exposita versibus elegiacis*” in his book “*Elementa Rhetoricae, sive Capita Exercitiorum Studii Puerilis et*

*Stil?* Although in his title<sup>16</sup> he classifies his work as an elegy, Weaver finds parallels to Shakespeare’s *epyllion*:

Camerarius’ elegiac-didactic version of the Adonis myth supplied the plot and arguably modeled the rhetorical strategies for a much lengthier, English paraphrase: Shakespeare’s Venus and Adonis. From Camerarius Shakespeare took the main outline of his *epyllion*, which focuses almost entirely on Venus’ copious arguments to a reluctant Adonis, and furthermore, crucially, remains with Venus after Adonis rejoins the hunt. Like Camerarius, Shakespeare does not narrate Adonis’ death but instead follows Venus in an ecstatic search for Adonis through a trackless wood. (Weaver 2012, 71)

Weaver identifies a verbal imitation in the concept of time. Camerarius has

*Cumque fuit mediū iam pars transacta diei,  
Phoebeoque ardens aestuat igne polus* (v. 31/2)  
(And while the middle part of the day was already over,  
and the burning sky sweats in Phoebos’ heat),

which Shakespeare renders as

And Titan, tired in the midday heat,  
With burning eye did hotly overlook them (v. 177/8)

We find a god as the sun, the middle of the day and heat in both poems. Camerarius’ next two lines,

*Ilice sub nigra niveis complexa lacertis,  
Detinet in gremio te Venus alma suo.* (v. 33/4)  
(Underneath a black holly oak embraced in snowy arms,  
nurturing Venus holds you in her lap.)

are, according to Weaver, reflected in Shakespeare’s

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,  
A lily prisoned in a gaol of snow (v. 361/2)

The Latin word “*alma*” introduces an aspect Shakespeare will take up as well. It can signify “benign”, an appropriate attribute for a goddess, as well as “nurturing”.<sup>17</sup> I will comment on Venus as a mother figure later (cf. p. 51).

Weaver stresses the importance of the context of Camerarius’ poem. His book, the *Elementa Rhetoricae, sive Capita Exercitiorum Studii Puerilis et Stili*, is a Latin textbook for boys. Weaver translates the title as “Elements of Rhetoric, subtitled The Chief Exercises of Boyhood Study and Style” (72). Apart from “the chief exercises”, “*capita exercitiorum*” can also mean “the beginning of exercises”. As Camerari-

<sup>16</sup> “*versibus elegiacis*”, in elegiac verses.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *alma mater*.

us' aim is to teach boys the basics of rhetoric, this is a reasonable translation as well. Being at the end of the grammar book, the poem is meant for boys who are about to move on and Weaver considers the topic, "Adonis' frustrated transition to manhood" (Weaver 2012, 72), fit for this purpose. Also fitting the context, Weaver sees Venus as a teacher figure "holding back the unready boy in the grove of boyhood study" (72), while Shakespeare's Venus first urges Adonis on and tries to make him a man, but later holds him back.

No matter how much Weaver stresses Camerarius' influence on Shakespeare, he still sees that of Ovid, namely of the *Metamorphoses*, *Ars Amatoria* and the *Amores*. These among others Weaver sees as evidence of the eclectic quality of Shakespeare's poem, thus fulfilling the first of three criteria of the boyhood style, the two remaining being the episodic and the ethical quality (Weaver 2012, 76-78).

Weaver quotes a passage from Camerarius arguing that boys should be encouraged to write long pieces rather than short ones, for later on it would be easy to shorten a too long text. It seems like Shakespeare acted accordingly when he turned Ovid's short sequence into an *epyllion* of 1,194 lines.

### 2.2.5 Titian: *The Art of Painting*

The last, rather uncommon source, is a painting from the Italian Titian.<sup>18</sup> It depicts a scene from the Ovidian myth and was produced for Philipp II., King of Spain (Schlink 2008, 86-90). William Keach has no doubts Shakespeare had seen at least a replica of the painting (Keach 1977, 55).

As Wilhelm Schlink points out, Titian chose an unusual, albeit crucial scene: In the painting, Venus is trying to hold Adonis back. Equipped for the hunt, he has his hounds with him and Schlink identifies his weapon as a boar spear. To an expert hunter, such as a sixteenth century king, it was a distinctive spear clearly hinting at the boar about to kill the young man. We also find Titan, the sleeping Cupid and his bow and the arrows that had caused Venus to fall in love in the picture. S. Clark Hulse calls to mind Ovid's verses likening Adonis to Cupid,<sup>19</sup> and remarks that "this figure [i.e. the one I identified as Cupid], equipped with both wings and quiver, lies in the same position as the dying Adonis in illustrated Ovids of the Renaissance, so the dead shepherd may here be fused with the sleeping boy, reminding us of the conclusion of the tale" (Hulse 1978, 99). This is a by far more direct reminder of Adonis' imminent death than the boar spear he is carrying. It also stresses Venus' helplessness: With her back to the viewer, we cannot read her face while body language implies she is straining to hold Adonis back. The depiction of what could be the dead Adonis, however, renders her efforts pointless.

<sup>18</sup> The painting is currently on display at the Museo del Prado in Madrid. See the museum's online gallery at <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/venus-and-adonis-1/> (date of access 21 Nov 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Met.* X.515-18.

Looking only at the painting and its title and not taking into account what we know from Ovid, we see a naked Venus holding on to Adonis trying to leave her. Even if we know she fears for his life, the picture also allows for desire as a reason for her holding him back. Although Adonis’ face is turned towards the goddess, his body is trying to get away from her. Still, youth as reason for the reluctance hardly comes from this source, as the Adonis in the picture appears to be old enough to fall in love.

However, we find painting not only as a source, but also represented in the poem itself. In their introduction to their edition of Shakespeare’s poems (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 31-56), Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen point out that Sidney had already written about Venus and “also associated [her] with the visual arts” (40). Furthermore, in his “vividly pictorial description of Adonis’ runaway horse, expressing the unbridled male sexuality in which his young master is pitifully deficient” (47), the poet features as painter. He even seems to be describing the work of one in verse 289: “Look when a painter would surpass the life”. It is noteworthy that in his description of the horse Shakespeare fulfills many of Isidore’s criteria for an ideal horse (cf. Clark 2006, 158). Isidore wants a “small, firm head” and Shakespeare gives his horse a “small head” (v. 296). While Isidore believes a horse’s emotion are shown in its ears, which therefore should be “short and expressive”, Adonis’ horse is described as having “short ears” (v. 297). Instead of Isidore’s “thick mane and tail” we only find “thin mane, thick tail” (v. 298) in Shakespeare, the thin mane possibly made up for by a “high crest” (v. 297). Shakespeare describes the “firm roundness of the solid part of the hooves”, which Isidore wants, simply as “round-hoofed” (v. 295). Shakespeare says of the horse that

Sometime he scuds far off and there he stares;  
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather. (v. 301-2),

meaning “that it is easily aroused from absolute quiet”, as Isidore says it should. W. R. Streitberger identifies Plato as an inspiration for Adonis’ horse, with Thomas Elyot as a likely source for the knowledge on Plato (Streitberger 1975, 289).

The detailed description of the horse with every part of its body as well as its movements and habits being laid out for the reader, inspires a much more vivid picture in the reader’s mind than any painter possibly could have produced.

### 3 The Dedication

Right after the epilogue, we find a dedication “To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield” (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 128). Ingeborg Boltz remarks that Shakespeare employs several *topoi* expressing modesty, as was customary in a dedicatory letter (Boltz 2009, 146/7). Although the expression “unpolished lines” might be accounted for by

these *topoi*, that would be the exact opposite of the elaborate *epyllion*. By including the word “unpolished”, Shakespeare plays with his readers’ expectations. They would certainly have heard about Shakespeare’s *epyllion*. By claiming not to have met the standards, he only proves he knows the rules of the genre.<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare goes on to refer to *Venus and Adonis* as “the first heir of my invention”. Peter Hyland thinks that “Shakespeare may have been erasing all the plays he had already written in order to intensify the sense of the poem’s significance. This does not mean that he really regarded it more highly than his plays, but he was clearly aware of the demands of his intended readership” (Hyland 2003, 66). Thus with his dedication to one man, Shakespeare was really consciously addressing the whole of his possible readership. If we want to take it a step further, we could see the word “heir” as introducing the topic of legacy. If *Venus and Adonis* is the first “heir”, that makes Shakespeare’s plays illegitimate “children”. The publication would equal Shakespeare’s will, and because he did not arrange for his plays to be published,<sup>21</sup> they are not legitimate heirs.

Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen identify two fields of metaphors, one employing words associated with pregnancy, giving birth and family in general. The other one belongs to the country and, as they argue, already provides the setting for the poem (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 129). It might also have been a reference to Shakespeare’s hometown. After all, some Londoners might have looked down at him for not being from a big city, and he might have chosen to bring up this topic before anybody else had a chance to do so. As for comparing the poem to a baby, there probably is more to it. As we will see later (cf. p. 33), the Lord of Southampton’s father had died early on. As a ward, the young man had to wait until he came of age before he could claim his father’s heritage. Thus, the word “heir” would have a special meaning for him at that time. Furthermore, Southampton’s ward had proposed a marriage for him. With this in mind, the words “I leave [...] your honour to your heart’s content; which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world’s hopeful expectation” (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 128) appear to be more than just a polite commonplace. What his heart on the one side, and his ward on the other side wished for were not the same thing. On the other hand, “the world” could also have been people supporting the lord. If that was true, the expressed wish would have been for Southampton to fall in love with his bride-to-be. Shakespeare might have gotten himself in a difficult position had he openly told his patron to do what his heart told him (especially since after the publication virtually everybody could read the dedication). Thus he might have chosen to qualify his statement.

<sup>20</sup> For the genre of the *epyllion*, cf. p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Hyland saying “there is no evidence that he had any involvement in the publication of any of his plays” (Hyland 2003, 66).

### 3.1 Patronage

Now that we know what Shakespeare wrote in his dedication to the Lord of Southampton, we need to consider his reasons. A common approach is to assume financial problems: With London’s theaters closed from September 1592 til June 1594, opened only two months in between, due to an outbreak of the plague, Shakespeare could not earn money with his plays the way he used to unless he left London and performed somewhere else (Boltz 2009a). Apart from being a possible reason for the composition of *Venus and Adonis*, we find the plague inspired allusions to death bells and death as such in the text (cf. Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 69/70). Shakespeare could hope for money for dedicating his poem to a patron. Still, Ingeborg Boltz doubts that that would have been a large sum, because the Lord of Southampton himself was having financial difficulties at that time (Boltz 2009a, 147). Peter Hyland, on the other side, calls the young aristocrat “a generous benefactor to writers and scholars” in 1953 (Hyland 2003, 32). Even if Shakespeare did not receive a fortune from his patron, it certainly was enough to make him dedicate his second narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, to the same man. Others argue that already in 1596 Shakespeare “purchased both a grant of arms, [...] and a substantial mansion, New Place, in his native Stratford-upon-Avon” (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 14). It is unlikely that just three years earlier, his financial situation would have been devastating.

Another explanation for turning to a patron would be what we today would call a marketing strategy: The Lord of Southampton was a fashionable man, and Shakespeare could count on many people to try to emulate him (Hyland 2003, 32). Thus, as soon as his poem had a connection to the Lord, it would also gain more readers.

### 3.2 Southampton

There are different interpretations finding a more or less hidden meaning in the text. The first, from a letter by William Renoldes, rather a conspiracy theory, is quoted by Leslie Hotson:

yet [...] if they colde once move me by ther printed bookes to com to the queene [...] they suppoes it would be there best sporte, for they would then beleve that by ther bookes I conseavid a secret hope of some great love in the queene towards me (Hotson 1950, 141-7)

“They” means the Privy Council who Renolds believes to have published certain books, such as *Venus and Adonis*, only in order to make him believe the Queen loved him so that he would make a fool of himself.

Apart from such admittedly not quite sane explanations of Shakespeare’s works, scholars have come up with other solutions. In his essay “Wriothesley’s Resistance” Patrick M. Murphy talks about alternative interpretations of *Venus and*

*Adonis* (Murphy 1997, 323-340). He sees the poem as an analogy of the Earl of Southampton's life. The key to this approach is the Elizabethan wardship practice.

Henry Wriothesley's (the later Earl of Southampton) father had died, so he eventually became the ward of Burghley (at least as far as his personal affairs were concerned). Burghley was also the warden of his granddaughter, Elizabeth Vere, who he chose as a bride for Southampton. Her father, Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, is the man that some people believe actually wrote the plays commonly ascribed to William Shakespeare. That would have some interesting consequences for the interpretation of the dedication to the Lord of Southampton.<sup>22</sup> However, the desired groom did not agree with the marriage and succeeded in postponing the wedding until he came of age. He then had two options. The first one would have been to refuse to marry on grounds of "disparagement",

including: first, defects of the mind, involving a lunatic or an idiot; second, defects of the blood, involving persons of lower social station, aliens, or bastards; and third, defects of the body, including missing limbs or other deformities. (Murphy 1997, 325)

To Southampton, the second aspect would have been the most interesting one: After Elizabeth Vere's mother had given birth to her, her husband left her because he had serious doubts about the paternity (334-335). If she really was an illegitimate child, Southampton would have had the right to refuse the marriage. Murphy also detects possible hints at an incestuous affair between Anne and William Cecil, Elizabeth's mother and grandfather. We also find the topic of incest in Ovid, while Shakespeare seems to avoid it in *Venus and Adonis*.

The second option for a former ward to escape a proposed marriage was paying a fine, which Southampton did in the end. The statute of Merton offered this way out, stating that no one could be forced to marry, "but when he cometh to full age he shall give to his lord, and pay him as much as any would have given him for the marriage" (325). In this case, the amount was £5,000. But why did the former ward pay at all, when he had a perfectly legal alternative? Apart from claims of disparagement being relatively rare, Murphy sees another reason:

This (self-) destructive strategy, however, would be an affront to Burghley, beyond proof and acceptable persuasion, and politically very dangerous, as well as personally offensive to feelings of mutual concern likely shared between the ward, his guardian, and perhaps Elizabeth herself. (1997, 336)

Thus Murphy thinks Southampton preferred to pay the customary fine out of respect for his former guardian.

So how does this connect to Shakespeare's poem? The first and maybe the only direct hint is the dedication to the Earl of Southampton. We find another allu-

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<sup>22</sup> For the Earl of Oxford as the actual author, see Boltz 2009b, 188-189.

sion to the process of inheritance and thus of the issues Southampton was facing at that time when in the end of the poem Venus addresses the flower:

Here was thy father’s bed, here in my breast;  
Thou art his next of blood, and ‘tis thy right. (v. 1183/4)

Venus considers the question of legacy immediately after Adonis’ death and then, at least physically, moves on in her chariot. When reading these lines Southampton probably identified with the flower easily: After his father’s death, he was taken away to live with his guardian. At first glance, the flower in the poem has a clear advantage over Southampton, as it is granted its rights on the spot, while he had to wait until he came of age and even then pay a large amount of money. Yet, the flower was cropped by Venus and thus will die shortly. This could be seen as an ironic word of comfort to a possibly impatient heir: It is true that he has had to wait for a long time and will have to pay a considerable sum, but at least he does not have to pay with his life for what is his.

## 4 The Poem

Today, we chiefly associate Shakespeare with his plays. This we probably share with Londoners in 1593. Shakespeare had at that time already written several plays (Kahn 2007, 72-7). So why did he now turn to poetry, and why did he publish *Venus and Adonis* under his own name?

Kahn mentions one practical reason for the young author to turn his back on the stage: Due to an outburst of the plague “London theaters were closed from June 1592 until June 1594 [...], with only two brief periods of playing in the winters of 1593 and 1594” (72). Unable to earn money with his plays, Shakespeare turned to poetry as a way to pay his bills. The topic of *Venus and Adonis* was not unheard of among Elizabethans.<sup>23</sup> Some scholars are of the opinion that Shakespeare had been working on the poem for some time, others that he had a draft already and just revised it for publication. Kahn also talks about another explanation scholars have found, namely Shakespeare wanting “his career to follow the pattern of classical poets such as Virgil and Ovid, beginning with pastoral lyrics that often focused on the vicissitudes of love, and then moving into a loftier epic style” (72). The setting of *Venus and Adonis* is pastoral, and Venus aptly embodies the “vicissitudes of love”.

Another possible reason, Kahn continues, is rivalry between poets. John Clapham dedicated his poem *Narvissus* to Southampton as well. The topic is the same, but it was written in Latin. In the *Shakespeare-Handbuch* (Boltz 2009a, 146) we find Greene’s attack on Shakespeare as a likely motivation for him to prove himself.

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<sup>23</sup> For works of Greene Shakespeare may have been inspired by, see Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 18.

Assuming Shakespeare wanted to work with the myth of Venus and Adonis, with only three characters, it would not have provided enough roles. In addition to that, both Venus and Adonis would probably have been played by boys – Venus, because only men were allowed to act on stage and Adonis, because the character is not a grown man yet. This would render the whole play ironic. The myth could have served as a subplot in another play, like Tyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In that case, however, he could hardly have developed the psychological depth of the characters the way he did (Dubrow 1987, 77).

Unlike Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, Shakespeare writes in iambic pentameters (Ovid had used catalectic dactylic hexameter, cf. p. 24). Each stanza consists of six lines, which gives us 199 stanzas. The rhyme scheme is ababcc. While Ovid's relating of the myth at least partly had an etiological background, that is it explains the origin of a flower and why love sometimes appears to be cursed, we do not find any evidence for this in Shakespeare.

One of the most obvious differences is the length. Of Ovid's 87 verses, Shakespeare makes 1,194. With just one more stanza, he would have achieved the even number of 200 stanzas. The number of verses (1,200) would have been reminiscent of the number twelve, which Christian tradition names as the perfect number.<sup>24</sup> Twelve is the number of months in a year as well as hours both in a day and a night. It also is the number of the apostles. Thus, by adding only one more stanza, the poem would have been perfected in Christian terms. However, that would not do justice to the content: It is a recurrent theme throughout the work that Adonis is still quite young.<sup>25</sup> So just like Adonis' life, the poem seems to end prematurely. Nevertheless, it is debatable whether readers would have counted the lines and discovered this as well as whether Shakespeare did this on purpose.

Heather Dubrow finds another reason for this premature and therefore incomplete ending in Venus' "volatile character" (Dubrow 1987, 42). She points out that in both Ovid's original and Golding's translation Venus actively ends the story by transforming the dead Adonis into a flower. Shakespeare's Venus simply witnesses this transformation.

Another alteration which Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 57) point out is the omission of Cupid. He takes no active part in the story and is only mentioned once. This we also find in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. The "even more remarkable" (57) alteration is Adonis: Venus' lover, that he was in Ovid, suddenly appears as "resolutely unresponsive to Venus' wooing" (57). Shakespeare's contemporary "readers, well versed in the *Metamorphoses*, must have read on and on, increasingly puzzled by the failure

<sup>24</sup> This would be even more striking not read as "one thousand two hundred", but as "twelve hundred".

<sup>25</sup> Cf. v. 127: "The tender spring upon thy tempting lip shows thee unripe; yet mayst thou well be tasted."; v. 187: "young and so unkind?"; Adonis himself stresses this in v. 416: "Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth?"; later he is spoken of as "the boy that by her side lay killed" (v. 1165).

either of Venus’ brilliant rhetoric or of her physical approaches to stimulate any erotic response in him” (57). Apart from making an impression on his readers, this also was a welcome opportunity for Shakespeare to show his own ability: While his readers wondered why any man would not be seduced by Venus’ words, at the same time they would have been impressed by the poet’s skill. This is exactly what Shakespeare would have been aiming for in his first publication, to prove he was an outstanding rhetorician. This discipline was valued very highly and important especially for somebody who had not attended university. Those of the Elizabethan authors who had are referred to as “University Wits”. There was an interesting relationship between them and Shakespeare.

#### 4.1 The Genre: Village vs. Cambridge

Without a doubt, *Venus and Adonis* is poetry – but a further definition of this and similar poems is difficult. William Keach argues that for the sake of simplicity and because “these Elizabethan poems are sufficiently like one another and sufficiently indebted to one another to be grouped under a single name, and they are closer related to late classical *epyllia* than to any other kind of poem” (Keach 1977, xvi/xvii) *Venus and Adonis* may be called an *epyllion* (information from Anz 2007, 54-56). The word *epyllion* is Greek and denotes a small epos. The genre was established by Kallimachos, a Hellenistic poet and patron of the arts in the third century before Christ. He thought of the epos as too long and outdated. An *epyllion* typically consisted of 100-800 verses, written in either hexameter or, less often, distichon. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is counted among the classical *epyllia*. A poet established himself as a *poetus doctus*, educated poet writing for an educated audience in a polished and elaborate style (von Wilpert 1969, 228). Weaver (Weaver 2012, 7) differentiates between two kinds of content of the English *epyllion*, mythological or historical. Thus *Venus and Adonis* is a mythological *epyllion*.

As we have seen before, Shakespeare received a rather basic education and did not go to university.<sup>26</sup> This is an important distinction from other writers from his time, the so-called “University Wits”. Robert Fricke (Fricke 1975, 80-83) talks about a trilogy of plays written by authors who certainly received a university education between 1598/99 and 1601/02, a few years after *Venus and Adonis* was published. Fricke finds a direct mentioning of Shakespeare and mocking of his *epyllion*. This can be taken as a revenge for the provocation that Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* surely was. In choosing the *Metamorphoses* as a source and making a Latin quotation of Ovid his epigram, Shakespeare entered the “University Wits” domain. If we add Camerarius’ grammar book as a source, Shakespeare even seems to have proven that a school book was all he needed to write a very successful poem. He did not need to go to Cambridge. According to Fricke, the play also

<sup>26</sup> In the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece*, he talks about his “untutored lines”, possibly stressing that he needed no university for his work.

tells Shakespeare to turn from narrative poems to more serious topics. Ironically, Shakespeare seems to follow the classical tradition. As we have seen above, Ovid had written love poetry before the *Metamorphoses*. It was the first topic an aspiring poet turned to. Encouraging Shakespeare to turn to something as serious as an epic now actually is acknowledging that he has mastered this first step.

Furthermore, Fricke stresses that Shakespeare's plays are not mentioned in the academic play. He should have liked that, as he deliberately published this first narrative poem under his name as the starting point of his career as an author. It might also show us that authorship of plays might not have been deemed too important. Yet, the plays are another important distinction to set Shakespeare apart from the "University Wits", as he took an active part in the theaters, both on stage and as a shareholder. Fricke suggests the university educated writers envied the players their success, feeling that they merely repeated another's words and received all the admiration for that. Shakespeare's acting could come in here as another reason for the "University Wits" dislike for him.

#### 4.1.1 Shakespeare and Marlowe

One other Elizabethan author often connected with Shakespeare is Christopher Marlowe. Both writers were working on Ovidian poetry at roughly the same time. A possible explanation, even a reason for both of them to start writing at the same time, is a letter offending playwrights. It could have encouraged both men to "show the reading public what great things they could achieve that had nothing to do with 'play-making'" (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 21). While Fricke does not name him among the "University Wits" proper, Peter Hyland nevertheless calls Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* more sophisticated than Shakespeare's two *epyllia* (Hyland 2003, 56). He shows how Shakespeare introduces his "Rose-cheeked Adonis" (v. 3) with a quote from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*.<sup>27</sup> Although the publication of *Hero and Leander* cannot be dated with certainty, "Shakespeare, at any rate, was familiar with it" (Hyland 2003, 56). Hyland stresses that by the time Shakespeare turned to writing poetry, Marlowe was already well established (57) and thus "To outdo Marlowe at his own Ovidian game would have been a notable feat" (57) for Shakespeare. The poem resulting from this "Ovidian game" Hyland describes as "deeply transgressive; Marlowe seems to have intended to make it as outrageous as possible, stimulating both heterosexual and homosexual erotic interest" (57). Considering the source for *Venus and Adonis*, namely the tenth book of the *Metamorphoses*, it is an obvious choice for Shakespeare if he wants to draw connections to this aspect of *Hero and Leander*. Book X is told by Orpheus who has just lost his love Eurydice and decides never to love a woman again. Instead, he will turn to loving boys. The topics of the stories told here are

<sup>27</sup> "For his sake whom their goddess held so dear, /Rose-cheeked Adonis", v. 92-3, quoted from Hyland 2003, 57.

all connected with lovers meeting some kind of difficulty or prohibition. Adonis, after all, was conceived by Myrrha from her own father.<sup>28</sup>

So if Marlowe had already written about homosexuality, in order to outdo him here, Shakespeare chose incest as a topic. With this topic he was ahead of his time: “The authors of Elizabethan *epyllia* show no particular interest in Ovid’s tales of incest, although the Jacobean, not surprisingly, do” (Keach 1977, 18). Still, he never names Myrrha or retells her story. Yet, the following stanza is quite explicit:

Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?  
 Nay, more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth.  
 Art thou a woman’s son, and canst not feel  
 What ‘tis to love, how want of love tormenteth?  
 O, had thy mother borne so hard a mind,  
 She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind! (v. 199-204)

Being pregnant from her own father, Myrrha left her family. She did not want to live, but neither to die, afraid of meeting dead family members. At the time of Adonis’ birth, Myrrha was a tree, the only way out of her misery. So no, he was not “brought forth” by her, and, strictly speaking, he was not “a woman’s son”. Following Ovid, he even was a statue’s descendant: The sculpturer Pygmalion had fallen in love with his own work, which Venus made come to life.<sup>29</sup>

Fie, lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,  
 Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,  
 Statue contenting but the eye alone,  
 Thing like a man, but of no woman bred! (v. 211-14)

Shakespeare includes incest in yet another way: Although Venus treats Adonis like a mother, she also desires him for her lover (cf. p. 51).

Apart from that, Shakespeare’s poem is “more English”: Although Marlowe also wrote in English instead of Latin, his setting is more foreign than that of Shakespeare (Kahn 2007, 75). The latter’s staying true to the English language and country in a way sets him apart from the “University Wits”. He seems to be making a point of the fact that he does not need foreign languages or settings for his work – among his sources, however, are still classical Latin ones. In conclusion, Shakespeare made his entry into the literary world by challenging one of its leaders. He showed that he could produce Ovidian poetry himself, and he was even more daring than Marlowe. Not having studied at a university, he may have wanted to make a point of showing off his knowledge of the *Metamorphoses* by including several myths, mostly just hinting at them.

<sup>28</sup> For a more detailed look at the myth of Myrrha and its significance for the poem, see p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. p. 43 and Met. X, v. 243-97.

#### 4.1.2 *Myths*

Given their popularity and the education a considerable part of the readership had, a contemporary reader very likely detected the hints at mythological characters. Each of the myths was purposefully included in *Venus and Adonis* to contribute to the poem.

##### Tantalus

While Venus is begging Adonis for a kiss, we find the following lines:

Never did passenger in summer's heat  
More thirst for drink than she for this good turn.  
Her help she sees, but help she cannot get;  
She bathes in water, yet her fire must burn. (v. 91-94)

This is reminiscent of Tantalus, who is standing in water that recedes whenever he tries to drink. In addition to being thirsty in all eternity, he is also hungry (Fink 1993, 289/90). Ovid makes Jupiter Tantalus' father.<sup>30</sup> This would make Venus his half-sister. By likening her suffering to that of Tantalus, Shakespeare renders all additional description of her pain superfluous.

When Adonis has revealed his plan of hunting the boar (v. 587/8), we see Venus once more in distress: "That worse than Tantalos' is her annoy" (v. 599). Her situation now is even worse than in verses 91-94: Before, what she desired was right in front of her, but she could not have it. Now, she fears that Adonis will be taken away from her altogether. Traditionally, the torments of Tantalus are the worst imaginable. Even the thought of Adonis dying makes Venus suffer even more, so that the reader can only guess how she feels when Adonis actually dies.

##### Narcissus and Echo

Because Narcissus (*Metamorphoses* III, 339-519) rejects Echo, the nymph's body withers away, and only her voice is left. Narcissus, however, walks on to find a spring. When he kneels down to drink, he sees his reflection in the water and immediately falls in love with himself. He cannot bring himself to part with his reflection and in the end slowly fades away and dies. His dead body turns into a flower, the narcissus, while the mourning Echo is left behind.

There are some obvious similarities between the Ovidian and the Shakespearean youth: Both are beautiful, die young and are turned into flowers. Both like to hunt<sup>31</sup> and their beauty is oftentimes described using the colors red and white (cf. *Met.* III, v. 422/3). Also, both are said to have a "hairless face" (v. 487 and *Met.* III

<sup>30</sup> In the *Metamorphoses* Niobe, Tantalos' daughter says: "*Iuppiter alter avus*"; "my other grandfather is Jupiter" (*Met.* VI, v. 176).

<sup>31</sup> *Met.* III v. 413: "*studio venandi*"; "the fervor of hunting" is what brought Narcissus to the spring.

v. 422), stressing their youth. Still, while Narcissus’ youth functions more as part of his beauty, Adonis’ youth is the reason he rejects Venus.

Being rejected, Venus tries to persuade Adonis of her beauty and, when that is not successful, finally bursts out:

Is thine own heart to thine own face affected?  
 Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left?  
 Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected,  
 Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft.  
 Narcissus so himself himself forsook,  
 And died to kiss his shadow in the brook. (v. 157-62)

She uses Narcissus’ fate as a warning to Adonis.

During her lamentation over Adonis’ death, Venus says: “When he beheld his shadow on the brook” (v. 1099). “His shadow in the brook” is a verbal repetition of verse 162. This is an elegant way of reminding the reader that Venus had been afraid this might happen all along, without her actually saying so.

While Shakespeare establishes this connection between Adonis and Narcissus, he does the same with Venus and Echo. In verses 147/8 Venus says she could dance like the nymph Echo was. Both women are rejected, left behind, and later find their beloveds’ corpses. When Venus tries to persuade Adonis to hunt a less dangerous animal than the boar, she mentions Echo (v. 695/6), who doubles the hounds’ barking. In verses 829-52 Echo even joins Venus in her lamenting and repeats her sighs. After Narcissus’ death, Echo did not have the chance to express her grief, as she could only repeat another’s utterances. She can now mourn by echoing Venus.

### Myrrha

Myrrha is Adonis’ mother. She falls in love with her own father and is so ashamed she tries to kill herself, but her nurse intervenes. Together, the two women take the opportunity of Myrrha’s mother’s absence and trick her father into sleeping with his own daughter. Upon finding out what they have done, he bans his daughter, by then pregnant with his child. Myrrha keeps wandering around, until she finally cannot stand the shame anymore and asks the gods to take her away both from the world of the living and of the dead. She is granted her wish and changed into a tree (*Met.* X, 298-502). With the help of the goddess Lucina, Adonis is delivered from this tree (*Met.* X, 503-513). One important detail is that Myrrha’s love was inspired neither by Venus nor by Cupid, but by one of the Furies (*Met.* X, v. 311-14) and consequently the incest is not associated with Venus and her son.

Myrrha’s story explains several lines in the poem. In every one of them, Venus seems to be unaware of Adonis’ history, such as when she calls him “Thing like a man, but of no woman bred!” (v. 214) or when she describes his beauty to Titan:

There lives a son that sucked an earthly mother  
 May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other. (v. 863/4)

Though Adonis had “an earthly mother”, she was a tree at the time he was born and could not nurse him. Again, Venus’ ignorance creates irony:

Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?  
 Nay, more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth.  
 Art thou a woman’s son, and canst not feel  
 What ‘tis to love, how want of love tormenteth?  
 O, had thy mother borne so hard a mind,  
 She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind! (v. 199-204)

Strictly speaking, he is not a “woman’s son”, but a tree’s. Also, Myrrha herself knew exactly “how want of love tormenteth”, it even made her try to commit suicide. Throughout the poem, we find various incidents where Adonis’ heart is said to be hard and is compared to stone. The first of these is “flint-hearted boy!” (v. 95), which first introduces the comparison to flint. But why flint, and not for example marble? Maybe this is because flint can be used to light a fire. Just as the flint stone produces sparks that eventually turn into flames, Adonis inspires love (often likened to fire) in Venus. The “rain” probably refers to Venus’ tears that cannot move Adonis. Venus again talks of Adonis’ “hard heart”:

O, give it [i.e. my heart] me, lest thy hard heart do steel it,  
 And beeing steeled, soft sighs can never grave it;  
 Then love’s deep groans I never shall regard,  
 Because Adonis’ heart hath made mine hard. (v. 375-78)

This threat of an unsympathetic love may scare the reader, but is of no effect to the unexperienced Adonis. Still, this is a first indication that Venus’ unhappy love might have consequences for all lovers. Near the end of the poem, Venus finally does curse love (v. 1135 ff.). In verses 425/6, Adonis actually takes up the motif of his hard heart:

Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flatt’ry,  
 For where a heart is hard they make no batt’ry.

The first of these two verses contains an anticlimactic tricolon, with flattery being the beginning of wooing and vows its most serious part. This reversed order might represent Venus choosing the wrong approach as well.

In verses 500-03 we once more find Venus accusing Adonis:

Thy eyes’ shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine,  
 Hath taught them scornful tricks, and such disdain  
 That they have murdered this poor heart of mine.

Here we once more find the thought of Adonis’ heart being “contagious”. In verses 375/6, Venus uttered her fear it might infect her own heart, and now it influenced his eyes. Adonis’ heart controls his ears as well:

For know, my heart stands armed in mine ear,  
And will not let a false sound enter there (v. 779/80)

All this makes the reader feel like Adonis is perfectly able to take care of himself. However, we also find the perfect opposite of this “tough”, malevolent heart right in the next couple of lines:

Lest the deceiving harmony should run  
Into the quiet closure of my breast;  
And then my little heart were quite undone,  
In his bedchamber to be barred of rest.  
No, lady, no; my heart longs not to groan,  
But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone. (v. 781-86)

Adonis obviously knows the risks of love and decides to avoid it altogether. He thus avoids the fate of the mother he never met. Deeply in love with her own father, Myrrha could find no rest: At midnight, when everybody else was asleep, only she was wide awake (*Met.* X, v. 36872).

Her own love drove Myrrha into suicide, where she failed, and finally into something even worse than death: She is separated from all human beings, alive and dead, and can never be reconciled with her family (which might be a comforting thought for her, since she cheated on her mother with her father). So what about Adonis? He is introduced with the following words: “Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn” (v. 4). Later, he says:

“I know not love”, quoth he, “nor will not know it,  
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it.” (v. 409/10)

So instead of loving one of his parents, Adonis loves hunting. This love is what kills him, and from his blood grows a plant, likening him to his mother.

There is a certain irony in Adonis’ behavior: He is aware of the dangers of love and tries to guard himself against these. But he only thinks about Venus’ love and does not see the real threat: His love for hunting. If he had indulged in Venus’ love, he would not have encountered the boar the next day.

### Pygmalion

With Pygmalion, we encounter another ancestor of Adonis. A very gifted sculpturer appalled by women, he builds a most beautiful statue from ivory. It is so perfect it can be mistaken for a real woman, and Pygmalion treated it like one. When he asks Venus to make his wife like her, she knows he really wants the statue as his wife, and makes her come alive. The daughter of Pygmalion and his statue is Paphos, the mother of Cinyras, Myrrha’s father (*Met.* X, v. 243-97 and Dun-

can-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 151-152 n. v. 211-16). The statue as Adonis' ancestor is recognizable in the Venus' lines:

Fie, lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,  
Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,  
Statue contenting but the eye alone,  
Thing like a man, but of no woman bred! (v. 211-14)

However, if this is the statue's heritage showing in Adonis, Venus has only herself to blame. After all, she was the one who granted Pygmalion's wish and watched over the marriage:

*Coniugo, quod fecit, adest dea, iamque coactis  
cornibus in plenum noviens lunaribus orbem  
illa Paphon genuit, de qua tenet insula nomen.* (Met. X, v. 295-97)

The goddess watched over the marriage she had brought about, and already when the crescent of the moon had completed the disk nine times (i.e. after nine months), did she give birth to Paphos, from whom the island has its name.

So, if it had not been for Venus, Adonis would never have been born.

If we think back on Adonis' "hard heart", we find an explanation in his statue-great-great-grandmother. Although she was technically made of ivory, not of stone, her being a statue brings stone to mind nevertheless. Just as she used to be of ivory through and through, Adonis' heart appears to be made of stone.

#### Atalante and Hippomenes

The beautiful Atalante was warned by an oracle not to marry. As she is a very fast runner, she decides that whoever beats her in a race would become her husband. If she wins, however, her opponent has to die. Many men enter the race and loose. Hippomenes asks for Venus' help, who in turn gives him three golden apples. Whenever Atalante overtakes him, he throws one of the apples to distract her. She cannot resist and stops to pick up each one. Also, she feels drawn to her opponent, without realizing she is in love. Hippomenes wins the race with Venus' help and marries Atalante. However, Hippomenes forgets to thank Venus. Enraged, Venus brings lust onto him, so that the two violate an old sanctuary of Athena in the woods. Athena punishes the couple by turning them into lions. Venus tells Adonis this story to warn him of the dangers of hunting, as he might encounter wild animals such as lions (*Met. X*, v. 560-707).<sup>32</sup>

We find the lions from the original in Shakespeare's poem in three different places:

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<sup>32</sup> Thus with 147 lines this myth is longer than that of Venus and Adonis framing it, which is told in 87 lines.

Being ireful, on the lion he [i.e. the boar] will venture. (v. 628)

Here, the lion serves as an example of a highly dangerous animal and makes the boar appear even more dangerous.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,  
But the blunt boar, rough bear or lion proud (v. 883/4)

It is interesting to see that while both the boar’s and the bear’s attributes stress their fierceness, the lion is called “proud”. This could be a reference to Hippomenes, who Venus thought was too proud to thank her. But pride is an attribute commonly ascribed to the lion.

To see his [i.e. Adonis’] face the lion walked along  
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him (v. 1093/4)

As the footnotes suggest, “fear” in this case means “frighten, scare” (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 221). Adonis is likened to the proverbial lamb that the lion will not attack. This creates a rather paradisaical atmosphere, while at the same time pointing at Adonis’ innocence.

#### Salmacis and Hermaphroditus

The mythological boy Hermaphroditus, son of Venus and Mercury, is the origin of the word “hermaphrodite”. Ovid (*Met.* IV, 284-388) claims that he looked both like his mother and his father<sup>33</sup> and thus was named after both of them.<sup>34</sup> At the age of fifteen Hermaphroditus leaves home. While he is traveling, the nymph Salmacis, who is as beautiful as she is vain, falls for him. She approaches him and straightforwardly offers herself either as a secret affair or a bride, should he not already have one. However, Hermaphroditus is still a “*puer*” (v. 329), a boy, meaning he cannot fend for himself yet (Menge 2007, 165). He blushes at her words, “*nescit enim, quid amor*” (v. 330) – “because he does not know what love is.” When the nymph gets even closer to him, the boy sends her away and she agrees to leave. Young and naive Hermaphroditus does not notice she is secretly watching him and takes off his clothes to take a bath. At this sight, Salmacis cannot hold back any longer and follows him. But try as she might, Hermaphroditus does not give in, and the desperate nymph calls on the gods for help, asking that the two of them be joined together inseparably, which the gods grant her – the first hermaphrodite is created. Hermaphroditus in turn asks his parents for every man entering that spring to be weakened and to leave it as half a man. His wish is

<sup>33</sup> “*cuius erat facies, in qua materque paterque cognosci possent*” (*Met.* IV, 290/1); “he had a face in which you could recognize both his mother and his father”.

<sup>34</sup> “*nomen quoque traxit ab illis*” (*Met.* IV, 291); “he also derived his name from them”. What Ovid does not explicitly mention is that while he as a Latin author uses the names *Mercurius* and *Cytherea* (v. 288), the latter being a common name for Venus, Hermaphroditus’ name is derived from the Greek names of the gods, *Hermes* and *Aphrodite*.

granted as well. Its explaining a natural phenomenon makes this myth another etiological one.

Heather Dubrow points out that Shakespeare takes an image from either Ovid's original or Golding's translation of the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, changes it, and then includes it into his poem (Dubrow 1987, 46/7). Both Adonis and Hermaphroditus are still very young (cf. p. 51) and therefore not yet interested in love. Both are desired by very persistent, beautiful suitors. We even find Salmacis likened to a "*regia [...] ales*" (v. 362), a "royal bird", i.e. an eagle, while Venus' behavior is likened to that of an "empty eagle" (v. 55). Both boys are described as extremely beautiful with the colors red and white. Although Hermaphrodite's fate was dreadful to any reader, Adonis' turns out to be even worse.

#### 4.2 Characterizations of Venus and Adonis

Keach sees the poem as characterized by opposition and inversion. Obviously, one of the protagonists is male and mortal, the other female and immortal. Their roles, however, are inverted, the female wooing the male, the immortal begging and depending on the mortal. He proposes that Shakespeare wanted to show how the wooer is actually depending on the one wooed, in whose power it is to reject (Keach 1977, 59).

In the characterization of either of the two characters, tears play an important role. When the narrator describes the "tears which chorus-like her eyes did rain" (v. 360), or when Venus is weeping for Adonis and we read

O, how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow!  
 Her eye seen in the tears, tears in her eye:  
 Both crystals, where they viewed each other's sorrow,  
 Sorrow that friendly sighs sought still to dry;  
 But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,  
 Sighs fry her cheeks, tears make them wet again. (v. 961-66),

we are bound to feel sorry for her. Following Gary L. Ebersole, tears held a special place in the Renaissance, as they "cross the bodily boundary of interior/exterior and visible/invisible" and so "offer a glimmer of hope that another person's true feelings could be known unambiguously" (Ebersole 2000, 229). When the sun burns Adonis' face, Venus offers:

I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs;  
 If they burn too, I'll quench them with my tears. (v. 191/92)

Crying by command refutes an indication of true feelings. In Adonis' outright accusation of producing "feigned tears" (v. 425), Shakespeare expresses his belief that "women learn to shed tears at will" (Ebersole 2000, 230). So what are we to think about Venus' emotion? In the *Metamorphoses* Venus' feelings are caused by one of Cupid's arrows and she undoubtedly feels drawn to Adonis. Why is Shake-

spere’s Venus in love? He introduces her as “sick-thoughted Venus” (v. 5), and Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen explain the attribute “sick-thoughted” as “sick from her thoughts, in particular from her longing and love for Adonis” (Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen 2007, 132n5). Venus herself certainly feels love, no matter what the source of it. After all, she cries and mourns for Adonis when she finds him dead. Without any witnesses, there is no use in putting on an act. She is grieving and even takes care of the flower she perceives to be Adonis’ son.

#### 4.2.1 *Venus*

Venus’ most prominent feature is her wooing Adonis. According to William Keach, this is not atypical, “the aggressive female wooer is often treated comically and even satirically, and this has to do [...] with her function as an anti-type of the chaste, idealized, cruelly reluctant mistress so prominent in Renaissance lyric and pastoral poetry” (Keach 1977, 20). The words “chaste, idealized, cruelly reluctant” aptly describe Adonis. Venus does not act as a mortal woman, but not as a true goddess either. Keach describes her as “human enough to make use of conventional poetic hyperbole and superhuman enough to tuck a young man under her arm” (60). Clark Hulse poses the following questions: “If one grants that Venus is earthly love, what is the attitude toward earthly love? Is it loathsome, foul lust? Delightful sense? A near-sacred force of natural propagation?” (Hulse 1978, 97). She is all of that to the different characters in the poem: The way she sees herself certainly is different from the way Adonis sees her, and the narrator has a third opinion. Clark Hulse comes to a similar conclusion and talks about “not one, but three Venuses – comic, sensual, and violent – all embodying earthly love but differently depicted to reveal different aspects” (98). I would rather call the different “Venuses” different views on Venus. The comic one would be that of the narrator. He (assuming it is a male narrator) expresses his view very early on, for example with these lines:

Being so enraged, desire doth lend her force,  
 Courageously to pluck him from his horse. (v. 29/30)

We do not get the picture of a graceful, charming goddess, but rather of a comic figure. The sensual Venus is what she herself has in mind. She sees herself as desirable – consistent with the common image of the Goddess of Love. Wooing Adonis, she says:

Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,  
 Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green,  
 Or, like a nymph, with long dishevelled hair,  
 Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen. (v. 145-48)

It seems like she cannot quite make up her mind which ideal beauty to compare herself to. This would leave the impression of a violent Venus to Adonis. Keeping in mind the way she plucked him from his horse, his opinion of her seems reasonable even before he utters it:

You hurt my hand with wringing; let us part,  
 And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat.  
 Remove your siege from my unyielding heart;  
 To love's alarms it will not open the gate.  
 Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flatt'ry,  
 For where a heart is hard they make no batt'ry. (v. 421-26)

The perceived violence is clear in Adonis' choice of words (cf. "you hurt") and especially in the military imagery: "siege", "alarms", "open the gate" and "batt'ry". Even the words "unyielding" and "vows" go well with the military, and "bootless" calls to mind the boots a soldier might wear. However, the division is not all that clear. After all, the narrator is the one employing similes like this to describe the way Venus kisses Adonis:

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,  
 Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,  
 Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,  
 Till either gorge be stuffed or prey be gone (v. 55-59)

Then again, maybe Adonis' view needs this support from the narrator, as the boy talks very little.

We find that the *Ars Amatoria* was a model for Shakespeare not only in the characterization of Venus, but also of love itself. When Adonis is gone at night, Venus is longing for him

And sings extemporally a woeful ditty,  
 How love makes young men thrall, and old men dote;  
 How love is wise in folly, foolish witty. (v. 836-8)

We have already seen what love is capable of in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (Book I, v. 83-87):

*Illo saepe loco capitur consultus Amori,  
 Quique aliis cavit, non cavet ipse sibi:  
 Illo saepe loco desunt sua verba deserto,  
 Resque novae veniunt, causaque agenda sua est.  
 Hunc Venus e templis, quae sunt confinia, ridet.*

In that place (i.e. the Roman Forum) the lawyer is often captured by Cupid,  
 He who supported others, he does not support himself:  
 In that place the eloquent often lacks his words,  
 A new situation occurs, and he has to carry on his own lawsuit.  
 At him Venus laughs from her temples, which are adjacent.

We find the notion that love can turn things around in both poems. In Shakespeare, it is paired with the irony that what Venus, as love impersonated, usually does to others, now happens to herself. She herself recalls Ovid.

But there are other models for Venus. Gordon Williams sees in her the Wife of Bath and a sign of feminism (Williams 1983, 770). Peter Hyland sees Shakespeare’s work for the theaters as explanation why Venus might be such an unexpected female character: “All his female characters were written with the knowledge that they would be played by boys, and the writer’s consciousness that the staged ‘woman’s part’ had an unavoidable masculine core is apparent in many of the roles that he wrote early in his career” (Hyland 2003, 82). Imagining Venus as a male actor accounts for her plucking Adonis from his horse (v. 30). While the narrator does not openly call Venus male, he still characterizes females as different from her when he describes the behavior of the mare:

Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,  
 She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind,  
 Spurns at his love and scorns the heat he feels,  
 Beating his kind embracements with her heels. (v. 309-12)

If we exchanged the personal pronouns here, we would have a summary of how Venus and Adonis act with Venus as the male suitor. She is experienced in love, after all she has a son, Cupid,<sup>35</sup> and tells Adonis about her affair with Mars (v. 97-114). It is worth noting that here Venus says she has been “wooed” (v. 97), she did have the traditionally female part in this affair. Robert P. Miller points out the following: “The dramatic virtue in permitting Venus to recount the tale herself has been ignored by critics of Venus and Adonis.” After all, Venus chooses to omit the fact that the affair ended with the two getting caught by Vulcan, her husband, and the other gods in a net (Miller 1959, 477). In the end, “the classical version is completely altered by Venus’ failure to mention Vulcan and his net” (Keach 1977, 62). Venus being the suitor makes Adonis the reluctant virgin.

Maybe it is important to look at who says what in the poem. Until now I talked about a male narrator for the sake of simplicity. There is nothing that would clearly identify the narrator’s gender. However, with such a sexually provocative poem I assumed it was aimed at a male audience and consequently told by a male narrator. But a female narrator would allow for a whole new range of interpretations. If we imagine a woman telling the story, she might even be jealous of Venus, who

<sup>35</sup> Although she has more children, he is the only one mentioned and the only one to have played an active part, at least in the *Metamorphoses*.

has the chance to approach Adonis. That would explain the rather negative description of her throughout the poem, such as the comparisons to birds of prey. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* have a very intricate structure of narrative levels and stories within a story.<sup>36</sup>

This emphasis on the hierarchy of narrators might have led to Shakespeare giving his narrator some thought. John Klause shows how the narrator is “not an indifferent spectator” (Klause 1988, 365). If Shakespeare wanted to make his narrator a third character, Ovid could have provided him with Athena. In the *Metamorphoses*, Venus tells Adonis the story of Atalante and Hippomenes (cf. p. 44). Angry with Hippomenes, Venus made them violate Athena's sanctuary. Athena punished the humans, but not Venus. If Athena was the narrator in *Venus and Adonis*, her negative characterization of Venus might stem from her anger. Although there is no hint at Athena being the narrator, it is interesting to think about the consequences if she was.

Many scholars have found the figure of Adonis to be an important change Shakespeare made to Ovid's story (cf. e.g. Kahn 2007, 77) but what if we see Venus as unsuccessful? If one wanted to defame Venus, there could hardly be a better way than to show how she failed in her own area of expertise, and the *Metamorphoses*, at least in this place, suggest Athena as a possible slanderer. Still, the gods from classical mythology were constantly fighting and scheming among themselves, so the narrator does not necessarily have to be Athena. Anybody disappointed with love could hold a grudge against Venus. All in all, I think it is worthwhile to think about the narrator of *Venus and Adonis* and to consider the possibility that it was not necessarily Adonis who is changed, but maybe Venus. On top of that, it would be even more outrageous for a female narrator to talk about sex in the way the narrator does.

Venus represents a woman having and at the same time craving power. Heather Dubrow observes that Venus renames things: “To name something is to assert one's power over it [...]. Another function of Venus' naming, however, is to attempt to change the nature of [in this example] sweat and breath” (Dubrow 1987, 28). With Queen Elizabeth I. ruling, it is hard not to draw parallels here. Hyland says about Venus that “she is freed from the social and moral constraints that were imposed upon Elizabethan women and thus enabled to behave like a man. In this she clearly reflects the position of Queen Elizabeth herself, and it would have been impossible for a contemporary reader to avoid the allusion” (Hyland 2003, 90). Although this powerful woman is unhappy in the end, the character of Venus apparently was not taken as critique of the Queen, otherwise it would never have been published. Still, Heather Dubrow identifies “ambivalence about a brilliantly manipulative queen” (Dubrow 1987, 34).

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<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Bate sees this as the origin of a contradiction. Venus encourages love while Orpheus wants to refrain from it (cf. Bate 1993, 86).

One topic of the poem is incest. This comes quite naturally, considering that Adonis was conceived in an incestuous affair between Myrrha and her own father. Now William Keach sees this motif continued in “the idea of a maternal-filial relationship between Venus and Adonis” (Keach 1977, 75). Considering Adonis’ youth, maternal feelings seem only logical. And Keach thinks that Shakespeare did not include this aspect of Venus’ relation to Adonis simply to shock his readership, he sees it as “a connection between the erotic and the maternal aspects of the feminine psyche. Venus lusts after Adonis, but she is also maternally protective of him, especially in the second part of the poem” (77). If one wants to accept such a quality of the female psyche, there finally would be an aspect where Venus acts the woman/ goddess she is. Jonathan Bate focuses on Adonis in this relationship: “Such juxtapositions of sexuality and parenting suggest that Adonis is forced to re-enact, with gender and generational roles reversed, his mother’s incestuous affair” (Bate 1993, 84). Venus’ role as a mother is prominent in Virgil’s *Aeneid* (cf. p. 17) where she looks out for the protagonist, her son Aeneas. Yet, while Virgil’s Venus stays calm and rational at all times,<sup>37</sup> “Variable passions” (v. 967) govern Shakespeare’s Venus. She insults Death (v. 931-54), only to apologize the next instant (v. 997-1014).

#### 4.2.2 *Adonis*

Shakespeare’s Adonis was unlike anything known at the time (cf. Keach 1977, 54). One of his most prominent features is his youth. This is a deviation from Ovid’s Adonis, who only behaved childish, and even more from Golding’s mature Adonis (cf. p. 27). In verse 95 Venus calls him a “flint-hearted boy” and verse 467 shows him as easily deceived “silly boy”. He himself refers to his “unripe years” (v. 524) to escape Venus’ love, and takes this topic up again in verse 783 (“my little heart”) and verse 806 (“The text is old, the orator too green.”). After Adonis’ death, Venus ponders on how the sun and wind would act “in pity of his tender years” (v. 1091). Adonis is young, but, as Hyland states, he “is seeking an adult identity: he wants to be a man, and his desire for the boar is a desire for manhood” (Hyland 2003, 89). He eventually goes hunting, but still misses out on adulthood and finds only death.

In addition to being young, Adonis is feminized. In verses 49/50 we find

He burns with bashful shame: she with her tears  
Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks

Apart from shame usually being associated with women rather than men (especially when it comes to love), the “maiden burning of his cheeks” shows the reader that Adonis behaves more like a girl than a man. Venus does the same:

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<sup>37</sup> João Froes claims that Virgil’s Venus is an “impulsive person who violently pursues her objectives” as well as Shakespeare’s Venus (cf. Froes 1997, 303.)

Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong;  
 I had my load before, now pressed with bearing;  
 Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh sounding,  
 Ears' deep sweet music, and heart's deep sore wounding. (v. 429-32)

Likening his voice to that of a mermaid is an interesting choice. Mermaids were said to use their voices to ruin sailors (cf. Duncan-Jones, Woudhuysen 2007, 170 n. v. 429). Although strictly Venus was not a sailor, she did have a connection with the sea. Trying to find an etymological meaning of the Greek goddess' name Aphrodite, the ancient Greek came up with the story of her being born from foam in the sea (Fink 1993, 48). If this is enough to connect Venus to the sea, it is only logical for her to compare Adonis to another being living in the sea, namely the mermaid. It is ironic that in the end, Venus lives and Adonis dies.

Still, there is a contrast in "thy mermaid's voice", as Adonis is, after all, a young man. This contrast is expressed in the two oxymora in verse 431, namely "melodious discord" and "heavenly tune harsh sounding". Other than male gods and heroes, Venus is not usually associated with homosexual affairs.

Yet more significant than these single incidents is the distribution of (gender) roles. Traditionally, we find a man wooing – or even pursuing – a reluctant woman (cf. e.g. Mars and Daphne; *Met.* I, v. 452-67). So just by being the one who is being courted and holding back Adonis takes over the traditional role of the woman. At the same time, Venus, the most beautiful of the goddesses (according to Paris' judgment), takes over the man's part, begging for a kiss (e.g. v. 115: "Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine"). After he has kissed her (v. 479), she demands more:

A thousand kisses buys my heart from me;  
 And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.  
 What is ten hundred touches unto thee?  
 Are they not quickly told and quickly gone?  
 Say for non-payment that the debt should double,  
 Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble? (v. 517-22)

In verse 517 we also see Venus' self-confidence: Adonis does not want to buy her heart from her. Still, she offers it to him and names a price, and already in the next line does she give the terms of payment. For her, the deal is settled.

#### 4.3 Animals

Catherine Bates takes a uniquely simple approach to explaining all the different animals we encounter in Venus and Adonis. She sees the boar, the horses, the hare, the "snail, falcon, eagle, vulture, dabchick, deer, doe, fawn, and so on" (Bates 2012, 339) primarily as counterparts to the human (and divine, respectively) characters in the *epyllion*. She calls them "stable behavioural archetypes" (339), one

knows what behavior to expect from any of them, such as the hare running away when hunted.

Unlike their animal counterparts, however, human beings are born into language and, for better or worse, their subjectivity and desire are irremediably structured by it. With the actions of the human characters (and for the sake of the argument I am including Venus here), language inevitably intervenes. Language comes first: it is what makes the concept of ‘action’ possible at all, and what – as several celebrated protagonists would soon articulate in a number of Shakespeare’s plays – often stands in the way of an action actually being performed. Venus and Adonis makes great play of this, presenting us – in its huge wall of words that gets in the way as much as it impresses or delights – with a sense that, if we can be masters of language (as the aureate poet was undoubtedly trying to be), we can also be its subjects, and that the resulting condition can be turned as much to negative as to positive effect. (Bates 2012, 339)

Before traveling allowed people to see wild animals from far away countries for themselves, they had to rely on drawings and descriptions in bestiaries. I am quoting here from Willene B. Clark’s *A Medieval Book of Beasts*. The bestiaries developed from the Early Christian *Physiologus*, the oldest manuscript being from the tenth century (Clark 2006, 8). Although this was well before Shakespeare’s time, Clark mentions Sir Robert Cotton collecting and distributing manuscripts in the seventeenth century (Clark 2006, 31n 72) so that we may assume that the contents of bestiaries were still known at the end of the sixteenth century.

When Venus returns looking for the dead Adonis, she finds his dogs “howling” (v. 918) and mourning (v. 920) for their dead master. This is a character trait we find in B-Isodore, who says that dogs “happily run with the master in the hunt; they even guard their master’s dead body and do not leave it” (quoted from Clark 2006, 145). Shakespeare’s dogs seem to be shaken by what happened, although it is not quite clear whether their fear is caused by Adonis’ death or the boar. Still, the dogs stay close by instead of running as far away as they can.

#### 4.3.1 Birds

Birds are an important theme throughout Venus and Adonis. Both characters are repeatedly likened to different species and thereby characterized. Venus has a flying chariot. In the *Metamorphoses*, it is drawn by swans (*Met.* X.718). Shakespeare substitutes them for “silver doves” (v. 1190). One possible reason would be to once more stress how light Venus is. Before, she had been the one to point this out:

Witness the primrose bank whereon I lie:  
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me (v. 151/52)

Now, at the end of the poem, the narrator seems to agree with her. Still, it is obvious that magic has to be involved in the chariot. This restores Venus as a goddess after she, the goddess of love, had fallen in love and been absolutely powerless. When we turn to the bestiaries once more, we find that the only important information on swans seems to be that they are white (Solinus, *Collectanea* 40:25, 171) and their beautiful singing stems from their long necks (B-Isidore/CCC 22, f. 168, 179). Doves, however, are traditionally associated with love and therefore a more adequate choice.

#### 4.3.2 *The Hare*

The hare is the prey Venus suggests Adonis should hunt instead of the dangerous boar. She gives a detailed, empathetic description of the chased animal's behavior (v. 637-708). The goddess reminds of a worried mother. According to her, the hare is very fast and constantly changes directions when running:

The many musits through which he goes  
Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes. (v. 683/4)

With “a-maze”, Shakespeare includes a synonym for “labyrinth”, thus doubling the complexity and presenting the hare as difficult prey. To make Adonis want to hunt the hare rather than the prestigious boar, Venus needs to make him feel a dead hare would be just as big a triumph. Running fast and zigzagging likely is not enough, so she presents the hare as cunning, hiding its smell among sheep to make it impossible for the hounds to track it down (v. 685/6), after all, “wit waits on fear” (v. 690). By introducing wit as a topic, Venus proves she does not understand Adonis. Hyland sees the wish for hunting the boar as the wish for becoming a man (Hyland 2003, 89; cf. also p. 51). Adonis would thus probably think it necessary to prove his courage, not his wit.

While the first four stanzas let the hunt appear almost heroic, with the last two Venus seems to lose focus and inspires pity for the animal. After doing everything in his power in order to save himself, the “poor Wat” can only wait and see whether he was successful. Shakespeare describes the exact pose of a carefully listening rabbit. This makes the situation more vivid so the reader empathizes with the animal. Despite its efforts, it is still being chased:

And now his grief may be compared well  
To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell. (v. 701/2)

The sound of the “passing-bell”, in the hare's case the dogs' barking in the distance, would be both well-known and dreaded by contemporary Londoners as announcing another victim of the plague. With the barking likened to the passing-bell, the hare is personified, and readers might mix fear for their own life into the apprehension felt for the hare's fate – which, according to Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen is prefiguring Venus' desperate search for Adonis

(Duncan-Jones, Woudhuysen 2007, 64). They also point out that the hare was “traditionally associated with lust” (64). According to Adonis, this links it even stronger to Shakespeare’s Venus:

Call it not love, for Love to heaven is fled  
 Since sweating Lust on earth usurped his name (v. 793/4)

Venus cannot be “Love”, because she is still on earth and “Love” is male here (cf. “his name”), probably referring to Eros. If we take this as resentment at the male love’s absence, it might be a hint at homosexuality and thus at Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*.

Identifying “Love” as Eros leaves “sweating Lust” to denote Venus, who indeed perspires: “By this the love-sick queen began to sweat” (v. 175). However, so does Adonis. The narrator calls Venus “love-sick Love” (v. 328), and not Lust, albeit maybe to emphasize the irony of her situation. Still, the way Venus acts throughout the poem calls for an identification as Lust rather than Love.

#### 4.3.3 *The Boar*

Just like the hare, the boar never actually makes an appearance in the poem, but it plays a crucial role by killing Adonis. His future victim is the first to mention him, telling Venus that

tomorrow he intends  
 To hunt the boar with certain of his friends. (v. 587/8)

After fainting at the mentioning of the animal, Venus gives a detailed description (v. 615-30) presenting the boar as a monster, a “mortal butcher” (v. 618), as good as invincible:

His brawny sides, with hairy bristles armed,  
 Are better proof than thy spear’s point can enter.  
 His short neck cannot be easily harmed (v. 625-27)

all in order to discourage Adonis from hunting the boar. Venus focuses only on her beloved Adonis and completely neglects his friends who will go with him (v. 588). She talks about “thine spear’s point” (v. 626), “that face of thine” (v. 631), “thy soft hand, sweet lips and crystal eyne” (v. 633) and “having thee at vantage” (v. 635). Again, she shows she cannot empathize with him: If he wants to prove himself, he will hardly walk up to his friends and tell them he thinks the boar is too dangerous.

Venus already pictures the scene of the attack quite accurately, including [Adonis’] blood upon the fresh flowers being shed  
 Doth make them droop with grief and hang the head. (v. 665/6)

These lines foreshadow the description of the actual scene:

No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf or weed  
 But stole his blood and steemed with him to bleed.  
 This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth;  
 Over one shoulder doth she hang her head. (v. 1055-58)

Again, there is blood on grieving flowers, although in the actual scene it covers not only flowers, but various plants. The “fresh flowers” from the middle of the poem prefigure the metamorphosis from the end:

And in his blood that on the ground lay spilled  
 A purple flower sprung up, chequered with white (v. 1167/8)

This is not the first boar in a work by Shakespeare (cf. Keach 1977, 78). Here, Keach sees Venus’ “obsession” with the boar as crucial (77). With the boar’s “symbolically sexual energies”, its attack on Adonis is sexualized (Duncan-Jones, Woudhuysen 2007, 25) at least by Venus. Keach proves Venus’ connection to the animal by showing how her kissing Adonis “prophesies the boar’s kiss which kills Adonis” (Keach, 1977, 79/80). It is important to keep in mind that it is Venus who interprets the killing as an attempted kiss (v. 1110/11). She likens her own behavior to that of the boar:

Had I been toothed like him, I must confess,  
 With kissing him I should have killed him first. (v. 1117/18)

She does not claim Adonis’ death was an accident, but she does not assume guilt either. Although she obviously does not have any tusks with which to hurt Adonis, both acted against his will.

#### 4.3.4 *Horses for Lions*

Ovid’s *Atalante and Hippomenes*<sup>38</sup> told by Venus, is almost twice as long as his *Venus and Adonis*. Venus uses the myth to discourage Adonis from hunting the boar. Knowing Ovid’s myth, readers would have had lions in the back of their minds. We actually do find lions mentioned in Shakespeare’s poem in three different places:

Being ireful, on the lion he [i.e. the boar] will venture. (v. 628)

Here, the lion serves as an example of a highly dangerous animal and makes the boar appear even more dangerous.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,  
 But the blunt boar, rough bear or lion proud (v. 883/4)

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<sup>38</sup> For the myth, see p. 44.

It is interesting to see here that while the boar and bear are described with an attribute that stresses their fierceness, the lion is called “proud” – which is what Venus accused Hippomenes of being. Still, pride is an attribute commonly ascribed to the lion.

To see his [i.e. Adonis'] face the lion walked along  
 Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him (v. 1093/4)

As the footnotes suggest, “fear” in this case means “frighten, scare” (Duncan-Jones, Woudhuysen 2007, 221). The innocent Adonis is likened to the proverbial lamb that the lion will not attack, which creates a rather paradisaical atmosphere. In the *Metamorphoses*, lions are described as cruel, not showing any sympathy for Adonis’ beauty (cf. 26). Shakespeare focuses on presenting the boar as most dangerous animal of all.

So why did Shakespeare leave it up to his readers to remember Atalante and Hippomenes? For one thing, retelling the story would have destroyed the unity of place and time in the poem. William Keach points out that Ovid’s work was a “*carmen perpetuum*”, a “continuous narrative” where each episode was connected to others, while the aim of Shakespeare and his contemporaries was “to treat their mythological narratives [...] in such a way as to establish a convincing narrative and poetic self-sufficiency” (Keach 1977, 26). In addition to that, lions did not go well with the pastoral setting which might, for all we know, have been an English one. Lions would alienate the reader. The myth inserted by Ovid also introduces a whole range of new topics: the foolishness of young men risking their lives for a beautiful girl, proper conduct when asking favors from gods as well as vengeful and scheming females. All these aspects would have distracted the readers’ attention.

Another reason might be found in the animals themselves. In a bestiary compiled by Leonardo da Vinci, the passage on lions is titled “Courage”: “The lion is never afraid, but with strong spirit puts up a fierce fight against his hunters, always seeking to vent his rage upon the one who first molested him” (Evans 1952, 394).

Isidore is even more specific, he writes that “the nature of lions is such that they cannot become angry toward men, unless <the lions> are hurt” (Clark 2006, 120). Thus a lion would not be a danger to Adonis, unless he attacked the animal. A peaceful lion might be why it did not serve to warn of the dangers of hunting anymore.

Omitting the lions, Shakespeare introduces horses (v. 258-324). For one thing, horses were a common sight to an Elizabethan. Besides, Adonis’ horse easily fits into the narration. After all, the setting is in the countryside. Venus, we learn, traveled there in her flying chariot, and it is only logical for Adonis to have some means of transport himself. It is only natural, then, that Adonis should become “sworn with chafing” (v. 325) when he loses his horse. T. W. Baldwin explains Adonis’ horse as requirement for Venus’ “afternoon lecture” (Baldwin 1950, 26), but any other animal would have served the same purpose. As mentioned earlier

(cf. p. 31), the description of the horse also allows for a display of Shakespeare's skill. Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen point to Plato and say that "a rider's control over his horse has been traditionally viewed as symbolizing the mastery of animal passion by reason" (Duncan-Jones, Woudhuysen 2007, 58). Here, however, they explain Adonis' lack of mastery with his youth.

Coming back to Catherine Bates' interpretation of the animals as the humans' (including Venus) counterparts (Bates, 2012), the horses can be taken to represent love as it should be – according to an Elizabethan. As soon as the male sees the female, Adonis' horse begins to woo the mare, who plays her part in being wooed. There are no words needed, words being Venus' choice of a way to win over Adonis. "Nature", that being the way an Elizabethan might perceive it, is simple enough to do without words, as long as each horse plays by the rules. Right in the beginning, however, we see that Venus does not stick to the rules:

Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,  
And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him. (v. 5-6)

In the very introduction of Venus, her mistake is already presented: She behaves like a "bold-faced suitor", not as a "bold-faced suitor", indicating it is not her place to act this way. Both lines ending in "him" gives the impression that something is not quite the way it should be – certainly Shakespeare gave a lot of thought to this very first stanza, and the repetition would not simply be for lack of a rhyme. So, if we know from the beginning that the way Venus is going about it is wrong, the episode with the horses shows us how it should have been: Venus should have just come into Adonis' sight and waited for him to act – which he would not have done, because, as it is, he is yet too young to be interested in love at all.

## 5 Conclusion

We have seen that for his *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare did not simply tell his own version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* because the theaters were closed and he needed money. Although that is part of it, the *epyllion* is carefully composed to impress the readers and marks a turning point in Shakespeare's career.

In this it has been shown that Shakespeare drew on various sources. The example of Venus' character serves to show how he took aspects from both Virgil and different works of Ovid as well as Camerarius and possibly Titian and combined them to build something of his own: Shakespeare's Venus acts both like a mother and a lover to Adonis, while also showing attributes of Love personified. While working on a characterization of Venus, I noticed the importance of the narrator, which surely requires more research, as most essays tend to focus on Venus and Adonis. Apart from the complex characters in themselves, there are

more hints at a classical education. One of them is the daring epigram taken from the forbidden *Amores*, another are the myths included in the poem. Those myths are not told in their entirety, but rather casually alluded to, a bit like dropping names at a party. The intended reader only needed a short hint, for instance to Pygmalion to remember that Adonis had something of a heart of stone, to see the irony Shakespeare intended. The playwright thus proved his education to Elizabethan readers, especially the “University Wits” who had little regard for anybody connected to the theaters.

Within the poem we find several fields of metaphors that are worth focusing on. I elaborated on animals, although this topic still deserves more attention. There are others that I did not have a chance to work on. I shortly mentioned military metaphors, although it would be interesting to dwell on their implications. There are repeated references to the colors red and white throughout the poem, which would quite probably be another rewarding topic, just like references to tears and eyes. I included Titan as the sun only as far as he marks the time structure of the poem, but the roles of the sun and the moon in *Venus and Adonis* might be a promising topic for research.

All in all, *Venus and Adonis* is proof that William Shakespeare did not deserve his contemporaries looking down on him. Even today there is no reason to exclusively focus on the plays. Writing a poem, intended to be read and not performed and viewed like a play, he could use more subtle hints and intricate structures than would have been suitable for the stage. With *Venus and Adonis*, William Shakespeare established his knowledge on the genre of the *epyllion* and thereby himself as a respected author.

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# **“Storm Still.”**

## **Violence, Power and Justice in Shakespeare**

*Anika Droste*

### **Introduction**

With the opening and commercialisation of playhouses in the 1570s, the golden age of theatre began, moving and fascinating spectators of all age and rank alike. Whereas the entertainment value certainly was one of the most important aspects when going to the theatre, many playwrights like William Shakespeare, realising its high potential, used the opportunity to deal with questions of life, society and status, as well as religion, astrology and politics. Therefore – and as will be discussed in this thesis – the Shakespearean plays written during this period show a high ideological complexity, incorporating a broad range of different, contradicting and ambivalent views, approving as well as criticising them. Likewise, the Elizabethan and Jacobean period as well as the literary works that emerged from that time present and expose a common, everyday violence that – due to its severity and frequent occurrences – seems almost medieval to today’s readers. Numerous traditions and records on public executions and punishments, but also theatre plays attest a fixation on the display of violence, as well as the exertion of violent acts.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, changing perceptions of the world and newly emerging notions of power and legitimization conflicted with old ways of thinking and structuring of the cosmos. As a result, the English Renaissance

can be seen as a historic period where insecurity and doubt dominated the people as well as the realms of literature and art to some extent. Likewise, suspicion and closer examinations regarding aspects of violence, manifestations of power, as well as the existence and exertion of justice started to spread.

An out-of-control violence became the signature of the era, bringing the significance of the state's monopoly on discourse to a new level. Discourses do not exist in themselves but are always born out of power structures – in other words, the state dictates and controls the discourse, turning his own view into the discourse of truth – thus, prohibiting and excluding discourse that is not his. As a logic consequence, the power that is exerted through the dictation of discourse “produces knowledge” (Foucault, *Discipline* 27), which is highly ideological.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, every subject is characterised and influenced by the state's discourse of truth, meaning that cultural factors exist, which control and steer the people's use of language (Turk/Kittler 24). And yet, according to Michel Foucault, literature can be seen as a counter discourse that is not subjected to power structures (Winko 469). Therefore, literature can take up a questioning position where everyday perceptions – thus also concerning the state's exertion of power and justice through violence – can be challenged, giving literature a subversive authority through the possibility of an own exertion of power (Winko 469). Accordingly, it is to be expected that also Shakespeare's works of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period reflect on contemporary events and changing structures in a critical and subversive way.

Furthermore, due to changing political views towards absolutist ideas, the demonstration of power through public displays of violence not only reached its peak during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, but also entailed growing notions of arbitrariness of means, hence using a variety of cruel methods. In his *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault discusses the power of the sovereign to use the body of the victim as a sign of the state's authority over the people as well as over jurisdiction, restrengthening the monarch's power and using atrocities as a deterring effect for further actions against the state by the subjects (Foucault, *Discipline* 3-4)<sup>2</sup>. If one considers the power of subversion through literature, the aspect of public punishments and executions is pivotal for a thematisation of violence, power and justice in Shakespeare's plays and hence is likely to be found throughout Shakespeare's works, from the earliest to the later plays – as shall be shown in this research.

Hence, the aim of my thesis is twofold: Firstly, I will analyse how violence is depicted in Shakespeare's plays. Secondly, I will illustrate in how far the violence as well as power and justice that are exerted in the works can be contextualised, bearing in mind that the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods were the scenes of great social, religious and political changes. Although Shakespeare can be seen as a

<sup>1</sup> On the meaning of Foucault's notion of discourse see also Philipp Sarasin (114-21).

<sup>2</sup> For a condensed illustration of Foucault's notion of power, see also Michael Ruoff (146-56).

highly ambiguous writer, my additional intention is to show a subversive force in the plays, where violence is used to reveal a growing insecurity within the system and towards the position of power of the sovereign.

In order to explore the interdependent themes of violence, power and justice during the Elizabethan and Jacobean age in connection to their display on the Shakespearean theatre stages of that time, especially three plays lend themselves to an analysis – namely *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III* and *King Lear*. Not only do these works cover almost the entire creative phase of Shakespeare – *Titus Andronicus* being his earliest and *King Lear* one of his later tragedies – but also the fact that these three works are the poet's plays with the highest body count of all the pieces he ever wrote, promise a revelatory and insightful investigation of violence, power and justice in connection to the cultural context of Elizabethan and Jacobean times.

I shall start off my thesis with a description of the Elizabethan world picture, discussing at first the role of religion and church, as well as addressing changing approaches to divinity, and considering the attitude of the Queen and the state towards the topic. Secondly, the astrologic view of Renaissance England shall be presented, in which the connection between microcosm and macrocosm, disorder and order, as well as the great chain of being and the role of the sovereign shall be explained, concluding with a thematisation of the challenged astrologic beliefs by new scientific discoveries. Thirdly, a ventilation of the topic of Elizabethan politics follows, in which I shall draw upon the 'Tudor Myth', the influence of the Italian political thinker Niccolò Machiavelli, and shifting ideals concerning the legitimization of the monarch. Lastly, the chapter on the Elizabethan world picture shall be concluded with a discussion on Queen Elizabeth I and the power of her role as a woman on the English throne.

In the second part of my thesis, the aspect of violence as well as its effects and its value for the sovereign in the Early Modern period shall be treated, beginning with considerations on different modes of violence infliction, such as private revenge, public punishments and public executions. Thereafter, the use of violence for the demonstration of power and for reasons of retributive justice, as well as its function for a distinction between good and evil shall be examined. A discussion of the aesthetic appeal of violence off- and onstage constitutes the last point of the second part, in which the spectators' motives for visiting displays of violence are revealed.

Analyses of the three Shakespearean plays constitute the final part of my thesis according to their chronological order of appearance, thus starting with *Titus Andronicus*. For many centuries, Shakespeare's presumably earliest tragedy had been neglected by numerous dramatists and despised by critics, such as T. S. Eliot, who's well-known statement that *Titus Andronicus* was "one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written" (82) certainly summed up the theory of many people before and also after him, who were reluctant to actually attribute the play

to Shakespeare at all. However, the temporary unpopularity of *Titus Andronicus* stands in contrast to the period between the early 1590s and the end of the seventeenth century, where the play proved to be quite favoured by the audience (Kermode, "Titus" 1019). Premiered probably in 1594 (von Koppenfels 492), the combination of a revenge tragedy with elements from Seneca and Ovid, numerous mutilated bodies, a villain who is – and at the same time is not – Machiavellian, a tragic hero who repels the audience, and the portrayal of an utterly destroyed state attracted hundreds and hundreds of spectators. In the analysis on *Titus Andronicus*, I shall begin with a discussion on the rape of Lavinia, where I argue that the violence imposed on her can be read as both demonstration and destruction of power. In the subsequent chapter, the focus will be on the character of Titus. Here, I raise the assumption that the main protagonist and his views are, in fact, stuck in a traditional overcome society where his violence and injustice appear to be the only outlets in a changing world that is not his. Lastly, I shall treat the portrayal of the character Aaron, who, in fact, can be seen as a subverter of power, deconstructing the authority of the state of Rome.

For my analysis I will be using the edition of the play by Eugene M. Waith, published in Oxford by Oxford UP, 1984. This edition is based on the first Quarto version of 1594 to which – due to its significance, yet only existence in the 1623 Folio version – scene 3.2 has been added by the editor.

The second play to be analysed in this thesis is *Richard III*, the final play of the first tetralogy of Shakespeare's history plays. Richard, Duke of Gloucester and soon-to-be king was born on 2 October 1452 at Fotheringhay and died on 22 August 1485 during the Battle of Bosworth Field (Kalckhoff 11, 435). After his death many myths surrounded the monarch and thus his depiction in historic sources is highly controversial until today. Records, chronicles and biographies are contradictory and show a range of negative as well as positive portrayals of Richard, the most famous being the description of the king as a murderous and immoral machiavel. Shakespeare's play *Richard III* takes up this depiction, relying almost exclusively on the information he had gathered from Raphael Holinshed's second edition of *Chronicles*, respectively Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* (Jowett 12-3). Probably debuting in 1592 or 1593, the history play is one of Shakespeare's earliest productions, corresponding to the contemporary enthusiasm for historical topics and England's national past (Habermann/Klein 324). However, although the events portrayed in the play can be considered historically true to some extent, Shakespeare accelerated the story, combining incidents into one short period of time, instead of stretching them out over the years as they had actually happened. Furthermore, he added a considerable amount of elements, which are now known to be fictitious, respectively historically not proven – such as Richard's murder of the two princes in the tower – but which render the plot all the more dramatic and thrilling for the audience. Due to its popularity, *Richard III* was published in six Quarto versions as well

as in one Folio version, although the texts do not vary as much as other Shakespeare plays do<sup>3</sup>. However, the first Quarto version from 1597 is generally considered to be more stage and performance oriented (Habermann 343). Furthermore, combining elements of both genres, the Quarto editions all identify the play as a “Tragedy” whereas only in the later Folio version *Richard III* is sorted under the category of the “Histories” by the editors. The structure of my analysis on *Richard III* will be as follows: Opening with a discussion on the aestheticism and appeal of violence in the play, I argue that a double attraction of cruelty is shown – for the audience as well as for the character of Richard. Furthermore, in the second chapter, an evaluation of violence as the creation of an Other succeeds, in which the portrayal of violence functions as a distinction between good and evil.

For the analysis of the play I will be using the edition of *Richard III* by John Jowett, published in Oxford by Oxford UP, 2000. This edition is based on the first Quarto version, but refers to the Folio version in cases where metrical reasons or clearer stage directions indicate that the Folio has the better copy.

The third and last play analysed in this thesis is *King Lear*, one of Shakespeare’s later tragedies. In 1823, *King Lear* was, for the first time in 150 years, put on stage in its original version. Before, it had been considered too gruesome and violent a play to be presented. Thus, the adaption by Nahum Tate, who drastically changed the contents, cut the blinding of Gloucester out completely and gave the story a happy ending by marrying Cordelia off to Edgar and reappointing Lear as king, was preferred by many dramatists in the eighteenth century (Schülting 559). The story itself, however, is old and many versions exist, such as in Holinsheds *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. Furthermore, an anonymous drama called *True Chronicle History of King Leir* was published 11 years before Shakespeare performed his version in 1605 – during the reign of James I – however, not without generously taking ideas and characters from the anonymous *Leir*. Nevertheless, whereas all existing versions end happily, Shakespeare’s is the only one which finishes badly (Schülting 553-4). When publishing his play in 1607/1608 as a Quarto version, the title still read *William Shakespeare: His True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three Daughters*, but in the Folio version of 1623 it appeared as *The Tragedie of King Lear*. Apart from the changed appellation, both versions differ dramatically from each other, with the Folio varying in 850 instances, yet missing 300 lines that can be found in the Quarto (Schülting 553).

I shall begin my analysis on *King Lear* with a discussion on Lear and his actions, arguing that the initial blunder of the main protagonist caused a destruction of cosmic balance, provoking universal injustice and the damnation of everyone’s existence. Subsequently, I shall thematise the blinding of Gloucester in scene 3.7, in which the disorder of the universe is mirrored in the limitless cruelty. Next, I raise the theory that Goneril’s and Regan’s violence can be seen as an expression

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<sup>3</sup> In *King Lear*, the Quarto and Folio version differ greatly from each other.

of atheist faithlessness, drawing on the nature of man and changing perceptions of divinity in Early Modern England. The last chapter shall address the character of Edgar and his confusion of divine justice with justified violence, eventually provoking a continuation of the disruption of the universe instead of ending it.

For the analysis, I will be using a combined version of *King Lear*, edited by George Ian Duthie and John Dover Wilson, published in Cambridge by Cambridge UP, 1960, which integrates the elements from both the Quarto and the Folio version. However, when necessary for the study, Quarto readings are cited separately from the version edited by Stanley Wells and published in Oxford by Clarendon Press, 2000. The use of Quarto elements will be indicated in the running text, using the abbreviation ‘Q’.

Finally, this thesis on violence, power and justice in Shakespeare shall be concluded with a résumé of the most important insights and results of this work. Additionally, an outlook for future prospects of research shall be given.

## The Elizabethan World Picture

### Religion

Church and religion both played a very important role for the people of the Early Modern Period. Since Henry VIII’s reign and the institution of the Anglican Church, the English had to cope with an ecclesiastic up-and-down. Whereas Henry VIII initially condemned the protestant beliefs and reforms of Martin Luther, he soon after broke with the papacy and the Roman-Catholic Church after unsuccessfully asking Pope Clement VII to divorce him and his first wife Catherine of Aragon. The new Church of England, the break with Rome as well as the consequences of the institution of a new religion – such as the dissolution of monasteries – were readily accepted by most of the English (Suerbaum 83-4). However, when Henry VIII’s daughter Mary I ascended the throne in 1553 after the short reign of her brother Edward VI, she returned to Catholic doctrines, bloodily and cruelly persecuting protestant commoners and clerics throughout England, incurring the hatred of her nation. It was only during Elizabeth I’s reign that the question of religion was settled once and for all.

A compromise with church and parliament – the so called Elizabethan Settlement of Religion – was made and Elizabeth I was announced to be – or rather announced herself to be – the “supreme governor as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal” (Suerbaum 152; G. Elton 299) instead of being declared as ‘supreme head’, like her father had been. This gave a new notion to her leadership of the Church of England – a ‘supreme head’ being a monarch as the highest cleric, whereas ‘supreme governor’ being the commissioner of God himself, a cleric outside of church hierarchy (Suerbaum 152; G. Elton 301). This

in turn led to an increase of her monarchical powers, her new title making clear and even emphasising that she was chosen by God and thus had the divine powers behind her (political) actions and decisions.

Although Elizabeth's settlement determined Anglicanism as the answer to the question of religion, Catholics were not persecuted at first. In place of rigour and hardship, the Queen preserved a milder course without, however, according the Catholics the full rights Anglicans enjoyed (Klein 12). Moreover, concerning religious contents and practises the new Church of England was closer to Catholicism than to Protestantism. This led to the fact that different protestant groups started to split off, feeling not only underrepresented but also angered by Elizabeth I. To them, the 'true' religion that was supposed to be supported and promoted by the state and the sovereign remained too close to odious Catholicism. This closeness eventually gave way to separations from the Anglican Church, which again gave orientations such as Puritanism and Presbyterianism breeding grounds.

Even if the Queen did not act against supporters of the Catholic belief, this did in no sense mean that Elizabeth I advocated religious freedom. Instead, non-conformity was merely left unpunished and thus Catholics were tolerated. However, when the Pope officially excommunicated the Queen in 1570, the Counterreformation started in Europe which also encouraged Catholicism on the island. The hatred against the tolerated religion flamed up again and, as a result, many Catholics throughout England were sentenced and/or executed (Klein 12-3; Suerbaum 155). Whereas England had turned Protestant again after the ascension of Queen Elizabeth I, Ireland – England's oldest colony – however, remained Catholic and thus not only became an ever so present eyesore to the monarch and her state, but was also regarded as a threat to the country. For one thing, Ireland's outdated Catholicism was linked to barbarism, as opposed to English civilisation, and for another thing, the Queen feared for an invasion of catholic Spain through the help of England's Catholic neighbour (Klein 30-1). As a result, the dread of a potential attack fostered the hatred as well as the prosecution of non-protestant religions in the country and led to increased torture and executions of Catholic commoners and clerics.

The ever-present importance of religion and the centrality of church for the people of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Age also gave rise to opportunities of criticism on the state and the sovereign's actions. Owing to the high frequenting of churches by the population, the buildings offered a perfect platform for anti-government propaganda and other critical expressions. The state and the monarch, on the other hand, tried to prevent the conversion of churches and similar public spaces – as for instance execution sites, as shall be discussed later on – into sites of resistance (Klein 13). Nevertheless, the state naturally knew of religion as an instrument of power and thus the subjects' religiousness and the compulsory attendance of Sunday mass made it possible for the state to exploit people's fear

of God's wrath as means to inoculate obedience to the sovereign as well as authorities in general by using church and mass as platforms of propaganda themselves (Dollimore 83). Correspondingly, the state as well as the monarch profited from sermons such as the following *An Exhortation concerning good Order and Obedience to Rulers and Magistrates* from 1547, in which the obedience to the monarch and the maintenance of the divine order was preached to the subjects during mass:

Almighty God hath created and appointed all things, in heaven, earth, and waters, in a most excellent and perfect order. [...] In earth he hath assigned kings, princes, and other governors under them, all in good and necessary order. [...] Every degree of people in their vocation, calling, and office hath appointed to them their duty and order. Some are in high degree, some in low, some kings and princes, some inferiors and subjects, [...] and everyone have need of other; so that in all things is to be lauded and praised the goodly order of God, without the which no house, no city, no commonwealth can continue and endure. [...] Take away kings, princes, rulers, magistrates, judges, and such states of God's order [...] all things shall be common, and there must needs follow all mischief and utter destruction, both of souls, bodies, goods, and commonwealths. [...] Christ taught us plainly that even the wicked rulers have their power and authority from God. And therefore it is not lawful for their subjects by force to resist them, although they abuse their power; much less then is it lawful for subjects to resist their godly and Christian princes which do not abuse their authority but use the same to God's glory and to the profit and commodity of God's people. ("Exhortation" 421-2)

Especially the appeal for acceptance of a ruler's violent actions is striking here. However, it has to be taken into account that the Elizabethan and Jacobean period can be considered as a time of rekindling of religious scepticism which influenced the feeling towards a deity in a strong way, as shall be shown in the following.

According to William R. Elton, the second half of the sixteenth century was influenced by several changing approaches to divinity and providence (*King Lear* 9). In Renaissance England, a rekindling scepticism in form of an Epicurean revival occurred, making its followers question divine providence and reinforcing the belief in a God that distanced himself not only from the people of England, but also from the entire humankind. Thus, for one thing God turned into an idle deity that acted arbitrarily and – seemingly – without a pattern, and for another thing, he turned into an absent God that had left the humans to their fate and therefore to whatever might happen to them (Elton, *King Lear* 9). Among Calvinists, the idea of providence existed, however, here God also turned into a *Deus absconditus*, i.e. an instance that was considered to be hidden and incomprehensible to the people, nevertheless having – contrary to the Epicurean belief – already

determined the fate of humankind (Elton, *King Lear* 9). Here, God also acts arbitrarily and is compared to a tyrant, since he leaves the people in ignorance about salvation and damnation and thus is both – friend and foe (Elton, *King Lear* 31-2).

As a result from the changing views and perspectives, insecurity among the people of the Renaissance was caused. The question arose as of where exactly mankind found itself in the universe, and with this question, the “relative medieval sense of security” (Elton, *King Lear* 9) got diminished, which had seen man ever surrounded by God and enclosed in the never-wavering presence of his wisdom and benevolence (Elton, *King Lear* 9). By their questioning of divine providence, followers of the Epicurean idea tended to be compared to – but also denounced as – atheists by Calvinist believers. According to W. Elton, a Renaissance religious-sceptic person “considers God’s providence faulty; [...] denies the immortality of the soul; [...] holds man not different from a beast; [...] denies creation ex nihilo [...] and [...] attributes to nature what belongs to God” (*King Lear* 54). Such a person’s beliefs thus clashed with all that the monarch and her subjects (officially) believed in, respectively were supposed to believe in, and it is hardly surprising that an atheist view brought the people at odds with each other. Thus, the Calvinist bishop Thomas Cooper wrote in his *An Admonition to the People of England* in 1589 that “there are an infinit [sic] number of Epicures, and Atheistes” (11) and that “the schoole of Epicure, and the Atheists, is mightily increased in these days” (125)<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the English translator Thomas Bowes declared in his translation of La Primaudaye’s *The Second Part of the French Academy* in 1594 that “this poison of Atheisme hath passed the narrow seas, & is landed in the hearts of no smal number” (sig. b3<sup>v</sup>). He goes on by saying that “there are as many, yea moe at this day that doe openly shew themselves to be Atheists & Epicures, then there are of those that are taken for good Christians” (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>)<sup>5</sup>. It is therefore apparent that religious-sceptic views, as much as they existed in Renaissance England, were not considered acceptable – neither by Calvinists, nor by the Queen and the state who condemned religious unorthodoxy (Dollimore 84).

Throughout the Renaissance, the Elizabethan was constantly confronted with different and divergent views and conflicts about the divine, to such an extent that the people did not know what to think anymore. Could salvation be influenced if providence existed? Is there a deity, and if yes, does it care about justice? Religious ‘certainties’ like afterlife, hell, purgatory as well as the guarantee of God’s benevolence and care seemed to have been sacrificed for a sceptic idea of an uncertain – and maybe even non-existent – beyond. Hence the Elizabethans found themselves confronted with a strong feeling of loss of transcendental comfort, which was moreover joined by a dramatic increase of insecurity. Shakespeare used the different tendencies the audience of his time had and reflected on the various traditional and new notions through his literary works, as shall be shown later on.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. also W. Elton (*King Lear* 20).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ibid* (21-2).

## Astrologic Views

As pointed out, the Elizabethan and Jacobean age was a period of change and transition. However, although a strengthening of religious scepticism and thus a certain kind of “demystification” (Dollimore 19) of the world surrounding the people took place, the Elizabethans – and thus also Shakespeare’s audience – were still known to have been highly influenced by astrological beliefs (Elton, *King Lear* 147). Throughout the Middle Ages and into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, people attempted to explain the world and life to the very last detail and therefore their attitude towards the world and the existence of beings had been quite complex and thoroughly structured. The established belief was that of a partial invisibility of reality, meaning that there was more to the world than met the eye and that one had to refer to this hidden reality through signs, language and actions (Suerbaum 465). Furthermore, the firm assumption was that everything was subjected to a fixed order and steadfast hierarchies with super- and subordinations (Suerbaum 475) as shall be explained in the following.

According to E. M. W. Tillyard, the Elizabethan world picture was universalistically, theologically and hierarchically based, which first of all meant that every phenomenon on earth and in the universe has its special and fixed place. Second of all, everything – even universal order – is existent because of God’s will and making and is thus subordinate to Him. Thirdly, the cosmos and everything that is contained in it – from minerals to archangels – is structured in a hierarchy with subhierarchies and hence belongs to a specific order of ranking (Suerbaum 478-9; Tillyard, *World Picture* 18-28). Additionally, another structure separated the sublunary from the macrocosm, the sublunary being the elementary world below the moon – the minerals, the plants, the animals and the humans, the macrocosm being everything from the moon ‘upwards’ – the stars and their spheres as well as heaven in its religious sense (Suerbaum 480).

Furthermore, the position of an element in the hierarchy, or in the words of Arthur O. Lovejoy’s the “Great Chain of Being”<sup>6</sup>, also showed its value and thus made clear, which other elements were of more or of less value and therefore dominated the former or were subservient to it. Moreover, adjacent elements mirrored each other in their qualities, in other words the lower creature faintly reflected the qualities of the upper creature (Suerbaum 485-6). According to the hierarchy, man found himself in the highest position of all bodily creatures as well as in the lowest position of all spiritual creatures and was therefore assumed to have held a central position in the universe, being a connector between the cosmos and the world. This position was not ascribed to man by coincidence, but

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<sup>6</sup> This is the title of Lovejoy’s work *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. The concept of a chain of being, respectively a *scala naturae* can to some extent be traced back to ideas of Aristotle and Plato and is thus an ancient way of structuring life and existence (Lovejoy 4-5).

through God's decision. In man, God's creation is mirrored – the angels, the stars and the material world – and thus, in him all aspects of the cosmos are merged, making man the so-called microcosm (Suerbaum 492-4; Tillyard, *World Picture* 21; Klein 21). The monarch, appointed by God as His representative on earth, held the highest position of all the people in a society and is thus at the top of the humans. He presides over the body politic, an analogy between the state and the humanly body. The body parts of a human, with the head as the central part, are compared to the state (the 'body'), with the monarch (the 'head') at the top of society. Like within a body, where the head ensures the synergy and cooperation between the individual parts, the monarch is responsible for the perfect synergy in a state. Thus, his most important task is to represent order and protect the subjects from disorder and chaos (Suerbaum 498-501).<sup>7</sup>

Due to the connection between man and the cosmos, i.e. the analogy between micro- and macrocosm, cosmic harmony and order was mirrored in earthly harmony and order and vice versa. Accordingly, a disruption of order on earth was believed to bring about a disruption of the cosmos, leading to chaos in both spheres (Klein 19; Tillyard, *World Picture* 20-3). This was to be prevented at all costs. However, in contrast to the medieval notion that man was created after God's image, the Renaissance belief distanced itself from that of divine likeness (Elton, "Shakespeare" 18). Caused by man's original sin and his resulting Fall from grace, Elizabethans assumed that a constant insecurity and mutability influenced the order and that thus society was constantly in danger of turning to chaos. Through his sinful existence induced by Adam, man ran the risk of being corrupted by his innate evil inclinations, of sinking onto the level of beasts in the chain of being and thus of not acknowledging order anymore, striving for change and revolution instead, causing the whole cosmos to disarrange (Suerbaum 504-5; Tillyard, *World Picture* 29, 47). Since order was believed to be divine and therefore immutable, but the Fall of Man was considered to be a steady concern, governmental and political disorder and chaos were one of the greatest fears of the people of Elizabethan England, since it implied the return to a similar state of chaos like the one before God's creation of the world (Tillyard, *World Picture* 24-6; Suerbaum 511-2). As a result, the topics of the world picture and its containing themes of order and disorder, as well as their consequences, were a subject widely used by Elizabethan writers and poets – and also Shakespeare, as shall be shown in detail later on. The famous poet was, like his fellow Elizabethans around him, influenced by the world picture of his time (Suerbaum 509). The explosive nature of the topic of disorder and chaos affected his choice of subject, plot and dramatis personae and it was one of the reasons why he was ever so well-received in his time.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on the topic see also Rolls 53-95.

The Elizabethan world picture was a system of categories that – although not very often explicitly mentioned (Tillyard, *World Picture* 18) – was practically known to every person in England and can thus be considered to have been common knowledge (Suerbaum 476-7; Tillyard, *World Picture* 22). Therefore, it was present in everybody's minds, as well as in everyday situations as when watching a play on stage. Especially language, and hence also (Shakespeare's) literary works and performing arts, served as means to depict the Elizabethan world picture, since they not only contained elements of the common belief, but also required a sound knowledge of the world view from the audience (Suerbaum 477).

The astrologic importance and its effects on the Elizabethan and Jacobean world view were challenged by the emergence of the Copernican heliocentric system. For thousands of years people had wondered about the universe and the position of earth in space, following the Ptolemaic idea and thus stationing the blue planet in the centre of the cosmos. According to the old, geocentric world view, the earth was believed to be surrounded by the spheres of seven planets, which again were encompassed by a cope of the fixed stars, a crystalline sphere and the sphere of the *primum mobile*, finished off with the realm of God – the macrocosm (Klein 18). However, with the Copernican discovery of the earth not being in the centre of the universe but instead turning around the sun and therefore merely being one of the other planets, the insecurity of the people as to where they found themselves in the universe and their insecurity about their cosmic relevance steadily grew. This meant that the old world view – although still commonplace among many Elizabethans – was not compatible at all with the new discoveries, and the new discoveries were not compatible with many of the religious and astrological beliefs the people deemed to be true. These incoherencies within their old beliefs led, among other things, to a resurgence of the antique gods – such as fickle Fortuna with her wheel of life, who decided over people's fates regardless of their rank – and were accorded distinct properties and traits (Reichert, *Fortuna* 13-4). With the instauration of said goddess and the factor of uncontrollability she brought along, the Elizabethans hoped to escape their stars' providence (Klein 20) and were thus able to justify their lives' up-and-down with an entity of fate.

However, since the Elizabethans found themselves in an age of transition where several concepts of seeing the world existed at the same time, the importance of the planets and their influence on people's lives affected everyone's thinking. As a result, the antique and medieval theory of the influence of the planets on the four bodily fluids, the so-called 'humours', was still a contemporary belief and generally well-acknowledged (Klein 20). According to the theory, man contains within himself four different fluids – black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood – which condition the well being or unwell being of a person. Ideally, the fluids are balanced out and thus the person is healthy. However, most of the time one of the substances would dominate the others and thus influence the person's temperament (Klein 20). The bodily fluids are mirrored by the four elements that

exist in the world – earth, water, fire and air. Like the fluids, the elements are responsible for a balance and thus have to be well mixed in order to be harmonious. An increasing influence of one of the elements would result in an imbalance and thus would lead to a certain natural phenomenon (Tillyard, *World Picture* 79-80). Therefore, since the elements as well as the fluids were believed to have been influenced by the movements of the planets, an imbalance in nature would directly reflect on an imbalance in the cosmos, as can be seen by the storm in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. In addition, since man's body (parts) were considered to be connected to the cosmos and therefore also connected to the spirits and daemons that were assigned to the planets, the Elizabethans believed in the possibility of temptation. Thus, they knew themselves in constant danger of evil corrupting them (Elton, "Shakespeare" 21).

### Politics and Changes

The break with Rome and the change from Catholicism to Anglicanism initiated a new era, not only religiously but also politically. Through the centrality of the monarch as head of church, a cultivation of image and self-portrayal started that rendered the sovereign even more powerful. Thus, Henry VIII and the Tudor monarchs that followed after him became masters of "self-fashioning" (Greenblatt, *Renaissance* 1) which would culminate in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. With the defeat of Yorkist king Richard III on Bosworth Field in 1485 by Henry VII and the resulting termination of the Wars of the Roses between the House of Lancaster and the House of York, the contemporary historicists had strengthened a heroic depiction of Elizabeth's grandfather and the following Tudor successors that would soon lead to a mystification and a teleological glorification of the family and thus simply be referred to as the "Tudor Myth" (Tillyard, *History Plays* 29). Especially from Henry VIII onwards, the sovereigns reinforced the powerful image of their God-given representative status and emphasised their rule and existence as the providential purpose of English history, making clear that their reign was the beginning of an empire of peace, unity and strength (Pfister 49; Suerbaum 43). Through the depiction of political and state history as well as the portrayal of Queen Elizabeth I and the cult around her, historicists such as Holinshed enhanced a strengthening of national identity (Suerbaum 521). This, furthermore, led to a growing feeling of unique- and specialness among the Elizabethans, which in turn boosted the nation-building through an immediate construction of an Other, i.e. of something that was different than England and the English. The identification of belonging to a certain nation, and thus a 'we-you-divide', was on the rise. This was, according to Winston Churchill, particularly the case after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 (106), in other words, around the time Shakespeare grew steadily famous with his plays on stage. However, whereas Churchill argues that the 1590s were a time of enthusiasm and national strength (106), Robert Ash-

ton is of the opinion that the last 15 years of Elizabeth I's reign had not been as glorious and nationalistic as they were often depicted, but instead entailed a huge economic crisis as well as disorder in the state and anxiety among the people (180-4).<sup>8</sup> Both scenarios are probable. In any case, a feeling of national upsurge, and also the possibility of financial problems certainly had a great impact on Shakespeare's process of writing, the end product as well as the reception of his works by the theatre audience. Furthermore, not only Shakespeare, but literature and culture in general were highly influenced by an increase of never before seen self-reflexivity that would change the arts as well as historic thinking entirely.

The identification with their own country, the growing nationalism and, as a result, the 'we-you-divide' between the English people and practically everyone else eventuated not least from the Elizabethan's ventures overseas. What began as voyages in order to capture gold, resources and other treasures from the New World, soon resulted in colonies, plantations and a booming slave trade. Encounters with the indigenous peoples increased insecurities not only among the travellers, but also among the English at home, who were influenced by the experience with the Other through the voyagers' travelogues (Pfister 91). Suddenly questions of nature and culture became highly topical. Opinions differed on whether the peoples of the New World were noble savages, indigenous to a paradise-like place and easily integrated into the English culture, or whether they were evil savages, in need of civilising influence (Pfister 93). Consequently, the English asked themselves if man was born innocent and then corrupted by society, or if he had to be civilised in order to escape his evil nature he had from birth (Pfister 93). These questions influenced the English society to a high extent and raised doubts about the divine image of man. Especially Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes treated the ideas mentioned above in their literary works, as shall be explained in more detail below.

With the Tudor reign a change in politics and power structures took place, in which the aristocracy was continuously deprived of their power, but was, however, acknowledged regional independence in exchange for total subjection to the sovereign. By this, the medieval feudal state with its rigid and established status groups was gradually turned towards an absolutist and humanist state – based on intellect and knowledge (Pfister 50; Klein 23-4) – with a central control over the people, ascribing to the divine appointment of the monarch. Ironically, the sovereign was, despite his divine existence, partially restricted in his actions by the parliament and thus needed its approval for several political decisions. However, although the monarch could thus be considered to have been dependent on the parliament, it was still he, the sovereign, who had the last say in all decisions (Klein 4). Nevertheless, parliament and monarch worked together most of the time, thus creating an – apparently – infallible powerful authority. This, however,

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<sup>8</sup> See also Christopher Haigh, who calls the golden age, which Queen Elizabeth I supposedly induced, an "illusion" that deceived scholars for several centuries (7).

did not last after the Queen's death. During the reign of James I – who would insist on his Divine Right that he, as king, had received from God and who used his rights to put himself above the law – growing conflicts arose, when James tried to reign without the parliament's approval (Coward 91-3).

As mentioned above, the medieval idea of the sovereign being God's representative was still a relevant factor during the Tudor dynasty. Yet, the appointment of the monarch, respectively the execution of his powers were already highly influenced by new emergent tendencies brought about by the Italian political philosopher Machiavelli, whose works became quite popular during the reign of Elizabeth I (Petrina/Arienzo 6). The new concepts saw the exceptional place of man in the cosmos as a result of man's predisposition of free will and the fact that innate opposing powers gave him the potential to decide between good and evil (Klein 21). Thus, providence and Fortuna's wheel of life were rejected by Machiavelli, since a person could vanquish Fortuna's arbitrary actions through his own *virtù*, i.e. his skills and self-autonomy:

success in rising from a private rank to that of a prince presupposes either personal merit or good fortune, [...] nevertheless, he who has relied least on fortune has maintained himself best. (Machiavelli, *The Prince* 34)

This image of *virtù* – the driving force of man – differed entirely from the medieval notion where passion, ambition or desire were considered not only to be against God's law but also to be highly dangerous to a society, as they could lead to change and therefore disorder and chaos (Pfister 142). According to the new ideas, man was now seen as being responsible for himself and thus taking fate into his own hands. From Machiavelli's point of view, this also entailed violent actions in the realm of politics. Since the administration of the state was separated from ethics and morals, any methods that could be considered profitable and good for the sovereign were acceptable means:

Cruelties may be said to be well used [...] when they are committed all at once, out of the necessity of securing one's position, and then not persisted in, but rather directed, as much as possible to the advantage of the subjects. (Machiavelli, *The Prince* 49)

Taking this into consideration, the ruler was deemed to be fit and rightful, if he was accepted by his subjects and if his stance was a strong one, i.e. if he showed a strong presence – when necessary, with violence and brutality. Thus, dependence, submission and fear were the goals a monarch had to reach within his people, so that order could be maintained and chaos prevented in the state (Machiavelli, *The Prince* 76). Although “every prince should desire to be held merciful and not cruel” (75), Machiavelli points out that “it is much safer [...] to be feared than loved” (76). However, the sovereign “must only make every effort [...] to avoid being hated” (78). In addition, it is possible that the Italian thinker was of the opinion

that man was not only characterised with evil from the moment he had fallen from grace, but that he had always been evil from the start, since Machiavelli says in chapter three of his *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livy*:

They who lay the foundations of a State and furnish it with laws must, as is shown by all who have treated of civil government, and by examples of which history is full, assume that ‘all men are bad, and will always, when they have free field, give loose to their evil inclinations. (18)

Thus, more than one hundred years prior to Hobbes, Machiavelli anticipated a view on society that would make Hobbes and his *Leviathan* famous, by saying that man’s nature is never peaceful and hence he has to be led by the sovereign, otherwise order could not exist in a state. According to Hobbes,

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; [...] where every man is Enemy to every man [...]. In such condition, there is [...] no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short. (Hobbes 103-4)

Therefore, Machiavelli’s and Hobbes’ view is that disorder is the natural predisposition of man, whereas civilisation existed due to convenience (Tillyard, *History Plays* 21) and consequently can be considered a mere convention of society.

Furthermore, what also influenced a reception of the Machiavellian notion of *virtù* concerning the fitness and success of a sovereign was the slow but steady change in acceptance of the ruler’s divine right in Elizabethan England. The approval of the monarch’s God given status as the deity’s representative on earth began to falter, since the sovereign’s status was connected to a Christian ideology – which was also diminishing, as has been already mentioned. Moments in English (Tudor) history, where unfit monarchs such as Richard II were usurped but where the action was seen to have inflicted God’s wrath on the people of England, clashed with new arising views, for instance that people should subject completely to authorities, i.e. the sovereign (Elton, “Shakespeare” 30). Likewise, the idea of the existence of unfit rulers or the necessity of replacing them with a better ruler came up – notions that would have been downright impossible in medieval England.

All three aforementioned theories, that is providence, fortune and Machiavelli’s *virtù*, were current beliefs (or at least tendencies) in Elizabethan England and thus all find themselves in Shakespeare’s plays (Klein 21-2), where the co-existence of varying assumptions – for instance the growing independence in contrast to medieval restriction of the self – is shown in distressing moments of insecurity and disorder that result in violent actions, as shall be discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

## Queen Elizabeth I

Elizabeth I ascended the throne of England in 1558 as the fifth Tudor monarch, following her brother Edward VI and her Catholic sister Mary I, who had both reigned only for a short period of time. Like her predecessors, Elizabeth legitimised her reign through the power invested in her by God, however, she also drew on the new tendencies brought about by Machiavelli and other political thinkers (Pfister 51).

Although a myth was created around Elizabeth in later centuries due to her Tudor ancestry, opinions differ on whether there had actually been a cult around her person in Renaissance England as Roy Strong and Elkin C. Wilson suggest.<sup>9</sup> Although many accounts exist in which it is noted that she was very popular among Elizabethans<sup>10</sup> and also knew how to use theatre and (sacred) spectacles such as allegedly healing subjects of illnesses through touch and bless-giving in order to increase her prestige (Levin 26-35), according to Susan Doran, many different and also opposing depictions of the Queen existed (46), which point to the fact that a cult had only developed after her death in 1603. However, the portrayal of Elizabeth I was influenced by the fact that she was a woman in a man's position – causing anxiety among many people in the patriarchal society of England (Doran 47). During Mary's reign, voices had already been raised against the fact that a woman should rule over men and lead a country. Thomas Becon exclaimed in 1554 in his *An Humble Supplication unto God* that mankind must have angered the Lord, otherwise he would not have enthroned a woman (227-8) and especially John Knox' work *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* became known, in which Knox called for insubordination to female rulers (Knox 11-53).<sup>11</sup> The insecurities that resulted out of religious changes and shifting beliefs in divinity – as already mentioned in previous chapters of this thesis – mingled with the question of Elizabeth's legitimacy not only because she had been considered a bastard child, but also because of her gender. Was her rule legitimised if she was a woman and not a man? Could her femininity be brought in line with power, respectively would the exertion of her rule be limited by the fact that she was a woman and was thus not able to behave adequately like a king (Levin 2-3)? Although the Elizabethans saw the ruler as a male person, Elizabeth's reign, however, was oftentimes strengthened with the providential argument, legitimising

<sup>9</sup> For further information on the assumption of a cult around Elizabeth I, see Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1977; and Elkin C. Wilson, *England's Eliza*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1939. See also the divergent views on Tudor England that are shown in Churchill's and Aston's works, as mentioned in chapter 2.3. of this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> In Elizabethan literature, the Queen was worshipped and referred to in many different ways. She was attributed for instance with names such as Gloriana or Belpheobe – two protagonists of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* as well as Artemis or Astraea – two Greek goddesses (Suerbaum 198).

<sup>11</sup> On Knox' work, see also David M. Bevington (157) and Carole Levin (10-1).

her position as a woman monarch with the reason that God chose her out of a special or mysterious purpose (Doran 47).

Every person in England and Europe expected the Queen to marry, pass her powers on to her husband and then produce an heir apparent, thus fulfilling her duties not only as a sovereign, but also as a woman. However, although there had been many suitors, she never decided on a husband and remained a ‘Virgin Queen’ until her death. Her position as head of the country was – to a patriarchal society – a most unusual situation. In Renaissance England, a legal status of women practically did not exist. While an unmarried woman had limited rights such as possessing property, after her marriage she had to subject to her husband, economically, socially and sexually (Klein 25-7). Whereas the Queen’s celibacy was seen as highly problematic in the first decades of her reign – an early death probably would have entailed a destabilising war of succession among potential ‘heirs’ (Levin 9) – she used this social ‘flaw’ to her advantage. Probably fearing the loss of power through marriage and a subsequent subordination to a husband, Elizabeth preferred to be considered the centre of the state (Suerbaum 190), instead of somebody’s wife. The fact that she (officially) remained a virgin played into her own portrayal as a chaste and pure sovereign, working in the name of God (Suerbaum 191-2; Doran 48-9) and thus portraying herself as completely dedicated to her reign and subjects, in other words, as wife and mother of the nation (Neale, *Elizabeth I* 48-50).

Like with her virginity, the Queen used her status as a female ruler as optimal as possible, deploying a rhetoric that played on both male and female attributes in combination with the theory of the monarch’s two bodies – her female, human body and her body politic, the personification of the polity (Doran 50). In her “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury“ she gave in 1588 before the Spanish Armada she supposedly exclaimed: “I know I have the Body but of a week [sic] and feeble Woman, but I have the Heart and Stomach of a King” (*Cabala* 343).<sup>12</sup> This presentation of being female, due to her human body, and male, due to her body politic, not only soothed her subjects who desired a male sovereign (Levin 4), but also empowered herself as a monarch and turned her into a never before seen “political hermaphrodite, not only a queen, but a king as well” (Haigh 25). Following Carole Levin’s argument of the Queen disguising herself to some extent as a man when emphasising her male position as ruler in a female body, it is exceptionally interesting that Shakespeare used hermaphrodite elements in his plays as well, for example in *Twelfth Night*, where Viola disguises herself as a page boy in order to “hide her vulnerability” (Levin 125) that is accorded to her through Elizabethan

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<sup>12</sup> The speech she allegedly gave can only be found in an exchange of letters between Dr Leonel Sharp and the Duke of Buckingham, published in *Cabala, Sive, Scrinia Sacra [...]*. London: Printed for G. Bedell and T. Collins, 1691. 342-344. Print. It is, however, questioned, whether or not Queen Elizabeth I ever spoke these words, or whether they were put in her mouth later on by historians, in order to enhance the mystic image of the Tudor family (Neale, *Essays* 104).

social conventions. Thus it is evident that the presentation of Elizabeth I as a 'King' with two bodies is already highly theatrical and emphasises her skills in optimising her situation through staging.

Nevertheless, the absence of an heir apparent became a problem again towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, causing insecurity among her subjects as to what would happen when their sovereign died. Additionally, a financial crisis as well as crop loss had England in a firm grip and the fear of a new Spanish invasion appeared to escalate again (Levin 9). Consequently, the people felt the continuity of the Tudor line and the stability of the kingdom to be endangered (Pfister 53). This topic was also integrated and reflected upon in many literary works of the time, as for instance in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III* and *King Lear*.

## Violence in the Elizabethan Period

The Early Modern period was an era where violence was common. Displays of dead criminals on stakes, severed heads hanging from the cities' gates and publicly decaying corpses were daily pictures to every man, woman and child living in a town or city. Despite the general assumption that the Tudor Age, and especially London as its centre, were strongholds of delinquencies, the crime rate – and particularly violent crimes – actually decreased steadily from Henry VII's ascension on, amongst other things because of the abolition and prohibition of feuds and actions of private revenge (Suerbaum 342). And yet, although the people's violence lessened, the severity of state violence did not merely stay the same, but instead criminal prosecution increased. Capital punishment was not only imposed when felonies had been committed, but also as a sentence for petty crimes, such as theft or vagrancy (Suerbaum 343-4).

### Modes of Violence Infliction

As there have been several different types of violence in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, we first have to distinguish between officially approved actions of violence – thus, the violence executed by the state – and state-prohibited actions of violence – thus, the violence executed by the people themselves, i.e. self-administered justice.

The most significant and best known action of state-prohibited violence performed by the people is without a doubt the action of private blood-revenge, which was an accepted method of justice before the first attempts at establishing state justice were made. However, it took several centuries for the concept of state justice to develop. Even during Elizabeth's reign, many people still did not approve of the fact that they were not allowed anymore to punish injustice against themselves or their family members on their own initiative. Thus, although the Elizabethan and also the Jacobean state saw themselves responsible for punishing

injustice, and considered the monarch to be the sole person to decide between right and wrong due to his status as God's representative on earth, actions of revenge yet existed (Bowers 8). However, since it was not only considered a violation of the victim, but also of the state, the sovereign and God<sup>13</sup>, the Early Modern avenger was not treated with clemency, but persecuted like any other murderer (Bowers 10-1).

The Elizabethans who witnessed public executions of a murderer were especially interested in the motive of the criminal deed. Although murder was considered to be the worst of all crimes, they sympathised with an avenger who reacted against a treacherous injustice. However, if the murderer acted out of an unknown and/or unnatural motive, the audience was horrified (Bowers 16-7), but also intrigued to find out more. Similarly, revenge on the Elizabethan stage was only accepted and aroused compassion for the offender, if the deed was committed as vengeance for base injuries, when it was committed out of self-defence, when the state was not capable of, respectively willing to, exert justice himself, or when the revenge was a retaliation for murder (Bowers 36-7). Yet, in any case, the spectators would nevertheless condemn the act as highly immoral and deem the public execution or theatrical death of the murderer to be just, since he had still offended God's law.

As already mentioned, to the state, any kind of "Wild Justice" (Bacon 16) performed by a subject impinged the laws of the sovereign and bereaved him or her of the monopoly to exert justice. In Renaissance England the state differentiated between several forms of official, sovereign-approved inflictions of violence – torture, punishment and execution.

Torture was, despite general assumptions, not used very frequently in the Elizabethan and Jacobean age, since there is evidence for only 81 cases of torture between 1540 to 1640 (Langbein 81). Although the estimated number of unknown cases is higher, it has to be noted that, firstly, the 81 known cases of torture also included mere threats of the act; in other words, the deed was, at least in some cases, not even performed (Langbein 84). Secondly and consequently, it is apparent that torture – which had in its official sense not existed in the Middle Ages but had arisen during the Tudor reign – had quite an exceptional status and was therefore performed only in exceptional circumstances (Langbein 82), and thirdly, Elizabeth's reign had the highest number of torture cases in English history – 53 of the aforementioned 81 cases happened during her rule (Langbein 82). Furthermore, torture was never used as a means of punishing an individual but served only to collect evidence, to make the accused person confess a certain crime and therefore to gather information before a trial. In addition, torture was practically never displayed in public, but executed in private, for instance in the Tower of London, under the presence of specially appointed judges (Langbein 83-

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<sup>13</sup> "Vengeance is mine, and I will reward" (*The English Bible* Deuteronomy 32:35).

5). The infliction of torture, which was always prescribed by the monarch, was mostly put upon offenders who were believed to have a political and religious intention. It is thus quite significant, that the number of tortures was as high as that during Elizabeth's reign – after all, both insecurity and fear of a possible attack from Spanish Catholics reached their peak during that period.

The act of punishment, which is nowadays often mistaken for an act of torture, due to its cruelty and painfulness, was not used as a means for gathering evidence or information. It was only applied *after* the condemned had been put to trial. Thus, punishments such as the boiling of hands in hot water, the burning of skin with hot irons, whipping, castrating or the slitting of noses served merely as sentences to a crime in Early Modern England (Langbein 76-7). Likewise, dismemberment was an established mode of punishment as well and served as a penalty for many different crimes. Afterwards, it was common to display the severed body parts in an open, accessible and visible place, such as on the city gate or on top of bridges (Lin 139). Furthermore, the punishment of subjects could be performed in private as well as in public, however, as means of deterrence and also as emphasis of the state's power the act was almost exclusively carried out for all citizens to see. This also applied for executions, as shall be shown in the following.

As already discussed, the public sphere of Elizabethan and Jacobean England was mostly influenced by open punishments and public executions. Both methods became familiar and well-attended spectacles – sometimes attracting thousands of spectators at once. Like the modes of punishment, execution methods were just as diverse and manifold. However, they differed greatly in duration and in pain inflicted on the accused. Additionally, termination of lives depended on rank, state and sex of the culprit. Whereas men and women alike were put to death in public, aristocratic and well known females were always executed in private, for fear that their death might rally supporters or endangered the political status quo (Dolan 160). Men, aristocratic or not, were almost exclusively executed in public, except for the Earl of Essex, whom Queen Elizabeth I had put to death in the Tower in 1601 (Doebler 60).

Quick execution by the sword for the aristocrats, breaking on the wheel, boiling to death, beheading, disembowelling for lower traitors – nearly everything, it seems, was a lawful sentence (Pettifer 83-170).<sup>14</sup> And yet, most deaths occurred through hangings and the *peine forte et dure* (Barker 173), a procedure where the person was pressed to death. According to Francis Barker, in England and Wales in the period between 1559 and 1624 approximately 24,147 men and women were hanged (on average 371 per year), and 516 died from the *peine* (on average 7 per

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<sup>14</sup> For further information about the punishments in the Elizabethan age see also the historical description of England in the sixteenth century by William Harrison (187-95).

year) (178).<sup>15</sup> These numbers may seem extreme,<sup>16</sup> and yet it is most probable that the figures of people put to death are highly underestimated since many original records of executions – so called “hanging books” – were either originally not consistently kept or lost over the centuries (Barker 179-82).

### Power and Retributive Justice

The determination of harshly sentencing any kind of law breaking was strong in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Dozens of offences led to capital punishments, hundreds of offences to corporal punishments and/or prison. With the institutionalization of violence and justice – as opposed to the feudal structures that could be found in the Middle Ages, where self-administered justice could be executed by private persons as well – the Tudor state and monarch enhanced their power as the only authority that was allowed to determine right from wrong. The state, therefore occupied the discourse of truth – thus, excluding and prohibiting every other discourse (Foucault, *Ordnung* 7-15). Hence, when a citizen broke the law or applied a certain kind of crude violence, the state and also the monarch saw not only an action against their absolute monopoly of the exertion of violence, but also feared a diminution of power. This is also applicable to the case of private revenge by an individual, as already mentioned. By exertion of his or her own means of violence and justice, the subject offended the discourse the state held for himself. Therefore, the criminal act was not only an offence against another citizen, but also an offence against the community and, most importantly, the state itself. By using counter-violence, the state ensured that the monarch’s authority was not diminished and that his interests in maintaining the dominant position and in restoring order and obedience to him were preserved. The counter-violence here can be seen as an ‘eye-for-an-eye’ action, although – as has been discussed earlier – not only murder was punished with an execution, but also theft. Although the counter-reaction was declared to be an “administration of justice” (Barker 169), it is questionable whether a thief received justice through being hanged from the gallows. Thus, the reason for the state to execute an offender may officially have been that of retribution.

However, the state’s actual intention was of a different kind. According to Molly Smith, the English writer Samuel Johnson once said that hangings only made sense if they were done in public (25). It is only through own actions of violence that the state can regain power (Cohen 4). Furthermore, only through

<sup>15</sup> Ulrich Suerbaum even claims that numbers of execution reached 1.500-2.000 per year in Elizabethan England (344).

<sup>16</sup> According to Barker’s calculations, in comparison with the population of today’s England and Wales – Barker uses the population of 1989, which had been 50,562,000 – this would mean that 4,599 people would be hanged and 98 people pressed to death each year. For the United States and their population in 1989 this would mean that 22,383 people would be hanged and 478 people pressed to death each year. (178-9)

actually displaying the violence for everyone to see, the state can bring home the message that there is just one authority. As already pointed out in chapter 2.3., Machiavelli emphasised the prince's use of violence to enhance his power and to produce complete obedience of the people. It is thus out of sheer calculation that also in the Elizabethan and Jacobean age the sovereign used physical and also psychological violence – through torture, punishments and executions, but also through the mere suggestion of possible violence – in order to enhance fear in the subjects and to keep them down. Therefore, the fact that physical violence was displayed openly and with the intention of the state to be shown to as many subjects as possible meant that the attendance of people at executions and punishments was thus a crucial element of power preservation. The Elizabethan and Jacobean state envisaged complete subservience of their people, brought about by their apprehension of punishment. Therefore, demonstrations of public executions – often of exceeding cruelty – were supposed to function as deterrents to further crimes and also showed the people what the state was capable of in order to keep the subjects down. In addition, the pivotal element of a visibility of the subject's punishment as well as the remaining mark on the victim's body was the internalisation. Hence, the body "become[s] a sign [...] to ensure that the individual internalizes his or her subjection to power" (Parvini 87). This means that a public display of violence and death had a highly didactic function for both spectator and victim. In addition, through the display of a subject's destroyed body and thus through the calculated terror exerted by the state, the symbolic power of the ruler, which had before been damaged by the culprit, could be restored. Therefore, the adamant authority was demonstrated by the excessive exaggeration of the violence (Foucault, *Die Anormalen* 110).

In this context, especially the putting to death of famous people can be considered to have been memorable and thus even more didactic to the audience than the executions of 'normal' persons. The state knew of the power of public displays and their appeal to the citizens of a city. Thus, a hanging or a disembowelment was in some way comparable to going to the theatre. The audience, the stage, the player, announcements and last words were all part of executions. (Doebler 65-6) The theatricality of a hanging or beheading drew the audience to the gallows or scaffolds and as a result, the often huge crowds were exposed to and also influenced by the state's ritualised demonstration of authority.

All in all, it is therefore obvious that the sovereign was highly dependent on the power through executions and public punishments. They served both as a deterrent, with the intention of preventing future crime and as a means of the state to assert its power. To achieve this effect, the publicity of the procedure was a salient point. Only by being openly visible and by being 'staged' as a theatre play, the executions could unfold their didactic effect. It has to be noted, however, that not infrequently this effect backfired and the opposite happened of what the state hoped to achieve. Victims were aware of their own power 'on stage'. Through

speeches given on the scaffolds they used the last moments to criticise and mock the state as well as to challenge legal efficacy of the executions. They could say what they wanted since they had nothing to fear (Smith 27-39).

### Good vs. Evil

The public termination of a citizen's life accompanied by the display of power was one possibility for the ruler to reinforce his authority and potency. However, it is essential to look at the way *how* this was actually done. To strengthen the sovereign's power, the violence that he and the state performed had to be considered reasonable, believable and rightful by the people. However, as already mentioned in chapter 2.3., in doing so, the sovereign must not turn into a despised monarch, but was only allowed to reign with an iron fist. More importantly, the subjects not only had to be shown that the doings of the ruler were right, but they had to believe in the rightfulness of the monarch's actions. Accordingly, it was pivotal to portray the violent deeds of the ruler as necessary and, above all, as good and right. Hence, the accused person had to be depicted in the worst possible way in order to justify violent actions against him.

Violence is all the more effective and comprehensible for the spectators when they can discern a clear distinction between good and evil. It is only through a black and white depiction that the sovereign can be acknowledged as the sole power and authority and can thus fully use his strength. If the spectator does not absolutely believe the actions of the sovereign to be right and just, the authority and credibility of the ruler is undermined. Whereas the former firm belief of a ruler being God's representative on earth would not necessarily have needed an affirmation of the monarch's credibility, the rising insecurities about religious and divine notions and therefore also the changing perception of political legitimacies during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period made a portrayal of the sovereign's rightfulness and justice ever so important. Therefore, it became essential to draw a well-defined line between the monarch and the person to be executed, respectively the good and the evil. The similarity between executions and onstage theatre made it important for the sovereign to also use elements of theatricality on the scaffolds and thus employ exaggerations to emphasise his actions. Thus, the visibility of a violent *mise-en-scène* enhanced the sovereign's spectacle of power. Consequently, the crueller and more gruesome evil is destroyed, the better and more honourable good is portrayed. Thus, it did not suffice 'only' to behead the person accused of high treason. Instead, he had to be hung from the gallows, cut down while still alive, his body sliced open and disembowelled, his intestines burned and the body quartered. These exaggerated atrocities led to the fact that through the bad ending of his life, the victim could be portrayed as bad himself. As a result, a distinction to the good – the sovereign – was formed.

Furthermore, people of the Elizabethan age believed that a person's death – respectively how exactly a person came to die – said a lot about how he had led his life. If someone died in a cruel way, he actually had been a cruel person in his time (Doebler 65). Therefore, the fact that the accused had been punished in an extraordinarily violent way pointed to the deed he must have committed – often the criminal act that was punished to such an extent was treason out of political or religious reasons. Since, the Elizabethans and Jacobean assumed that man, due to his Fall and original sin, was in constant danger of being corrupted by his innate evil inclinations, the conclusion would be that his life ended badly, because he had led a sinful life, indulging in his evil tendencies and striving for change, revolution and therefore disorder. He thus had been the evil that had to be destroyed by the good. Therefore, violence in the Elizabethan and Jacobean time not only had the function of demonstrating power and making clear to the subjects who was in charge. The function of violence was also, in fact, to make a clear cut between good and evil, tyranny and legitimacy, right and wrong, dishonourable and honourable. It was only thereby that the state and the monarch could maintain and reinforce power and authority.

#### Aesthetic Appeal Off- and Onstage

As already discussed, despite their cruelty and their bloody procedures, public executions were highly popular events in the Elizabethan Period and attended by many people of all rank and age. In some cases, several thousands of citizens gathered, only to watch the convict's slow and excruciating – or sometimes also quick and easy – death. Similar to a visit to the theatre, people could buy various kinds of fruit and snacks during an execution, or purchase leaflets enumerating the felonies the culprit was supposed to have committed. At Tyburn, people who could afford it were even able to rent seats in order to enjoy the best view on the famous Triple Tree – the first gallows in England that made mass execution possible (Smith 17). It almost seems as if this kind of spectacle had been a much-loved afternoon activity, just like cock-fighting and folk football (Reay 137). Already in ancient Rome, gladiator fights to death had been well-frequented attractions. Slaves, equipped with nets, swords or spears, who had to fight wild animals or even each other until there was only one – or no one – alive in the end were a favoured amusement of many Romans. Although the entertainment value of public and theatrical violence certainly appealed to the Elizabethans and Jacobean, the audience's only attraction to public executions and punishments as well as violence in theatres cannot solely have been a mere lust for bloodshed and amusement, as shall be explained in the following.

First, the audience was probably drawn to the scaffolds through the element of retributive justice. Since it was the responsibility of the state and the monarch to ensure that rules and laws were observed and protected, the people were animated

by a desire for righteousness and thus they wanted to be present when justice took place. The monarch was – after God – after all the authority who was to impose law and order, and without his well-ruling, the state would fall victim to disorder and chaos. Therefore, an execution was an excellent opportunity to check whether the sovereign really proved to be a good ruler and punished injustice in his country, or if he proved to be flawed and not virtuous and did not prosecute law-breakers appropriately or severely enough.

Quite on the contrary, however, it was also possible that executions came to appeal to its audience because they turned into an open stage for satire and criticism. Naturally, the monarch could only influence the course of the execution to a limited extent and thus these spectacles manifested themselves as unique opportunities to listen to open criticism addressed to the sovereign. Since the convict could utter last words and say whatever he wanted, the audience could indirectly take part in the convict's exertion of justice. The accused person expressed negative feelings about the monarch and mocked the state. Like that, the intention the state had by open violent punishment was actually subverted, allowing the authority of the monarch to be questioned and ambiguities of power to be uncovered instead.

Another motive for such a high presence of people at an execution presumably also was their strengthening of identity. As a “collective spirit” (Gurr 45), the audience could generate a ‘we-you-divide’ and thus declare the accused person an outsider of society. By use of their portrayal as themselves being lawful subjects and the contrasting offender as law-breaker, the audience reinforced their identity as being good subjects and thereby expelled the culprit from their community. Furthermore, through mutual verbal attack against the accused person, the spectators combined and concentrated their power, which lead to an intensified evocation of strength and might.

However, not only did executions and punishments provide the people with an opportunity to strengthen their collective identity of ‘lawful’ citizens against one trespasser. At the same time, with the culprit on the scaffolds, the people had a scapegoat at whom they could direct their frustration. (Ehrenreich 29) Thus, during an execution the audience addressed their words to the culprit and spoke their minds, accused him collectively and ‘condemned’ him. By this means the people were made to believe that they, for once, had the possibility to be the judge, instead of being judged. With their collective spirit and their “thrill of defensive solidarity [they could defeat] the beast that was the ancestor of [their] fears” (Ehrenreich 94). And yet, this belief – or perceived empowerment – was only an illusion. The strengthening of the individual's conviction to be free and powerful is after all a calculation of the state and his power. Instead of an empowerment of the subject, the state and the sovereign only increase their authority – without the people's detection.

Finally, people's enthusiasm about public executions can also be explained as religiously motivated. The citizens could liberate themselves mentally by projecting their own wrongdoings, faults and guilt onto somebody else. By choosing a scapegoat on whom they could unload their vices, they unburdened and released themselves from guilt and therefore cleansed their conscience. Comparable to Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of humankind, the convict took the punishment for the people's sins and burdened himself with it. Consequently, with the projection of the onlookers' faults unto the accused man, the cumulated evil was unified in one person. This was even intensified by the fact that at executions it was common to view the culprit as a pseudo-martyr. Quite often the person on the scaffold was assigned a Jesus-Christ-like status (Merback 19). Furthermore, many myths surrounded him. His blood for instance was supposed to have healing and divine powers, which lead to people dipping handkerchiefs into the victim's blood.<sup>17</sup> Rumour had it that the corpse or even the "death sweat" of the executed cast out diseases and sickness (Linebaugh 109-10). The spectators firmly believed that the death of another person would empower them and provide them with strength and (spiritual) healing.<sup>18</sup>

All things considered, it can be said that in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, the audience expected more from an execution than just watching an exciting afternoon spectacle. The desire to possess power and strength, as well as experiencing justice or a consolidation of their sense of community were underlying, yet powerful, motivations for people to attend – and rejoice in – public executions. However, the anticipation of empowerment and freedom remained an illusion. It is, after all, the state who strengthened his authority.

After having shown the appeal of public executions and punishments, it is now pivotal to take a look at aestheticism of violence on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. In London around 1600, every day approximately 3000-4000 men, women and children of every age and rank went to the theatre (Castrop 114-5). However, the spectators were, on the one hand, inevitably influenced by public executions and punishments and, on the other hand, biased by accounts about the history and also current affairs of their country. This led to the fact that the audience brought certain expectations, respectively expected conventions with them into the playhouses.

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<sup>17</sup> The tradition of dipping handkerchiefs in blood, respectively the keeping of relics of a dead person can also be seen in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. After Caesar's death, Anthony says: "But here's a parchment, with the seal of Caesar; / I found it in his closet – 'tis his will. / Let but the commons hear this testament – / Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read – / And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds, / And dip their napkins in his sacred blood, / Yea, beg a hair of him for memory, / And dying, mention it within their wills, / Bequeathing it as a rich legacy / Unto their issue." (3.2.128-37).

<sup>18</sup> It is interesting that this is heavily reminiscent of myths still existing in the twenty-first century. Acheiropoietia such as the Shroud of Turin or the Sudarium of Oviedo are still supposed to carry healing powers and to strengthen the person touching it.

First of all, it is without a doubt true that the audience was drawn to the theatres because they wanted to be entertained. Since plays and public executions or punishments were mutually dependent in their use of emotional and symbolic overload, they displayed tragic and/or horrifying fates of men and women which moved and thrilled the audience to an extent no other afternoon activity could have done.

Secondly, it is also very likely that – similar to today’s cinema goer – the spectators of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre highly enjoyed the bombast of stage plays. Dramatists and especially Shakespeare went all-out with their use of props and theatrical elements, for instance in war scenes, which were simulated as lifelike as possible, with armed weapons such as guns and canons, riot gear, war drums and clarions. These elements were an integral part of theatre pieces, regardless of whether tragedies, comedies or history plays were presented (Chambers 3: 52-3). Added to that was the utilization of music instruments, with whom not only war noises but also birds’ twittering could be imitated. (Keenan 73)

This penchant for life likeness also covered the portrayal of violence on stage. To all appearances, the depiction of violence was an important element and seemingly indispensable – not only in real-life executions but also on stage. However, the amusement in form of violent scenes that were imbedded in the play sometimes turned out to be so realistic that they were a threat to everyone present. Especially the use of armed weapons on stage led to accidents and even fatalities (Chambers 1: 283). Thus wrote the contemporary witness Philip Gawdy about a play of the Admiral’s Men in November 1587:

My L. Admyrall his men and players having a devyse in ther playe to tye one of their fellowes to a poste and so to shoote him to deathe, having borrowed their callyvers one of the players handes swerved his peece being charged with bullet missed the fellowe he ayimed at and killed a chyld, and a woman great with chyld forthwith, and hurt an other man in the head very soore. (Chambers 2: 135)

Moreover, in order to act out violent scenes as realistic as possible, animal blood and innards were used during stage productions (Keenan 73). As a result, in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, plays with gory scenes turned out to be particularly attractive to the audience and quickly became crowd favourites. Due to their innovative transfer of execution cruelties onto theatre stages, Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* and also Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* proved to be veritable money-spinners (Smith 43), displaying highly exaggerated elements of violence, as for instance in the depicted braining of Bajazeth, Emperor of the Turks, and his wife Zabina, prisoners of Tamburlaine in Marlowe’s piece<sup>19</sup>, or regarding the dismemberments, mutilations and multiple deaths in Shakespeare’s play. Although these two plays can already be considered

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<sup>19</sup> On the aesthetics of braining see also Claudia Richter (63-8).

to be extremely violent, the Jacobean drama from 1604 on put forward plays with even more gruesome scenes (Tennenhouse, "Violence" 77).

Thirdly, it certainly can be said that, in general, violence and its display had an aesthetic appeal to humans, not only today, but also during the Elizabethan and Jacobean age. Therefore, the success and the attractiveness of violent theatre pieces developed due to the fact that the spectators were pleased to be viewers to violence during executions as well as on stage.

However, although the audience was on the one hand drawn to the playhouses because of the splendour and bombast which theatre was able to produce, they were, on the other hand attracted by an even more important quality of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. Jürgen Wertheimer states:

[Es] steht zu erwarten, dass hinter der literarischen und künstlerischen Stilisierung von Gewalt elementare individuelle und gesellschaftliche Bedürfnisse der jeweiligen Kultur zum Ausdruck kommen. (10)

The cultural needs that Wertheimer mentions can in fact be seen in the presentation of themes used in the plays on stage. As the people were highly influenced by the display of violence through the state and its aforementioned steering of monarch-approved discourse, the attendance of plays in theatres was a means for the subjects to get a glimpse outside the box. The power of the stage was its possible subtle subversion of the monarch's authority and to – indirectly – question the ambiguities and paradoxes of the state's wheelings and dealings. Therefore, theatre became in some way "daily journalism" (Gurr 141), which could depict, discuss and challenge not only the lives of Elizabethan and Jacobean people – whether still alive or already dead – but also show a different opinion and view on things as the sovereign and the state showed themselves. The theme of violence in a play could therefore lay bare the power relations of the ruler towards the people and hence criticise the state's use of violence and punishments as means to subordinate and control the subjects. Furthermore, by underlining the relation between state-violence offstage and staged-violence in theatres and by showing that violence actually had turned into theatre, the playwrights could expose the use of theatricality by the sovereign, for instance Queen Elizabeth, thus subverting the monarch's most crucial and most relevant element of power.

All in all, the transfer of everyday violence onto the stage, as well as the use of spectacular and realistic elements were highly attractive to the Elizabethan and Jacobean people. However, the possibility of the state's subversion through the on stage challenge of the monarch's use of power turned theatre as well as the depiction of violence into a highly aesthetic and also satisfying experience for the spectators.

## *Titus Andronicus*

In comparison with Shakespeare's other plays, there is no piece that he wrote which is as overtly bloody as *Titus Andronicus*. Alternating cruelties and atrocities dominate the plot, showing violence from which public punishments and executions in Elizabethan England could still learn a thing or two. And yet, although they seem – at first glance – to merely copy the exertion and display of power of the Elizabethan state and thus appear to conform with the proceedings of the sovereign, these exaggerated cruelties in *Titus Andronicus* are highly political and can be read not only as a reflection on Renaissance contemporary circumstances, but also as exceedingly critical of monarchical power, as shall be shown in this part of the thesis.

### The Rape of Lavinia as Both Demonstration and Destruction of Power

The ravishment and mutilation in the second act can be seen in two different ways, because the meaning of Lavinia as a character and the significance of her body are highly ambiguous. Thus, I raise the theory that she is both: the state of Rome and a mutilated body politic, and a subject of Rome in form of a mutilated woman.

On the one hand, Lavinia is a female subject to the emperor Saturninus and therefore a subject to Tamora and her sons. By violating her, the state – in the persons of Demetrius and Chiron – exerts power through violence. It becomes clear, however, that the deed itself is completely arbitrary, since the two sons not necessarily have a reason for punishing the girl. It was after all Titus who had Alarbus – the oldest son of Tamora – unjustly executed, thus, the rape of Lavinia does not serve as a means of retributive justice. Instead, the use of violence against the girl acts as pleasure gain, since both violators do not appear to have an actual agenda. They only want Lavinia in order to have had her sexually:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| DEMETRIUS | She is a woman, therefore may be wooed;<br>She is a woman, therefore may be won;<br>She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved.<br>What, man! More water glideth by the mill<br>Than wots the miller of, and easy it is<br>Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know:<br>Though Bassianus be the Emperor's brother,<br>Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge. |
|           | (TA 2.1.83-90)   |

Although both Demetrius and Chiron had thought about taking Lavinia by force, they eventually actually do it, because they are spurred on by Aaron:

AARON                    'Tis policy and stratagem must do  
                                  That you affect, and so must you resolve  
                                  That what you cannot as you would achieve,  
                                  You must perforce accomplish as you may.  
                                  [...]
   
                                  My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand;  
                                  [...]
   
                                  Single you thither then this dainty doe,  
                                  And strike her home by force, if not by words  
                                  (TA 2.1.105-119)

Since Lavinia is a woman, she is automatically othered from society. Apart from the fact that in *Titus Andronicus* women are treated as trophies that can be (and are supposed to be) possessed (Ballestra-Puech 122), her rape – like her death in the end of the play, too<sup>20</sup> – is an answer to her (unintentional) subversion of masculine power and ideals of honour. Whereas she is only supposed to be a tool and an object for the use of male authority games (Asp 335-7; Kolin 313), thus submitting to the will of the men around her, she ‘humiliates’ Saturninus by not marrying him, and ‘embarrasses’ Titus, who had promised the new emperor his daughter’s hand in marriage. Although Lavinia has no rights from the beginning on – she even keeps silent, when her brothers announce her being promised to Bassianus – she threatens male dominance and male power through her mere existence. Thus, as a means of demonstrating power, subjection is imposed on her through the disfigurement of her body by the sons of the Empress. Lavinia is physically and psychologically marked in order to assure the aforementioned internalization of (the state’s) power structure.<sup>21</sup>

However, she is not only mutilated, but also forcefully silenced forever – her tongue, i.e. her voice, is taken from her. If we consider Demetrius and Chiron to be agents of the state, the silencing of Lavinia and her inability to express herself are significant signs for a state monopoly on discourse, thus prohibiting any other discourse beside his own. Hence, the state imposes his powerfulness of speech on Lavinia and silences her with authority. Language therefore becomes an act of violence, and thus the question of discourse permission is raised: Who is allowed to speak and what is allowed to be said?

And yet, although Demetrius and Chiron intended for Lavinia to never speak again, she finds a way to express herself and to be heard anyway, by guiding a stick with her mouth and feet and writing messages in the sand. She, as a subject, thus subverts the will of the state – she will not be silenced. Likewise she does not

<sup>20</sup> By her rape, Titus feels that Lavinia has subverted the power of her father, causing him shame for which she can only pay for with her death. Thus, Titus says: “Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, / And with thy shame thy father’s sorrow die” (TA 5.3.45-6).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. chapter 3.2. Power and Retributive Justice of this thesis.





most of the people she was the only sovereign they had ever known. Thus, with the death of the monarch, England would be thrown into chaos, causing civil war to break out.

Hence, in *Titus Andronicus*, the spectators were confronted with a weak and fragile Rome, symbolizing a weak and fragile Queen Elizabeth, whose powers appear to have been diminished. The destroyed tree, i.e. the feeble body politic and the feeble human body show a rising feeling of insecurity and the growing questioning of the theory of the king's two bodies. Although the state in form of Demetrius and Chiron intends a demonstration of power through the violation of Lavinia, it turns out that eventually exactly the opposite happens. Rome in its personification of Lavinia is physically as well as psychologically mutilated, rendered powerless and finally destroyed. In other words, the worst fears of Shakespeare's Elizabethan audience are put on stage. However, through the short empowerment of Lavinia and her regaining of a language with which she can make herself heard, Shakespeare also shows a subversion of authority of the monarch by breaking the boundaries of discourse. And yet, the eventual death of Lavinia raises the question, if the subject can ever be empowered, or if it is just an illusion.

#### Titus, Injustice, and a Traditional Overcome Society

The depiction of the main protagonist Titus shows that his actions and demeanours cannot be brought in line with the actual development of the society and the political conditions around him. Titus does not belong into this world and hence does not find his way around in the new system. Instead, the avenger is confronted with a changing understanding of politics, resulting from the shifting ideals that occurred from the medieval to the modern period – i.e. the dissolution of chivalry and the change from a God-given to a civil system. Thus, his unjust and inappropriate actions provoke a disturbance in the cosmos, blur the lines between evil and good and result in a near extinction of his own genealogy.

Similar to Lear in *King Lear*, Titus commits several fatal blunders in the beginning and throughout the play, which are distinctive for the process of the plot, since they not only cause injustice but also incite revenge and escalating violence. Already in scene one, *Titus Andronicus* is presented as a universe, where a mixture of different political structures exists. Titus, who still believes in the system of the empire, is in favour of appointing a new emperor by primogeniture. Hence, he votes for Saturninus, although the new leader is by this time actually elected through a different system, that is, by the senate and via a democratic procedure. Even though Bassianus and Saturninus both strive for leadership, it is actually Titus, who is deemed to be the perfect successor by the people:

MARCUS Princes that strive by factions and by friends  
Ambitiously for rule and empery,  
Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand

A special party, have by common voice,  
 In election for the Roman empery,  
 Chosen Andronicus, surnamèd Pius  
 For many good and great deserts to Rome.  
 (TA 1.1.18-24)

Consequently, it is likely that Titus himself is to some extent responsible for what happens in the following acts, since he – by refusing to become the next emperor and choosing a successor that is not at all fit for the job – provoked the upheaval of Rome and the destruction of his family. The hereditary rights that he deems to be sufficient for leading a country clash with the new era of democracy. As a result, the hopes expressed by Titus shortly before Saturninus is elected seem almost ironic to an Elizabethan audience, who – in contrast to Titus and everyone else – catches the element of foreshadowing of dark times to come:

TTTUS      Tribunes, I thank you, and this suit I make,  
                   That you create our emperor's eldest son,  
                   Lord Saturnine, whose virtues will, I hope,  
                   Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth,  
                   And ripen justice in this commonweal.  
 (TA 1.1.223-7)

Strangely enough, Titus does not see the unsuitability of Saturninus as an emperor in the first place, although the speech the latter gives when he runs with Bassianus for leadership shows clearly to what Saturninus is capable of, setting the people of Rome against the two other contenders, wanting the people of Rome to fight for patrilineal primogeniture, if necessary with swords (Willbern 172). Hence, although a democratic system exists, Saturninus wants to use force in order to achieve his aims. However, it is much too late when Titus realises that – as a result of Saturninus reign – justice does not exist in Rome anymore, and Titus exclaims: “Terras Astraëa reliquit” (TA 4.3.4) – Astraëa, goddess of justice, has left the earth. The new emperor has turned cruel and abuses his powers, suspending laws and rules.<sup>23</sup> As a consequence, the power that had initially been Titus', has been passed down the line, from Titus to Saturninus, to Tamora and ultimately to Aaron. Thus, Titus himself provokes the tyranny that takes over the city:

TTTUS      Ah, Rome! Well, well, I made thee miserable  
                   What time I threw the people's suffrages  
                   On him that thus doth tyrannize o'er me.  
 (TA 4.3.18-20)

<sup>23</sup> Even the clown is killed – only for bringing bad news: “Clown: I have brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons here. / [*Saturninus reads the letter*] / Saturninus: Go, take him away and hang him presently. / Clown: How much money must I have? / Tamora: Come, sirrah, you must be hanged” (TA 4.4.43-6).



throughout the whole tragedy<sup>24</sup> and which would be enhanced by the fact that the audience knew that Titus' only way out of the system would be the complete destruction of it. However, the theory of an audience pitying Titus is eventually untenable.

Instead, the Romans are presented just as barbaric as the Goths, since Titus, in his fury, kills everyone, even his own sons (Cahn 310). Both Tamora and Titus show "Wild Justice" (Bacon 16), in other words unjust justice and exaggerated violence. Since the two characters act as embodiments of the state and thus their violence can be seen as an emblem of the state's violence in general, it is ironic that their own cruelty destroys the state in the end and therefore Titus and Tamora destroy themselves. Hence, *Titus Andronicus* reveals the non-existent difference between good and evil violence, for in both cases the aggressor is turned into a beast – even the Romans, although Marcus tries to talk some sense into his brother when he says: "Thou art a Roman; be not barbarous" (*TA* 1.1.378). It seems as if most characters of the play are reduced to the natural state of wild animals. As a consequence, Titus only listens to his egoism and his pride when slaying Alarbus, however, expecting clemency from Tamora later on. Therefore, the Roman protagonist is not different than Tamora or Aaron, showing off his power in the beginning of the play by deciding over life and death. Thus, it is more likely that Titus provoked incomprehension and repulsion for himself among the Elizabethan spectators.

And yet, it has to be noted that Titus does, after all, follow a certain logic by using revenge as an outlet. Since the violence around him has become completely absurd and irrational in its cruelty and gruesomeness, the eruption of violence on behalf of Titus, as well as his destruction of the people around him can be considered as the only way out of the system. Titus' impotence explodes and hence leads to an utter carnage and bloodbath, where extinction appears as the sole possibility to cope with the claustrophobia in a world that is not his own.

Concerning the ending of *Titus Andronicus*, I have to contradict David Willbern (and other scholars), who states, firstly, that with the instauration of an Andronici (in this case Lucius) order is restored in Rome and the state, and that, secondly, the society is rescued, turning Lucius into the hero of the play, bringing together Romans and Goths in peace (188).<sup>25</sup> Instead, I agree with Gail Kern Paster, who suggests that Rome is not newly ordered but the old violent structures which existed in the beginning are restored (84). Justice and order will never be reinstated in Rome, since violence and power of the sovereign always continue to exist, no matter who reigns. Thus, *Titus Andronicus* blurs the boundaries – showing that

<sup>24</sup> Unlike the bond that is created in *Richard III* between the audience and the protagonist, where the spectators also felt drawn to the tragic hero, however, where Richard loses the favour and affection of the Elizabethans due to his evil and the non-existence of repentance, as shall be shown in chapter 5. *Richard III* of this thesis.

<sup>25</sup> See also Robert S. Miola (71), who is of the same opinion as Willbern.









but rather a Rome, where violence will repeat itself and exerted by the following generations to come, like the young Lucius says: “f I were a man, / Their mother’s bedchamber should not be safe” (*TA* 4.1.106-7) (Bladen 59).

### Conclusion

*Titus Andronicus* shows a disturbed cosmos where violence seems to be the only possible reaction to a world that has changed completely. Nothing, it appears, makes sense anymore: Lavinia, the embodiment of Rome and an analogy to Queen Elizabeth is weak, mutilated and destroyed, Titus is both victim and attacker, slaying friend and foe alike, and Aaron, despite his status of the other, empowers himself and subverts the state and everybody around him with ease. Justice and order do not belong into this universe and are rendered illogic and futile by each character. Instead of a restored Rome, we find a vicious circle of damnation foreshadowing a never-ending violence. Thus, although a successor takes on the role of Rome’s emperor, it is evident that still no good can exist with him. Hence, due to its bleak outlook and the very likely repetition of history, the play remains open and unfinished to some extent.

Furthermore, although it is the intention of a state – Elizabethan and Jacobean alike – to use a separation of good from evil, as well as the promotion of good violence in contrast to the punishment of evil violence as means to enhance his power and underline the authority of the monarch, in *Titus Andronicus*, however, the power of the state is subverted – firstly, by Titus and his injustice and his own cruelty towards his children, secondly, by Lavinia who finds herself able to speak even though she was silenced, and thirdly, by Aaron who – ironically – is the embodiment of the Other, the evil. The play emphasises that the separation between good and evil is, in fact, the state’s way of manifesting its own power and of subjecting its people, and that, hence, a portrayal of goodness by the sovereign does not at all automatically entail social well-being for the subjects. Instead, in *Titus Andronicus* boundaries between good and evil are blurred – neither Rome nor the Goths are displayed as good and righteous, both are unjust and cruel, intent on gaining and maintaining their power by all means. As a result, violence always is an indicator for the inhumanness of man.

Therefore, Shakespeare mirrors the terror of contemporary Elizabethan England, where changes from old to new concepts of the world raise a strong insecurity among the people – and it is due to the capturing of the “claustrophobia of the age” (Haekel 9) that *Titus Andronicus* and other revenge plays turned out to be highly appealing for the spectators.

### *Richard III*

Even if violence is not made explicit in *Richard III* like it is in *Titus Andronicus*, it is still strongly hinted at. Although only two characters actually die on stage, the primary text as well as the secondary text indicate that thirteen characters die in total – nine at the hands of Richard.<sup>29</sup> However, even though violence is not used in its bloody and gory form like in the revenge play mentioned before, it is nevertheless most fascinating that *Richard III* not only evokes but also portrays an ever-present violent atmosphere. On the one hand, the audience is intrigued by Richard as a character and – instead of condemning it – appreciates the protagonist's violent scheming. On the other hand, the spectators are confronted with a thoroughly evil character, who relishes every action of violence himself. The depiction of violence can, however, be read as the creation of an Other, thus enhancing a distinction between good and evil. This distinction produces a glorification but also a critique and warning, as shall be shown in the following.

#### Aestheticism and Appeal of Violence

Since *Richard III* constitutes the final play of the first tetralogy of Shakespeare's History Plays, it can be expected that the Elizabethan audience knew about the story of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, respectively Richard III, either through handed down historic knowledge or owing to earlier visits to the theatre. Hence, the spectators were aware that the play would – to the best of their knowledge – be about a ruthless, murderous and, at the end, defeated machiavel. Thus, it was because of Richard's covert intrigues and horrible scheming for power, as well as his secret and merciless murders that the play proved very popular among the audience from the beginning on. The playgoers would shudder about the piece and the protagonist's cruelties and inhumanities. However, at the same time they enjoyed the violence he performed, because they knew the historic ending of the king and hence were aware of the fact that he would be slain and rightfully punished in the end, thus receiving poetic justice. Furthermore, the spectators knew what was coming – also because Richard announces it in the first scene – and consequently they were shocked about the brutalities only to a limited extent.

However, the audience's knowledge and certainty about Richard's death was not the only motive for an aestheticisation of the depicted violence in the play, as

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<sup>29</sup> These are: the Duke of Clarence, Lord Hastings, Lady Anne, Earl Rivers, Lord Grey, Sir Vaughan, the two young princes (Young Duke of York and Young Prince of Wales) and the Duke of Buckingham. Moreover, King Edward IV dies of illness, the Duke of Norfolk and Sir Robert Brakenbury are killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field and Richard is slain by the Earl of Richmond. Moreover, in the play there are also other people mentioned, who lose their lives, as for instance Walter Lord Ferrers and Sir William Brandon. These, however, are characters that are not mentioned in the play's dramatis personae and thus never appear on stage. Therefore they shall not be added to this paper's number of characters killed.

shall be discussed in the following. First of all, one definite argument for his success with the spectators was Richard's magnetic character. Although the audience was shocked and repulsed, they were also attracted to him at the same time. Even if they did not intend to, the playgoers found themselves siding with Richard, because they knew, a part of that cruel machiavel was hiding in them as well (Ros-siter 78; Bromley 33). Thus, Richard embodied a lust for violence, which was also familiar to the execution-loving Elizabethan audience.

Furthermore, the spectators are made into confidants of Richard's plans. Through monologues and soliloquies, the machiavel lets them in on his intrigues:

RICHARD Plots have I laid inductious, dangerous,  
 By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,  
 To set my brother Clarence and the King  
 In deadly hate the one against the other;  
 And if King Edward be as true and just  
 As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,  
 This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up  
 About a prophecy which says that 'G'  
 Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.  
 Enter Clarence with Brakenbury and a guard of men  
 Dive, thoughts, down to my soul; here Clarence comes.  
 (R.III 1.1.32-41)

The fact that he plays a role in front of every character in the play and is not who he pretends to be, but at the same time gives away openly all of his secret intentions towards the audience, turns him into a very charismatic and fascinating person. By means of this manipulation of distance and the closeness to the audience Richard makes them feel a certain kind of intimacy towards him. Consequently, the spectators are only partially scared off and instead develop a voyeuristic interest in Richard's cruelties. There is also the fact that the playgoers presumably detected a moral weakness in the characters Richard killed, and thus did not necessarily feel pity for them dying. Donald G. Watson argues that all characters that are put to death in the play can be considered complicit in their own downfall. Hence, they engaged the spectators' contempt and anger:

Self-interest governs everyone: Clarence naively believes his defection from the Yorkist cause will be forgotten because he wants it forgotten; Anne finds security in a profitable marriage; Edward allows his fears to displace kinship in ordering Clarence's imprisonment" (109)

According to Watson, the victims deserved their death and thus, the audience could enjoy the violence inflicted on them by Richard. This argument seems justified in some cases; however, it is questionable whether the two young princes deserved to die as well. The attractiveness of the tragic hero is due to what David

D. Raphael calls the “grandeur d’âme” (26). Although the audience is in *Richard III* not confronted with the typical tragic hero, but instead finds a Machiavellist, yet winsome villain as main character, they still admire him for his “effort to resist” (26).

However, not only the audience is interested in the violence Richard presents, but also the protagonist Richard himself relishes in the action of murdering. Like the audience that entertained themselves at executions and considered the bloody spectacle as a pleasant afternoon activity, Richard, too, perceives the destruction of people as entertaining. First, he devotes all his power of persuasion and rhetoric abilities on convincing Anne to be his wife. Then – after a positive answer – he triumphantly informs the audience about her awaiting death when she has served her purpose. Thus, he says in 1.1.:

RICHARD The readiest way to make the wench amends  
Is to become her husband and her father,  
The which I will – not all so much for love,  
As for another secret close intent  
By marrying her which I must reach unto.  
(*R.III* 1.1.154-8)

One scene later he adds, again to the audience:

RICHARD Was ever woman in this humour wooed?  
Was ever woman in this humour won?  
I’ll have her, but I will not keep her long.  
(*R.III* 1.2.213-5)

Given the fact that it does not become clear until the end of the play what exactly he had planned for her, respectively what his “secret close intent” (*R.III* 1.1.157) had been, it can be concluded that he only wanted to have her in order to destroy her. He killed her just to watch her die and therefore Anne’s murder can be considered as pure amusement, due to its needlessness.

Hence, what is striking in *Richard III* is the fact that the protagonist is not using violence in order to gain power, but that instead he is using the power that he gained in order to exert violence (Held 179; Rabkin 95). He wants to be violent out of lust and aesthetic reasons, and since he “cannot prove a lover” (*R.III* 1.1.28) he simply wants to “entertain these fair well-spoken days” (*R.III* 1.1.29). Therefore, in the play violence is used for the sake of violence. Richard, as a Machiavellian tyrant, has no remorse to kill his brother, his wife Anne, as well as the two young boys. He uses murder for the sole purpose of amusing himself; he uses violence, because he *can*. And yet, it is the lust for violence and consequently the striving for power and the fact that cruelty and evil appeal to him to the extent that is shown in the play, that Richard provokes his own doom and that he thus becomes the agent of his own downfall (Baker 709). In other words, with his

deeds he acts against the Machiavellian ideal of a prince who is – though feared – not hated. Accordingly, he is not a good and just ruler anymore and, as a result, disturbs the cosmos, which, in turn, discards of him in the end. Fortuna's wheel has carried him up and – through his own faults and the use of tyranny – ultimately brought him down again, turning the history play into a de-casibus-tragedy.

Yet, in contrast to other tragic heroes who draw the spectators' admiration until the very end of the play, Richard steadily begins to repel the audience's attraction to him. Since he is evil from the first to the last scene, a final moral redemption which is typically found in a tragic hero does not emerge in his case. The brief insecurity after he wakes from his restless sleep

RICHARD O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!  
 The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.  
 Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.  
 What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.  
 Richard loves Richard; that is, I and I.  
 Is there a murderer here? No. – Yes, I am.  
 Then fly. – What, from myself? – Great reason why:  
 Lest I revenge. – What, myself upon myself?  
 Alack, I love myself. – Wherefore? – For any good  
 That I myself have done unto myself. –  
 O no, alas, I rather hate myself  
 For hateful deeds committed by myself.  
 (R.III 5.4.158-69)

is quickly discarded by him:

RICHARD Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls.  
 Conscience is but a word that cowards use,  
 Devised at first to keep the strong in awe.  
 Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.  
 (R.III 5.5.37-40)

Thus, due to the lack of moral recognition, the attractiveness of his character diminishes through the course of the play and finally, in the end, Richard himself seems to know the feelings of the audience he has driven away, voicing the words “if I die, no soul will pity me” (R.III 5.4.180).

All in all, *Richard III* shows a double meaning for violence. On one side, the audience could find aesthetic violence in the play. The very negative depiction of Richard as well as his evil scheming, in combination with his appealing ambiguous aura made the general aesthetic experience of violent plays on stage all the more attractive. On the other side, the play presents Richard's own lust for destruction and murder, which – to some extent – seems to mirror the audience's own lust for violence and destruction. However, since the protagonist does not use violence

for power, but power for violence, his thorough evil is emphasised, eventually repelling the audience and bringing Richard to his own provoked destruction.

Yet it could be argued that the fascination with evil is the most crucial aspect in the play, and the reason the audience is drawn to Richard, as well as repelled by him in the end. Since it becomes not entirely clear, why Richard uses violence, evil remains unexplained, thus scaring the audience away eventually.

### Violence as the Creation of an Other (Good vs. Evil)

Both Holinshed's and Hall's chronicles that were used by Shakespeare to construct the play of *Richard III* had been written during the Tudor period and were therefore biased and highly restricted in their perception of political history. Consequently, the poet's portrayal of the past also distorted and blurred historical facts (Holderness 209). Apart from the two sources mentioned, Shakespeare did not refer to other chronicles, although other traditions and records must have existed. According to George Buck's description, Richard III had been anything but murderous and cruel. Thus, Buck elaborates:

But King Richard did many good things both for the publike good, advancing Gods service, and maintenance of his Ministers and Church-men. [...] Tyrants be cruel and bloody: but this King, by the testimony of his enemies, was very merciful and milde; who confesse he was of himself gentle, and affably disposed. These be their own words. (134)

According to Thomas Heywood and his *An Apology for Actors*, the intended effect of a play is "to teach the subjects obedience to their King" (Book 3, sig. F3<sup>v</sup>) and to demonstrate what will happen to those who cause trouble and disturb the peace. Therefore, it is not surprising that such a violent depiction of Richard as a ruthless killer is designed to defame the Yorkist past and to glorify the present – the Tudor reign (Bromley 31). In this case it is Richard, a usurper and evil machiavel, who is portrayed as a violent and cruel villain in order to make the audience see and realize what is considered good and evil in their own Elizabethan time. Everything belonging to the old Yorkist reign is foul and thus has to be portrayed as such on stage as well. Accordingly, the main concern of the chroniclers was to depict Richard in the worst way possible. Shakespeare – who probably would have had to expect sanctions if he had referred to sources that showed a positive portrayal of Richard – consequently also presents a sovereign who is almost bursting with brutality and violence.

Identical to public executions, where the destruction of evil justified and strengthened the good, also Richard III had to be portrayed as evil as possible in order to glorify and justify the Tudor reign of the Elizabethan period. The violence exerted by the king in the play, the intrigues and the secret conspiracies to murder have to be so cruelly depicted that actions against him – in this case in

form of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, the subsequent king – not only seem comprehensible to the audience but are even desired by them. Thus, the evil Richard is put in contrast to the just Richmond to manifest a clear distinction between evil and good. Given the fact that Richard is killed in the end, the audience not only realises that he *will* meet his downfall, but that he *must* meet his downfall. The violent evil has to be destroyed, even if this means that the sovereign himself has to be destroyed. Therefore, the plot also comments on the question of royal succession, as well as the people's right to resist a bad and violent king. Richmond, who is later crowned king, defied his bad sovereign successfully and even killed him and was still, or because of that, celebrated as the glorious victor and rightful successor. Thus, violence in *Richard III* also serves to separate good from evil. At the same time it also separates legitimised violence that is exerted by the good from illegitimate violence that is exerted by the evil. Richard's intrigues are understood by the spectators as unlawful and therefore his evil violence cannot be justified, whereas the violence exerted by Richmond at the end of act five – namely killing Richard in battle – is understood by the audience as legitimised and good. Consequently, Tudor royal splendour and righteousness are reinforced through theatricality, whereas the enemies of this splendour are destroyed through theatrical violence (R. Wilson 11-2).

The destruction of evil in the cruellest way possible, as could be seen in the public executions, where a person would be hanged, disembowelled and quartered, is also applicable to the depiction of evil in *Richard III*. Here, however, the crueller evil is portrayed, the better good is portrayed. The necessity for a black-and-white-depiction can especially be seen in Richard's plotting for the murder of his brother. The sovereign's fratricide is the worst murder that could be committed, since it is "a violation [...] of the contract known as 'family'" (Liebler 47). The murdering of a brother thus crosses the line between the tolerable, the reasonable and the immoral, the utter evil. Through the execution of Clarence, Richard is depicted as inhuman and almost beastly. As a result, the audience not only accepts his death but also sees his eventual downfall as a just punishment. Furthermore, being a violent and cruel character he is not attributed a positive outer appearance, but is instead portrayed as ugly and almost devilish. Since physical deformity was seen as a sign for moral depravity in Shakespeare's time (Held 187), the deformity of the protagonist is used as an enhancement of his evil inner depiction. Thus, the black and white portrayal of evil versus good is strengthened, since evil is even more evil when it is ugly. Therefore, Shakespeare's Richard is of bad shape "deformed, unfinished" (*R.III* 1.1.20), born with a limp and a deformed arm, "mine arm / Is like a blasted sapling withered up" (*R.III* 3.4.73-4), although the historic Richard not necessarily looked like that. The portrayal of his mythic and devilish appearance is even enhanced when Queen Margaret adds that Richard had been born with teeth ("That dog that had his teeth before his eyes", *R.III* 4.4.46). Being physically attractive is and has always been reserved for virtuous and morally good

characters and therefore evil in Shakespeare's play is defined from good through the exaggerated description of Richard's bad outer appearance.

However, the Tudor Myth and its ambiguity of good and evil is not only the most prominent theme in *Richard III*, but it also emphasises the idea of torment as a uniting factor for the state. It is only through the suffering of the individual that the country can emerge much more strengthened and unified in the end. In order to be a great nation, hardship must be overcome first. Therefore, the Tudor Myth also underlines that old structures have to fall apart to make way for better things. Thus, the age of violence that was brought to its peak with the ascension of Richard III has to be defeated. It is only through the evil depiction of the other, the wrong way so to speak, that a portrayal of what is good can be successful and reasonable – it is only thereby that good can take full effect.

Here it furthermore becomes clear that Shakespeare – seemingly following the path of the righteous Tudor monarchs – presented the play very ambiguously. On the one hand, we see a highly religious piece, in which evil turns into God's last test for mankind before the advent of the Golden Age, the “troubles of a country [being] God's punishment for its sins” (Tillyard, *History Plays* 156). Richard thus becomes an element of God's greater scheme, eventually leading “England into her haven of Tudor prosperity” (Tillyard, *History Plays* 204).<sup>30</sup> However, although this can be seen as one element Shakespeare adapted in support of the Tudor Myth, I have to contradict Philip K. Bock's view that *Richard III* merely “gives prophetic and supernatural sanction to the winning side and stresses the moral significance of events” (37). Instead, other elements can be found that seem to subvert the idea completely. Richard, although being part of God's greater scheme and imposed onto England as His representative on earth, is evil from nature. He has – due to man's Fall – let himself be corrupted by his innate evil inclinations, thus sinking unto the level of beasts in the chain of being, striving for change and revolution instead, causing the whole cosmos to disarrange. Consequently he is described in animal terms, being a “poisonous hunch-back'd toad” (*R.III* 1.3.246), a “bottled spider” (*R.III* 1.3.242), an “abortive, rooting hog” (*R.III* 1.3.225) and a “hedgehog” (*R.III* 1.2.100). Although he is a more or less rightful and crowned monarch, he is at the same time the incarnation of man's Fall and the embodiment of Original Sin. There is no humaneness in him, only lust for power and violence by all existing means. Hence, it is made clear that *Richard III* is not only a play about the good and evil in human nature (Baker 709), but that it likewise questions the steadily rising power structures and capabilities of the sovereign in general. As a result, by showing violence as the creation of an ‘other’, the play serves as a warning, a mirror for magistrates so to speak, stressing the dangers of a monarch who reigns however it pleases him. Machiavellianism thus transforms the

<sup>30</sup> On the role of Richard as God's avenging agent as the result of the deposition of Richard II see also David L. Frey (74), Arthur P. Rossiter (82-3) and Calvin G. Thayer (12-3; 94-5).

prince into said other, who distances himself from parliament and subject, in order to gain absolute power.

Therefore, on the one hand, the non existence of Richard's morals emphasises a Tudor reign where rule and the sovereign are supposed to be 'better' than before and where violence is good violence if it is useful to the glorious Elizabethan period. However, on the other hand the portrayal of evil as opposed to good also acts as a warning for kings and queens, to not abuse their power. By showing a corrupted kingdom, Shakespeare criticises a monarch who literally takes the centre stage and dismisses and defies all existing rules.

### Conclusion

With the use of a time lapsed structure in his depiction of historic events as well as a diverse and broad addition of theatrically important details, Shakespeare steers the portrayal of Richard together with the contemporary theme of the Tudor Myth and the dealing with the Elizabethan / Tudor past even stronger into a fixed direction. On the one hand, the quick succession of cruel historic events during Richard's rule, and also the accumulation of historically not identifiable but scenic and thrilling elements – as for instance the dream he has in scene 5.4 in which he is haunted by the ghosts of the people he had murdered – emphasise his wickedness, turning him into an even more magnetic villain for the audience. On the other hand, a black and white depiction is underlined, firstly, making Richard seem even more vicious from nature and, secondly, stressing the fact that his malignity and evil cannot be explained. This in turn renders the character of Richard as well as his actions so fascinating for the spectators. It can be seen that in Shakespeare's piece not only the fascination with evil but also the question of man's natural state plays a leading role. Thus, Richard is depicted as a monstrous arch-villain, who – by his character traits and the exaggeration of negative bodily features – strongly enhances the Tudor Myth surrounding Henry VII.

However, although he at first captures the audience with his winning manner and his rhetoric skills, his initial attractiveness gradually subsides, until solely his tyranny remains at the end of the play, leaving the Elizabethan spectator puzzled by his ambiguity and paradox character, possibly asking themselves in how far the negative portrayal of Richard could be compatible with general ideas about monarchs and the state of England.

Likewise, although the mythologization around the Tudors is without a doubt the most prominent feature in *Richard III*, in can nevertheless be gathered from the play that a closer examination of the sovereign as well as his or her power expansion takes place. Even if the Elizabethan world picture still refers to the God-appointed status of the king or queen, however including a joint collaboration with the parliament and the state, a development towards an absolutist sovereign becomes visible. In addition, the question arises if a monarch, even when he

proves to be a tyrant, can be deposited although he had been crowned and thus appointed by God himself. Both aspects are highly topical in *Richard III*, yet cannot find an answer in the play. Still, Shakespeare subverts the expectations of his audience, confronting them with an ambiguous, almighty machiavel, who is both loved and hated by the spectators.

## *King Lear*

The play of *King Lear* is generally considered Shakespeare's play with the highest number of universal themes and topics of Elizabeth and Jacobean relevance, combining questions of evil versus good, divine legitimacy in a changing perception of the world and the cosmos, as well as integrating elements of insecurity and fear. In the following, these issues will be analysed to a closer extent.

### Lear and Universal Injustice

Right in the beginning of the play, Lear commits a fatal blunder that will not only influence the whole future of his life and everybody's around him, but – even worse – ruin the cosmic balance and engulf the world he lives in a crisis. The combination of his decision to resign from his duties as a king and to divide the country into three parts, the choice of putting his trust in the wrong daughters, to give in to his pride when he realises that Cordelia will not speak the words he had laid out for her in his head and the resulting emotional overreaction to disinherit her and turn her into an outcast entail catastrophic consequences that cannot be undone.

My first proposition, which traverses the entire storyline of the play, is that of a creation of an alternative universe through Lear's actions in the beginning of the play. He wrongly assumes to be in an absolutist position in which he can use and abuse his monarchic powers at his leisure, thus believing himself rightfully able, firstly, to give away his position as king before he has actually died and, secondly, to choose an heir, therefore disregarding hereditary rights and obligations. By doing so, he not only violates the rules of the state, but also and more significantly violates universal and God-given laws. In the Elizabethan age, being God's chosen representative on earth was not considered to be an office the sovereign could tamper with, instead it was a personal property that was inherent to the monarch and thus could not be discarded at will but had to be taken as a fact and executed with dignity and a demeanour fit for a ruler, until his (or her) death. Thus, either the king has not understood the concept of the two bodies he inhabits and is thus "in deep confusion over it" (Kermode, "King Lear" 1251), or he overestimates his power abilities and consequently the pretension concerning his rank is what made him violate the rules.



This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgement,  
 Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,  
 Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound  
 Reverbs no hollowness.

[...]

My life I never held but as a pawn  
 To wage against thine enemies; ne'er feared to lose it,  
 Thy safety being motive.

[...]

---- Revoke thy gift,  
 Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,  
 I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

(*KL* 1.1.148-65)<sup>32</sup>

Kent fails in his attempt to illuminate the dangerous situation that is about to arise for the king, who in his pride is not able to see the violence he will do to the cosmos if he decides against a withdrawal of his decision. In both instances, with Cordelia as with Kent, Lear commits violence against two of the few people in his state he can actually trust, only out of pride. Moreover, his bad decision of giving his kingdom into the hands of Goneril and Regan happens entirely out of arrogant and proud reasons. From this moment on, the audience knows that Lear and everybody else is irrevocably doomed. By his blunders, Lear created an alternative universe, in which everything good that is attempted turns out evil, and everything evil that happens, happens because of the disruption Lear caused in the beginning. In other words, in the alternative universe, all laws and rules that existed before have been turned around at 180 degrees and “every possible thesis about the action and its implications [is confronted] with an antithesis” (Rackin 30). As a result, everything that happens in the alternative universe can be seen as an inverted mirror image of what should have happened. Instead of a Cordelia that takes him in into her house, he has a Goneril and a Regan who discard him and cast him out into the storm. Due to his blunder, everything that *can* go wrong actually *will* go wrong from now on – Lear created the universal injustice in an unjust parallel universe.

Lear, whose beliefs are pagan and who repeatedly calls upon the forces of the natural and divine (Cantor 232)<sup>33</sup>, consequently thinks in the beginning of the play

<sup>32</sup> Whereas in the Folio version Kent only entreats Lear to reverse the latter’s “state“ and to revoke his “gift“, the Quarto version is more explicit regarding the fate that will befall the king, should he cast out his daughter Cordelia: “Kent: Reverse thy *doom* [...] Revoke thy *doom*“ (*KL* Q. 1.140, 1.153, my italics).

<sup>33</sup> LEAR: “For by the sacred radiance of the sun, / The mysteries of Hecate and the night, / By all operations of the orbs / From whom we do exist and cease to be“ (*KL* 1.1.109-12); “Hear, Nature, hear! dear Goddess, hear!“ (*KL* 1.4.284); “You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames / Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty, / You fen-suck’d fogs, drawn by the powerful sun, / To fall and blast her pride!“ (*KL* 2.4.166-9); “You Heavens, give me that patience, patience I

that order – cosmic and therefore also political – is existent in nature and therefore a given fact. Furthermore, he is certain that natural and divine order belong together and cannot be separated from each other and that they are moreover conjoint with human justice (Cantor 231-2). Thus, by putting his faith in nature's justness, he expects that Goneril and Regan will be justly punished for their behaviour by a divine instance and that he does not have to do it himself (Cantor 232). He exclaims when Goneril dismisses him:

LEAR            All the stored vengeance of heaven fall  
                   On her ungrateful top! Strike her young bones,  
                   You taking airs, with lameness!  
                   [...]  
                   You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames  
                   Into her scornful eyes. Infect her beauty,  
                   You fen-sucked fogs drawn by the pow'rful sun  
                   To fall and blister her!

(*KL* 2.4.158-64)<sup>34</sup>

However, although it becomes clear to the audience – after having witnessed the ungrateful behaviour of the two older daughters in the first seven scenes – that in this alternative universe human nature does not necessarily entail human justice, but Lear does not (yet) realise the wrongness of his assumptions. Furthermore, it does not occur to him that he is the cause for injustice in his world. If it had not been for him and his blunders, the injustice would not have developed in the first place. It is only later, outside in the heath, after the outbreak of the storm that he starts to question whether justice can exist by nature at all.

After having been cast out by Goneril and Regan, Lear finds himself in an apparently never-ending violent thunderstorm (“storm still”, *KL* 3.2) – a result and at the same time a mirror image of the disorder in the cosmos provoked by Lear himself. Gradually turning mad, his “wit begin[ing] to turn” (*KL* 3.2.67), he is joined by the fool and Edgar who, on the run and fearing for his life, has disguised himself as a madman called Poor Tom. Ironically, even though Lear is out of his senses, he understands that injustice is all around him and ever existent for the lower “poor naked wretches” (*KL* 3.4.28) and that he now, too, has become a victim of injustice. He convokes a staged trial to bring justice upon Goneril and Regan, in which the fool takes the role as a “sapient sir” (*KL* 3.6.22), a “yokefel-

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need! – / You see me here, you Gods, a poor old man” (*KL* 2.4.273-4); “Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow! / You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout / Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks! / You sulph'rous and though-executing fires, / Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts, / Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder, / Strike flat the thick rotundity o'th'world! / Crack Nature's moulds, all germens spill at once / That makes ingrateful man!” (*KL* 3.2.1-9); “Spit, fire! spout, rain!” (*KL* 3.2.14).

<sup>34</sup> The Quarto version says “You fen-sucked fogs drawn by the pow'rful sun / To fall and *blast her pride*” (*KL* Q 7.323-4, my italics).

low of equity” (*KL* 3.6.37) and the mad Edgar becomes a “learnèd justicer” (*KL* 3.6.21), a “robèd man of justice” (*KL* 3.6.36). Paradoxically, Lear sees the fool and Mad Tom as the opposite of what they are. To him, they are wise men who can speak justice. This scene can be considered as one of the most crucial moments in the play, exposing not only the senselessness of invoking justice in a universe where justice does not exist, but also pointing to the disrupted and turned-over cosmos. If justice can be executed by two madmen and a fool, it is meaningless and in vain. Moreover, not only does Lear realise that justice is merely a convention of society and can therefore be discarded easily, but he also sees that man is uncivilised in his natural state. In an unjust universe, ethics and morals cannot exist – everything is corrupt (Knight 193):

LEAR        ---- Look with thy ears. See how yon justice rails upon yond  
                  simple thief.  
                  Hark, in thy ear: change places and, handy-dandy, which is the  
                  thief, which is the justice?  
                  [...]  
                  ---- The usurer hangs the cozener.  
                  Through tattered rags small vices do appear;  
                  Robes and furred gowns hides all.  
                  [...]  
                  ---- Get thee glass eyes,  
                  And, like a scurvy politician, seem  
                  To see the things thou dost not.

(*KL* 4.6.150-71)

If “all is corrupt” (Knight 193), justice no longer has a meaning, because it does not exist. Instead, it is replaced by “universal injustice” (Knight 193). This entails that divine justice is not existent, either. Lear – hoping at first that Goneril and Regan will be punished for their cruelty – is confronted with the fact that no one hears him, he is all alone, the gods have left him for good (Knight 193). His realisation that not only he but everyone around him, and thus humankind as well, is not the centre of God’s attention anymore directly reflects upon the changing perceptions of the Elizabethan age. The earth that had once been the core of the universe, and the king who once was the central point of man, now merely are specks of insignificance in a wide and obscure heliocentric cosmos, questioning the sense and purpose of man’s existence.

As a result of the non-existence of divine justice and cosmic structure, every moment of justice that is attempted by the characters throughout the play is no actual justice, but justified violence.<sup>35</sup> Kent and Oswald, Goneril and Regan and Gloucester, the servant and Cornwall, Edgar and Oswald and Edmund – all of them act because they believe their actions to be right. However, they are not just.

<sup>35</sup> On this topic, see also chapter 6.4. Edgar, Justified Violence and Poetic Justice in this thesis.

According to Goneril and Regan, Gloucester is a traitor and has to be punished, but the violence they exert is everything else but just, it is overtly cruel and highly exaggerated. Without the existence of justice, i.e. in a world of universal injustice, an action for justice is absurd. Thus, violence becomes a symbol for absurdity. *King Lear* shows that in the existent cosmos no laws exist anymore which could be applied. The universe is turned upside-down, it is in disorder and human justice is replaced by universal injustice.

In the end, due to Lear's blunder everyone, evil and good people alike, is punished to the same extent. In fact, innocence in form of Cordelia gets the worst share of them all. Whereas Edmund, Goneril and Regan die a relatively "noble" (Knight 174) death, Cordelia dies the cruellest way possible. Although the storyline is practically over – Goneril, Regan and Edmund are dead – Cordelia is killed nevertheless, emphasising the disturbed universe where nothing makes sense anymore. Violence loses its meaning and turns into a 'means of nothing'. Furthermore, the end emphasises the horrific fact that good is ruined by evil, instead of the other way round, like it is supposed to be. Although Goneril, Regan and Edmund are gone, they still triumph over Cordelia's and Lear's fate. Thus, the play ends utterly senselessly. Instead of evil being destroyed as evilly as possible, and the state and king restrengthened, exactly the opposite happens. Hence, the play shows that good power, respectively the king's power, does not exist anymore. Instead good power is replaced by evil forces. Even though the audience knows from the beginning of the play on that there is no hope left for a reordering of the universe and a turn of fate for Lear, his family and his people, they nevertheless do not expect such an ending. The fact that Shakespeare finishes the plot but leaves it open at the same time, showing senseless violence and injustice for every being, as well as a world full of desolation, bleakness and insecurity, causes suffering and mental violation among the spectators (Booth 102).

On the whole, Lear's actions in the beginning of the play open up a catastrophic situation, in which the disruption of the universe and its consequent events are mirrored in violent and evil actions. Lear's moments of insight and self-recognition, however, come too late. He has caused universal injustice and thus his existence is doomed from the division of his kingdom on, until his death – ruining not only his own life, but that of all the people around him, including that of his most beloved daughter Cordelia.

#### The Blinding of Gloucester: Limitless Cruelty Mirroring the Disorder of Things

The punishment directed against Gloucester in scene 3.7 is without a doubt the most violent and the most brutal scene in *King Lear*, and also one of the gruesome moments in all of Shakespeare's plays. In the seventeenth century, as well as today, the brutality of the act staged was and still is horrific and certainly hard

to watch for the audience, but pivotal for the play and its depiction of a universe turned upside-down and the senselessness of man's existence that it evokes.

Several aspects prove that the alternative universe created by Lear's blunder not only created universal injustice, but also a limitless cruelty that has no equal. What begins as a 'mere' interrogation as means for the retrieval of information and a confession by Gloucester

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| CORNWALL   | Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?   |
| REGAN      | Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.<br>[...] |
| CORNWALL   | Where hast thou sent the King?                      |
| GLOUCESTER | To Dover.   |
| REGAN      | Wherefore to Dover?                                 |

(KL 3.7.42-51)

turns into an a never before seen act of torture:

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| CORNWALL   | See 't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.<br>Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot. |
| GLOUCESTER | He that will think to live till he be old,<br>Give me some help! O cruel! O you Gods!           |
| REGAN      | One side will mock another; th'other too.<br>[...]  |
| CORNWALL   | Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!<br>Where is thy lustre now?                      |

(KL 3.7.66-83)

As already mentioned in chapter 3.1. of this thesis, torture, unlike corporal punishment, was not very common in Elizabethan and also Jacobean England, however, it found its peak during the reign of Elizabeth I – between the 1580s and 1590s (Langbein 134) – where the fear of a catholic coup d'état led to an increasing number of people being racked because they were believed to be Catholic attackers or possible usurpers who planned to overthrow the Queen (Rocklin 301). With the ascension of King James I the use of torture began to disappear in England (Langbein 134). Although it was very rarely displayed in public and mostly executed during private trials and therefore could have easily been composed of random acts of cruelty, torture methods – although diverse in execution – followed a set structure for the imposition of pain and torment. In other words, if information needed to be gained from the accused, it was done according to the severity of the situation, with the rack or the manacles used most commonly (Langbein 84-5). Furthermore, torture was always witnessed by several judges who were specially appointed for such tasks (Langbein 85-6).

However, these facts already point to the absurdity of the act in *King Lear*. Regan – as part of the royal family – is not only present at Gloucester's 'trial', but

also inciting and encouraging her husband Cornwall to carve out the second eye of the accused. The fact that a member of such high aristocracy would commit this deed is not only bizarre but also virtually impossible – at least it never occurred during the reign of Elizabeth I or James I (Rocklin 304). Thus, the act must not only have seemed absurd to an Early Modern theatre goer, but rather it emphasised the chaotic universe and the senselessness of human actions in a disturbed cosmos. Additionally to the impossibility of a royal family member being present, the torture method ordered by Goneril (“Pluck out his eyes”, *KL* 3.7.5) and employed by Cornwall and Regan is also absurd and thus impossible. The gouging out of Gloucester’s eyes would never have been accepted as a torture method in Elizabethan/Jacobean England (Rocklin 304). Although Gloucester is considered to be a traitor by the two evil sisters and therefore would have had to be tortured especially severely for a confession, the destruction of Gloucester’s eyesight is by no means a suitable and just method. Accordingly, the absurdity and arbitrariness of the means of violence indicates the complete disorder of the universe.

Furthermore, I suggest that – although Goneril, Regan and possibly also Cornwall are evil to the core and thus lust for violence out of sheer pleasure – to some extent they are also interested in putting their reign and their own universe back into order by punishing what, according to them, has to be punished. As I noted in chapter 6.1. of this thesis, Goneril and Regan believe their actions to be right (although they most certainly are not just). For them, the employ of torture is a means to protect the state and identify and prevent plots against the system, in this case by Lear, Gloucester, Cordelia and France. This means, similar to Early Modern public executions where the monarch could strengthen his or her power through a black-and-white depiction of good and justified violence (performed by the state) as opposed to evil and unjust violence (performed by the accused) so as to make the public condemn the culprit and his deeds and – consequently – restore law and order in the state, this is also Goneril’s and Regan’s intention when they torture and then punish Gloucester. Yet, like so often during public displays of violence in Early Modern England, the opposite happens. Regan realises their mistake too late:

REGAN    It was great ignorance, Gloucester’s eyes being out,  
             To let him live; where he arrives he moves  
             All hearts against us.

(*KL* 4.5.9-11)

Instead of strengthening the state’s and the monarch’s power by an attempt to restore order, the power is diminished. The violence which was applied turned out to be too cruel, unfitting and – worst of all – unjust and unreasonable. As a result, it is not perceived by the subjects as a punishment, but rather as an act of private revenge. Justice is replaced by wild terror, arising out of pure pleasure. Therefore,

the audience – and, in the case of *King Lear*, the public Goneril and Regan have released Gloucester into – condemns the violence of the state/the monarch, thus turning the intended strengthening of power and restoration of order into the opposite. Consequently, the people are repelled by the cruelty of mutilation and grow to hate the sovereign. Moreover, the accused rises in the audience's esteem and is being assigned the aforementioned Lamb-of-God-like status. Gloucester therefore becomes a martyr in the eyes of the audience. In other words, due to the rising sympathies for him, Goneril's and Regan's expected result of order is not attained. Instead, the state of disorder is even more emphasised.

The depiction of this violent scene points to the fact that Shakespeare knew of the possible counter-effect of the display of violence, respectively the abnormal violence of the state against its subjects. It is therefore possible to detect a certain amount of criticism of the general use of torture as well as its contra productivity here. Moreover, this scene can also be considered as highly critical against the rising absolutist tendencies of James I in a growing Machiavellian society. Right before Gloucester is brought in for his torture, Cornwall exclaims:

CORNWALL            Though well we may not pass upon his life  
                               Without the form of justice, yet our power  
                               Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men  
                               May blame, but not control.

(*KL* 3.7.24-7)

Cornwall sees himself in a position where he can decide on whom and to what extent he can do justice, thus, neglecting laws and rules and punishing in every way that pleases him. Hence, a reasonable legal procedure is not necessary, since those in power can do whatever they want (Cahn 158). Shakespeare intensifies the experience of chaos for the audience by integrating the gruesome element of the destruction of Gloucester's eyesight. Although he could have chosen a different cruelty for Gloucester, he shows "limitless" (Cavell 73) and inexplicable violence that has completely gone out of hands and out of bounds. Since the "eyes are physically the most precious and most vulnerable of human organs" (Cavell 72), the audience feels limitless pity towards the victim.

I agree with Stanley Cavell who stresses that this scene does not only depict physical violence, but also psychological violence, since "physical cruelty symbolizes [...] the psychic cruelty" (73). However, whereas he argues that the destruction of Gloucester's eyesight shows "evil's ancient love of darkness" (73), I rather suggest that the importance of psychological violence lies to a greater degree in the fact that Gloucester is now confronted with never-ending darkness. Hence, mankind's worst fear is put upon him – i.e. fear of darkness and fear of not knowing what is about to happen. Instead of light and vision, insecurity and unpredictability reign. Gloucester's missing eyes therefore not only become a symbol for

darkness, but also for disorder – and thus the Elizabethan’s and Jacobean’s second greatest fear.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, not only the violent act itself is a sign for the disorder of the universe, also the fact that man’s evil nature – as Hobbes and Machiavelli remark – is breaking through indicates a disturbed cosmos. Basic animalistic and barbaric structures are laid bare, the destruction of Gloucester’s second eye being only for the sake of violence, for pleasure of man’s wolfish state of nature. Thus, “the blinding of Gloucester marks the moment when the hierarchic, humanly constructed order [...] gives way to [...] predatory ‘Nature’ (*KL* 1.2.1)” (Rocklin 300). It is only because of divine disorder, in other words the absence of a divine instance, that nature is enabled to resurface. No entity is left which could preserve order, civilisation and benevolence in Lear’s alternative universe. Instead, the gods have left the world to its fate. Devout Gloucester, who puts his faith and the hope for help and revenge in a deity (“but I shall see / The wingéd Vengeance overtake such children” (*KL* 3.7.64-5) is deceived. His last resort will not respond to his calls (“O cruel! O you gods!”, *KL* 3.7.69), he is alone (“All dark and comfortless!”, *KL* 3.7.84).

Third indications for the limitless cruelty mirroring the disorder of the cosmos are the non-existence of social codes and the broken boundaries of social convention in scene 3.7. The first proof can be found after Cornwall has gouged out Gloucester’s first eye. He attempts to destroy the other one as well, when he is interrupted by his servant:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1 SERVANT | Hold your hand, my lord!<br>I have served you ever since I was a child,<br>But better service have I never done you<br>Than now to bid you hold. |
| REGAN     | How, now, you dog?   |
| 1 SERVANT | If you did wear a beard upon your chin,<br>I’d shake it on this quarrel.   |
| REGAN     | What do you mean?  |
| CORNWALL  | My villain?<br>[he unsheathes his sword]   |
| 1 SERVANT | [drawing his weapon] Nay, then, come on,<br>and take the chance of anger.  |
| REGAN     | [to another Servant] Give me thy sword.<br>A peasant stand up thus?<br>[She takes a sword and runs at him behind]                                |

<sup>36</sup> This theory shall also be discussed in chapter 6.3. Goneril’s and Regan’s Violence as an Expression of Atheist Faithlessness in this thesis.



Gloucester finds himself in a dilemma: Who should he be loyal to? He chooses Lear and therefore follows the social convention of respect and obedience to the king. However, he does not realise that conventions are non-existent. The social codes he is keen to observe do not work for Lear's alternative universe anymore.

The same problem appears when he reminds Regan and Cornwall that the two are guests in his home:

GLOUCESTER      What means your Graces? Good my friends, consider  
                                  You are my guests. Do me no foul play, friends.  
 CORNWALL        Bind him, I say. [Servants bind him]  
 REGAN             Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!  
                                  [...]
 GLOUCESTER      I am your host:  
                                  With robbers' hands my hospitable favours  
                                  You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?  
                                  (KL 3.7.30-41)

He tries first to appeal to their humanity and their knowledge of social codes, however, he fails. His last resort is the appeal to the code of divine order and divine justice (KL 3.7.65), which, likewise, fails, because divine justice does not exist anymore (Rocklin 306-7).

As a consequence of the brutality in the blinding scene of Gloucester in *King Lear*, and the subjects' seeming impotence concerning the machinery of power, the aesthetic appeal of violence that so often had been the reason for a play's success – as for instance with *Titus Andronicus* – is not existent in *King Lear*. Instead of amusement and entertainment that the audience could gain from watching violence on stage, horror, shock and repulsion are the result. The exorbitant cruelty – staged in a dramaturgy of pity – cannot entertain the spectator anymore. Instead, compassion and indignation reign.

All in all, the limitless cruelty that is displayed with Gloucester's blinding does not only symbolise disorder by presenting the impossible act itself, but also through the emphasis on man's evil nature in a universe deserted by God. Divine disorder, as well as broken boundaries of social convention find themselves centred in the cruel deed, from which only darkness and chaos – man's greatest fears – remain.

#### Goneril's and Regan's Violence as Expressions of Atheist Faithlessness

The non-existence of justice and the development of a "universe of suffering" (Elton, *King Lear* 103) in which Lear and the other characters find themselves is even enhanced by the cruelty displayed by Goneril and Regan. Several explanations for such a portrayal can be raised here.

On the one hand, the actions of Goneril and Regan stress the antithesis of civilisation and nature (Knight 182), through which it becomes clear that in Lear's unjust

and overturned universe, man has finally succumbed to the beastly natural state, which both Hobbes and Machiavelli mention in their works. Consequently, the two evil sisters exploit the situation of chaos caused by Lear's blunder to their advantage, using their evil nature as a catalyst for gaining power. The breakout of their beastly being is underlined by many descriptions of the two throughout the play. Thus they are referred to and denoted as "most savage and unnatural" (*KL* 3.3.7), "pelican daughters" (*KL* 3.4.74), "she-foxes" (*KL* 3.6.23), "tigers, not daughters" (*KL* 4.2.40) and "dog-hearted" (*KL* 4.3.46). Goneril is separately called a "degenerate bastard" (*KL* 1.4.262), a "detested kite" (*KL* 1.4.271) with a "wolvish visage" (*KL* 1.4.309) and a "sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture" (*KL* 2.4.131) by her father. Although it is only after the division of the country has backfired on him that Lear addresses his older daughters by using beastly attributes, Cavell suggests that Lear knows of the evil and unloving nature of his two older daughters from the beginning on, however, he ignores it – like many parents do – hoping for a positive outcome with the division of the country (82).

On the other hand, the fact that Lear is apparently unexpectedly deceived by his daughters, his own flesh and blood, points to the worst violence possible – the violence of close family members. Here, cruelty is enhanced by the unexpected occurrence of brutality. Naomi Conn Liebler argues that violence in a surrounding that is originally considered safe – i.e. violence at home – transgresses the unspoken contract that exists in such a space (46-7). The first cruelty the two sisters commit in the play is therefore of psychological nature and directed against their father, who, in turn, clearly states what the unnatural character of this violence is – it is "filial ingratitude" (*KL* 3.4.14) (Liebler 38). Lear is humiliated by Goneril and Regan as they make him beg for accommodation, as well as when he calls to the gods for justice, as shall be shown below.

While these interpretations for violence are possible, I would suggest a third theory that incorporates both ideas, taking them a step further. While Goneril and Regan both revel in their evil natures and act against the contract of 'home', the violence, which they exert not only against their father, but also against Gloucester can be seen as an expression of a possible atheist and religious-critic mindset.

As already discussed in chapter 2.1. of this thesis, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a growing tendency towards different religious orientations and steadily growing scepticism concerning an ever-present God and the providentialism in life. Thus, a notion that was termed 'atheism' by many critics such as by Bowes or Cooper began to gain awareness throughout the people of England. However, it is noteworthy that today's perception of what exactly constitutes atheism probably did not correspond to what atheism meant in the English Renaissance. Although Stephen Greenblatt explicitly states that is impossible to know today in what or in whom the Elizabethans exactly believed – also because they had to fear sanctions and punishments and therefore historic evidence and documents certainly can be considered as having been cautious concerning its religious

clarity – disbelief in and thus the complete rejection of the existence of any deity presumably was very rare (*Negotiations* 22). The same goes for Shakespeare and the use of own beliefs in his plays. Even if the poet had atheist tendencies, he could not voice his views too openly, since supporting non-orthodoxy or even Catholicism would mean punishment (in form of imprisonment or torture) and/or death (Dollimore 84; Mallin 10). Greenblatt, furthermore, argues that – even if the term ‘atheism’ existed – it was connected to the idea of an ‘other’ and used to isolate any other belief in a deity from one’s own belief, respectively those of Protestantism (Greenblatt, *Negotiations* 22). Thus, the thought of ‘otherness’ often resulted in the fact that different religious orientations were denoted to be atheist orientations.

When we take a look at *King Lear* now, it could be argued that both Goneril and Regan have been influenced by the Machiavellian Edmund, who at first rejects his father’s notion of fate and mocks superstition and the influence of the stars on man’s life. However, at the same time he is voicing the doubts of religious-sceptic Elizabethan viewers (Elton, “Shakespeare” 21):

EDMUND This is excellent foppery of the world that  
 when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of  
 our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the  
 sun, the moon and the stars; as if we were villains on  
 necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves,  
 thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance,  
 drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced  
 obedience of planetary influence, and all that we are  
 evil in by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion  
 of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to  
 the charge of a star!

(*KL* 1.2.121-31)<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, whereas Edmund believes in the divinity of nature (“Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law / My services are bound.”, *KL* 1.2.1-2), Goneril and Regan entirely reject a deity and any kind of religious thinking. I therefore concur with W. Elton’s assumption that both are “Machiavellian opportunists” (Elton, *King Lear* 119) and also atheists due to their natural, beastlike state, although the pursuit of Edmund might have spurred them on in their actions.

Looking at Goneril, it is striking to see that she is the only one of the main characters who does not once call upon a deity or mention a divine instance. Instead she mocks her husband Albany on his beliefs:

ALBANY ---- O Goneril,

<sup>37</sup> Ironically, in the end Edmund admits defeat to the instance he had always rejected – fate. Thus, he says: “The wheel is come full circle; I am here” (*KL* 5.3.172).

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind  
 Blows in your face! I fear your disposition.  
 That nature which contemns it origin  
 Cannot be bordered certain in itself.  
 She that herself will sliver and disbranch  
 From her material sap, perforce must wither  
 And come to deadly use.

GONERIL No more! The text is foolish.

(*KL* 4.2.29-37)

Hence, Goneril rejects any Elizabethan/Jacobean religious belief and instead seems to strive for change, which in turn would mean that she prefers chaos and anarchy – since change was not considered to be something positive in the Renaissance, but could only lead to disorder (Elton, *King Lear* 119-20).

Goneril's physical violence, as opposed to the psychological violence she uses against her father in the first act, is likewise violence out of atheist beliefs. Since she has neither Christian morals, nor a conscience, she poisons her sister for personal gain, i.e. to have Edmund to herself. However, when Edmund is fatally wounded and the plan to kill her own husband Albany fails, she stabs herself (*KL* 5.3.223-6). Here, she commits violence against herself, in other words, violence that a Christian or at least a god-fearing Elizabethan would consider a blasphemous act against God. Since it is very likely that Shakespeare as well as his audience had a great knowledge of the Bible, they probably immediately drew a parallel between Goneril's suicide and the suicides they were familiar with from Scripture. Thus, they knew that Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23), Saul (1 Samuel 31:4) and Simri (1 Kings 16:18) as well as Judas (Matthew 27:5) all killed themselves because they had either defied God and/or had had lived a sinful life. However, the fact that Goneril chooses to commit suicide points to her atheist mindset. If she were pious or at least acceptant of a deity, she would commit such a God-defying action. By her suicide she rejects a salvation through a divine instance, in other words, she rejects any belief in a deity. Additionally, the action emphasises her evil nature and sinful life.

Regan also defies God and mocks any belief in his existence. When Lear calls to the gods for justice against Goneril, Regan's response to his exclamation not only is the only moment in the play where she refers to a divine instance, but to a greater degree her answer is highly ironic and impatient, and thus openly deriding. Whereas her piety is only a show, her father, however, does not notice it:

LEAR You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames  
 Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,  
 You fen-sucked fogs, drawn by the pow'rful sun  
 To fall and blister her!

REGAN O the blest gods!



structure and order do not exist anymore and everything is allowed. Thus, also hideous violent actions can be committed without consequences. A display of Goneril and Regan as atheists would therefore reflect on their beastly nature. Without believing in God, man always remains in his natural state – he is never civilized. Therefore, Goneril and Regan are justifiably “pelican daughters”, “she-foxes” and “tigers”. Such a depiction automatically turns the two sisters into “archcriminals” (Greenblatt, *Negotiations* 25), raising the audience’s hostility towards them to no end. Every action done by them could be interpreted back to the fact that they are atheists in their natural, beastly state. Thus, the ‘other’ could be demonized.

Moreover, the cruelty toward their father and the neglect of social conventions could be explained as well. The “filial ingratitude” Lear denounces in scene 3.4 is also due to the fact that neither Goneril nor Regan believe in God, meaning that humaneness and the wish to follow the rules of courtesy are non-existent. To them, morality and laws are only customs and conventions designed by man – instead of God – and consequently can be dismissed in any given situation.

All things considered, if one assumes that Shakespeare intended to present Goneril and Regan as possible atheists, the poet could problematise the question of the need for religion. Are the two sisters right in discounting religious beliefs as hokum and useless? After all, the newly arising insights of science and astronomy could be used to question the existence and efficacy of a divine instance. And yet, does the portrayal of Goneril and Regan not show, how indispensable God and religion are for the preservation of social order and justice (Dollimore 86)?<sup>38</sup>

### Edgar, Justified Violence and Poetic Justice

As I have shown in the previous chapters, resulting from the initial blunder, the gods have left Lear’s universe to its fate and remain ignorant to calls and supplications from Gloucester and others. However, it is striking that only Edgar keeps up his faith in a divine and just instance until the very end, although everybody around him more and more questions the gods’ goodwill or realises the divine injustice (Gloucester: “As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods / They kill us for their sport” [KL 4.1.36-7]; Lear: “Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel, / That thou mayst shake the superflux to them / And show the heavens more just”

<sup>38</sup> On this topic see also the play *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks* from 1594, in which religion is questioned by the main character. Instead of a belief in a deity, Selimus explains God to be an invention of man and thus he himself promotes atheism as the only truth: “Then some sage man, above the vulgar wise, / Knowing that laws could not in quiet dwell, / Unless they were observed, did first devise / The names of gods, religion, heaven and hell, / And ‘gan of pains and feigned rewards to tell: / Pains for those men which did neglect the law; / Rewards for those that lived in quiet awe. / Whereas indeed they were mere fictions, / And if they were not, Selim thinks they were; / And these religious observations, / Only bugbears to keep the world in fear / And make men quietly a yoke to bear” (*Three Turk Plays: Selimus* 2.95-106).

[*KL* 3.4.34-6]). Edgar's famous words towards the end of the play ("The gods are just", *KL* 5.3.169) suggest that he is oblivious to the non-existence of justice – and that he still believes in justice. However, I argue that Edgar confuses divine justice with justified violence, and hence continues the disruption in the universe, as shall be discussed in the following.

According to Tom Clayton, poetic justice, i.e. the retribution in which evil is punished and good rewarded, can be found in numerous occasions in *King Lear* (186). Yet, if we consider the instances in which good and evil are equally punished and, in addition, consider the fact that evil and disorder keep the upper hand in the end, it is highly questionable whether Clayton is right. Instead, the characters find themselves in Lear's parallel universe, which in turn means – as I suggested earlier – that only universal injustice exists. Therefore, an assumption of the existence of poetic justice would be contradictive here. Likewise, since justice is a mere human convention in *King Lear*, Edgar's declaration that "the gods are just" is faulty. If Edgar's so-called 'justice' is existent in the play, it is only due to his own actions. In other words, 'just' moments that can be found in the play are neither poetically just, nor are they just in a divine sense. Instead, we only find actions of violent retribution, which are attempts of executing justice, respectively which are termed 'just' by the agents. In Regan's and Goneril's eyes, Gloucester's punishment is just, since he, as a "traitor" (*KL* 3.7.3), a "villain" (*KL* 3.7.34)<sup>39</sup> and an "ingrateful fox" (*KL* 3.7.28) gets what he deserves. Yet, this is no justice – Goneril and Regan merely justify their violence. Also Cornwall's servant attempts justice by taking laws and rules into his own hands, punishing his master in order to prevent him from causing more injustice.

Likewise, Edgar can be accorded two instances of justified violence – firstly, when he strikes Oswald in order to prevent the latter attacking the blind Gloucester (*KL* 4.6.227-53) and, secondly, when he fatally wounds his brother Edmund in the fight (*KL* 5.3.121-50). Although Edgar still believes in a divine and just instance, the fact that Oswald and Edmund are slain by Edgar's hand cannot be considered just, since Edgar only paid like with like. Thus, Oswald and Edmund did not receive poetic justice by the "just" gods, but justified violence by Edgar.

However, by confusing justified violence with divine justice, he replaces the one with the other. Thus, it is not the gods who (want to) impose justice, but Edgar. By imagining that the retribution that was brought upon evil was actually divine justice, he puts himself in the position of an agent of the gods (Adelman 15), meaning thus, that he acted on the gods' behalf. This, in turn, is the mistake that he makes which leads – just like Lear's blunder did – to a continuation of the disrupted cosmos, as shall be explained in the following.

According to the Elizabethan world picture, man is a mirror of the universe, created in God's image (Suerbaum 493), that is, he is the microcosm in the universal

<sup>39</sup> Gloucester is not once, but repeatedly called a "traitor" (*KL* 3.7.22, 3.7.32, 3.7.37, 3.7.44, 3.7.86) and a "villain" (*KL* 3.7.86, 3.7.95).

macrocosm. Therefore, a disruption in the microcosm will be reflected in a disruption of the macrocosm. Now the problem is that Edgar's justified violence which he committed in order to restore order in the disturbed universe is an action that he was not allowed to make. It can only be the king who ensures that order is kept during his rule, since this is his prime task as a sovereign – as has been established earlier in chapter 2.2. By acting and then justifying the actions by referring to the just gods, Edgar displays himself as an agent of the divine and thus puts himself in the place of King Lear. This, in turn, means that even if Lear's blunder is cleared after his death, a new blunder exists, caused by Edgar. Although it is left open in the end who will be the succeeding monarch among the three survivors Edgar, Albany and Kent, it is nevertheless very likely that Edgar will be the future king. Whereas Albany instantly rejects a possible coronation for himself ("Friends of my soul, you twain / Rule in this realm, and the god's state sustain", *KL* 5.3.319-20)<sup>40</sup>, Kent is on the brink of death himself ("I am come / To bid my king and master aye good night" [*KL* 5.3.33-4]; "I have a journey, sir, shortly to go; / My master calls me, I must not say no" [*KL* 5.3.321-2]), either following his master Lear into death, or called by God.<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, Edgar would start his reign with an error which, similarly to Lear's initial mistake, would cause the disruption of the cosmos to be conserved instead of being undone. Additionally, even if he had not committed the mistake of striving for the position of a justifying entity, it is unlikely that Edgar as a minor character could restore order, peace and justice in the play's universe. He becomes king "only by default" (Land 126), since everybody else is dead, dying or unwilling to burden himself with sovereignty (Flahiff 227).

On the whole, by putting himself in the position of exercising justice, which turns out to be justified violence, and the resulting possibility of Edgar's succession as king would mean a bleak future for the play's universe. However, even if one disregards a blunder on his part, Edgar would not be the sovereign that is actually needed to restore the upturned cosmos to normal again. In both cases, history would repeat itself.

## Conclusion

*King Lear* shows, like no other play, a hopeless and forlorn image of a cosmos turned upside-down, in which justice does not exist anymore and where, likewise,

<sup>40</sup> According to Mark A. McDonald, Albany does not reject the offer of becoming king, but instead invites the other two survivors to share the country between the three of them (203). This, nevertheless, could also mean chaos and a possible Civil War – thus the same result, the division of the country brought upon King Lear and his reign.

<sup>41</sup> However, since it is questionable whether an afterlife or even a divine instance exists, Kent's 'future' looks just as bleak as Albany's and Edgar's. Instead of the comfort of knowing where death will lead him, his demise is an "escape into the unknown" (F. P. Wilson 121). Thus, also the audience's "uncertainty [is extended] into infinity" (Booth 103).

the use of utterly cruel violence turns into a means of senselessness. Lear and his initial blunder are the reason for complete chaos, provoked by the choice of absolutism over the medieval feudal system and its norms of action. It becomes clear that the king himself is the person who does not seem to fit into his own state, ruling however it pleases him and offending all existing laws, engulfing the world he inhabits in a crisis. With these themes, Shakespeare's play is highly political and topical, implying the changes brought about by the new line of Stuarts after Elizabeth I had passed away. Almost as a sign of foreboding pointing to future conflicts in England, Shakespeare shows a proud king, who does not see and hear the warning signs around him. Additionally to the changing perception of man's place in the universe, of divinity as well as providence, a man is presented who desperately tries to cling onto his pagan assumptions that human nature entails human justice, respectively that a divine and righteous entity exists who can set everything right again. Ironically, it is only in his state of madness that Lear begins to understand that justice is only a convention of society and that the gods have left him for good.

Instead of (poetic) justice and man's civilized existence, we find destructive and highly exaggerated justified violence, executed by Lear's oldest daughters, who not only incorporate changing religious perceptions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean age, but carry insecurity about man's existence in the cosmos to extremes, defying and mocking a divine instance and embodying pure evil. Likewise, their betrayal towards Lear, as well as Edmund's betrayal towards Gloucester emphasises a claustrophobic atmosphere, where nothing is as it seems and where man cannot trust another. Familiar structures are unhinged, social norms and boundaries are suspended, giving violence freedom to reign. As a result, the sheer pleasure shown by Goneril and Regan at the blinding of Gloucester generates a feeling of repulsiveness and shock among the audience, rendering impossible any kind of aesthetic appeal of the scene, in contrast to many other violent scenes of Shakespeare's plays. Instead, a desolated and insecure Jacobean world is mirrored by a desolate and unstable staged universe: The action falls from beginning to end; the ending is left unresolved, making the audience realise that this disturbed cosmos might continue to exist. The result is the devastating demise of a king who has gone mad and yet is lucid:

LEAR        --- No, no, no life!  
               Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,  
               And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,  
               Never, never, never, never, never!  
               [...]  
               Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,  
               Look there, look there!  
               [dies]

(*KL* 5.3.305-8)

## Final Conclusion

In *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III* and *King Lear*, Shakespeare addresses the corruptedness of a changing society, where it seems as if ethics and morals cannot find their place anymore. The shift in astronomic beliefs, the influence of new discoveries in science, arising religious insecurities combined with a desperate clinging onto the old, feudal structures underline the insignificance of man in an obscure cosmos. The seemingly random outbreaks of violence, which can be found in all three plays presented in this thesis, indicate that, not only portrayed on stage but also in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, people's insecurities have risen immeasurably. Nothing makes sense anymore; life and man's existence have gotten out of hand. Even the security and reassurance of an afterlife has been taken from them. Apparently nothing, it seems, can be controlled anymore.

Especially *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus*, but also *Richard III* are significant representations of Renaissance claustrophobia. In *King Lear*, we as readers as well as Shakespeare's spectators are confronted with an insecurity that is caused by a constant threat: namely that everyone can be a spy and that, consequently, everyone spies on everyone. Edmund, Goneril and Regan who betray their fathers; Goneril who in the end even poisons her ally; Kent and Edgar who disguise themselves in order to remain alive; Edgar who even takes on several characters; the Mad Tom and the illiterate country yokel – it seems as if nothing can be resolved rationally anymore. In *Titus Andronicus*, the arbitrariness of the state's violence in form of the sons of Tamora is met with the logic of revenge where powerlessness and impotence lead to the eruption of Titus' cruelties, culminating in the near extinction of his own genealogy. Meanwhile, *Richard III* shows the Renaissance tendency towards absolutism with, ironically, a Machiavellian twist, where the sovereign is everything and the subject nothing. It is this violence that is portrayed in all three plays that comprises Elizabethan and Jacobean questions of legitimization, exertion and maintenance of power and the issue, whether justice can exist at all.

It is due to these insecurities of the Early Modern period that character types such as the Machiavellist Richard III or Goneril and Regan are produced, respectively that they have such a powerful impact on the audience. By portraying them, it is made clear that violence – in whatever shaping – is always institutionalized. Furthermore, it is stressed that whatever the individual does, the subject will forever be impotent and will, for all times, be confronted with an almighty machinery of power. The public display of physical violence is in the end a proof for the never-ceasing might and authority of the monarch, for it is the sovereign who decides where and how to punish, who to execute and to torture. Even if the witnessing audience of these acts of public display gets the impression of being able to do justice once themselves and to blame the victim for the deeds he did or did

not commit, even if they are able to rid themselves of their own sins, passing them on to the victim in his or her Lamb-of-God-like status and then feel empowered – at the end of the day it is only the monarch who has strengthened himself. Hence, it does not matter who succeeds as king or queen, since violence and power are existent in the system – and that is also why there will never be the possibility to escape from it. History always repeats itself.

Despite the comprehensive research on Shakespeare and his plays by today's scholars, it is nevertheless noticeable that there are still gaps to be found concerning the thematisation of violence and power on the Shakespearean stage, especially concerning uncharacteristic violent plays such as *Richard III*. As I have shown in this thesis, not only *Titus Andronicus* or *King Lear*, but even atypically violent theatre pieces such as *Richard III* convey valuable information on the portrayal of violence and power on the Elizabethan stage, as well as integrate and give deep insights into the changing Renaissance world picture, political conditions and historical events. Hence, it would be very enriching for future studies to examine – not only in other tragedies or history plays but also in Shakespeare's comedies – in how far violent actions on stage are connected to demonstrations of power in Elizabethan and Jacobean everyday life. Especially since, as has been mentioned in this thesis, Shakespeare's plays apparently can be read as unfinished, i.e. they almost exclusively remain open at the end, showing a repetitive pattern concerning the sovereign's use of violence. In other words, it is very likely that in the three plays presented in this thesis neither Edgar, nor Lucius, nor Henry Tudor will bring (positive) change to the country. Instead, everything will remain as it has been before.

Moreover, in the three plays the existence of justice is questioned to an extent never seen before. All three tragedies show that neither human justice, nor divine justice can be found. In both *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear*, it is even due to the fault of the main protagonists and their wrong decisions that justice abolishes itself. In *Richard III*, justice does not exist, because the main protagonist is a Machiavellist tyrant. As a result, the violence that is employed for 'justice' turns out to be a mere justification of violence and therefore a symbol for absurdity – transforming violence into a means that is only applied for its own sake by the characters – the sake of violence. Its production is hence surreal, anarchistic and almost nihilistic.

It is especially striking that in all three works presented in this study, injustice first and foremost exists particularly for female characters. In *Titus Andronicus*, Lavinia is raped and mutilated without a motive, and Tamora is thrown to the beasts after her death (*TA* 5.3.194-9) – although, for instance, Saturninus, who is as guilty in committing the atrocities like his wife, receives a proper and decent burial (*TA* 5.3.190-1). In *Richard III*, Anne is killed out of sheer amusement; thus, violence is directed at her merely because Richard is powerful, and she is not. Lastly, in *King Lear*, Cordelia is mistreated out of pride and arrogance by her father and dies completely unnecessarily although the play has practically finished,

whereas Goneril and Regan, instead of being unjustly treated, turn out to be the actual embodiment of injustice. Instead, all females of the three plays mentioned are – without exception – objectified. Since the gender aspect could not be treated in particular in this thesis due to lack of space, it would be most revelatory and fruitful to investigate the connection between violence towards women in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods and violence towards women on stage, especially since most of Shakespeare's plays were written during Queen Elizabeth's reign and yet portray in most cases powerless, flat or unsympathetic females that are mutilated and – in the case of Goneril, Regan and Tamora – mutilate others.

In conclusion, by integrating the themes of violence, as well as power and justice, *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III* and *King Lear* can not only be seen as a highly political plays, but also as mirrors to the world, thus taking up themes that touched Renaissance England in history, society, religion and politics, as well as affecting the people's lives. And yet, by specifically taking up themes which were monopolized by the state, authority structures could be unfolded and undermined on stage. Considering Foucault's theory of power through discourse, it becomes clear that – although state and monarch dominated said discourse and internalized their power on the subject's body – Shakespeare's plays can be attributed a highly state- and power-subverting character. In other words, by portraying characters such as Aaron, Shakespeare undermines the state's assumption of the efficacy of punishment and execution, as well as violence and retributive justice in general. By taking up elements from public punishments and executions and then highly exaggerating these violent atrocities – especially in *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear* – Shakespeare offers the possibility for the audience to not only question but also distance themselves from what they witness, making clear that the ending of a sovereign's rule always also means the beginning of a new sovereign's rule, entailing afresh demonstrations of power and subjection. Moreover, through the irrational and completely absurd use of violence in the plays, Shakespeare responds to public demonstrations of the state's power in general. By showing that Tamora, Aaron, Demetrius and Chiron, as well as Richard and Goneril, Regan and Cornwall only apply torture and violence as a means of pleasure gain, an analogy to the Elizabethan state (and to every other sovereign) is drawn, where violence does not need a justification anymore, but is applied as a whim, turning into an "acte gratuit" (Reichert, *Der fremde Shakespeare* 305).

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# When Didactic Drama Meets the Comical: Two Views on the Victorian Family

*Max von Blanckenburg*

## 1 Introduction

“We live [...] in an age of ideals” – with this statement Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (21) makes a most vital observation about the time and culture she lives in. In Victorian England, people were indeed confronted with clear-cut ideals of social life regarding both the public and private sphere. In this context, it was the nineteenth-century home and family playing a particular role as the “crystal of society” and “nucleus of national character” (Smiles 394). Hence, family was the very core of Victorianism serving to regulate its members’ behaviours and demanding absolute obedience. In line with this, Sarah Stickney Ellis states in 1843: “it is evident that principle, rather than inclination, must form the basis of our actions” (210).

These principles, now, have received quite varying responses, for instance, on the Victorian stage. In this thesis, I will examine Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Bernard Shaw’s *Mrs Warren’s Profession*<sup>1</sup> as two plays mirroring the prevailing conceptions of nineteenth-century family life in two different ways. What we find in both plays are characters that show awareness of the social

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<sup>1</sup> In the following, the two plays will be abbreviated as *IBE* and *MWP*.

expectations that are connected to the family. Their forms of dealing with these expectations, however, differ fundamentally in *IBE* and *MWP*, as I will demonstrate. Drawing on the field of New Historicism, these illustrations of family on stage can then be linked to Shaw's and Wilde's criticisms of Victorianism. Shaw was a member of the Fabian society and as a dramatist "hoped to effect direct social change" by means of a moralistic theatre (Marshik 47). With strong didactic elements in his drama, he aspired to lament a system that caused social injustices. This clearly sets him apart from Wilde, who had a distinctively comical approach to depicting society.

It does not come as a surprise, then, that examiners and scholars of the time, in turn, reviewed the two plays rather differently: the social criticism in Shaw's drama was fairly obvious and even resulted in a yearlong ban from the stage. As to *IBE*, however, the play was referred to as "extraordinarily funny" (Fyfe 99), on the one hand, and "intangible" (Archer 97) for its lack of a moral point, on the other. Notably, Bernard Shaw found even harsher words for his Irish fellow-countryman's work. From his perspective, Wilde's play was "heartless" and "hateful" (Shaw 1918, 95f) and watching it was merely a waste of time (Shaw qtd. in Eltis 173).

However, Oscar Wilde for himself considered comedy as a most suitable format to convey a message without being restrained by censorship (Wilde 305). His biography reveals that he was a man who was at odds with Victorianism in various respects, and so we can ask if in his drama there is a dimension beyond the mere comical. According to Reinert, the key to realising the subversive power of Wilde's humour in the play is to understand that "the quip is not a quip; it means what it says" (15). Against this background, the following analysis will show that, when taking the characters in *IBE* seriously, there is much more to find than the witty humour of a Restoration comedy.

Ultimately, it will become clear that, despite their different styles, Shaw and Wilde actually are on a similar mission: for one thing, they ask the question as to what happens when family members thwart social expectations in Victorian England. For another, both make clear that this human failure cannot simply be attributed to individuals' shortcomings but likewise blames the social system behind it. Therefore, it is the aim of this paper to explore these ways in which Shaw and Wilde form their perception of Victorian<sup>2</sup> society and its felt deficits into two, on the surface, very different plays, and, beyond that, to examine the possible functions of these social criticisms.

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<sup>2</sup> Knowing that within the nineteenth century there were, in fact, a number of cultural developments with regard to the notion of family and the roles of men and women, what can be done within the scope of this paper is to outline that intersection of values and ideas that was valid and relevant for the better part of the century and embodied by Queen Victoria. Therefore, the expressions 'nineteenth century' and 'Victorian age' are not meant to provide a detailed and adequate description of the whole century but rather touch upon the major cultural discourses.

## 2 Theoretical Foundations

### 2.1 New Historicism

Especially in an age like the late nineteenth century, bringing about changes to society in many various ways (such as, for instance, through industrialisation or far-reaching social reforms), it is highly interesting to focus on how the respective social conventions of the time are taken up and mirrored in literary works. In order to do so, it is necessary to adopt an analytical perspective that allows making a statement about the relationship between literature and the context in which it originates. The framework of New Historicism is very suitable here because it provides a viewpoint from which it situates literature within its given social and historical context. Thus, it enables me to show, on the one hand, how interwoven both *MWP* and *IBE* are with Victorianism and, on the other, how the two plays draw attention to the destructive potential of social convention for the lives of individuals.

Generally, New Historicists like Stephen Greenblatt claim that any literary work bears a connection to “other [cultural] practices, behaviour and values” (Robson 18) and is hence per se embedded in a sociocultural context. The nature of this link, however, is in no way straightforward but becomes an object of study. Thus, opposing a materialist view, Greenblatt criticises the idea that a text merely represents its context or vice versa (Greenblatt 1982, 5). Rather, literature can be understood as part of a “network of material practices” (Veeser xi), and, as such, a literary work holds a specific position within a larger structure encompassing, amongst others, social and political forces. This description is reminiscent of Clifford Geertz’s semiotic approach to culture: according to him, an author – just like any other person – is suspended in self-spun “webs of significance” (Geertz 5), that is, their culture. Any literary creation is thus done, quite literally, out of this position and also reacts upon it. The aim of New Historicism is, now, to combine the interpretation of literature and history (Gallagher/Greenblatt 3) and leverage the fact that the former cannot be examined, let alone explained, without the latter.

What is more, New Historicism understands neither literature nor its socio-cultural context as static. Instead, both are seen as variables taking an influence on and even producing each other reciprocally. That is, if culture fully permeates the process of writing a text, it inevitably provides the “social understandings” upon which that very work depends (Greenblatt 2005, 12) and thus strongly influences its creation. In turn, texts of any kind are considered to contain a “social energy” that impacts on their readers and, in turn, on the views and behaviour of those readers (Robson 22, 71). Hence, literature interacts with its cultural setting and, furthermore, has the capacity to invoke changes through its readership or audience, respectively.

What is of particular importance to this paper is Greenblatt's assumption about the origin of that social energy, namely, some kind of dissatisfaction on the part of writers: in his opinion, authors "are agents whose lives are not quite lived in harmony with the official, generalised, and objectively recoverable version of their society" (During 179). I will claim later on that this is very true for both George Bernard Shaw and for Oscar Wilde. In *MWP*, Shaw, very obviously, voices his criticism of a society that makes prostitution possible and even reasonable. Oscar Wilde, in a more humorous manner, renders social conventions absurd and hence expresses his concerns implicitly. In the last chapter, I will state that both playwrights even go one step further than just expressing their lamentations by including indications towards an alternative and better social reality in their works. To examine this mutual enrichment of the two theatre plays and their well-defined social world, New Historicism provides a valuable analytic tool.

## 2.2 Gender Theory

As a second theoretical component for this thesis, Gender Studies will allow me, in combination with New Historicism, to analyse how Shaw and Wilde use family ideals and dynamics as essential building blocks for their plays. One of the reasons for this is that from today's state of research, we can say that gender was an elementary category for Victorians to structure their lives by (Shires ix) and particularly their families. Evelyn Glenn claims that any discussion about, for example, a nineteenth-century woman's position in the family, in fact, represents a discussion about her position in society (348). If gender is one of the main factors for the formation of Victorian family roles, then by analysing gendered familial structures and positions, we likewise gain an insight into the underlying social system and hence draw a line from Gender Studies back to New Historicism.

In order to name the key points in Gender Theory that are relevant here, one can start by defining gender, according to Judith Butler, as the "cultural interpretation of sex" (10). Rather than relating to the biological traits of a person, the term gender is hence linked to the attribution of socio-cultural features to a sexed body. In this context, Butler would agree with Greenblatt on saying that culture is always man-made<sup>3</sup>, which is the reason why gender roles, in turn, are by no means natural but equally constructed. Amongst their functions is that these roles serve as a public carrier for social convention and behaviour (cf. Hess/Ferree 16), which will be of particular importance when analysing the family members in the two authors' plays. On the surface of gender, people (or in this context: characters) literally act out a social discourse that is – at least traditionally – dominant in their society and by iterating that performance affirm and reproduce a specific social code (Butler 185ff).

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<sup>3</sup> Greenblatt uses the colourful expression of the "poetics of culture" to illustrate this (cf. Robson 29).

This brings us directly to the topic of this thesis: I will apply the notion of gender to the Victorian family by interpreting (core) family as a cultural unit smaller than society that, yet, functions by means of similar social mechanisms, such as gender performance. Glenn supports this thesis – that we can think of family roles as one realisation of gender – by maintaining that gendered structures develop, above all, amidst members of a family through their social intercourse (348).

The critical point here is that the adherence to this Victorian family gender system acts as a precondition for someone's participation in social life. That is to say, while gender is, in fact, a cultural construct, its artificiality is carefully hidden (Butler 198) and its performance is turned into a social requirement. Now, in social sciences it has been claimed that although, theoretically, individual gender-inconsistent behaviour could lead to the altering or even dissolution of a gender category, in point of fact, it rather excludes that person from the very gender concept (Deaux/Kite 109f). With regard to both *MWP* and *IBE*, it will become clear that all those aspects – the unnaturalness of gender, its characteristic performativity in the family and the consequences of gender-deviating behaviour – are at the heart of the plays' claims and criticisms. Despite the obvious differences between the two literary works, it emerges that the authors both seem to formulate the same question as Butler: "What interventions to this ritualistic repetition are possible?" (199). Interestingly, it will become clear in the analysis that their answers to it do not vary as much as one might think.

### 3 And What About the Context?

#### 3.1 Of Roles and Duties – The Victorian Family

If the two dramatists, as a matter of fact, used the gender conception of Victorian family as an object of subversion, then this label must have had some sort of identifiable substance that audiences would be able to relate to. In how far this holds true, however, depends on the angle from which we look at family: Mintz points out that "there was, of course, no single Victorian family type" (xi). Certainly, there is merit in the argument that those familial gender relations were in reality not one-dimensional but diverse. Nevertheless, what Shaw and Wilde allude to are the major cultural discourses, which, although revolving around a strongly idealised version of family, were present in the minds of people at the time.

Strikingly, in spite of the fact that a huge majority of 85% belonged to the working class, the prevalent ideology and role models were disseminated via the middle class and from there percolated down into the lower ranks of society (Nelson 2007, 6). Again, there were, surely, class differences regarding family ideals but rather in the sense that the working classes could often not afford to uphold the

same standards as the middle classes, mainly because they were involved with numerous other duties that were of higher importance.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.1.1 *Family Values and the Value of Family*

Under Queen Victoria's reign, the notion of family was very much that of the social fundament that would provide a structure to both individuals' lives and likewise society as a whole. Hence, family had a number of inner and outer functions: for its members, it constituted a counter-part to the large and dangerous world of work, a safe place that people could retreat to and that was therefore paramount in a Victorian's life (Ittmann 142). While social change was, in many ways, happening at a fast pace, family was seen as something constant and of timeless quality (Nelson 2007, 6). To the outside world<sup>5</sup>, in turn, family had a strong representative side: by creating a new family, through marriage, an individual was allocated his or her own position in society. One was no longer seen as being under the influence and patronage of one's parents but would take up a specific – and publicly identifiable – place within the social system of Victorian England. Since this new unit was to operate on the same principles as society, family, effectively, turned into a “microcosm of the larger social and political world” (Mintz 60).

This social logic is a key factor also with regard to any form of literary creation in general: as conventionality was crucial for Victorianism, any representation of family in art was to cast a positive light on society and thus reaffirm the dominant and politically desired social patterns.

In this context, we find certain characteristics to be central in giving shape to that cultural construct that is the Victorian family, and acting as behavioural guidelines for its members: the middle class code of conduct was essentially built around “dignity, work and duty” (Gordon/Nair 5). That is to say, there was a distinct allocation of tasks and responsibilities that Victorians would fulfil with as much earnestness and conscientiousness as in any way possible. Hereby, everyone would prove acceptance of their part within the social framework of family, and consequently of society. In order to illustrate what this meant in practice, this paper will consider the different members of the Victorian core family: mother, father and the relationships to their children.

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<sup>4</sup> For further information on the relation of class and family roles in the nineteenth century consult Nelson 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Historically, this process of creating a clear distinction between the public and private world rooted in the nineteenth century development that, for the first time, the sphere of work was no longer located in and associated with the home (Flanders xxii).

### 3.1.2 *Family Roles*

What is pivotal regarding nineteenth-century family roles is that there was a strict gender division into two different spheres that men and women would occupy. These gendered domains constituted their respective members' lives and likewise did the men and women (re-)constitute them, which resulted in the production and reproduction of publicly visible gender effects.

Those effects can be seen perhaps most clearly in the role of the mother, who virtually constituted the heart of the nineteenth-century family. Judith Flanders, for instance, even goes as far as describing the home not as "a place, but [as] a projection of the feminine" (xxx1). When thinking back to the idea of duty in Victorianism, one can sense the high responsibility that was laid on the mother regarding the inner and outer functioning of family. There is no doubt that bringing up the children was one of her major obligations (Mintz 59) but the notion of the Victorian mother encompassed a great deal more than that. She was likewise ultimately accountable for the whole family's welfare regarding its moral and social renown (Ittmann 154). This included managing the household and keeping property and family members presentable at all times. Furthermore, "purity, devotion, and selflessness" (Nelson 2007, 27) were amongst the central virtues that a woman was to possess. Her own being – sometimes idealised as angelic<sup>6</sup> – in this thinking radiates that goodness over husband and children and hence uplifts them morally. Strikingly, however, when looking at nineteenth-century prescriptive literature, such as conduct books<sup>7</sup>, there is little reference to the necessities and preferences that she herself might have. Sally Shuttleworth traces this back to the Victorian idea that a woman's emotions were all and exclusively tied to her role as a mother, to the effect that the concept of Victorian womanhood fully merged into that of motherhood (32). Although there might be truth in her argument, I would object to it in as much as there was a definitive second facet to a woman's gender role, namely, that of the wife.

In fact, only within marriage a woman could fulfil her mother role at all because having children out of wedlock was an utter social taboo and usually had far-reaching consequences. By marrying, however, a woman would secure or possibly improve her societal position and she would complete her identity through the attachment to a male counter-part. As a prominent writer of her time, Sarah Stickney Ellis paints this picture of marriage and highlights two vital sides of it: on the one hand, marriage is described as the most significant step to take in the life of a woman. Not only does it ensure that one is being provided for, it also promises marital love as the greatest good anyone can obtain on this planet (21, 107).

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<sup>6</sup> Most prominently featured in Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House*, from 1854.

<sup>7</sup> As for conduct books and manuals on how to organise home and family life, especially for middle-class women, see, for example: Isabella Beeton's *The Book of Household Management* (1861) or Sarah Stickney Ellis's series *The Woman of England*, *The Wives of England*, *The Mothers of England*, *The Daughters of England* (as of 1839).

Likewise, however, Ellis appeals to her readers to be fully aware of the clearly inferior position that a woman has to take up compared to her husband, irrespective of her talents or achievements. Hence, she must always thoroughly examine a potential marriage partner in advance, in order to reassure herself of his integrity and her own will to fully subordinate herself (14). Moreover, as a fundament for this concept of femininity serves the regent herself, “our beloved QUEEN [sic] [in whom] we have the character of a wife and a mother” (12).

From this description of a Victorian woman, two conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, because it is the queen, representing all of England, who acted as a role model and thus set a dominant gender standard, one can argue that there was a role awareness across classes. This makes it possible to examine and interrelate Kitty Warren and Lady Bracknell later on. Secondly, referring back to New Historicism, one gets an idea of the vast influence of the socio-cultural and political forces on the lives of individuals, here on women. It does not come as a surprise then that these very determinative notions of femininity are mirrored within literary works.

Turning now to the second constituent part in the family, the father and husband, we once more find a variety of prescriptive statements regarding the set of desired character traits for a man. Interestingly, there are several overlaps between the gender roles of a man and a woman. For instance, the attribute angelic was likewise used in connection with an ideal man and related to him being strong-minded and full of integrity (Ellis 58). Similarly, at first glance there seems to be some kind of gender competition between husband and wife considering that the expression ‘head of the family’ can be found for both partners (Farningham 10ff; Ellis 250). However, this potential contradiction can be resolved by looking closer at the two domains men and women occupied: while the wife would classically be in charge of intra-familial matters, it was the husband who protected the family from the outside world and likewise represented them to it. Therefore, he was the one to bear the highest authority as well as responsibility and consequently deserved to be treated with utmost respect (Ellis 67). To question this paternal authority was virtually unthinkable, especially because of the prevalent idea that it was divine providence giving a father his leading role (Mintz 60). In turn, it was part of his duties to provide financial security to a family as well as behaving in a morally impeccable manner (Ruskin [s. p.]). Generally, many of those desired masculine behavioural characteristics revolved around the notion of the gentleman as someone characterised through, amongst other things, suave manners, probity and benevolence. Those virtues were to be practiced in the family by any man irrespective of his financial background (Nelson 2007, 35) and thus separated the gentleman from belonging exclusively to a particular class.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> There is, of course, much more to be said about the notion of the Victorian Gentleman. Consider, for example: Newman, John Henry. *The Idea of a University*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907.

As a third point, by throwing light on the social structures that regulated how many Victorian sons and daughters lived together with their parents, we can see a more complete picture of the nineteenth-century core family which will be fundamental for the analysis of the two dramas. Broadly speaking, children, as well, were subject to various cultural forces that would strictly define their gender roles and require an everyday performance of them. The roles of sons and daughters differed in as much as there were different life paths sketched out for them, namely, to step into their respective parent's role at some point. Therefore, the long-time goal of the upbringing of sons was that they would preserve or ideally enhance the family's social and financial status (Nelson 2007, 72), just like the father did. As a consequence, within the phase of adolescence, sons would gradually gain more authority, which in many cases led to conflicts. Notably, these very tensions contained a social function: according to Mintz, "filial rebellion [was] one of the patterns through which cultural values were transmitted from one generation to the next" (88). That is to say, usually; father and son did ultimately not fall out with each other but both played their parts within the process of gender role transition that a growing-up son went through.

In comparison to a Victorian son, who was generally given more liberties to cultivate and prepare himself for independence, a daughter would be tied much more closely to the home (Nelson 2007, 86). Even more than any of her brothers, she had to be absolutely obedient and greatly care about her flawless angelic appearance and reputation in family and public (82). This was of utmost importance because a good name significantly enhanced her chances to find someone to marry and since she was considered to step into her mother's role at some day, marriage was obviously the key prerequisite.

### 3.1.3 *Cracks in the Social Foundation*

When considering Victorian family, it is important to note that there was, as a matter of fact, always some kind of discrepancy between gender demands and their fitting into the realities of people. Arguably, Shaw and Wilde had a sense for those two sides and, as will be shown, playfully hint at them in their works.

To start with, there is evidence that Victorian families and marriages did in many cases not live up to the prevalent gender claims (Gordon/Nair 70), either because people were not able to or did not want to. In fact, there is some truth in both: as for the first one, it was a broad social change – leading to "conflicts between work and home, between the needs of children and the limits of parents and between men and women over resources and sexual power" (Ittmann 142) – that made it immensely difficult to conform to the high social expectations. Likewise, however, gender concepts were deliberately challenged and objected to by people: Gordon and Nair state that, within the course of the century, family and marriage ideals were increasingly questioned even though an actual altering of that

long-established concept was still a long way off (97). Nevertheless, this criticism led to the emergence of at least one prominent alternative gender image: Victorians feared that the classic female gender role would change towards what was termed as the “New Woman” (Nelson 2007, 67) at the end of the century. This type of woman demanded education for herself, had career aspirations and showed traits such as smoking cigarettes, all of which were conventionally considered masculine features. As a result, the traditional feminine gender role was questioned and the masculine one even threatened.

I is only possible to touch upon this theme within the scope of this thesis, but nevertheless it allows the following conclusion: The fact that gender attributions can be dynamic because society is always in motion, supports Butler’s thesis that these roles are by no means innate. On the contrary, people’s belief in them is the result of a socialisation and education into a certain culture and – as history suggests – can be questioned and disrupted when those dominant discourses are at odds with the possibilities, needs and wishes of many.

### 3.2 Censorship of Victorian Drama

With respect to New Historicism, it is worth considering another cultural factor before actually looking into *MWP* and *IBE*: in nineteenth-century England, an overt and central dimension of the cultural influence on drama was, in point of fact, restriction through censorship. As English drama, for the longest time, had been staged at court and for the respective governments (Stephens 37), it is hardly surprising that these institutions considered it necessary to scrutinise theatre. On the one hand, censorship, therefore, was a means to channel creativity into a direction that complied with the state ideology, and, on the other, to punish those who would not put up with that policy. In this sense, it was an important power-maintaining instrument, even more so because the Victorian theatre enjoyed great popularity not only at court but it was also that very form of art with the largest mass appeal (2). Thus, if potentially subversive ideas could be widely disseminated via theatre performances, then drama had the power to do harm to “key social institutions” (Shellard *et al.* 43), amongst which the Victorian family is of particular interest here.

It was the task of the Lord Chamberlain and his examiners not to restrain but rather to protect drama (5). In their own view, only through their work, peace and quiet in society and family could be guaranteed (Robert Southey, qtd. in Stephens 38). However, the censors’ authority was not free from criticism either and since they naturally did not want to evoke the impression of suppressing creativity and art as such, there was often a fine line between the alleged protection of theatre and its audiences, and an immoderate social straightening of the stage.

For playwrights such as Oscar Wild and George Bernard Shaw, it was hence of utmost importance to have a sure feeling for what they were allowed to write or

what had better be left out. Remarkably, however, there was not always consensus between examiners as to what specifically was to be termed ‘inappropriate’ or ‘indecent’. While scenes of nudity and obvious political criticism were commonly cut out, as for the toleration of morally and socially deviant behaviour on stage, the extent of censorship lay very much in the hands of a particular licenser (Shellard *et al.* 46, Stephen 80f). This is a key point to keep in mind when analysing Wilde’s and Shaw’s works. While both writers’ biographies suggest that they were clearly not at ease with Victorianism in various respects<sup>9</sup>, they were not able to simply flout the nineteenth-century drama conventions and voice their discomfort freely. Therefore, instead of openly deploring a socially unjust system, the two writers had a chance to utter criticism by illustrating how those circumstances impinge upon the lives of individuals, and families in particular. Hence, they were able to question social categories upon which society depended to a great deal. In fact, it will become clear that the way the dramatists display family roles on stage is highly subversive and ultimately targets not only family but society as a whole. Thus, what would certainly not have been possible to express directly is disguised in the plays through the altering of family ideals as a much subtler and more implicit method of criticism<sup>10</sup>.

## 4 Families and Fallacies

In this chapter, I will show how the characters in both plays present and represent, through their attitudes and actions, social truths that are strongly at odds with nineteenth-century family ideals. That is to say, the plays highlight, in two different ways, the discrepancy between generic family gender role prescriptions and people’s diverse realities of life. Hess and Ferree argue that “because the gender system is not a reflection of natural differences, creating gender is a struggle” (16). We will see that this is accented in the two dramas in several ways.

The characters do not manage or do not choose to act according to convention and hence alter family conceptions. Through this deviation, a new light is cast on Victorian gender performance, revealing its artificial core and depicting the outcomes of socially inconsistent behaviour. While both playwrights make use of

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<sup>9</sup> Within the limits of this paper, there is no room to go deeply into the dramatists’ biographies. Rather, as was claimed in 3.1.3., based on the two plays I will render visible the cultural embeddedness of the dramas and the perceived social injustices that they deal with. However, to read up on Shaw’s and Wilde’s biographical relationship to Victorianism consider, for instance: Belford, Barbara. *Oscar Wilde. A Certain Genius*. London: Bloomsbury, 2000; Jones, Howard Mumford. “Shaw as a Victorian.” *Victorian Studies: A Journal of the Humanities, Arts and Sciences* 1 (1957): 165-172.

<sup>10</sup> Being aware of the problems Shaw had with receiving a licence for *Mrs Warren’s Profession*, and also of Oscar Wilde’s downfall after the revealing of his homosexuality, I will not further dwell on the historical details in view of the fact that both plays were, in fact, staged after all.

family as their object of subversion, their characters' actions, however, draw very different consequences: as will become clear in the following analysis, in *MWP*, Shaw has gender deviance punished whereas Wilde characters defy social demands by escaping into comical absurdity.

#### 4.1 Deconstructing the Victorian Mother

##### 4.1.1 *Kitty Warren*

Drawing on what has been said about family roles earlier, Allan states that a Victorian woman “craves to be a mother, knowing that she is an imperfect undeveloped being, until she has borne a child” (35). As for Kitty Warren, however, the facts are slightly different: she is a woman who happens to be a mother but has evidently not ‘completed’ her identity because she has born a child. On the contrary, *MWP* is a play abounding with the idea that Kitty has a very different understanding of her own role. Whilst being fully aware of traditional Victorian mothers’ features, she claims an alternative way to fulfil her motherly function and hence attempts to recreate her own gender role.

The first step in this process is her vigorous protest against gender convention. She knows very well what is “expected from a woman” (*MWP* 68) but blatantly communicates her opinion that mere conformity is socially utterly vacuous and more “hypocrisy” (*ibid*) than anything else. In her view, a woman – if not from a privileged social background – can only live up to the morally impeccable female gender image to the extent that her circumstances allow her to (64f).<sup>11</sup> As her low social rank did not provide enough shelter and financial security, she feels she had to choose a different path than that of gender obedience. It is notable that Shaw’s description of Kitty Warren completely opposes the classic Victorian view of Sarah Stickney Ellis, who emphasises the possibility and duty to always do “the greatest amount of good with the smallest pecuniary means” (201f). But suffering for the sake of upholding a gender concept that Kitty perceives as artificial anyway is not what Shaw’s protagonist chooses to do.

Instead, to embark on a career in an area that could not be further away from Victorian ideals, Kitty redefines a female gender concept and grounds it upon two pillars: wealth and her own conception of character. In her discussion with Vivie it becomes clear that Kitty regards money as a necessity that a woman has to generate herself if male provision fails. She abandons that feminine labelling of being forever attached to a husband and sees her career as the only way to take a step out of that victimised position and towards self-determination (*MWP* 66f). At the same time, it appears to be crucial to her to keep her character morally upright.

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<sup>11</sup> We find a similar reasoning in Bertolt Brecht’s *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, in which the protagonist Shen Te describes her dilemma by saying: “Gut zu sein und doch zu leben zeriss mich wie ein Blitz in zwei Hälften” (139).

Remarkably enough, though, for Kitty Warren, keeping one's integrity is not a matter of reputation but mainly of self-respect (67f). Only through this shift from social to self-approval she can justify her business towards herself and Vivie. From that position she claims to "know how to treat [her] own child" (40) because, in her view, Kitty has deconstructed a flawed motherly ideal and rebuilt a new one.

Nevertheless, from a Victorian gender perspective her actions constitute a remarkable form of deviation, which, as Shaw's storyline suggests, will inevitably take its toll: to start with, the strong link between the vital notions of home and femininity is completely taken apart through her constant absence in her daughter's life. As Kitty was always tied up with business matters, Vivie does not feel her mother has reared her at all (37). It is very telling that Kitty's character is by no means as family-oriented as expected: while society wants her to understand "family devotion as the answer to the woes of public life" (Nelson 2007, 6), Kitty rather claims her own liberties and seems to be entirely taken up in her profession. Her statement "I must have work and excitement" (*MWP* 102) illustrates very well, for one thing, her priorities and, for another, how that business life has transformed her personality. Hence, a woman in her position cannot morally uplift anybody but instead has centred her actions on traditional masculine values and aims in life. Here we find a character movement towards that, among Victorians infamous image of the New Woman at the end of the century, who through her own profession "undermine[s] patriarchal and familial authority" (Ittmann 223).

Again, dedicating most of your time and passion to the world of work would clash with those Victorian values of maternal selflessness and familial devotion even if Kitty's business had been one of higher social acceptance. Even more so, running a chain of brothels – a fact that can only be hinted at but never spelt out in the drama – cannot stay without consequences in Shaw's play. Therefore, the image of Kitty as a strong, resolute woman is gradually deconstructed in the course of the plot. For instance, she herself realises she is not impervious to Frank's advances and has to acknowledge "I *am* wicked" (*MWP* 50), thus showing both surprise about her own lack of moral control and likewise awareness of her non-conformity with gender standards. In addition, when Kitty "embraces her daughter protectingly, instinctively looking upward for divine sanction" (69), it becomes obvious that the belief in her own mother role is not as firm as one might think. As a consequence, the more she anticipates that she has lost credibility in the eyes of Vivie, the more she attempts to take the bull by the horns: knowing that she has failed setting Vivie an example of a virtuous mother, Kitty tries to regain her family position by being authoritative and enforcing a motherly attitude (54, 59). This is entirely paradox, however, because she tries to bind her daughter by resorting to the family ideal that she has deconstructed herself! This is why her claim "You've no right to turn on me now and refuse to do your duty as a daughter" (103) does not have much effect on Vivie, who shakes off all family expecta-

tions as she perfectly knows her mother is by no means in the position to demand gender conformity of her.

Furthermore, this raises a central question: What is the reason why Kitty suddenly enforces a quasi-motherly attitude and wants to determine Vivie's life so much?<sup>12</sup> Arguably, it dawns upon her that she has fundamentally failed as a mother and hence fears to more and more lose significance as Vivie's parent. Her vehement begging "You wouldn't – you *couldn't* leave me" (63) supports this idea and, as a matter of fact, reveals strikingly reversed dependencies at this point of the play: a mother, traditionally being in charge of all matters within the family and wielding authority over her children, is suddenly abandoned by her much more autonomous child and cannot bear the thought of having to look after herself. From a reader's point of view, this is a most bitter ending, particularly because it does not even seem bitter to Vivie (104).

To sum up, the following conclusions can be drawn: There is potential for a harsh social criticism in the drama regarding the Victorian mother's gender role. On the one hand, we find that it is the circumstances that hinder Shaw's protagonist from being an ideal mother. In line with this, Marshik states that the perhaps most shocking observation about *MWP* is that Kitty Warren's choice of a career as a brothel owner seems to be a reasonable one considering her situation (49). That is to say, society does not actually give all of its members a chance to confirm gender prescriptions in practice and therefore fosters a social disparity. On the other hand, however, through the imperfect Kitty Warren, Shaw hints at the fact that this family gender ideal is entirely artificial anyway. Women who cannot or do not want to recognise this, in Kitty's view, possess, if anything, a "want of character" (*MWP* 67). She, however, is fully aware of the unnaturalness of these gender claims and hence denies their legitimacy. Yet, the tipping point of all this is that Kitty's story is not one of a successful emancipation from social demands. In the end, she has become "a coarse woman, a vulgarian by nature" (Nelson 1971/1972, 365) despite any attempts to recreate herself gender-wise. She fails at her prime duty to oversee a well-functioning household, in fact, in two ways. Outwardly, she cannot represent her motherhood to society and is hence not socially accepted. Inwardly, she does not offer Vivie a gender role to grow into but has indulged in a world with values so different from her daughter's that the two of them have entirely lost common ground, which leads to an inevitable parting.

#### 4.1.2 *Lady Bracknell*

While it is fairly evident that Kitty Warren does not succeed in her family role, as for Wilde's *Lady Bracknell*, we have to look at her from a different angle. Just like

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. "Your way of life will be what I please" (*MWP* 61).

Shaw's femme fatale is aware of her gender failure, Lady Bracknell, in turn, is perfectly certain about her unquestionable conformity, and hence will be examined against this background. To start with, one can state that Lady Bracknell has a very distinct and confident self-image, which she constructs through her self-perceived adherence to prevalent social norms and values. Hence, there is merit in the argument that she is virtually presented as the impersonation of society (Eltis 177). Indeed, there are frequent references to this very society that one must "never speak disrespectfully of" (*IBE* 83), illustrating her conviction to uphold the social status quo by all means: she praises the failure of English education that is securing her privileged position (25), sees the French revolution as an "unfortunate movement" (29) and generally disapproves of "arguments of any kind" because they are "vulgar and often convincing" (91). Thus, from her speech, which is ruling out any form of social criticism we get the sense that she has completely adopted Victorian society's fundamental thinking patterns as her own identity-forming maxims.

In line with this, she likewise expresses strong opinions about family. To her, what is true on a larger scale, equally applies to the familial community: "strange coincidences are not supposed to occur" (91). As she considers her gender performance flawless, she sets high standards for others, too, and, for instance, seems to have her nephew Algernon fully under her thumb (cf. 17). Similarly to Kitty Warren, Lady Bracknell is even more commanding when it comes to her daughter's behaviour: she claims absolute authority as a mother and expects Gwendolen to be obedient at all times (24). In her own view, she fulfils her motherly role in that she herself serves as a role model protecting her daughter from any outer influences and at some point is going to select a husband for Gwendolen.

However, Lady Bracknell's character resembles that of Kitty Warren in an important point: there is a vital mismatch between the women's self-perceptions and their factual success in family matters. Although Lady Bracknell states to have "brought up [Gwendolen] with the utmost care" (29), her idea of rearing children does neither fully comply with Victorian standards nor does it ultimately pay off. Absurdly, she wants to protect her daughter's innocence by having her live in town and not in the countryside (26), which entirely opposes Victorian logic, even more so in a time of industrialisation. Her basic problem is that she tears down her self-given image of a "really affectionate mother" (25) by aiming all her actions not mainly at her child's welfare but at her idea of social conformity. Hence, just like she always tries to be close to where social power lies, Gwendolen is not supposed to live in a remote area in the countryside but must stay in town where society's heart is, in her mother's opinion. It is evident that bringing up kids for Lady Bracknell is therefore mainly (or perhaps solely) based upon the idea of securing the family's social and financial status. Therefore, she first cannot allow Jack's engagement to Gwendolen because he does not know about his social origin but has been found in a train station. This fact causes Lady Bracknell's

comical fear that her daughter would possibly “marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel” (29). It is striking that the value of love is here completely neglected and subordinated to social pragmatism.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, in addition to constraining her motherly love, she likewise sacrifices her alleged high maternal morality in a number of ways: firstly, honesty does not seem to be one of her greatest qualities as she lies to her husband (78) and recommends Cecily to do the same about her age (85). Moreover, she maintains not to be in favour of “mercenary marriages” which is obviously counteracted by the fact that she only approves of Cecily after knowing about her fortunes (82f). Lastly, when Jack reveals Algernon’s deceptions, Lady Bracknell simply decides to “overlook [her] nephew’s conduct” (85) for the sake of financially alluring prospects coming with marriage.

What is more, Jack’s and Algernon’s comments highlight that her reputation is not as stainless as she claims either: while the former perceives her as “perfectly unbearable” and “a monster”, her nephew even considers Lady Bracknell not to have “the remotest knowledge of how to live” (30). That this evaluation is not completely made out of thin air can be seen when looking at the relationship with her daughter again, which allows us to once more draw a parallel between *IBE* and *MWP*: much in the same way as Vivie is not obedient to Kitty, Gwendolen only pretends to be submissive to her mother (20). Thus, we again find a mother who, in this case, is not critical of but full of praise for society, but nevertheless fails in providing her daughter a gender role to grow into.

Still, we have to acknowledge that these deviations are presented in a very comical way throughout Wilde’s play. This impression is even strengthened as Lady Bracknell’s (at least partial) failure as a mother stays without any serious consequences for herself and her relationship with Gwendolen, which constitutes a fundamental difference to *MWP*. Nevertheless, I will argue the case that, in addition to this very humorous style, there is potential for social criticism also in *IBE*. Reinert supports this idea by saying that Lady Bracknell, like other characters as well, assumes “a code of behavior that represents the reality that Victorian convention pretends to ignore” (15). If this is true, we have got to ask what the nature of this undesired reality is, which brings us back to the cracks in Victorian gender imagery: it is the notion that nineteenth-century gender attributions are not innate but culturally constructed that is exemplified in the character of Lady Bracknell. She exaggerates her adhering to social demands and likewise proves her sense for their artificiality when she notes that behaving well and feeling well virtually excludes each other (*IBE* 17). Here we also see that this allegedly ignored reality is actually hinted at under the veil of humour. What seems merely comical at first glance in Wilde’s world can, in point of fact, contain critical truths that expose

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<sup>13</sup> The topic of love and marriage will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 4.4.

both “hypocrisy and [...] the unnatural convention that necessitates hypocrisy” (Reinert 16f).

Therefore, one can take up Geertz’s image again to say that Lady Bracknell is caught in Victorian webs of significance that dictate her actions, and yet, as they leave no room for flexibility, enforce her flight into comical exaggeration. The notion of home in *IBE* is then – again – not a projection of the feminine but rather a downscaled version of society that is completely overacted and hence ridiculed. Thus, Oscar Wilde seems to ask the following: if not even a woman of Lady Bracknell’s position does live up to Victorian motherly ideals, then how can those ideals be legitimate after all?

## 4.2 Failing Fathers and Missing Husbands

Turning now from the analysis of mother figures to their male counterparts, we find a seamless continuation of gender failure. One of the two major aspects in this respect is the notion of failure through absence, featured in both plays.

Starting to examine *MWP*, it is far from trivial to note that Vivie lacks a father figure. If Kitty and Vivie’s father had married or if he had taken on responsibility for his child, the familial situation would, of course, have been fundamentally different. Since Shaw did not choose the story to go that way, the family has to bear dire consequences: there is no one to provide financial support, which leads to Kitty’s expanding rather than giving up her business to afford her living standard (*MWP* 100). As described above, Kitty develops rather masculine character traits, arguably because there is no husband who would carry these features in her stead. Furthermore, she leaves no doubt about her low opinion of men in general and hence is “determined to keep the child all to herself” (42). As a result, however, the small family obviously misses that masculine part representing them to the outside world and serving as the moral complement to Kitty. Likewise, the fact that Vivie is not protected by her father gives Crofts the chance to pursue his desire to approach her and even to put her under pressure (80).

In *IBE*, in turn, there is, as a matter of fact, not a single male parent present anyway. Gwendolen’s father is only mentioned by Lady Bracknell but she does not even intend to tell her husband of their daughter’s marriage plans, as she has never “undeceived him on any question” (*IBE* 78). Since he does not meet his gender role expectations to bear the highest responsibility and authority in the family, his wife is free (and also bound) to rule entirely according to her disposition.

Regarding the two dandies in the play, it is notable that neither Jack nor Algernon ever got to know their fathers (27, 94). This brings up the question if there is a connection between their unconventional characters and the lack of paternal influence, especially in light of the fact that within a father-son relationship cultural values were thought to be passed on across generations (cf. 3.1.2). Both their

moral flexibility, vividly illustrated by their Bunburying, and their denial of any form of duty and responsibility could, in this sense, be ascribed to a missing masculine gender role model. In turn, this would explain why Jack, having no father himself, does not seem to be an ideal substitute father for Cecily from a Victorian perspective either (32).

Examining now the second aspect of paternal failure, we find – mainly in the character of Reverend Gardner – a strong form of gender deviation, not through absence, but rather in his attitude and actions.<sup>14</sup> Although he is a rector, Gardner does by no means comply with an ideal father figure and indeed fails in both his profession and his family. To begin with, he seems to be aware of the paternal authority and respect that he is entitled to when he claims full powers to decide about his son's marriage plans (*MWP* 52f). However, Shaw thwarts the notion of a parallel between godly and fatherly authority straightaway: Reverend Gardner is a churchman who has got a past with Kitty Warren and thus has given up his high moral position once and for all. Even when he is being open and rueful about his faults, it becomes obvious that in the world of this play, there is no room for repentance or reconciliation.

The central and striking observation here is that Gardner's father role is deconstructed through the eyes of his son Frank. It is him who blatantly questions his father's integrity when he criticises the reverend for his excessive drinking (72). Likewise, Frank accuses Gardner of not fulfilling his duty as a clergyman (73), which is revealed as a profession that he never wanted to practise anyway (44f). By Victorian standards, this description of Frank, who feels a strong need to distance himself from the man who is supposed to be a role model for him, casts a very poor light on Gardner's gender performance. This is even emphasised by the fact that we once more find a parent being dependent on a child in performing a gender role: the reverend needs his son to invent excuses in order to uphold the image of hospitality towards guests, and is even obedient to Frank's instructions (74). Here, the idea of a strong-minded father representing the family to the outside world is entirely torn to pieces.

Ending this chapter, the analysis of fathers in the two plays leads to one conclusion: when paternal figures are absent or fail in their role, family is fundamentally disrupted and gender deviation even spreads amongst family members. In the following, it will be shown that there are references between parental failure and the behaviour and mindsets of the children in both dramas.

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<sup>14</sup> In *IBE*, there is one reference to this active fatherly failure as well: Lady Bracknell comments on Jack's father, who "was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life" (95).

### 4.3 Rebellious Children

#### 4.3.1 *Vivie Warren*

Right at the beginning of the play, Shaw introduces Vivie Warren as a Victorian daughter with rather unconventional passions and priorities. Through Praed, we get to know her as a firm young lady being immersed in her work (*MWP* 31). She leaves no doubt about her dutiful and determined attitude, which is mirrored in both her appearance and behaviour. Her plain dress, strong handshake and scorn for art are some of the features symbolising that she is a fairly unusual character for a woman of her age and status (32, 36). To Vivie, womanhood is to be productive and efficient (35), rather than merely being a beautiful and well-mannered public display of her family's social rank.

Remarkably, the gender picture that is painted of her in the play resembles that of a Victorian son much more than that of a daughter. The values that she proclaims as pivotal to her identity – “purpose, [...] character, [...] grit” (56) – are amongst those that usually an adolescent young man was to develop when growing into his father's role. Similarly, her liking of whiskey, cigars and detective stories contribute to this rather masculine image (35). Furthermore, we see that Vivie has much more self-confidence and authority than a typical nineteenth-century daughter would ever be granted. This brings her into a conflict with Kitty, which is reminiscent of those father-son arguments transferring Victorian values to the filial generation (cf. 3.1.2).

However, in acting out these non-classical traits, Vivie strays from the prevailing gender rules, just like her mother did before her. As Kitty committed the social crime of abandoning her motherly role expectations, her daughter does not find a gender role laid before her that she is willing to adopt. Practically, she has never been tied to the home in a Victorian sense anyway because she has lived without a mother ever since. The fact that the two never built up a strong relationship seems to make it easy for Vivie to not only deny Kitty her filial support (*MWP* 33), but also to contradict and openly act against her (37). Instead of showing the socially expected absolute obedience of a daughter towards a parent, Vivie claims independence and refuses any values that her mother tries to pass down to her (101).

As a result, however, it appears she loses a great deal of her familial emotionality and sense of belonging: the question “Are you my mother?” (62) seems to have yet another dimension than merely asking about her own biological origin. One gets the impression that, on a deeper level, Vivie questions if there is anything left that would hold the two women together. Although both their biographies have come to be deeply rooted in the world of work, mother and daughter find only very little common ground. Instead, it emerges that the lack of motherly rearing has developed a necessity for gender recreation in Vivie. Strikingly, however, the

result of this process is that Vivie adopts neither her mother's nor society's image of a well-bred daughter. She has developed into a woman who finds meaning and structure for her life in a reputable but clearly masculine profession. Hence, Vivie cuts herself loose from both her mother's moral decay as well as from society's concept of an angel-like feminine daughter.

Yet it is by no means the case that she remains untouched by this situation. In fact, there is no doubt that family is a markedly sore point in Vivie's character. Admittedly, on the one hand, she does show a resolute side of her personality when throwing all responsibility for Kitty overboard (103). On the other hand, though, it becomes clear that, beneath the surface, the dysfunctional relationship to her mother does indeed affect Vivie deeply (64). For only a moment in the play, she allows herself some familial empathy with Kitty and even changes her mind about her mother's infamous profession temporarily ("You are stronger than all England", 68).

However, the vital point to make here is that these rudiments of reconciliation are only very short-lived and do not undo Vivie's filial rebellion in any way. When she proposes "to be good friends now" (69), it becomes evident that for Kitty there is no chance of regaining her motherly role. If anything, they could meet on an equal footing as friends but the re-establishment of old familial gender hierarchies between mother and daughter seems absolutely out of the question.

What is it then that one can conclude from Vivie's socially untamed gender and the patterns of her behaviour? First and foremost, we find that in the drama's logic, gender discrepancy must again lead to far-reaching problems. As Vivie has never had parental role models on the part of either mother or father, she escapes into the working world and there finds a substance for her gender identity. However, as a consequence, she gives up her daughterly femininity and further loosens the already shaky connection to her home. This rebellion against family ideals, in Shaw's moral theatre, does not lead to happiness, though. Vivie herself reveals the ironic irreversibility of her situation: "I am my mother's daughter" (102). Although she has expended great effort to make something different of her legacy, in the end even cutting all ties to Kitty leaves open if there is fulfilment to be found for Vivie Warren. In any case, that ultimate parting between the two women throws an enormously poor light on Victorianism: the social circumstances in which both of them had to manoeuvre their ways through life did not leave any chance for family bonding but tore apart that most significant relationship between mother and daughter.

#### 4.3.2 *Frank Gardner*

Earlier it was argued that it is Frank Gardner who through his disrespectful behaviour towards the reverend undermines the gender role of his father. In this chapter, I now want to focus more deeply on the question where this disobedi-

ence comes from and what the consequences of Frank's actions are for himself and his family. Drawing on the analysis of Vivie, we can say that just like her gender role is negotiated through the conflicts with Kitty, Frank, similarly, has to be examined in light of his father because Gardner's paternal failure proves to be character-forming for his son. That is to say, the self-confident attitude that Frank shows towards several characters is, in actual fact, not built upon his own merits but on the hierarchical vacuum that Gardner's poor gender performance has caused. This allows Frank to escape from fatherly authority and control, and to live a dandy-like life that is first of all aimed at pleasure. Interestingly, in his light-hearted nature he does not "care a rap" about "social position" (45) and hence never really takes his own gender breach to heart. However, his lifestyle unmistakably suggests that Frank's first priority is certainly not to uphold his family's social and financial status, as would be his duty. He rather spends his father's money and when having to move back into his parental home merely explains that "things came to a crisis" (43). The "personal indulgences" (Ellis 64f) that Frank demands, however, would traditionally be granted only to the breadwinner in a family and honour a man's responsibility. It is obvious, though, that Frank has not earned the liberties he is given in this way: he does not cultivate himself or grow towards being an independent and self-sufficient man (cf. 3.1.2.), but instead seems happy to play the role of an ineducable child.

Furthermore, he does not give great care about his family's reputation either, which is best reflected in the way he speaks about the reverend: Frank is absolutely honest about his father's lack of skills as a pastor (*MWP* 55), instead praises his mother's intellect (59) and even depicts Praed, who is not a family member, as a much better father figure (59f). Although this criticism is, of course, directed at Gardner, it tells us a great deal about Frank's family gender role as well: Mintz describes very aptly that in Victorian families one could observe the "feverish attempts of a son [...] to define a distinctive personal identity while maintaining continuities with the past" (88). This is the very dilemma that Frank is caught in. He is in need of a gender role that would help him succeed in social and professional life but clearly does not want to step into that of his father. Hence, in order to develop his identity as an individual, he has to distance himself so much from his home that, in order to do this, the link to the reverend had best be cut off completely. However, we find at least two reasons that prevent him from taking this step: on the one hand, Frank does not seem to have the skills to earn a living on his own, but rather gambles with the money he has (*MWP* 88). On the other, he himself utters one of the key sentences in the play, that is, "Can't help it [...]: it runs in the family". This is the central idea that we have already found in the Kitty-Vivie conflict: Shaw's characters are inextricably linked to their parents and if those parents go astray, gender deviation is reproduced across generations. Therefore, it appears to be almost straightforward that Frank has to fail as a Victorian son.

To sum up, it has become clear that he lacks obedience and respect towards his father, likewise a sense of duty and does not even feel the need to act according to social prescriptions. Admittedly, in comparison to Vivie, he does not completely fall out with his parent, which will be of importance later on (in Ch.5). Nevertheless, as he does not show any sense of responsibility, he surely fails as a son and likewise as a potential husband for Vivie. He is obviously not able to provide financial security for anyone or to take over a moral representative function for a family and hence from a Victorian perspective is far away from fulfilling the demands of both a son and a marriage partner.

### 4.3.3 *Gwendolen*

In comparison to Frank, we find Gwendolen to be a Victorian adolescent who knows very well about the expectations that are laid on her and likewise how important it is to conform to them. This is, of course, very much in line with her mother, who, above all, strives to confirm gender conventions. However, when looking closer at their relationship, it is questionable whether Gwendolen really has that “simple, unspoiled nature” (*IBE* 26) that Lady Bracknell proclaims. Despite Algernon’s remark that “all women become like their mothers” (31), there is evidence that Gwendolen very much reframes the gender role that is presented to her through Lady Bracknell. Surely, her mother thinks and expects Gwendolen to be tied closely to the home but it becomes quite clear that there is some discrepancy between the Lady Bracknell’s perception of her daughter and the actions of the latter. As a matter of fact, Gwendolen disobeys her mother repeatedly, which, strikingly enough, does never lead to any punishment or consequence (cf. e.g. 17, 20, 54). She hides her love to Jack (literally) behind Lady Bracknell’s back, talks to her in a “reproachful” manner and, when Jack proposes to her, Gwendolen even tells her mother: “this is no place for you” (24).

Here we see that Oscar Wilde’s play works quite differently compared to that of his moralising colleague: Gwendolen can always get away with these trespasses simply because she masters the skill of keeping up appearances, which disguises her intentions and clearly sets her apart from Frank in *MWP*. To the outside, she confirms Lady Bracknell’s authority (“Certainly, mamma”, 20) and seems keen to prevent that her mother would ever lose her face because of her. However, Gwendolen’s behaviour reveals that she does not plan on stepping into that motherly role at all. Rather, she is able to see through her mother’s conformist educational aims and, out of that position, manages to undermine them. Gwendolen knows Lady Bracknell “has brought [her] up to be extremely short-sighted” (61), and that not merely literally: she has realised that “it is part of her [mother’s] system” (61) to keep her within reach, that is to say, under the influence of her own gender radiance. Therefore, as long as Lady Bracknell believes in Gwendolen’s full dependence on that motherly judgement and influence, then, outwardly,

that Victorian gender system is confirmed. Gwendolen's personality, however, makes plain that she considers this construct rather shallow and has learned to bluff her way past it without attracting attention.

In the same way, when other characters are present she declares that there are "principles at stake that one cannot surrender" (77) and yet we constantly find her thwarting Victorian ideals: she talks back to Algernon and even lectures him (34), thus clearly reversing the traditional gender hierarchy between them. Furthermore, she is described as "always refusing people" and hence "ill-natured" (30), and later in the play completely breaks with Victorian thinking when she claims that "in matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing" (76).

To sum up, what all this suggests is that Gwendolen actually has a sense for the fact that those Victorian gender demands are artificial, and, for her, consequently not to be followed *per se*. But as she is brilliant at concealing her role refusal, Wilde allows her to succeed as a cleverly disobedient daughter.

#### 4.4 Undermining Love and Marriage

To gain a deeper insight into the plays' criticisms, it is worth casting light on the notions of love and marriage from a different perspective again: Both works play with the fact that marriage was to be that everlasting bond holding together the Victorian family and hence society as a whole. Interestingly, we hear a great deal about marriage in both plays but do not actually see anything of it. Although the topic runs like a golden thread through the two dramas, there is no depiction of a married couple whatsoever. What we do find, however, are a number of characters with different needs and ambitions in respect to love and wedlock that are representing strongly varying attitudes towards Victorian thinking. For instance, quite contrary to the nineteenth-century idea of love as a counterpart to worldly and work-related matters, marriage is termed as "demoralizing" in *IBE* (6) and in *MWP* not even the clergyman leads a fulfilling married life (59). By analysing the central characters, it will be shown that on the basis of humour, on the one hand, and lamentation, on the other, Wilde and Shaw once more draw upon prevailing ideas and ideals, and ultimately make a mockery of them.

##### 4.4.1 *The Refusal of Marriage*

While the relationship between mother and daughter in *MWP* is evidently a problematic one, Kitty and Vivie nevertheless agree on one matter: none of them chooses to enter into the bond of marriage. Given the cultural context and the value of that institution, this depiction of women on stage certainly had a revolutionary touch. It strongly opposed the dominant Victorian discourse stating that "only in the married state [...] the boundless capabilities of a woman's love can be fully known or appreciated" (Ellis 110). Therefore, if this pivotal cultural concept

is rejected, we expect the characters not to be able to perform their role anymore and thus lack the womanly love that is supposed to be so central to their personality. In this chapter, I will show, for one thing, that this refusal of marriage indeed has consequences for Kitty and Vivie and, for another, I will highlight that Shaw's drama at the same time criticises the underlying idea of marriage fundamentally.

As for Kitty Warren, we are not made privy to the details of her biography but have to examine the results of a somewhat unorthodox past: she has produced an illegitimate child, which from a Victorian perspective is bad enough, but she does not even show any form of regret or the willingness to find a husband after all. On the contrary, marriage, to her, seems entirely vacuous and, thus, does not say anything about a woman's respectability (*MWP* 66). Instead, Kitty has decided to provide for herself and to abandon the prospects of marital love in order to avoid being dependent on male patronage. However, what is interesting is that she refers to herself as 'Mrs' Warren anyway, although she is actually unmarried. Her justification for assuming that title is the simple fact that she is a mother (47). This is a central point because through the adoption of that name, Kitty, in fact, counteracts the social imperative dictating that procreation is allowed solely in the context of marriage. In her view, a woman is entitled to call herself 'Mrs', not only after having passed a marriage ceremony, but when becoming a parent, which obviously is very much at odds with Victorian thinking.

If we give credit to her daughter's words, however, we find yet another aspect that is of importance here: Vivie calls her mother, who is so keen on leading a self-determined life, "a conventional woman at heart" (104) and hence insinuates that Kitty is not actually able to live free from society's ideals. If she really "live[s] one life and believe[s] in another" (104), then Kitty's choice of name suggests that she does indeed seek some form of acceptance as an allegedly married woman in the society that she permanently condemns.

To support this, one can consider her relationship to Crofts which reveal a similar reservation about her rejection of social standards: Although Kitty has always objected to marrying a man, it is arguable that George Crofts does take over functions of a husband for her. On the one hand, they were lovers (41) and, on the other, support each other in making a living. Therefore, one can state that their bond allows her to experience a substitute for marital love and likewise it secures her financial situation. In this sense, it becomes clear that even a supposedly independent character like Kitty Warren finds herself to be somehow attached to those cultural webs that structure her society and assign meaning to an institution such as marriage. What this adds up to, however, is very striking: Kitty dismisses marriage in favour of her freedom and independence but still searches for the support and security that comes with it. Therefore, she even enters an alliance with a man such as Crofts who became rich through being "stingy" and "vicious" (58).

Remarkably, Kitty Warren's relationship towards love and marriage, is not so different from her daughter's attitude: in order to uphold the gender role Vivie has negotiated for herself, she rejects all claims on her person and life, and instead declares candidly: "I don't want a husband" (103). Rather, it is through her work that she maintains her social rank and constitutes her identity as a woman. To stress that, she instantly makes clear she is not interested in any advances by either Praed (33) or Crofts (38) because just as in the case of her mother independence to Vivie seems crucial to survive. Like Kitty, she is not able to relate to the alluring prospects of Victorian marriage and neither does she have a parental relationship to look up to. Instead, it seems it is both her legacy and her own character that have made her develop an attitude that does not allow for matrimonial happiness. The consequence, however, that Vivie formulates herself, is a dire one: "Once for all, there is no beauty and no romance in life for me. Life is what it is; and I am prepared to take it as it is" (92). In order to live by this standard, she has to suppress her emotional side (93, 95), though, and constantly has to be "merciless to herself" (93).

When looking at her relationship to Frank, however, we see that Vivie's refusal to bind herself to someone holds true only to a certain extent as well. The two of them, at least temporarily, indulge in an unusual romantic relationship by falling back into the roles of children (56). Only within this secret and protected imaginary world Vivie is able to experience a form of partnership, and during these moments both manage to escape from their parents' influence (77). To my mind, this yearning for a retreat into an innocent and private sphere clearly opposes the scholarly view of Laurence depicting Vivie as throughout "strong, determined, and apart, as all [of] Shaw's great women" (43). Instead, her character is equipped also with a rather vulnerable side beyond the superficial resoluteness.

In conclusion, both mother and daughter have an ambivalent relationship towards partnership: for one thing, they object to the concept of Victorian marriage out of the fear to lose their self-determination. Likewise, however, Kitty and Vivie do feel a longing for acceptance and affection that cannot be catered for within the context of conventional nineteenth-century forms of partnership. Therefore, both of them choose alternative ways, which in Shaw's world, again, is doomed to fail: Crofts turns out to be attracted by Vivie instead and hence completely falls out with Kitty (58). Frank, in turn, is not successful with his advances so that in the end their romantic alliance is downgraded to a brother-sister-relationship. As a result, we once more see a gendered concept such as marriage fail because as a Victorian convention it neither "reckon[s] with facts of human nature" (Reinert 17) nor does it permit any flexibility or alternatives.

#### 4.4.2 *The Female Comic Subversion*

At first glance, the representation of marriage in *IBE* seems quite contrary to that in *MWP*. In Wilde's play, everyone wants to marry at all costs and, as will become clear, the female characters pursue that goal in a quite peculiar manner. Later on, however, we will see that there is criticism in the Wildean comedy as well, which is not even far away from what has been said in the previous chapter.

To start with, what comes across as very typically Victorian is that all women in *IBE* are fully aware of the importance of being married. Lady Bracknell, for instance, has a quite pragmatic view on marriage and prioritises its material and social advantages (Eltis 191). Gwendolen and Cecily, on the other side, both aspire to find a "romantic boy" (*IBE* 58) to love "passionately" (21). However, looking at the criteria by which they select their partners reveals that the women's attitudes are not as conventional as they may seem: firstly, Gwendolen's mother approves of Algernon because "he has nothing, but he looks everything" (84). What makes Jack potentially eligible, in turn, is obviously his wealth but also that he smokes and says of himself he knows nothing rather than everything (25). If we take Lady Bracknell seriously in her speech, we have to constitute that these arguments are nothing more than a caricature of the Victorian must to study a man's "real character" before marrying and to ensure that he is morally upright (Ellis 17). In fact, she even expresses very blatantly that finding out about one's personality prior to marriage "is never advisable" (*IBE* 84), and thus she completely twists the meaning of Victorian wedlock around: in Lady Bracknell's view, marriage is not an intimate relationship between husband and wife but a social shell, a surface on which adherence to convention can be read off. Here, public performance of family gender roles clearly outranks the (alleged) substance of these conceptions.

As for Gwendolen and Cecily, one can observe that in comparison to Lady Bracknell they seem interested in a romantically idealised version of partnership. However, neither of them examines her potential husband carefully in the Victorian sense. What makes a man eligible in the young women's eyes is simply that he would bear the name Ernest. As a matter of fact, their love actually depends on nothing else: for Gwendolen, Ernest is "the only really safe name" (22), suggesting that the right surname could ensure a fulfilled married life. Cecily, in turn, states she would not be able to give "undivided attention" (59) to a man called anything other than Ernest. Thus, the success of romantic love is here based on something utterly irrelevant, which consequently makes the underlying concept of marriage look rather trivial and satirises the earnestness with which Victorians were supposed to pursue marriage, select their partners and live their married lives.

Moreover, not only are their men allowed any flaws except for the wrong name, Cecily and Gwendolen also grant themselves liberties that are contradictory to nineteenth-century wifely ideals: both make plain that even for the man they love, they are by no means willing to wait (59f, 86, 91) and hence act strongly

against the idea of devoting one's love to one person only. Instead, Gwendolen freely admits "I never change, except in my affections" (93) and Cecily simply breaks off her self-made engagement to Algernon, although in Victorian England this would have been a disgrace for the family (Ellis 16). Even worse, when the two of them discover that their partners are not actually called Ernest, Cecily and Gwendolen's conclusion is simply that they have never been engaged at all (*IBE* 70). That is to say, the name in marriage appears to be more important than the actual person and neither of the women considers it necessary to look beyond that surface. Nevertheless, both still pretend to uphold Victorian standards and when they temporarily think they are competing for the same man, absurdly enough, the stage of this fight is a tea table and the weapons are sugar and cake (67).

To conclude, one can say that the actions of both parties, Lady Bracknell and the two young women, as different as they are, point in the same direction: to the outside, everyone pretends to be very keen on observing the proprieties when it comes to marriage. However, in all cases the standards the women apply to select a husband are highly comical, to say the least. Thus, the characters question the fundamental concept of marriage implicitly and illustrate its shallowness as their behaviour is all about the seeming and completely ignorant about anything that might be beneath that superficiality.

#### 4.4.3 *Ineligible Marriage Partners*

We have seen that neither Vivie nor Gwendolen or Cecily are presented as typical Victorian wives-to-be. Turning now to the male suitors in the plays, it is notable that they neatly blend in with the women and do not cut a fine (gender) figure either. As to *MWP*, the striking observation is that even if Vivie did consider marrying, the drama would not feature anybody who fits the bill of a Victorian eligible marriage partner. Conversely, what we find in *IBE* are two dandies who throughout the play deconstruct the idea of a Victorian husband but are admired by their beloved anyway.

##### 4.4.3.1 Crofts and Praed

Earlier I have argued that Frank Gardner, who is amongst the male characters in the play wooing Vivie, does not qualify as a Victorian husband because he lacks a sense of responsibility and instead of earning a living prioritises his own pleasure. When looking at the other two men showing an interest in Kitty's daughter, we find rather problematic characters as well. I will juxtapose Praed's and Crofts' gender performances by saying that the former is a man who is actually not man enough whereas the latter is virtually the opposite.

With Praed, we are presented with a character who, contrary to Vivie, is indeed looking out for "beauty and romance" in life (*MWP* 91). He is a sentimental man (38) who approaches life through art and aspires to soak up all the splendid

things the world has in store (35, 92). Therefore, to him, even work is not primarily aimed at earning money but rather it is a means to gain culture (35). The reason he gives for this thirst for knowledge and cultivation is that he “was born a boy” and has never grown up (42). Hence, he loves walking with Vivie and trying “to stay out as long as possible” (52), which once more puts emphasis on this impression of a curious and somehow childlike personality.

The downside of this attitude is, however, that Praed always remains inside a sphere that is only partially coherent with the social setting that he finds himself in. As a matter of fact, when confronted with the real world, his shortcomings suddenly become apparent: he is described as “diffidently”, “anxious and considerate” (92f) when Vivie challenges his art-loving disposition, and he rather shies away from confrontation instead of making his case. This sparsely masculine gender image is further deconstructed as he shows obedience towards the Vivie (93) and is not even able to express his discontent with the dinner arrangements at Kitty Warren’s place (55). Here, a lack of assertiveness reveals that Praed does by no means fit into the notion of a strong-minded man who is capable of representing and protecting a family in the world of nineteenth-century England. Although he is a gentleman throughout and shows integrity in what he does, his overly polite fashion and his artistic worldview rather dawn on Vivie as a “disappointment as to the quality of his brains and character” (34). Even Frank, who is not exactly a man of the world either, perceives Praed as a romantic with a lost grip on reality (96). What this amounts to is the impression of a man who might be good-natured but in his artistic fragility would certainly not be able to lead a Victorian family as a husband.

In comparison to Praed, laying the focus on George Crofts reveals a very different kind of man: He is a character who has delved so deeply into a brutal world of work that retreating into the cosmos of a traditional nineteenth-century family does not seem possible anymore. His biography has taken him far away from the moral purity that Victorians perceived as a requirement for marriage. George Eliot, for example, felt that “only a person who had overcome the forces of worldliness in his or her own soul could safely marry” (Mintz 114). Crofts, however, in the play replies to this demand in a very pragmatic manner by saying: “while we’re in the world we’re in it” (*MWP* 78). In his view, a man has to adapt to the circumstances of a social reality that is not beautiful – as Praed would claim – but entirely corrupted (83). To do this, however, he has long abandoned the ‘angelic’ masculine gender image that his society demands. That is to say, he cannot claim those moral standards for himself that would qualify him as a suitable marriage partner for a Victorian woman and, strikingly enough, does not even try to. Against this background, Crofts’ depicting himself as “a safe man from the money point of view” (79) exposes his rather one-dimensional idea of family: from his perspective, marriage provides a man with a lover, whereas he, in turn, offers money and status (79, 82). This functionalist understanding of Victorian wedlock, however,

denies the moral fundament for a relationship that scholars have described as crucial.

What makes his eligibility as a husband appear even more questionable, however, is that there are no signs of social criticism in his words. Crofts does not deplore injustice or moral decay but stresses the importance of finding a way to put up with it (83). As a practical man he knows the value of money as that one good that makes life more convenient and allows looking at the corrupted world from a safe position instead of having to suffer its badness. With this attitude, Crofts fails both from a Victorian perspective and in the eyes of Vivie. He draws upon the notion of a gentleman (82), pretends to woo her with “honest affection” (80) but quickly enough counteracts his own words: he sets Vivie under pressure and even reveals his violent streak (84). Likewise, he pretends to value fidelity and responsibility, which his past with Kitty Warren, however, does not support at all. Here, it becomes obvious that he has, in fact, become too much a part of a world in which morality, if anything, is a means to pursue personal profits.

All in all, while their competitor for Vivie’s fondness, Frank, remains in the role of a rebellious son, Praed and Crofts are both men who walk the earth in spheres that are quite different but similarly non-Victorian. One is an artist lacking the strong-minded Victorian masculinity that was thought to be pivotal for protecting one’s family from the outside. The other one is a businessman who has internalised the logic of a morally corrupted world to such an extent that the wealth and position he can offer still cannot make up for his obvious gender failure as a Victorian marriage partner.

#### 4.4.3.2 Jack and Algernon

It was shown that all marriage plans in Shaw’s drama fail, for one thing, because of Vivie’s refusal and, for another, because of the gender shortcomings of all male characters. Considering what has been said about *IBE* already, it does not come as a surprise that Wilde, in turn, approaches the idea of courtship in quite a different manner: his prototype of a suitor in the play is an utterly un-Victorian “unreasonable man [...] who will think and act in a particular manner just because he will” and who declines any form of argument because its outcome would not change his mind anyway (Ellis 59). In *Jack and Algernon*, the theatre audience is presented with two men who may even look earnest on the surface (*IBE* 11) but in their speech and actions satirise their own roles very much. Both of them clearly deviate from the gender concept of a Victorian man and potential marriage partner in that their lives seem to be entirely and solely oriented at seeking pleasure (7). In fact, they subordinate all other values to this hedonistic maxim: Jack, for instance, states that morality takes its toll on one’s happiness (13), and hence he frequently escapes from the social obligations of a guardian. Algernon, on the other side, is not one jot better, and whenever pleasure is at stake he pretends to look after his ill friend Bunbury (14).

Contrary to *MWP*, it is in a very comical way that the two men undermine their own integrity and authority here. Algernon makes his butler lie about something as trivial as cucumber sandwiches (18) and Jack is the first to decide to simply have himself christened in order to get rid of his first name (49). All this does by no means conform to the notion of a virtuous Victorian gentleman. Admittedly, one has to constitute that Jack at least shows attempts to reform himself as he wants to 'kill' his imaginary brother (15), but then again these plans are only very limited. When being asked if he considers coming clean with Gwendolen about his lying to her, he claims that "the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a [...] girl" (31f). Thus, he objects to the Victorian idea that honesty would be "the only sure basis" for marriage (Ellis 17).

In addition to this, Algernon's view of marriage is even further away from nineteenth-century ideals: being married, in his eyes, is something demoralising that one rather wants to forget and instead it is divorces that "are made in heaven" (8). Remarkably, this socially quite incorrect and dandy-like worldview, to his mind, does not even oppose his "duty as a gentleman" (53). What this shows is that Algernon has managed to redefine his gender role in a way that he pretends to uphold Victorian family ideals but at the same time ducks all responsibilities. He comically disguises his gender deviation behind the term Bunburying and, strikingly enough, is even successful in legitimising his actions with it. That this applies to Jack in a similar way becomes clear when considering that Miss Prism and Reverend Chasuble think him to be an impeccable Victorian man (38, 47) and do not express any doubts about his integrity despite the fact that his alleged brother appears only a moment after Jack has pronounced him dead (47ff). Gwendolen, however, even discovers his foul play but simply decides to "crush" her doubts (76).

In fact, this is the most crucial thing to note about both Algernon and Jack: the two of them commit a strong "love breach" (Foster 21) and hence prove themselves to be ineligible Victorian marriage partners but this never causes them trouble for long in the play. Looking beyond the comical dimension of this fact reveals a serious form of social criticism: Algernon states that "a man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it" (*IBE* 16) and hence implies that a fulfilled marriage is not even possible without deception. In this sense, his being serious about Bunburying (71) means that what is really of importance to Algernon is to step out of his role. But in this process "the Bunburying Algernon, in escaping the hypocrisy of convention, becomes a hypocrite himself by pretending to be somebody he is not" (Reinert 16). That is to say, fleeing from a corrupted social system in Wilde's drama is only possible through corrupting oneself once more. Therefore, if one follows Foster's statement that "fools must be taken seriously in the extra-rational world of Wilde's play" (19), then the failure of the two husbands-to-be rather casts a negative light on that very society that produces these comical actions. As a result, our laughter about their silliness can then be

understood as “an effect of discrepancy” (Helbig 350). It is a reaction to something unexpected and based upon the knowledge about ‘how things should be’. This intuition represents the deeply inscribed gender roles, here for a Victorian young man, which are humorously subverted and exposed as artificial.

## 5. Flickers of Hope?

So far, this paper has focused on the various ways in which the characters in *IBE* and *MWP* act against Victorian family ideals and render those conceptions problematic. Going one step further, it is worth asking the question if the two dramatists offer any alternatives regarding the topics of family and gender in Victorian England. It is rather obvious that none of the plays features characters who successfully bear a non-conventional family role. However, there might be rudiments of hope hinting at alternative gender concepts or ways to better deal with society’s expectations. Therefore, I will draw attention to those characters who – beyond their obvious flaws – manage to do something crucial: they reveal failures of the society they live in and likewise open up new forms of gendered behaviour and attitudes.

To start with, there is Frank who very aptly says about himself “I am not a fool in the ordinary sense” (*MWP* 91). Although he is presented as a good-for-nothing character, he is, in fact, capable of seeing below the surface: to him, the concept of family needs some kind of essence and cannot be built simply around politeness (73). Frank makes very plain that, especially amongst family members, form must never rule over substance! This is why, from his own perspective, he has to be hard on his father. The reverend, in his eyes, is an epitome of hypocrisy striving for social acceptance in the family and beyond, but does not live by his own standards.

Even more importantly, though, Frank’s great achievement in the play is that – although he does not step into his father’s gender role – he compensates Gardner’s shortcomings and hence introduces a new dimension to the gender role of a Victorian son. Seeing his father lack social skills, he takes up the role of a host, shows the family’s guests around and even introduces them to church, which clearly would have been the reverend’s domain (72ff). Here, it seems that Frank has those talents that Gardner misses, thus gains authority and manages to somehow distinguish himself. Furthermore, his ideal of marriage is a relationship based on love and not on economic interests (53). Hence this concept of partnership seeks to satisfy, first and foremost, two partners and not the world around them. Moreover, even when the prospect of marrying Vivie dwindles, he ultimately shows a great deal of maturity and promises his support as a brother (96). Strikingly, it is therefore him – the ‘fool’ in the play – who manages to deal with gender failure best: despite the rejection of his love and without money or renown, in the

end, he remains as a happy character for he has found a set of substantial values offering more than a merely a visible frame of conformity.

A second character who is able to free himself to some degree of social norms is Praed. He may not be a strong man in the Victorian sense, but as a libertine looks from a different perspective on his cultural setting. On the one hand, he is a perfect gentleman but then again questions Victorian thinking when he claims that “the most intimate human relationships are far beyond the law”, that is, the demands of society (94). Quite vigorously, he denies any inherent value in paternal authority and dismisses gender images as obsolete and “nothing real” (34). What is striking in his character is that Praed rejects these gender categories that society imposes upon him, and yet, he does not attempt to completely break out of that system. Knowing that his identity is inextricably linked to the cultural webs of Victorianism, he chooses to focus on the slowly improving circumstances (34) and tries to evoke change from within: he takes Vivie “on her own merits”, accepts Kitty despite her past, and even tries to restore at least part of a domestic happiness between the two women (41f). Therefore, just like Frank, he strives to do away with the social shallowness of Victorian relationships and instead puts emphasis on mutual trust and support.

In the comical and witty play of Oscar Wilde, in turn, it is the character of Cecily who is capable of even more than ridiculing convention: firstly, she understands that appearance does not actually reveal much about one’s character and suspects that a wicked person “will look just like everyone else” (42). In addition, Cecily is fully aware that the dominant behavioural patterns of her time are inscribed on a “shallow mask of manners” (65) and hence are as vacuous as the phenotype of a person. Nevertheless, similarly to Gwendolen, she stays within her role to the outside and thus, given her age and the influence of her mother, shows a remarkable ability to challenge the rigid social structures of her environment out of an allegedly conformist position.

Moreover, Cecily also seems to have a sense for what limits the altering of one’s own character: her statement that reforming oneself is rather Quixotic (44) highlights that she has realised the immense difficulty of shaking off one’s socially grown identity. What sets her apart, however, is that she does, in fact, prove to be a self-possessed woman and able “to make her intentions quite clear” (Eltis 184). Her idea of social intercourse is that “whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid” (*IBE* 62). This surely opposes the demand of saving one’s face at all times for the sake of an impeccable reputation. What is more, she shows her autonomy by choosing to be engaged to a man simply by deciding so without even asking him (56ff). Hence, Cecily undermines her expected role of a submissive young Victorian female. Instead of acting according to standard courtship procedures, she is looking out for a man who is explicitly not sensible as she imagines pleasure in being reckless (45, 42). Of course, one has to admit that she ultimately does not break with Victorianism. But in the comical

reality of Wilde's play this is not even necessary anyhow because, as I stated earlier, social criticism is here hidden under the mask of humour.

In conclusion, these three characters make an important point in both plays: their behaviour and attitudes suggest that there is an actual chance to "disturb and rearticulate" gender roles, as Powell (101) describes it. All of them express their discontent with the prevalent family ideals of Victorianism and have managed to take first steps towards alternative forms of gender performance. Still, Frank and Praed come away empty-handed as far as their marriage plans are concerned, and Cecily is allowed to be successful only in the world of a drama that does not punish social deviance anyway. Hence, seeing their attempts to escape convention in the larger contexts of the plays, one can find flickers of hope but no clear perspective for better gender conceptions in the Victorian family.

## Conclusion

Weaving together the observations about Victorianism and the way its demands are mirrored in the two dramas highlights the potential of criticism in both plays. With regard to New Historicism, we have seen plenty of evidence suggesting that the plays were written upon the basis of prevailing nineteenth-century gender conceptions for the family. This "cultural matrix" that Butler (24) speaks of sets the Victorian family at the centre of society and is omnipresent in the actions of all characters. The fact that Wilde and Shaw are playing with these gender expectations reveals that they were aware that conformist behaviour inside the family and in public is, of course, not innate but socially scripted and can hence be questioned.

However, it was difficult to voice any direct criticism – even more so on the stage –, especially as it was Queen Victoria herself, as well as her husband and children, who impersonated that family ideal. The Lord Chamberlain's Theatre censorship was a powerful instrument to prevent the spreading of subversive thought. Nevertheless, what the two playwrights do is to allude to those cracks in the social foundation, which Victorians perceived and which hence were identifiable for theatre audiences (Beckson 74). That is to say, Shaw and Wilde both situate their characters within Victorian spheres where they experience the difficulties coming with family gender prescriptions. Surely, the methods they use differ fundamentally: while Shaw deplors Victorianism, Wilde comically satirises it. The medium, however, is the same in both classes: it is on the surface of the nineteenth-century family that both criticise a society imposing a deficient gender system on its members.

In *MWP*, the results of this process are portrayed in a very serious manner. There is obvious parental failure on the part of Kitty Warren and Samuel Gardner, spreading across generations to their children. Even worse, though, not only are the relationships between parent and child spoilt but we also find Victorian mar-

riage, which was to hold together the nineteenth-century family, to be deconstructed: contrary to the central gender expectations, the women in *MWP* refuse to marry at all, while all men fail as potential marriage partners because they lack either a sense of duty, integrity, or strong-mindedness. It becomes clear, though, that Shaw does not primarily blame individuals here but rather the system that sets unrealisable gender standards in the first place.

Regarding *IBE*, there is – as Shaw lamented – no obvious moral point in the play. This paper, however, defends Wilde’s work against Shaw’s criticism in as much as it stresses the potential of humour for social criticism. In the drama, we find Lady Bracknell as the paragon of Victorianism, who is oblivious to her own comical exaggeration. Then there are two dandies who despite their lies and deception, consider themselves perfect gentlemen. Lastly, as to Gwendolen and Cecily, they are both acting out their gender roles half jokingly and merely for appearances’ sake. Strikingly enough, though, in the world of *IBE* even obvious non-conformist gender performance is never disciplined in any way because “reason is ruled out” (Thienpoint 249). Therefore, the fact that ultimately everything falls into place in *IBE* is perhaps not a weakness, but the greatest strength of the play! It suggests that familial happiness in the Victorian gender system is indeed only possible in a comical reality. The characters’ gender failure, in this sense, is – in line with Eltis – not merely owed to “pervasive flippancy” (171) but it constitutes an escape from a merciless society into absurdity. Hence, the laughter that the play evokes then becomes “a subversive act in view of inadequate discourses” (Helbig 352). That is, audiences laugh at incongruent gender ideals and hence reveal their artificiality.

Of course, the perspective of gender and family is only one amongst others suitable to reveal social criticism in the two plays. For future research, it would be promising, for instance, to examine family ideals by means of Foucault’s discourse analysis. Moreover, within the scope of this thesis it was not possible to examine all characters and scenes in greater detail. Rather, I focused on the central parts and speeches that allowed me to locate the character’s actions in the larger picture of nineteenth-century family concepts.

Finally, in spite of some flickers of hope, it has to be noted that the plays both paint a rather bleak picture of Victorian family: they expose the “fundamental unnaturalness” of gender (Butler 203) and reveal that those roles that society provides are strongly at odds with the realities of the characters. Even worse, family ideals are hence not only destructive as such, but likewise breaking out of that system is doomed to fail – in *MWP* – or can only work out when characters flee into a comical reality – in *IBE*. Either way, both Shaw and Wilde criticise that society fails at its core if families are corrupted – the more so as the family was a concept of key importance in nineteenth-century England.

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# Intertextuality in James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and James Robertson's *The Testament of Gideon Mack*

Marius Glowsky

## 1 Introduction

What can this work be? Can it be anything other than the ramblings of a mind terminally damaged by a cheerless upbringing, an unfulfilled marriage, unrequited love, religious confusion and the stress and injury of a near-fatal accident? Who would dare, in this day and age, to suggest that Gideon Mack was, as he maintained to the end, telling the truth? (361)

This is what the fictitious publisher of James Robertson's novel *The Testament of Gideon Mack* (2006)<sup>1</sup> asks the reader in the opening lines of his epilogue which frames the strange account of the protagonist's life: Gideon Mack, a 'son of the manse' and Church of Scotland minister, meets the Devil after an almost fatal accident at a dangerous and mysterious river gorge. Indulging in his company, he more and more retreats from the people around him, ends up in a deplorable

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<sup>1</sup> The *Testament* was first published by Hamish Hamilton in 2006. In this thesis the 2007 Penguin edition is used.

outcast state and eventually sees suicide as the only escape from the world. This is merely one of the themes explored in Robertson's novel that remind of James Hogg's *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), in which the 'sinner' Robert Wringham is haunted by the devil-figure Gil-Martin until he finally commits suicide.

James Hogg's 'classic' novel has been discussed very extensively.<sup>2</sup> Except for a few internet articles and a brief discussion in Gillian Hughes' article on the after-lives of the *Confessions* (143f.) there has not been much criticism on James Robertson's *Testament*.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to the discussion of Robertson's work. In my thesis I will analyse and compare these two Scottish novels in order to point out how James Robertson's contemporary adaptation of Hogg's *Confessions* takes up main ideas, narrative techniques and structural features of the original and transfers them into twenty-first century Scotland. Apart from this, I argue that both novels have a very similar purpose: by subverting hierarchical structures in language and questioning the belief in master narratives they call for a multi-layered and diverse representation of Scottish history and culture.

For the analysis of the novels at hand I will use the literary concept of intertextuality, including the poststructuralist theorists Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva, who played a major role in the emergence of the concept in general, and Gérard Genette's structuralist systematisation of the concept which can be regarded as a tool for the analysis of intertextual relations in literary texts in particular. After having established this theoretical framework in the first part of my thesis I will then analyse and compare four major aspects in the novels. First of all, I will look at the editorial function in both novels before going on to discuss the narrative strategies that are used by the first-person narrators. Then I will analyse how the use of master narratives for the depiction of history and especially religious history is undermined, pointing out the thematic similarities between the novels. Finally, I will investigate how the novels' Gothic qualities contribute to this challenge of unquestioned belief in master narratives by revealing the limits of 'enlightened reason' to account for supernatural events.

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<sup>2</sup> Penny Fielding (132ff.) gives a very detailed overview of earlier and recent criticism on the *Confessions*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Robertson's own homepage on the *Testament* (<http://www.scotgeog.com/>) and one very useful review by Irvine Welsh ("The Devil in the Gorge").

## 2 The Theoretical Background of Intertextuality

### 2.1 The Historical Development of the Concept: Bakhtin's 'Dialogism'

The term 'intertextuality' was introduced by Julia Kristeva in the middle to late 1960s (Allen 14). As early as in antiquity, texts had referred to other texts as *imitatio veterum* and the practice of literary imitation and influence had persisted throughout almost all subsequent literary epochs until the 1960s, but it was Kristeva who revolutionised theoretical thinking about the relations between texts with her concept of intertextuality (Pfister 1). She introduced the term by explicitly referring back to the Russian literary theorist Mikhail M. Bakhtin and his concept of 'dialogism' (Pfister 1). In her essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel* (1969) and related publications she introduced Bakhtin's work to the French-speaking world and thus made him known in circles outside Eastern Europe (Allen 15). As Kristeva's theory of intertextuality was mainly influenced by Bakhtin, I will point out the central ideas of his concept of dialogism in the following.

Bakhtin first published his works in 1919, but only in the 1960s they were recognised outside Eastern Europe (Worton/Still 15). The starting point of his theory is the question how literature and society are related (Pfister 2). At the core of his political and aesthetic thinking is the assumption that in society, there is an opposition between dialogic forces that promote plurality and critical discourse, and monologic forces that repress plurality and support authority and tradition (Pfister 2). According to Bakhtin, this opposition has a political dimension as it dominates society and it has an aesthetic dimension, as language and art always mirror current discourses of society (Pfister 2). He argues that hierarchically structured societies will try to promote monologic discourse that affirms unity of meaning and the canonical truth. If dialogic principles enter the realm of politics and society, however, these singular truths are questioned and challenged (Pfister 2). Bakhtin also sees this struggle between monologic and dialogic principles in the realm of language and discourse. In this context, he especially criticises Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist approach to language which, from his point of view, undermines the pluralistic nature of language (Allen 16).

One premise of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is that "all linguistic communication occurs in specific social situations and between specific classes and groups of language-users" (Allen 15). He criticises Saussurean synchronic linguistics which analyses language as closed system and thus, in his opinion, fails to take into account that language is always used in certain contexts (Allen 16). According to Bakhtin, the meaning of an 'utterance', which he regards as the basic unit of linguistic communication, will only be intelligible if the context in which the speaker addresses the addressee is considered (Martinez 431). The use of the word 'utterance' is very significant as it "captures the human-centred and socially specific aspect of language lacking in formalism and Saussurean linguistics" (Allen 17).

What is not included in Saussure's abstract account of language is its social dimension. In their joint work *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1986) Bakhtin and the Russian linguist Volosinov argue that "there is no real moment in time when a synchronic system of language could be constructed" (qtd. in Allen: 18). If this social dimension of language is considered, "no word or utterance [...] is ever neutral" because language always reflects "class, institutional, national and group interest" (Allen 18). Therefore, the real meaning of an utterance and the real intention of the addresser can only be fully understood if certain factors, such as the speaker's political, social, or ideological background, are considered. Furthermore, Bakhtin insists on the diachronic nature of language, as no utterance is singular in meaning and unconnected to previous or future utterances (Allen 19). Instead, all utterances are part of a complex discourse system in which "all language responds to previous utterances and to pre-existent patterns of meaning and evaluation" (Allen 19). As a result, Bakhtin regards all utterances as "dialogical" as "their meaning and logic [are] dependent on what has previously been said and on how they will be received by others" (Allen 19). For Bakhtin, this dialogic nature of language is a constitutive element of all language (Allen 21). Therefore, Bakhtin's point of view, the structuralist presumption that there is unity in meaning of language is an illusion (Worton/Still 15).

According to Bakhtin, there is an ongoing struggle between centrifugal and centripetal, unifying and disunifying forces of language, as the social and interpersonal dimensions of language can either be promoted or repressed (Allen 21-22). While centripetal forces promote one 'official', authoritative language, centrifugal forces celebrate a variety of dialects, sociolects, and idiolects, meanings, approaches and views (Pfister 2). Bakhtin argues that this struggle within society is also reflected in literature. He differentiates between two kinds of literature: On the one hand, he labels poetry as a monologic art form in which writers "artificially strip language of others' intentions" (Worton/Still 15). On the other hand, there is the modern novel which, according to his 1984 work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, has a dialogic character (Allen 22). He sees the novel as the modern inheritor of the carnival tradition. Carnival, most explicitly visible in medieval and Renaissance holidays and feast days, overturns the hierarchical structures of society and questions dominant ideologies of state power (Allen 22). The Early Modern twelfth night festivities, which celebrate servants as kings and nobles as servants, can be regarded as one very prominent example of such feast days where normal social hierarchy was overturned.

Bakhtin argues that the modern dialogic novel has emerged from the monologic genre of poetry (Martinez 437). While, according to Bakhtin, Aristotelian poetics and its successors encouraged and confirmed hierarchical and centralising forces, the modern novel was shaped by revolutionary and popular traditions (Worton/Still 15-16). He especially regards Dostoevsky's novels as the first accomplished pieces of dialogic literature and even calls him the creator of the "pol-

lyphonic novel” (Martinez 437). Polyphony is another key concept which complements that of dialogism. Allen concisely defines this concept with respect to the polyphonic novel:

In the polyphonic novel we find not an objective, authorial voice presenting the relations and dialogues between characters but a world in which all characters, and even the narrator him- or herself, are possessed of their own discursive consciousness. The polyphonic novel presents a world in which no individual discourse can stand objectively above any other discourse; all discourses are interpretations of the world, responses to and calls to other discourses. (23)

Like the carnival which subverts dominant structures of power and authority the polyphonic novel “fights against any view of the world which would valorize one ‘official’ point-of-view, one ideological position [...] above all others” (Allen 24). This concept of polyphony can easily be applied to *The Testament of Gideon Mack*. The novel’s protagonist Gideon Mack, who at the same time is the unreliable narrator of the main plot (cf. chapter 3.2), has a very different world view than the characters that surround him. His insistence on having seen the Devil clashes with the rational approach to the world of most of his friends and the Christian belief of his church members. In the second part of this thesis this conflict will be analysed in more depth. It can already be stressed, however, that *The Testament of Gideon Mack* does not present a hierarchically structured order of world views but a complex mixture of co-existing ideas, which exactly fits the Bakhtinian concept of the polyphonic novel.

Not only a novel as a whole but also one single character, speaker or voice can be dialogic. Like a novel that incorporates different discourses, one single character’s personal discourse can be dialogic, which is what Bakhtin calls ‘double-voiced discourse’ (Allen 24-25). Allen refers to Robert Burns’s poem *A Red, Red Rose* (1794) in order to exemplify that one single lyric voice can be dialogic – or ‘double-voiced’ in Bakhtinian terms. The speaker of the poem uses a mixture of official, high-register literary English (“And I will love thee still, my Dear”) and Scottish dialect (“Till a’ the seas gang dry”) (qtd. in Allen: 26). The words that are used in Burns’s poem are double-voiced as “all of them sound a clash between different ideological, class and literary positions” (Allen 27). In both novels that are analysed in this thesis, the use of dialects plays a crucial role. While the enlightened, English-speaking, rational editors are questioned as reliable sources, marginalised Scots-speaking characters give important insights into the true nature of the related events (cf. chapter 3.1).

Allen stresses the importance of Bakhtin’s concept of double-voiced discourse for the emergence of the theory of intertextuality:

With this notion of double-voiced discourse and its powerful place within the dialogic novel, and for us, in all dialogic texts, we begin to come close

to what must appear a major theory of intertextuality. All utterances depend on or call to other utterances; no utterance itself is singular; all utterances are shot through with other, competing and conflicting voices. (27)

However, Pfister points out that Bakhtin's theory is more "intratextual" than "intertextual" (4-5). He argues that Bakhtin's dialogism above all hints at the dialogic nature of one utterance or one text which is captured in the polyphonic novel which again ideally reflects the multi-layered discourse of the whole historical epoch. According to Pfister (4), the recourse of one text to a pretext does not seem to be in the centre of Bakhtin's work. Nevertheless, Bakhtin's insistence on the interdependency of language can be regarded as a major contribution to the emergence of intertextuality, or, as Allen puts it: "The most crucial aspect of language, from [Bakhtin's] perspective, is that all language responds to previous utterances and to pre-existent patterns of meaning and evaluation, but also promotes and seeks to promote further responses" (Allen 19).

## 2.2 Kristeva's Concept of Intertextuality

The cultural background and theoretical context of 1960s France explains why Kristeva discussed Bakhtin's work at that specific point of time. In the intellectual scene of late 1960s Paris, more and more theorists began to challenge Saussurean linguistics and structuralism in general (Allen 30). A critique of structuralist methodology emerged and traditional literary notions like authorship were questioned (Allen 30-31). Many of the most important theorists of this movement, which was subsequently called poststructuralism, exchanged their ideas in the literary magazine *Tel Quel* (Allen 31). *Tel Quel* was the intellectual forum where its contributors could investigate the role of literature and literary language in society with special emphasis on literature's relation to political and philosophical thought (Allen 2000, 31). The emergence of post-structuralism in this rather philosophical context relates to the very different origins of structuralist and post-structuralist thinking which Peter Barry describes in his *Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*: While structuralism "derives ultimately from linguistics" and believes in "method, system, and reason as being able to establish reliable truths", post-structuralism derives from philosophy, a discipline which tends to question the belief in secure knowledge (61). Among *Tel Quel's* contributors were major poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Philippe Sollers, and Michel Foucault – and so was Julia Kristeva as a very important member of the group (Allen 31).

Kristeva was attracted by the revolutionary potential of Bakhtin's work (Pfister 6). While Bakhtin wrote against the post-revolutionary canonisation of Socialist Realism, she challenged bourgeois ideology that promoted authority and unity in meaning (Pfister 5-6). In her work she attacks notions of stable signification and the belief in scientific and objective truths gathered from linguistic analysis (Allen 31). This belief was at the heart of structuralist semiotics, as Allen points out:

Semiotics in mid-1960s France argued for its own objectivity by employing Saussurean concepts such as *langue* (the system) to stabilize the 'signifieds' it studied. Myths, oral cultural traditions, literary texts, indeed any cultural text, can be scientifically analysed, so structuralist semiotics argued, because at any moment signifiers exist and function within a synchronic system which provides determinable signifieds for those signifiers. (31-32)

From Kristeva's point of view, this semiotic approach ignores three factors: human intentions of utterances, the historical implications and their cultural relations. According to Allen, these are the "hidden spaces within which Kristeva works and from which emerges her theory of intertextuality" (32). Being "at the vanguard" (Allen 33) of the *Tel Quel* movement, she offers and promotes a new kind of semiotics which she calls 'semianalysis' (Allen 34).

In her fundamental essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel* (1969) Kristeva not only discusses Bakhtin's work but also uses his concept of dialogism in order to develop her own theory (Moi 34). She defines intertextuality as a basic feature of all texts: "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double" (qtd. in Moi: 37). This quotation implies two very important ideas. First of all, Kristeva has a very wide notion of 'text', for she sees literary texts as part of the "cultural (or social text)" (Allan 36). This is a very important parallel to Bakhtin's dialogism, which also treats literary texts as part of the larger cultural context. However, Kristeva's definition also extends Bakhtin's theory as she insists that a text is independent from its author and thus produces meaning itself (Martínez 442).

This insistence on the text's own productivity is at the very heart of Kristeva's theory of intertextuality. She regards texts as being always in a "state of production" rather than being fixed entities (Allen 34). Challenging the author's authority over a text, she emphasises the connection between author, reader, and literary analyst. The reader does not simply analyse a text in order to find out the author's one true intention, but becomes an active member in the production of meaning him-/herself: "Author, reader or analyst join a process of continual production, are 'in process/on trial' ("le sujet-en-procès"), over the text" (Allen 34). Pfister calls this "theoretical tool" ("texttheoretischer Hebel") with which Kristeva attempts to dismantle the bourgeois notion of the autonomous subject (8). As soon as the text becomes part of discourse, the connection to its author is literally severed and the text has its own independent productivity ("subjektlose Produktivität") (Pfister 8). As a result, "the subject, as poststructuralists like Kristeva and Barthes are fond of declaring, is lost in writing" (Allen 40). This is why 'intertextuality' replaces 'intersubjectivity' in Kristeva's definition.

If there is a 'process of continual production over a text', there can never be a finished analysis claiming to have pointed out the true meaning of a text. As a result, Kristeva attacks the illusory assumption that texts possess a meaning

unique to themselves (Allen 37). By arguing that texts never reveal absolute truths she points to aspects of language which “escape the dominant tradition of Aristotelian monologism” (Moi 35) and attack “foundations of Western logic” (Allen 43), expressed in Aristotle’s principle of non-contradiction (‘something cannot be A and not-A’). According to Kristeva, the subversive, revolutionary potential of language can be seen in literary texts, which she calls ‘poetic language’:

If we accept Bakhtin’s vision of society as always exhibiting a conflict between monologic and dialogic forces, then the monologic forces will argue for what it takes to be logical (0-1), whilst dialogic forces, for Kristeva ‘poetic language’, will constantly struggle to express the non-logical (0-2). Notions of unquestionable authority and singularity – ‘God, Law, Definition’ – always work on the side of monologic power. (Allen 45)

This idea takes up the Bakhtinian notion of centripetal and centrifugal forces in society. While centripetal forces support dominant ideology by conveying unquestionable truths and repressing plurality, centrifugal forces like poetic language challenge dominant ideology by subverting ‘truths’ and pointing to more diverse perspectives. According to Kristeva, poetic language reveals the “inability of any logical system based on a zero-one sequence (true-false, nothingness-notation)” (qtd. in Allen: 45). As a result, Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality clearly opposes any attempt to promote unity in meaning and the belief in monologic truths:

If intertextuality stands as the ultimate term for the kind of poetic language Kristeva is attempting to describe, then we can see that from its beginning the concept of intertextuality is meant to designate a kind of language which, because of its embodiment of otherness, is against, beyond and resistant to (mono)logic. Such language is disruptive, revolutionary even. Intertextuality encompasses that aspect of literary and other kinds of texts which struggles against and subverts reason, the belief in unity of meaning or of the human subject, and which is therefore subversive to all ideas of the logical and the unquestionable. (Allen 2000, 45)

In the *Testament* and the *Confessions* very similar topics are addressed. In both novels traditional notions like author, reader, and narrator are questioned. Moreover, the belief in religion and historiography as authoritative purveyors of universal truths is challenged. Before focusing on these aspects in the analysis part of this thesis, however, it is first necessary to refer to another theorist of intertextuality whose systematisation of the concept serves as a helpful tool for the analysis of the two novels at hand.

### 2.3 Gérard Genette’s Structuralist Approach to Intertextuality

Bakhtin’s and Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality is a very general approach which treats literary texts as part of the larger cultural text. The structuralist theo-

rists who responded to the poststructuralist ideas of the 1960s had a more “circumscribed” approach to intertextuality (Allan 94). Unlike poststructuralist theorists like Bakhtin and Kristeva, the structuralist approach uses intertextuality as a tool to analyse a closed system of literary texts, which Martinez describes as “begrenztes Verfahren innerliterarischer Sinnbildung” (Martinez 442). Apart from this, there is another basic difference between these two theoretical schools. While poststructuralists use the concept of intertextuality in order to show that there is no stable signification of meaning in literary texts, “structuralists retain a belief in criticism’s ability to locate, describe and thus stabilize a text’s significance” (Allen 97). What distinguishes the structuralist notion of intertextuality from an earlier structuralism à la Saussure is its shift of attention away from the study of a single text, which is analysed as a closed system of decipherable and interpretable “inner structures” (Allen 111), towards the study of a system of texts out of which the single text is constructed (Allen 97).

The French literary theorist and critic Gérard Genette can be regarded as one major contributor to the concept of intertextuality as far as the structuralist approach is concerned. In his three works *The Architext* (1992), *Palimpsests* (1993), and *Paratexts* (1997)<sup>4</sup> Genette develops his theory of transtextuality which Allen defines as “intertextuality from the viewpoint of structuralist poetics” (Allen 98). He also introduces an extensive systematization of transtextuality, subdividing the ways in which texts are related to other texts into five subcategories (Allen 101). As this systematization provides an important tool for my discussion of the *Confessions* and the *Testament*, I will outline the most important ideas of Genette’s transtextuality in the following.

In contrast to the poststructuralist call for plurality, Genette attempts to establish a “viable and stable poetics of theme, genre and mode” on the basis of what he calls “architexts” (Allen 99-100). Architexts can be defined as “basic, unchanging (or at least slowly evolving) building blocks which underpin the entire literary system” (Allen 100). In Aristotelian terms an example of such architextual building blocks would be the generic categorisation of texts into drama, epic and lyric. As already shown above, poststructuralist theorists challenged this monologic representation of literature, regarding traditional Western poetics as one form of repression of plurality. Genette also recognises the problem that such a definition of fixed building blocks fails to take into account the evolving nature of literary categories but he proposes a solution to the problem which is radically different from the poststructuralist one. Instead of rejecting the whole field of traditional poetics he contextualises it by adding a new perspective to it called “transtextuality” (Allen 100). A transtextual approach does not study a single text with the help of fixed literary conventions but takes into account the system of texts out of which the text evolved. Genette’s approach is still a structuralist one as he believes

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<sup>4</sup> These publication dates refer to the first English and German publications of Genette’s works.

in the possibility to gain viable and stable truths from the study of literary texts, but it is a more flexible and contextualised one. He calls this an “open structuralism”, which can be defined as

a poetics which gives up on the idea of establishing a stable, ahistorical, irrefutable map or division of literary elements, but which instead studies the relationship (sometimes fluid, never unchanging) which link the text with the architextual network out of which it produces its meaning (Allen 100).

Genette’s concept of structuralism aims to be “open” but “pragmatic” at the same time (Allen 100). The recognition that the relationship between the text and its architext is never unchanging does not lead him to the conclusion that the text’s meaning is unstable as well. His theory of transtextuality which includes his notion of the architext implies that one can find the text’s meaning if the architext out of which it evolved is considered. This new approach to poetics is the basis for Genette’s systematisation of relations between texts.

In his major work *Palimpsests* (1993) Genette defines transtextuality as “all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (qtd. in Allen: 101). He subdivides transtextuality into five subcategories: the first kind of transtextuality is called intertextuality, representing something different than Kriseva’s use of the term. While in poststructuralism the term ‘intertextuality’ stands for “semiotic processes of cultural and textual signification”, Genette defines it as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts” and “the actual presence of one text within another”, meaning that a text can be present in another in the form of quotation, plagiarism and allusion (Allen 101). According to Allen, Genette’s reduction of the term intertextuality reveals the “clash of critical and theoretical motivations” (102) between the poststructuralist and structuralist approach to this field. While poststructuralists analyse “the text’s relation to the entirety of cultural signification”, Genette’s more restricted approach focuses on “the supposedly closed, or at least semi-autonomous field of literature” (Allen 102).

The second kind of transtextuality is called paratextuality. In this very important concept “the paratext [...] marks those elements which lie on the threshold of the text and which help to direct and control the reception of a text and which help to control the reception of the text by its readers” (Allen 103). The paratext again encompasses two minor categories: the peritext, “consisting of elements such as titles, chapter titles, prefaces and notes” and the epitext, “consisting of elements such as interviews, publicity announcements, reviews by and addresses to critics” (Allen 103). Being located on the text’s threshold the paratext occupies “the space which is both inside and outside” of the text (Allen 103). Peritextual elements like titles can be found inside the text, epitextual elements like interviews and reviews are outside the actual text but nevertheless contribute to its meaning. The third subcategory, metatextuality, is concerned with the meta level

of literary discussion. One can speak of a metatextual relation “when a text takes up a relation of ‘commentary’ to another text” (Allen 102). The fourth subcategory is what has already been defined above as architextuality. Genette includes this concept as a subcategory because, according to him, architextual elements like generic, modal, thematic and formal characteristics influence “the reader’s expectations and thus their reception of a work” (Allen 102). For example, an author can indicate that his/her novel follows a certain genre tradition by adding a subtitle (Allen 102). In this case a paratextual element (the subtitle) indicates that the text at hand refers to the architext of literary conventions in a certain way, which shows that the five different types of transtextuality can overlap: “Genette warns his readers, the five types of transtextuality [...] are not ‘separate and absolute categories without any reciprocal contact or overlapping’” (Allen 103).

With respect to my discussion of the two novels at hand Genette’s last subcategory, hypertextuality, is of special importance. He defines it as “any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (qtd. in Allen: 107). Genette’s use of the word hypotext is similar to what most critics call the ‘inter-text’, both terms referring to “a text which can be definitely located as a major source of signification for a text” (Allen 108). One important aspect of Genette’s theory is that he particularly focuses on forms of literature which are “intentionally inter-textual” and self-consciously refer to other texts (Allen 108). In this context Genette speaks of a “text in the second degree” which implies the idea that the hypertext is a non-original re-writing of a pre-existent hypotext (Allen 108). It is important to note that this is not a mere re-writing in the sense of plagiarism – which would be an intertextual relation – but a re-writing for the purpose of pastiche.<sup>5</sup> Only elements are taken up from an earlier text and these elements have to be recognised by the reader to get the meaning of the new text. Genette explicitly argues that “the meaning of hypertextual works [...] depends upon the reader’s knowledge of the hypotext” (Allen 108-9). This is also what distinguishes hypertextuality from architextuality: an architextual relationship does not imply that a text refers back to a specific hypotext but rather describes a text which imitates certain generic or formal conventions (Allen 108). This is what Martinez calls the difference between “Einzeltextreferenz” and “Systemreferenz” (443).

In general one can say that Genette sticks to a more conventional notion of “author”, “text”, and “reader” (Martinez 442). In his theory he presumes that intertextual relations between two texts are intended by the author, marked in the text, and have to be recognised by the reader (Martinez, 442). Allen (111) highlights the problem that there are some texts which explicitly foreground their hypotexts while others hide their hypotexts or depend upon sources that are no

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<sup>5</sup> Pastiche can be defined as “a literary work composed from elements borrowed either from various other writers or from a particular earlier author” (Allen 216).

longer available. Indeed, the degree of intertextual marking can vary from a high degree to a very low or no marking at all.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the two novels which will be discussed in this thesis there is a very high degree of intertextual marking. The analysis part aims to show that the *Testament* explicitly foregrounds the *Confessions* as a major source of influence.

For the discussion of intertextual relations between the *Confessions* (in Genette's terms the hypotext)<sup>7</sup> and the *Testament* (hypertext) I will use both the structuralist approach of Genette and the poststructuralist approach of Bakhtin and Kristeva. On the one hand, I will point out how the *Testament* takes up and transforms the *Confessions* as a hypotext by looking at different areas, such as structural, narrative, thematic and generic similarities. On the other hand, I aim to show that both novels correspond to Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Kristeva's theory of intertextuality as both novels question unity in meaning, for instance by calling for a multi-layered representation of history, challenging the belief in master narratives and subverting hierarchical structures in language.

### 3 Analysis of Intertextual Relations between the *Testament* and the *Confessions*

#### 3.1 Structural Similarities: the Editorial Function

The first very striking similarity between *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and *The Testament of Gideon Mack* is the novels' structural composition. Both novels are made up of a framing narrative (the editor's narrative/the publisher's prologue and epilogue) and the inner narrative (Robert Wringhim's private memoirs and Gideon Mack's testament). I will first look at the framing narratives in order to analyse their editorial function before focusing on the two first-person narrators. The *Testament* begins with the publisher's prologue which is intended to inform the reader about the circumstances of Gideon Mack's case:

In presenting to the world the following strange narrative, I find it necessary to offer a word of explanation as to its provenance. Being a firm believer in the principle of the division of labour, I do not usually divert myself from the business of publishing books in order to write prologues to them. However, Mr Harry Caithness having declined to provide an introduction – on the grounds, he says, that he has more than cancelled any debt he owed me by (a) sending me a copy of the original manuscript in the first

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of different degrees of intertextual marking see Broich (31ff.).

<sup>7</sup> Having introduced Genette's theory, I will use the term 'hypotext' to refer to the *Confessions* as the major pre-text of the *Testament* from now on.

place and (b) submitting the report which forms the bulk of the epilogue – I am left with no option but to write this myself. (T 3)<sup>8</sup>

What do we learn about the publisher<sup>9</sup> in his opening words? First of all, he presents himself as a man of business. As a “firm believer” in the principles of modern economy he has a sober, down-to-earth approach to his job as publisher, which is a “business” for him. It is a business which normally does not allow for the time-consuming endeavour of writing prologues. Yet he still writes the prologue declaring to provide the reader with an explanation about the “strange narrative” she/he is about to read. It is also indicated that he is a very systematic and thorough person. Using the numerals „(a)” and „(b)”, he gives the reader an insight into his sources: the copy of Gideon’s hand-written manuscript and the journalist Harry Caithness’s report, which includes Harry’s interviews with the inhabitants of Monimaskit. Right from the start of the prologue the reader is made to believe that the publisher is a trustworthy person who takes his publishing job seriously. The use of different sources is also highlighted by the editor in his opening words of the *Confessions*:

It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan, about one hundred and fifty years ago, and for at least a century previous to that period. [...] I find, that in the year 1687, George Colwan succeeded his uncle of the same name, in the lands of Dalchastle and Balgrennan; and this being all I can gather of the family from history, to tradition I must appeal for the remainder of the motley adventures of that house. (C 3)

For several reasons the reader is tempted to trust the editor as well. First of all, he refers to the “parish registers” in order to show that his narrative is based on historical facts. To give the reader a complete account of events he also refers to “tradition” as an important source of information. Velasco describes the editor’s approach in the following way: “Tradition and documentation are compared for degree of correlation and discrepancy, and hypotheses and conclusions formulated on those grounds are decided (filtered, hierarchised and ordered) on the basis of enlightened ‘reason’” (40-41). Douglas Mack (1999) calls this a seemingly “judicious and even-handed evaluation of the evidence” (2).

By saying “I find, that in the year 1687” (C 3) the editor also stresses that he is actually scrolling over the registers while he is writing his narrative. In the *Testament* a very similar passage can be found: “The photocopied manuscript duly arrived the next day, Tuesday 5th October, 2004. It consisted – consist, in fact, for I

<sup>8</sup> For reasons of clarity I will use the abbreviations “T” (for *Testament*) and “C” (for *Confessions*) where necessary in order to refer to the respective primary text.

<sup>9</sup> By saying “publisher” I refer to the *Testament*, by saying “editor” I refer to the *Confessions*.

have it before me as I compose this – of 310 pages of A4 paper” (T 11). Both, the editor and the publisher, emphasize that they are actually referring to a document which they have in front of them and thus stress their authority. As a result, both opening passages invite the reader to trust the editor/publisher who appears to be reliable, accurate, and thorough in his work.

In the course of the prologue the publisher uses several other strategies to make his account sound trustworthy. First of all, he gives exact dates and place details when he informs the reader about Gideon Mack’s story. He says that “one Monday morning at the start of October 2004” (T 5) he receives a phonecall from his friend, the freelance journalist Harry Caithness, who tells him about Gideon Mack. The reader learns that Gideon has stayed at Mrs Nora MacLean’s B&B near Ben Alder for two nights, “the 15th and sixteenth January to be precise”, and that it is a “cottage in the village of Dalwhinnie, some fifty miles south of Inverness” (6). The publisher continues with his documenting style when he relates how he received Gideon Mack’s manuscript, which “duly arrived the next day, Tuesday 5th October, 2004” (11). When the publisher describes what the manuscript looks like, the reader gets the impression that he is very accurate and thorough:

It consisted – consists, in fact, for I have it before me as I compose this – of 310 pages of A4 paper, numbered, very neatly written for the most part, in black ink, with deletions and additions clearly marked, extra passages inserted at the margins and on the reverse of many sheets, and the whole thing divided into sections headed by Roman numerals. Only towards the end of the document does the handwriting deteriorate, although it is never illegible. (11)

Not only does this quotation reveal the publisher’s accuracy but it also implies a direct intertextual reference to the *Confessions*. The editor finds Robert’s memoirs on his trip to the highlands, which he embarks on together with Mr John Gibson Lockhart in order to see Robert’s corpse. It consists of a printed and a hand-written part. Like Gideon’s “very neatly written” (T 11) testament, the hand-written part of Robert’s memoirs “is in a fine old hand, extremely small and close” (C 209). Apart from the intertextual reference, the publisher’s and the editor’s mentioning of the original manuscripts also has a similar strategic function as their detailed description adds to the overall intention to sound reasonable and convincing.

Furthermore, the publisher makes frequent use of explanatory footnotes, for example when he describes what “Munro-bagging” means: “For those unfamiliar with the term, it is perhaps necessary to explain that a Munro is mountain in Scotland over 3,000 feet in height” (T 18). These footnotes appear again and again; also in Gideon Mack’s testament. The use of explanatory footnotes is just one device the publisher employs to take the reader by the hand. Apart from that, he also summarises information for the reader in order to avoid deviations. For ex-

ample, he only presents the “relevant part of the libel” against Gideon Mack, patronisingly saying that the complex procedures of the Presbyterian court system “need not long detain us” (13-14). For the same reason of brevity he only presents “the relevant part of the entry for Sunday 1st August” (16) from Dr Tanner’s journal, which gives an account of how Dr Tanner meets Gideon Mack near Ben Alder.

In addition to his frequent use of time references, footnotes and summaries, the publisher also presents many different sources and invokes several authorities to make his account sound trustworthy: he refers to his friend, the freelance journalist Harry, whom he presents as a “a first-class reporter” (4); he refers to the press and the media, saying that “there had been quite a bit in the papers at the time” (5); he includes witnesses like Dr Tanner and the other two hikers who saw Gideon Mack near Ben Alder (15ff.); finally, he refers to the police report, the libel from the Presbytery and the Procurator Fiscal’s information. As a result, the publisher’s account seems to be based on a very diverse collection of facts, documents and oral reports.

The editor who opens and closes the *Confessions* uses very similar strategies to make his narrative sound trustworthy. He incorporates several features of the ‘conventional’ editor, representing a kind of authority that a reader “accustomed to the editorial function might be tempted to take at face value” (Campbell 180-1). One very important feature which supports this authority is his eloquent, high-register language. According to the norm of the time, educated (British) English discourse was associated with ‘good’ and reliable characters (Campbell 183). Although there are plenty of examples of the editor’s elegant language, it is particularly interesting to look at the way in which he describes Lady Rabina Colwan and Reverend Wringhim: “Great was the dame’s exultation at the triumph of her beloved pastor over her sinful neighbours” (C 16). In this context Mack 1999 points out that in the first part of the editor’s narrative “the Scott-like editor displays good humour, a reasonable tone, and gentlemanly good sense” (3-4) when he describes the conflict between the Colwans and the Wringhims. With respect to his gentleman-like behaviour it is important to mention that he also takes the reader by the hand. Like the publisher who avoids deviations and summarises information for the reader, the editor makes frequent use of expressions like: “We cannot enter the detail of the events that now occurred, without forestalling a part of the narrative” (41); and: “But this story we cannot enter on at present” (59). By saying “we” instead of “I” he also creates a certain familiarity with the reader.

As a result, the editor and the publisher share many important features: both present themselves as rational, thorough and responsible and thus seem conform to the conventional editorial function. However, in the course of the publisher’s prologue and the editor’s narrative the reader begins to question their infallibility.

In the *Testament* there is an important turning point when the publisher refers to Gideon’s accident at the Black Jaws for the first time: “Before that happened,

however, the Scottish media got hold of the story, but the diverting embellishments of the tabloid press need not concern us here. The facts concerning Gideon Mack were these" (T 12). By distancing himself from the sensationalist yellow press he emphasises that he is a serious publisher who sticks to the facts. His very drastic dismissal of the tabloids reminds of the editor's comment on the Blackwood Magazine towards the end of the *Confessions*: "so often had I been hoaxed by the ingenious fancies displayed in that Magazine, that when this relation met my eye, I did not believe it" (C 202). Both, the publisher and the editor, distance themselves from the sensationalist press, claiming to give a reasonable, objective account of events. In fact, neither of them really meets this task, as will be shown in the following.

After having declared to enlighten the reader about the facts concerning Gideon Mack's accident, the publisher only gives very vague information, which seriously casts doubt on the publisher's omniscience for the first time. His choice of words changes significantly, as his confident, objective language from the beginning is replaced by expressions of doubt and astonishment: "Not only had the water apparently carried him through its unknown course, but, even more amazingly, he was alive, and without a broken bone in his body" (T 12-13). Another aspect which casts doubt on the publisher's omniscience is that he hardly mentions the stone at all. There is only one passage in the prologue where he mentions the stone to his friend Harry Caithness: "The stone in the woods is where it all starts, and from there we move on to the Devil in the cave. Far-fetched, you see. Maybe Mack was just mad and that's all there is to it" (19).

Moreover, several passages reveal that the publisher not only gives vague information but also presents the story from a very biased point of view. For example, he sides with the Kirk when he says that at the gathering in the church hall after his accident Gideon "made declarations of such a scandalous nature that the Monimaskit Kirk Session had no option but to refer the matter to the local Presbytery" (13). In addition to this, he condescendingly refers to the three witnesses (Mr Sean Dobie, Miss Rachel Ammand, Dr Roland Tanner) who contacted the police after having seen Gideon Mack in the area around Ben Alder: "I include these here less in expectation of their being taken seriously by any rational reader than because they are typical of the kind of stories that spring up around almost any unusual death" (15). On the pretence of furnishing further evidence he even includes Dr Tanner's journal entry but rejects it right away: "Dr Tanner might have been a brilliant historian, but he didn't sound to me like a very reliable witness" (18). These quotations show the arrogant attitude of the publisher in this part of the prologue.

The editor shows very similar signs of arrogance, which undermine his seemingly neutral perspective. Mack (1999:3)<sup>10</sup> has pointed out that his sympathies are

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<sup>10</sup> The name "Mack" is used for the critic Douglas Mack. The *Testament's* protagonist Gideon Mack is referred to as "Gideon".

clearly in favour of the Colwans. This can be spotted in the text. The editor describes the Laird George senior and George junior in a very positive way: about the Laird he says that “he had hitherto believed that he was living in most cordial terms with the greater part of the inhabitants of the earth, and with the powers above in particular” (C 4). His description of George sounds very similar: “He was a generous and kind-hearted youth; always ready to oblige, and hardly ever dissatisfied with anybody” (17). In contrast to this he sheds a very negative light on Reverend Wringhim and Robert. For example, he dismisses Reverend Wringhim’s “creed” as “arbitrary” and “unyielding” (17) and describes him as “terrier” when referring to his role in Edinburgh politics (19). One very striking example of the editor’s negative depiction of Robert can be found in the context of Robert’s encounter with George on Arthur’s Seat: “From the moment that he heard he was safe, he assumed his former insolence and revengeful looks – and never were they more dreadful than on parting with his brother that morning on top of the hill” (39). It is quite clear what kind of picture the editor tries to convey: by presenting Robert Wringhim as “a fanatical and apparently insane heir of the Covenanters” (Mack 1999: 1), he reinforces the values of enlightened Scotland which he embodies to a great extent.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from his lack of neutrality there are other things which cast doubt on his omniscience. Campbell (179) emphasizes that the reader hardly learns anything about Gil-Martin from the editor. According to him, the reader soon realises “that Gil-Martin is completely uncontrolled by the narrative and functions beyond the Editor’s knowledge” (179). Gil-Martin first appears in Robert’s memoirs,<sup>12</sup> not in the editor’s narrative “where only the most oblique explanation is given of his nature and function” (Campbell 179). When George enquires on Arthur’s Seat how Robert could have known that he was there, the reader is given the first very vague reference to Gil-Martin: „So then, you indeed knew that I was here? ‘I was told so by a friend, but I did not believe him’” (C 38). The editor’s inability to account of Gil-Martin’s role in the course of events can be labelled as “the failure of the omniscient narrator” (Campbell 180).

In this context it is important to come back to the editor’s language again. As outlined above, his educated written language seems to convey a certain kind of reliability. Mack (1999: 4) argues that the questioning of the editor begins with the oral tale of Bell Calvert. From the editor the reader only learns very little about the circumstances of George’s murder. The relevant passage reads: “George stepped out; the door was again bolted [...] the report had spread over the city, that a young gentleman had been slain, on a little washing-green at the side of the North Loch” (C 45). It is Bell Calvert who clarifies the circumstances as she discharges Thomas Drummond who has been suspected of murder:

<sup>11</sup> I will focus on the depiction of religion and history in chapter 3.3.

<sup>12</sup> Robert’s relationship to Gil-Martin will be analysed in detail in chapter 3.4.

This is what I wish you to pay particular attention to. I had only lost sight of Drummond (who had given me his name and address) for the short space of time that we took in running up one pair of short stairs; [...] when I got my eye on him again, he had not crossed the mouth of the next entry, nor proceeded above ten or twelve paces, and, at the same time, I saw the two men coming down the bank on the opposite side of the loch, at about three hundred paces distance [...] it was quite clear that he neither could be one of them, nor have any communication with them. [...] When I looked down at the two strangers, one of them was extremely like Drummond. (62)

As a result, it is the prostitute Bell Calvert, an outcast of society, who informs the reader about the real circumstances of George's murder, while the powerful, 'enlightened' editor fails in his role as omniscient narrator. This reminds of Bakhtin's notion of double-voiced discourse which challenges hierarchical structures in language, stating that no dialect or form of speech can be regarded as superior to any other (cf. chapter 2.1). According to Mack, the contrast between the Editor's written account and Bell Calvert's oral tale is "disturbing, and invites the reader to reconsider the Editor's account of other events" (1999:6). Furthermore, "Bell Calvert's oral tale alerts the reader to the need to distrust and question the Editor" (Mack 1999: 7). This is especially the case if one takes the Editor's use of historical references into account. He names many historical dates in order but they turn out to be contradicting. For example, the editor tells the reader that Robert is born after his brother, "in the course of another year" (C 16), which would be around 1690 (Mack 1999: 17). Robert himself says that in the year 1704 he "had just entered the eighteenth year of my age" (C 99). Garside (202) points out that at the time of the 'famous session' Robert should be fourteen but he himself pretends to be seventeen. Mack justly notes that the reader has to be "fairly alert" (1999:18) to spot these mistakes but, once they are spotted, they reveal the editor's misleading use of historical references in general which "tantalise rather than confirm" (Fielding 132) and warn the reader "to tread carefully in the historical field" which the editor presents (Fielding 135). The same can be noted about the publisher's use of historical references in the *Testament*. At first glance, his explanatory footnotes seem to be helpful for the reader but turn out to contain historical errors on closer inspection. When Gideon talks about and how Archbishop Sharp was "dragged from his coach by nine vengeful Covenanters" (T 168-9), the publisher provides biographical information in his footnote: "Archbishop Sharp (1613-79)" (T 169). According to *The Birlinn Companion to Scottish History* (Donnachie 71), Sharp actually lived from 1618 to 1679, which reveals that the publisher's use of historical references is as 'tantalising' as in the *Confessions*.

Finally, there is another important similarity between the publisher and the editor. In general, the editor can be labelled as a "child of the Scottish Enlightenment" (Mack 1999: 12) who gives a rational scientific account of events. One very

prominent example of the editor's scientific world view is the description of the halo which George sees during his ascension of Arthur's Seat:

He beheld, to his astonishment, a bright halo in the cloud of haze, that rose in a semi-circle over his head like a rainbow. He was struck motionless at the view of the lovely vision; for it so chanced that he had never seen the same appearance before, though common at early morn. But he soon perceived the cause of the phenomenon, and that it proceeded from the rays of the sun from a pure unclouded morning sky striking upon this dense vapour which refracted them. (C 34-35)

The editor demystifies the appearance of the halo right away by giving a scientific explanation. His choice of words reveals that he is deeply entrenched in Enlightenment thinking: for him, a "vision" is nothing supernatural but a "phenomenon" which has a "cause". These causes can be found through observation of nature with the help of inductive principles. Therefore, a halo is nothing mysterious as it is "common at early morn". The subsequent passage represents the self-confident belief of Enlightenment thinkers that there is no limit to scientific discovery:

But the better all the works of nature are understood, the more they will be ever admired. That was a scene that would have entranced the man of science with delight, but which the uninitiated sordid man would have regarded less than the mole rearing up his hill in silence and in darkness. (35)

It is very important to note that this passage marks a drastic change from the gentleman-like narrative voice that takes the reader by the hand to an arrogant and biased tone, as Mack observes: "Even as the Editor conveys the excitement and value of the scientific methods and insights of the Enlightenment, there is a jarring note in his dismissal of 'the uninitiated and sordid man'" (2012: 67).

The publisher shows a very similarly arrogant behaviour, which can be seen in the opening lines of his epilogue:

What can this work be? Can it be anything other than the ramblings of a mind terminally damaged by a cheerless upbringing, an unfulfilled marriage, unrequited love, religious confusion and the stress and injury of a near-fatal accident? Who would dare, in this day and age, to suggest that Gideon Mack was, as he maintained to the end, telling the truth? (T 361)

The opening question "What can this work be?" (361) at the beginning of the publisher's epilogue is a direct quotation from the *Confessions*, appearing at the very same structural position. I have pointed out above that the publisher incorporates many structural and functional features of the editor. One could even argue that the publisher is a modern 'child of the Enlightenment'. For example, he signs his prologue with the words: "Patrick Walker, Edinburgh, June 2005" (T 21). Therefore, he is situated in the Lowlands, in the 'enlightened' city – not in Monimaskit,

in the countryside, where strange and mysterious things happen. Like the editor who claims not to dare “venture a judgement” (C 209) on Robert’s memoirs, he still pretends to present Gideon’s case from a neutral perspective, claiming to “leave every reader to judge it for him or herself” (T 21). However, neither the editor nor the publisher is really able to free himself from his preconceived opinion. Their final judgements – for they in fact do not leave the reader to judge for him or herself – are almost identical: While the editor says that “in this day, and with the present generation, it will not go down, that a man should be daily tempted by the devil, in the semblance of a fellow creature” (C 210), the publisher is convinced that “in this day and age” nobody will dare to claim that Gideon was “telling the truth” (T 361). However, neither of them is able to give a satisfying explanation for what happened to Robert or Gideon, leaving the reader in uncertainty due to their lack of omniscience. As a result, it can be noted for both novels what Campbell suggests with respect to the *Confessions*: “With the realisation that the ‘omniscient’ Editor is as fallible as the mortal characters any critical reading of the book acquires freedom – by denying any empowering or authoritative function to any strand of narrative” (180). As a result, both novels correspond to Bakhtin’s idea that in a polyphonic novel “no individual discourse can stand objectively above any other discourse” (cf. chapter 2.1). In addition, Kristeva’s insistence that in language there cannot be any unity in meaning reverberates in the editor’s/publisher’s unmasking as fallible narrators. Their attempt to give a monologic representation of events turns out to be insufficient.

Having shown how the editor’s/publisher’s authority is undermined and deconstructed I will now focus on the other narrative strategies that are used in both novels, especially the function of Robert and Gideon as unreliable narrators. With respect to the concept of intertextuality it can be noted that the *Testament* takes up the fallible editor as one vital element of the hypotext, the *Confessions*. Moreover, the editor’s/publisher’s fallibility corresponds to Bakhtin’s and Kristeva’s notion that in a polyphonic novel or poetic language in general the promotion of one ‘official’ world view and unity in meaning is challenged.

### 3.2 Narrative Strategies: Gideon Mack and Robert Wringhim – Two ‘Mad Monologists’?

For the discussion of Gideon’s and Robert’s role as first-person narrators it is helpful to use Gaby Allrath’s (62ff.) categorisation of textual indicators for unreliable narration. She defines these categories with special emphasis on the ‘mad monologist’ as a special form of homodiegetic narration.<sup>13</sup> Robert and Gideon can

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<sup>13</sup> Allrath (62) also highlights the problematic nature of the term ‘mad monologist’. Due to the lack of objective criteria it is impossible to judge whether a narrator is really ‘mad’. This problem will also be discussed at the end of this subchapter. For the purpose of detecting general tendencies

both be regarded as homodiegetic narrators as they tell the story from their own personal perspective, giving no more information about other characters than what their actions reveal.<sup>14</sup> It will be shown in the following that both narrators show several signs of unreliability and correspond to Allrath's definition of a mad monologist.

According to Allrath, one very important indicator of unreliable narration is the mad monologist's outcast state: "In ihren Beziehungen zur Außenwelt und in ihrer Kommunikationsfähigkeit mit ihren Mitmenschen erscheinen viele der Protagonisten als gestört; sie werden als einsam und abgekapselt lebend geschildert, fühlen sich als Außenseiter und sehnen sich nach Anerkennung" (62). In order to point Gideon's outcast state it is important to first look at his disturbed emotional state which makes it difficult for him to interact with the people that are important to him. Right at the start of his testament Gideon tells the reader that he has "walked through this world pretending emotions rather than feeling them" (T 27). Gideon's repression of feelings is one central theme of the *Testament* which is underlined by the pervading use of fire imagery. Gideon repeatedly compares his repressed feelings to a fire that burns inside him which he learned to control: "And all the while this fire was burning deep inside me. I kept it battened down, the door of the furnace tightly shut, because that seemed necessary in order to get through life" (28). His inability to express feelings and emotions becomes most evident when Gideon describes his relationship to Jenny during his student years: "I did not love Jenny as I should have: I was not capable of doing so. [...] But if there was a raging passion waiting to be released in me I did not let it out. I kept myself clamped down" (112).

Gideon's disturbed emotional state is mirrored by the description of his childhood as a "son of the manse" (42). The oppressive atmosphere of the manse corresponds to the description of Gideon's repressed feelings: "The manse was a place, overwhelmingly, of silence. [...] What scant noise the three of us made, while outside the world's volume was getting constantly louder!" (49). This contrast between the manse's silence and the roaring world outside reflects Gideon's growing up in an environment which is dominated by rules and repressed emotions. The lack of emotions is especially revealed by his father's distant, biblically-derived language: „The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour"; and, on occasions of supreme achievement, such as when I learned to ride a bicycle, to applaud thunderously with the words, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!" (46). Gideon is named after an "Old Testament hero" but only embodies a "pale imitation" (46) of him, an imitation that is unappreciated by his father: "Did my father love me? Was he capable of love at all? I think he loved the idea of a son more than he loved the actuality. He wanted a Gideon, but what he got was Gide-

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of unreliability in the two inner narratives this term will be used despite its problematic connotation.

<sup>14</sup> This definition of homodiegetic narration can be found in Allrath (62).

on Mack” (46). This longing for recognition, classified by Allrath (62) as one important indicator of a mad monologist, characterises Gideon as well. When Gideon finally decides to study Divinity to enter the Kirk he says to his dying father, lying in hospital after his second and fatal stroke: „Dad,’ I said, ‘you were right all along. I’m going to follow in your footsteps. I’m going to be a minister in the Kirk” (127). This can be regarded as a son’s desperate attempt to be accepted by his father at last.

It is not only a lack of emotions which characterises Gideon’s childhood and makes him keep “a lid on his passions” (53) but also a predominance of negative, even frightful feelings towards his father, which is symbolised, for instance, by his description of “the minister’s study”: “It was the nerve-centre of our existence. The gloom seeped out from there and filled our lives” (52). The “gloom” which seeps out from “the minister’s” – his father’s – study highlights the problematic relationship between Gideon and his father which plays a crucial role for the discussion of Gideon’s emotional state.

Gideon describes himself as a “dutiful wee boy growing in the shadow of his father and of the Kirk” (27). The contrast between the “wee boy” and the powerful alliance of his father and the Kirk gives the sense of the authoritative surrounding Gideon grows up in.<sup>15</sup> There is one very important passage, linked by the use of anaphora, in which Gideon describes the family constellation:

The minister: grave, forbidding, slow to anger but fearsome when roused, emotion displayed by a slight reddening of the usually grey upper cheeks; sense of humour not entirely absent but so dry you could have used it for kindling; the lawmaker, the sayer of grace before and after meals, the inculcator of good manners. [...] The minister’s wife: dutiful, timid, destined always to wear beige and browns, or unshocking blues [...] And the son: gangly, nervous, good at schoolwork [...] a lonely boy politely storing up rebellion until it would least inconvenience his parents, probably after they were dead. (44)

This quotation clearly shows that the father, whom Gideon significantly calls “the minister,” dominates the whole family. His mother, like himself, lives in the shadow of her husband. His father is the undisputable “lawmaker”, who has unquestioned authority. This is also revealed by Gideon’s choice of words when talking about how he is “being catechised” (89) by his father. During his religious education at the manse his father decides which topics to talk about and when to have “little diversions” (89). When Gideon is thinking about his study plans he is “summoned” (91) to his father’s study like a servant who pays a dutiful visit to his master. Gideon’s uneasiness about his father turns into actual fear when he is caught in front of the TV set on a Sunday afternoon. In this scene Gideon’s father

<sup>15</sup> In this context one can again refer to Bakhtin and Kristeva. For Gideon, his father and the Kirk are unquestionable authorities which promote one ‘official’ world view.

gets monster-like features which make him appear inhumane and uncanny<sup>16</sup>: Gideon describes how “his huge right hand” grips his neck so that he cries out, how “the blood in his fingers pulse[s] furiously” and he compares his breathing to “that of some monstrous creature in its den” (65). His father’s punishment has a long-lasting effect on Gideon: “To be told by your father that the sight of you offends him is a terrible thing. The contempt in his voice sounded as though it would last forever. Which it has. Here I am, four decades on, and I can still hear it” (66).

As far as Gideon’s outcast state is concerned, it can be noted that in the course of the *Testament* Gideon more and more retreats from the outside world and his fellow human beings. This self-imposed escape is reflected by the language he uses, which changes after his encounter with the Devil: “For the next two days, Friday and Saturday, I stayed shut away from the world while I typed up the recording” (301). From now on, this ‘rhetoric of isolation’ frequently reappears in the further course of the testament: “I had a solitary evening in the manse that Saturday night. I read from the Bible, the Book of Jonah, and then I read a chapter or two of Moby Dick, Captain Ahab and his obsession with the whale” (311). Gideon even begins to enjoy his outcast state, seeing “a great contentment in it” (319). His outcast state reaches its culmination after his speech at Catherine Cragie’s funeral which shocks the whole congregation and leads to his complete isolation: “I made for the manse, my place of refuge, my shelter from the storm, and I got in and I was alone.” (343) It is very significant that the manse, which he used to regard as a place to break out from, now becomes his only refuge. Even the study, which Gideon describes as “gloomy” (52) in the beginning of his testament, now gets a positive connotation as he calls it “his study” where he is “safe from the world” (344). First he goes out “less and less often” (347) then he only goes out at night. As a result, Gideon’s outcast state fits one important criterion for unreliable narration.

In the *Confessions*, Robert’s outcast state is one of the predominant themes as well. At the very beginning of his memoirs Robert says that he “was born an outcast in the world” (C 81) and laments the lack of recognition by his natural father George Colwan who “disclaimed all relation or connection [...] and interest in [him], save what the law compelled him to take” (81). Robert tells the reader that is only salvation is the “faithful minister of the gospel” (81) and his “mother’s early instructor” (82) Reverend Wringhim.<sup>17</sup> In Wringhim’s manse Robert grows up in an environment which sets him apart from the outside world as well. From his “reverend father” (82) he learns to divide his fellow human beings into ‘sinners’ and ‘elect’ and how to discern “good and evil, right and wrong” (82), a kind of religious extremism which he willingly accepts and thrives in, strengthening the

<sup>16</sup> The term ‘uncanny’ will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.4.

<sup>17</sup> According to Mack 1999, it is “strongly hinted” (3) that Reverend Wringhim is Robert’s real father.

desire to set himself apart from “the wicked of his world” (81). According to Dagmar Sims (119), Robert’s outcast state leads to an emotional coldness which is revealed by his use of biblically-derived, impersonal, rarely appropriate language. This coldness can especially be perceived in his condescending attitude towards his mother and his father’s servant John Barnet. During one of the family’s religious discourses Robert corrects his mother, claiming her misinterpretation showed how much she said “these fundamental precepts by rote, and without any consideration” (82). He even admits that he does not have “any great regard for her person” (95). John Barnet, who seriously questions Robert’s behaviour and religious thinking, is addressed by Robert in a similarly condescending way: “Who made thee a judge of the actions or dispositions of the Almighty’s creatures – thou who art a worm, and no man is in sight? How it befits thee to deal out judgements and anathemas!” (84). It is very important to note that it is the Scot-speaking character Barnet who sees through the hypocritical nature of Robert’s religious extremism: “There he goes! sickan sublime and ridiculous sophistry I never heard come out of another mouth but ane” (84). This is just one example of the use of different dialects in the *Confessions* that reminds of Bakhtin’s notion of double-voiced discourse in which the hierarchical structure between an allegedly educated, biblically-derived language and a more original local dialect is subverted.

In the same manner as Gideon’s outcast state aggravates, Robert becomes increasingly isolated in the course of the memoirs. The more Gil-Martin takes possession over him the more he retreats from the outside world. He describes how in “this state of irritation and misery” he is “dragging on an existence, disgusted with all around [him]” (152). Like Gideon, who retreats to his manse, his “shelter from the storm” (I 343), Robert locks himself in his chamber: “So miserable was my life rendered by these continued attacks, that I was often obliged to lock myself up for days together, never seeing any person save my man Samuel Scrape” (160). Finally, Robert describes himself as “an outcast and a vagabond in society” (180). As a result, there is a very close intertextual relation between the description of Gideon’s and Robert’s outcast states.

Apart from the mad monologist’s outcast state, Allrath (65) mentions another important indicator of unreliable narration. As mad monologists incorporate the role of a character who is part of the story as well as the role of the narrator who tells about the experienced events, they tend to retrospectively attribute meaning to certain events, which Allrath calls “retrospektive Sinnstiftung” (65). In the case of Gideon and Robert this tendency plays a very dominant role. They both present themselves as being exposed to an inevitable fate, showing a lack of responsibility for their own actions and decisions.

One very striking example of retrospective construction of meaning in the *Testament* is Gideon’s description of how he becomes a minister in the Church of Scotland despite his oppressive upbringing as a “son of the manse” (I 42). He finally decides to enter the Kirk after having visited his parents together with Jen-

ny during his student years: “I didn’t realise it at the time, but from the moment Jenny and I walked down the brae to the bus-stop I was moving towards a life in the Kirk” (122). This decision marks an important turning point because after his student years, his time of liberation from his oppressive childhood, he decides to return to life in the manse again. It is important to note that he does not present this decision as an act of his own will but as a decision which has been imposed from an outside force. There are other situations in which he presents himself as controlled by an outside force which prevents him from taking action, for example when he is unable to make a decision in the polling booth: “Scotland had been cheated. I was as vociferous in my outrage as the others. I admitted nothing, but I almost came to believe that I’d been duped into spoiling the ballot paper against my will” (123). While writing the testament, Gideon retrospectively connects this event with his choice to enter the Kirk:

Meanwhile I continued on the road to the Kirk and perhaps my moment of humiliating self-denial in the polling-booth made it easier to contemplate that future. If I could be so false-faced when it came to a vote on the future of my country, why should the fact that I didn’t believe in God debar me from the ministry. (123)

His choice of words is significant here, as he “contemplates” his future instead of taking action to change it and he describes himself as “false-faced”, a self-characterisation which reappears at a later stage, when Jenny confronts Gideon with their unhappy marriage. She asks him if he can “be dishonest in one part of your life but not in another” (155). Actually, Jenny is the strong character who sees through Gideon’s false pretences but he does not have the strength to admit it: “I put my arms around her and she began to cry. [...] ‘You haven’t lost me.’ But inside I felt a horrible queasiness, as if she’d found me out” (155).

Robert’s account is especially dominated by his religious interpretations of events. According to Sims, his religious extremism is one of the main indicators for his unreliability (Sims 119). Velasco also stresses Robert’s tendency to interpret his experiences in “mythic archetypes” (46)<sup>18</sup>, which alerts the reader not to take Robert’s account of events at face value. When Robert attacks his brother George during the tennis match, he interprets this “victory” (C 126) as a sign of God’s approval of his deeds: “This was a palpable victory gained over the wicked, and I thereby knew that the hand of the Lord was with me” (126). After he learns from Gil-Martin that George’s friend has been accused of murdering George, he asks in a direct address to the reader: “how could I doubt, after this, that the hand of heaven was aiding and abetting me?” (142). He also repeatedly compares himself to figures from the Bible, for instance by calling himself “a scourge in the hand of

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<sup>18</sup> Robert’s conception of religion will also play an important role in the chapter 3.3.

the Lord; another Jehu, a Cyrus, or a Nebuchadnezzar” (90).<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Robert fails to see his own responsibility, which is indicated by his frequent use of passive constructions, for example when he describes how he murders Mr Blanchard (116: “and at that moment my piece was discharged”) and George (139: “I was compelled to take the rapier, much against my inclination”). Although he even confesses at one point to feel “considerable zeal” for his and Gil-Martin’s mission after “the ice being broke” (118), he still blames his “illustrious friend” for his downfall: “if it had not been the instigations of this illustrious stranger, I should never have presumed to begin so great a work myself” (114). Like Gideon, he presents himself as being exposed to an inevitable fate: “I found myself constantly involved in a labyrinth of deceit, from which it was impossible to extricate myself” (90).

Furthermore, Allrath points out one very significant structural indicator for unreliable narration: “Das wohl wichtigste solcher strukturellen Signale resultiert aus multiperspektivischem Erzählen und besteht in der Kontrastierung von Perspektiven, die nicht synthetisierbar sind“ (73). In this context, the love scene between Gideon and Elsie plays a crucial role. Gideon presents his affair with Elsie as a singular event, claiming that Elsie ends the affair before it actually starts: „‘Come on, Gideon,’ she said, ‘let’s quit while we can’” (T 172). However, his account clearly contradicts what Elsie says to Harry Caithness at the end of the publisher’s epilogue:

But it didn’t just happen once. That was the first time, but we made love all that summer. And for years afterwards I used to go to the manse at different times of the day and we’d make love. So it was an affair all right, it was passionate and intense and secret, it was like stealing fruit from a beautiful garden, but I think right from the start I knew it was doomed, that it would never be anything more than stealing. (382)

As a result, Elsie’s account reveals that Gideon retrospectively alters facts while writing his testament. Furthermore, it invites the reader to look at Gideon’s and Elsie’s relationship from a different perspective. Gideon presents himself as a victim who is rejected by Elsie. However, Elsie’s interview with Harry Caithness casts doubt on his point of view: “He was never going to really love me, whatever he said. I don’t think he ever loved Jenny either. He wasn’t capable of loving her or me or anybody, including himself” (383).

In the *Confessions* there are similar contradictions which cannot be synthesized, especially between Robert’s and Bell Calvert’s account of George’s murder. In the editor’s narrative it is already revealed by Bell Calvert that Robert hides in a dark corner and stabs George from behind (C 50ff.). In Robert’s version of the murder

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Sims: “Der Rekurs auf Figuren der Bibel zur Selbstcharakterisierung bezeugt nicht nur einen totalen Realitätsverlust, [...] sondern er kommt auch einer Verweigerung von Verantwortung gleich“ (120).

scene, he addresses his brother before he fights a “fierce” duel with him in which “the might of heaven” (141) finally prevails. It is indicated right away, however, that Robert’s account is unreliable: “I will not deny, that my own immediate impression of this affair in some degree differed from this statement. But this is precisely as my illustrious friend described it to me afterwards” (142).

Finally, Allrath (71) highlights the mad monologist’s desire to justify him-/herself as a typical sign of unreliable narration. According to her, this desire is particularly expressed by the use of direct addresses to the fictional reader (71). In both novels, the protagonists’ self-justification plays an important role and both have their fictional readers in mind when they write down their confessions. At the beginning of his testament Gideon explains why he wants to write down his story: “Then they can find me neither bad nor mad but absent, permanently absent [...] and the case will be closed. But not quite, for I will have my say – and hence this pen and this paper” (T 37). He does not want his case to be closed but wants to “have his say”, thinking that his written testament might add a new valuable perspective to the case. He thinks that a written account is more appropriate to convey his view of events than his oral declaration at Catherine Cragie’s funeral:

My mistake, if it was a mistake, was that I did not write this testament first, before I spoke. Had I done so, if people could have read this full and honest account rather than heard me announce it amid the din and confusion of that day, then perhaps they might have reacted with more open minds.  
(344)

It is his desire to be understood and not condemned which makes him write the testament. The same desire to “have [one’s] say” can also be observed in Robert’s memoirs: “when my flesh and bones are decayed, and my soul has passed to its everlasting home, then shall the sons of men ponder on the events of my life” (C 97). Like Gideon, who wants his readers to judge his case with “open minds” (T 344), Robert wants the reader to form his/her own opinion: “I shall go on to write such things as I remember, and if any one shall ever take the trouble to read over these confessions, such a one will judge for himself” (C 113). For Gideon and Robert the completion of their testament/confession becomes their only remaining purpose in life. Gideon finishes his last pages, which “contain nothing but the true history of [his] life” (T 357), hoping that “the truth will make its way to the surface of this troubled world and be recognised for what it is by those who have eyes to see” (T 357). Before he leaves “this detested world” (C 197), Robert is equally anxious that his written account remains in its original form: “I will now seal up my little book, and conceal it; and cursed be he who trieth to alter or amend” (C 198).

As a result, both narrators show many signs of unreliability and correspond to Gaby Allrath’s definition of a mad monologist. It is, however, problematic to entirely dismiss their accounts as ‘madness’. Dagmar Sims (119) argues that there

is no doubt that Robert falls victim to his religious delusion and shows signs of a split personality. However, Campbell is more careful in this context, arguing that “Robert, like Gil-Martin, indeed like the Editor, is true up to a point” (185). According to him, the admission of several versions of the plot and the recognition that all the characters have their say is “the key to the novel” (185). Analogous to this idea one can say that although Gideon incorporates many features of an unreliable narrator he cannot be labelled as entirely ‘mad’. The question of madness will also play an important role in the discussion of the two novels’ Gothic qualities. In the next chapter, however, I will first look at the depiction of history and religion. Having pointed out that neither the editor/publisher nor the first-person narrators Robert and Gideon are fully reliable, I will analyse what kind of approach to history and religion this entails.

As far as narrative strategies in general are concerned, there is a very close connection between the two novels and Bakhtin’s and Kristeva’s theoretical framework: the ‘official’ point of view that Gideon and Robert are ‘mad’ – which is especially promoted by the ‘rational’ accounts of the publisher/editor – is undermined. The two mad monologists have their own say in the case, even if their accounts turn out to be unreliable. In addition, it is the minor characters like Elsie Moffat in the *Testament* and the Scot-speaking John Barnet in the *Confessions* who give revealing information about the plot. In Bakhtin’s terms one could argue that both novels promote ‘centrifugal forces’, celebrating a variety of dialects, meanings and views (cf. chapter 2.1). Finally, the analysis of narrative strategies has shown that the two protagonists Gideon and Robert have significant similarities which can be regarded as major intertextual references between the *Testament* and its hypotext.

### 3.3 Deconstructing Master Narratives: The Depiction of History and Religion

The analysis of narrative strategies in the framing narratives and the inner narratives of the *Confessions* and the *Testament* has shown that neither the editor/publisher nor the two first-person narrators are fully reliable. Therefore, the following part of my analysis will focus on the question what the lack of omniscience on the editors’ side and the first-person narrators’ unreliability means for the depiction of history and religion in the two novels. As far as intertextual theory is concerned, I aim to show that there is a very close thematic relationship between the *Testament* and its hypotext. Tracing the connection between the texts and the poststructuralist approach to intertextuality, I will also point out that both novels challenge the belief in religion and historiography as authoritative purveyors of universal truths and thus correspond to Bakhtin’s and Kristeva’s insistence on the dialogic nature of language.

The novels' approach to history is also highly relevant for the discussion of the novels' Gothic qualities. As Duncan points out, one of the defining features of the particular Scottish Gothic tradition is its preoccupation with national history:

The thematic core of Scottish Gothic consists of an association between the *national* and the *uncanny or supernatural*. To put it schematically: Scottish Gothic represents (with greater historical and anthropological specificity than in England) the uncanny recursion of an ancestral identity alienated from modern life. (70)

The *Confessions* figures very prominently in this tradition as “the novel’s Gothic qualities express the structural conditions of Scottish cultural history” (Fielding 133). Furthermore, it can be regarded as one of the “most original versions of Scottish Gothic” (Duncan 77). Garside emphasizes that the *Confessions* is “undeniably an intensely Scottish work, touching on some of the most pivotal events in national history” (200), especially the Revolution Settlement of 1689/90 and the Union between the Scottish and English parliaments in 1707. According to Wright, the Union of Parliaments marked one of “the most significant crises that the eighteenth century brought to Scotland” (73). This historical turning point, including its antecedents and aftermaths, propelled “tales of haunted doubles, disowned sons and ineffectual heroes” as “fictional representations of Scotland’s past” (Wright 73).

Before focusing on these particular Gothic qualities by analysing the role of Gil-Martin in the *Confessions* and the function of the stone and the Devil in the *Testament*, I will first look at how historical events like the Union of Parliaments are reflected in the *Confessions* and how the problematic relationship between Scotland and England is taken up in the *Testament*. In this context it is equally important to consider the religious context of the *Confessions* as its comment on the depiction of Covenanter history is explicitly taken up in the *Testament*.

As indicated above, the *Confessions* covers two “crucial moments in Scottish history” (Garside 200): the Revolution Settlement of 1689/90 and the Union of Parliaments in 1707. Both events had a significant impact on the Scottish nation. With the ascension to the throne of William of Orange after the flight of James II and VII to France in 1688 the centuries-old Stuart dynasty was replaced (Garside 200). King William accepted first the crown of England in 1688 as William the III and then, in 1689, the crown of Scotland, which had dramatic consequences for Scotland: “In Scotland this meant in political terms the triumph of the Whigs over the Royalist party, and in religious terms that of Presbyterianism over Episcopacy” (Garside 200). As far as Scotland’s cultural identity is concerned, the Union of Parliaments in 1707 can be seen as a watershed event:

the 1707 Union of the Parliaments, against the background of which the story [of the *Confessions*] is set, and to a degree the whole preceding century since the Union of the Crowns in 1603, may be said to mark the transition

of Scotland into a situation of split identity where Scottish nationality was no longer exclusively Scottish, nor of course English, and where the word British conveyed less a sense of common identity between these two nationalities than a sense of paradox or unfair English domination. (Velasco 48)

While nationalists regarded the Union as a betrayal of Scottish identity, unionists saw it as “emancipation from backwardness and superstition and the dawn of progress and Enlightenment” (Velasco 48).

In various ways these divisions within Scottish Society are reflected in the *Confessions*. Garside highlights that the birth of George and Robert lie on “either side of the Revolution divide” (200). George, the son of George Colwan senior, is born in 1688, just after the end of the Stuart rule. Robert, probably the son of Reverend Wringhim, is born in 1689 or 1690, when Presbyterianism is dominant (Garside 200). According to Garside, this division of the Colwan household “reflects a profound dualism in Scottish political and religious life” (200). Duncan supports this idea by saying that “the fatal antagonism between the brothers, or stepbrothers [...] mirrors the religious and political divisions of Scottish society” (Duncan 78).

In the *Testament* Scotland’s relationship to England plays a crucial role as well. When Gideon describes the beginning of his student years, this topic is mentioned for the first time: “Scotland was a land of unwashed jeans, rotten bear, heavy industry creaking at the joints and endless arguments about something called devolution, and the United Kingdom as a whole was stumbling towards the tender arms of Margaret Thatcher” (T 104). The question whether Scotland should become independent from England or not dominates the political discussion of Gideon’s student years. Political divisions within society are especially reflected by Gideon’s group of friends, including Jenny, Elsie and John. John is described as “the most nationalistic” (122) among them, regarding the Scottish Assembly as a step towards complete Scottish independence. Although Jenny, Elsie and Gideon are more moderate they still vote – or pretend to vote in Gideon’s case – in favour of the Assembly: “We all felt [...] that the country needed to be better governed, [...] that an inadequate Assembly could be built on and strengthened” (122). However, the result of the referendum is a “resounding *maybe*” (122), leaving the Scottish nation in a state of insecurity about its future. This vague political identity of the Scottish nation as a whole which is expressed by the “resounding *maybe*” is reflected by the characters, in particular by Gideon and John. As pointed out above, Gideon experiences a “moment of humiliating self-denial in the polling booth” (123), not being able to make a choice when he is to vote for or against a devolved Scottish Assembly. John’s rigorous nationalism of his student years dwindles to a bitter mixture of disappointment and indifference as he gets older:

The open-minded nationalism he had espoused in the 1970s seemed to me to have shrivelled into something less wholesome. After years of political frustration Scotland had at least got a Parliament, but when John mentioned it now it was to sneer at its cost and the uselessness of its members. (165)

Gideon even sees a “sense of failure” (165) in John’s attitude. This bitterness is expressed even more drastically at the Wishaw’s dinner party, when John complains: “Nobody feels, nobody cares any more. There are no causes left. Even Scotland doesn’t feel like a cause anybody’s going to get angry about” (219). However, at a later stage in the novel John’s bitterness and Gideon’s indecisiveness are replaced by a certain determination, which – at least on the level of the novel – also represents a transition within Scottish society from a sense of insecurity towards an almost unanimous confident call for a certain degree of political independence from England: „[My mother] came to me in September, not long after Princess Diana was killed and the Scots voted, decisively and overwhelmingly (I among them), for a Parliament in Edinburgh” (233). As a result, Scotland’s role as a nation and its resistance against English domination plays a crucial role in the *Testament* as well.

Apart from this, there is another very important parallel between the two novels. As indicated above, not only political but also religious divisions dominated nineteenth-century Scotland (Duncan 78). In both novels the depiction of religious history plays an important role, as religious divisions are especially reflected by the description of the Covenanters.

For a long time, critics have argued that the *Confessions* is a critique on Calvinism in general. For instance, Dagmar Sims writes about the role of religion in the *Confessions*: “Hogg kritisiert in seinem satirischen Roman mittels Robert Wringhims hysterisch übersteigter Religiosität die lebensfeindlich-starre Haltung der Calvinisten” (121). More recent criticism argues, however, that this interpretation of the novel is too short-sighted to fully understand the complex topic of religion in the novel, as Gribben points out: „[L]iterary critics have generally failed to realise that Hogg’s novel satires a system of theology that was totally unrepresentative of the orthodox Calvinism of any of the Scottish Presbyterian churches” (13). Campbell goes in a similar direction when he emphasizes that Hogg’s novel “satires not religion, not Calvinism, but excess” (190). This kind of excess, which is especially represented by the Wringhims’ religious extremism, can be labelled as “antinomianism”, a religious doctrine which means “opposition to the law” and comprises “the belief that religious salvation comes from divine grace rather than from adherence to the moral law” (Fielding 138). Redekop also points out that “Gil-Martin traps Wringhim in antinomianism, a heresy which assumes a world rigidly plotted by the law of God into sheep and goats” (160). While the novel criticises excess of religion on the one hand, it also criticises a misrepresentation of religious history on the other. As already outlined in chapter 3.1, the editor’s

sympathies are clearly distributed in favour of the Colwan family. Gribben points out that the editor “represents Wringhim’s theology as the doctrine of seventeenth-century Covenanters” (12). However, as the editor turns out to be untrustworthy, his negative depiction of the Covenanters is challenged as well. In this context Mack argues that the *Confessions* can be seen as a critique on Walter Scott’s depiction of history and religion, which is especially evident in Scott’s novel *Old Mortality* (1816): “[It] represents extreme Covenanters as dangerous and deranged fanatics, prototypes of the revolutionaries who had driven the excesses of the Terror in France during the 1790s” (2012: 68). Mack 2012 states that in a time of political and social divisions “Scott used *Old Mortality* to advance the Tory cause by depicting the era of the Covenanters in a way that would serve as a warning against the subversive radicals who were working for revolutionary change in Britain in the 1810s” (2012: 68).

It is important to look at the actual historical context of the Covenanters in order to understand what exactly Hogg criticises in Scott’s representation of Covenanter history. The Covenanters were a seventeenth century militant Presbyterian movement which had originated in the south-west of Scotland (Mack 2012: 68). Its members were strictly against episcopacy and State control of the Church and thus found the results of the Restoration Settlement unacceptable, which was passed after the return of Charles II (1630-85) to the thrones of England and Scotland (Donnachie 272). Among other things, this Settlement included a revival and reinforcement of the episcopal system and the reintroduction of patronage (Doannchie 70). From now on ministers had to obtain presentation from a patron as well as episcopal collation (Donnachie 70). 262 ministers who refused to follow this rule were ‘outed’ and replaced by conformist ministers (Donnachie 70). Nevertheless, many continued to hold service, especially in the southwest of Scotland where they had many supporters (Donnachie 70). In order to stop these secret congregation gatherings troops were sent into these areas, which aggravated the situation and provoked the Pentland Rising (1666), the major armed Covenanter rebellion (Donnachie 71). After ten years of further government measures against the Covenanters the conflict culminated with the murder of Archbishop Sharp (1618-79) in May 1679 (Donnachie 71). He had been an enthusiastic supporter of repressive government measures and therefore his murder “was a signal for a full-scale Covenanter rebellion” (Donnachie 71). It was an armed rebellion against what the Covenanters regarded as arbitrary abuse of royal power by the Stuart monarchs (Mack 2012: 68). The rebellion culminated in the battle at Bothwell Bridge in which the Covenanters were easily defeated (Donnachie 70). This final defeat had disastrous consequences for the remaining Covenanters:

In the course of the 1680s – dubbed the ‘killing time’ by Wodrow – about a hundred Covenanters were executed and perhaps eighty more were cut down by troops in the field. It was an unprecedented volume of repression in a country which had until then largely escaped large-scale show trials and

martyrdoms. [...] it also showed a fatal misreading of the strength of religious extremism. (Lynch 295)

This “fatal misreading” of religious extremism is what Hogg criticises in his novel. By undermining the editor’s authority and his “monopoly of wisdom” (Gribben 17), the one-sided dismissal of Covenanters as dangerous religious fanatics is questioned.

Mack (2012: 93) identifies Scott’s *Old Mortality* as major addressee of Hogg’s critique. The very same novel is alluded to in the *Testament* and there are many other references to Walter Scott, too. The most important one is Gideon’s father’s comment on Scott’s impact on the shaping of the political and historical thought of his time:

‘[Scott] gave a wrong view of history’, my father said. ‘A learned and godly man called Thomas McCrie exposed him when he defamed the Covenanters in *Old Mortality* [...] The Victorians then were like the Americans now. They thought the story of the world was theirs, and that it had been written by authors like Scott. It is the great danger of romance: too many people succumb to it, and forget the one true author. But, as I say, Scott is harmless now.’ (93)

He even says that Scott’s view of history was harmful when he actually wrote his works: “The damage was all done when he first wrote them” (93).

Apart from this, there are important similarities between the Wringhims and some of the characters in the *Testament*. Especially Gideon’s father and Peter Macmurry embody the same kind of rigorous, dogmatic form of religion that the Wringhims represent. Gideon describes how during Sunday service his father talks “about God’s infinite wisdom, how he knew what was best for us all” (44). His understanding of religion does not allow any questioning or freedom of thought and it also includes a fear of authorities. Besides, he cannot accept any deviation from this devout behaviour, which is conveyed when during a service a boy in his congregation challenges the minister’s authority: “All my father’s concentration now focused on that boy. ‘Really?’ he said. ‘Not – even – the tiniest – bit – afraid?’ The words came out like pebbles. There was a long silence: a contest of wills between the minister and the errant boy” (45). In this situation the boy is “errant” from the minister’s point of view because he does not conform to his will. There is a similar situation when Gideon brings Jenny home to meet his parents. His father cannot accept that Jenny does not believe in God: “My father gave [Jenny] one of his long, unblinking stares. ‘There is no hope,’ he said, ‘without Christ.’ [...] ‘There is nothing more terrible than to lose your faith’” (118-9).

Peter Macmurry is as intolerant as Gideon’s father, being almost a mirror image of him. When Gideon promotes his idea to run a marathon for charity, Macmurry dismisses this idea as unchristian: “Macmurry thought I was undoing the work of 450 years, by opening up that old debate between justification by faith

and justification by good works. ‘Without faith,’ he once said, [...] ‘without faith, we are nothing’” (140). From now on he realises that Macmurry sees through him and that he is his “enemy” (141). Macmurry’s conception of religion resembles the Wringhim’s strict distinction between ‘sinners’ and ‘elect’. For instance, he and his friends from the Session mind Gideon’s habit of visiting Catherine Cragie, saying “it’s the ungodly communing with the godless” (222). Macmurry is even more enraged when he hears about Gideon’s plans to conduct her funeral service: “And I hear that the service you intend to conduct is an improper one. God knows what you have in mind. [...] She was a proud, wicked woman and a fallen one at that” (324). Like Reverend Wringhim, Macmurry distinguishes between the saved and the damned: “By day he is an accountant and by night, Jenny used to say, he adds the saved and subtracts the damned, and always comes out with a minus figure” (321). Harry’s final interview with Macmurry reveals that he thinks in the same “mythic archetypes” (46) which Velasco attributes to the Wringhims. Macmurry tells Harry Caithness that Gideon’s behaviour revealed “the depths of his dabbling in the black arts.’ [...] ‘Sin will out, Mr Caithness, and it did so spectacularly in his case’” (372). With respect to the *Confessions* Velasco points out that “the three fanatics, the Sinner, his mother and her pastor use mythic archetypes and biblical images as “frameworks within which to interpret their existence” (46). According to him, this extreme form of religion, which is also embodied by Gideon’s father and Peter Macmurray, has the potential “to be used to legitimise the suppression of difference in the name of the higher truth” (46). Like the hypotext, the *Testament* criticises this kind of excess.

However, there is also another kind of religion which is depicted in the *Testament*, especially conveyed by the character of Lorna Sprott. Gideon describes her as “brimful of faith” and “the only minister [...] who was also a friend” (166), always having a “sympathetic ear for him” (167). Besides, there is one very important passage which conveys her approach to religion:

‘Prayer’s a wonderful thing Gideon, isn’t it? But you have to be careful with it. You have to really listen to what God’s telling you, not what you want him to tell you.’ [...] There was something very comforting in such an innocent approach to religion. (167)

Therefore, there is a difference between the extreme form of religion, represented by Gideon’s father and Peter Macmurry, and a moderate form of belief, represented by the kind-hearted, reliable, forgiving Lorna Sprott. Velasco sees the same phenomenon in the *Confessions*, as he differentiates between Robert’s “excess of religious enthusiasm” and “the sane religious belief of the moderate Blanchard or the common sense religion of John Barnet” (47). Not only does Mr Blanchard see the danger of Robert’s extremism, he also preaches a very moderate approach to religion, which is conveyed when he warns Robert of Gil-Martin’s influence: “but you do not seem to perceive, that both you and he are carrying these points

to a dangerous extremity. Religion is a sublime and glorious thing, the bond of society on earth, and the connector of humanity with the Divine nature” (C 109).

As a result, both novels challenge two extremes: the unquestioned belief in religious doctrines and extremism and the belief in historic master-narratives. Velasco argues that the political and religious divisions that are reflected in the *Confessions* refer to a more fundamental struggle within Scottish society during the time of the Scottish Enlightenment: a struggle between “a modernising, anglicised, cosmopolitan, rationalist, post-Enlightenment world view” and a “pre-Enlightenment *Weltanschauung*”, which is “autonomous, indigenous, religiously fragmented, and rooted in a popular oral culture” (38-39). The post-Enlightenment world view was closely connected with a linear and positivistic notion of history, which Mack calls “the Whig master-narrative of the time” (2012: 64):

This master narrative was deeply influenced by Adam Smith’s famous theory that there are four stages in the development of human society: nomadic hunting, shepherding, agriculture and commerce. [...] The four-stage scheme encouraged the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment and their understand history in terms of the progress of society from one stage of development to another, more advanced stage. (64)

This master-narrative implies that as soon as one stage has been overcome it will not reappear; it is literally erased from cultural discourse. In the *Testament* a similar phenomenon is addressed, for example when Gideon looks if the stone is marked on a map: “I got off my knees and folded the map, thinking as I did so how total is our trust in maps. [...] They are not real terrain, only representations of it. But our inclination is nearly always to believe the map” (T 200). This quotation refers to a very similar master narrative: once we have produced a map of an area, this area is in our possession. Although according to the map the stone should not be there, Gideon is haunted by it. Likewise, the *Confessions* shows “with exceptional vividness how a Gothic premodernity bubbles up through the Edinburgh New Town pavements that invented it in the first place” (Fielding 134). As a result, both novels correspond to what Wright outlines as defining feature of the Scottish Gothic genre: “Scottish Gothic embarks upon the excavation of a nuanced, multi-layered version of Scotland’s history” (Wright 80). This also reminds of Kristeva’s attack on the notion that there is unity in meaning when it comes to a representation of reality. While the allegedly ‘unquestionable’ “Whig master-narrative of the time” (Mack 2012: 64) is undermined in the *Confessions*, the *Testament* takes up Hogg’s critique on the ‘monologic’ representation of Covenanter history. This very close intertextual connection between the two novels is reinforced by many generic similarities which will be outlined in the following. The theme of being haunted by some uncanny force is a predominant theme in both novels. There-

fore, the next chapter will focus on the function of Gil-Martin in the *Confessions* and on the role of the stone and the Devil in the *Testament*.

### 3.4 Gothic Elements and the Role of the Devil Figures

Before focusing on the Gothic elements in the *Testament* and the *Confessions* it is necessary to briefly establish a framework of Gothic terms which capture the main Gothic themes in the novels. Jerrold Hogle defines some “general parameters” (2) which characterise the Gothic genre. First of all, he says that “a Gothic tale usually takes place (at least some of the time) in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space”, including castles, foreign places, graveyards, primeval frontiers or islands (Hogle, 2). This is a very classic list of Gothic settings, referring to the first generation of Gothic stories but it already indicates that in the first phase of Gothic writing the “paradigm of the horror-plot is the journey from the capital to the provinces” (qtd. in Mighall: 54).<sup>20</sup> During the period of Romanticism “sublime landscapes” became the predominant setting of Gothic stories (Botting 38). The gloom and darkness of these landscapes, including mountains as “the foremost objects of the natural sublime”, represented “external markers of inner mental and emotional states” (Botting 38). In the same period Scotland came to represent a typical Gothic setting, which was also confirmed by Scottish writers of Gothic fiction like Walter Scott and James Hogg: “Scott and Hogg’s apparent confirmation of their nation’s inhospitality may well cement the reader’s equation of Scotland with a Gothic, hostile territory.” (Wright, 75) As a result, in more general terms a typical Gothic setting can be defined as an inhospitable, hostile, uncanny space.<sup>21</sup>

In this space, as Hogle goes on to explain, characters of Gothic stories are typically haunted by ghosts, specters or monsters that “manifest unresolved crimes or conflicts that can no longer be successfully buried from view” (2). One could ask why ghosts have such a prominent position in this context. In their introduction to *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (1999) Peter Buse and Andrew Stott go into this matter. According to them, “the answer lies in their relationship to reason and rationality [...] With the advent of the Enlightenment, a line was drawn between Reason and its more shadowy others – magic and witchcraft, irrationality, superstition, the occult” (3). The Gothic genre undermines this boundary between the rational side on the one hand and the supernatural on the other:

<sup>20</sup> Robert Mighall mentions this ‘paradigm’ with reference to the first generation of Gothic stories. In his article on *Gothic Cities* (2007) he explores how the division between the civilised urban world and the wild and superstitious countryside was overturned during the Victorian period and how cities like London became representations of a Gothic setting.

<sup>21</sup> This is of course a generalisation of Gothic settings and the Gothic genre in general. David Punter highlights the problem that only at first glance Gothic fiction seems to be a “homogeneous body of writing” (7). Nevertheless, for the purpose of this chapter it is helpful to stick to these ‘classic’ elements.

As much is already implied by Freud in “The Uncanny” where he points out that the meanings of heimlich (the homely, the familiar) and unheimlich (the uncanny, the strange, the hidden) tend to dovetail. The familiar and secure is always haunted by the strange and unfamiliar, while the unfamiliar often has a troubling familiarity about it. (Buse/Stott 9)

Therefore, the Gothic oscillates between two poles, “between the earthly laws of conventional reality and the possibilities of the supernatural” (Hogle 2). Just as the homely is always haunted by the uncanny in Freud’s concept, the concept of an ordered, rational sphere inherently implies an unstructured, supernatural ‘other’ against which it sets itself apart. According to Hogle, “this oscillation can range across a continuum between [...] the ‘terror Gothic’ on the one hand and the ‘horror Gothic’ on the other” (Hogle 3):

The first of these holds characters and readers mostly in anxious suspense about threats to life, safety, and sanity kept largely out of sight or in shadows or suggestions from a hidden past, while the latter confronts the principal characters with the gross violence of physical or psychological dissolution, explicitly shattering the assumed norms (including the repression) of everyday life with wildly shocking, and even revolting, consequences. (Hogle 3)

Overall, one can synthesize three main aspects that I will focus on in my discussion of Gothic elements in the *Testament* and the *Confessions*: I will ask in how far the setting contributes to an uncanny atmosphere, how the main Gothic theme of being haunted is played out, and which effect supernatural events (terror or horror) have on the novels’ protagonists.

As far as these Gothic elements are concerned, it is vital to look at the devil-figures in both novels. In the *Confessions* Robert is haunted by Gil-Martin, whose identity is left uncertain right up to the end of the novel. In the *Testament* Gideon first comes across a mysterious stone and then meets the Devil who has very striking similarities to Gil-Martin. Therefore, it is very useful to outline which elements from the hypotext are taken up in the *Testament*.

Robert meets Gil-Martin for the first time after he is told by his reverend father Wringhim that he has been accepted among the small group of ‘elect’. Believing that he is now “a justified person” (C 96), he goes out “into the fields and the woods” (96) in order to pray. In this lonely surrounding he sees “a young man of a mysterious appearance coming towards [him]” (96). It is very important to note that right from the start Robert feels drawn towards Gil-Martin: “I felt a sort of invisible power that drew me towards him, something like the force of enchantment, which I could not resist” (96). Very soon, Robert becomes preoccupied with him, regarding him as his “guide and director” who will help him to “learn the right” (105). He even shows signs of inner restlessness when Gil-Martin is not around: “There was something so flattering in all this, that I could not resist it.

Still, when he took leave of me, I felt it as a great relief; and yet, before the morrow, I wearied and was impatient to see him again" (105).

Robert's first encounter with Gil-Martin and his instant inclination towards him is very similar to the scene in which Gideon sees the Stone for the first time, while he is running through Keldo Woods: "And there it is. To the right of the path, in the middle of this space, a stone, looming in the mist like a great tooth in a mouth full of smoke. It brings me to a sudden and astonishing halt" (I 29). Like Robert, who sees Gil-Martin while walking lonely through the fields, Gideon finds the "looming" stone in a typical Gothic setting. He goes there "in early January", during the "cold heart of the winter", and finds the stone "deep in the woods, where few people venture" (29). Right from the start, Gideon becomes obsessed with the Stone, regarding it as his discovery: "The stone acquired a capital S in my mind. The stone became the Stone" (34). He also shows signs of inner restlessness, caused by his new discovery: "I went to bed early, but I did not relax. [...] that Sunday night I was restless, waking every hour or so to find the Stone massively present in my mind" (164).

Apart from this, he very soon becomes protective of the stone, not willing to share his secret with anyone else, which is especially indicated by his frequent use of possessive pronouns, for example when he talks about "my Stone" (202) and "my mystery" (231). This protective attitude can also be found in Robert's relationship to Gil-Martin:

I rejoiced in him, was proud of him, and soon could not live without him; yet, though resolved every day to disclose the whole history of my connection with him, I had it not in my power: something always prevented me, till at length I thought no more of it, but resolved to enjoy his fascinating company in private, and by all means to keep my own with him. (C 105-6)

Robert does not only keep his company with Gil-Martin for himself but also more and more retreats from his surroundings. He describes how he absents himself from home "day after day" (106) and even religious discourse with his reverend father Wringhim, whose doctrines Robert describes as "high conceptions and glorious discernment between good and evil" (82) at the beginning of his memoirs, now becomes "exceedingly tiresome to [his] ear" (107). Instead, he is increasingly dominated by Gil-Martin's influence: "All my dreams corresponded exactly with his suggestions; and when he was absent from me, still his arguments sunk deeper in my heart than even when he was present" (112).

In the *Testament*, the devil-figure, which resembles the Gil-Martin of the *Confessions* to a great extent, first appears after Gideon's accident at the Black Jaws. Gideon describes him as "absurdly well dressed for his surroundings" (I 271), as empathetic and very polite (273) and he says that the Devil is "constantly on the move" (274). Gil-Martin also has a "gentlemanly personage" (C 184), is dressed in elegant cloths which mark him as a foreigner and due to his eloquence he has a

very powerful rhetoric appeal. In addition, Robert observes that he is constantly on the move as well: “he made a rule of never lodging in any particular house, but took these daily, or hourly, as he found it convenient” (119). Apart from this, the Devil exerts an equally strong influence on Gideon as Gil-Martin on Robert. After the accident the Devil is omnipresent for Gideon, hovering over him like a shadow:

My friend was certainly present in the town during this period, but for how long at any one time I do not know. I assume that he came and went in that nervous, restless way of his, but what he was doing remains a mystery to me, for he never approached me, nor did he allow me to get close to him. I saw him almost every time I was out. He was always at a distance. (T 348)

Gideon sees him “entering Boots”, outside a newspaper shop, in a window of a bus and in the kirkyard (348-9). It is also very significant that he calls him “my friend” now, as this address reminds of Robert’s name for Gil-Martin, whom he calls “my illustrious friend” (C 131).

However, Robert’s attitude towards his friend changes in the course of his memoirs. While he first calls him “my illustrious friend and great adviser” (131), he later speaks of a “dreaded and devoted friend” (192), until he finally sees him as a “great tormentor” (171). This changed perception is indicated at one important turning point in the memoirs, when Robert’s initial enthusiasm about his powerful friend and his mission of “cutting the sinners off” (102) from the world turns into fear and despair: “The worst thing of all was, what hitherto I had never felt, and, as yet, durst not confess to myself, that the presence of my illustrious and devoted friend was becoming irksome to me” (151). Although he is repeatedly confronted with severe doubts about his infallible state as a “justified sinner” in the first part of the memoirs, he always gives in to Gil-Martin’s seductive power and commits the murders against Mr Blanchard and his brother George. Being confronted with new accusations against him, such as seducing a young lady and thereby ruining her family, he now shows actual signs of physical distress: “I was many times, in contemplating it, excited to terrors and mental torments hardly describable. [...] I was under the greatest anxiety, dreading some change would take place momentarily in my nature” (151).

Gideon does not have to face the consequences of any murders he has committed but there is a similar change in his behaviour, as far as his perception of the stone is concerned. At first he is proud of his discovery and wants to keep it for himself. Then his preoccupation with the stone becomes like a burden for Gideon: “I willed myself not to run in Keldo Woods, as if by not going there I could *manage* the Stone, keep whatever it signified at bay, possibly even make it disappear” (T 201). However, he is not able to free himself from it. Instead, he decides to go the stone again in order to take a picture of it. The nearer he gets to the stone the faster he walks, as his “impatience and excitement” makes him behave

“irrationally” (203). When he arrives at the stone he puts his palm against it and thinks that it looks “like an old friend waiting for [him]” (203). At the same time, the stone comes to represent Gideon’s deteriorating mental state which is indicated by clear signs of physical distress:

A crisis was upon me. I was sweating, seething with energy. If I didn’t do something the energy would burst out of me and leave me wrecked on the floor. My left arm was twitching as if in contact with an electric fence. I wanted to go to the Stone, yet at the same time was afraid to go. It seemed to me that the Stone had provoked this crisis, had engineered it in some way. I paced round the manse, in and out of every room, up and down the stairs. (247)

The same ambivalence between fascination and excitement on the one hand and an increasing desire to free oneself from an unbearable burden on the other can also be observed in Robert’s relationship to Gil-Martin. His initial enthusiasm for his “great companion and counsellor” (C 155) vanishes and turns into fear and despair, especially when he realises that he cannot free himself from Gil-Martin any more: “Sooner shall you make the mother abandon the child of her bosom; [...] Our beings are amalgamated, as it were, and consociated in one, and never shall I depart from this country until I can carry you in triumph with me” (156-7). Gil-Martin’s words indicate that Robert’s flight is hopeless and foreshadow his final suicide. Robert’s choice of words in this part of the memoirs reveals that his uneasiness about Gil-Martin now turns into a feeling of terror. He compares Gil-Martin’s speech to an “announcement of death to one who had of late deemed himself free” and describes how his “nature [shrinks] from the concessions” (159). Now Robert’s flight begins: “I resolved to shake him off, cost what it would, even though I should be reduced to beg my bread in a foreign land” (169). The oppressiveness of his situation is underlined by the use of several comparisons and images. For example, Robert compares Gil-Martin’s “ascendancy over [him]” to that of “a huntsman over his dogs” (169) and he stresses to be “willing to encounter any earthly distress” to free himself from “the chains of [his] great tormentor” (173). In order to escape from his “tormentor” Robert is willing to “travel to the farthest corners of the world” (181). Robert’s escape, therefore, corresponds to the “paradigm of the horror-plot” which has been outlined above because Robert leaves his familiar surroundings in order to retreat to the countryside and, while travelling, he only takes “the bye and unfrequented paths” (181). During Robert’s escape the terror of being haunted is played out very dramatically and his deteriorating physical and mental state is reflected by many uncanny events. No matter where he lodges, Robert is haunted in his sleep. At the county weaver’s house he is restless during the night: “I fell asleep, and a more troubled and tormenting sleep never enchained a mortal frame” (177). The word “enchained” takes up the image of the “chains of [his] great tormentor” (173), indicating that an escape from Gil-Martin

is impossible. When he lodges in the “village of Ancrum” he is “seized with terrors” during the night and wakes up “bathed in cold perspiration” (191).

Gideon does not have to fear a tormentor but he is also haunted by something which drives him into utter despair. The more isolated Gideon gets, the more intense a certain sense of entrapment becomes. Robert, after he is thrown out of the weaver’s house, describes himself as “an outcast and a vagabond in society” (C 180). Likewise, Gideon alienates himself from his friends and acquaintances because of his insistence on having seen the Devil and the stone. When Gideon tells Elsie about his unsuccessful attempt to take a picture of the stone, Elsie is afraid of him: “Why are you looking like that, Gideon? [...] You look strange” (T 246).<sup>22</sup> After having recorded Gideon’s story about his encounter with the Devil, Bill Winnyford looks “horribly uncomfortable” (300).<sup>23</sup> Gideon’s outcast state reaches its culmination when he gives his speech on Catherine Cragie’s funeral in which he tells his congregation about his encounter with the Devil. After this event he lives in total isolation: “I made for the manse, my place of refuge, my shelter from the storm, and I got in and I was alone” (343). In this state of inner despair he decides to go to the stone again, where he can no longer repress his feelings:

I clung to the Stone and suddenly all my unspoken pain and anger and misery came pouring out of me. I went down on my knees. I didn’t care about the soaking ground. I howled and howled and howled. I beat my fists against the Stone until they were raw. There was no sympathy out there in the woods, no give, no mercy, no redemption. That was all I wanted, but there was none. Everything I had ever done had failed, had been a total waste. I’d had enough. (353)<sup>24</sup>

The only person he still wants to see is the Devil: “There is someone out there with the foxes and birds, and I am waiting for him. I am anxious to see him but I know he will not come till I have finished writing this” (37). At last, Gideon welcomes the Devil in his own house. In this passage there are many allusions to the *Confessions* which underline the many similarities between the two devil-figures. For instance, the Devil reveals that he is actually called “Gil Martin” (355).<sup>25</sup> Like

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Robert’s mother’s reaction after his first encounter with Gil-Martin: “‘Ah, Robert, you are ill!’ cried she; ‘you are very ill, my dear boy; you are quite changed; your very voice and manner are changed’” (C 99).

<sup>23</sup> This is another interesting parallel: Robert and Gideon need another ‘medium’ to secure their stories. In Gideon’s case it is Bill Winnyford’s tape recorder, in Robert’s case it is the printing office.

<sup>24</sup> This passage is almost identical to Robert’s emotional outbreak after having been thrown out of the yeoman’s house: “Again was I on my way southward, as lonely, hopeless, and degraded a being as was to be found on life’s weary round. As I limped out the way, I wept, thinking of what I might have been, and what I really had become.” (C 187)

<sup>25</sup> The publisher even explains in his explanatory footnote “that this is the very name given by James Hogg to the mysterious, devil-like figure that haunts the anti-hero of his novel [the *Confessions*]” (355).

Gil-Martin in the *Confessions*, who stresses that his and Robert's beings are "amalgamated" (C 156), the Devil has become inseparably connected to Gideon: "I am with you in spirit, if not in person. I'll always be with you, Gideon" (T 356). However, Gideon is not terrified by the presence of the Devil, but feels rather comfortable when he is around. The perspective to meet the Devil on Ben Alder after having finished his testament is Gideon's only remaining relief, which is indicated by the reappearing fire imagery: "The fire burns in me still, fiercer and brighter. *Nec tamen consumebatur*. Tomorrow I leave Monimaskit, never to return" (357).<sup>26</sup>

Gideon's retreat to Ben Alder follows the same "from the capital to the provinces" pattern as Robert's escape from Gil-Martin. He arrives at Mrs MacLean's B&B cottage when the weather is "wet and misty" (T 7). There he finishes his testament which he leaves in his room for posterity. From Harry's report the reader also learns that Ben Alder is a "remote spot" where a "young Frenchman" had chosen to end his life (11). The uncanny atmosphere of the place is reinforced by the witnesses' reports which the publisher includes in his prologue. For example, Dr Tanner's journal entry reports how Gideon mysteriously disappears: "No sign, not a trace. Begin to wonder if I should do these walks alone any more. Very peculiar" (17). Robert commits suicide in an almost identical surrounding. After having almost finished his memoirs in a "humble cot" of a poor widower (C 194), he leaves for "the open moor", heading to the north-west, "because in that quarter [he] perceive[s] the highest and wildest hills" (195). In the end, he sees his suicide as final relief from his terrors: "My devoted, princely, but sanguine friend, has been with me again and again. My time is expired, and I find a relief beyond measure" (196).

As a result, both protagonists are haunted by a devil-figure until they finally commit suicide. The important question is how the function of Gil-Martin on the one hand and the Devil/the stone on the other can be interpreted. As far as the *Confessions* is concerned, many critics have focused on psychoanalytic approaches to the novel and understood the role of Gil-Martin "particularly through the figure of the double" (Fielding 132). Following this approach one would have to treat Gil-Martin as "a delusion of Wringhim's imagination", which indeed has been a "feasible reading" for many critics (Campbell 185). In this view, Gil-Martin represents an unconscious anxiety which haunts Robert until he finally ends up in a state of utter despair. Likewise, one could argue that Gideon is haunted by his repressed desires and feelings which find their expression in the figure of the Devil and the stone. Irvine Welsh suggests that the Devil, "rather than any absent God, is revealed to be the observing presence in [Gideon's] life" ("The Devil in the Gorge") who begins to haunt Gideon during his childhood years, physically manifests himself "by occasional spasms in one solitary twitching arm" (2) and

<sup>26</sup> The Latin motto of the Church of Scotland ("Yet it was not consumed") is another reference to the *Confessions*, as Robert's memoirs are headed by a Latin inscription as well ("Fideli Certa Merces": C 209).

finally appears in person.<sup>27</sup> With respect to the *Confessions* Campbell points out that a psychoanalytic reading of the novel “might involve a more extensive knowledge of the subconscious mind than could be expected of Hogg’s time” and adds that “the book fiercely resists single readings and single interpretations” (185-6). There are several aspects that contradict the assumption that Gil-Martin is only an invention of Robert’s mind. Campbell mentions that there are several characters “who actually see Gil-Martin” (186), such as the men in the printing office and Mr Blanchard. There is another uncanny event which remains unresolved. When Robert lodges at the country weaver’s house his clothes and his poniard are mysteriously removed, “though under double lock and key”, supposedly by the force of Gil-Martin, which strikes the weaver and his wife with extreme “terror” (180).

As far as the role of madness in the *Testament* is concerned, one could definitely argue that Gideon shows some signs of a mental illness. Right before the Devil visits him at the manse, Gideon goes to see the stone on a “grey, miserable afternoon”. There he sees a figure beside the stone and takes it to be the Devil: “It was him, I knew it was him” (353). This uncanny event is clarified in the publisher’s epilogue. Significantly it is not the publisher but Elsie who demystifies this scene, telling Harry Caithness that it was her whom Gideon must have seen that day (384). At the same time, she confirms that she saw a stone that day, indicating that Gideon might have been telling the truth. Apart from this, his description of the Devil is almost identical to the description of the devil-figure in “The Legend of the Black Jaws” (188ff).<sup>28</sup> In this legend, which like the Auchtermuchty story in the *Confessions* is told in Scots, the Devil is described as a “black-avised gentleman, dressed in the finest cla’es” (192) who lives in a cave beneath the Black Jaws and speaks eloquently “wi’ a gentle voice” (192). These are just a few parallels which could indicate that the Devil is Gideon’s own invention. However, this is not a satisfying explanation as many mysteries about Gideon’s disappearance and his encounter with the Devil are not resolved. At the hospital the medical staff cannot explain how he could have survived the accident. Neither can they explain what happened to his leg: “The bone appears to have been subjected to extreme heat. It’s very unusual” (265). It is also unresolved how Gideon comes into possession of the Devil’s shoes (cf. 272). As a result, the true nature of the Devil and the stone is finally not resolved. According to Campbell, it is exactly this “technique

<sup>27</sup> Right at the start of his testament, Gideon talks about this observing presence: “As that wee boy I was taught that, solitary though I might be, I was never alone. Always there was one who walked beside me. I could not see him, but he was there, constant at my side. I wanted to know him, to love and be loved by him, but he did not reveal himself” (T 27).

<sup>28</sup> This is a very important reference to the Auchtermuchty story in the *Confessions*. Both oral tales are embedded in the inner narratives and reveal one possible way of interpreting the devil-figure. In the Auchtermuchty story Robert Ruthven saves his town by making the powerful preacher out to be an impostor, revealing to his fellow villagers that they have been tricked by the Devil (cf. Mack 1999: 16f.).

of imprecision” which also characterises the *Confessions* and the role of Gil-Martin (187).

It is very significant that the journalist Harry Caithness has the final word in the *Testament*. Harry tells the publisher how he went to the Black Jaws, an endeavour which he retrospectively deems “strictly outwith the bounds of his remit” (386). He describes the place in the following way:

There’s this permanent mist of water droplets in the air, like an almost invisible veil or a film between you and the bottom of the chasm. And “film” is the right word because the light plays on it, there are these fragments of rainbow everywhere, and through them you see shapes and images shifting among the projecting trees and in the shadows of the cliffs. If you look for a while you become mesmerised, you start to see a whole world of things. (386-7)<sup>29</sup>

Even Harry Caithness, whom the rational publisher describes as a “first-class reporter”, starts to see “a whole world of things” at the Black Jaws. His puzzling statement invites the reader to read Gideon’s story from an unbiased perspective. As a result, in both novels the Gothic qualities undermine the editor’s and the publisher’s attempt to provide the reader with a satisfying explanation of supernatural events.

This chapter has shown that the *Testament* takes up many important Gothic elements of the *Confessions*. Both protagonists are haunted until they finally commit suicide. In the *Confessions*, the “terror Gothic” is especially revealed by the depiction Robert’s hopeless attempt to escape from his tormenting persecutor Gil-Martin. In the *Testament*, the Devil does not have as frightening an effect on Gideon as Gil-Martin on Robert because Gideon finds his presence rather comforting until the end.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Gideon’s increasingly desperate situation in connection with his discovery of the stone and his more and more outcast state conveys a very similar sense of entrapment and hopelessness as in the *Confessions*. Another important Gothic element in both novels is the occurrence of several uncanny and supernatural events that remain unresolved, which is why the reader is kept in suspense. In addition, there are settings in both novels which can be described as Gothic: Robert and Gideon meet Gil-Martin and the Devil/the stone in an uncanny, lonely surrounding, they both retreat from their familiar surroundings in order to escape their tormenting troubles, and finally head for an inhospitable, hostile space to end their lives.

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<sup>29</sup> This passage can be regarded as a reference to the halo scene in the *Confessions* (34ff.). While climbing on Arthur’s Seat George is suddenly caught in “dense vapour” which makes him see “a bright halo in the cloud of haze” (35).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Hughes who compares the two devil-figures in the *Testament* and the *Confessions* and says that Gideon “encounters the devil without real terror of hell or murderous crime” (144).

Finally, it is important to emphasize that although there are many Gothic elements, both novels resist a strict genre categorization. The critic Magdalene Redekop has labelled the *Confessions* as “a kind of premature post-modernist novel” (162). Campbell similarly argues that Hogg’s novel is a “book which opens itself to multiple readings in a manner more akin to the post-modern than to any single hypothesis or interpretation” (190). The same holds true for the *Testament*: it is only one possibility to interpret the Devil as a double figure, which is one central element of Gothic fiction. In fact, Robertson’s novel calls for several interpretations because, as in the *Confessions*, the many different strands of narratives that have been pointed out above are true up to a point. Therefore, the novel invites for a postmodernist approach: “For the postmodernist, by contrast, fragmentation is an exhilarating, liberating phenomenon, symptomatic of our escape from the claustrophobic embrace of fixed systems of belief. In a word, the modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it” (Barry, 81).

## 4 Conclusion

In my thesis I have shown that there is a very close intertextual relationship between the *Testament* and the *Confessions*. Both novels have a very similar structure, being made up of a framing narrative, an inner narrative and several other fragmenting elements, such as legends, oral tales and interviews. Furthermore, similar narrative strategies are employed. On the one hand, the editor’s/publisher’s authority is deconstructed by revealing that these seemingly omniscient narrators are fallible. On the other hand, both first-person narrators turn out to be unreliable while minor characters give revealing information. As far as the thematic similarities are concerned, both novels discuss the representation of history and religion, following the key feature of Scottish Gothic and its preoccupation with national history. By criticising the one-sided representation of religious history and depicting Scotland’s fractured state with respect to its relationship to England the *Confessions* and the *Testament* challenge two extremes: the unquestioned belief in religious doctrines and the use of master narratives to justify cultural hegemony. In both novels the undermining of this master narrative which understands history in terms of progress from one stage to a further advanced stage which sets itself apart from its allegedly ‘superstitious past’ is achieved by the use of Gothic elements, especially the theme of being haunted. At the same time, I have argued that although both novels follow the Scottish Gothic tradition they call for a postmodernist reading which takes into account the novels’ techniques of vagueness and fragmentation.

Apart from these major intertextual references there are other intertextual markers in the *Testament*, such as direct quotations from the *Confessions*, similar character constellations and the mentioning of the hypotext in a footnote. As a result, one can say in Genette’s terms that the *Testament* (the hypertext) explicitly

and self-consciously refers to the *Confessions* (the hypotext) as a major source of influence. In addition, it is important to note that both novels as singular texts fit Bakhtin's and Kristeva's poststructuralist approach to intertextuality. Both challenge a monologic representation of reality, question allegedly powerful authorities and subvert hierarchical structures in language by giving every character their say and providing a complex mixture of narratives.

Finally, coming back to the fictitious publisher of the Gideon's testament, we have to ask ourselves again: was Gideon Mack telling the truth? The answer is: we cannot tell. The *Testament* confronts the reader with several fragmented narrative strands, unreliable narrators, unresolved supernatural events and the question of madness. This opaqueness, which Irvine Welsh calls a "skilful blend of religion, the supernatural and mental illness" ("The Devil in the Gorge"), is one key feature which Robertson takes up from the *Confessions*. He thereby transfers the powerful conflicts and ideas that are explored in Hogg's novel with respect to early-nineteenth-century Scottish society into present-day Scotland, calling for a multi-layered representation of Scottish history and culture and a dialogic discourse between different forms of belief and approaches to reality 'in this day and age'.

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# The Construction of Cornish Identity

*Benjamin Schlink*

## 1. Introduction

The “strong sense of distinct nationality [which] is still cherished in Cornwall” (White 137) came as quite a surprise to Walter White. In the 1850s, he had just come back from a journey to the south west of England, and took with him a lasting impression of the Cornishmen’s revolting, anti-English character. Signs of this distinct national identity, however, have not become relics of the past but can still be discovered by today’s traveller: The Cornish flag, a white cross on black ground, is almost ubiquitous in some areas and can be found on flag poles, T-shirts, or car-stickers. Traces of a different language are less frequently encountered, but appear to be even more intriguing when found on the County Hall or on tourist signs; and a cuisine which is offensively displayed as Cornish, such as Cornish cream tea with a distinctive Cornish clotted cream, Cornish ice cream, or the world-famous Cornish pasties. All things considered, even today Cornwall leaves the impression not of an English county, but a country in its own right.

This experience of an apparently deeply ingrained Cornish difference sparked my initial interest and brought about the subsequent hypothesis to which the thesis at hand is dedicated: Cornish people perceive themselves as members of a Cornish nation even though Cornwall, in legal terms, is no nation at all. Because the impression is created that Cornwall is a country although it legally is not, the question arises whether or not Cornish people describe themselves as members of a Cornish nation. Thus the first objective brings Cornish identity into focus when identity is in principle defined as “how we describe ourselves to each other” (Barker 7). Here it has to be clarified if Cornish identity is distinct from the English one and, if so, Cornish identity can be perceived as a distinct national identity.

In isolating and analysing the elements which construct Cornish identity, this clarification can be achieved. In this fashion my analysis in chapter 3 will find that Cornish identity is both distinct from the English one and a national one; following Benedict Anderson it therefore can be claimed that Cornwall is imagined as a nation. This leads to the thesis' second objective which is to examine the way in which this Cornish nation is in fact imagined. This examination appears to be even more relevant if juxtaposed to legally acknowledged nations since Cornwall cannot refer to its legal national status but is dependent on other strategies defining it as a nation.

This thesis is partly a theoretical and partly an empirical work. The theoretical framework in which it is embedded draws on Stuart Hall's and Benedict Anderson's extensive works on identity. In more detail Hall's articles "The Question of Cultural Identity", "Who needs Identity", and "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" are the sources for a model explaining personal identity, cultural identity and culture and their mutual relation which provide a basic understanding and terminology. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* generally contributes to this basis in terms of defining the term "nation".

In addition, two different empirical methods will be applied. To tackle objective one, aiming on isolating and analysing the elements of Cornish identity, Mayring's content analysis as a qualitative method will be applied to empirical data. This data was collected by conducting guided interviews. Both methods were chosen mainly because they meet the two requirements which they had to fulfil: they firstly both started from an inductive perspective and were secondly applicable within this paper's time and space restrictions. Elements of Cornish identity were hence induced so as to not to distort results by foreknowledge so that the probable members of an imagined Cornish nation were given the chance to unfold their understanding of Cornish identity. Approaching the second objective, the examination of the way the Cornish nation is imagined, an analysis on the basis of Hall's five representational strategies of how a nation is imagined (cf. "Question of Cultural Identity" 293ff) will be performed.

The material which will be the basis point of reference for analysis is empirical data collected in 2013 during a stay in Truro, Cornwall. The complete material consists of recordings of four interviews two of which were transcribed and used for further analysis, selected mainly due to their prescriptive character. Hence the core theme will be the examination of Cornish identity with a focus on its national characteristics. In this way legal issues, defining the actual status of Cornwall and relationship to England, will be left aside except for superficial highlights in case they provide a better understanding of Cornish identity. Moreover historical facts presented throughout the empirical material will not be critically questioned. Lastly no all-encompassing construct of Cornish identity can be expected; rather two distinct types of it will be sketched through the analysis of empirical data.

To start with I will provide a short survey of Cornish history with a focus on Cornish peculiarities. This short illustration aims at providing a rudimentary historical basis to the reader and has no claim for completeness. It can be stated that Cornish history begins when Celtic immigrants came to England around the sixth century AD (Tschirschky 78). After the Saxons' arrival and in the course of the subsequent centralisation of the isle, more areas came under Saxon control such as Devon in the seventh century (Tschirschky 81). However, Cornwall managed to prevent the Saxons from coming in so that Cornish kings could remain in power (Tschirschky 81). In the early tenth century, King Athelstan defined the river Tamar as the eastern border of Cornwall. Thus it was made a limited territory on which, from then on, English law was enforced (Tschirschky 81f). Cornwall is then mentioned in the Domesday Book though no differentiation is made between Cornwall and England which could mean that Cornwall was seen as part of England. However, there are counter-arguments: “[Bis] in die Tudorzeit [waren] viele Rechtsdokumente aber mit dem Geltungsbereich ‘in Anglia et Cornubia’ ausgestellt” (Tschirschky 82), whereby “Cornubia” stands for Cornwall. In 1337 the Duchy of Cornwall was established. In the course of this, the English King's eldest son was given the title of Duke of Cornwall and was fitted with the rights of a “quasi-sovereign” (Tschirschky 83) in granting him royal prerogatives. According to Tschirschky this can be seen as a “Mittel des privilegierten Anschlusses des Gebietes” (83) and thus differentiated Cornwall constitutionally from England.

From 1198 the Cornish Stannaries were acknowledged by the King. Cornwall was divided into several Stannaries which were areas of independent jurisdiction where not English Common law but Cornish Stannary law was in force (Tschirschky 85); during the Stannaries' heyday Stannary parliament was granted a veto over English laws concerning tin mining within Cornish territory. The next instance of Cornwall treading the boards of history is 1497 when Michael Joseph, alias “An Gof”, led Cornish rebels to London to revolt against high taxation under King Henry VIII but was defeated by the King's troops (Tschirschky 86); by some this instance is judged as an indication of Cornwall not being wholly integrated into England at this time (cf. Rowse 139). The 1549 Prayer Book Rebellion can be seen as another example for Cornish independence. Cornishmen moved to Exeter to demonstrate against both the translation of the Book of Common Prayer into English which they could not understand since they spoke Cornish, and the abolition of the Latin mass (Tschirschky 87). Because the Cornish language was understood to be a Celtic one, it used to be a strong factor of differentiation between Cornwall and the rest of England until it died out in the course of the eighteenth century (Tschirschky 88). However, with its revival at the dawn of the twentieth century, attempts have been made to re-establish this distinctively Cornish institution ever since (Tschirschky 109f). In terms of the legal status of Cornwall, it was not until the 1888 County Council Act that Cornwall became a county of England. This act has remained valid until today. The last time Cornwall

attempted to protect its “eigenen Status, den keine [andere] englische Grafschaft vorweisen konnte” (Tschirschky 90) was after the Second World War when the borders between Devon and Cornwall were to be rearranged – to the detriment of Cornwall. After all, this plan was not put into action and Cornwall prevailed over English interests (Tschirschky 90).

In order to examine whether a distinctively Cornish identity exists, and whether it takes on the form of a national identity, I have chosen the following structure: The second chapter will provide the theoretical basis, introducing Anderson’s concept of “Imagined Communities” (2.1) and Hall’s notion of cultural identity (2.2); subsequently the next subchapters concentrate on Hall’s ideas on national cultural identity with reference to difference and representation (2.3) and introduce his five “representational strategies” through which a nation in general is imagined (2.4). The third chapter is concerned with objective one, isolating and analysing elements of Cornish identity, and applies the first method to the empirical data; thus it introduces guided interviews as a method of data collection and Mayring’s content analysis as a method of data analysis (3.1). Next the data itself is outlined (3.2) and subsequently analysed (3.3). The fourth chapter focuses on the second objective in applying Hall’s five representational strategies on the analysis of the empirical data. However, first the fact that Cornwall is not a nation in legal terms is taken into account (4.1) which is then followed by the application of Hall’s five strategies as categories of analysis (4.2 – 4.6). This analysis will reveal four additional strategies through which a Cornish nation is imagined which were not covered by Hall. Therefore his concept will be expanded and refined to better match the Cornish case (4.7). Chapter five contains the conclusion which will discuss the given hypothesis.

## 2. The Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Anderson’s “Imagined Communities”

Generally groups within a nation which do not feel to belong to it can try to break away, be it for ethnic or other reasons (Anderson 3). However, after the Second World War only those revolutions were successful in establishing new states which were on the national, not subnational, level (Anderson 2). The obvious power of the concept of *nation* also figures prominently in the Cornish case. Therefore this central term needs to be defined. Anderson’s main thesis is that the division of the world into nations is something artificial, not natural – that it is a construct. According to him nations are “imagined political communit[ies]” because no one within this community can know all other members (6). Besides nations are imagined as “sovereign”, “as a community” and as “limited” (Anderson 7). They are imagined as sovereign since they superseded monarchy and based

its legitimacy on freedom, not religion. Furthermore, a nation is imagined as a community because its members perceive themselves as an “us” facing a “them”, binding them together in a “a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 7). Finally a nation is imagined as limited in the sense that it has boundaries and hence a fixed territory; however it is also imagined as limited with regards to the fact that not everyone is, nor can be, a member of the nation (Anderson 7). Another crucial point Anderson makes is that a nation seems to belong to the same realm like the colour of one’s skin or one’s gender and that it thus seems to belong to “all those things one cannot help” (Anderson 143).

## 2.2 Hall and Identity

The following will illustrate the general concept of identity concentrating on Hall’s comprehension of it. In doing so his essentialist and anti-essentialist interpretation of identity will be unfolded along the levels of personal identity, cultural identity and culture. To start with, these three levels will be defined briefly.

For the purpose of this paper, it will be sufficient to define personal identity as referring to the identity of an individual; it can be allocated to a single subject. Cultural identity can be situated in the realm of collective identities; they are “those aspects of our identities which arise from our ‘belonging’ to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and, above all, national cultures” (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 274). Hence it can be seen as an entity paramount to and simultaneously as a source of a subject’s personal identity (Nünning 306). Culture, being the point of reference for cultural identity, is understood in a very broad sense as “[t]he distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviour, products, or way of life of a particular nation, society, people, or period” (OED). In this fashion the subject identifies with a specific group by means of a shared cultural identity (Hall, “Who needs Identity?” 3), whereas cultural identity draws on culture as its main source (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 291).

When describing the essentialist concept of identity, having a closer look at the term *essence* reveals what is at the heart of this idea: the assumption that identity is “that which constitutes the being of a thing” (OED). Its historical roots can be traced back to the age of Enlightenment when man emerged “aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit” (Kant 481) and became a subject first and foremost in the sense of being the agent of his own actions. On the level of personal identity, the “Enlightenment subject” was claimed to possess an unchanging, stable and essential inner core (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 275). It identifies with a society of people being of the same origin to which it is bound by a “natural closure of solidarity and allegiance” (Hall, “Who needs Identity?” 2). On the collective level cultural identity can also be described as something essential but now being the essence of one people of the same origin. In this context Hall describes it as “a sort of the collective’s ‘one true self’” which is grounded on

the sense of sharing the same history and culture and perceived as a “stable [...] [frame] of reference and meaning” (“Diaspora” 234). However, cultural identity is not only something everyone within the society can identify with; Hall also assumes that cultural identity as the essence of a people is the one force which binds together members of the society in spite of other cultural differences (“Who needs Identity?” 3). When it comes to the level of culture, it can be seen as the system of meanings and symbols, the distinctive traditions and ideas which associate the members of a society with one cultural identity, no matter “how different the members of a [society] in terms of class, gender, race” may be (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 296).

In contrast to that the anti-essentialist concept of identity is just the opposite – the idea of identity as the essence of a subject and a people alike is being replaced by the notion of its construed character. Historically, in the course of the age of modernity, and especially towards the end of the twentieth century, the world became ever more complex (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 274). On the level of personal identity, Hall recognised two new types of subjects successively displacing the Enlightenment subject: first the “sociological subject” which echoed the increase of complexity of the societies in so far that it is no longer described as possessing that stable core of the Enlightenment subject but that it rather is a product of the inner and the outer world (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 275). To be precise, Hall still suggests that the sociological subject possesses an inner core but adds that this core was shaped by society (“Question of Cultural Identity” 275). In finally displacing it by the “post-modern subject”, Hall reflects the still growing complexity of a globalised world (“Question of Cultural Identity” 276) leading to a decentred subject: it has completely lost its stable, inner centre and has not been imbued with another; instead the former centre has been displaced by “several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved, identities” (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 276). On the level of cultural identity, the same process can be observed: according to Hall the subject could no more identify with the essentialist “one, shared culture” (“Diaspora” 234) but any form of identification has finally become “contingent” and is just an “articulation” and a “suturing” (“Who needs Identity?” 2) of the subject into something more important than itself, i.e. society. Therefore the understanding of cultural identity as the natural overarching object of identification of a society, its essence, needs to be altered in two ways: on the one hand it does no longer maintain this essential sameness of a people but rather bespeaks “points of deep and significant difference which constitute ‘what we really are’” (Hall, “Diaspora” 236). Since there is no naturally given nexus between discourses of class, age, gender and race which eventually makes up one specific society, this connection has to be “articulated”, has to be constructed by cultural identity (Barker 230). Thus identities have to be perceived as formed by discourses (Barker 279). On the other hand the assumption that cultural identities possess an essential history and are a society’s essence

has to be challenged: Hall stated that it is not “fixed in some essentialised past” but rather contingent on change (“Diaspora” 236). Hence cultural identity does not reflect the natural “belonging to” or identification with a distinct, essential and eternal culture but articulates “the criss-crossing discourses of race, ethnicity, nation, class, gender and age” (Barker 279). Having a closer look at the level of culture, it still can be seen as the “source of cultural meaning” (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 296) for a society; however, the nature of culture is changed when Hall defines it as a “system of representation” (“Question of Cultural Identity” 296). By representation Hall basically means the process of transferring meaning to items which are presented through different media (Hall and Jhally 9:55ff); thus the way and context in which, for example, a cultural artefact or a historical narration is presented can change its meaning dramatically. Cultural identities, drawing on culture as their primary source, are therefore also “constituted within, not outside representation” (Hall, “Who needs Identity?” 3).

### 2.3 National Identity – A particular Form of Cultural Identity

According to Hall, today’s nation-states and their national cultures are the main source for a society’s cultural identity (“Question of Cultural Identity” 291) despite the decrease of their significance due to globalisation. Within the theory depicted so far, national identities can be seen as a specific form of cultural identity insofar as they primarily highlight the belonging to national cultures. Henceforth it will be assumed that every kind of identity, be it on the personal or collective level, follows anti-essentialist principles as illustrated above. Therefore two more characteristics of and their implications for national cultural identities have to be introduced: difference and representation.

Hall claims cultural identities in general to be “organized around points of difference” (“Question of Cultural Identity” 227). Thus a nation cannot be defined without stating what it is not. Points of difference evolve around the identification with and articulation of certain discourses within social categories such as class, ethnicity, nationality, or religion (Hall, “Who needs Identity?” 3). As far as nationality is concerned, difference would translate in what Anderson calls “the irremediable particularity of [nationality’s] concrete manifestations” (5): ideally a subject is a member of and identifies with only one nation-state and constructs national cultural identity by means of the difference to the rest of the nations with which it does not identify. Due to the anti-essentialist understanding of identity and the subsequent significance of representation it however follows that particular manifestations within social categories of a nation are not naturally given; on the contrary, the actual sense of those social categories has not been defined once and for all but certain representations give meaning to them (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 227).

Representations are not naturally grounded but subject to change and influence. The political implication of identity as a “production” has therefore to be taken into consideration (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 227). In this manner representation encounters two problems. The first one is that of correctness (Hall and Jhally 3:55f): from a social majority’s point of view, for instance the common historical experiences of a nation can be represented ‘in a right way’; however, from the perspective of a minority group, it can be represented ‘falsely’. If representations of common national experiences thus ignore or even expel a minority within a nation, a second problem occurs: that of inclusion and exclusion (c.f. Barker 264; Hall, “Who needs Identity?” 5). Having said that, it seems to be in the teleology of national identities not to generally exclude but instead to “help to stitch up differences into one identity” (Hall “Question of Cultural Identity” 299): the target of cultural identities in general and that of national culture in particular is to bring together the members of a society, a nation, despite their differences concerning class, gender, or race (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 296) by means of a national identity representing all subjects or groups of a nation, no matter how different they may be. Despite attesting national identities a strong political significance (Hall, “Who needs Identity?” 4), Hall agrees with Anderson when repeating the latter’s major claim that “national identity is an ‘imagined community’” (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 293). Subsequently Hall further develops Anderson’s theory by elaborating on the *way* nations are imagined.

#### 2.4 How to Imagine a Nation?

This chapter will introduce Hall’s five representational strategies through which nations are imagined: national narratives, primordial roots, invented traditions, a foundational myth, and an original folk (“Question of Cultural Identity” 293). In chapter 4 these strategies will be applied as categories of analysis, examining empirical data in terms of how the interviewees imagine a ‘Cornish nation’. Firstly, *narratives of a nation* are crucial representations through which national identities are constructed (“Question of Cultural Identity” 293):

These provide a set of stories, images, landscapes [...] historical events, national symbols and rituals which stand for, or represent, the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation. As members of such an ‘imaginative community’, we see ourselves in our mind’s eye sharing in this narrative. (“Question of Cultural Identity” 293)

Secondly the representation of a national identity as *primordial and eternal* is of significance: its major traits today appear to be in line with those of the past despite the challenges of history because they are ingrained in a nation and constitute its very essence. Moreover this past can be recurred to if the nation has ‘alienated’

itself from its essential identity in order to restore it. Representations of national identities therefore highlight “origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness” (“Question of Cultural Identity” 294).

Thirdly Hall draws on Hobsbawm’s and Ranger’s concept of *the invention of tradition* (“Question of Cultural Identity” 294) which they define as

[t]raditions which appear [...] to be old [but are] often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented. [They are] a set of practices, [...] of a ritual or symbolic nature which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviours by repetition which automatically implies continuity with a suitable historical past. (1)

Furthermore, a subtype of the first representational strategy, the narratives of a nation, is supposed to be a very crucial strategy: the *foundational myth* (“Question of Cultural Identity” 294f). It can be defined as the story of origin of “the nation, the people and their national character” which is so ancient that “they are lost in the mists of, not ‘real’, but ‘mythic’ time” (“Question of Cultural Identity” 294f). In addition, Hall claims that “disenfranchised people” can utilise foundational myths in order to create a new nation in its own right: it provides them with a historical representation of that cultural national identity which they had possessed before they were colonised and which was oppressed subsequently (“Question of Cultural Identity” 295). National identity is finally based on the notion of “a pure, original people or ‘folk’” despite the fact that in reality hardly any nation can be found which actually derives from one folk in particular (“Question of Cultural Identity” 295).

### **3. Cornwall’s Reality – Introducing and Analysing Empirical Data**

The following chapter is concerned with the first objective of this thesis. Thus it attempts to isolate and analyse elements constructing Cornish identity in order to find out whether Cornish people feel to belong to different “ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and [...] national cultures” (Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 274) than England. In this fashion the methods of data collection and analysis are presented (3.1), followed by an introduction of the data (3.2) and the actual analysis (3.3).

#### **3.1 Methods**

The aim of both data collection and analysis was to be as open and non-partisan as possible. As a result the interviewees should be enabled to unfold their understanding of Cornish identity while not being manipulated by the interviewer’s

foreknowledge or biased questioning. Thus a qualitative approach to data collection and an inductive analysing procedure were necessary.

As far as data collection is concerned, a semi-structured guided interview was conducted. The interview guideline based on both Hall's five categories through which a nation is imagined and general foreknowledge mainly gained through Tschirschky's "Die Erfindung der keltischen Nation Cornwalls"; however, it was organised in such a way that it did not exclude possible deviations or refinements. The applied interview technique attempted to echo this intention by implementing Merton's criteria of *range* and *depth*<sup>1</sup>, generally suggesting that one of the main aims is "to uncover a diversity of relevant responses, whether or not these have been anticipated by the inquirer" (Merton 12). According to the criteria of range, the interviews followed the subsequent two elements: on the one hand they started with unstructured questions in order to let the interviewee decide whatever holds significance for him or her (Merton 54). On the other hand changes from one topic to another or the introduction of new topics were the task of the interviewee so that he or she could illustrate the interconnections between different elements and determine the sequence of the interview (Merton 55). The criteria of depth especially aims on yielding emotional responses because those are seen to be central to the interviewee (cf. Merton 97). Thus in using the method of a guided interview in combination with Merton's criteria of range and depth, the target of being both open and non-partisan could have been achieved in the stage of data collection.

As a method of data analysis, Mayring's qualitative content analysis was the means of choice for several reasons. One was that it is considered to be an inductive approach. With the main aim of openness and impartiality, such an inductive analysis seems to be compulsory. Having said that, Mayring's content analysis appears to be a necessary compromise between an open approach towards the collected data and the time required for its analysis: procedures such as Rosenthal's 'Interpretative Sozialforschung' offer the advantage of a maximum of openness and interpret only from a subject's point of view (cf. Rosenthal 18ff); however favourable this method may be in terms of impartiality, it needs a considerably bigger amount of time compared to Mayring's approach. Due to the limited time frame of the thesis at hand, Mayring's procedure thus appeared to be the appropriate means of analysis. Furthermore content analysis follows a what Mayring calls "systematische[s] Vorgehen" because it is "regelgeleitet [...] und theoriegeleitet" (12). This is claimed to be generally beneficial because it is not an arbitrary

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<sup>1</sup> Although Merton describes these criteria in terms of the application of focused interviews, they can nevertheless also be applied in semi-structured guided interviews. The only difference would be the point of reference that the interview questions try to aim at: in the case of focused interviews, it is the stimulus situation the interviewee was being exposed to before; in the case of the guided interview, it is the general opinion, feelings and convictions to the topic in question.

interpretation of material but analysis becomes replicable if provided that the same rules and theory are utilised (Mayring 12).

### 3.2 Introducing the data

The following will introduce the collected data in accordance with Mayring's suggestions (cf. 54). Firstly the material is presented, followed by a description of the stage of data collection, from first contact to the interview situation. Thirdly the formal characteristics are discussed, followed by a theoretical grounding of the questions addressed to the material. Subsequently the technique of analysis will briefly be explained and the classification of the analysis' results will finally be categorised.

#### *The Material*

The material is derived from interviews which were conducted in May and June 2013 in Cornwall. In total four interviews were carried out from which two were selected for further analysis. The reason for focusing on these in particular is twofold: they appeared to be descriptive in terms of this thesis' interest as the interviewees talked without requiring too much input from the interviewer, and Cornish identity appeared to be an essential element in their lives. Furthermore, a selection had to be made simply due to the restricted time frame. For the analysis interview parts were preferred which could provide answers referring to the question of the elements finally creating Cornish identity. The first interview partner was Eve Morris\* who has been an active member of the pro-Cornwall party Mebyon Kernow (*MK*) since 1999 and was a town councillor for this party until 2013. The second interview partner was Keneder Bligh\* who has been actively engaged in the Cornish Language Partnership until 2011, an institution trying to strengthen the role of the Cornish language in Cornwall. Since then he generally tried to reinforce Cornish within school education. Both of them were selected mainly because of the roles they occupy.

#### *Data Collection Stage*

In order to find suitable interview partners, the internet was searched for Cornish organisations which attempt to strengthen Cornwall's political, cultural, or economic situation. Suitable means that the prospective interviewees should relate to a Cornish identity and try to support the Cornish cultural identity by means of the work they do for these Cornish organisations. In a first step those persons were contacted using standardised e-mails including the content and aim of the study and the enquiry for a conversation. In a second step the prospective interviewees

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\* The interviewees' names and occupations are anonymised.

were called in order to provide them with further information and to set time and place for the interview in case of approval.

In Cornwall the first interview was conducted with Eve Morris. It took place in the lobby of Cornwall County Hall and lasted for 45 minutes. In a later reflection she “appeared very friendly and interested in the topic” and the atmosphere during the conversation was described as “quite natural and relaxed”. The second interview with Keneder Bligh took place in a meeting room at Cornwall County Hall and lasted for about 90 minutes. Although being “welcoming and friendly” when first meeting him in person, during the interview he appeared to be “a bit distracted or overextended because it sometimes took him long to actually finish a sentence”.

### *Formal Characteristics*

As far as formal characteristics of the material are concerned, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed in accordance to Rosenthal’s transcription code (95):

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| ,           | kurzes Absetzen                          |
| (4)         | Dauer der Pause in Sekunden              |
| Ja:         | Dehnung eines Vokals                     |
| ((lachend)) | Kommentar der Transkribierenden          |
| <b>nein</b> | betont                                   |
| <b>NEIN</b> | laut                                     |
| viel-       | Abbruch eines Wortes oder einer Äußerung |
| (sagte er)  | unsichere Transkription                  |
| Ja=ja       | schneller Anschluss                      |
| ja so war   | gleichzeitiges Sprechen ab „so“          |
| nein ich    |  |

*Fig. 1: Rosenthal’s transcription code*

### *Theoretical Grounding*

It has been stated above that one advantage of Mayring’s content analysis is the fact that it is theory-driven whilst still formulating categories inductively. In the case under consideration, the empirical material consists of statements made by two official representatives of a specific form of cultural identity. As already illustrated, Stuart Hall claims that cultural identities do not refer to a group’s essential characteristics but that they are rather an articulation of different discourses which only appear to be primordial. Thus he demonstrated that national identities are generally imagined by means of five different representational strategies. Moreover he claimed identities in general to be “organized around points of difference” (“Question of Cultural Identity” 227). Lastly he also states that cultural identities in general refer to culture as a point of identification. Embedded in this theory the

following leading question to the material arises: What are the general elements that make up Cornish identity?

It is important to note once more that, in the following analysis, the provided theory only supported the process of finding suitable questions to the material in order to identify elements of Cornish identity. The analysis itself was conducted inductively so that the condition of being as open and non-partisan as possible was not harmed.

#### *Technique of Analysis*

The following analysis will use the qualitative technique of “summary”, one possible content analytical procedure. Here Mayring suggests to proceed in five steps: forming paraphrases, definition of the level of abstraction, generalisation, first reduction, and second reduction. In forming paraphrases, superfluous information is excluded from further analysis in removing “nicht (oder wenig) inhaltstragende Textbestandteile wie ausschmückende, wiederholende [...] Wendungen” (Mayring 62). Moreover the text is transformed into a grammatical short version (Mayring 62). After that, the definition of the abstraction level is the point of orientation for the following steps (Mayring 62); in the analysis of Cornish identity, it was defined as “general, though case-specific statements about Cornish culture and assumptions about Cornish identity”. Paraphrases of step one being below the defined level of abstraction are then generalised onto this level so that the new, generalised statements imply the old paraphrase (Mayring 62). In the subsequent first reduction those generalised paraphrases are removed which are meaningless or redundant in terms of the research question. (Mayring 62). In a final second reduction, paraphrases with similar meanings are condensed to one paraphrase (Mayring 62).

#### *Classification of Results*

Usually Mayring’s content analysis demands more material in order to aggregate different cases to be able to induce more universal statements about the subject of research (cf. 71). However, the restrictions of this study do not allow such an approach. The two interviews in consideration, i.e. that of Eve Morris and Keneder Bligh, are therefore perceived as representations of two different descriptive types of Cornish identity. Thus a descriptive type can be defined as the summary of individual criterial features (cf. Rosenthal 75). This entails that other types of Cornish identity, consisting of other features, can exist which differ from the two illustrated ones.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The analysis is split into two parts, each of which describes one type of Cornish identity. The two interview transcripts will be used as the basis of analysis. Part 1

will explore Eve Morris' construct of Cornish identity, part 2 that of Keneder Bligh.

### 3.3.1 *Eve Morris' Construct of Cornish Identity*

The main point Morris makes about her perception of Cornish identity is that she “happily” considers herself as Cornish and British, but by no means as English. This notion can be seen as lying at the very heart of her Cornish identity. From this conviction several reasons evolve explaining at the same time why Cornish identity is different from the English one, why Cornwall thus is different from England, and lastly which elements create Cornish identity. The following illustration depicts her general concept of Cornish identity<sup>2</sup>:

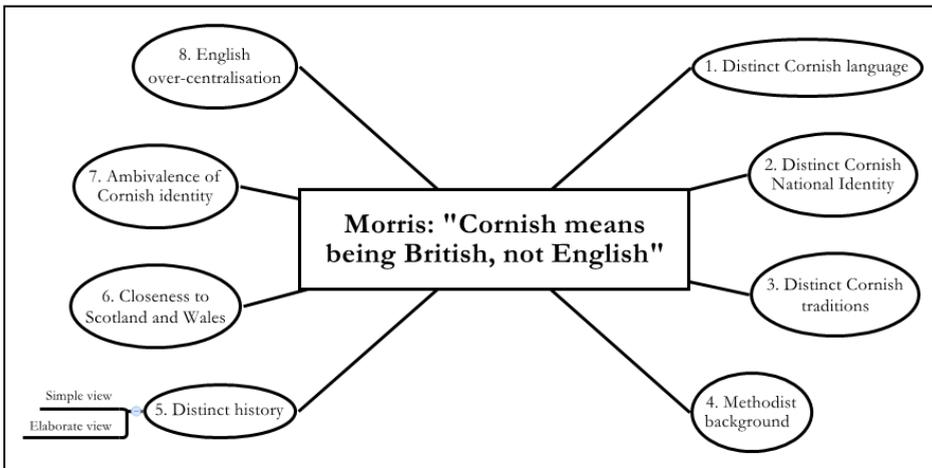


Fig. 2: *The Construct of Eve Morris' Cornish Identity*

According to Morris, the Cornish language is the “number one thing” for Cornish identity. In this way it ensured continuity within Cornwall before it actually died out in the nineteenth century. The death of the language was followed by an attempt to revive it in the beginning of the twentieth century in order to keep alive Cornish traditions of the past. Moreover the fact is stressed that Cornish was not spoken outside its borders.

Next the claim that Cornish identity is one in its own right and not positively related to England is underpinned by claiming that it is a “distinct national identity”. The fact that Cornwall possesses its own language provides the very basis of this claim and justifies that it is not merely seen as a region or county of England but as a nation in itself. Furthermore, Cornwall has its own national origins which

<sup>2</sup> For the matter of simplicity, the term Cornish identity and Cornish national identity will subsequently be used to refer to that type of Cornish identity which Eve Morris represents.

are different to the English ones: they descend from the nation of people which originally existed in Cornwall. Lastly, Cornwall is the same as the rest of all nations worldwide as far as self-identification is concerned: it is just about members identifying with their nation which actually produces it. If members of Cornwall thus identify with a Cornish nation, this nation comes into existence.

The next distinctive trait of Cornishness Morris mentions are Cornish traditions. First of all they are built around the Cornish language and derive from it. One instance is provided by hurling, a very rough sport which was and still is played exclusively in Cornwall. A second example provides Cornish rules wrestling. Although wrestling in general is not typically Cornish, the very fact that the rules are close to those of Breton and not compatible with Devon ones makes it a cultural signifier. Finally Cornwall's Methodist background adds to the Cornish difference because it is perceived as a very strong tradition. As a proof of this, Morris states that the percentage of Methodists in Cornwall is, if not the highest, than at least amongst the highest of the country.

Yet another point of difference can be identified when focusing on Morris' representation of Cornish history since the settlement of the Anglo-Saxons. In general it illustrates the origins of Cornwall and identifies the Cornish as a distinct people with a distinct national origin. Thus it provides an alternative argument for the fact that Cornish identity is an explicitly national one. When making remarks on history in more detail, Morris recognises two different views on it: a simple and an elaborate one. The simple view basically claims that the English descend from the Saxons and the Cornish from the Celts. With the Saxons arriving on the island, they are said to have massacred the Celts and forced those which survived to become English. As an historical instance, the rebellion of 1497 can be interpreted as one driven by the Cornish nation while pursuing aims grounding in the protection of Cornish national identity. The elaborate view on history suggests that the impact of the Saxon invasion was in fact less than "told in these simplistic old tales". The Saxons did not massacre all Celts when arriving on the island but rather became the new ruling class; thus the Celts were ruled, not massacred, by the Anglo-Saxon lords. The fact that the Celtic people and traditions actually did not die out entails that it still exists today in *all* people of Britain. Within the elaborate view on history, the rebellion of 1497 should therefore not be interpreted as a national rebellion of the Cornish nation. Having said that, Morris is in favour of the elaborate view on history and rejects the simplistic one as depicted above.

As strongly as Morris argues for Cornwall being different from England, as fiercely does she support the equality between Cornwall, Wales and Scotland. With reference to the Welsh identity, she claims that it is fully acknowledged as being different from the English, and that this is why Wales is perceived as a country different from England. The fact that Wales is seen as an integral part of Great Britain and as a country at the same time provides its necessary "bit of otherness", providing the grounds for an own Welsh national identity. Morris' identi-

fies the reason for that in two things: firstly the fact that Wales maintained its own language facilitates its perception as a country in its own right; secondly Welsh people can look back to distinct national origins, descending from the nation of people which originally could be found in Wales and which kept certain traditions alive until today. Although the Scottish identity and Scottish nation is as well acknowledged as being definitively distinctive from the English one, Morris here shifts the focus to what it actually lacks although it is seen as different: unlike Welsh, Scots Gaelic is not widely spoken within Scotland and can hence not be identified as a reason for the otherness of a Scottish identity and the Scottish nation. Neither are Scottish traditions perceived as an adequate basis which could justify Scotland's special status: many of them are shared by English and Scots alike.

Morris then claims that Cornwall is equal to Wales and Scotland for a variety of reasons. First of all Cornwall possesses an own national identity, with the only difference that Scotland and Wales are actually perceived as nations whereas Cornwall is not. Furthermore Cornwall and Scotland are particularly similar in that the cultural distinctiveness from Scotland and England has the same basis: Scots Gaelic and Cornish alike are not widely spoken in the respective countries. The only element differentiating Cornwall from Scotland is the fact that the latter has more and stronger political institutions. But then again, so she argues, Cornwall could also have these institutions and would be as legitimised of being a nation as Scotland.

After having made the claim that Cornwall is equal to Scotland and Wales and not to England, the question arises why Cornwall is actually a part of England. Historically Morris argues that Cornwall used to be separate from England but was incorporated at a very early time. She claims that Cornish identity therefore appears weak since Cornwall has been perceived as being internal to it for a long time. The over-centralisation of the United Kingdom is again another reason, bringing in its wake the problem that the contradiction between English and British generally is not widely recognised. In terms of political power, it moreover deprives Cornwall of the possibility to make decisions of local importance locally. This is why Morris argues for Cornwall to become a devolved part of Great Britain and to be granted an own assembly equal to the Scottish parliament in order to make decisions according to the principle of subsidiarity.

With reference to the strength of Cornish identity, Morris finally identifies a certain ambivalence. In this fashion some people see themselves as Cornish and English at the very same time: in one moment they would cheer for their Cornish rugby team and in the next they support the English national football team with the same tremendous spirit. On the one hand this ambivalence, the fact that people living in Cornwall can possess a strong sense of being Cornish *and* English at the same time, is supposed to be something which makes the Cornish identity "unique". On the other hand Morris later on suggests that it is actually not as

unique as she thought because identity is always a very personal thing. However, for her the notion of being Cornish is what she is about, is “at the heart” of all the things which constitute her identity.

Coming back to the key question asking about the elements which define Cornish identity, Morris’ construction of it is generally created by the notion of being different to England and equal to Scotland and Wales; basically two lines of argumentation surfaced: the ‘same-degree-of-otherness’ argument which is underpinned by the ‘Celtic-Cornish-culture’ argument. Morris denies the “simplistic view on history” and she thus does not reduce the link between Cornwall, Scotland and Wales primarily to their common Celtic origin. Morris rather advocates the “elaborate view on history” where the Celts and their traditions continued to live across the whole of Britain after Saxon invasion. In taking away the underlying connecting idea of Celticism she significantly weakens the bond between Cornwall, Wales and Scotland. However, she re-establishes a perception of them as being equal again, now not primarily on racial grounds but in terms of having the same degree of otherness to England: By claiming the distinctiveness of the Cornish language, culture, history, and subsequently the distinctiveness of the Cornish national identity, Morris primarily aims at constructing that necessary “bit of otherness” which enabled Wales and Scotland to become nations. Thus the two role models are not seen as Celtic countries but only as countries within the United Kingdom and other than England. Because their degree of otherness is equal to that of Cornwall, the latter also qualifies for being a nation in its own right. This equality argument is then enforced by cultural implications. For instance, Morris claims that Cornish rules wrestling is not compatible to Devon but to Brittany rules wrestling. If Devon is seen, *pas pro toto*, as a part of England and Brittany along the same line as a part of the Celtic nations, Morris constructs a cultural link between Cornwall and a Celtic country while simultaneously denying a compatibility between Cornwall and England. Wrestling could also be seen as a representative of the culture of the respective countries in general. Following this thought it would imply that because Cornwall’s culture corresponds to Celtic cultures and not to English, Cornwall and Cornish identity itself must be different from England and comparable to that of the Celtic nations. Therefore the ‘same-degree-of-otherness’ argument is implicitly supported by the ‘Celtic-Cornish-culture’ argument.

### 3.3.2 Keneder Bligh’s Construct of Cornish Identity

At first sight, the construction of Bligh’s Cornish identity equals that of Morris. For Bligh the difference between Cornwall and England is also situated at the very centre of Cornish identity. However, the way that difference is constructed is altered. On a first level, two primary elements of Cornish identity vividly depict that difference: Cornish language as being one “in its own right” and that “an essential part of being Cornish is being Celtic”. On a second step this leads to two

secondary elements of Cornishness: a distinctive Cornish culture and Cornish history. On the third level, two tertiary elements of Cornish identity can be identified supporting the notion of difference between England and Cornwall: the economic situation and the organisation of social life. Finally the English are perceived as the centre of an Anglo-centric United Kingdom. As will be shown below, this produces two meta-elements of Cornish identity which describe the overall feeling of Cornishness: that of being suppressed by England within the United Kingdom and that of hence being a minority within its realms. The illustration below summarises Bligh's concept of Cornish identity<sup>3</sup>:

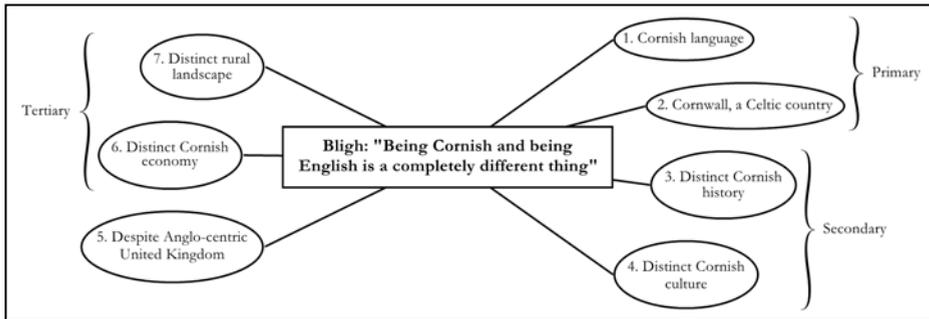


Fig. 3: *The Construct of Keneder Bligh's Cornish Identity*

The first primary element of Cornish identity is the Cornish language. For Bligh it is “a key to it all” in terms of understanding Cornish identity and Cornwall's difference to England. For him it neither matters that the actual speaker community is very limited nor that Cornish is a revived language. On the contrary, the fact that Jenner revived it in 1904 is seen in a positive way since it makes the language special. It is therefore perceived as being at the very core of Cornish identity because all other primary characteristics of Cornishness are derived from it. The first and simultaneously most important nexus is that between the Cornish language and Cornwall being a Celtic country: In presuming that “Celtic” can only refer to “those geographical area[s] where a Celtic language is spoken”, the fact that Cornish as a Celtic language is spoken in Cornwall defines it as being Celtic.

Secondly the Cornish language carries plenty of “cultural implications and hooks” as well. Plays and literature in particular can only be properly understood through the language. In addition, Cornish linguistically defines the eastern border with England as lying east of the river Tamar: When comparing the place names of Cornwall and Devon, it figures very prominently that in Cornwall around 75% of the place names are of Cornish origin. In Devon, situated on the eastern side of

<sup>3</sup> For the matter of simplicity, the terms ‘Cornish identity’ and ‘Cornish national identity’ will subsequently be used in order to refer to that type of Cornish identity represented by Keneder Bligh.

the Tamar, Cornish place names can hardly be found at all. The linguistic boundary can thus be seen as the geographical limit of the territory of Cornish identity. On the grounds of an existing Cornish language and the fact that Cornwall has its own history and culture, Bligh finally claims that it is not a county or region *within* England but a nation *such as* England and within the United Kingdom.

The second primary element of Cornish identity is that Cornwall is a Celtic country. Next to the fact that Cornish is a Celtic language, both being necessary and sufficient condition making Cornwall a Celtic country, two more characteristics are introduced by Bligh which underpin Cornwall's Celtic status: certain aspects of Cornish culture and the history of Cornwall. As far as culture is concerned, several characteristics can be identified which support Cornwall's Celticness. Within the realms of material culture, Celtic crosses and carvings can be found all over Cornwall and are mainly a sign of Celticism since they can also be found in other Celtic countries such as Brittany and Scotland. Moreover Cornwall possesses its own form of bagpipes which are identified as part of the Celtic culture. They are distinctively Cornish due to their construction and unique sound which is described as "raw and rough". As part of Celtic cultural institutions, the *Gorseth*, a gathering of bards conducting a ceremony which is done only through the medium of Cornish, figures very prominently. Despite the fact that it was reconstructed in Cornwall in 1928 on the basis of a reconstruction of the Welsh (1840s) and the Breton (1899) *Gorseth*, it still is very important.

Cornish literature from medieval times can also be identified to reflect Cornish Celtic roots to a certain extent. In particular Bligh mentions the *Ordinalia*, a Cornish mythical play consisting of three different parts, and *Beunans Meriasek*, another Cornish medieval play written by Adolphos Tom and depicting the life of Saint Meriasek. They are generally seen as being a part of Cornwall's Celtic heritage because they are written in Cornish. Also certain elements of the stories illustrate its Celtic character, for instance a story in *Beunans Meriasek* in which the number of three, referring to the trinity of God, son and Holy Ghost, is often mentioned. According to Bligh, that number is not to be found in the Bible with reference to the concept of trinity but is the sacred number of the Celts.

Cornwall's history in general is also taken into consideration when claiming Cornwall to be a Celtic country. Bligh presupposed that England has persecuted the Celts and Celtic languages for thousands of years and fought against the Celtic nations for the same amount of time. In this period of history, to which no exact dates are given but just the time reference "for thousands of years" is attached to, Cornwall is positioned on the side of the persecuted Celts. The instance which politically established Cornwall as Celtic can be traced back to 1904 when Cornwall was admitted into the Celtic Congress and became one of today's six Celtic nations through the agitation of Henry Jenner. History even serves another end: it is a means of representing the closeness between Cornwall and its Celtic sister countries and thus underpins its Celtic character once more. In particular Brittany

as Cornwall's sister country is mentioned frequently. Quite bluntly Bligh explains their close relation by seeing them both as Celtic countries. Both countries have a different history, culture and language compared to that of France and England respectively and were subsequently suppressed by the one or the other. That feeling of being suppressed is one which both Celtic countries have suffered from and which brings them closer together. In the past the link between Cornwall and Brittany was even stronger than today: not only did they share Kings and a similar flag but also the "ownership of King Arthur", as Bligh puts it. Besides they would have sent members to each other's Gorseths.

After having identified the Cornish language and its Celtic character as two primary elements of Cornish identity, secondary elements can be identified which serve the same ends as the primary ones: producing the notion of difference of Cornwall in comparison to England. Thus Cornish culture and Cornish history will be discussed in more detail. When having a closer look on Cornish history, Cornwall was in opposition to England from early times onwards. This explains that when the Danes and Vikings invaded the island the Cornish would side with them and fight against the Saxons. The Saxons in turn are clearly identified as the people which inhabit England today. Next Cornwall became a Duchy in the year 1337. This can be seen as an important event in Cornish history since from this year onwards, a separate legal system was established in Cornwall and the Duke of Cornwall, the eldest son of the King of England, was appointed as head of state in this territory – and not the King of England directly.

The story of An Gof figures prominently as he led the 1497 rebellion of Cornish people against the Crown of England due to the English suspending Stannary parliament. Before the rebellion the Cornish were granted an own parliament because of their economic importance for England: It was in Cornwall that the tin was mined which was vital for the English industry. Because of the suspension of the Stannary parliament, An Gof and Thomas Flamank, together with their army, headed to London but were "slaughtered by English troops". According to Bligh, this was one event where Cornwall "was on the wrong side".

A further important historical event took place in 1549 in the course of the Prayer Book Rebellion to which Bligh refers to as the "Cornish Holocaust". With England becoming Protestant, Bibles were printed in English and the mass was read from this point onwards in English only. Because the Cornish did not speak any English, they could not understand mass anymore. Therefore they gathered an army and attempted a rebellion which was quickly defeated by English troops. In the aftermath of this rebellion, horrid events are said to have happened: Not only did English troops hunt and kill deserters from the battle field but they also invaded into Cornwall and killed around 20% of the male population. Moreover the links to the Cornish sister country Brittany were cut because it was still a Catholic country. Next Glasnik college was burned down which used to be the centre of education in Cornwall. According to Bligh, it could have rivalled Oxford and

Cambridge in present days if they “had left it alone”. Last but not least this rebellion meant the end of the Cornish language because no word of it was to be spoken in churches anymore. What is more, the story of what Bligh calls the “Cornish Holocaust” is described as a suppressed bit of history nowadays: no one is actually allowed to know it.

The last important event in Cornish history Bligh mentions is the story of the English Civil War of the 1640s. For Bligh this is yet again another case of Cornwall being on the wrong side since in the course of the war between the supporters of monarchy and those of parliamentarism, Cornwall sided with the royalists and was defeated by the parliamentary army. Cornwall and other Celtic countries still suffer from this today because this is why “London makes the rules”. In summary it can be said that in neither of the depicted events, Cornwall was on the side of England but rather in opposition to it. Because they used to be on the wrong side more than once, they were beaten by England. The representation of Cornish history thus seems to transport two implications: firstly again the general closeness to Cornwall’s Celtic sister countries which seems to underlie Cornish history and secondly the fact that it has been suppressed by England from early times onwards.

The parts of Cornish culture which have not already been discussed above in terms of their Celtic value illustrate another secondary element which Cornish identity refers to in order to claim its difference from England. Differences in sports and in the legal system will be examined more thoroughly now. As far as sports are concerned, Bligh states that three different kinds are very important in Cornwall: rugby, gig rowing and hurling. To start out with, rugby is a crucial expression of Cornish cultural difference and distinctiveness. Bligh claims that the English football culture is completely alien to Cornwall and that Cornish people do not support the English football team. In order to strengthen his point, he claims that the Cornish are bad at football in general and that it is rubbish for him. Rugby is the sport which is played and widely supported in Cornwall such as it is in Wales, too. This is what the Cornish are really good at. In fact they do so well at rugby that the Cornish Pirates qualified for the English premiership. But the English would not be the English if they did not try to spoon-feed the Cornish in one way or another: because they claimed the Pirate’s rugby stadium to be too small, they were not allowed into the English premiership in spite of their formally correct qualification.

Two other sports are claimed to be not only specifically Cornish but actually to be Cornish national sports: gig rowing and wrestling. Both of them are distinctive national Cornish sports because – “like baseball in America” – they are virtually non-existent outside of Cornwall. In spite of their importance for Cornwall, Bligh states that they do not get the amount of representation in television they actually deserve. In sum, Cornish sports thus underpin the distinctive culture of

Cornwall and define it as a national one. Moreover, sports seem once again to express a suppression of Cornwall by England.

A further cultural difference between England and Cornwall can be identified in the Cornish legal system. This difference historically goes back to Cornwall being a Duchy and possessing its own Stannary parliament with its own set of laws, called Stannary law. For instance, flotsam in England belongs to the Queen while in Cornwall it belongs to the Duke of Cornwall. With the Charter of Pardon in 1508, Cornwall was given the right to pass its own laws. This right has never been repealed so it is *de jure* still valid according to English law. Along the same lines Stannary law is still valid today, too. Bligh proves that this is actually the case through a meaningful example:

Nirex, which used to be an English state-run company for dumping nuclear waste, started investigations in Cornwall for a disposal site in the 1970s. Cornishmen became aware of that and did not appreciate the idea of having nuclear waste dumped in their home ground. But instead of merely mourning about the situation, a group of people actually decided to do something against it. Claiming to be tanners, they dug trenches across the roads to stop Nirex' lorries from further investigation. These "tanners" were of course arrested and put into prison almost immediately. However, the Nirexians failed to reckon with the tanners' attorney. He claimed Stannary law according to which tin miners may dig trenches when they investigate for future tin mines wherever they want. Nirex' lawyers found that to be ridiculous but the judge did not. He actually told them to "go back and do their homework", and he thus released the tanners who were actually no tanners at all but shareholders in a local company. Being free again they started to dig more trenches in their eager attempt to find tin deposits. In doing so they established a system of trenches obstructing Nirex lorries in their investigations once and for all.

This instance does not merely prove the validity of Stannary law in present times. This story rather entails more implications which can help to understand Cornish identity as a whole. On the one hand it amplifies the argument of Cornish difference in the realm of legal difference because this law is still applicable today. On the other hand it reveals something about the way Cornish people see themselves: Nirex, as a state-run company of England, could be seen as the English suppressor which this time was defeated by Cornishmen's wits. Throughout history it was usually Cornwall that was "on the wrong side" and defeated; this time, however, they outwitted England and repelled their attack. Nevertheless, this reasoning yet again throws light on the default mode of the Cornish-English relationship: instances when Cornwall strikes back and wins are the exception; more often than not it is defeated and suppressed by English force. Although Bligh only mentions the supremacy of the English language over the Celtic languages, his depiction of Cornish history and culture implicitly entail that not only the English language, but England in general is seen as superior.

It is this underlying notion of English superiority which is attacked by Bligh several times during the interview. It is to say that he seldom openly attempted to undermine England's assumed superior position but that he did so mainly through devaluing certain elements of English (high) culture through which its superiority seems to be expressed. At least three instances of hidden attacks against English supremacy can be identified.

Bligh firstly insinuates England to rather arrogantly believe that all the world speaks English and that therefore English people have no reason to learn foreign languages. However, so he concludes, the world speaks American, not British English which is why their arrogant attitude cannot be justified. He again devalues the English language in juxtaposing it to Cornish: He had to learn English when he was young and uses it nowadays because the majority does. In opposition to that, he consciously decided to learn Cornish as an adult. For him, English is only a "noise" coming out of someone's mouth in order to communicate; Cornish as a language in its own right appears to be far more to him: it does not only serve the ends of communication but carries the core of Cornish identity. Although he does not explicitly describe Cornish as a beautiful language as opposed to "the Noise", he implicitly establishes a hierarchy in which Cornish signifies to be the more valuable language of his heart and English appears to be the less valuable, rather pragmatic language of his mind. But his final strike against the English suppressor does not directly aim at the language itself. Rather, Bligh holds the whole of English high culture, the whole of English arrogance and superiority at gunpoint when comparing Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to Adolphus Tom's *Beunans Meriasek*: when Cornish Adolphus was able to write his play in seven-syllable rhymes from the first line to the last, Shakespeare tried to do the same when writing the speech of Macbeth – Bligh does not elaborate which speech is meant – but failed because he was not competent enough to maintain it for very long. Hence Shakespeare could only write what Bligh calls "gibberish". By this, he – at least in his imagination – completely degrades English high culture. In "proving" English superiority to be unjustified, the former hierarchy between England and Cornwall is inverted for a moment; however, this statement once more reveals what is Cornish fantasy and actual reality: the attack on English culture seems to be an attempt to take away the legitimacy of English superiority and subsequent suppression and to present an instance when Cornwall is not defeated by the English as illustrated throughout history. But in reality English superiority still lurks beneath the surface through the eyes of a Cornishman.

Finally, the tertiary elements of Cornish identity by means of which Cornish difference from England is manifested are the economic situation and the general organisation of social life. As far as economy is concerned, from Bligh's hopes for Cornwall's future his views on its present situation can be deduced. Thus Cornwall neither offers any job nor higher education opportunities for its youth. Too little business is settled in Cornwall in order to provide sufficient positions for the

younger generation, and with not having an independent university within the borders of Cornwall, none of those businesses can really be established there. As a consequence at least the best young Cornishmen and Cornishwomen move to London to make a living there which leads to a “brain drain” in Cornwall. In this fashion, London is seen as Cornwall’s opposite pole in terms of education and economy, being the thriving, successful and thus once again the superior centre of England.

The organisation of social life is another instance of both Cornish distinctiveness and English superiority. According to Bligh, Cornwall is only “a spread of small towns” and has a rural character. By way of contrast, England with its urban character is not comparable to Cornwall at all. The subsequent problem evolving out of this difference lies in the realm of power and politics: because of the Anglo-centric character of the United Kingdom, London makes the rules. But those rules are urban-shaped solutions which simply do not fit rural Cornwall and thus create more problems than they actually solve. Hence, in not acknowledging the different socio-geographical character of Cornwall, England changes it to the worse and suppresses Cornish attempts at improving its situation.

In eventually coming back to the initial question asking for the elements which compose Cornish identity, it can be summarised that at the obvious core of it lies the Cornish-English relationship. Bligh tries to point out time and time again that this relation is one of difference, not equality. This difference is primarily produced by relating Cornishness to the distinctive Cornish language and its Celtic origin, secondary by presupposing a culture and history which marks Cornish otherness, and tertiary by juxtaposing the economic, educational and organisational situation in Cornwall to the one in England. On a next level the analysis revealed two meta-elements of Cornish identity: the feeling of being both suppressed by and inferior to England, and moreover that of being a minority within Great Britain. It was shown that Bligh tries to re-establish the presupposed superior-inferior relationship between England and Cornwall by means of attacking English (high) culture. However, these attacks can be valued as merely rhetorical because the old England-Cornwall relation in which Cornwall is perceived as inferior prevails to be a deeply ingrained part of Cornish identity. This can best be depicted by one of Bligh’s final remark which reveals a crucial, if not the most crucial element of Cornish identity: when he speaks about the ‘belongingness’ to Cornwall explicitly, he declares that if one is truly Cornish, if taking it really on to oneself, one makes oneself a minority within Britain. This underlying notion of being a minority is part of Cornishness in the form of another meta-element. On the one hand the belief that Cornwall is suppressed by England is thus obviously regarded as negative and entails a strong differentiation and enhancement of Cornishness from Cornwall’s supporters; but on the other hand, the feeling of being a suppressed minority is an underlying *sine qua non* of Cornish identity without which it cannot be sufficiently described and understood.

## 4. Comparing Theory and Reality

The following chapter will deal with this paper's second objective. It aims at identifying the representational strategies through which a Cornish nation is imagined; in this fashion it will combine Hall's theory of identity as depicted in chapter 2 and the analysis of empirical material of Cornish identity from the previous one. I will then examine how a Cornish nation is imagined in terms of the five representational strategies suggested by Hall. Here two limitations will surface: their limited applicability and their incompleteness; these will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4.7. Hall's theory of how nations are imagined will be refined and improved. But before actually applying theory to empirical data, one problem has to be addressed, which is that Hall describes how to imagine a nation although Cornwall is, in terms of its legal status, no nation at all.

### 4.1 Cornwall – A Nation?

Because Hall's five representational strategies originally refer to the way how nations are imagined, it briefly has to be explained why this concept was chosen in order to analyse Cornish identity although Cornwall legally is not a nation in its own right but a county of England. Therefore Anderson's claim that all nations are imagined communities is crucial. Ensuing from this assumption a nation never evolved out of a primordial people and subsequently possesses some sort of legitimacy to be a nation but is always a construct of the human mind, no matter if it is or is not politically acknowledged. To put it in other words, a community of "the same" people which live in a clearly limited geographical area and which identify themselves as sovereign occupants of this territory can be imagined as a nation but this imagination must not be shared by others or does not have to be mirrored by political reality in order to actually define it as a nation. In addition both interviewees clearly related national characteristics to Cornwall (e.g. when Morris defines Cornish identity to be a "national identity" or when Bligh describes wrestling and hurling as the two "Cornish national sports"). Hence the application of Hall's five representational strategies of imagining a nation is justified.

### 4.2 Category 1 – Nation as Narration

Hall suggests narratives of the nation as the first representational strategy through which nations in general are imagined. They represent the "shared experiences" (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 293) of the nation and, as members of this nation, they create that sense of belonging to and being a part of it. Although Morris' construct of Cornish national identity reveals one instance of a national narrative, it does not seem to actually hold significance when it comes to the imagination of a Cornish nation.

The first and simultaneously only prominent instance when she refers to such a narration is when she talks about the Cornish rebellion of 1497. Here she reflects on this particular historical event with reference to the actual problem of representation: She claims that “in modernity, we put our own slant on things” and that the Cornish rebellion with its Cornish soldiers is therefore seen by some as “the last non-English army to reach London”, by others as a mere “internal rebellion”. Because “it is so easy to put modern perceptions onto what happened” in the past, this strategy is only marginally pursued.

Unlike Morris, Bligh concentrates on national narrations rather extensively. However, it has to be said that his interview took twice as long as the one with Morris which could explain the reason for the latter talking in more width and depth about Cornishness and the Cornish nation. Moreover, he was particularly asked to elaborate on Cornish history when Morris was not. Thus the previous analysis of Bligh’s construct of Cornish identity has revealed several instances of national narrations which appear to hold significance for him insofar as they suture him into a Cornish imagined community. As far as stories are concerned, he refers to Cornish literature and the Nirex story which are both told either to show Cornish difference from England or Cornish superiority – or better, Cornish non-inferiority in comparison to England. Besides it is important for Bligh that Cornwall has a distinct landscape which appears to be rather rural. Coming to historical events he mentions six in more detail: The invasion of the Danes and Vikings, Cornwall becoming a Duchy in 1337, the rebellion led by An Gof in 1497, the Prayer Book Rebellion in 1549, the English Civil War in 1640 and Cornwall becoming an official Celtic nation in 1904. Finally Bligh indirectly refers to national symbols when he talks about Celtic crosses and Carvings which can be found in Cornwall. Although these are primarily Celtic elements of Cornwall, it can be argued that they also are national symbols because for him, Cornwall is primarily seen as a Celtic nation through the Celtic language. To conclude, when Morris does not concentrate on national narratives but recognises the problem of representation in general, Bligh is more prone to use this representational strategy.

#### 4.3 Category 2 – National Identity as Primordial

The second representational strategy is that of stressing a nation’s “origins, continuity, traditions and timelessness” (“Question of Cultural Identity” 294) through which it is perceived as still being connected to a primordial past which reveals the essential character of a nation. Morris’ construct of Cornish identity clearly reveals several instances when she applies this representational strategy. As far as the notion of origin is concerned, she states that Cornwall clearly has different national origins than England. In saying that the Cornish nation today descends from

the nation of people which originally used to live in Cornwall, she constructs that notion of timelessness which links today's Cornish nation to that of the past.

Next Morris is of the opinion that "Cornish identity [is] a continuity within Cornwall". According to her this is mainly because the Cornish language survived into the nineteenth century, handing over this identity and the traditions that go with it from one generation to the next. Although it died out in the course of the nineteenth century, its revival kept these traditions and Cornish identity alive until today. Moreover it was mentioned that Morris actually is in favour of an elaborate view on history implying that the Anglo-Saxons did not hunt and kill the Celts after having arrived on the island but that they rather governed them. In following this logic Morris claims that the Celtic people still exist today in "all the people of Britain". This reasoning again brings about the notion of a certain continuity; however this time not exclusively with focusing on Cornwall but on Britain as a whole. Morris' elaborate view on history therefore reveals an important characteristic of Cornish national identity which was already discovered above: the fact that it sees Britain as an umbrella term which includes Cornwall, England, Wales and Scotland as "constituent nations" and that hence being British was, and still is, a part of being Cornish. Lastly a distinctive set of Cornish traditions is identified which she unfortunately does not elaborate.

Bligh's construct of Cornish identity also reveals certain instances representing Cornwall's continuous existence over time. To start out with he states that gig rowing and wrestling are two national Cornish sports. Although he does not explicitly refer to the fact that wrestling or gig rowing have been practised in Cornwall for a very long time, he nevertheless identifies them as a "peculiar Cornish thing". Thus he implies that it has been Cornish in a long time. They can be treated as an essentially Cornish tradition underpinning the idea that the origins of a Cornish national identity and a Cornish nation reach a long way back into the past and that the nexus between a past and present Cornish nation is still being maintained. As another instance figures Bligh's representation of the Cornish legal system as a prominent example of Cornish continuity since it is illustrated as both being old – he claims that the Cornish legal system was introduced when Cornwall became a Duchy in 1337 – and still valid today: the Nirex story depicts this most vividly. A more subtle but simultaneously important example supporting the idea of timelessness can be found when having a closer look at the relation between England and Cornwall: the analysis in chapter 3 has revealed that a major element of Cornish identity is the feeling of being suppressed by England, both linguistically and culturally. According to Bligh, Cornwall and other Celtic nations alike have been suffering from this suppression for "thousands of years" and it thus seems to be an essential element now and then.

In terms of his second strategy, Hall claims that people can refer to the past in order to restore an essential national identity. As far as Morris is concerned, she bears upon the past not so much as to restore Cornish identity but rather the

Cornish status within Great Britain, i.e. that of a more independent nation. Bligh, with attempting to bring the Cornish language back into schools, seems to be more interested in actually strengthening the Celtic Cornish identity by means of referring to the past. Thus where Morris' interest is primarily a political one, Bligh's is rather cultural.

#### 4.4 Category 3 – Invention of Tradition

According to Hall a third representational strategy is that of invented traditions. When it comes to Morris, it could be examined in how far Cornish hurling and wrestling are invented traditions. However, this has to be postponed to further researches because of this paper's time restrictions. More assertions can nevertheless be made about Cornish traditions mentioned by Bligh: an examination reveals that the Cornish Gorseth and Cornish bagpipes are two examples of invented traditions. As far as the Gorseth is concerned, Bligh himself is aware of the fact that it has not been existing without interruptions but that it was "reconstructed", such as the Welsh and the Breton also were. Now the term "reconstruction" obviously implies that the Cornish Gorseth used to exist in the remote past and then ceased to exist for unknown reasons; only then could it have been reconstructed. However, the new Cornish Gorseth is not the reanimated form of the ancient one but was introduced from other countries which are perceived as Celtic; thus it can be said that the reconstruction of the Cornish Gorseth is not about a "Wiederbelebung vorgeblich autochthoner kornischer [...] Traditionen" but rather about the "keltischen Symbolcharakter, die [invented traditions] als Inbegriff eines als 'keltisch' etablierten Landes auf Cornwall übertragen" (Tschirschky 204). The same holds true for Cornish bagpipes which are additionally represented as a Celtic artefact of Cornish culture. Tschirschky claims that bagpipes used to be popular instruments in rural Scotland. With the reinterpretation of Scotland to a Celtic nation in the course of Romanticism, the bagpipe became a symbol of Celticism which could subsequently be used by other nations to represent their Celtic origins; this is exactly what happened in Cornwall (Tschirschky 207f). In this way it can be summarised that invented traditions hold significance at least for Bligh. Because of the complexity of this representational strategy, more time can be spent on examining its actual significance.

#### 4.5 Category 4 – The Foundational Myth

The fourth representational strategy is the foundational myth. This particular national narrative contains the story of a nation's origin that can be situated in a past which is so long ago that it actually seemed to have happened "not [in] 'real', but 'mythic' time" (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 294f). When examining Mor-

ris' construct of a Cornish nation, it becomes clear that she perceives the event when "the Saxons [came] charging across" as one crucial instance of Cornish history although she is of the opinion that the Saxons only ruled, not massacred, the former Celtic inhabitants of the isle. However, this event only appears to be the introduction to an actual foundational myth because she does not mention a "birth" of the Cornish nation before that day when the Saxons came. Further she claims that despite the fact that "we [Cornwall] got sucked [into England] at a very early stage", a separation between England and Cornwall existed for a long time which can be illustrated, for example, by means of a map showing that "Anglia et Cornubia" are separated by a clear demarcation line. Tschirschky claims that "Bis in die Tudorzeit wurden viele Rechtsdokumente [...] mit dem Geltungsbereich 'Anglia et Cornubia' ausgestellt" (82f). However, a distinct narration of the birth of the Cornish nation cannot be clearly identified by means of Morris' illustration. A possible interpretation of the lack of this narration within her construction can be twofold: it could not have been triggered by the questions of the interview guideline or she consciously or unconsciously favours different representational strategies. When it comes to Bligh, the case is somewhat clearer. Here the Celtic origins of Cornwall can be interpreted as the Cornish foundational myth: Because Cornwall is perceived as a Celtic country, it is part of the family of the Celtic nations; this is where it comes from.

In sum Bligh's case partly displays Hall's predicted behaviour of "disenfranchised people" (Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 294f) using the foundational myth in order to form a new nation. The only difference is that Bligh does not use this representational strategy in pursuance of forming a new nation; for him, the Cornish nation already exists although it might not be legally acknowledged. The foundational myth grants Cornwall this national status in the present: it already is a Celtic nation because it is part of the Celtic family. In contrast Morris does not use this strategy although she is interested in Cornwall becoming admittedly not a nation but at least a devolved part of England. In this fashion she prefers representing Cornwall as possessing the same amount of "otherness" to England than Wales or Scotland without highlighting their proclaimed common Celtic origin.

#### 4.6 Category 5 – The Original Folk

The final representational strategy Hall identifies is that a nation is based on the idea of "a pure, original people or 'folk'" ("Question of Cultural Identity" 295). Morris seems to agree with this notion on the surface when claiming that Cornwall descends from the nation of people which originally existed in Cornwall and that history and Cornish national origins in general identify the Cornish "as a distinct people"; moreover she claims that within the simple view of history, the Cornish descend from the Celts (and the English from the Saxons). Nevertheless, the fact that Morris is in favour of the elaborate view on history weakens her

agreement with the equation Cornish people = Celtic people because she argues that the Celtic inhabitants were not killed or driven to the west but continued to live on all over what today is Great Britain, entailing that the Saxons and Celts intermingled and not stayed what Hall referred to as “pure”.

Bligh makes clear that Cornwall is a Celtic country and that an “essential part of being Cornish is being Celtic”. However, he does not immediately determine that Cornwall is Celtic because it is one of the Celtic peoples, but Cornwall is Celtic primarily because of the language. Thus he implies the notion that Cornwall and its people derive from that “Celtic area of culture” which was spread all over Europe in a not further specified past.

In brief, it was found that both Morris and Bligh refer to the idea of Cornish people being Celtic people. Morris, however, only relates to Cornish people as Celtic within her “simple view on history” but rejects it for herself. She favours the idea that the Celts intermingled with the Saxons after the latter’s arrival. Bligh in contrast more clearly is convinced that Cornish people are truly Celtic.

#### 4.7 Refining Hall: Discussion and Additional Representational Strategies from Empirical Evidence

It was shown that Hall’s five representational strategies can be used as categories to analyse how the Cornish nation is imagined. Nevertheless, two weaknesses were brought to the surface: Firstly representational strategies in parts are not significant within the examined cases, and secondly, they do not sufficiently describe the mechanisms of imagining Cornwall as a nation. Thus four more representational strategies could be identified through the analysis of the material: imagining the Cornish nation through language, as being limited, as possessing legitimate authority within its borders, and as being culturally superior. When firstly examining the applicability of Hall’s concept, the following table illustrates its limitations:

Tab. 1: Significance of Representational Strategies (Hall’s Categories)

|   | <i>Morris</i> | <i>Bligh</i> |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Nation as Narration  | ~             | ✓            |
| 2. Continuity   | ✓             | ✓            |
| 3. Invented Traditions  | ?             | ✓            |
| 4. Foundational Myth  | X             | ✓            |
| 5. Pure Folk  | ~             | ✓            |
| ✓ significant    ~ significant with restrictions<br>? not examined    X insignificant |               |              |

Morris' case obviously shows some problems within Hall's theory. The only instance when she is sufficiently in accordance with Hall is in the second representational strategy. As far as the first and last strategy are concerned, at least some overlapping can be identified. When it comes to the foundational myth, the material does not contain any clear clue from which it could be induced. Invented traditions can be suspected to hold at least some degree of significance but their actual applicability has to remain open due to research pragmatics. Bligh in contrast seems to be a rather classic case. Here each strategy can sufficiently be identified in the material under examination.

The analysis of Morris' and Bligh's construct of Cornish national identity has revealed four new representational strategies. The first and simultaneously most important one which cannot be subsumed under Hall's given strategies is the Cornish language. Since the preceding analysis found it to be a prominent factor of Cornishness in both cases under consideration, it can be evaluated as a primary means through which the Cornish nation is imagined. Thus Morris perceives Cornish as "the number one thing for Cornish identity". The distinctive Cornish language moreover provides the very basis for the assumption that it is a national identity and that therefore Cornwall is a nation. Lastly language in general is seen as that necessary "bit of otherness" which facilitates the perception of a nation as being a distinctive entity in contrast to other nations. In the case of Bligh, it becomes additionally obvious that language "is a key to it all" and a major means of imagining Cornwall as a nation. In this way language is perceived at the core of Cornish national identity from which other Cornish elements derive, e.g. Cornish traditions. The fact that Cornwall was permitted as one of the six Celtic nations is exclusively due to the fact that Cornish is a Celtic language. Finally the analysis in chapter 3 has revealed that Bligh is of the opinion that Cornish as a language makes Cornwall a nation, just as England and Wales are nations, too. For the sake of completeness, it must be stated that Hall also reflects the importance of language within cultural identities. However, he does not single out the feature – which is the claim which is made here – but places linguistic culture next to ethnic, religious, or national culture which generally are points of reference for cultural identity (cf. Hall, "Question of Cultural Identity" 274); he does not explicitly identify language as a further representational strategy which clearly has to be done after the analysis of the given material.

The second representational strategy not being taken into consideration by Hall can be borrowed from Anderson: limitedness. This method of imagining the Cornish nation again figures prominently in both cases. In referring to the fact that Cornish was not spoken outside its borders, Morris explicitly bespeaks a geographical limitedness of the Cornish nation expressed through language. In stating that Cornish rules for wrestling are not compatible with the Devon counterparts, she furthermore underpins not only the notion of difference but also that of limitedness expressed through tradition. When it comes to Bligh, linguistic and tradi-

tional arguments are additionally found to emphasise the notion that Cornwall is a geographically separate area. Again Hall does include the idea of limitedness within the framework of his theory when claiming that cultural identities evolve around “points of difference” (“Question of Cultural Identity” 227) which entail that these identities have an imagined border and thus are limited; nevertheless, in his works under consideration limitedness refers only to cultural identities and is not identified as a representational strategy.

The third strategy which is not included but significant is that of imagining the nation or its representatives as possessing legitimate authority within its borders. This time it has similarities to Anderson’s notion of sovereignty (cf. 7); however, the source of that sovereignty which according to Anderson is the fact that it superseded monarchy becomes only marginally important here. Moreover this strategy can only be identified in Morris’ case. She discovers a contradiction between Cornwall’s entitlement and reality referring to legislative and executive power: although Cornwall ought to be entitled to “make more decisions locally”, Westminster government in fact makes those decisions at the time being. Underlying this is the notion that Cornwall is entitled to self-government because nations as such are sovereign within their territory. When it comes to Hall, he refers to Anderson and starts from the assumption that nations are imagined communities and hence implicitly includes that nations are imagined as limited, sovereign and as a community (cf. Anderson 7; cf. Hall, “Question of Cultural Identity” 254f). However, Hall again does not explicitly include the aspect of legitimate authority as a representative strategy.

Finally the fourth new representational strategy is the imagining of a nation as culturally superior. This figures most prominently in Bligh’s construct of a Cornish national identity. In this way he undermines the value of the English language and reduces it to a “noise which comes out of your mouth”. In deeming Shakespeare only a second-rate poet and attesting the mere thought of putting him on equal grounds with Cornish high culture to suffer from megalomania, he rather clearly illustrates a certain superiority of Cornish literature compared to the English one. Having said that, it has to be kept in mind that one of the most important aspects of Cornish national identity and thus of imagining the Cornish nation is that of being suppressed and a minority within Great Britain. Therefore, although Cornish cultural superiority could be seen as an expression of its national character, Cornwall must not be acknowledged as a nation in political reality in order not to harm the minority condition of Bligh’s Cornish national identity. In sum and after having refined Hall’s theory in terms of how to imagine a Cornish nation, the following table includes the induced representational strategies and depict their application in the two respective constructs:

Tab. 2: Significance of Representational Strategies (Amended List)

|   | <i>Morris</i> | <i>Bligh</i> |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Nation as Narration  | ~             | ✓            |
| 2. Continuity   | ✓             | ✓            |
| 3. Invented Traditions  | ?             | ✓            |
| 4. Foundational Myth  | X             | ✓            |
| 5. 'Pure' Folk  | ~             | ✓            |
| 6. Language   | ✓             | ✓            |
| 7. Limitedness  | ✓             | ✓            |
| 8. Legitimate Authority   | ✓             | X            |
| 9. Cultural Superiority   | X             | ✓            |
| ✓ significant ~ significant with restrictions<br>? not examined X insignificant |               |              |

## 5. Conclusion

The starting point was the hypothesis that Cornish people perceive themselves as members of a Cornish nation even though Cornwall, in legal terms, is no nation at all. In order to judge whether or not this hypothesis is admissible, two objectives determined the concept of this paper: Firstly the examination of two types of Cornish identity ought to reveal if Cornish people themselves in fact perceive themselves as members of a Cornish nation; secondly, because nations are imagined communities, the way of how the Cornish nation is imagined by Cornish people was explored. The analysis of two interviews in chapter 3 has revealed two different types of Cornish identity which evidently included both the notion of being different from and not subsumable under an English identity and explicitly referred to Cornwall as a nation in its own right, not a region or a county which the legal status would imply. Although the reasons for Cornish difference varied between the two types, both of them refer to the fundamental Cornish difference from England and the Cornish language as major justifications for calling Cornwall a nation. Chapter 4 subsequently explored the way in which this Cornish nation is imagined by means of Stuart Hall's representational strategies of how nations are imagined in general. It was found that the type of Cornish identity represented by Keneder Bligh matches well with Hall's suggested strategies; with reference to the type represented by Eve Morris, in contrast, the application of some categories was problematic. Moreover it was found that Stuart Hall's concept of imagining a nation in the cases under consideration was sometimes not significant or sufficient and hence needed refinement.

Although the analysis in chapter 4 was mainly dedicated to the second objective and thus with the question of how a Cornish nation is imagined, it could be understood as a means of validation for the previous claim that Cornwall is perceived as a nation through the eyes of the Cornish. In this fashion Hall's five strategies could be perceived as criteria testing whether or not a community is in fact imagined as a nation. Hence Bligh's type could be clearly defined as presupposing a Cornish nation because all of the five strategies were found to be followed; the claim made in chapter 3 would be underpinned by the analysis of chapter 4 (cf. table 1). In contrast, Morris' case does not as clearly figure as an example of a type of Cornish identity presupposing a Cornish nation because she does not include all five strategies suggested by Hall; the previous claim of chapter 3 that Morris' concept includes the notion of a Cornish nation would be at least weakened when tested by the five strategies. However, the applicability of Hall's strategies as a general means of further exploring this paper's hypothesis can be challenged for mainly two reasons: firstly, although the type of Cornish identity Morris represents does not completely match with these strategies, other representational strategies, first of all the Cornish language, are found in her as well as in Bligh's construct. This could entail that Hall's concept of how to imagine a nation is not complete and thus could not be used as a test of validation. It secondly is most likely that during the stage of data collection not all the data was ascertained and that some representational strategies were not collected. It is thus finally claimed that the hypothesis could not be falsified in the course of the paper: The first analysis has revealed that the Cornish under consideration describe themselves as members of a nation and possess a national identity which is significantly distinct from the English national identity.

However, the admissibility of the hypothesis must be limited. It was not falsified only with regards to the two types of Cornish identity in question from which no general statement about the construct of Cornish identity in general can be drawn: for this more interviews with a variety of people would have to be conducted in order to generate a more general construct of Cornish identity. Furthermore it must be kept in mind that the interview partners were selected in terms of their virtual visibility: only those could be found during internet research in the first stage of data collection which were visible on the internet because they were affiliated to organisations trying to support Cornish identity or Cornish culture. In addition, no detailed links, neither asynchronous nor diachronic, between the Cornish legal situation defining Cornwall as a county and the self-description of (some) Cornish people of Cornwall as a nation can be offered; neither the history of Cornwall's legal status compared to Cornish identity over time can hence be explored, nor can the Cornish political agitation, grounding on the notion that Cornwall is a nation, towards the legal situation be examined.

The illustrated limitations can be seen as invitations for future research. On the basis of this thesis' findings, it could be analysed in how far the representa-

tions of Cornish history – especially those given by Keneder Bligh – coincide with actual historical sources; and if they do not it could be examined whether particular representations of historical facts serve political, cultural, or other ends. In a broader context a more complex and universal construct of Cornish identity could be acquired by means of more extensive empirical and literary research. As far as future interview partners are concerned, it has to be made sure that a varied or random sample is selected in order not to influence the results because of the study design. Lastly another method of data collection and data analysis could be preferred which asserts the claim of being more inductive than Mayring’s content analysis such as the before mentioned approach of Rosenthal.

In a broader sense the results can be related to the theoretical concept of *nation* and the discourse evolving around Cornish nation building. Thus it was shown that the scientific category of nation has to be understood according to Anderson’s notion of it as an “imagined community”: the legal acknowledgement of a community as a nation is in fact no necessary condition of a community to be perceived as a nation, for example through the eyes of some of its members. Furthermore, two instances or types of Cornish national identity were identified in which the aspect of Cornish nationality figures prominently; these types could be examined further in the field of Cornish Studies concentrating on nation-building processes within Cornwall.<sup>4</sup>

After the analysis it can be concluded that neither Walter White’s impressions of the 1850s, nor the everyday experiences in today’s Cornwall came and come out of thin air. Indeed, back then as well as today, it appears that at least some Cornish people have not get acquainted with the fact that they ought to be English. Whether or not this will finally lead to a legally acknowledged Cornish nation, separate from England, only time will tell. Thus, it remains exciting.

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# **“Rooted” and “Vernacular” Cosmopolitanism in Context: Conceptions of World-Citizenship from the Classical to the Postcolonial Age**

*Nikolas Helm*

## **1. Introduction: Cosmopolitan Fashion**

In our day and age the idea of cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitans is usually associated with the world of fashion. According to this vague sense of the word, the cosmopolitan appears to be a kind of chic entrepreneur, who divides her/his time between the trendy capitals of the world: London and Barcelona, New York and Paris, Tokyo and Milan. He is always chasing the latest flavours of the mouth, and constantly re-making and re-modelling himself accordingly. But cosmopolitanism is also the name of an old Occidental idea, an idea that goes back to ancient Greece and Rome, to the Cynics and Stoics. And it is an idea that was famously reactivated by philosophers such as Christoph Martin Wieland and Immanuel Kant during the eighteenth century and, thus, became inextricably linked to the universal aspirations of the Enlightenment.

Recently, the notion of cosmopolitanism has become a fashion within the discourse of postcolonial studies. It has been taken up and explored by a number of

key-theorists such as Homi Bhabha or the black British intellectual Paul Gilroy<sup>1</sup>; and it is possibly related to what Edward Said described as the task of humanism in a new preface to his classic study *Orientalism* in the year of his death.<sup>2</sup> Somewhat unsurprisingly, the term has – in a way buzzwords usually do – managed to polarize debates within postcolonial studies. However, unlike other notions such as identity, diaspora, or hybridity, the challenge that the concept of cosmopolitanism poses to the discourse of postcolonialism seems particularly hard-bitten. The influential postcolonial critic and sociologist Stuart Hall intimates his distrust of the idea in an interview in the following way:

You know, I hesitate before I use the term. Because a certain view of cosmopolitanism was built into the Enlightenment and Kant's famous question, "What is Enlightenment?" Kant is the architect of this universalist version of cosmopolitanism. And I resist that kind of cosmopolitanism, not because there weren't enlarging 'universalising' elements in it, but because, as we know very well, it is a version of cosmopolitanism that represented itself as 'universal' but that universality inevitably became harnessed back to the West. 'We' were the enlightened ones, whose civilizational duty and burden it was to enlighten everyone else – the unenlightened, the non-cosmopolitan.<sup>3</sup>

What Hall expresses in this quote is a suspicion of cosmopolitanism's roots in Enlightenment universalism. Mistrust of the Enlightenment tradition is not unusual in postcolonial theorists. Nor does it appear particularly unfounded when, arguably, Enlightenment ideas were instrumental in forging the overseas empires of the British. However, there remains a sense (even for Hall) that a dismissal of cosmopolitanism on grounds of its relation to the Enlightenment and to universalism might be hasty. For, would not an abstention from any kind of universalizing vision of humanity reduce the project of postcolonial studies to a mere negation of colonialism (in its historical and contemporary guises) that lacks an alternative overarching conception of how humans may connect across difference, a positive horizon of human cooperation and mutual understanding? I daresay this is exactly what Edward Said saw in 2003 when he spoke affirmatively about Goethe's notion of *Weltliteratur*<sup>4</sup> and the "need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from one another, and live together [...]".<sup>5</sup> I sense in Said's plea for humanism a profound urging not to leave the

<sup>1</sup> See especially his elaborations on the subject in Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*, London/New York 2004, pp. 29-92.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London 2003 (originally published 1978), pp. xviii-xx; xxii.

<sup>3</sup> Pnina Werbner, "Cosmopolitanism, Globalisation and Diaspora: Stuart Hall in Conversation with Pnina Werbner, March 2006", in: Idem (ed.), *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives* (ASA Monographs 45), Oxford/New York 2008, p. 349.

<sup>4</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, pp. xviii-xix.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxii.

connecting of different human communities to those who are insufficiently aware of its potential colonial implications and intricacies. And I believe this is precisely what lies behind many recent attempts to re-imagine cosmopolitanism from a postcolonial perspective.

But Hall's objection has alarmed us and we find ourselves asking: In how far are these new kinds of cosmopolitanism rooted in Western philosophy? Do they necessarily perpetuate Euro-centrism? What is still useful in Western philosophy for postcolonial critics and what should they reject? These are very important questions and – like most, if not all, truly profound issues theory raises and wrestles with – they may never be finally answered. However, currently the new cosmopolitan perspectives that are developing within postcolonial studies are not yet very well understood. And there remains a sense that we may yet make some headway by interrogating, disassembling and contextualizing these ideas before we either write them off as leftovers of colonial discourse or praise them uncritically.

In this essay I want to go some way towards finding answers to the questions posed above – answers which, in turn, may serve as a starting-point (not an endpoint) for further critical engagement with the idea of cosmopolitanism and especially those cosmopolitan perspectives developed under postcolonial auspices. To this end I want to fully portray two such postcolonial conceptions of cosmopolitanism: Kwame Anthony Appiah's so-called "rooted cosmopolitanism" and Homi Bhabha's notion of "vernacular cosmopolitanism." (see chapters 3.2 to 3.3) These two conceptions will be set and developed against the background of the historical discourse on cosmopolitanism as it runs from its earliest antecedents in ancient Greek philosophy to its contemporary incarnations in political and social theory (see chapters 2.1 to 2.3). In chapter 4 I will evaluate the various perspectives against one another and draw conclusions as to relations among them. In this part I will also assess to what extent the two postcolonial cosmopolitanisms of Bhabha and Appiah may be regarded as rooted in Western philosophical discourse.

One additional task I set myself is to thoroughly compare the two perspectives of Bhabha and Appiah and to attempt to turn out their respective points of concurrence as well as their differences (see chapter 3.4). Some may object to such an endeavour on the basis that it is hardly surprising that two different authors who are both writing about cosmopolitanism may, nevertheless, concur on certain issues while simultaneously disagreeing on others. However, Bhabha and Appiah speak from different disciplinary perspectives, utilizing different theoretical languages to relate their ideas. Thus, it is not self-evident that they should be compatible with one another at all. But nevertheless – and notwithstanding the fact that some differences inevitably remain – there exist a great deal of overall similarities and agreements between them. In some way this is the proof of the pudding in the eating: For, it is a central claim of cosmopolitanism that conversation across difference is possible without conflating it into sameness. Thus, by comparing Bhabha and Appiah in this way I want to suggest that the discourse of postcoloni-

al studies is already cosmopolitan in the sense that in it many different disciplinary perspectives and theoretical orientations take part in a discussion which leaves the differences among them in place but also turns out new and unexpected points of concurrence – a discussion which is productive of new and innovative trans-disciplinary perspectives.

I shall now proceed in the following way:

- I will describe the discourse of cosmopolitanism from the classical to contemporary perspectives.
- After that I will portray and develop in all detail the two postcolonial perspectives, which I will compare and evaluate against one another.
- Finally, in my concluding section I shall draw on the various perspectives I have developed to describe in what way they are related to each other and to offer some answers as to how far the new postcolonial cosmopolitanisms are connected to specifically Western conceptions and whether this is damaging.

## 2. Cosmopolitanism: Classical to Contemporary Perspectives

### 2.1 Diogenes and Cynic Cosmopolitanism in Ancient Greece

“I am a citizen of the cosmos (*kosmopolitês*).” The person who first said these words and, thus, coined the term cosmopolitanism as such was the fifth-century BCE Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope.<sup>6</sup> Diogenes was also the first Cynic philosopher and an unusual one for that. The term cynic literally means “dogish” and derives from Diogenes’ byname “the dog.” This byname was given to him because of his alleged shamelessness – a trait the Greeks thought of as characteristic of dogs.<sup>7</sup> About Diogenes’ life not much is known, albeit many of the details about him that have come down to us are preserved in the form of anecdotes and stories others tell about him.<sup>8</sup> Yet there is a sense that Diogenes would have embraced his being called a dog as his philosophy held nature and the realm of the animals in high regard. The assumption that the essence of virtue lies in living according to nature, and that such life is, in fact, the only true life may be taken as the central Cynic axiom.<sup>9</sup> This is a simple yet very radical message and, allegedly,

<sup>6</sup> Diogenes coined the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ and it was mostly associated with his movement. More broadly speaking, cosmopolitan attitudes, however, were already held by philosophers who chronologically preceded the Cynics. (John L. Moles, “The Cynics”, in: Christopher Rowe/Malcolm Schofield [et al.] (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge/New York/Melbourne [et al.] 2000, p. 424.)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417; 419

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 414-416.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 420-421.

Diogenes did not merely submit it as a teaching but based his life on it. He lived according to radical life and he encouraged others to follow his example.

Being exiled from his native Sinope after an incident with the local authorities, he dwelled homeless on the streets of Athens and Corinth. He allegedly slept in a wine barrel, begged and stole for sustenance.<sup>10</sup> Together with his followers, he publicly addressed passers-by and sought to convince them of the fundamental truth that a life according to nature, a life of simplicity and without personal possessions was truly good and lead to happiness. Yet Diogenes' mode of persuasion did not take the form of currying favours. Rather he attacked and slandered the citizens for their "vices." His public shamelessness – Diogenes notoriously urinated and defecated as well as masturbated and had sex in public<sup>11</sup> – and his often vulgar rhetoric that targeted especially the rich as well as other philosophers took the form of bizarre public spectacles, aimed at offending audiences rather than winning them over. In these public spectacles as well as in their writing Diogenes and his Cynics often made use of theatrical and literary elements<sup>12</sup>, whose entertaining qualities they seemingly deemed better suited for the purpose of reaching an audience than the dry syllogisms philosophers were known for. This is not to say that the Cynics were all show and no good philosophers. Diogenes single surviving work *Politeia* showcases that he was well versed in the technicalities of philosophical discourse. He also debated with Plato and others in public and was officially acknowledged as a philosopher<sup>13</sup>, even though his teachings were often attacked as repulsive.<sup>14</sup> It is, of course, nothing short of a paradox that Diogenes and his followers should have sought to attract the public through their literary and theatrical styling, only to repulse them. But as a matter of fact, paradox is one of the reigning principles of Cynicism and it is especially present in Diogenes' notion of cosmopolitanism

In order to come to terms with Diogenes' notion of cosmopolitanism we need to realize that the world of the ancient Greeks consisted of a landscape of interrelated city-states, so-called *poleis*. Each of these states endowed some of the individuals living in it, but not all, with the privilege of citizenship. Whoever was regarded a citizen was a matter of social standing, wealth and education. Also, women were not citizens, nor were slaves. In fact, being a slave was the very opposite of being a citizen. Strangers and people who were citizens of other cities were not considered citizens either.<sup>15</sup> The prime achievement of the polis consisted in ena-

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 418-419.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 419; 420

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Diogenes defended incest (ibid., p. 430) as well as cannibalism (John L. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism", in: Robert Bracht Branham/Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé (eds.), *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 23), Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1996, p. 112) on the basis that they occurred in nature.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

bling its citizens' freedom. However, this understanding of freedom should not be thought of as synonymous with the modern notion of freedom: It did not result in personal rights but in the right to help direct the enterprises of the political community.<sup>16</sup> The sum of all citizens of a polis was the political community and there were no state and no governmental bureaucracy in the modern sense.<sup>17</sup> Outside of this landscape of poleis existed 'barbarian' people, who lived under tyranny and who served as the Other of the Greek republican self-image.<sup>18</sup>

In reflecting upon what Diogenes meant when he described himself as a cosmopolitan, it is quite important to bear in mind that he was a stranger to the Greek cities where he lived and taught. But he had also lost Sinopean citizenship. Hence, the question of citizenship must have been highly programmatic to him as it referred to the problem of his own political status in the world.<sup>19</sup> It has often been suggested that Cynic cosmopolitanism is merely negative in that it fundamentally rejects government of any kind and the notion of positive citizenship along with it. Paradoxically, this is correct but not entirely so: It is true that Cynics were political anarchists, who rejected any form of government as unnatural. However, Diogenes did not say that he was no citizen. Rather he said that the polis he owed allegiance to was simply coextensive with the universe.<sup>20</sup> The word cosmopolitanism is actually an oxymoron as it suggests an exclusive category that is simultaneously all encompassing. What is noteworthy is that the Cynics' aversion toward government never took the form of active rebellion. Diogenes and his disciples opposed the state as unnatural but they also forbade that Cynics use violence, which they considered a vice stemming from civilization.<sup>21</sup>

Now what is one to make of this? What concrete and positive form could Diogenes' polis possibly have, considering he forbade all government? How could it even exist when Greece at that time factually consisted of many different cities? As John L. Moles has suggested in his heterodox reading of Cynicism, the Cynic state (*politeia*) simply denotes "the 'state' of being a Cynic."<sup>22</sup> And this, simple as it may seem, is the positive aspect of Cynic cosmopolitanism. The Cynics publicly attacked wealth, power as well as established customs and norms. This was done to the end that citizens might question their given notions of good and bad, and to literally convert them to Cynicism.<sup>23</sup> From this context we may then also understand why the Cynics seemingly sought to affront and disgust rather than to win over their listeners. It was only through the public proof that a life in accord-

<sup>16</sup> Paul Cartledge, "Greek Political Thought: The Historical Context", in: *History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> Moles, "The Cynics", p. 424.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 431.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 427.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 422.

ance with nature and in fierce opposition to the established norms of civilization and the lifestyle of the polis was actually practicable, that Cynic claims could appear at all credible to their audience.<sup>24</sup> The Cynics strove to convince others that to live in accordance with nature was the only ethical state of existence, the only true life. Whoever accepted this Diogenes called his fellow citizen. This was why the polis he envisaged was potentially everywhere. Surely even those whom the Greeks looked down upon in an ethnocentric fashion as barbarians could agree with this. In fact, Diogenes alleged that many of the people thus denoted lived in more true and natural a fashion than did ordinary Greek citizens.<sup>25</sup> One is faced at this point with an element of Cynic cosmopolitanism that is essential to bear in mind as it recurs especially in the cosmopolitanism promoted by postcolonial theorists: To be a cosmopolitan, on this take, is to recognize the existence of ties that transcend those allegiances most obvious to us and that we customarily recognize as most immediate and necessary. In this Diogenes claims an actual proximity to, a familiarity with what the Greeks considered Other – namely, with barbarians. However, Diogenes did not claim this allegiance just for himself. What might have been the most challenging about his assertion was that it suggested a potential allegiance between so-called barbarians and all Greeks as, in turn, all Greeks were potential citizens of Diogenes' *kosmopolis*.

However, Diogenes' questioning binary oppositions was not merely directed toward the outer boundaries of the polis. I have mentioned beforehand that women were not entitled to citizenship. Diogenes' cosmopolitanism protested against this treatment of women as second-class people. Obviously women have the same capacity to live in accordance with nature as men. Naturally they can be cosmopolitans, too. Diogenes assaulted the customary notion that women were inferior to men. In fact, he alleged that partnerships should cease being arranged and that women should only live with men they personally chose to live with.<sup>26</sup>

This makes Cynic cosmopolitanism appear very modern. However, Cynic cosmopolitanism is specifically unlike more recent perspectives on cosmopolitanism in that it contains a spiritual dimension. The ancient Greek understanding of *kosmos* did not merely comprise the world, the diverse peoples and gendered bodies living in it but reached out further to encompass even the heavenly realm, as well as ghosts and spirits. The Cynics actually thought of themselves as mediators between ordinary men and the gods. They even considered themselves god-like.<sup>27</sup> This religious or spiritual element is absent from all other perspectives.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 422; Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism", pp. 110-111.

<sup>26</sup> Moles, "The Cynics", p. 422; 430.

<sup>27</sup> Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism", pp. 112-113.

## 2.2 Kant and the Enlightenment's View of Cosmopolitanism

### 2.2.1 *Stoic Influence on Kant's Cosmopolitanism*

After antiquity the philosophical concept of cosmopolitanism became popular again during the Age of Enlightenment. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century there developed a substantial scholarly debate over the term and its implications, to which especially German intellectuals contributed. What likely prompted their interest in cosmopolitanism, which to the contemporary mind described an attitude of openness toward and curiosity about other cultures, was the overall political situation of German-speaking people during that period. Most German speakers lived within the confines of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The empire was not centrally governed but fractured into a great number of different territories, some of which – as, for example, Prussia – lay only partially within the empire itself. The territories of the empire largely followed liberal immigration policies, which meant that many foreigners escaping war and poverty settled among German-speakers, bringing along with them their foreign cultural and religious practices. What made the situation even more contingent was that German was also spoken in territories outside the empire, where it was not the only language and where German-speakers often lived together in close contact with other cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups.<sup>28</sup>

Among the many contributors to the philosophical debate over cosmopolitanism was the influential Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant. Kant, partly due to the circumstances described above, characterized Germans as ideal cosmopolitans. According to him, the Germans of the period were curious about other cultures, hospitable toward foreigners and not overtly proud of their own traditions and country.<sup>29</sup> In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that there existed only a very vague sense of national belonging among German-speakers in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, German cultural heritage was attached little value to by leading German intellectuals, who instead were a lot more interested in the cultural achievements of others.<sup>30</sup> All of this was swept aside by the nineteenth century and its strong concern for the nation;<sup>31</sup> so that today it is difficult to imagine how Germans could ever not have conceived of themselves as a nation. However, during the period Kant lived in the idea of a unified German people living together in a clear-cut nation-state was not a dominant one. This created a general atmosphere of tolerance and openness.

In this intellectual and social climate philosophers, who studied the texts of the ancient Greeks, revived the notion of cosmopolitanism, and Kant was at the fore-

<sup>28</sup> Pauline Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism: The Philosophical Ideal of World Citizenship*, Cambridge/New York/Melbourne [et al.] 2012, pp. 9-10.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

front of this movement. The term figured prominently in most of his political writing. But, as Pauline Kleingeld has shown, cosmopolitanism in Kant comes in many shapes, touching upon a diverse set of issues. Accordingly, I have decided to limit my discussion to two separate but interrelated aspects of Kant's work: his moral and political cosmopolitanism.<sup>32</sup>

Kant's moral cosmopolitanism, as may be expected, is rooted in ancient philosophy; yet not in Cynicism but Stoicism. I have already mentioned that Diogenes' cosmopolitanism is often taken to be wholly negative in that it renounces all specific allegiances. Against this I have argued that Diogenes' cosmopolitanism is not egotistic but recognizes the community of the wise. However, one may very well ask what is to become of the running of the economy and the managing of public affairs if all citizens were to become Cynics and reject government. On purely logical grounds this argument may, of course, be countered by stating that if all citizens were Cynics, there would be no-one left to worry because Cynics are dedicated to poverty. But this argument appears flawed because Diogenes and the Cynics never lived in entire poverty. But they lived of the goods they stole or were given, goods that had been produced by women and men who did not follow the Cynics' way. This circumstance does not exactly make Cynicism appear politically credible. The Stoics' attitude towards government was more positive than that of most Cynics<sup>33</sup> and many of them served as political officials; especially in the Roman world. There are, for instance, Cicero and Seneca – the latter being a political adviser to Nero; and there is Marcus Aurelius, who was a powerful emperor of the Roman Empire.<sup>34</sup> Yet this does not make the Stoic cosmopolitanism less radical as will become obvious shortly.

The core axiom of Stoic cosmopolitanism, which was also adopted by Kant, is the assumption that all human beings are equal by virtue of being capable of reason. This capacity, according to the Stoics, is a spark of the divine that lives in everyone and that makes all human beings morally equal and, therefore, equally valuable.<sup>35</sup> Thus, to the Stoics it did not matter whether one was a beggar or a king, a Chinese or a Roman. It did not matter where one came from or which class one had been born into because everyone could have been born anywhere.<sup>36</sup> By virtue of being equal, all human beings are citizens in a universal moral polity that transcends all particular allegiances.<sup>37</sup>

One of the reasons why the Stoics opted for such a strong claim was that in their capacity as political theorists and advisers they became aware that many great

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Significantly, there is a sub-current within later Cynicism that was less hostile toward government. (Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism", p. 108.)

<sup>34</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, "Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism", in: *The Journal of Philosophy* 5:1 1997, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

evils result from political faction and separatism.<sup>38</sup> Thus the Stoics did not merely assert it a truth that all humans are equal in this way, but also meant that it would be desirable if everyone believed so, that is, if everyone perceived her/himself as morally responsible for everyone else.<sup>39</sup> This would eliminate political faction. It would bring about a situation, in which nobody could easily kill or injure an enemy as s/he would be faced with the other person's humanity. Marcus Aurelius, in an almost Buddhist fashion, held that everyone must identify with one's enemies in this way, look upon them with understanding and even attempt to imagine her/himself as sharing a common goal with them.<sup>40</sup> If everyone adopted this principle war, as a political instrument, would either vanish entirely or become limited to the purpose of self-defence.<sup>41</sup>

As becomes obvious from this, Stoic cosmopolitanism is profoundly dedicated to peace and this appealed to Kant, who adopted its stance that all humans are equal by virtue of their shared capacity of reason and that, accordingly, all humans are citizens of an implicit universal moral polity and subject to common moral laws.<sup>42</sup> Kant's approach to a large extent is concerned with how one may eliminate what he called the "state of nature" between states, that is, a state wherein war is a constant possibility. This desire on Kant's part is clearly rooted in the historical context of the early modern period, which was an epoch of intense bellicosity. One need only think of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which utterly devastated Europe in the seventeenth century. Closer to Kant's time there were, for example, the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), the Seven Years' War (1754-1763) and, finally, the Napoleonic expansion that was already under way when Kant lived. Also, during the eighteenth century bigger European conflicts reached a global scale as they were carried into the newly colonized territories.<sup>43</sup> Under the impression of ever-present warfare and violent conflicts that increased in the scale of their destructive force as well as in scope, Kant desperately sought for a way to regulate the interaction of states so as to induce a process that would eventually lead to perpetual peace.

### 2.2.2 *Constitutional Right: Republicanism and Patriotism*

There are several interrelated ways in which the Stoic cosmopolitanism that influenced Kant must appear problematic. According to the Stoics, we should take into primary view in our political deliberations not what is good for us or our commu-

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 8; 9.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 6; 8

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 10; 10-11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 12; Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism*, p. 2; 17.

<sup>43</sup> Compare especially Marian Füssel, *Der Siebenjährige Krieg: Ein Weltkrieg im 18. Jahrhundert*, München 2010.

nity but what is good for the whole of humanity.<sup>44</sup> This assumption is consistent with the view that all human beings are related with each other as citizens of a world-wide moral polity, which somehow transcends local allegiances. What the Stoics have done here is derive a principle for political practice from moral reasoning. But this principle seems to demand something unpractical. For there is a sense that, in order to fully embrace it, we might need to violate the allegiance we owe to our own country, state or community. This is because we can easily imagine situations in which the interest of humanity at large is not the same as the interest of our country. It becomes obvious at this point that this was already a potential problem of Cynic cosmopolitanism. But because the Cynics categorically refuse serious political commitment they do not have to face up to it the way Kant and the Stoics have to. From this point of view it seems that the Stoics' moral premise is a fallacy to begin with. Just imagine you had to consider every stranger in the street, even people living at the other end of the world and whom you have never met as just as valuable to yourself as your own parents, your siblings or your friends.<sup>45</sup>

Kant resists these objections. To him, the assumption that we have moral obligations toward humanity at large is not absurd. He denies that this must lead to the loss of our identity and claims that love of one's country is not only compatible with but even necessary for cosmopolitanism.

I want to examine Kant's defence of moral cosmopolitanism first. The issue at hand is whether we must give up our special attachment to our family and friends if we consider all human beings to be equally valuable? Obviously we could never easily accept such a demand. But is that what moral cosmopolitanism means? Is it really meant to override particular allegiances in this way? An important way in which Kant fends off the allegation that moral cosmopolitanism is necessarily opposed to particular allegiances is by demonstrating that there is a difference between perfect and imperfect duties. Perfect duties oblige one to commit certain acts, whereas imperfect duties merely compel one to take up certain maxims. If interpreted as obliging us in an imperfect sense moral cosmopolitanism is fully compatible with maintaining particular allegiances for we may have one maxim to love our parents and another to embrace all of humanity. These maxims do not have to be at odds. But if they were it would be legitimate for us to fail one of them; provided, of course, that we had actually taken it up.<sup>46</sup>

This solution justifies political cosmopolitanism, too. But Kant does not merely claim that attending to the needs of one's country is compatible with cosmopol-

<sup>44</sup> Nussbaum, "Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism", p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism*, p. 19; For the sake of making a clear argument in my treatment of Kant's defence of moral and political cosmopolitanism, I diverge slightly from Kleingeld, whose distinction between these two dimensions of cosmopolitanism is less pronounced.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

itanism but that it is necessary for it. In order to appreciate how Kant bases this claim, I have to go further and examine his understanding of republicanism. What is of utmost importance in the normative evaluation of a political system to Kant is its capacity to guarantee the individual freedom of each of its citizens.<sup>47</sup> Kant claims that republics are best at this and that they represent the most just form of government.<sup>48</sup> In theory there exists a state before individuals form a state. This is what Kant calls “the state of nature.” The state of nature is characterized by the existence of constant potential threats to the individual’s freedom. There are no laws regulating human interaction. Anyone can be killed or injured at random or have her/his property taken away from her/him.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it is reasonable that people who interact with one another on a constant basis invent rules regarding how they should behave and, thus, bring the potential threat to their freedom, which prevails in the state of nature, under control. In Kantian terms this means that they form a state and to form a state means to exit the natural state.<sup>50</sup> It becomes obvious this way why Kant conceives of the implementation of individual freedom as the decisive factor in judging a political system. On Kant’s account individuals enter the state to have their individual freedom enforced.<sup>51</sup> But if a political system is not able to do so because it implements slavery or serfdom, the value of the state is questionable; hence, a republic follows with necessity.

In a republic the individuals give up her “wild freedom”<sup>52</sup> but retrieve it in the form of citizenship. That is, they must submit to the prevailing laws but these laws also work in their interest. What is more, as citizens they hold the right to politically influence the passing of laws through representatives.<sup>53</sup> This ensures that the citizens do not fall victim to the terror of unjust laws that were passed by their forefathers. What is important here is Kant’s emphasis on justice. For him “patriotism”, as he calls it, does not pertain to one’s membership in an ethnic, religious or national group but to a just political system.<sup>54</sup> What becomes clear from this is that the form of local allegiance Kant wishes to uphold is not equivalent with nationalism. Nationalism is the uncompromising belief that one’s own country is ‘the best country’ and that it is always right. But this attitude is unreasonable and therefore simply indefensible within Kant’s framework. What justifies the pride we take in our country is that it is pride about the justice of our political system, which guarantees our freedom. But of course there is no real guarantee that our country will remain this way. We must do something in order for this status to prevail. Accordingly, we are not merely free to monitor the state of justice in our

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> For this term see *ibid.*, p. 48; 50.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

state and to uphold and further it but we have a duty to do so.<sup>55</sup> Patriotism is a necessary condition for the existence of a republic. Significantly, this duty includes that we must criticize our country when it adopts policies that are unjust toward foreigners.<sup>56</sup> It is due to the circumstance that patriotism is not just conducive to the state of justice in a republic but a condition of its possibility, that it turns out to be necessary for cosmopolitanism, too. Actually patriotism is a form of political cosmopolitanism, which contributes directly to Kant's project of perpetual peace. Ergo, everyone being a patriot is a condition for the possibility of a world, wherein there would only be republics. Republics, according to Kant, do not tend toward warlike conduct among one another.<sup>57</sup> One of the deeper reasons as to why republics abstain from waging with each other is that in a republic the cost of war is born by the citizens.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, it is not conducive to trade and economic relations in which the citizens take an interest.<sup>59</sup>

### *2.2.3 International Right: Republicanism and World-Government*

One may or may not agree with Kant's assessment that republics do not tend towards war. . What would appear to be accurate is that democratically governed states have not tended to fight among one another historically. However, what is most surprising about Kant is how from his argument flows a sense that in order to establish perpetual peace and international justice the differences between states need to be abandoned. After all, states interact with one another just like individuals do. Also, we have already seen that Kant conceptualizes the phenomenon of war in analogy to the natural state that exists between individuals before common government is established. On this take, it would make sense to advocate that all states be absorbed into one state encompassing the entire globe and all peoples. Yet such a conclusion would contradict Kant's argument in favour of patriotism, which implies a multiplicity of fatherlands. In fact, Kant advocated a federal republic of different states as ideal.<sup>60</sup> However, during Kant's period there were theorists who held that the establishment of a world-state was exactly what was needed in order to implement peace and progress. To them, the coercive establishment of a world-state seemed justified.<sup>61</sup>

Kant opposed such attempts at an ad hoc implementation of a world-government.<sup>62</sup> According to him, a world-state cannot be established through coercion because non-coercion is an international right. This is due to a significant

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-31.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 31-32.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 50-51.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

incongruity between the state of nature as concerning the interaction among individuals and among states. On the level of individuals a person may be coerced into joining a state when s/he interacts with its citizens on a regular basis. In this case Kant judges coercion to be justified because the state defends every citizen's personal freedom. Thus, joining it is in the interest of the coerced individual. But this does not apply at an international level. This is because states grant political autonomy as a constitutional right to their citizens, which is something an individual existing in the state of nature does not possess. Thus, citizens already are politically self-determined, and to seek to override their political autonomy is arbitrary.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, it is implausible to try to overcome the international state of nature by resorting to coercion, whose effects are worse than that state.

The most important lesson which may be learned from Kant is that in imagining the overcoming of the international state of nature one must think historically and in terms of process. Historically the creation of different states antedates the moment in time from which we envisage world-government as desirable. The historical process of the dwelling of individuals in states naturalizes the existence of states<sup>64</sup> and even though all humans are equal on moral grounds and ought to be so politically they may not want to live together in a world-state. Yet what they want is what matters in Kant's republican line of argument.<sup>65</sup> What needs to be done in order to establish peace, Kant suggests, is the founding of a voluntary league, wherein the different member-states cooperatively legislate rules and regulations for interaction.<sup>66</sup> This will initiate a historical process toward perpetual peace<sup>67</sup> as the members, thriving and dedicated to both internal as well as external peace and justice, will attract more and more participants.<sup>68</sup>

#### 2.2.4 *Cosmopolitan Right: Hospitality and Sovereignty*

Kant's discussion of cosmopolitanism is not limited to questions of constitutional and international right. Another important way in which Kant thinks about cosmopolitanism is with regard to cosmopolitan right. This pertains to the interaction between individuals and states and, thus, is not covered by international agreement, which only concerns relations between states.<sup>69</sup> It applies, for instance, in the case of merchants, who try to establish and maintain business relationships with other states. In the course of such business interactions the individuals involved potentially impact on each others' freedom. To Kant it is imperative that

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 53-57.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 63-64.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-67.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 72; 74-75.

such interaction be regulated. For otherwise the international state of nature may not be completely overcome.<sup>70</sup>

Kant's immediate impetus for engaging with this issue was provided by the way in which early modern Japan and China conducted business with foreign traders. The Japanese, for instance, allowed contact with Dutch traders only once a year. When the Dutch came they were kept contained on a small island off the Japanese coast. They were not allowed to enter the mainland. During Kant's time it became a point of debate among Europeans whether countries had a right to deny individuals access to their domain in this way.<sup>71</sup> Kant's contribution to this issue is often overlooked, even though it is of importance to his theory of international relations. I have mentioned that Kant insists that states engaging in a loose league, in the context of which they negotiate multilateral legal agreements, do not have to sacrifice their sovereignty. The issue of cosmopolitan right, however, touches directly upon how such sovereignty may in fact be limited by the rights of individuals. In the end Kant ruled in favour of Chinese and Japanese politics of reclusiveness. He defended their right to act in this way on the basis that they merely wished to forestall European colonial intrusion, which by that time had already established its hold on various places in Asia. On Kant's interpretation their acting in this way amounted to making use of the right to self-defence.<sup>72</sup>

Having argued in this way Kant nevertheless left no doubt that there were instances in which states could be obliged to provide what he called "hospitality."<sup>73</sup> Requests for access to a state's domain may be made by persons at any time. States have the duty to audition such requests but hold the right to deny access. In this case their duty to provide hospitality goes no further than to meet the requests with non-hostility.<sup>74</sup> However, there are certain requests for hospitality that cannot be denied. This would be the case if a person could be denied hospitality only at the expense of his/her "demise."<sup>75</sup> Kant justifies this principle by arguing that individuals have an innate right to freedom. We have already seen why this is the case. But being free requires existence, and existence requires a place to exist in. If the refugee cannot help being where s/he is, s/he must be permitted to stay on.<sup>76</sup>

One may point out that, in suggesting such a principle, Kant anticipated the discussion over the rights of refugees that ensued in the twentieth century.<sup>77</sup> Modern people are therefore likely to find Kant's argument laudable. It, nevertheless, runs into problems when we imagine that an individual, in claiming hospitality,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 72-73

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>73</sup> For this term see *ibid.*, p. 73; 76.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

might infringe upon the private property of another individual. Kant calls to attention that individual states may raise taxes to finance welfare. He suggests that in analogy to this a universal state might oblige individual world-citizens to solidarity with their fellow citizens in need and to permit encroachment on their property in case this is vital to the maintenance of another person's existence.<sup>78</sup>

Another problem concerns Kant's interpretation of the reclusive behaviour of China and Japan. For his argument that the Chinese and Japanese use self-defence may be challenged by way of pointing out that the political systems of Japan and China are applying undue coercion by depriving their citizens of the possibility of establishing relationships with foreigners, which they might otherwise approve of.<sup>79</sup> One way of loosening up the grip of this counter-argument is to point out that if the Japanese and Chinese citizens had a say, it would not be illegal if they came to exactly the same decision as their rulers.<sup>80</sup> Kant also makes it clear that whether a state is a republic or not is a matter of the internal affairs of that state, in which cosmopolitan right has no say<sup>81</sup>, which is consistent with the principle of non-coercion.

What this shows is that Kant's cosmopolitan right concerns a number of issues that cut across the rather straightforward international regulations in a complex way. It complicates Kantian theory and deepens its insights as to the relation between individuals and states. It also contains the proper realization of the demands made by moral cosmopolitanism. For, the cosmopolitan right is shared by all people regardless of their local or national affiliations.<sup>82</sup>

From this point one may still go a lot further in exploring Kant's cosmopolitanism. I shall presently content myself with a concluding summary regarding the differences and similarities between Kant's understanding of cosmopolitanism and that of the Stoics and Cynics. In doing so, we may note that Kant's approach differs from that of Diogenes in that cosmopolitanism serves a different and quite specific purpose: the establishment of international peace. This notion was already present in the Stoics' moral cosmopolitanism but Kant's approach is also different from theirs as he does not limit his efforts to positing normative principles. Even though he agrees with the Stoic humanitarian ideology, Kant has accepted that human beings have selfish urges, which they must follow. Among other things, he seeks out ways in which our selfish desires may be reasonably compatible with these humanitarian ideals and on that basis wishes to construct regulatory mechanisms for social interaction. In doing so, Kant develops cosmopolitanism further from its anarchist seclusion in Diogenes to a more government-affirmative position, which makes him akin to the Stoics. But unlike the Stoics Kant transforms

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 85-86.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

cosmopolitanism from a guideline for politicians to a legal principle that is practically binding for everyone. Most importantly, Kant demonstrates that the cosmopolitan ideal is compatible with more local allegiances – a problem that was not solved well by the Stoics.

Finally, using the notion of cosmopolitan right, Kant opens up a space for the legal regulation of social interaction that involves individuals as well as states but that takes place beyond the level of individual states. This is where we encounter Kant at his most cosmopolitan. Moreover, there is a lingering sense in Kant's philosophy that the achievement of peace must be imagined not only in terms of reason but also in terms of process and of history. Nothing could be more damaging than to take quick action once we have identified what is rationally desirable. Our theories also need to meet the requirements of empirical reality. Accordingly, Kant suggests the issue of peace may not be forced. We may only hope to initiate a process that will eventually lead us there.

### 2.3 Contemporary Cosmopolitanism: World Citizenship in the Age of Globalization

#### 2.3.1 *Cosmopolitan Order versus Westphalian Order*

As was implied earlier, in the period immediately succeeding Kant's time there emerged a heightened sense of nationalism in many European countries.<sup>83</sup> In 1871 a German nation-state was founded, uniting the greater part of German-speakers within a centrally governed territory. The fascination with newly discovered national identities, especially in Germany, turned into an obsession, an exaggerated notion of the significance of national belonging that culminated in two world wars in the twentieth century, which drove Europe and the world to the brink of destruction. During this period of increased particularism the project of cosmopolitanism lay dormant. One could not say that it was completely forgotten. But when it was addressed by intellectuals such as the historian Friedrich Meinecke or the philosopher Edmund Pfleiderer it was typically subjected to ridicule.<sup>84</sup>

Why cosmopolitanism appeared incompatible with nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalist sentiment should already be obvious: Nationalism is the belief in impenetrable, almost natural boundaries that distinguish peoples from one another. Cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, is more about how such boundaries may not be absolute and that we may reach out across them. Kant even suggested that there is a necessity to do so and, although he held the political autonomy of individual states in high regard, his notion of cosmopolitan right indicates that this

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<sup>83</sup> For a full account of the rise of nationalism in nineteenth and twentieth century see: Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Wiles Lectures given at the Queen's University Belfast), Cambridge/New York/Melbourne [et al.] 1990.

<sup>84</sup> Klingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 11-12.

autonomy may be positively limited. This notion contradicted the Westphalian Order, the dominant ideology of international politics in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which conceptualized states as possessing absolute sovereignty.<sup>85</sup> It was not until World War II that the Westphalian Order was recognized not to have paid off. The Westphalian order was ultimately overcome with the holding of the Nuremberg Trials, the foundation of the United Nations (UN) and the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a number of other international rights.<sup>86</sup> On the basis of such agreements states were to be made accountable for the measures they inflicted upon their citizens.

However, it was not until after the Cold War that the new order could fully come to the fore. When the Berlin Wall came down and released the world from its bipolar interlock, this event coincided with the emergence of an increased awareness of the global interconnectedness and interdependence in terms of financial markets, communication and environmental problems.<sup>87</sup> Not only did a return to the Westphalian model appear historically undesirable but the institution of the nation-state had been radically undercut by global economic developments. It was in this context that the idea of cosmopolitanism came to flourish again. The anthropologist Pnina Werbner has identified three strands of “normative cosmopolitanism” which emerged in this context, two of which I will treat in some detail.<sup>88</sup> There is the notion of cosmopolitan democracy, whose main proponents are the political scientists Daniele Archibugi and David Held, and which will be discussed in the immediately succeeding chapter. Ulrich Beck’s approach to cosmopolitanism, which will be discussed under headings 2.3.3 and 2.3.4, is of specific interest as Beck is a sociologist. Accordingly, his approach to cosmopolitanism differs in some respects from the more philosophical understanding of cosmopolitanism I have developed so far.

### 2.3.2 *Cosmopolitan Democracy: Globalizing Democracy and Democratizing Globalization*

David Held’s and Daniele Archibugi’s notion of cosmopolitanism – the term cosmopolitan democracy suggests as much – is profoundly intertwined with democracy. This, of course, suggests a theoretical proximity to Kant, who deemed republicanism an essential means for the overcoming of the international state of nature. As a matter of fact, cosmopolitan democracy is rooted in Kantianism. Yet it also diverges from it in important ways. Significantly, Held synthesizes Kant’s approach with insights from the hermeneutical tradition.

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<sup>85</sup> Pnina Werbner, “Introduction: Toward a New Cosmopolitan Anthropology”, in: *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism*, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-8; I do not entirely concur with Werbner’s characterization of these perspectives as normative. She applies this label to Jürgen Habermas and David Held, which, to me, is fine. However, I do not see how Beck’s perspective could be said to be normative in the same sense.

One way in which cosmopolitan democracy diverges from Kant is in that it conceptualizes cosmopolitanism not solely as a means of overcoming the threat of international warfare.<sup>89</sup> Of course, this is still a problem and a very important one for that. But there are other issues pertaining, for example, to the regulation of international financial exchange or environmental pollution. Due to increased global interdependencies issues such as these can no longer be democratically resolved by state-based decision-making. For example, the United States should not unilaterally decide to violate the Kyoto Protocol because the result of such an infringement does not merely affect Americans but all of humanity.<sup>90</sup> But the effects of global processes need not necessarily concern humanity at large to pose a problem. Some processes may impact upon individual members of a religious community who live in different countries. In a similar way employers of a multinational company may be equally affected by the fortunes and misfortunes of their company.<sup>91</sup> The point is that due to the increasingly global dimension of economic, social, religious and cultural processes the stakeholders in such processes are increasingly less correspondent with nations. This phenomenon, which David Held calls “overlapping communities of fate”<sup>92</sup>, poses a problem because current institutions of global governance, so-called international governmental organizations (IGOs), like the UN are dominated by governmental officials. But such officials represent the interests of states, which have gradually become less equivalent with the communities affected by global political decision-making.<sup>93</sup> According to Held and Archibugi, all of this suggests that we require more specialized forms of democratic participation. Much of the current literature on cosmopolitan democracy explores what institutional reforms and innovations are necessary in order to democratize globalization.<sup>94</sup>

However, the wider point of cosmopolitan democracy is not that states need to be abandoned. Archibugi acknowledges that the nation-state has been instrumental in granting rights to minorities and may continue to do so.<sup>95</sup> Also, the cosmopolitan

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<sup>89</sup> Daniele Archibugi, “Cosmopolitan Democracy and its Critics: A Review”, in: *European Journal of International Relations* 10:3 (2004), p. 442.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*; Jean-Paul Gagnon, “An Interview with Professor David Held: Exploring the Concepts of Cosmopolitanism and Democracy”, in: *Journal of Democratic Theory* 1:1 (2011), p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Archibugi, “Cosmopolitan Democracy”, p. 443.

<sup>94</sup> In his interview with Gagnon David Held explains how he began working on the project of cosmopolitan democracy many years ago under the influence of Horkheimer and Adorno. Held expresses dissatisfaction with these authors’ tendency to simply criticize the existing state of affairs without making substantial suggestions as to how it may be changed for the better. (Gagnon, “An Interview”, pp. 6-7.) As a remedy Held suggests that political theory ought to operate at different levels. One such level which Held designates “agitational” is specifically designed to translate more abstract philosophical reasoning into suggestions for institutional reform and innovation. (*Ibid.*, p. 6.)

<sup>95</sup> Archibugi, “Cosmopolitan Democracy”, p. 447.

effort is not restricted to the democratization of IGOs. Rather, cosmopolitan democracy aims to extend democratic principles to all levels of government, be they local, regional in a sub-national sense, national, regional in a supra-national sense, or global.<sup>96</sup> Held argues that a laudable attempt at such a “multilayered citizenship” can be found in the EU: A person living in Glasgow, for instance, may participate in local, regional and national elections, as well as in the United Kingdom general elections and EU elections.<sup>97</sup> All the relations we stand in ought to be democratized in this way. Importantly, however, Held admits that it is as yet unforeseeable where exactly this process of democratization will finally take us and what forms of democratic deliberation and participation it will generate.<sup>98</sup> This is partly a lesson learned from globalization. In all likelihood the world will keep being transformed in unpredictable ways, will remain dynamic, and we will always have to re-think and re-adjust our efforts to consolidate democracy and the rule of law. This is also the point at which Held incorporates principles from hermeneutics into his approach. According to him, we always have to re-interpret democracy as we apply it to a new social context or situation<sup>99</sup> and this process is potentially never-ending.<sup>100</sup>

This leads me to what the term cosmopolitanism actually designates within Held’s and Archibugi’s framework. In many of his publications Held describes cosmopolitanism as a set of universal principles underlying democracy<sup>101</sup>, which he partly derives from empirical inquiry into the nature of various historical political systems that qualify as democratic.<sup>102</sup> For example, like Kant and the Stoics he, firstly, argues that all humans are of equal moral value and deserve to be treated equally by the state. To this Held adds the notion that all humans possess what he calls “transformative agency”, which means the capacity to make decisions regarding issues that concern them.<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, all human beings should be regarded as capable of self-determination and this capacity must be safeguarded and respected by politics. This idea was also implicit in my earlier account of Kantian cosmopolitanism, specifically with regard to Kant’s notion of republicanism, which may be understood to imply a democratic participatory system. From Held’s point regarding transformative agency follow, thirdly, responsibility and accountability: In their transformative capacity social agents may often change the world in ways that affect others and what needs to be ascertained that these

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<sup>96</sup> Gagnon, “An Interview”, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Archibugi, “Cosmopolitan Democracy”, p. 440.

<sup>99</sup> Gagnon, “An Interview”, p. 8.

<sup>100</sup> Archibugi, “Cosmopolitan Democracy”, p. 440.

<sup>101</sup> Held argues that, for him, cosmopolitanism corresponds to the principles of democracy without territorial borders. (Gagnon, “An Interview”, p. 2.)

<sup>102</sup> Held alludes to his empirical research on democratic models several times throughout his interview with Jean-Paul Gagnon. (*Ibid.*, p. 1; 7-8.)

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

changes are not harmful. This, in turn, necessitates the principle of collective decision-making and so on.<sup>104</sup>

When comparing Held's definition of cosmopolitanism as the universal principles underlying democracy and his insistence on the hermeneutical maxim, according to which democracy will always have to be re-interpreted and, thus, transformed, it might not immediately be clear how these two notions should be compatible with one another. Held has argued that democracy will always have to be translated into specific contexts. However, in order to translate democracy in this way we need to have principles first. Accordingly we could not abandon one of the essential principles on which democracy is based in our interpretation – such as the idea of accountability of political agents or that of the right to equal participation of all citizens – and claim that we were upholding democracy. Conversely, the interpretation and application of the principles may not be pursued outside the context of public dialogue<sup>105</sup>, to which the democratization of institutions cosmopolitan democracy suggests should be conducive. Held, at some point, claims that his principles for democracy are universal but not eternal.<sup>106</sup> What this paradoxical statement seems to suggest is that he regards his account of the principles of democracy as fallible. Hence, anyone can reasonably object to his account, add or contest principles or suggest adjustments. Held is not insisting on his account of principles but on the necessity of principles more generally.

Another possible objection to cosmopolitan democracy is that it disregards the plurality of culturally derived value-orientations and interpretive standpoints by superimposing Western standards onto international procedures.<sup>107</sup> Held rejects this by arguing that it is precisely because cosmopolitan democracy acknowledges that people differ in their understanding of right and wrong that it seeks to establish a framework for discussion.<sup>108</sup> Cosmopolitan democracy is dedicated to ethical neutrality and ethical pluralism. Yet in order to enable pluralism cosmopolitan democracy requires commitment to a political structure that facilitates the imposition of possible sanctions on ethical positions that are actually harmful to that pluralism.<sup>109</sup> The notion that democracy belongs purely to the West has become more difficult to maintain in the light of the democratic aspirations of the Arab Spring or the political movements of many Third World national minorities demanding participation and equality (e.g. untouchables in India). What is more, anthropological research such as that of David Graeber has demonstrated that if we strip democracy to its core principles, we suddenly become peculiarly aware

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid. Held's entire set of principles is also mentioned in David Held, "Cultural Diversity, Cosmopolitan Principles and the Limits of Sovereignty", in: Idem/Henrietta L. Moore (eds.), *Cultural Politics in a Global Age: Uncertainty, Solidarity and Innovation*, Oxford 2008, p. 159.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp. 161-162; Gagnon, "An Interview", p. 8.

<sup>106</sup> Held, "Cultural Diversity", p. 161.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 160-161.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

that it is and was by no means restricted to ‘the West’ but played a role in the history of many different cultures at different times.<sup>110</sup> David Held argues that in particular Islam’s contribution to this tradition has been significant.<sup>111</sup>

### 2.3.3 *Cosmopolitan Sociology, Cosmopolitanization and World Risk Society*

As I have already indicated, Ulrich Beck’s approach to cosmopolitanism differs from the more philosophical cosmopolitanisms of Held, Kant and Diogenes. All of the latter denote ways of thinking about what we *ought* to do and what institutions we *ought* to create in order to transform the world in an ideal way. Beck’s approach, however, is not philosophical and, for that, is not normative in the same sense. To be sure, Beck also advocates something as ideal, thinks that we *should* do something and this something is also called cosmopolitanism. However, Beck thinks of cosmopolitanism more in terms of a new methodology for social science. He advocates what he calls a “methodological cosmopolitanism” in the social sciences or a “cosmopolitan sociology.”

As in the case of cosmopolitan democracy, Beck’s demand for a “methodological cosmopolitanism” must be understood as a reaction to globalization. He starts off on the diagnosis of a profound ontological transformation of global social structures to the extent that these have become increasingly transnational.<sup>112</sup> It is Beck’s central contention that the framework of traditional sociology, has become insufficient in dealing with these new ontological conditions<sup>113</sup> which Beck calls “Second Modernity.”<sup>114</sup>

One way in which this conventional “methodological nationalism”, as Beck calls it, fails is in the development of an appropriate framework for assessing and analyzing global inequality. According to Beck, the fact that many social scientific and economic statistics merely assess social inequality within nation-states leads to the belief that such issues are mere national phenomena.<sup>115</sup> However, this is not so and Beck argues that there is sufficient reason to believe that the more developed countries of Europe and North America frequently pass on poverty risks to less developed states. As an example Beck names the protectionist policies Europeans

<sup>110</sup> David Graeber, “On Cosmopolitan and (Vernacular) Democratic Creativity: Or, There Never was a West?”, in: *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 281-305. Note that Werbner mentions Graeber’s work in the same context in her introduction (Werbner, “Introduction”, p. 3).

<sup>111</sup> Held, “Cultural Diversity”, p. 163.

<sup>112</sup> Ulrich Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies”, in: *Theory, Culture & Society: Explorations in Critical Social Science* 19:17 (2002), p. 29.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24; Ulrich Beck, “Kosmopolitisierung ohne Kosmopolitik: Zehn Thesen zum Unterschied zwischen Kosmopolitismus in Philosophie und Sozialwissenschaft”, in: Helmuth Berking (ed.), *Die Macht des Lokalen in einer Welt ohne Grenzen*, Frankfurt [a.M.]/New York 2006, p. 252.

<sup>114</sup> For a definition of Beck’s notion of First and Second Modernity see *ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

and the US apply to their agrarian commodity markets in order to save them from having to compete with African and Latin American goods.<sup>116</sup>

According to Beck, problems such as these cannot be properly analyzed and understood at present because they hardly ever show up on the radar of social sciences. He makes many suggestions as to how the framework of social science might be reformed in order to make it more sensitive to the increased transnational interdependencies of social, economic and political processes.<sup>117</sup> One phenomenon that Beck thinks social science needs to come to terms with is what he calls “cosmopolitanization.” Cosmopolitanization, according to Beck, is about how globalization transforms nation-state societies from inside.<sup>118</sup> It is essentially the increased intermixing and confrontation of alternative (cultural) ways of life within territories that used to be more culturally homogenous.<sup>119</sup> This process, of course, may be much older than the rather recent post-Cold War economic trends that we refer to as globalization. After all, peoples and cultural groups have been settling, re-settling and intermingling with others all throughout history. No doubt Beck means to suggest that cosmopolitanization is now accelerated not only by an increased degree of international migration but also by the spread of telecommunication and internet, both of which, in turn, are facilitated by economic globalization.<sup>120</sup> Thus, cosmopolitanization is an old process that is increasing in scope but – and this is most significant to Beck – what is new is that we are increasingly becoming aware of it.<sup>121</sup>

This phenomenon Beck refers to as “globality” or “reflexive globalization.”<sup>122</sup> Before I discuss this I want to more fully explore what cosmopolitanization entails. The reason why Beck refers to this process as cosmopolitanization is, as he claims, because it has made some of the dreams of philosophical cosmopolitanism come true and that this has happened mostly without any of the institutional guidance that cosmopolitan philosophers usually demand.<sup>123</sup> One of these dreams was the wish to include the excluded. But this, Beck claims, is exactly what reality today is like.<sup>124</sup> People increasingly lead transnational lifestyles and that this is not limited to rich Western entrepreneurial classes. One may imagine, for instance, a Pakistani working in the US, whose family stays behind in Islamabad but who,

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>117</sup> Note, for instance, Beck’s adaption of Saskia Sassen’s notion of the city as a node of international flows (Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society”, p. 23) or his discussion of concepts such as “de-territorialization” and “imagined presence” (*Ibid.*, p. 31).

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18

<sup>120</sup> Beck at some point seemingly agrees with Kant that cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitanization, as he calls it, is brought on by the global spread of economic relations (*Ibid.*, p. 29).

<sup>121</sup> Beck, “Kosmopolitisierung ohne Kosmopoliten”, p. 260.

<sup>122</sup> Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society”, p. 21.

<sup>123</sup> Beck, “Kosmopolitisierung ohne Kosmopoliten”, p. 255.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

nevertheless, retains a presence in the imagination of his family at home (“imagined presence”), which is aided by telecommunication and the internet.<sup>125</sup> Beck suggests that people like this simultaneously belong to two different places, that in a sense they even are in both places at once<sup>126</sup>. Hence, clear-cut differences between being a citizen or not, belonging to a place or not, the principle of either-or, which pervaded throughout and ordered “First Modernity” is increasingly being undermined.<sup>127</sup> This is what Beck calls “cosmopolitan realism.” Nineteenth-century polemic attacks on Kant ridiculed his notion of cosmopolitanism as “idealistic” because national egotism was the way in which reality was apparently structured. Beck claims that the tables have turned and that now nationalism and, therefore, methodological nationalism are outmoded because reality is ontologically increasingly cosmopolitan.<sup>128</sup>

Nevertheless, Beck is mindful not to give the impression that the cosmopolitanization will necessarily produce a rosy cosmopolitan future. He states that there is, in fact, a dialectical relation between cosmopolitanization and anti-cosmopolitanization. This may, for instance, be seen in the rise of popular right-wing parties within Europe such as the UK Independence Party, or Lega Nord.<sup>129</sup> Another example is the increased focus on national security in the US and other countries after 9/11.<sup>130</sup> There is a sense that cosmopolitanization and especially our becoming aware of it may exactly lead to renewed efforts of drawing boundaries. Yet Beck also suggests that this tendency may not persevere since there is yet another dialectical process interfering with it. This other dialectic is related to what Beck calls “world risk society.” According to this theory, globality (or reflexive globalization) will ultimately produce a global awareness of great future risks such as the threat of ecological disaster or poverty and that these risks are equally shared by all human beings. This will necessitate global consensus for political action and provide humans with a shared sense of belonging. Thus, the more threatening shared risks will appear, the more urgent will be the need to lay aside differences and come to agreements.<sup>131</sup>

### 2.3.4 *Universalism, Hegemony and Relativism*

In summary, what may be noted, again, is that one major aspect that sets Beck’s approach apart from the more philosophical understanding of cosmopolitanism is his focus on the need to re-think categories, concepts and theories of empirical

<sup>125</sup> Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society”, pp. 30-31.

<sup>126</sup> Beck, “Kosmopolitisierung ohne Kosmopoliten”, p. 257.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. Note also Beck’s discussion of what he calls “exclusion crisis” (Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society”, pp. 19-20).

<sup>128</sup> Beck, “Kosmopolitisierung ohne Kosmopoliten”, p. 253.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

sociological research. Yet this does not mean that Beck has nothing to contribute to the more philosophical discussion. In fact, he contributes some important coordinates from social theory that can be used to complement the more philosophical analysis: This is the opposition between the principles of universalism and relativism. To be sure, this antagonism between universalism and relativism will ultimately play a role in my discussion of the two postcolonial theorists.

Beck first describes the “two faces of universalism” as corresponding to Samuel P. Huntington’s notion of the “clash of civilizations” on the one hand and Francis Fukuyama’s idea of the “end of history” on the other. According to Beck, Huntington’s universalism is a “universalism of difference”: There are hierarchies between different cultures. Some are more advanced than others and, hence, are superior. These differences are universal and unbridgeable. This is why the West and Islamic civilization are culturally fundamentally opposed to one another. Fukuyama’s universalism, by contrast, is a “universalism of sameness”: There are cultural differences but they are not so important. In fact, they are transcended by an underlying universal sameness of all human beings.<sup>132</sup> Beck compares this model to Christian universalism, which enabled missionaries to defend the equal humanity of indigenous people against claims that they were racially inferior to Europeans.<sup>133</sup>

Significantly, Beck at this point does not go on to discuss Huntington’s universalism of difference, which is chauvinistic. However, he also makes a critical point about Fukuyama’s universalism. There is, of course, something incredibly desirable about this type of universalism. It enables one to transcend perceived difference and to feel for strangers as sincerely as we feel for ourselves and our kind.<sup>134</sup> It enables identification. Its shortcoming is more difficult to understand but it helps to imagine what would happen if one was to absolutize this principle. What would happen is that the difference of others would cease being valuable in itself. We could not appreciate someone for just being different from us but s/he would only matter as far as s/he reaffirmed our sense of self.<sup>135</sup> Beck gives the example of American citizenship: In the United States there are many different people bearing all sorts of different cultural heritages. However, they are all united as Americans. Beck claims that what one encounters here is a dialectic between difference and conformity: The more internal difference a society possesses, the stronger becomes the pressure on individual groups to conform to overarching universal values.<sup>136</sup> However, the problem is that what is considered universal might just be instituted by a particular social group. It is a ‘pseudo-universalism’

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<sup>132</sup> Ulrich Beck, “Realistic Cosmopolitanism: How Do Societies Handle Otherness?”, in: *Cultural Politics*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>134</sup> Beck uses similar imagery to describe the positive side of universalism in his section on relativism (*ibid.*, p. 65).

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63; 64.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

that is particular to the dominant social group within that society and, thus, absolutized universalism of sameness is hegemonic.<sup>137</sup> It gaps the difference of the Other at the expense of making this difference insignificant.

It is important to treat this issue at some length and come to a clear understanding of it. This is because all cosmopolitanisms are underpinned by universalism to some extent. Universalism is to some extent necessary for cosmopolitanism. But absolutized universalism is vulnerable to political instrumentalization.

This leads me straight to Beck's discussion of relativism. To Beck, relativism is on the opposite side of the spectrum. It is the contention that the Other has a unique perspective that is different from ours and that this perspective has a right to exist as well as value in itself.<sup>138</sup> This is what keeps universalism from being a demand to conformity. However, just like universalism relativism may not be absolutized. For if this is done, we find that our perspective and the perspective of the Other are essentially incommensurable, and that the Other is so alien that mutual understanding must be impossible. Extreme relativism, thus, achieves exactly what it tries to avoid: essentialism.<sup>139</sup> I might add that such an idea is also critical since it would appear to negate the legitimacy of universal human rights.

### 3. The Postcolonial Perspectives: Rooted and Vernacular Cosmopolitanism

#### 3.1 What is Postcolonial?

Before I get started on the two postcolonial conceptions of cosmopolitanism – Kwame Anthony Appiah's notion of "rooted cosmopolitanism" and Homi Bhabha's "vernacular cosmopolitanism" – I feel it in order to address briefly the question of what the term 'postcolonial' may entail in the present context. Generally, one may ask things like what or who is postcolonial, what is the 'postcolonial age' and what do 'postcolonial studies' do? Of course, the most obvious thing would be to believe that the term 'postcolonial' simply refers to the way things are after the end of colonialism. This, however, leaves us stranded with the problem of defining 'colonialism.' All throughout history, empires existed and, thus, instances of colonialism. Are all these instances of colonialism the same, or do we have to talk in terms of different colonialisms? To be sure, the use of the term postcolonial is not stable to the extent that its meaning may be finally settled. However, there are typical ways in which the term is used by postcolonial critics. One such way is

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., pp. 62-63; 64.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

by thinking the postcolonial precisely not as merely referring to the state of affairs that prevails after the end of colonialism. This view we encounter, for instance, in Bill Ashcroft's, Gareth Griffith's and Helen Tiffin's interesting study of postcolonial literatures called *The Empire Writes Back*. The authors describe their approach in the following way:

We use the term 'post-colonial' [...] to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. We also suggest that it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years and for the discourse through which this is constituted. In this sense this book is concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European colonial domination and the effects of this on contemporary literatures.<sup>140</sup>

From this one may, at first, be inclined to think that Ashcroft's use of the term postcolonial is deliberately misleading. This is because the 'post' in postcolonial clearly suggests that something has ended, namely: colonialism. What is more, we actually know that the colonialism Ashcroft is referring to has ended since he clearly means European colonialism. We know, for instance, that India gained its independence from the British in 1947 and that Hong Kong ceased being a British colony in 1997. And yet Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin speak of "a continuity of preoccupations" and wish to subsume under the postcolonial both colonial and, hence, historical, as well as formerly colonial cultures.

However, one must not misunderstand the authors here. For their aim is not to suggest that European colonialism did not officially end but that, while it lasted, colonialism impacted on the cultures engaged in "the imperial process" to such an extent that it continues to be felt in the present. Accordingly, after colonialism is not before colonialism. Cultures which were at one point engaged in the imperial process do not simply revert to their pre-colonial state once colonialism has officially ended, but remain forever changed by their experience of it. For instance, many, if not all, formerly colonized countries depend in their present form as nations on a concept derived from their Western colonizers. Would India ever have become a nation-state if it had not been for Gandhi, who adopted the idea of national autonomy from the British? Would many, if not all, of the states of Africa exist in their present form if it had not been for the Europeans' 'Scramble for Africa'? This is precisely why the authors think of their subject-matter and approach as postcolonial rather than colonial: More conventional approaches to colonialism think of it as restricted to the past. But the authors suggest that we may actually understand the present through the colonial past, that we may best

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<sup>140</sup> Bill Ashcroft/Gareth Griffith/Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, London/New York 1989, p. 2.

conceptualize it as a result of colonialism. On this take, the term postcolonial refers to the phenomenon of colonialism in its continuing impact upon its own aftermath. Postcolonial studies is the field of study that inquires into this phenomenon.

But I have quoted Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin at some length because the authors offer even more clues pertaining to the present state of postcolonial studies. It is also true, for instance, that, following their example, much of the postcolonial debate has focused on the effects of “European imperial aggression” of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, one must not believe that postcolonial analyses are necessarily restricted to modern and contemporary history. As I indicated above, it is quite difficult to define what colonialism actually is. But while it is undoubtedly true that the modern period witnessed an unprecedented rise of colonial domination, one may ask whether the history of what we call ‘Europe’ or ‘the West’ is not itself marked by colonial conquest and domination? There were the Roman Empire, the process of Christianization or Charlemagne’s Carolingian Empire. What this makes us recognize is that, strictly-speaking, the postcolonial is not necessarily confined to one particular period but that it constitutes a conceptual framework that may be applied to a great number of ethnically, politically, culturally, economically and religiously motivated forms of domination that existed throughout history.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, the way the term postcolonial is mostly used by postcolonial theorists and as it appears in the title of this work refers to the present and how it has become what it is.

According to the authors, postcolonial studies are also concerned with ‘culture.’ The way I see it, the term culture is even more complex and semantically unstable than colonialism. At the most basic level one may conceive of culture as opposed to nature, as something that is not given to us by birth. Instead it denotes how our behaviour, our way of thinking, our actions and various, if not all, of our personal features are constituted and shaped by the way in which we relate to other persons and to the various groups we are part of (social constructivism). One basic underlying assumption of this understanding of culture is that what we perceive as our self, our identity is not ‘given’ but socially constituted and, thus, conditioned by our environment and experiences in complex ways, which may not be positively and finally disentangled and elucidated.<sup>142</sup> Hence, we may never analyze culture itself but only analyze something in terms of culture.

<sup>141</sup> There are some interesting attempts to apply concepts from post-colonial theory to medieval literature and history: Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middle Ages* (The New Middle Ages), New York 2006; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (ed.), *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, New York 2000; Ananya Jahanara Kabir/Deanne Williams (ed.), *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 54), Cambridge 2005.

<sup>142</sup> There is a highly elucidating discussion of the concept of identity in Stuart Hall, “Introduction: Who Needs Identity?”, in: Idem/Paul Du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi 2003 (originally published 1996), pp. 1-17.

This means that culture, just like the notion of the postcolonial, represents a conceptual framework rather than an object. From the cultural perspective one may analyze a great number of, if not all, social phenomena as culturally constituted and, thus, relative rather than natural and necessary. But since culture is the potential driving-force behind all behaviour, every discourse and mindset, cultural analysis cannot be limited to fictional literature. Rather, cinema, biographical narratives, visual art, newspaper articles, material objects and many other things may also be regarded as expressions of culture and, hence, as potential objects of cultural analysis. Thus, the authors' mention of "all the culture affected by the imperial process" as postcolonial implies that they wish to open postcolonial studies to the analysis of all the different objects that are potentially implied by the term culture.

This points to an important feature of the self-image of postcolonial studies. Postcolonial theory and postcolonial empirical analyses may have been pioneered by literary critics. Yet the academic field of postcolonial criticism is in no way restricted to the analysis of literature but regards itself as trans-disciplinary. Consequently, there exist postcolonial niches in disciplines as diverse as history, anthropology, film and media studies, economics, sociology and art history, which have facilitated and advanced the methodological and theoretical exchange between these disciplines.

Finally, the authors also suggest that the term postcolonial may not only be applied to the culture generated and conditioned by the postcolonial experience but that it also designates the discussion of and academic commentary on this culture. As far as literary studies are concerned, much of this "new cross-cultural criticism" harks back to Edward Said's seminal study *Orientalism*. Said, arguably, was the first to consistently apply post-structuralist methodology to the study of colonialism. In the wake of his work the field of postcolonial theory has emerged as a discourse that seeks to synthesize different theoretical and methodological insights from different disciplines, as well as different frameworks like Marxism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, post-structuralism and feminism.<sup>143</sup>

What becomes obvious from this is that postcolonial theory is not theoretically and conceptually homogenous but encourages diversity and debate among different positions and many theorists have multiple theoretical allegiances. Homi Bhabha, for example, tends strongly towards post-structuralism and psychoanalysis. Kwame Anthony Appiah, by contrast, argues from the standpoint of analytical philosophy. However, alongside his strong affiliation with philosophy Appiah is also a literary critic and literary theorist. In many ways Appiah appears much less attached to the specific conceptual framework of the postcolonial as outlined

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<sup>143</sup> It is worth mentioning at this point that certain authors associated with anti-colonialism (especially Frantz Fanon), or the American Civil Rights movement (especially W.E.B. Du Bois) may be regarded as early precursors of postcolonial studies, who were practising a kind of postcolonial criticism before Said. To be sure, they remain important points of reference for contemporary theorists.

above than Bhabha. Hence, it is all the more surprising that, as we shall see, Appiah and Bhabha share certain perspectives in their respective conceptions of cosmopolitanism.

### 3.2 Kwame Anthony Appiah's 'Rooted Cosmopolitanism'

#### 3.2.1 *Appiah's Justification of Liberalism*

In the preceding chapter I have already suggested that Kwame Anthony Appiah's theoretical and disciplinary allegiance differ significantly from that of Homi Bhabha, whom I will deal with in the subsequent sub-section. Appiah is an analytical philosopher while Bhabha's approach is more methodologically eclectic. I will, of course, also argue that despite their differences Appiah and Bhabha have similar things to say. But before I get to that, it is imperative to make certain differences clear. This is also important because the way Appiah differs from Homi Bhabha is how he differs from most proponents of postcolonial theory; and this is in three ways, the first of which I have already alluded to:

- Appiah is primarily a philosopher,
- his cosmopolitanism is a moral philosophy,
- his approach is from the perspective of liberalism.

Given the eclecticism of postcolonial theory in general, I do not think that Appiah's being a philosopher or his practising moral philosophy require justification. As I said before, the discourse of postcolonial studies is unusually open-minded and welcoming of many different perspectives and points of view. Yet, arguably, Appiah's liberalism does require justification. This is because there have been strong arguments from postcolonial critics in the past, showing that many proponents of traditional liberalism, with whom Appiah shares a framework, have lent support to colonialism and, as in Kant's case, have even propagated a supposed racial inferiority of Indians and Africans.<sup>144</sup> For instance, Edward Said made the following observation about the nineteenth-century utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill that

it will not take a modern Victorian specialist long to admit that liberal cultural heroes like Mill [...] had definite views on race and imperialism, which are quite easily to be found at work in their writing. So even a specialist must deal with the knowledge that Mill [...] made it clear in *On Liberty and Representative Government* that his views there could not be applied to India [...] because the Indians were civilizationally, if not racially, inferior.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism*, p. 7; 18 and especially pp. 92-120.

<sup>145</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, p. 14.

I have argued before that the postcolonial implies that even though colonialism has officially ended, its legacy drags on and, like the Freudian repressed, keeps resurfacing in unexpected ways. Certain dependencies between postcolonial states and their formerly colonizing societies have remained in place to a great extent. And it is in this context that postcolonial theorists might be critical of liberalism, which, albeit in new clothing as neo-liberalism, still serves the underlabouring of a new and more subtle form of 21<sup>st</sup> century economic and ideological exploitation, namely: of neo-colonialism. But if liberalism was and still is involved in colonialism, if it has no basis in the ‘Third World’ traditions and societies it helped to colonize (and still does), it must be an imposition of Western forms of thinking onto postcolonial societies.<sup>146</sup> Consequently, it cannot be an adequate tool for the analysis of this imposition or a means of emancipation from colonialism.

These objections are very serious and cannot easily be dismissed. The tradition of liberal philosophy partly approved of colonialism. Postcolonial studies is built on an opposition to colonialism and, thus, it affiliates itself with the victims of colonial oppression; and rightfully so. This is one reason why a liberal approach may seem like an oddity within postcolonial studies and might sit uneasy with some theorists. On the other hand we cannot so easily pin the responsibility for this onto the entire liberal tradition. If we did that, we could not account, for instance, for Kant’s later rejection of colonialism, which I have already alluded to, or his change of heart regarding race.<sup>147</sup>

Maybe it is not so much that the ideas of liberal philosophy are at fault but that philosophers operating within this tradition were often too inconsistent to cash them in. Appiah suggests as much when in the context of his treatment of postmodern anti-universalism he states:

Often [...] attacks on something called ‘Enlightenment humanism’ have been attacks not on the universality of Enlightenment pretensions but on the Eurocentrism of their real bases: Hume’s or Kant’s or Hegel’s inability to imagine that a ‘Negro’ could achieve anything in the sphere of ‘arts and letters’ is objectionable not because it is humanist or universalistic but because it is neither. A large part of the motivation for this recent anti-universalism has been a conviction that past universalism was a projection of European values and interests: this is a critique that is best expressed by saying that the actually existing Enlightenment was not Enlightened; it is not an argument that Enlightenment was the wrong project.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> The term “postcolonial state” in this context merely refers to a nation-state that emerged out of a former colony. Thus, the meaning of “postcolonial” is not identical with the one I derived from Ashcroft et al. However, it does not exclude it either. This is the way in which Appiah uses this term.

<sup>147</sup> Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 111-120.

<sup>148</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, in: Matthew J. Gibney (ed.), *Globalizing Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1999*, Oxford 2003 p. 205.

Appiah makes clear that the problem with liberal thought lies not with its universalistic aspirations or its humanism but with the fact that these were used as if they applied only to a fracture of humanity, namely: to Europeans.

I have suggested before that postcolonial studies to some extent naturally and rightfully takes the side of the colonized. It attempts to find out about the mechanisms of oppression and critiques them. But if this is true, then to rehabilitate a liberal approach in postcolonial theory means to demonstrate that liberalism can also be a source of emancipation for the oppressed and that it is not necessarily just a Western ideology for colonial domination. This, I believe, Appiah demonstrates in a convincing and way.

Appiah has a habit: In nearly every single piece he has written on cosmopolitanism, he talks about his father Joseph, who was a Ghanaian independence activist. For example, in his *Amnesty Lecture*, which he delivered in Oxford in 1999, Appiah talks about how his father, who had been trained as a lawyer in London,<sup>149</sup> after Ghana's independence in 1957 travelled all over the country to give legal council and to defend before court citizens whose rights were being violated by the newly instated postcolonial government. Appiah explains that his commitment to the rights and freedom of individuals even earned his father some time in prison.<sup>150</sup> However, the greater point that Appiah wants to make is that he recognizes an analogy between his father's situation after independence in 1957 and seventeenth century England when John Locke wrote his *Two Treatises*; an analogy between the religious intolerance that shaped Locke's intellectual enterprises and the political intolerance of the post-independent Ghanaian government. What Appiah suggests is that liberalism, that is, the aspiration to limit the abilities of states to interfere in or impose restrictions on the freedom of individuals, is to some extent a 'natural' or 'necessary' reaction to "illiberal government."<sup>151</sup> This is as true of Locke – one of the originators of liberal theory – as of Appiah's father.

There are two more possible ways in which sceptics could argue against Appiah: They could, for instance, say that Appiah's father was not a genuine Ghanaian. But that he was, in fact, subjected to Western forms of power and ideology when he came to England; and transformed into an instrument of the colonizer's interests. Appiah argues against this by commenting on his father's conceptual framework for reading authors from the liberal tradition:

But more important yet, I think, to my father's concern with individual human dignity was its roots in the preoccupation of free Asante citizens, both men and women, with notions of personal dignity, with respect and self-respect. Treating others with the respect that is their due is a central preoccupation of Asante life [...]. Just as European liberalism – and demo-

<sup>149</sup> Appiah, "Citizen of the World", p. 227

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

cratic sentiment – grew by extending to every man and (then) woman, the dignity that feudal society offered only to the aristocracy [...], so Ghanaian liberalism, at least in my father's form, depends on the prior grasp of concepts such as *animuonyam*. It is clear from well-known Akan proverbs that respect was precisely not something that belonged in the past to everybody: [...]. The point, however, is that just as *dignitas*, which was once, by definition, the property of an elite, has grown into human dignity, which is the property of every man and woman, so *animuonyam* can be the basis for the respect for all others that lies at the heart of liberalism.<sup>152</sup>

What Appiah wishes to express is that his father, of course, read Cicero and other liberal authors. But that he was not 'subjected' by them. Rather he read them against the backdrop of concepts from his own culture – Asante culture. This comparative reading enabled him to discover that Asante thought and liberal Western philosophy held something in common: the notion of individual dignity. What the two also held in common was the historical development of this concept from being an attribute of only a small group of people, to its becoming an attribute of every member of society. Appiah expresses this in the following way: "Indeed *dignitas* and *animuonyam* have a great deal in common. *Dignitas*, as understood by Cicero, reflects much of what was similar between republican Roman ideology and the views of nineteenth-century Asante elite; [...]"<sup>153</sup> And this is the reason why Appiah concludes that "it was [...] as an Asante that my father recognized and admired Cicero, not as a British subject."<sup>154</sup>

Of course, sceptics could still contend that Appiah's redemption of liberal philosophy is not really foundational since his father's appropriation of liberalism depends on particular cultural constellations. However, I do not believe that Appiah means his approach to be foundational at all. Appiah writes in this context: "Then, as I said, we cosmopolitans believe in universal truth, too, though we are less certain that we have it all already. It is not skepticism about the very idea of truth that guides us; it is realism about how hard the truth is to find."<sup>155</sup> And just a little further on he argues that "[a]nother aspect of cosmopolitanism is what philosophers call 'fallibilism' – the sense that our knowledge is imperfect, provisional, subject to revision in the face of new evidence."<sup>156</sup> Thus, as a fallibilist, Appiah combines a search for truth with ongoing doubts about his own position. It is noteworthy that, as we will see, the cosmopolitanism presented here is in part a

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., pp. 229-230.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (Issues of Our Time), New York/London 2007, p. 144.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.. Note also that we have already come across fallibilism in David Held, another philosopher from the liberal tradition, under heading 2.3.2.

result of doubts about the universal applicability of an unbounded form of liberalism.

### 3.2.2 *Ethical Individualism, Identity and Freedom*

One thing that is tied to the liberal framework is ethical individualism – the notion that “everything that matters morally, matters because of its impact on individuals and – so that if nations, or religious communities, or families matter, they matter because they make a difference to the people who compose them.”<sup>157</sup> Consequently “liberals value individuals over collectivities [sic].”<sup>158</sup> Strictly speaking, individualism does not require separate vindication from liberalism. For it is already justified on the liberal insight that collectives are in danger of arbitrarily imposing themselves on individuals, and that the freedom of the individual to be what it needs to be is what is truly worth protecting. This mistrust of collectives also appears as specifically historically justified.

But there is one possible objection to individualism that Appiah needs to deal with. This is the true allegation that liberalism, especially in its libertarian guise, has sometimes unduly elevated the individual, its freedom and especially its right to private property above society and any positive moral obligations it might have to others. This vision of individualism, as Appiah notes, is largely perceived to be selfish and is, therefore, rejected by many postcolonial societies.<sup>159</sup> And this is, of course, justified since this is also the exact point at which liberalism’s collaboration with neo-colonialism arguably takes shape. It is clear that Appiah does not condone this view although he does not examine it closely. However, he does not do so because it simply would not be a good starting-point for his approach. This is because it would defeat the purpose of individualistically-based ethics, not to mention cosmopolitanism: If we were to assume that individuals only had obligations to themselves, this would be the most unethical vision of society one could have. Instead Appiah passes on to saying that individualism, his vision of individualism that is, has nothing to do with selfishness or with being unsocial. This is partly, as he himself notes, because it is recognizable that we could not even develop without the aid of others and that many of the things we want and need are produced by society.<sup>160</sup>

Appiah claims that, in fact, there is a more profound sense in which we are related to others rather than just materially. According to Appiah, we are socially dependent on others in the sense that they give us a sense of who we are, of our

<sup>157</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity*, Princeton 2005, p. ix.

<sup>158</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Against National Culture”, in: Laura García-Moreno/Peter C. Pfeiffer (eds.), *Text and Nation: Cross-Disciplinary Essays on Cultural and National Identities*, Columbia [SC] 1996, p. 177.

<sup>159</sup> Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, p. 218.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

identity.<sup>161</sup> This leads Appiah to claim that without society, without a link to the social, there would not even be what liberalism refers to as freedom.<sup>162</sup> This is quite an astonishing claim, but it is consistent with what I have already alluded to as “social constructivism”, which is the idea that we are not born with an identity but that it is something that comes together on the basis of the social relations we have with others.<sup>163</sup> Through these social relations we learn about concepts of what ‘kinds of person’<sup>164</sup> actually exist that we could be. This means that we are not born with an identity but it also implies that identity does not emerge out of nothing.<sup>165</sup> Appiah sums up his thoughts in the following way:

Self-construction, to make human sense, must draw on what history has given each of us. And thinking about what history has, in fact, given each one of us, as materials for our identities, will allow us to answer the worry I raised about the unsociability of the liberal self. [...] Beginning in infancy it is in dialogue with other people’s understandings of who I am that I develop a conception of my own identity. [...]. An identity is always articulated through concepts (and practices) made available to you by religion, society, school and state, mediated by family, peers and friends.<sup>166</sup>

In other words: Our freedom to become who we want to be is supplied by society. This surely is counter-intuitive because usually we would think that social constraints are exactly what keeps us from being free; and this is true but, paradoxically, only partially so. There is a perfect dialectical relationship here with regard to the enabling and constraining function that society executes in relation to the individual. Society enables our freedom to do things, to desire things and have an identity because it gives us choices of how to construct our identity in the first place.

Even though this idea seems plausible, it invites some objection. Homosexuals, for instance, could rightfully protest that they do not choose to be homosexuals but that they were born in this way; and that Appiah’s model, in fact, suggests that they had a choice to be heterosexual. Even though homosexuals require the socially mediated concept of homosexuality in order to recognize themselves as homosexuals, this objection is important. But Appiah does not mean that the concepts we acquire are the only things that society offers us. It also gives us a language to talk about it, re-interpret it and change our identity.<sup>167</sup> This would at

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 219; 224.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>163</sup> All of this is also implied in Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, p. 267-268.

<sup>164</sup> Note Appiah’s discussion of Ian Hacking’s notion of ‘kind of person.’ (Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, p. 220.)

<sup>165</sup> This is implied by Appiah’s comparison of the Romantic notion of identity, which Appiah calls “authenticity”, and the one he calls “existentialist.” (Ibid., p. 222-223.)

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>167</sup> Appiah, “Against National Culture”, p. 181.

first appear to suggest he is heading off into the direction of saying that we have even more of a choice. However, what he means is that we do not simply act out roles in accordance with the concepts we are given but we appropriate them. He explains:

Once labels are applied to people, ideas about people who fit the label come to have social and psychological effects. In particular, these ideas shape the ways people conceive of themselves and their projects. So the labels operate to mould what we may call ‘identification’, the process through which individuals intentionally shape their projects – including their plans for their own lives and their conceptions of the good life – by reference to available labels, available identities. In identification, I shape my life by the thought that something is an appropriate aim or an appropriate way of acting for an American, a black man, a philosopher.<sup>168</sup>

This goes to say that it is not the concepts which simply determine our behaviour. Instead we appropriate them and use them to shape ourselves. But in so doing they become part and parcel of the fabric of who we are and, thus, we cannot easily dismiss them at all. They appear natural to us and not as simple conscious choices.

This, I think, is the reason why it has taken humanity a good deal of time to learn this about our identities. However, to assume that our identity, which is really a highly personalized construction of idiosyncratically interpreted concepts that we have acquired throughout our life, is vital to us (because it is us), is ethically significant. Namely, the identity-concepts we appropriate are always concepts, which we share with other people – people we identify with, which, after all, is the meaning of identification. This means that to deny that an individual has moral obligation to these people – her/his family, friends, fellow countrymen, and sisters and brothers in faith – in a way is to ask that person to deny her/his identity.<sup>169</sup> This is something Appiah finds ethically unfeasible. Identity matters from an ethical point of view and this, of course, sets limits to the demands of moral universalism.

### 3.2.3 *The Realm of Ethics*

What exactly is the nature of the obligations we have to those that make up the social groups to which we belong? Appiah starts discussing this question by acknowledging that there have been versions of liberal cosmopolitanism that deny the ethical significance of local attachments or ask us to become impartial to them.<sup>170</sup> As Appiah points out, this has been found to be due to a tension, underlying liberalism in general, between what may variously be called “special obliga-

<sup>168</sup> Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, p. 221.

<sup>169</sup> Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, p. 236.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

tions”, “associative duties”, or “special responsibilities” on the one side, and the liberal premise that all humans are equal on the other.<sup>171</sup> We have, of course, already come across this difficulty in Kant and the Stoics and we remember that Pauline Kleingeld interprets Kant as relying on the difference between perfect and imperfect duties to solve this tension. However, I am not sure this strategy fully redeems the moral premise of cosmopolitanism from seeming impracticable. This is because there remains a sense that the call to treat everyone equal must degrade the very relationships that are most dear to us. And this must appear so because to treat all humans equally can only mean that

- either we adjust our treatment of strangers to the way we treat our loved ones, or
- we treat our loved ones like strangers.

Out of the two options the former, of course, is the more likely contender for cosmopolitanism. However, it clearly makes demands that would be virtually impossible to fulfil. And while there is no doubt that we owe something to strangers, this could not be the right way of interpreting this principle.

Appiah presents two arguments against this unrefined reading of the liberal premise of equality. His first contention is that it is simply a misunderstanding to believe that this premise is asking individuals to be impartial. That is just what the state needs to be. He writes:

And here’s where the opposition between associative duties and moral equality (in the sense of equitable treatment) really does dissolve. For it is a category mistake to hold that persons are bound by moral equality in the first place. Liberalism, in most accounts, is indeed concerned with moral equality: the state is to display equal respect toward its citizens. Where we go wrong is to suppose that individuals should be subject to the same constraint. Social justice may require impartiality – or evenhandedness, or fairness, or (under some construction) “neutrality.” But social justice is not an attribute of individuals.<sup>172</sup>

This is why partiality is justified. But Appiah needs to deliver yet another argument because now we just know that equality, as pertaining to individuals, does not mean impartiality. But what does it mean? Appiah argues that the principle is asking us to treat others equally but not, as it were, identically.<sup>173</sup> It is useful in this context to look at a general differentiation which Appiah, following Ronald Dworkin, makes between ethics and morality. He explains this difference in the following way:

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

Here, the distinction between the ethical and the moral corresponds to “thick” relations – which invoke a community founded in a shared past or “collective memory” – and “thin” relations, which we have with strangers, and which are stipulatively entailed by a shared humanity.<sup>174</sup>

It now becomes evident how Appiah seeks to circumvent the danger of playing our special obligations off against the notion that we really have responsibilities to all of humanity, and why, as Appiah puts it, “I can give you your due and still treat my friend better.”<sup>175</sup> One question, however, that arises from this is where exactly the limits of partiality should be? How is partiality overdone to the extent that we could not give others what is their due? And what is their due anyway? These questions, of course, refer directly to the nature and content of morality, which I shall treat under chapter 3.2.6. For the time being, it, therefore, suffices to point out that the definite limit of partiality for Appiah is racism. He argues: “Racism, for example, typically involves giving people less than they are owed, failing to acknowledge their due as fellow human beings”.<sup>176</sup> I return now to partiality, to ethics and to the initial question of the nature of special obligations. How are we supposed to make sense of them? Appiah mentions that one way of approaching them is to argue that, in order for them to obtain, they must be deducible from a universal principle.<sup>177</sup> But this approach is too rationalistic. After all, we do not love our mothers because there is a universal value that says that we should love our mothers. There might be but the point is this: You have a mother and I have one. I assume that we both love our mothers. But we have very different reasons for this.<sup>178</sup> And this points to an important concession that rationalists have to make; namely: that the nature of such obligations is intrinsic to these social relations themselves<sup>179</sup> and we cannot possibly expect to justify them on universal principles or values because they just are not universal but “project-dependent.”<sup>180</sup> Universality belongs to morality but not to ethics. If we belong to a particular group then ethics is about what we owe to the individuals who compose this group.

In this way, one might complain, that Appiah effectively staves off any commitment as to what our special obligations really are. But should he prescribe them? After all, these obligations could take many forms and what he essentially says is that this is acceptable, as long as it does not clash with the demands of

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>178</sup> This is the problem of “non-transferability”, which Appiah discusses with regard to wives. (Ibid., p. 226-227.)

<sup>179</sup> Appiah makes this point by arguing that special obligations are contingent on values underlying the communities we are part of. (Ibid., p. 236.) The way I see it, this is essentially what is meant by “project-dependence.”

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

morality. This is precisely the way in which Appiah's cosmopolitanism appears first and foremost as a "rooted cosmopolitanism", in that it makes space for the special obligations that most people have and it is difficult to fully deny.

In the following chapter I will discuss Appiah's use of the term (cosmopolitan) patriotism, which he claims is synonymous with rooted cosmopolitanism<sup>181</sup>, and how he uses it to fend off various objections to cosmopolitanism.

### 3.2.4 Patriotism, Humanism and the State

This chapter discusses Appiah's use of the term patriotism, which goes back to the very beginning of his theoretical engagement with cosmopolitanism. Appiah essentially develops it as a critique of Martha Nussbaum's famous essay "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism". In this article, which was originally published in 1996 in the *Boston Review*, Nussbaum bemoans the shortcomings of the nationally and, thus, inwardly focused American system of education that leaves pupils largely ignorant of other cultures and foreign countries. In consideration of the onslaught of globally shared problems, such as environmental pollution, Nussbaum makes the case for a cosmopolitan education that should lead Americans to engage with other cultures on the basis of a sense of shared responsibility.<sup>182</sup> Needless to say, Nussbaum identifies patriotism – the preoccupation with and privileging of one's own country's interest – as a hindrance to this cosmopolitan project.<sup>183</sup> She specifically attacks an earlier discussion about the meaning of US citizenship in the light of the increasing multi-ethnic composition of the United States. In this discussion Sheldon Hackney and Richard Rorty tried to synthesize patriotism with an appeal to a "politics of difference", that is, a politics based on the affirmation of America's religious, ethnic and cultural diversity.<sup>184</sup> Nussbaum finds fault with this view and presents a counter-argument to the extent that to appeal to diversity on a national basis is contradictory. She interrogates Hackney's and Rorty's claim in the following way:

In Richard Rorty's and Sheldon Hackney's eloquent appeals to shared values, there is something that makes me very uneasy. They seem to argue effectively when they insist on the centrality of democratic deliberation of certain values that bind all citizens together. But why should these values, which instruct us to join hands across boundaries of ethnicity, class, gender, and race, lose steam when they get to the borders of the nation? By conceding that a morally arbitrary boundary such as the boundary of the nation has a deep and formative role in our deliberations, we seem to deprive our-

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<sup>181</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots", in: Joshua Cohen (ed.), *For Love of Country?* (New Democracy Forum), Boston 2002 (originally published 1996), p. 22.

<sup>182</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism", in: *For Love of Country?*, p. 12.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3-4; 14.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

selves of any principled way of persuading citizens they should in fact join hands across these barriers. [...] Why should we think of people from China as our fellows the minute they dwell in a certain place, namely the United States, but not when they dwell in a certain other place, namely China? What is it about the national boundary that magically converts people toward whom we are both incurious and indifferent into people to whom we have duties of mutual respect? I think, in short, that we undercut the very case for multicultural respect within a nation by failing to make central to education a broader world respect.<sup>185</sup>

What becomes obvious from this lengthy quote is that Nussbaum, in fact, welcomes Rorty's and Hackney's attempt to negotiate values all Americans have in common, while simultaneously calling for respect of difference. But she draws a different lesson from it. Namely, that we should not only respect the difference of others, reach out across this difference to them and negotiate what we share because they are our fellow citizens. We should do so because they are our fellow human beings. The call for respect and transcendence of difference is not plausible when it is limited to the nation because this is inconsistent.

Appiah takes issue with Nussbaum's allegation that the national boundary should be "morally arbitrary." He argues, that in the case of America the national boundary coincides with the boundary of the state.<sup>186</sup> The problem with claiming that this boundary does not matter is, Appiah implies as much, that one must concede that there is no reason why there should not be just one world-state, surpassing all countries, governing all human individuals. I have already addressed the issue of the world-state and presented reasons as to why it is undesirable. Kant essentially justified his objection to it on the liberal imperative that one ought to respect the choices of autonomous subjects, the individuals making up the nations who, on Kant's take, wanted to remain in separate states. Appiah adds another possible solution for this problem, which, in turn, helps him alleviate two serious charges that may be rendered against cosmopolitanism; namely:

- that cosmopolitans are rootless wanderers (as in the case of Diogenes), and
- the consecutive objection that if everyone became a cosmopolitan, there would be no more cultural differences, no more particular cultures to embrace.<sup>187</sup>

For Appiah these problems apply to Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism, which he also refers to as "humanism"<sup>188</sup> because it renders differences insignificant in favour of what humans share. However, for Appiah the question of what state we belong to matters profoundly. He argues that "[s]tates matter morally intrinsically. They matter not because people care about them, but because they regulate our

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>186</sup> Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots", p. 27.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

lives through forms of coercion that will always require moral justification.”<sup>189</sup> In a way this is similar to Kant’s patriotism, which ideally requires citizens to maintain the state by politically involving themselves in its operation. But this would theoretically also be possible in a world-state. Thus, what matters the most to Appiah is that people belong to different states because states are in a sense historically responsible for cultural differences.<sup>190</sup> Conversely, if we crammed everyone into the same state, the world would become culturally homogenized and there would not be anything for the cosmopolitan to embrace. It is in large parts through the difference in governmental arrangement, the difference in political institutions that cultures came to differ from one another.<sup>191</sup> This surely is a controversial claim and it might be necessary to examine Appiah’s argument more closely.

Let us begin with ascertaining that Appiah makes a claim pertaining to a causal relation between governmental arrangements and cultural practices. This relation should not be understood to be strictly deterministic. Rather cultures appear to be different from one another for a diverse number of reasons and it is not all down to how we are governed. For all we know we cannot finally explain why they differ; and maybe we do not even have to. But can we really say that the way we are being governed has nothing to do with cultural practices? I think not. That it should have some, if not considerable, influence is, I think, plausible. Let us now take a look at how Appiah justifies his argument. Appiah begins his argument from an account of nations as given by the early nineteenth-century German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder. For Herder, nations precede states. This means that every nation exists like a natural entity before it becomes enshrined in a state. Appiah turns Herder from his head onto his feet, so to speak, and claims that in fact states always precede nations; and that no nation is existent insofar as it is not the result of a prior state.<sup>192</sup> This assumption certainly seems more logical than Herder’s. After all, if nations are not the result of people being governed together, where would they come from? However, there is one difficulty with Appiah’s view; namely there were not always states in our modern sense. I have already explained that the city-states of ancient Greece were very different from today’s modern nation-states. This is why Appiah has to extend his definition of state to what he calls “state arrangement”<sup>193</sup> in order to include every form of political government from modern states, to medieval city-councils, and African

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> This is also implied by Appiah’s reference to the notion of “hybridization” of cultures. All cultures are the result of people going to other places, taking their ideas with them and mixing them with other ideas. In this way cultures are always local and bound to specific places. And they do not become homogenized through the global spread of some ideas as long as there remain specific places. (*Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.) The only way this may be changed is by making all places into one, by making all states into one state.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

tribal gatherings under the category of state. If we understand the term state in this way it really applies that every political entity should not be naturally given but the result of a prior governmental or state-arrangement.

In her essay Martha Nussbaum develops a model of cosmopolitanism, which she borrows from the Stoic philosopher Hierocles and which demonstrates the different spheres of moral deliberation. The model consists of several concentric circles with the individual located in the middle. Next follows the family, after that the extended family and friends, fellow city-dwellers, fellow-countrymen and finally: strangers. It is Nussbaum's contention that in becoming cosmopolitans we have to learn to draw the circle of strangers closer toward ourselves and make them more like our fellow city-dwellers.<sup>194</sup> Appiah also addresses this model and interprets it in the following way:

There are many reasons to think that living in political communities narrower than the species is better for us than would be our engulfment in a single world-state, a cosmopolis of which we cosmopolitans would be not figurative but literal citizens. [...] It is because humans live best on a smaller scale that we should defend not just the state, but the county, the town, the street, the business, the craft, the profession, and the family as communities, as circles among the many circles that are narrower than the human horizon, that are appropriate spheres of moral concern.<sup>195</sup>

Appiah conceptualizes the various spheres of moral concern, within which we are related to others, in an analogy to his notion of states. In a way the street, the profession, even gender and other things are just *like* political communities. But one should not be deceived into thinking that Appiah means they *are* political communities. If he meant that he could not justify why the state somehow matters more. The difference between the political arrangements and the different spheres of moral obligation is that the political ones matter intrinsically.<sup>196</sup> Citizenship in them is literal. But the other arrangements matter not in this way but because they matter to people<sup>197</sup> and this is a significant difference. Appiah's patriotism is Kantian with regard to the state but it also includes many other social arrangements of which we are citizens in a more metaphorical sense.

We have now observed how Appiah in various ways creates space for collective and individual idiosyncrasies. In particular his characterization of special obligations as project-dependent relieves the demands an otherwise unbound cosmopolitanism would have imposed. In the following chapters I will therefore gradually approach Appiah's conception of morality, or what should be taken to be universal.

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<sup>194</sup> Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism", p. 9.

<sup>195</sup> Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots", p. 29.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.2.5 *Dialogue vs. Cultural Relativism*

In his discussion of cosmopolitanism Appiah criticizes cultural relativism on several occasions. Ulrich Beck argued that relativism, like universalism, may neither be entirely discarded nor absolutized. I have already demonstrated that Appiah does not, in fact, absolutize moral universalism at all. But he imposes serious restrictions on it. Conversely, I believe, he is not oblivious to the legitimate side of relativism. Of course, one of the prime functions of cultural relativism in the past was as an argument against intervention of the West in other cultures. In this context Appiah writes: “One reason for this scepticism about intervention is simply historical. Much well-intentioned intervention in the past has undermined old ways of life without replacing them with better ones; and, of course, much intervention was not well-intentioned.”<sup>198</sup> Thus, Appiah is not opposing cultural relativism in principle. Instead Appiah’s argument is only that relativism as a principle has limited applicability. More specifically he decides to push against it because, when taken as a dogma, it actually poses a serious obstruction to conversations between members of different cultures. This, of course, was already implied by Beck’s statement that absolutized relativism yields essentialism.

I have already alluded to and quoted from Appiah’s treatment of what he perceives as “recent anti-universalistic arguments” in philosophy. Such arguments Appiah finds in the works of Richard Rorty<sup>199</sup> and Jean-François Lyotard as well as in “the formal fragmentation of postmodern literary texts.”<sup>200</sup> He complains that “in such a context an older humanism, with the notion of a human essence, a human nature that grounds the universality of human rights, has indeed come to seem to many simply preposterous.”<sup>201</sup> The charge that postmodernism’s dismissal of universalism makes it incompatible with human rights is, I think, quite a serious problem for such approaches. However, we must also understand that postmodern anti-universalism was in part a reaction to the failure of Marxist universalism. In that it appears as historically justified. However, this is not an argument against universalism in general. Appiah discusses the interplay between relativism (or anti-universalism) and universalism on a couple of practical examples. One of them is about the question whether organizations like Amnesty International have a right to criticize human rights violations in Asian countries, or whether this amounts to colonialism since the Western notion of human rights is alien to Asian values.<sup>202</sup> For the cultural relativist this case must appear clear: There is no way that we can arbitrarily impose our notion of human rights onto others in this way. This is because it is particular to our culture and if others do

<sup>198</sup> Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. 14.

<sup>199</sup> Regarding Appiah’s treatment of Rorty see Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, pp. 204-206; 209-210; 213-214.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

not share this notion and do not want it, we cannot force the issue. Let us take a look at a similar example: Jamaica is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for homosexuals to live in. Homosexual intercourse is officially outlawed and sexually deviant people often serve as scapegoats for social problems. Moreover, homosexuals are often publicly attacked and even murdered when the nature of their sexuality is uncovered.<sup>203</sup> When Jamaican dancehall singers, who sell most of their records in Europe and the US, in their songs advocate the killing of ‘batty bwoys’ (gay men), are Western listeners in no position to criticize this? For the cultural relativist the same applies as before: We might label this bigoted but that is really just us, our own values, which we arbitrarily impose upon their culture.

But is the second case really as unambiguous as the relativist would have us believe? What if I described the whole issue differently and said that in reality giving a relativist argument in support of Jamaican homophobia amounts to a Western underlabouring of the hegemonic status of certain groups in this society? It would appear then that the call not to intervene has the precise effect of an intervention – only for the worse. What if I said that there are many people in Jamaica who think that hatred of gays is wrong<sup>204</sup> but who are afraid to say so publicly because they fear persecution? Would the relativist be able to maintain his position? There are two problems here:

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<sup>203</sup> As far as I am aware the topic has not received attention from social scientists. However, there is a lot of information on the internet. Here are two older but substantial articles: Tim Padgett, “The Most Homophobic Place on Earth?”, *Time.com*, 12/04/2006, URL: <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1182991,00.html> (accessed: 28/08/2013); Gary Young, Troubled Island, *The Guardian*, 27/04/2006, URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/apr/27/gayrights.comment> (accessed: 28/08/2013).

<sup>204</sup> That there are currents even within dancehall music that are critical of homophobia is evident from an interview with female dancehall-artist Cecile Charleton (Ce’Cile), in which she describes homophobic men as potentially misogynist. (Dave Stelfox, “Dancehall Queen”, *The Guardian*, 12/01/2004, URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2004/jan/12/dance> [accessed: 28/08/2013]).

- The relativist entertains a holistic conception of culture<sup>205</sup>, and
- s/he believes that if we reject or criticize some cultural practice as unethical, our next step must be to physically impose ourselves on this culture.

These issues lead her/him to conceive of moral reality in such a way as would “require[s] us to define hermetically sealed worlds, closed off from one another, within which everyone is trapped into a moral consensus, inaccessible to arguments from outside.”<sup>206</sup> And this is exactly the same as essentialism. Appiah is good-willed and gives it another name. He calls it “anti-universalist cosmopolitanism.”<sup>207</sup> But I must say that I do not see what might be cosmopolitan about this position because it practically asks us to denounce our cosmopolitan conviction that we owe something to the gays of Jamaica. Yet this model’s greatest problem lies in the fact that it commands us to silence when, really, we should be talking to others. It totalizes difference and conceives of different cultures as essentially incommensurable. Against this notion Appiah builds up what he refers to as “dialogue.” One thing that is important to emphasize, however, is that the notion of dialogue is not solely developed by Appiah as an answer to postmodern forms of cultural relativism. It is also a response to an older notion, which relativism makes every attempt to reject; namely: moral realism. This is the notion that there are moral facts, so to speak, which may be identified with scientific certainty. According to this idea, all we need to do when we meet other cultures is to make them understand what these facts are.<sup>208</sup> Against this view Appiah argues that “[o]nce you enter into a genuine dialogue with people who hold views other than your own [...], you are going to discover that there is no non-question-begging way of settling on a basis of facts, whether moral or non-moral, from which to begin to discuss.”<sup>209</sup> He adds:

In real life ethical judgements are intimately bound up with metaphysical and religious belief and with beliefs about the natural order. And these are matters about which agreement may be difficult to achieve. (It’s hard to persuade people there are, on the one hand, no electrons or, on the other, no witches.) Real dialogue will quickly get stymied in these circumstances because interlocutors who disagree at this level are likely to treat each oth-

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<sup>205</sup> Note that Appiah charges Richard Rorty with conceptualizing the relation between ‘the West’ and other cultures in this way (Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, p. 210-211).

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 208. Note that Appiah also identifies this position as “humanism” (*ibid.*, p. 208; 212) – a position he has criticized in Martha Nussbaum. (Appiah, “Against National Culture”, p. 178; 188.) This could mean that Appiah is charging Nussbaum with thinking in terms of moral realism.

<sup>209</sup> Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, p. 209.

er's claims as 'merely hypothetical' and are thus not likely to engage with them seriously.<sup>210</sup>

In other words, the type of dialogue envisaged by moral realism fails precisely because here interlocutors are trying to agree on principles. But this seemingly requires that difference be more or less eradicated and it is, therefore, justly eyed up with scepticism by postmodern critics.<sup>211</sup> Thus, one of the reasons why postmodern critics seemingly render dialogue impossible and put only relativism in its place is because they recognize correctly that moral realism is flawed.

### 3.2.6 *Agreement on Particulars*

Appiah's alternative to relativism is not to fully negate relativism but to address the deeper reason for its appearance, which is the failure of moral realism. In imagining the possibility of dialogue Appiah, thus, begins by asking whether it is really necessary to agree on principles. If both you and I wanted to prevent a war, would it matter whether we had the same reason for doing so?<sup>212</sup> However, instead of fully negating either cultural relativism or moral realism, Appiah finds a middle ground. He claims:

What we learn from travel, but also from reading books and watching films from other places, is that we can identify points of agreement that are much more local and contingent than this. We can agree, in fact, with many moments of judgement, even if we do not share the framework within which those judgements are made, even if we cannot identify a framework, even if there are no principles articulated at all. And, to the extent that we have problems finding our way into novels, or films or neighbourhoods, they can occur just as easily with novels and films and places around the corner, as they do with those far away.<sup>213</sup>

What Appiah wishes to express here is that we can sometimes agree on things without agreeing on the reasons why, without sharing the beliefs that lead up to a shared judgement. This is both an argument against moral realism as well as its adversary cultural relativism because he both dismisses the necessity of agreeing on principles as well as the alleged total incommensurability of frameworks. In our encounters with others there will always be certain things we share, things we have in common; even if it is just that we both like looking at the stars at night. And he suggests that we will be able to identify more common-ground once we stop try-

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Note that Appiah does not mean to say that agreement on principles or, as he calls it, "universals" may not occur at all. Appiah, "Citizen of the World", p. 213.

<sup>212</sup> Appiah uses an analogous example of two people, who want to save a child for different reasons. Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, p. 253.

<sup>213</sup> Appiah, "Citizen of the World", p. 210.

ing to agree on universals. Agreements, for Appiah, are much more likely to occur with regard to particulars.

We may ask how he can be sure that such agreements will occur. Appiah would probably answer to this that he cannot be sure at all. However, he would most likely hold that there are certain things that make agreement easier because they would appear to be shared by all humans. One such thing is what Appiah refers to as an “evaluative language.” What does Appiah mean by saying that we share an evaluative language? Obviously we do not all share one language. Appiah’s development of this idea occurs against the backdrop of his discussion of logical positivism – a position in the history of science which appears to assert that the values (of different cultures) cannot be rationally criticized.<sup>214</sup> They simply are mutually exclusive and no reasoning will alleviate this difference. But this paves the way for someone who believes that causing everyone suffering was a value to be as correct as someone believing the opposite. Appiah argues against this by asking the following:

How, in fact, do people learn that it is good to be kind? Is it by being treated kindly and noticing that they like it? Or by being cruelly treated and disliking it? That doesn’t seem quite right: kindness isn’t like chocolate, where you find whether you have a taste for it by giving it a try. Rather, the idea that it’s a good seems to be part of the very concept. Learning what kindness is means learning, among other things, that it’s good. We’d suspect that someone who denied that kindness was good – or that cruelty was bad – didn’t really understand what it was. The concept itself is value-laden, and therefore action guiding.<sup>215</sup>

In a similar way Appiah contests that any culture truly approves of killing. The fact that Islamic terrorists justify the killing of civilians by saying they are infidels, demonstrates that they acknowledge that killing is actually wrong. If they did not think so, they would not need to give any reasons for this at all.<sup>216</sup> One problem with our shared evaluative language, however, is that even though we share many concepts such as kindness, friendship, and cruelty we often interpret them differently, or weigh the corresponding values differently.<sup>217</sup> Thus, there is a problem with, for instance, accusing a Muslim of oppressing his wife by finding it necessary

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<sup>214</sup> For Appiah’s in-depth discussion of logical positivism, see Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 18-25 and for his subsequent treatment of its implications for values, see *ibid.*, pp. 25-31.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>216</sup> Appiah uses an analogous example to the extent that we are forced to justify our opinion that torture of terrorists is legitimate, which goes to show that we know that torture is actually bad (*ibid.*, p. 27). Appiah’s whole point here is to argue that logical positivism overestimates the role of reason with regard to facts but underestimates reason’s stake in values (*Ibid.*, p. 40).

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60; 66. From his comments it becomes clear that Appiah means that a shared evaluative language may even fail to produce agreement in people who live closely together and under comparable circumstances.

for her to wear a veil. That is because he supposes that he is, in fact, protecting her in this way from the greedy gaze of other men. He simply does not recognize himself as committing an affront.<sup>218</sup> However, what Appiah finds valuable about the insight of a shared evaluative language is that we “can often guide one another, in the cosmopolitan spirit, to shared responses; and when we cannot agree, the understanding that our responses are shaped by some of the same vocabulary can make it easier to agree to disagree.”<sup>219</sup>

It is in this context that Appiah also addresses the role of narratives and literature. All cultures enjoy and cultivate the telling of stories in one form or another – whether it be in myth, telenovelas, rap-music, novels, fairy-tales or historical writing. This is because all humans share the capacity to respond to them in creative and imaginative ways.<sup>220</sup> Thus, what we should do is try to talk about them together, and across cultural boundaries, but also across boundaries of age, sexual orientation, race etc. However, the end-result here should not be that we can all agree on one meaning. Rather, as Appiah puts it, “evaluating stories together is one of the central human ways of learning to align our responses to the world. And that alignment of responses is, in turn, one of the ways we maintain the social fabric, the texture of our relationships.”<sup>221</sup> Maintaining the social fabric through conversation or discussion – is that not how we, as fellow Germans, Ghanaians or British act when we, among ourselves, have discussions about whether what this or that prime-minister just did was right or wrong? Is it not what we do when we watch or contribute to political talk-shows (the better ones, of course) and panel-discussions; when we debate with our friends, in the university, in a bar or at home with our family? And what happens in most of these discussions? We disagree. But for some reason these disagreements do not lead us to claim that this person we just have had a disagreement with does not belong to our culture. This, I believe, is the very heart of what Appiah understands as cosmopolitanism. It is, in fact, an argument against the strong assumption that coming from different cultural traditions makes us necessarily different.<sup>222</sup> One needs to be cautious at this point because Appiah does not deny that it could make us different. He just doubts that this is the case by necessity.

This seems to me to be a very valuable insight. For, if we assume that the world is contingent, which means that there is an absence of necessity – a view, I think, many adherents of postmodern relativism agree with – cultural relativism in the sense of the mutual exclusivity of cultures, cannot obtain as a general princi-

<sup>218</sup> A similar argument is used by Appiah (*ibid.*, p. 59).

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>220</sup> Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, p. 213.

<sup>221</sup> Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. 29.

<sup>222</sup> It certainly would not make us different in every respect because this would mean that we could not meaningfully converse with one another. Appiah specifically criticizes this attitude in Rorty, who appears to imagine the West as essentially different from non-Western societies (Appiah, “Citizen of the World”, p. 211.)

ple. However, this is not just an intellectual sophistry. It is a call not to believe that, since somebody comes from another culture, I have no social relations to maintain with him. It is Appiah's call for us to change our minds about culture and to make true dialogue possible. And this is something that, more likely than not, is already practiced by many ordinary people all over the world, who never have to think about this in philosophical terms.

### 3.2.7 *The Realm of Morality*

As the preceding chapter has emphasized Appiah seeks to curtail cultural relativism in its extreme form. He endorses the view that we share an evaluative language, which we can, to some degree, use to think with one another about values. However, Appiah has also defended the notion that universalism, as in the case of moral realism, must not seek to eliminate differences. In fact the right to difference is already presupposed by Appiah's commitment to liberalism as a conceptual framework. However, Appiah also admits that his brand of cosmopolitanism is also committed to certain universal standards and, thus, dialogue will in some sense also ultimately lead to more homogeneity. He argues that through dialogue

we can learn from other kinds of people and from other societies, just as they can learn from us. But if we do that, we shall inevitably move towards a world of greater uniformity. Differences will remain, naturally, but they will remain precisely in the spheres that are morally indifferent [...]. This is what I am going to call universalistic cosmopolitanism: a celebration of difference that remains committed to the existence of universal standards.<sup>223</sup>

What these "universal standards" ultimately are is not something that is merely superimposed by one side onto the other but is also subject to negotiation. For, as Appiah argues in relation to Richard Rorty's urging that in conversing with others we ought to entirely get rid of Enlightenment-style rationalism, "Rorty supposes that the rationalist is bound to think that 'we' are right and 'they' are wrong: but if there is one world only, then it is also possible that *they* might be right."<sup>224</sup>

This is consistent with Appiah's fallibilist position. However, Appiah is forced to concede that there will likely be people who will not want to join this dialogue, which brings many different people from different places closer together.<sup>225</sup> Maybe the idea that others, who have very different customs, should have something to say about the way these people live frightens them. The point is that one cannot possibly force these people to join the discussion. If they want to be left alone, there is nothing that can be done about it. But what is it that they really owe others (even if they want nothing to do with them) by virtue of being human? We

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<sup>223</sup> Appiah, "Citizen of the World", p. 202.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>225</sup> Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. xx.

remember that above I have, following Appiah, differentiated between two different realms of moral philosophy:

- the one of ethics, wherein (special) obligations are relative to our projects (project-dependent), and
- that of morality, wherein obligations are universal and to those with whom we share being human.

We have already seen that project-dependence is bounded by racism. Racism might correspond with a consensual value internal to the group to which we owe one or another obligation. However, it can never be consistent universally because it denies morality.<sup>226</sup>

This, I think, is a very good argument. But what else is universal? What else do we really owe others? I shall say straightaway that I do not think Appiah answers this question sufficiently. For this reason it shall be my primary concern in this chapter to elaborate on a few tidbits Appiah presents on this issue, rather than attempt to make a full and systematic argument. The reason why Appiah's comments on morality are sparse is in part, I think, due to the fact that it is notoriously difficult to find answers to this question. One must, for instance, be absolutely cautious not to prescribe here too much because there is always a danger that one might unduly exclude some cultural practices. For this reason it is helpful to think, as fallibilists would, of the discussion about morality (as about the discussion on ethics, by the way) as a work in progress that potentially never finishes but must always remain open to new arguments, occurrences and discoveries. But then such a task would require an enormous philosophical and empirical oversight and Appiah is, of course, predominantly concerned not with the practical content of morality but with its justification.

Nevertheless, certain aspects of morality ought ultimately be derivable from Appiah's justification of it; and, of course, much of his writing is pervaded by a strong sense that he is sympathetic to the idea of human rights. In his latest work on cosmopolitanism Appiah declares that he is drawn towards a certain conception of "basic needs" as laid out by Martha Nussbaum. According to this notion,

[p]eople have needs – health, food, shelter, education – that must be met if they are to lead decent lives. There are certain options that they ought to have: to seek sexual satisfaction with consenting partners; to have children if they wish to; to move from place to place; to express and share ideas; to help manage their societies; to exercise their imagination. (These are options. People should also be free not to exercise them.) And then there are

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<sup>226</sup> Appiah uses a similar argument to discuss ethics and the nature of our special obligations. He argues that ethics is based on consensus in a way that morality is not and he illustrates this point by saying that while there might exist a consensus that genocide is good within a given group (and, thus, an ethical obligation for people who belong to this group to act in accordance with it), it would still be wrong morally (Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, pp. 235-236).

certain obstacles to a good life that ought not to be imposed on them: needless pain, unwarranted contempt, the mutilation of their bodies.<sup>227</sup>

Thus, what we have here is a threefold model that differentiates between needs, options and protection from certain types of harm. Especially with regard to the meeting of needs, however, Appiah is critical of making them official human rights. This may sound astonishing because their case appears specifically pertinent. But Appiah certainly does not want to say that these are not important. Nevertheless, he criticizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (hereafter UDHR) exactly for characterizing access to higher education, food, clothing, medical care and social services as rights. What we must understand in order for this critique to make sense is that there are not just individuals in the world which have obligations to others but that there is at least one other sort of player: states.

Appiah criticizes the decision to refer to the meeting of basic needs as human rights for the simple reason that states would be morally obliged to grant them. But they cannot be obliged if they lack the resources to do so.<sup>228</sup> Appiah's argument is that many postcolonial states easily come into unnecessary conflict with the human rights regime. For, more often than not, their not providing for these basic needs is not caused by unwillingness to do so but because they simply cannot do so on their own. There is a consecutive danger at this point that the idea of human rights may become discredited in the eyes of postcolonial states and this is something that must be avoided at all cost. This is also why Appiah prefers to have human rights formulated in such a way that they demand states to abstain from an action because this is principally easier to fulfil.<sup>229</sup>

This shows that talk about universal obligations does not only include what individuals owe to other individuals but also what states need to do. But even so, one may still ask what we, as persons, are required to do. If states cannot be obliged to guarantee that basic needs be met, could not individuals have this obligation? One way in which Appiah discusses the direct responsibility of every person is by reference to what he calls "the Singer-principle", so named after its main proponent: the Australian philosopher Peter Singer. This principle says that we should always prevent something bad from happening at the expense of something less bad. The example that Singer gives in relation to this rule is that of a child drowning in a pond and me passing by. I must save the child even if this means that I get my new suit dirty.<sup>230</sup> The American philosopher Peter Unger has derived from this principle the conclusion that in order for us to do our duty onto others we must constantly give the greater part of our worldly possessions to charity-businesses like Oxfam or UNICEF.<sup>231</sup> As Appiah points out, the consequences

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<sup>227</sup> Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. 163.

<sup>228</sup> Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, p. 261.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. 158.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p. 158; 159.

of this way of thinking are drastic because we would have to do so until we could be sure that the consequences of giving more benefits in this way would be worse than the consequences of not giving more.<sup>232</sup> We would even have to accept personal financial ruin. Appiah is opposed to the idea that we have such strong obligations. He demonstrates that the Singer principle, in fact, covertly demands even more than it reveals at first sight; namely that we must always do our level best to prevent the worst thing from happening that could possibly occur. But what would that be? Appiah reduces their principle *ad absurdum* in the following way:

Upon reflection, however, it's not so clear that the principle even gets the drowning case right. Saving the child may be preventing something bad; but not saving the child might, for all we know, prevent something worse. After all, shouldn't I be busy about saving those hundreds of thousands of starving children? And wouldn't selling my suit raise a few hundred dollars? And wouldn't ruining it mean I couldn't raise those dollars?<sup>233</sup>

Against the strong Singer-principle Appiah introduces his principle that we ought always to avert an ill if we happen to be in the best position to do so ("emergency principle").<sup>234</sup>

It is in this context that Appiah also suggests something that dates back to his very first engagement with cosmopolitanism. Having argued that we have special responsibility to our own state (as prime provider for the basic needs mentioned afore), he reasons that as cosmopolitans "we still have to play our part in ensuring that all states respect the rights and meet the needs of their citizens. If they cannot, then all of us – through our nations, if they will do it, and in spite of them, if they won't – share the collective obligation to change them [...]."<sup>235</sup> This is similar to his plea that "[w]e should, as cosmopolitans, defend the right of others to live in democratic states with rich possibilities of association within and across their borders, states of which they can be patriotic citizens."<sup>236</sup> This is problematic because throughout all of his writing on cosmopolitanism Appiah has left one possible implication of this completely untouched: the issue of armed conflict. In fact, by failing to elaborate on this problem, Appiah falls into the same trap as Nussbaum, who in the context of her rejection of the national boundary as vital in terms of moral deliberation is lead to assume that the very values that lie at the heart of America must somehow apply to all other human beings, too. In this context Nussbaum argues:

But here one may note that the values on which Americans may most justly pride themselves are, in a deep sense, Stoic values: respect for human digni-

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., pp. 160-161.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., pp. 161-162.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>236</sup> Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots", p. 29.

ty and the opportunity for each person to pursue happiness. If we really do believe that all humans are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights, we are morally required to think about what that conception requires us to do with and for the rest of the world.<sup>237</sup>

Nussbaum is careful in the last line not to suggest too much as to what this conception might require us to do. Still it is sufficiently obvious that it might justify our leading wars in its name. Now I realize, of course, that both Nussbaum's article and Appiah's response were published in 1996. However, in the light of 2003's controversial invasion of Iraq by the US both authors' statements seem to suggest all the wrong things. This is an issue against which the liberal position will have to sufficiently revise itself. What it requires, in my view, is the development of a critical theory of political action, as well as an engagement with theories of this sort that already exist, outside the liberal philosophical framework.

### 3.3 Homi Bhabha's 'Vernacular Cosmopolitanism'

#### 3.3.1 *Thinking in Transition: Marxism, the End of History and Beyond*

I have already mentioned under heading 3.1 that the literary and cultural theorist Homi Bhabha is often associated with post-structuralism. In his main work *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha frequently and consistently draws on the theoretical and methodological insights of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. I have also explained that, in addition to that, Bhabha often approaches literature and theory from a psychoanalytical point of view. Hence, Sigmund Freud and especially the structuralist/post-structuralist psychoanalyst/psychoanalytical theorist Jacques Lacan are frequently referenced in his work. However, Bhabha's work is neither simply post-structuralist nor psychoanalytical but these are merely his most obvious influences. In reality, Bhabha resembles an intellectual leviathan that seems to have read and absorbed almost anything from all possible strands of theory. Here is a brief (and necessarily incomplete) list of authors Bhabha has engaged with: V.S. Naipaul, Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, Antonio Gramsci, W.E.B. DuBois, and Tony Morrison. This is quite an eclectic list but it gives a good impression of what it feels like to read and engage with Bhabha's texts. Often Bhabha would cite authors as diverse as the ones named above in close proximity establishing unexpected connections between them. Hence, one may say in the vein of the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss that Bhabha is a great *bricoleur*.

One thing the list above does indicate that, as a theorist, Bhabha is not merely influenced by other theorists but also by authors of fiction. This is an important

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<sup>237</sup> Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism", p. 13.

aspect of Bhabha's work: He is not so much a theorist of literary genres and epochs but a theorist of society and culture through literature. On the other hand, he reads other theory in a specifically literary way. This is inevitably mirrored in his writing, which at first sight comes across as impenetrable, elusive and cryptic. I think it is safe to assume that even experienced readers of his texts have difficulties figuring out the precise meaning behind many of his passages. Oddly enough, though, this has made Bhabha's work highly appealing. It has rendered it a seemingly endless reservoir of creative ideas that are unearthed and carried to the surface in dialogue between Bhabha and his respective readership rather than being developed by him alone. On the other hand, this has also made Bhabha's work quite controversial. In fact, critics have often reproached him for his obscurity; and maybe sometimes he really does not actually say anything. However, there always remains a sense that he might. Finally, one could even ask what difference it would make whether Bhabha was the originator of all the ideas that were born out of readings of his texts or not. In this way Bhabha brilliantly exploits post-structuralist insights into the instability of meaning and the uncertainty of authorial intention.

Somewhat less surprisingly, the list also indicates that Bhabha is influenced by authors (formerly) working in the field of postcolonial studies and postcolonial theory, or who are regarded as precursors of postcolonial theory. Especially Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* as well as the writings of the Martinique-born psychiatrist Frantz Fanon are frequently quoted and discussed by him and may be regarded as highly formative of Bhabha's own intellectual legacy.<sup>238</sup> Further, Bhabha has been strongly influenced by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and his theory of hegemony. In a way these influences form Bhabha's political backbone and this sheds some additional light on the style of his writing. For his notorious inaccessibility, his seeming unwillingness to express his ideas in a clear and understandable manner can ultimately be perceived as a discursive strategy of resistance, which is, in a way, an extension of the anti-colonialism of Fanon or the Orientalist critique of Said. For Bhabha, colonialism is deeply embedded and hidden away in the philosophical and scientific discourse of European Enlightenment, of rationalism and, in particular, of liberalism, which continues the Enlightenment's lega-

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<sup>238</sup> Note that Bhabha, who is an expert on Fanon, has contributed forewords to both a 2004 English translation of Fanon's important text *The Wretched of the Earth* as well as to the 1986 English translation of his *Black Skin, White Mask* (Homi K. Bhabha, "Foreword: Framing Fanon", in: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York 2004 [originally published in French 1961], pp. vii-xli; Homi K. Bhabha, "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition", in: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*, London 2008 [originally published in French 1952], pp. xxi-xxxvii). Also, the second chapter of Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* is specifically about Fanon. (Homi K. Bhabha, "Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative", in: Idem, *The Location of Culture*, London/New York 2010 (originally published 1994), pp. 57-93.)

cy.<sup>239</sup> But one cannot get to its core and exorcise it if one is forced to speak in its language, to speak in accordance with the discursive regime that helped justify colonialism in the first place. Particular disciplines have their own discourses or languages. These work according to different discursive rules and, thus, they have certain customary categories, arguments and types of reasoning built into them, which one must submit to in order to be heard at all. Bhabha's strategy, as can be seen, for instance, in the case of his critique of liberalism, consists in continuously placing himself at the margin of its discourse. He picks up and, thus, appropriates its concepts and terminology, while creatively re-reading or misreading it in order to unsettle and alienate the discourse of liberal theory. The fact that this strategy is effective, that Bhabha is heard is attested to by the appearance of many of his articles in volumes together with the international *crème de la crème* of political theory. While Bhabha's critique of liberal theory is sometimes controversial, it is safe to say that it does not amount to a random act of destruction. In fact, his disruptions sometimes enable alternative ways of thinking, alternative perspectives, which, naturally, do not occur to occupants of just one discourse, who, in a way, are limited by its rules. In this sense Bhabha's work may also be characterized as properly inter-disciplinary or even trans-disciplinary.

Also, Bhabha, as opposed to Kwame Anthony Appiah, is clearly a theorist of the postcolonial in the sense elaborated by Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin. These authors conceived of the postcolonial not simply as that which comes after colonialism has ended; but that which comes after it but is covertly still related to it. For instance, Bhabha argues that the same ambiguity between 'having ended but not really' applies in the case of the Cold War. He asks: "Do we live in a post-Cold War world tout court, or in the long shadow of that disastrous postwar [sic] experience of superpower collusion and competition that deformed the development of the rest of the world?"<sup>240</sup> Bhabha casts into doubt that the passageway to the era of the Cold War has really been sealed behind us. Again, this should not be taken to mean that the Cold War did not end but that the past of "superpower collusion" may somehow unexpectedly re-enter the present. A recent example for such re-entry is the war in Syria. Here international debates over invention or non-invention have swiftly resurrected an unfortunate geopolitical polarization between the United States and its European allies on the one side and Russia and China on the other, which resembles the binary opposition of Western capitalism and democracy versus Soviet communism that marked the Cold War period.

<sup>239</sup> Note, for instance, Bhabha's comment that liberalism ought to be confronted with its being "an ideology of conquest, or an instrument in the cultural [sic] of assimilation." on pp. 137-138 of Homi K. Bhabha, "The Vernacular Cosmopolitan", in: Ferdinand Dennis/Naseem Khan (eds.), *Voices of the Crossing: The Impact of Britain on Writers from Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa*, London 2000, pp. 133-142.

<sup>240</sup> Sheldon Pollock/Homi K.Bhabha/Carol A. Breckenridge/Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Cosmopolitanisms", in: *Public Culture* 12:3 (2000), p. 580.

Thus, Bhabha hints at the danger that history may repeat itself in a fatal way, at the possibility of our “going forward into the past.”<sup>241</sup> However, Bhabha’s urging goes deeper than expressing fear of renewed global bipolarization. Bhabha is also aware that during the 1980s, and partly as a result of the global political constellation of the Cold War, the IWF and World Bank tried to win over Third World countries for capitalism by attempting to develop them through systematic loan-giving and what is referred to as “structural adjustment programmes.”<sup>242</sup> For Bhabha, as for other critics of these institutions, it has become plain that these efforts, in fact, have covertly reinstated colonial dependencies. Thus, colonial history was repeated under the surface of Cold War history.

Bhabha also explicitly attempts to resist the notion that, since the demise of the Soviet Union, Western capitalism has triumphantly re-modelled the world in its image, distributing peace, prosperity and opportunity via the spread of free-markets all over the globe.<sup>243</sup> This critique of the master-narrative of Western capitalism links Bhabha to Marxism. I have already mentioned Bhabha’s indebtedness to Gramsci but my list also gives away that Bhabha is influenced by the Frankfurt School. However, Bhabha’s relation with Marxism is more ambiguous. As in the case of Fanon’s anti-colonial struggle, Marxism might need to be re-thought because, on Bhabha’s take, it cannot accurately continue in its traditional guise.<sup>244</sup> It is no question for Bhabha that to oppose capitalism by reverting to some dogmatic form of Marxism, some hope of yet establishing a perfectly just communist society would reinforce the fatal binary opposition associated with the Cold War. Thus, he believes that it is imperative that we do not take sides here but explore what lies beyond this opposition.<sup>245</sup> Accordingly, what Bhabha takes away from his engagement with Marxism is more its methodological tool of thinking dialectically rather than any concrete political convictions. Unfortunately, this does not exactly decrease the complexity of his writing. But it makes Bhabha into an excellent and highly counter-intuitive thinker of history as I have already tried to demonstrate above.

One way of going beyond Marxism, even methodologically, while remaining true to it, Bhabha finds in Gramsci’s alleged notion of the necessity of thinking a dialectic before it unfolds itself. Bhabha puts it this way:

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Compare especially Bhabha’s reference to Joseph Stiglitz and his talk of “dual economy” in Homi K. Bhabha, “Looking Back, Moving Forward: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism”, in: *Location of Culture*, p. xvi.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>244</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism”, in: *Text and Nation*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>245</sup> For Bhabha’s rejection of both neo-liberal and the socialist grand-narratives compare Bhabha [et al.], *Cosmopolitanisms*, p. 580.

The notion of continuance, as it relates to “taking stock of the situation at the precise moment of struggle,” is similar to what Gramsci, in a famous passage on the subaltern subject, defines as the importance of “knowing all truths, even the unpleasant ones, which entails grasping the complex of superstructures in their rapid transience” – a form of contradiction, Gramsci informs us, that is often found outside the “formally dialectical” structures, because we need to grasp the dialectic as it is forming in the process of becoming itself in history.<sup>246</sup>

In order to fully grasp this notion of thinking an emerging dialectic we need to examine more closely the way in which Bhabha thinks about history. According to Bhabha, when we think about history or when we draw on it for orientation in the present, we tend to think of ourselves as standing before the historical process, the historical development we depict and, thus, as disconnected from it.<sup>247</sup> Hence, we are tempted to believe that colonialism has ended. We rest assured that today we are enlightened enough not to let something like it happen again. As we move on in time and look back again, the past seems to have changed its shape. For now we come to realize that earlier on we did not ultimately steer clear of the events we were describing, that we weresomehow still caught on their threshold, and we become aware of new dialectical structural relations which we did not recognize the first time as they had not properly unfolded. The wider point here is, of course, that no matter what we do, we cannot leave the on-going stream of events, cannot abandon history to grasp it in its entirety because it is not yet complete.<sup>248</sup> Thus, what Bhabha criticizes is teleology, that is, a kind of thinking which claims for itself a place outside or above the stream of events in order to infer the shape of history’s completeness from its incompleteness, and which, in so doing, simulates a supposed ‘end of history.’

Bhabha offers a radical alternative to this metaphysical misconception, which he variously refers to as the “moment of transition”<sup>249</sup> or simply “transition.”<sup>250</sup> According to this, our world is potentially in constant change and, thus, potentially every moment could be significant in prefiguring the emergence of a new and unforeseen dialectical development. For Bhabha, a person who wants to stay on top of this development must incessantly dart back and forth between the past, the present and possibly even the (projected) future in order to revise his/her notions of the past in the light of new developments from the present, to revise

<sup>246</sup> Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 192.

<sup>247</sup> Bhabha [et al.], *Cosmopolitanisms*, p. 580.

<sup>248</sup> Compare Bhabha’s interpretation of Adrienne Rich’s poem “Eastern Wartime” and especially his comment that “[t]he position Rich stakes out is an intervention into the flow of ‘history that stops for no one’ [...]” in Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 199.

<sup>249</sup> Bhabha [et al.], *Cosmopolitanisms*, p. 581.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 580.

the way in which s/he understands them as related to one another.<sup>251</sup> For this purpose s/he must ceaselessly theorize, trying to represent and envision past and present as standing in ever new possible relations to one another. This, of course, is precisely what Bhabha does in his own theorizing. This is one more reason why Bhabha's writing mostly does not confront the reader with well-systematized ideas but discontinuous arguments and seemingly unstructured bits and pieces, with sparks of brilliance that are immediately dispersed as one carries on reading. Bhabha is no developer of systems because these are too static and tend towards hypostatization. We will see that this constant re-modelling and re-thinking Bhabha has in mind in a deeper sense corresponds to his conception of multicultural societies.

### 3.3.2 *Symbolic Citizenship, the Nation and the Right to Narrate*

One possible starting-point for discussing Bhabha's notion of vernacular cosmopolitanism is to address the way in which he thinks about globalization. This is a good starting-point because here Bhabha relates directly to a thinker of globalization I have discussed under heading 2.3, David Held. Further, it represents an excellent opportunity to observe Bhabha's revisionist thinking, his thinking in terms of transition at work.

Bhabha's basic contention about globalization is that the way in which it has developed up to this point is deficient. I have already alluded to his suspicion of the idea of an even global spread of democracy, equality and prosperity that is associated with Francis Fukuyama's notion of the end of history. Of course, it is clear to Bhabha that massive material and political inequalities persist. The notion that liberal globalization has out of itself created a world of equal opportunity or that it will do so in the long run is a dream. However, Bhabha does not analyze why structural equality has not been achieved or how things could be improved. This is a job for developmental economists. Instead Bhabha takes into view the multicultural societies of the West where he observes a profound dialectical entanglement between the deficiencies of liberal globalization and the failure of multiculturalism.

It is in this context that Bhabha explicitly refers to David Held's proposal that in creating a new internationalism, in envisioning a new global order, we should

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<sup>251</sup> Note that Bhabha believes this to be precisely what Rich's poem proposes when he argues "[...] Slavery, War, Holocaust, migration, diaspora, revolution. The 'I'm a' [Bhabha refers to the beginning of almost every line of Rich's poem] is less the instantiation of commonality of history and culture (*pace* Nussbaum), than the emphasizing, through insistent repetition of starting again, re-visioning, so that the process of being subjected to, or the subject of, a particular historicity [...] has to be, as they say, '*recounted*' or re-constituted as a historical sign in a continua of transformation [sic] [...]" (Bhabha, "Unsatisfied", p. 199). Compare also Bhabha's remark in Bhabha [et al.], *Cosmopolitanisms*, p. 580 that "[a]s we negotiate this transitional territory, we often find ourselves in the interstices of the old and the new, confronting the past *as* the present."

start from a reflection on mankind's darkest moments.<sup>252</sup> As I have already demonstrated Held's political theory is, at least partly, engaged in overcoming the constitutional leftovers of the Peace of Westphalia, which, arguably, paved the way to an idolization of the nation that led to the two most destructive wars in human history, and an attempt to exterminate entire peoples. Bhabha agrees with Held that we should indeed proceed from these dark historical moments. But he asks whether this would not prompt us to conceive differently of the global order.<sup>253</sup> He explains that globalization has up to this point produced a global class of people which he refers to as "the stateless." These people leave mostly the Southern Hemisphere and the East in order to work in Western states where their labour is systematically exploited in order to support the wealth and comfort of Western consumers.<sup>254</sup> According to Bhabha the question of whether these people possess a work-permit or even citizenship, whether they are legal or illegal is not necessarily of consequence<sup>255</sup> as in everyday life they merge into a homogenous mass, which incites feelings of hostility on the part of the 'regular' citizens. Bhabha refers to the zone or domain these people inhabit as the zone of "insecure security." He writes:

This domain of 'insecure security' signifies the boundary of the nation's alterity, the frontier of democracy's agonistic double. Of course, security is politically necessary; but it is also in danger of becoming a structure of legitimation that replaces the laws of participation with the prerogatives of the 'police', while transforming public opinion into collective neurosis and xenophobic projection. Those who inhabit the space of 'insecure security' live in fear of the danger of encountering the alienation of the democratic promise. Not the extinction of the imagined community of the nation, but its reproduction through the creation of the fear of a culturally alien nation of the 'stateless' emerging in the midst of the nation's democratic habitus [sic].<sup>256</sup>

What Bhabha claims is that this mass of immigrants represents the nation's constitutive Other. This may at first seem a bit confusing but Bhabha thinks here in terms of psychoanalysis. His idea is that our sense of who we are ultimately depends on the existence of things about which we believe that they are not us. In the case of the domain of insecure security the imagined community of regular citizens constitutes itself as a nation in contradistinction to the immigrants who, in so doing, are lumped together as the Other and excluded. This process of Othering, in my view, corresponds precisely to Edward Said's notion of 'Orientalism',

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<sup>252</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "Notes on Globalisation and Ambivalence", in: *Cultural Politics*, p. 37.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

to a discursive fixing of the Other in order to constitute oneself in contradistinction to it. One possible incarnation of this covert negative nation-building is the emergence of right-wing popular movements<sup>257</sup> like Germany's Bürgerbewegung pro NRW, the Norwegian Fremskrittspartiet, or, both of which I have already mentioned, Italy's Lega Nord and the UK Independence Party. But there is more because Bhabha's talk of insecure security indicates that the Other, the object that is the stateless, literally causes a contradiction within the liberal value of equality. In response to the threat of Islamist terrorism, which, to Bhabha, is ultimately a product of globalization and a response to the global neo-liberal hegemony of Western values and products, the liberal state is permanently under strain to suspend its own ideal of equal treatment of mostly African and Asian migrants in order to avert a possible threat. This constant suspicion ultimately feeds into the covert process of nation-building for now exclusion of those considered the Other appears more or less officially sanctioned. Thus, the liberal state is constantly forced to justify the absence of liberality in its territory, which enables otherwise rather extreme political forces to enter into a discursive proximity to liberal values like freedom and to pretend to be acting in its interest.

However, Bhabha's real criticism of Held's way of conceiving of internationalism or cosmopolitan democracy lies in his claim that there exists a dialectical relationship between the increasing dissolving of the nation in liberal conceptions of globalization and the covert resurgence of an even more aggressive version of it, of an ethnocentric nationalism within civil society, which precipitates the failure of multiculturalism. Bhabha explains:

[Hannah] Arendt's condition of statelessness opens up a space of double-articulation (what I earlier on called an unresolved dialectic) in the midst of the discourse of global polity. Here the universally interrelated principles of international integration – civility, cosmopolitanism, rights conventions, global covenants, transnational citizenship, 'overlapping communities of fate' – are confronted in a kind of double-bind with the contingent conditions of dis-integration – exclusion, violence, injustice, security, discrimination.<sup>258</sup>

According to Bhabha the cosmopolitan or internationalist project needs to be approached differently. It cannot mean the universal dissolution of nations because it is necessary for people to identify in groups. What would appear to be the problem with Held's approach is that, rather than overcoming just the nation, he, in fact, seeks to eradicate any source of antagonism, which would mean: all

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-41.

groups.<sup>259</sup> But Bhabha holds that the nation was actually a good thing, and he invokes Frantz Fanon to intimate what he

inscribes as his credo: “National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension.” It is this Fanonian paradox that is both enigmatic and essential for the continuance of discourses of cultural globality and transnationality to which we, too often, accede or concede without a necessary struggle.<sup>260</sup>

Bhabha, of course, speaks here explicitly from the postcolonial perspective. What Westerners all too easily forget is that the societies of the so-called Third World have existed as nations for a much shorter time than Western societies. They have different histories, and accordingly they see the nation in a very different light: as an important collective source of meaning, as the embodiment of a successful collective and collaborative struggle against slavery and exploitation. This must be taken into account when we think about internationalism or cosmopolitanism. However, from Bhabha’s point of view it is not only that we should acknowledge this perspective for the sake of being fair but because it teaches us something about our own multicultural societies. For Bhabha, who believes that we may only come to an international perspective through the nation, the project of nationhood may not be abandoned because it is as yet incomplete. He argues:

Globalisation I want to suggest must always begin at home. A just measure of global progress requires that we first evaluate how globalizing nations deal with ‘the difference within’ – the problems of diversity and redistribution at the local level, and the rights and representations of minorities in the regional domain. What is the status of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, or the Muslims in India in the midst of the transformational myths and realities of global connectivity? In the United States, for instance, the American dream is sustained by the ‘wave theory’ of migration – the Irish, followed by the Italians, Jews, Koreans and South Asians. There is, however, an ingrained insouciance, a structural injustice, shown towards African Americans and First Nation Peoples whose ethical and political demands for equality and fairness are based on issues of reparations and land-rights. These rights go beyond ‘welfare’ or ‘opportunity’ and make claims to recognition and redistribution in the process of questioning the very sovereignty of national traditions and territories. And it is because of their inter-

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<sup>259</sup> In the quote above reference to Held is evoked by the mention of overlapping of communities of fate, which is one of Held’s main concepts in the context of his theory of cosmopolitan democracy. Bhabha criticizes Held for abandoning the idea of the nation somewhat more directly in Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 194.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

rogations and interventions at this foundational level, that such movements are often considered to be ‘against the American grain.’<sup>261</sup>

Bhabha makes the important point here that minorities often fail to be properly recognized or integrated because their identities contradict or challenge national narratives, the way national identity is collectively constituted in national histories, in tales that are shared by everyone who ‘belongs.’ And Bhabha suggests that in dealing with such problems it might not suffice to offer them national citizenship. But they must also receive what, in drawing on Avishai Margalit, he refers to as “symbolic citizenship”<sup>262</sup> – a place of their own within the larger national narrative, which, according to Bhabha, can be achieved by means of what he refers to as “the right to narrate.”<sup>263</sup>

This idea of a right to narrate is central to Bhabha’s understanding of cosmopolitanism and it manifests itself in a number of different ways; so that it will be a recurring theme within this sub-section. In the immediately following chapter I will explore one possibility of how Bhabha thinks the right to narrate. And we will see that Bhabha is justified in arguing that thinking in terms of the nation offers a way of approaching an international perspective as the incarnation of the right to narrate, which I have decided to term the “minorization- globalization dialectic”, can be applied to both a national and international context.

### *3.3.3 The Minorization-Globalization Dialectic, the Minoritarian Condition and the Right to Narrate*

The minorization-globalization dialectic is connected to, or part of, another of Bhabha’s interventions and attempted revisions within liberal discourse. His argument begins from a critical examination of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is one of the two main implementation-conventions of the UDHR.<sup>264</sup> Bhabha criticizes that

Article 27 [...] supports ‘the right of minorities, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.’ However, Article

<sup>261</sup> Bhabha, “Looking Back”, p. xv.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xx; xxv.

<sup>264</sup> Note that in “Looking Back” there occurs some kind of muddle and it appears as if Bhabha claims that this is what the UDHR says, but this is a mistake. Article 27 of the UDHR reads: “(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits [.] (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.” (Anon, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, URL: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a27> (accessed: 25/10/2013)). This mistake is ultimately cleared up on p. 167 of Homi K. Bhabha, “On Writing Rights”, in: *Globalizing Rights*, pp. 162-183.

27 emphasizes the need for minorities to 'preserve' their cultural identities, rather than to affiliate across emergent minority communities.<sup>265</sup>

It may come as a surprise that Bhabha should criticize the idea that immigrants preserve their cultural traditions, given that he has spoken affirmatively about the recognition of minorities. But Bhabha is strictly opposed to any kind of identity-politics, which he sees as related to a way of thinking about culture in terms of an adherence to a supposed cultural origin, or cultural authenticity.<sup>266</sup> Accordingly, Turkish immigrants to Germany and their descendants should not merely think of themselves as Turks. After all, they are not only Turks but they are Turks in Germany; and Bhabha advocates that minorities explore the meaning of this "in-between" status, which can be profoundly fulfilling and a remedy to the traumatic disruption of identity, the loss of meaning which the experience of migration often entails. Bhabha speaks in this context of "articulation."<sup>267</sup> The migrant-subject must ask him/herself: "Who am I here?" S/he must find an answer to this question in a new cultural context where the significance or meaning of his/her cultural heritage, customs and norms cannot be properly symbolized.

I shall return to this very interesting point at a later stage. For now, let us just look at how Bhabha's dismissal of identity-politics constitutes a critique of liberalism. The example of Turks living in Germany (what is more formally called German citizens of Turkish origin) is quite instructive in this context. The problem with the liberal notion of cultural tolerance does not lie in that it is not tolerant enough. Rather, paradoxically, it is its implicit premise that turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy: our assumption that these people could want nothing else but their own culture. It is this originally benevolent and well-intended assumption that even though these people have come here, we must leave them alone with what they are culturally, which builds a wall instead of a bridge and finally traps the immigrant in being 'the Turk.' I have just described the liberal premise of tolerance as benevolent. But is this really so? In fact, if we are completely honest a different characterization of it would be possible: I could also say that it entails a certain ethnocentric desire to keep the alien separate from me. For in keeping him a Turk, I can remain a German.<sup>268</sup> This is one of the instances in which Bhabha

<sup>265</sup> Bhabha, "Looking Back", p. xxii.

<sup>266</sup> Compare especially Bhabha's comments on conventional notions of identity in Homi K. Bhabha, "The Manifesto", in: *Wasafiri: Perspectives on African, Caribbean, Asian and Black British Literature* 14:29 (1999), pp. 38-39; Compare also how Bhabha and the London artist Rashid Araeen discuss the shortcomings of identity in an interview in the same issue of *Wasafiri* (Patrick Wright, "Radio 3 'Night Waves' Discussion: Homi Bhabha, Susheila Nasta and Rasheed Araeen", in: *Wasafiri* 14:29, p. 41).

<sup>267</sup> Bhabha, "Manifesto", pp. 38-39.

<sup>268</sup> Compare especially pp. 49-52 of Homi K. Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory", in: *Location of Culture*, pp. 28-56. This argument is also implicit in his rejection of identity-politics and his aspiration to convict liberal discourse of ethnocentrism. It is certainly implied by Bhabha's comments on the UDHR above but also becomes apparent in his critique of Will Kymlicka, who

appropriates or, rather, misappropriates and revises a category from the discourse of liberalism. It certainly makes for a very controversial proposal. However, can we really say with absolute certainty that it is wrong? What we become aware of in this instance is that the discourse of liberalism is more ambivalent, more open-textured than would at first appear to be the case and that it appears to possess a dark side we usually are not aware of.

I will now address one of the ways in which cosmopolitanism or internationalism can be dialectically realized, and which, earlier on, I described as the minorization-globalization dialectic. In the context of his elaborations on a poem of Adrienne Rich, which, for him, represents cosmopolitan or global subjectivity, Bhabha says the following:

In the wake of these voices we are led to a philosophical and political responsibility for conceiving of minorization and globalization as the quasi-colonial, a condition at once old and new, a dynamic, even dialectical relationship that goes beyond the polarization of the local and the global, the center and the periphery, or, indeed, the ‘citizen’ and the ‘stranger.’<sup>269</sup>

He then continues in a seemingly disjunctive fashion:

A recent UNESCO report of the World Commission of Culture and Developments suggests that a minoritarian condition is, indeed, a kind of global citizenship. The last two or three decades have seen more people living across or between national borders than ever before – on a conservative estimate 40 million foreign workers, 20 million refugees, 20-25 million internally displaced people as a result of famines and wars. Immigrants, refugees and minorities who live in the midst of metropolitan centers in the North and South represent the most tangible and proximate presence of the global or transnational world as it exists within ‘national’ societies.<sup>270</sup>

What Bhabha tries to express in relating these two parts is a vision of globalization as a dialectical process of minorization, a process in the cause of which people to an increasing extent become minorities so that increasingly more cultures become centered around the experience of being a minority, of being displaced. Cultures increasingly contain or are built on experiences of being in the minority or what Bhabha calls the “minoritarian condition.” If we combine this with the idea that liberal notions of cultural neutrality<sup>271</sup> discourage minorities from associating with

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believes that multiculturalism is all about the right of ethnical and cultural groups to move around in the world within their own culture. (Bhabha, “Writing Rights”, p. 167.)

<sup>269</sup> Bhabha, “Looking Back”, p. xxi.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>271</sup> Remember that “ethical neutrality” is a view specifically advanced by David Held. It is the idea that states must meet the cultural distinctiveness of citizens in an uncommitted fashion as long as these cultural traits do not impinge on other citizens’ freedom (see chapter 2.3.2). I have here decided to refer to it as “cultural neutrality”, which, for my taste, grasps its implications some-

other minorities, there emerges an interesting sense that we could achieve more understanding on both a global and national scale if we let migrants and minorities exchange their respective minority-narratives. I do not want to take this idea too far but it seems that Bhabha here suggests that working in this way may precipitate a Palestinian in Israel to identify with the fate of Jews in Germany, or that a Muslim immigrant to Europe may approximate an understanding of what being in the minority must mean to a Coptic Christian in Egypt. This is another very controversial yet highly intriguing idea. However, it still leaves us partly stranded as the dialectic cannot include those people who have no experiences of migration or “minorization”, and this is where the work of Bhabha’s cosmopolitans begins.

### 3.3.4 *Culture and the Difference between Languages Lived and Languages Learned*

Bhabha’s engagement with what he refers to as “vernacular cosmopolitanism” goes back to his 1994 classical study *The Location of Culture*. In his preface to this book, which is actually a proper essay, Bhabha offers some insights into his autobiography: He briefly mentions his youth in India, and, in particular, talks about what it was like coming to England to study its language and literature. Bhabha explains:

Setting out from Bombay in the 1970s to study English at Oxford was, in many ways, the culmination of an Indian middle class trajectory where formal education and ‘high’ culture colluded in emulating the canons of elite ‘English’ taste (or what we knew of it) and conforming to its customs and comforts.<sup>272</sup>

Here especially the aspect of desiring to conform to English taste, to English norms and customs is interesting. In a way Bhabha conveys the sense that he believed that there lay hidden within English literature a secret knowledge, an essence that formed the key to English greatness and civilizational superiority. Thus, one could say that, in a way, Bhabha was working to become English himself in order to be able to partake in English greatness. However, he remarks that when he came to England, he did not encounter such an essence.<sup>273</sup> This was partly because he did not enter into an environment in which English was spoken in its received pronunciation or the idealized and artificially quick-witted fashion in which the characters of Jane Austen or Charles Dickens speak. Bhabha explains:

My everyday life, however, provided quite a different inheritance. It was lived in that rich cultural mix of languages and lifestyles that most cosmopolitan Indian cities celebrate and perpetuate in their vernacular existence –

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what better. Though I have often used both terms to signify this relation between Held’s and Bhabha’s respective conceptions of multiculturalism.

<sup>272</sup> Bhabha, “Looking Back”, p. x.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

'Bombay' Hindustani, 'Parsi' Gujarati, mongrel Marathi, all held in suspension of Welsh-missionary-accented English peppered with Anglo-Indian patois that was sometimes cast aside for American slang picked up from the movies or popular music.<sup>274</sup>

It occurred to Bhabha that to seek English in its purest expression, the quintessence of Englishness, which would radiate throughout all of its appearances, was possibly anachronistic because English, to use a winged word, was not identical with itself. Rather, it appeared as internally diverse<sup>275</sup> and in practice was constantly polluted and inter-penetrated by things other than itself, which then irreversibly became a part of it. This is what Bhabha refers to as the discrepancy between "languages *lived*, and languages *learned*"<sup>276</sup> (Bhabha's italics). That which Bhabha refers to as vernacular cosmopolitanism resembles the latter half; that is, it resembles languages as they are actually spoken and constantly hybridized through this usage by different speakers.

I have chosen to further elaborate on this at this point because to understand what Bhabha means by this dichotomy is not only to understand what vernacular cosmopolitanism amounts to. It also means to grasp the profoundly perplexing and original way in which Bhabha thinks about culture. One interesting thing that Bhabha has to say about languages *learned*, which corresponds to the metaphysical notion of Englishness is that this "canonical 'center' may, indeed, be most interesting for its elusiveness, most compelling as an enigma of authority."<sup>277</sup> What Bhabha draws attention to is that even if there was a central core of English culture or English literature – a core that brings to unity the spirit that pervades English literature or culture in its entirety –, it could not stand on its own. We could not adequately think or represent it in its purity because our thinking and language are essentially organized in terms of binary opposition. Thus, whatever content we consider this essence to possess, whatever concrete characteristic we attribute to it, always presupposes the existence of something other than itself: In order to finally characterize our essence, we would need to know the essence of its Other. But this Other only leads to another difference, another Other and so on indefinitely. Thus, the bottom line here is that we are only able to say what we consider typically English because there is something that stands to it in a relation of non-identity. Yet, the precise interplay of relations can never be finally worked through because, paradoxically, there is no identity without difference.<sup>278</sup> And, thus, what

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., p. x.

<sup>275</sup> Compare Bhabha's allusion to class-specific accents and regional dialects in his "Vernacular Cosmopolitan", p. 136.

<sup>276</sup> Bhabha, "Looking Back", p. x.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., p. xi.

<sup>278</sup> Compare for this especially Bhabha's comments on "the peculiarly English" on p. 153 of Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken For Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817", in: *Location of Culture*, pp. 145-174. This idea is also often implicitly

we find at the metaphysical heights of Englishness is not an identity or oneness but difference because difference (and not identity) is the most basic category of our thinking. This is why the essence of Englishness must remain elusive and cannot finally reveal itself in language or representation.

This admittedly rather abstract point is quite nicely complemented by Bhabha's comment that the pure(ly) English he had been seeking "had the archaic feel of a carved almirah that engulfed you in the faded smell of moth-balls and beautiful brittle linens."<sup>279</sup> Apart from the fact that the reader is here intentionally left in the dark as to whether this amounts to insult or praise, what is intriguing is Bhabha's use of the term 'almirah'. For upon inspection of the dictionary we learn that this term, which is used by Bhabha to conjure up the ancientness of the English idiom, is, in fact, a loan from Urdu via Portuguese.<sup>280</sup> In this way Bhabha signals how much the intersection of our own language and culture with the Other marks our own condition of coming into it. There simply is no way for us to go all the way back and imagine it as so ancient and so authentic that it could not be said to already contain alien elements.

Note that Bhabha does not want to claim at this point that there always were Indian loanwords in English. This would be absurd and, thus, we must not take this too literally. Of course, we possess evidence of what English was like before any person speaking it ever encountered an Indian. Back then English clearly contained no Indian loans. However, the point is that even back then it was not exactly pure either. For, it drew on and was inseparably related to other languages that existed in its proximity. If we go back even further, the notion of English as English disappears altogether and, finally, all languages appear to collapse into one. However, Bhabha's broader point here is not so much about language, but about cultural practices more broadly.<sup>281</sup> Cultural practices, including languages, are always hybrid, are always the result of the intermingling of various heterogeneous sources. If we take this insight at face value and think back to what I have said before, we come to realize something very important about Bhabha's way of thinking about culture; namely: The source of a culture's hybridization lies not merely in its relation to an external Other but, paradoxically, also stems from an Otherness that is always already internal. In reality, of course, any supposedly unified culture always contains its own difference in that it consists of different groups and individuals, who interpret its meaning differently and which are inter-

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used by Bhabha to suggest a general unreliability of empirical knowledge. For this see, for instance, his comments on "fixity" on pp. 94-95 of Homi K. Bhabha, *The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism*, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 94-120.

<sup>279</sup> Bhabha, "Looking Back", p. x.

<sup>280</sup> Anon, "almirah, -myra" in: *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. I, Oxford 1989, p. 352.

<sup>281</sup> Bhabha here at least partly conceives of language and culture in analogy to one another. This has a lot to do with his being influenced by post-structuralism, which is rooted in modern linguistic theory.

locked in a struggle for hegemony, a constant process of negotiating cultural meaning.<sup>282</sup>

It is necessary to point out that this way of absolutizing difference, of course, seriously disrupts our usual way of accounting for it in terms of culture. Cultures, on Bhabha's take, all of a sudden do not appear anymore as separate units but as potentially the same in that they are all hybrid and constantly hybridizing one another as well as themselves (through the individuals that compose them). Bhabha, thus, shares with Kwame Anthony Appiah a dislike of what I have referred to as a holistic conception of culture, which is a way of thinking about cultures that still implicitly relies on our being able to signify their singular identities, on our being able to show what they truly are in themselves. This, as I have shown, cannot be done – at least not linguistically. And this makes the supposed boundaries between cultures appear a lot more permeable than we would at first believe. Maybe the differences you feel between you and your friend really are due to the fact that the two of you grew up in what supposedly are two different cultures. But this is not necessarily so. Certainly the differences between you and your neighbour are not due to culture. But quite possibly these feel even more severe than the differences between you and your friend.

### 3.3.5 Vernacular Cosmopolitanism and the Subject of Ambivalence

Bhabha explains that the idea of languages *lived*, that is, the notion of English as inherently hybrid, in fact, enriched his understanding of the canonical texts he was studying<sup>283</sup>, while simultaneously shedding new light on his home India. However, this “vernacular existence”, which Bhabha associates with Indian metropolitan spaces, did not return him to his Indian heritage. Instead, he found it epitomized in a deeper sense in the fiction of the Trinidad-born British novelist and travel-writer V.S. Naipaul<sup>284</sup>, who in much of his writing attempts to work through his own personal cultural displacement. One of Naipaul's works explicitly mentioned by Bhabha is his 1967 novel *The Mimic Men*. The book's title is specifically suggestive as, earlier on, I have described Bhabha's desire to mimic British taste and norms, which he associates with the notion of languages *learned*. And, indeed, we encounter in the novel the same theme of mimicry, an ambivalent desire on the part of a group of immigrants to London, whose story the novel tells, to reify and

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<sup>282</sup> Please note that, again, Bhabha at no point clearly states this to be his conception of culture. However, it would appear to follow more or less directly from his idea of the necessarily hybrid status of cultures. The idea that there is a kind of struggle within every society or culture for hermeneutic hegemony or a negotiation of cultural meanings appears to be suggested in some way by Bhabha's idea that “culture is less about expressing a pre-given identity (whether the source is national culture or ‘ethnic’ culture) and more about the activity of negotiating, regulating and authorising competing, often conflicting demands for collective self-representation.” (Bhabha, “Manifesto”, p. 38.)

<sup>283</sup> Bhabha, “Vernacular Cosmopolitan”, p. 136.

<sup>284</sup> Bhabha, “Looking Back”, p. xii.

appropriate aspects of the city. For instance, the Maltese character Lieni attempts to fashion herself as a “London girl” to no avail<sup>285</sup>, while the novel’s main protagonist Ralph Singh, a Caribbean-born colonial of Indian descent, tries to grasp “the god of the city” but ultimately fails as this entity remains “elusive” or “veiled.”<sup>286</sup> Bhabha, of course, is absolutely aware that Naipaul’s intention in fashioning his characters as lost and shadowless mimics is to point to the inferiority and marginality of Caribbean culture, which, on Naipaul’s take, lacks all the historical greatness of England, leaving its inhabitants devoid of a full sense of identity, without a sense of cultural belonging.<sup>287</sup> However, in complete contrast to Naipaul’s intended dismissal of postcolonial cultures, Bhabha argues something surprising about his protagonists:

His [Naipaul’s] characters made their way in the world, while acknowledging its fragmented structures, its split imperatives, and a prevailing sense of a loss of cultural authority. [...] It was the ability of Naipaul’s characters to forbear their despair, to work through their anxieties and alienations towards a life that may be radically incomplete but continues to be intricately communitarian, busy with activity, noisy with stories, garrulous with grotesquerie, gossip, humour, aspiration, fantasies [sic] – these were signs of a culture of survival that emerges from the other side of the colonial enterprise, the darker side. Naipaul’s characters are vernacular cosmopolitans of a kind, moving in-between cultural traditions, and revealing hybrid forms of life and art that do not have a prior existence within the discrete world of any single culture or language.<sup>288</sup>

If we go back to *The Mimic Men* and examine the novel more closely, we become aware of what Bhabha means. His reading the novel against the grain brings to the fore an unanticipated colourfulness, a warm sense of community among Naipaul’s outcasts, which is otherwise suffocated by the novel’s bleakness and overall atmosphere of despair and decay. In fact, the people Ralph Singh associates with stem from all walks of life and many different cultures: There are, of course, Singh’s initial Maltesian companion Lieni and her “young Indian engineer with whom she had a relationship”<sup>289</sup>, then there are the Anglo-Italian couple, “the Countess”<sup>290</sup>, the “girl from Kenya [and] her man friend, a blond, vacant alcoholic [...] the smiling, mute Burmese student; the Jewish youth [...] the bespectacled young Cockney”<sup>291</sup>, who has two Italian fiancées and the French translator, who

<sup>285</sup> Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, London 2011 (originally published 1967), p. 10; 28-29.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>287</sup> Bhabha, *Looking Back*, p. xii.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>289</sup> Naipaul, *Mimic Men*, p. 10.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

actually comes from Morocco and prefers Moroccan temperatures.<sup>292</sup> Finally, there are “Johnny-boy”, a supporter of Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists, his drunk wife<sup>293</sup> and Paul, the homosexual<sup>294</sup>, which suggests that Naipaul’s community of discards in its unorthodox heterogeneity possesses enough potential to encompass and accommodate even outright contradictions. It is especially this capacity to bring together and to co-locate differences without reducing them, which makes them into a model of citizenship for Bhabha.

We are now in a position to more fully appreciate why Bhabha is against politics of identity and why he did not easily find comfort in being an Indian after his discovery that the center of Englishness was, in fact, empty. Bhabha is strongly influenced by psychoanalysis and thus he is often interested in subjectivity. However, what is of interest to Bhabha is not so much the subject as it is produced by its culture, but the subject as a moment within the process of hybridization. For Bhabha to reassert himself as an Indian after having been disappointed and rejected by England would have meant to seek refuge in another monolithic identity, another dead-end; albeit, one in which differences appear much more pronounced than in England. Of course Bhabha is an Indian. However, he is also a Parsi and he suggests that upon coming to England, experiencing it and taking it in, he also became an Englishman. This doubling and tripling he expresses in a wonderfully poetic way by saying: “In another’s country that is also your own, your person divides, and in following the forked path, you encounter yourself in a double movement [...] once as stranger, and then as friend.”<sup>295</sup> For Bhabha it is this sense of existing not within one culture but, as he often says, ‘in-between’ different cultures, a situation, which appears to amount to alienation, that marks the condition of the vernacular cosmopolitan.

This is also the reason behind Bhabha’s objection to Martha Nussbaum’s model of cosmopolitanism, in which the individual is surrounded by various concentric circles of ethical concern, the outlying ones of which s/he must draw closer toward him/herself. The way in which Bhabha criticizes this model at first appears cryptic and unintelligible. This is partly caused by the fact that in order to get his point across he actually dissects and recycles a quote from Richard Sennett’s response to Nussbaum. This is a good chance for observing Bhabha’s deconstructivist technique at work. I will, therefore, have a closer look at what he does and how he does it: First Bhabha argues against Nussbaum’s model by claiming that “Nussbaum too readily assumes the ‘givenness’ of a commonality that

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 13

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>295</sup> Bhabha, “Vernacular Cosmopolitan”, p. 142.

centres on a particular image of the ‘emphatic’ self’.<sup>296</sup> Then he misquotes Sennett in the following way:

[Nussbaum] neglects ‘Those identities [... that] arise from fissures in the larger social fabric’, as Richard Sennett suggests in his response to Nussbaum, ‘[containing] its contradictions and injustices [...] remaining necessarily incomplete versions of any individual’s particular experience’.<sup>297</sup>

Of course, it is not immediately obvious what Bhabha means in this passage. For how may anyone possess an identity that is not part of her individual experience? It is as if Bhabha claims that these identities are not identities of complete individuals or that the identities make up only a fraction of the individuals. But then the individuals belonging to them needed to have other identities in order to be individuals in the full sense. In fact, this would at first appear to be the solution: The identities in question have to share the individual and, thus, what Bhabha criticizes is that Nussbaum cannot comprehend that individuals may have hybrid identities.

However, I would suggest that Bhabha also wants to state precisely what his misquote initially proposes: that the cosmopolitan subject is not an individual, as I have put it, ‘in the full sense.’ For Bhabha it is precisely clear that being a vernacular cosmopolitan, in fact, precludes our subjectivity from ever appearing as whole. Thus, what he criticizes in Nussbaum is that the individual, who stands in the middle of her circle, is represented as if it was in any sense self-contained. But anyone who considers his/her identity as whole, who possesses a firm standpoint, which s/he does not want to leave, is not really going to be open to others. Thus, for Bhabha the cosmopolitan subject appears as fragmented, incomplete and always in process. He argues that “it is precisely there, in the ordinariness of the day-to-day [...] that, unexpectedly, we become unrecognizable strangers to ourselves in the very act of assuming a more worldly [sic], or what is now termed ‘global’, responsibility.”<sup>298</sup> For Bhabha, being a cosmopolitan subject is precisely to be alienated, to be essentially split between or in-between positions, which, in a constant discontinuous movement, we try to bring into order without there ever occurring a definite end to this process. This is also what Bhabha calls the “the subject of ambivalence.” According to Bhabha, “[t]he ‘subject’ of ambivalence

<sup>296</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “Unpacking my Library... Again”, in: Iain Chambers/Lidia Curti (eds.), *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, London/New York 1996, p. 200.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201; Please note that in this quote the additions in brackets that occur within the space marked by single-stroke quotation marks are not mine but Bhabha’s.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202. Please note that the idea that the subject is essentially alienated further supplements my interpretation of how Bhabha thinks about culture. In fact, Bhabha conceptualizes culture and the subject in an analogous way in that it is not merely culture that is the site of a hegemonic struggle but also the subject itself. The subject is always already hybridized as it is the intersection of contradictory social and cultural forces. Hence, like culture, it contains its own Otherness.

[...] moves back and forth, hither and thither [...]”<sup>299</sup> and we now understand in how far vernacular cosmopolitanism is related to that which I have described as thinking in transition. Here, again, the subject must dart back and forth, incessantly revising not only past against present but also seeking common-ground between different contradictory and seemingly incommensurable perspectives and subject-positions.

All of this might cause some confusion because Bhabha never actually explains whether he means this to be a recommendation or the description of a cosmopolitanism that already exists. I think it is a bit of both: Bhabha essentially attempts to conceptualize how cosmopolitanism must function within the subject, and how we can imagine it. But he also uses his ideas to identify other vernacular cosmopolitans. I have explicitly used ‘other’ here because it is absolutely clear that Bhabha considers himself a vernacular cosmopolitan, that, in fact, he bases his conceptualization of vernacular cosmopolitanism on his own subjectivity. In the context of the various responses to Martha Nussbaum Bhabha finds vernacular cosmopolitanism to be embodied by Richard Sennett, the son of working-class Russian immigrants to Chicago, in Vandana Shiva, the Indian nuclear physicist, advocate of women’s rights and ecologist, and in Kwame Anthony Appiah, whose life is split between Ghana, Britain, and the United States.<sup>300</sup> All of these individuals, for Bhabha, are living in-between different cultures, bringing different perspectives to the various discourses and academic disciplines in which they work and, in so doing, are hybridizing them.

### 3.3.6 *Translation as Transformation, Human Interest and the Right to Narrate*

Bhabha’s notion of translation takes me back to the issue of recognition. As I have argued earlier on, Bhabha does not approve of politics of identity. He argues:

My aim is to get away from a view of culture as an evaluative activity concerned primarily with the attribution of identity (individual or collective) and the conferral of authenticity (custom, tradition, ritual). [...] Culture as an authenticating/identity-bestowing function, expressive of this past tradition, or that customary belief is of limited relevance to the cosmopolitan condition.<sup>301</sup>

Instead, Bhabha argues that what one should think of as culture is more “the activity of negotiating, regulating and authorising competing, often conflicting demands for collective self-representation.”<sup>302</sup> He continues: “So the work of culture does not exist at the level at which a community expresses a demand, but at the level at which that demand becomes articulated with other demands in order to be

<sup>299</sup> Bhabha, “Globalisation and Ambivalence”, p. 41.

<sup>300</sup> Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 196.

<sup>301</sup> Bhabha, “Manifesto”, p. 38.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

able to claim a value and to become meaningful as a form of cultural judgement.”<sup>303</sup> What is important here, I think, is Bhabha’s reference to meaningfulness. His point is that all too often when migrants make demands relating to their ethnical and cultural needs, these remain unintelligible from the point of view of their host-society or nation. This is because they are formulated in terms of an appeal to a cultural tradition, and to norms, which might be completely self-evident for the migrant. However, we encounter here the need to “translate” or “articulate” them in such a way that they become meaningful within the discursive order of the host-society. This, of course, is another side of what Bhabha refers to as symbolic citizenship. Significantly, this translation appears to amount to a two-way transformation. This is because in translating her cultural meaning and, thus, him/herself, the migrant adapts him/herself to the discourse of the Other, of her host-society. Thus, s/he transforms him/herself but s/he also transforms the host-society because s/he now receives recognition within its discourses, represents a moment within them and has thus effectively hybridized them. In this way s/he has, paradoxically, transformed him/herself in order to remain who s/he was, to maintain his/her former subject-position. I believe that this is what Bhabha means when he speaks of “translation as transformation.”<sup>304</sup>

However, in hybridizing one another the immigrant and his/her host-society have moved closer together and opened up an “intercultural”<sup>305</sup> space, a new idiom or framework in which they can translate their differences to one another. Bhabha finds a model for this in the two main-characters from E.M. Forster’s novel *A Passage to India*. The novel, which is set in early twentieth century India, partly describes the development (and eventual destruction) of a friendship between the Muslim doctor Aziz and the young Englishwoman Adela, the prospective wife of a colonial official. In the novel their opening up of an inter-culture or in-between space eventually fails due to unfavourable external conditions, intrigue and Adela’s lasting impression that she was raped by Aziz.<sup>306</sup> Yet Bhabha still beautifully elaborates on the book’s promise of a space in which the mutual loathing between Indians and their colonial masters is suspended. He argues:

Aziz and Adela were trying to create a new medium of understanding that would make it irrelevant for them to retreat to the certitudes of their own cultural foundations, and it is for this reason that Forster leads them into

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>304</sup> Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 196.

<sup>305</sup> Note Bhabha’s discussion of the “intercultural” in: Bhabha, “Writing Rights”, pp. 175-176.

<sup>306</sup> Edward Morgan Forster, *A Passage to India*, London 2005 (originally published 1924), pp. 182-183. Note that in the novel it never gets settled whether Adela was actually raped at all. There certainly occurs some incident. Yet throughout the novel there pervades a strong sense that Aziz is being framed as part of a power-struggle between the local Indians and Anglo-Indians. Compare for this especially Fielding’s discussion with McBryde in: Ibid., pp. 157-161, or the courtroom-episode on pp. 204-217.

the darkness of the Marabar Caves. There, prior assumptions and prejudices are flung into the void and, for a spare moment, the colonial mehmsahib and the educated native confront each other through a glass darkly [...] not seeking their own reflections, but the possibility of a proximate existence.<sup>307</sup>

This promise of an inter-culture into which we may translate our differences together with others to seek a “proximate existence” in many ways resembles that which Bhabha often terms the “third space”<sup>308</sup>. The metaphor of a space opening up in what is essentially meaning, may at first seem a bit ill-fitting. However, I believe that the reason Bhabha often refers to this in such a way is because he wants to suggest that to form an inter-culture does not amount to a mere dialectical sublation or synthesis but to something that opens up new potentials and possibilities of combination; in other words: to freedom. And this, of course, marks Bhabha as a thinker of human agency. For him, it is only through hybridization and, thus, through the emergence of new cultural and social forms and ways of being that we can, if only for a moment, escape from the structures that otherwise determine our every action.<sup>309</sup>

Something that is related to Bhabha’s notion of inter-cultures is what, drawing on Hannah Arendt, he calls “human interest”, “*inter-est*” or “in-between.”<sup>310</sup> I have already used this expression several times without properly reflecting on it. In many ways it seems to refer to the position of the cosmopolitan subject. However, Bhabha also uses this idea of the in-between to comment on the discourse of human rights. In this context he is specifically critical of a certain tendency within liberalism to base the notion of what rights belong to ‘the human’ on a presumptuous generalization about what the human or, as Bhabha puts it, the “merely human” amounts to. Bhabha is here very suspicious of a universalism he already found in Nussbaum and which Ulrich Beck called an absolutized universalism of sameness – a universalism on which we embrace others but only on our own terms and thus at the expense of their difference. Such a notion of the merely human attempts to cast aside something that Bhabha thinks as inevitable: the symbolic embeddedness of all human behaviour.<sup>311</sup> In reality, what it achieves is not a universal image of man but merely the universal projection of its own con-

<sup>307</sup> Bhabha, “Vernacular Cosmopolitan”, p. 138.

<sup>308</sup> Compare for the concept of “third space” especially Jonathan Rutherford, “The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha”, in: Idem (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London 1990, pp. 207-221.

<sup>309</sup> This is especially suggested by Bhabha’s comments on the Dalit poet Prakash Jadhav, who, according to Bhabha, escapes the Hindu-Muslim-polarization of Indian mainstream culture by borrowing rhetorically from the Black Panther movement. (Bhabha, “Looking Back”, pp. xxiv-xxv.)

<sup>310</sup> Bhabha, *Globalisation and Ambivalence*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>311</sup> Compare for this Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 198; Bhabha, “Vernacular Cosmopolitan”, p. 139; Compare also Bhabha’s statement that “[t]he ‘human’, as a cultural category, frequently signifies a process of translation.” (Bhabha, “Writing Rights”, p. 170.)

sciousness. Bhabha argues that this must not lead us to a rejection of human rights: “We need not, of course, dismiss the appeal to the ‘merely human’. After all, we quite properly invoke the merely or purely ‘human’ as a horizon of moral hope and political courage when we talk of human rights in a national and international perspective.”<sup>312</sup> Instead, he suggests: “In complex multicultural societies, the ‘culture of humanity’ requires that we continually translate the ‘merely’ human [...]”<sup>313</sup> Thus, what Bhabha recommends is not that we should stop trying to think about human rights or what the merely human amounts to. We must, in fact, create an active culture of talking about human rights and not leave this to a few professionals. But we must not do so in the way in which religious fundamentalists discuss the Bible or the American constitution. We must not try to artificially fix the meaning of the human but always expect that in the context of our translating our subject-positions to one another, we may get to a point at which we have to adjust or revise our understanding of essential rights. This is quite reasonable since the people behind the UDHR – legal scholars should not be considered to be infallible. Bhabha also speaks in this context about “the human as a ‘translational’ sign.”<sup>314</sup> The discourse of human rights in maintaining its position cannot remain the same but it must move along with and follow the flow of hybridization, re-translating and re-inscribing itself within the discursive struggle for hermeneutical hegemony.

Finally, one way in which translation and negotiation between different positions may be put into practice, is through the right to narrate; hence, through a mutual exchanging of narratives. Bhabha explains that narrative is here not meant as restricted to literature but that it extends also to film, art, historical writing and any other way in which a person’s or a group’s history and sense of identity may be related. He argues:

By the ‘right to narrate’, I mean to suggest all those forms of creative behaviour that allow us to represent the lives we lead, question the conventions and customs that we inherit, dispute and propagate the ideas and ideals that come to us most naturally, and dare to entertain the most audacious hopes and fears for the future. The right to narrate might inhabit a hesitant brush stroke, be glimpsed in a gesture that fixes a dance movement, become visible in a camera angle that stops your heart.<sup>315</sup>

Then Bhabha suggests something interesting, which is that our exchanging narratives with one another may not only help us understand the Other. Rather, this gaining insights into the Other appears as dialectically related to a gaining of deeper insights into the self. Bhabha suggests:

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Bhabha, “Unpacking”, p. 204.

<sup>315</sup> Bhabha, “Writing Rights”, p. 180.

Suddenly in painting, dance or cinema you rediscover your senses, and in that process you understand something profound about yourself, your historical moment, and what gives value to a life lived in a particular town, at a particular time, in particular social and political conditions.<sup>316</sup>

When we learn about the way others conceive of themselves, this gives us new ways of imagining ourselves or making sense of our own life. Our recognition of the difference of the Other dialectically reinforces our recognition of ourselves as Other, of our own difference. That is, we are being alienated from ourselves, which, in turn, corresponds to the condition of the cosmopolitan subject. But we now realize that this alienation is actually a source of freedom, of breaking free from the confines of our culture, in which our possibilities of accounting for who we are were limited. And the more we discover our own alienation as a source of freedom, the more we open ourselves to the narratives of others and become vernacular cosmopolitans.

It becomes obvious at this point that this dialectic forms the complementary part to the minorization-globalization dialectic, by means of which Bhabha encompasses those people who do not experience migration or partake in what he called the minoritarian condition. Bhabha compensates here by suggesting that these people should be opened to the minoritarian condition by being alienated from their own culture, which, for him, is precisely what migration and minoritarian existence entail.

### *3.3.7 Global Memory and the Right to Narrate*

In chapter 3.3.2 I have argued that Bhabha believes that thinking in terms of the nation can provide us with an international or cosmopolitan perspective. In chapter 3.3.3 I then outlined the minorization-globalization dialectic that is implied by him. It was easily recognizable how this dialectic could be said to possess both a local (or national) and a global dimension. However, Bhabha does not leave it at that and attempts to also think the other half of the right to narrate, the dialectic that exists between the recognition of the Other and the self in a global or international context. This leads him to what he refers to as “memory” or “global memory.”

In thinking about memory Bhabha returns to David Held and his dictum that in conceiving of cosmopolitanism, we should proceed from a consideration of human atrocities. This is to the purpose that we should not repeat them or go down roads that lead us back to them. Bhabha takes this idea seriously and he also agrees with another of Held’s assessments; namely that the increasing advancement of international integration and global interconnectedness poses a serious challenge to the practice of democracy. Bhabha puts it this way: “If, as David Held argues, ‘the agent at the heart of modern political discourse, be it a person, a

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

group or government is locked into a variety of overlapping communities and jurisdictions, then the “proper home” of politics and democracy becomes difficult to resolve.”<sup>317</sup> How, in other words, could we translate the procedures and practices of national democratic deliberation into a global or international context? This, of course, constitutes the most fundamental problem explored by Held in the context of cosmopolitan democracy. What we have learned from Held, from Kant and ultimately from Appiah is that there exist a variety of reasons for why the challenge that globalization poses to democracy cannot be solved by the creation of a global state. For even if the creation of such a state, the holding in coherence of its procedures was not virtually impossible to accomplish, it would still be highly undesirable for its all-encompassing centralism. This is why Held’s approach rather seeks to decentralize power by thinking about the democratization of institutions of global governance and from civil society. Of course, Bhabha does not share Held’s rather straightforward approach of thinking about institutions. This enables him to contribute to the discussion over cosmopolitanism in an original way: Bhabha is, of course, aware that the proper functioning of national democracies relies on the existence of a politicized and well-informed community of citizens and, thus, on public spheres like the university. But these public spheres have increasingly become subject to corporate interferences. It is Bhabha’s contention that literature or narrative can compensate for this by posing as a global public sphere, organizing a global political community.<sup>318</sup>

The way in which Bhabha relates this to Held’s idea that human atrocities should be our starting-points in conceiving of a new global order, is by suggesting that what memory in the sense of a global dialogue should focus on is exactly the mediation and collective negotiation of traumatic experience; experiences of collective disasters like genocide, war, slavery and exploitation via narrative.<sup>319</sup> This, of course, also represents a way of making the discussion over global governance more susceptible to the various postcolonial histories, identities and perspectives that are often not taken into account by Western theorists and political scientists. In other words, this amounts to a global politics of recognition. Again Bhabha emphasizes that narrative must not be understood as restricted to literature or as necessarily fictional. For example, he finds an instance of global memory in the anonymous female Iraqi blogger Riverbend, whose reflections on the war in her country became internationally famous and were compiled into a book that became a bestseller.<sup>320</sup>

One way in which Bhabha supplements the notion of memory is by comparing it to Toni Morrison’s notion of “rememory.”<sup>321</sup> In Morrison’s post-slavery ghost

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<sup>317</sup> Bhabha, “Globalisation and Ambivalence”, p. 46.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-46.

<sup>320</sup> For Bhabha’s discussion of Riverbend, compare *ibid.*, pp. 44-46.

<sup>321</sup> Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 196; Bhabha, “Unpacking”, p. 201.

novel *Beloved* the main character Sethe explains rememory to her daughter Denver in the following way: “What I remember is a picture floating out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don’t think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened.”<sup>322</sup> Hence, according to Sethe rememory possesses a material presence and this, in turn, resonates well with Bhabha’s assertion that memory “is a material ‘medium’ that must be ‘restored and framed’, cut and edited” and his further remark that “its ethical importance lies in its being at once a form of presence – an ‘exposure’ – and a technology of ‘processing’, remembering, repeating and working through.”<sup>323</sup> Thus, unlike Sethe, who wants to protect her daughter from the traumatic experience of slavery, Bhabha seeks a way in which the memory of human catastrophes can be made into rememories that last and continue to haunt us, to remind us of their presence. Yet, paradoxically, what Bhabha suggests is that we can only uphold the presence of memory in this way through, as he puts it, cutting and editing and, thus, through transformation. We have here the same problem that underlies the discursive inscription of human rights: Memory as well as the discourse of human rights needs to be translated and, in doing so, transformed. Hence, we become aware in this way that Bhabha’s notion of global memory contains all the attributes of translation and transition: ever renewed reflections on the relation between past, present and future and a negotiation between the various cultural perspectives and subject-positions that are being narrated in it to the end of opening up spaces in-between them.<sup>324</sup>

One way in which this rather abstract idea may be posed as a more concrete problem is by thinking back to the Holocaust, which is also mentioned by Bhabha. In the past the way the Holocaust was conventionally narrated was as the outcome of the structural evolution of the German state. As long as this state housed a nation that was mostly ethnically German, this memory remained relatively stable. However, today German classrooms are increasingly filling with students who are not ethnically German and whose ancestors were not present to witness the Holocaust. This, of course, reflects the increasing cultural heterogeneity of the German nation. Given this situation, it would seem that in order to maintain their presence within the nation, the lesson learned from the Holocaust need to be re-translated. They need to be transformed from a particular (German) memory into global memory. This is yet another way in which Bhabha’s thinking about the multicultural nation leads to an international perspective.

Finally, I would like to finish this chapter on a more critical note. I have already implied that Bhabha’s ideas are sometimes controversial. One aspect that appears particularly problematic is how Bhabha often feels called upon to speak in a moralizing tone on behalf of ‘migrants’ or ‘minorities.’ An instance of this can be

<sup>322</sup> Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, London 2005 (originally published 1987), p. 43.

<sup>323</sup> Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 198; Bhabha, “Unpacking”, p. 203.

<sup>324</sup> Compare for this especially Bhabha, *Globalisation and Ambivalence*, p. 47.

found in the passage where he criticizes liberal notions of secularism and egalitarianism as “privileged [and] a perspective far removed from the cultural and national context in which various minority groups like Woman against Fundamentalism in England, are demanding adherence to secularism.”<sup>325</sup> Of course, the charge that liberalism occupies too privileged a perspective to fully comprehend the problems of minorities is definitely not made out of thin air. But this poses the question of how we could compensate for this lack. Of course, the migrant-groups and national minorities we know are often composed of people belonging to the poor and labouring classes, of people who have little education and are materially underprivileged. As we have already become aware, Bhabha’s notion of vernacular cosmopolitanism is, of course, explicitly based on his own experiences as a migrant. It is a projection of his own consciousness as a migrant and a Parsi in India. In India, Bhabha belonged to the middle classes, and when he went to England it was as an exchange student to Oxford. Consequently, his experience as an immigrant to the UK most likely differed radically from the experiences of most of the immigrants he aspires to speak for. In this way Bhabha prescribes his own consciousness as a model for negotiation between mostly lower class immigrants and their host-societies. Now this may or may not be deemed permissible. Yet Bhabha attacks liberalism for being privileged as if he himself could be exempted from such a charge. Thus, to the extent that Bhabha is asking us to take material differences more seriously, it remains doubtful whether his own theorizing provides any instruments to live up to this standard.

### 3.4 Synthesis: Rooted and Vernacular Cosmopolitanism Revisited and Cosmopolitanism Practice

What I wish to do now as a final step in this section is to compare the respective approaches of Bhabha and Appiah with regard to their differences and similarities and also to point out some of the ways in which (empirical) research practices may be based on them. What is worth pointing out above all is that despite the fact that they speak from differing disciplinary perspectives, both authors’ arguments possess a great deal of overall similarities. For instance, they hold in common the idea that literature can play an important role in engaging across cultural, racial and linguistic divides. Appiah’s idea of dialogue or conversation, according to which we should try to find commonness of interest and partial agreement on particulars rather than more polarizing universals is fully compatible with Bhabha’s notion of (global) memory; a (global) collective discussion on the historical legacy of colonialism, exploitation, genocide, displacement and the subsequent loss and transformation of identities.

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<sup>325</sup> Bhabha, “Unsatisfied”, p. 204.

Bhabha and Appiah are also remarkably close in their respective critiques of Martha Nussbaum. For instance, Appiah's criticism of Nussbaum's humanism are precisely mirrored in Bhabha's suspicion of what he refers to as the discourse of the merely human: the false universalization of a particular consciousness as an objective representation of a natural and bare humanity that appears stripped of all its cultural contingencies. Both authors are also critical of cultural relativism<sup>326</sup>, or rather, its absolutization as a foundational principle of cultural knowledge and cultural politics. In Bhabha's case this is not immediately obvious but he, of course, implicitly attacks cultural relativism through his critique of liberalism's stance of cultural or ethical neutrality. According to this, the neutrality-stance precipitates negative forms of Othering by making the difference between different groups seem essential and impermeable. The very same idea is contained in Appiah's dismissal of an ethics that views the world as consisting of several different and internally homogenous ethical sub-units that are forbidden to interpenetrate. In this way both authors attempt to open up and occupy a space in between the poles of universalism and relativism.

But it is also at this point that a complication between the two authors becomes apparent: Bhabha and Appiah have differing views on the precise nature of identity and, consequently, of recognition. Appiah seems to conceive of identity, more conventionally, in terms of an intersection of different group-affiliations within the individual and he discusses the (ethical) allegiance between the individual and the groups which constitute her/his identity. This appears to include traditions, norms and customs. Bhabha, on the other hand, is more interested in the process of identity-formation, which for him corresponds to the process of hybridization. For Bhabha, the articulation of identity is both a matter of translation/transformation and of hybridizing both the articulating entity and its Other.. The result is that Bhabha is not prepared to make space for identity in the way Appiah does. This regards especially the adherence to supposedly authentic cultural practices and authoritative traditions, which Bhabha rejects. This clearly is one way in which the two approaches of Bhabha and Appiah may be said to diverge: While Appiah wants to make as much space for different group-identities and only seeks consensus on vitally pressing ethical issues, Bhabha is more interested in pushing societies into a state where the constant negotiation and, hence, transformation of identities becomes more natural.

When we now think back to Bhabha's critique of neutrality we come to realize in what way this difference causes further tension between the two approaches. We have, of course, learned from Appiah that on liberalism's take the need for ethical or cultural neutrality applies not so much in the case of persons and their relations among one another but definitely to the relations between individuals and the state. What the idea of neutrality entails in this context is the state's

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<sup>326</sup> What would appear to follow from this is that both of them also reject holistic conceptions of culture.

recognition of each of its citizens as an autonomous individual. Now, strictly speaking, all citizens are different from one another and they have very different needs. But some of our most important needs have to do with the groups to which we belong. Thus, in order to best pave the way to individual freedom the state must recognize groups in their idiosyncrasy and pave the way for the legality and social acceptability of their practices. In other words, the state is ethically obliged to categorize and, thus, implicitly fix the groups as distinct from one another in construing a framework for their coexistence. This is an absolutely necessary procedure that is achieved most fully where the recognition and categorization of groups on the part of the state corresponds to the ways in which these groups define themselves. This procedure is necessary since it is done to the end of ensuring overall equality. For if the state was able to recognize and meet an individual's needs more fully than another's on account of her/his group being recognized by the state while the other's is not, then, all things being equal, this amounts to unequal treatment. But, all things being equal, we do not want to abandon the ideal of equality and equal treatment of individuals by the state. This is why I believe, whatever critical issues Bhabha may raise about liberal multiculturalism, that we still need it, and that a dismissal of neutrality would be problematic. Sometimes groups will not have reached a point where they can conceive of themselves as in-between, or where they can easily translate themselves. In such a situation the state is obliged to respect their difference to the end of treating them equally.

What I suggest, therefore, is that a relative suspension of neutrality and of cultural relativism may only be properly exercised at the level of civil society as, for instance, in what Bhabha calls (global) memory or what Appiah refers to as dialogue or conversation. Here identities become subject to a complex process of negotiation that is not bound by the legal pressures which (at least ideally) bind the state. However, the outcome of this negotiation may ultimately feed back into revised claims for legal recognition addressed to the state. Maybe this is exactly what Bhabha has in mind. But be that as it may, if we interpret his work in this way it again appears as fully compatible with Appiah. What we learn about in this way is one context in which cultural relativism, which is interrogated by both authors, remains necessary. This also leads us to a definite understanding of the kind of citizenship envisaged by Bhabha and Appiah: It is citizenship in a more metaphorical sense that has to do with one's taking part in a global conversation, a process of negotiating values and identities, commonalities and differences. It does not refer to the citizenship in a literal world-state that was already rejected by Kant.

Another way in which Bhabha's theorizing differs from liberal theory and thus also from Appiah, is Bhabha's thinking in terms of discursive strategies as well as his use of concepts from psychoanalysis. This kind of thinking is unparalleled in the more principled analytical arguments of philosophers like Appiah and Held.

However, it seems indispensable since it gives us alternative and ultimately more profound ways of imagining and conceptualizing what actually happens in processes of cross-cultural negotiation. Further, it can help us interrogate various unquestioned notions that liberal theory, which is the principle discourse on human rights. One of the ways in which cosmopolitanism may be turned into a concept for research is, for instance, by drawing on Kwame Anthony Appiah's treatment of identity (see chapter 3.2.2). As we have seen, our identity is, according to Appiah, not something that is simply given but something that comes together on the basis of the relations we stand in as social beings. It is through others that we learn about what categories of people exist, which we may then use to fashion our selves. One thing I pointed out in my discussion is that there are many such social categories, which we cannot help belonging to. In a way these are especially important for us since they also appear to especially bind us to specific groups and, thus, to a social consensus of sorts. One of the problems with these categories is that more often than not they are exclusive. You cannot both be black and South East Asian. Cosmopolitanism is when we, in our social capacity, overstep or transcend boundaries, which appear as formative of such group-identities, in order to allow the sameness of difference without ultimately collapsing them together.

If we conceptualize cosmopolitanism along these lines we may, for instance, discover it in Andrea Levy's novel *Small Island*. The novel is staged shortly before, during and shortly after World War II in Jamaica, England and India. One of Levy's main female protagonists, a white upper middle class-bred Englishwoman called Queenie spends the war years working at a "rest center."<sup>327</sup> Queenie at several points in the novel transcends class-differences when she repeatedly cares for and protects a bombed out Cockney-family.<sup>328</sup> She also uses her position at the office to allocate a new flat in a fashionable London-area to a lower class family, whose home has been destroyed.<sup>329</sup> This she does much to the annoyance of the local residents, who defy "those people" to be living in their "respectable street."<sup>330</sup> After the war Queenie lets out part of her husband's house for rent. During this time – and after she had a sexual relationship with the black Jamaican pilot Michael Roberts<sup>331</sup> – Queenie becomes friendly with and takes on Jamaican lodgers like Gilbert<sup>332</sup> and his wife Hortense. Queenie's cosmopolitan transcendence of the racial boundaries, again, is very much opposed by her racist neighbour Mr Todd and various other white people from her area.<sup>333</sup> In the end what we learn from Levy's novel is that a cosmopolitan stance is not necessarily something

<sup>327</sup> Andrea Levy, *Small Island*, London 2004, p. 278.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 269-271; 275-277.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 281-286.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 289-302.

<sup>332</sup> How Queenie and Gilbert get to know each other and become friends is described on p. 168 ff. in *ibid.*

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 111-113; 116-118.

one may only acquire through extensive travelling. For, Queenie, of course, does not resemble the image of the well-travelled globetrotter that is usually associated with the term cosmopolitan. If anything this more customary understanding of cosmopolitanism would apply to her husband Bernard, who goes abroad to fight in India but who, nevertheless, turns out every bit as racially prejudiced and resentful of otherness as Mr Todd.<sup>334</sup> Thus, the cosmopolitanism of *Small Island* is, as the novel's name suggests, an "insular cosmopolitanism", one that can be practiced at home by discovering and embracing one's own place as internally heterogeneous.

This idea of discovering one's own place as internally heterogeneous leads us to another, albeit totally different way of putting cosmopolitanism to practical use. As Bhabha has argued, modern (Western) societies are stricken with the condition that there exist communities of otherness all around us, communities that emerge, as Bhabha puts it, "in the midst"<sup>335</sup> of our nation. He has also argued that what he calls narrative must not be thought of as restricted to works of fiction. Hence, if we take seriously Bhabha's and also Appiah's call for cosmopolitanism, it seems prudent to no longer limit efforts to the analysis and critique of works of literature. In chapter 3.3.3 I have discussed Bhabha's idea that what national minorities and immigrant communities need to do is exchange their respective minority-narratives. Under heading 3.3.6 it then became apparent that they should ultimately share them with us to make us more familiar with them and in a way defamiliarize our sense of self. It is to this that we, as academics, can contribute. For instance, we can try to set up contact with immigrant communities and request interviews with people from these communities regarding their experience as migrants. I am sure that we would find that these people – should they be willing to talk to us – have very interesting stories to tell, stories that would exactly defamiliarize our notions of the national space we share. We would suddenly perceive voices coming from a previously unknown part of the very space we occupy every day and which we thought we knew inside out. These voices would show us an image of our society and ourselves from an unfamiliar perspective, a precarious and threatened perspective. And this would alert us to the myriad of problems that immigrants face in our societies and about which we naturally possess no knowledge. Thus, one objective could be to look for structural problems immigrants are facing collectively to the end of raising awareness of them and, ultimately, removing them.

There is a danger that the people we interview will not give us very useful information for improving their situation. Maybe they would rather talk about other things, which, by all means, we should not keep them from talking about; in this way, our project may be carried through best if, for the time being, we substituted

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<sup>334</sup> For Bernard's dismissive attitude towards Jamaicans and blacks more generally see especially *ibid.*, p. 430 and 435-437.

<sup>335</sup> Bhabha, "Looking Back", p. xxii.

our scientific interest of ascertaining facts about them for an ethical interest of letting them articulate themselves to us. Within the methodological repertoire of the social sciences there exist certain techniques that may help generate what Gabrielle Rosenthal refers to as a “biographical narrative”, that is, a narrative that does not rely on pre-given questions and answers but that preserves the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of what the teller has to say.<sup>336</sup> In this way and by letting them speak about whatever they deem appropriate, we would be communicating to our immigrants that they matter to us, a sense of appreciation. This appreciation they can return by asking how we got to be the ones we are; so that we would gradually establish a culture of taking an interest in one another and of exchanging our stories, a community wherein the various ‘wes’ and ‘thems’ become less polarizing.

#### 4. Conclusions: Necessary Humanist Residues in Cosmopolitanism

In this chapter I would like to return to my various opening questions and, in retracing the various stages of cosmopolitanism step by step, address in how far the postcolonial perspectives on cosmopolitanism are related to and rooted in the Western discourse of cosmopolitanism and, especially, to what extent they are related to the Enlightenment and whether this is damaging.

In my analysis of the classical to contemporary perspectives on cosmopolitanism I first examined the philosophy of the ancient Greek Diogenes, who originated the term cosmopolitanism as such. As a Cynic Diogenes radically rejected worldly existence and, instead, advocated a life in accordance with nature – an ideal he most literally adhered to. He lived in poverty and without any possessions which he branded as vices of civilization, on the streets of Athens, whose citizens he often provocatively enticed to abandon their worldly ways and to live in his manner. Significantly, as a result of his rejection of civilization Diogenes also disapproved of any form of worldly government or state and, therefore, also of contemporary forms of citizenship. Accordingly, his notion of being a cosmopolitan, that is, a citizen of the cosmos invokes less a literal citizenship but citizenship is here meant as a metaphor for a state of unity with all things and all beings, which is, of course, exactly what, for Diogenes, the state of nature was all about.

The idea that cosmopolitanism refers to a metaphorical rather than a literal citizenship is something that runs like a red thread through most, if not all, conceptions of cosmopolitanism we have encountered. For instance, Kant rejected the notion of a world-state and suggested the founding of a voluntary league of nations instead. Likewise both Appiah’s notion of dialogue (or conversation) and

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<sup>336</sup> Gabrielle Rosenthal, *Erlebte und Erzählte Lebensgeschichte: Gestalt und Struktur biographischer Selbstbeschreibung*, Frankfurt New York 1995, pp. 186-207.

Bhabha's concept of global memory imply metaphorical citizenship since their efforts to globally forge allegiances across difference must be understood as located at the level of international civil society. Thus, based on Cynic cosmopolitanism most - if not all - notions of cosmopolitanism I have examined reject literal world-citizenship.

As I have argued, ancient Greece, the world wherein Diogenes lived, was composed of different interrelated city-states. Consequently, any foreign citizen and especially those who existed outside this order altogether and whom the Greeks regarded as barbarians would have posed as Other. Thus, for Diogenes to dismiss contemporary notions of citizenship in the way he did was meant as an appeal to identify with the Other, to try and imagine one's sameness with so-called barbarians but also with slaves and with women. This notion of bridging socially constructed inequalities in some way is especially interesting to the postcolonial perspective. However, one difference between the Cynics and later cosmopolitans is their belief that cosmopolitanism should unite within one realm not only humans but, ultimately, all beings, including metaphysical entities such as gods and spirits. This spiritual or religious dimension of cosmopolitanism was not included in the adoption of the concept by the Enlightenment, which, instead, was based on the political and legal implications of the Cynic and especially the Stoic perspectives; and it is not an element of either the contemporary or postcolonial versions I have examined.

Further, what becomes clear in retrospect is that Cynic cosmopolitanism is clearly inhabited by an undesirable universalism, which Ulrich Beck referred to as an absolutized universalism of sameness. As I have explained, the Cynics took to the streets and what they did to convert people to authoritatively prescribed truths. In order for the Other to exist in harmony with the Cynics' world-view it would have had to become identical with it. In this way Cynic cosmopolitanism reaches out to the Other only to make it into the self. My second stage in exploring the various historical incarnations of cosmopolitanism from the classic to contemporary perspectives was Immanuel Kant, who within the confines of this work represents the Enlightenment's conception of cosmopolitanism. Kant's perspective is complex and he differentiates between several different kinds of cosmopolitanism such as a moral and political cosmopolitanism, which are also related to one another in intricate ways. Kant's moral cosmopolitanism is an inheritance from the Stoic notion that ideally all humans ought to be seen and treated as equals. What follows from this is that everyone has obligations to all other humans rather than just to their own kin. The way Kant connects this notion to political cosmopolitanism is through his concept of patriotism: Good patriots, who take an interest in the moral advancement of their state will criticize it for treating others unfairly. By this they aim at changing their state for the better. In retrospect what appears clear is that especially Bhabha's idea of creating an international public sphere or a global discussion on the legacy of violence, war and

suffering (global memory) is structurally equivalent and rooted in Kant's idea that politicized subjects from civil society should intervene to make states more just. In a way, what Bhabha (and also Appiah) suggests is the building of a league of patriots who make connections beyond their own states.

We have also become aware that Kant's philosophy differed very much from that of the Stoics and especially the Cynics. While the latter were more interested in justifying certain personal attitudes they described as cosmopolitan, Kant sought to use these ideas to construct a framework for international legal agreements that could ensure peaceful coexistence (perpetual peace). Kant is clearly not guilty of the kind of universalism that we perceived in the Cynics. The reason for that is that his cosmopolitanism is not primarily about the interaction across a divide between self and Other. Rather, Kant starts from an overarching sameness of all human beings (moral cosmopolitanism). Yet this does not mean that Kant cannot comprehend difference. As we have seen, Kant's political cosmopolitanism is dedicated to ensuring peaceful coexistence and opposed to an all encompassing world-state. This grew partly out of moral cosmopolitanism and his subsequent recognition of each human being as an autonomous reasonable agent. Accordingly, for Kant an overarching moral equality is entirely compatible with the recognition of individual differences or the differences between different states and peoples. It is precisely this double-perspective that we find in Kwame Anthony Appiah's differentiation between ethics (what one owes to the groups one belongs to) and morality (what one owes all humans). Thus, one major result of this work must be that both postcolonial perspectives I have addressed and analyzed in this work are firmly rooted in the cosmopolitanism of Kant.

David Held's notion of cosmopolitan democracy – which was the first of two contemporary conceptions of cosmopolitanism I discussed – builds on Kant just like Bhabha and Appiah. However, Held also does so in a way that is very different from the two postcolonial theorists. Basically, he is concerned with how democracy can be maintained institutionally in a globalized world. The necessity for institutional and procedural makeovers arises from the fact that in the age of globalization we can no longer solve many of the most pressing issues on a national basis. Also the differences between states seem to increasingly blur since some issues concern groups of people who exist in many different states. Held suggests, that in order to solve problems which we are increasingly facing together, we cannot simply transfer the model of state-based democracy to an international level. What we must rather do is to always re-interpret democracy's underlying principles and this, of course, resonates well with Bhabha, who is interested in translation. But Bhabha also has disagreements with Held and with liberal theory more generally. He criticizes the way Held seeks to re-imagine democracy to the end of transcending the idea of the nation. We have seen that Held does not think that nation-states should be abandoned. However, there is a difference between the state and the nation, although, more often than not, the two coincide.. It is rea-

sonable of Bhabha to object to Held's project of cosmopolitan democracy, which aspires to globally clear out the damaging remnants of the Westphalian Order, on grounds that this endeavour is insufficiently open to the perspectives of postcolonial nations, whose histories have to be respected. Thus, although Bhabha's cosmopolitanism appears rooted in Kantianism, this does not mean that he is unable to criticize other Kantian perspectives.

Ulrich Beck's cosmopolitanism appears as related to the perspective of Held in that it also attempts to take stock of the conditions brought on by globalization, or what Beck refers to as Second Modernity. However, Beck is not so much interested in thinking about how democracy may be re-organized institutionally but in the development of a new sociology that can do justice to the changed ontological conditions of the global age. Beck wants to conceptualize and explore the various ways in which social interactions extend beyond national societies and how, partly as a result of this, the latter emerge as increasingly heterogenous. In a way this is very similar to what Homi Bhabha means by hybridization, and there are also some notable similarities between the ways in which Bhabha and Beck dialectically conceptualize social developments: Beck identifies the same dialectic as Bhabha that prompts the emergence of anti-cosmopolitan forces (such as reactionary political movements). But unlike Bhabha, Beck draws attention to the fact that there is another dialectic development that may potentially counter-act the anti-cosmopolitan dialectic. This is the emergence of what Beck refers to as world risk society. This concept, which is in itself dialectical, presumes that the more pressing issues we face together (as world-citizens), the greater becomes the urge to sit down together and engage with one another. Finally, Beck also contributes some very important coordinates that help us think about and critically evaluate the various more philosophical frameworks explored in this work: On Beck's take such frameworks must attempt to levitate between universalism and relativism and may never collapse into one or the other extreme.

Beck's caution against absolute principles is clearly reflected in Kwame Anthony Appiah's rejection of absolute cultural relativism, which negates the necessity and viability of our trying to find global agreement on certain very pressing moral issues such as human rights. However, Appiah also uncovers for us why relativism, which he specifically detects in the works of postmodern philosophers like Jean-François Lyotard and Richard Rorty, might have appeared as necessary. This was as a counter-balance against the intellectual hegemony of moral realism – a philosophical position that maintains that we may acquire factual knowledge about morals and which in its extreme seeks to erase all difference. In other words: moral realism amounts to a perfect absolutized universalism. In contradistinction to moral realism Appiah's cosmopolitanism is dedicated to maintaining differences as much as possible, while trying to only find consensus on issues that are so pressing that they cannot be ignored.

Cultural relativism is also criticized by Bhabha who believes it to derive from liberal notions of multiculturalism. There are many aspects on which Bhabha and Appiah concur and others on which they do not. It is not self-evident that these authors should possess any overall agreements at all since they adhere to different theoretical orientations, communicating in completely different disciplinary languages and idioms; so that they might as well not agree on anything at all. But this is not the case and in a way their above agreement with simultaneous difference epitomizes perfectly what cosmopolitanism is all about, which is essentially to go beyond one's own discourse and to hybridize others as well as oneself. This is particularly obvious in the case of Bhabha, who can no longer be safely attached to any one theoretical school or discipline. But it also applies to Appiah, who is prepared to criticize the sometimes exaggerated rationalism of analytical philosophy. For instance, he critiques Nussbaum and other liberal authors for being totally removed from actual emotions. He advocates patriotism and the love of the particular, while simultaneously maintaining that we also owe something to everyone. It is this desire on Appiah's part for both patriotism and universal morality, rationality and emotion that lets him appear every bit as hybrid as Bhabha. I argue that this boldness to 'go beyond', to appropriate and intervene, even at the risk of having to transform oneself, is particular to postcolonial studies, which, in a way, can be seen as a space in-between different disciplines and discourses, wherein disciplinary differences converge, by and by give rise to new perspectives and create an atmosphere in which such differences in perspective gradually come to appear less polarizing.

In drawing to a close, let me return to the beginning, to Stuart Hall, who took exception with cosmopolitanism's Enlightenment heritage. I was not able to ultimately dispel his worries that cosmopolitanism might serve to license Eurocentrism. What I have demonstrated is that there are authors who engage with the idea of cosmopolitanism, while maintaining a critical awareness of its roots in Western thought. For I was able to show that while both Appiah and Bhabha appear as rooted in Kantianism, there are also certain elements within the discourse of cosmopolitanism they dismiss. For instance, both of them oppose unbounded universalisms. Significantly, both Appiah and Bhabha go up against humanism. However, the way in which this is done is ambivalent. Bhabha criticizes the universalization of particular consciousness to derive what are supposedly objective underlying principles of 'the human' but he also acknowledges that we may not stop thinking about it either. The same goes for Appiah, who believes that Nussbaum's humanism is akin to the universalism of moral realists but holds that even though differences ought to be respected and maintained, we must, nevertheless, converge on certain vital ethical issues. Thus, for both authors some form of humanism is inescapable. Notably, this same humanism already occurs in Kant, who universalizes his account of how human beings leave behind a life that is devoid of the rule of law (state of nature) and enter into the state. This may be

said to constitute a form of essentialism, an unwarranted reduction of the fullness of human diversity. However, one problem that arises from opposing this kind of argument in Kant is, of course, that we would have to undermine his argument in favour of democracy. For in thinking about and universalizing the relation between the state and the individual Kant inevitably prescribes certain normative notions as to how states should ideally be run in order to ensure human freedom. This is also why for Bhabha and Appiah humanism remains an ambivalent affair: In some way it appears as a necessary starting-point for arguing in favour of democracy and for human rights. However, there also is a sense that it might not take us all the way and that it becomes most critical where it re-introduces through the backdoor an absolute universalism of sameness. This is the limit set by the Kantian framework that both Appiah and Bhabha adhere to; and postcolonial critics must now debate and evaluate whether this is something they can live with. However, if a culture of rights and democracy is agreeable then it would appear that the Enlightenment is here to stay with us.

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# **„Göttinger Schriften zur Englischen Philologie“: Zum Konzept der Reihe**

*Frauke Reitemeier*

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