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Issue 5: Radical Thinking in the Long Nineteenth Century

Editorial Board & Acknowledgements

Editorial Board

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Contents

Editorial Board & Acknowledgements 2

Editorial: Radical Thinking in the Long Nineteenth Century – *Gemma Holgate* 4

Re-reading the Radical in John Addington Symonds's *Memoirs*: Poetry, Intertextuality, and Queer Self-Construction – *Charles Gough* 10

'The Curfew's Knell': Anglo-Saxon England and the Tradition of Dissent in English Romantic Poetry – *Rory Edgington* 31

Defending the Indefensible: Morris, Tennyson and Arthur's Adulterous Queen – *Susan Mooney* 55

A Pamphlet War: Colonialism versus Radical Nationalism in the Ionian Islands, 1848-1864 – *Helena Drysdale* 73

Jewish-American Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century: A Case Study of Anarchist Radicalisation in New York City – *Frank Jacob* 97

Review: Sarah Comyn and Porscha Fermanis, eds., *Worlding the South: Nineteenth-Century Literary Culture and the Southern Settler Colonies* – *Chloe Osborne* 122

Review: Mark A. Allison, *Imagining Socialism: Aesthetics, Anti-politics, and Literature in Britain, 1817-1918* – *Sophie Thompson* 127

Review: James Epstein and David Karr, *British Jacobin Politics, Desires, and Aftermaths: Seditious Hearts* – *Joshua Smith* 132

Review: Béatrice Laurent, *Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination* – *Georgia Toumara* 137

Review: Sarah Bartels, *The Devil and the Victorians: Supernatural Evil in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* – *Hayley Smith* 142

Review: Emma Rice (dir.) Wuthering Heights – *Bethany Appleton* 147

Afterword – *Gemma Holgate* 152

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Editorial: Radical Thinking in the Long Nineteenth Century

GEMMA HOLGATE
(EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

THE TERM 'RADICAL' evades simple definition. What is understood to be radical is dependent on the particular social, political, and cultural context in which it occurs, and must necessarily change over time. What once was radical may continue to appear avant-garde decades, even centuries, later, while other once-transgressive ideas are absorbed to the extent that they lose their radical power altogether. The question of what it means to be 'radical' is particularly pertinent for nineteenth-century studies, as much of our contemporary understanding of the concept was developed within this period. Indeed, it was in the early nineteenth century that 'radical' as a label denoting 'a proponent of radical reform' became common, and this usage was sustained even when the capitalised 'Radical' – as a branch of parliamentary Liberalism – came to dominate in the second half of the century.[1] While specific party political affiliations kept 'Socialist' and 'Radical' mostly separate in the later Victorian period, the subsequent decline of Radical-Liberalism has made the term available in a broader sense; as Williams notes, it seems to 'offer a way of avoiding dogmatic and factional associations while reasserting the need for vigorous and fundamental change'.[2] A definition popular in the leftist politics of the present, one that stresses the social function of the radical, is also attributed to Williams: 'To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing'.[3] We might thus think of the radical as showing the way forward to

[1] Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (London: Harper Collins, 1988), p. 251. The term's usage is fluid across noun (as person), adjective, and noun (as concept), in that one can be termed *a* radical, described *as* radical, or seen as a proponent of *the* radical.

[2] Williams, *Keywords*, p. 252.

[3] This definition of radicalism is widely quoted, and features on the front cover of a recent Verso edition of his essays: Raymond Williams, *Culture and Politics: Class, Writing, Socialism*, ed. by Philip O'Brien (London: Verso, 2022). There does not appear, however, to be a traceable source for this quote – though Williams did advocate for 'making hope practical, rather than despair convincing' in an essay on nuclear disarmament: Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*

transformative change, as opposed to the more gradual, conservative approach to reform often most associated (perhaps unjustifiably) with the nineteenth century.

This issue of *Romance, Revolution and Reform* defines radicalism in its broadest sense, welcoming contributions on any aspect of the long nineteenth century that represents a departure from tradition, convention, or mainstream norms, whether in a political, cultural, or social sense. It is often the case that the significance or potential of a radical idea only emerges fully in a later period, when a gradual shift in attitudes means that a greater number of people are prepared to receive it. Radical figures, works, and movements may also take on new relevance in later years, but scholars must resist rereading the radical in light of what we might wish it to be, and instead see historical radicalism in its full, idiosyncratic, and even contradictory, complexity. Neither must we judge the importance of radical thought purely on the extent that it has seen concrete implementation in the time since. Following the work of Leela Gandhi in *Affective Communities* (2006), we might recognise the value of those radical ideas characterised by what she terms 'immaturity': sparks of the radical, or the utopian, that do not fit easily as stages within overarching narratives of progress in the 'respectable' politics of mainstream socio-political arenas.[4] In a similar vein, we might also seek out the radical in less obvious places, as in recent literary critical re-readings of canonical texts. Carolyn Lesjak's 2021 study, on the politics of 'the commons' long after enclosure, for example, seeks to reveal 'a radical politics at the heart of the work of the British nineteenth century's most canonical writers', challenging previous readings that suggest mere reinforcement of socio-economic norms.[5]

The radical has never been the sole preserve of the academy, however, as local communities seek to discover, conserve, and celebrate their own radical histories in the twenty-first century. Independent, not-for-profit organisations such as the Bristol Radical History Group and the Pendle Radicals connect people to the radical past in

(London: Verso, 1989), p. 209. Regardless, the popularity of the definition attests to its continued political resonance.

[4] Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anti-Colonial Thought, Fin-de-Siecle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Princeton, NJ: Duke University Press, 2006).

[5] Carolyn Lesjak, *The Afterlife of Enclosure: British Realism, Character, and the Commons* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2021), p. 3. See also Isobel Armstrong, *Novel Politics: Democratic Imaginations in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), which undertakes a radical reading of six canonical novels via the subject of illegitimacy.

their area through walking tours and public talks.[6] The lively radical sector of the publishing industry also suggests that there is significant public appetite for radical ideas and solutions to our modern crises, many of them influenced, if not inspired, by the radical traditions of the past.[7] The articles in this issue of *RRR* also look to this tradition, exploring how five very different manifestations of nineteenth-century radical thinking – on issues as varied as gender, sexuality, literary form, and colonial and anti-capitalist resistance – can continue to hold relevance for us as twenty-first-century thinkers.

In his article on the poet and critic John Addington Symonds (1840-1893), Charles Gough discusses the articulation of Symonds's queer identity in his *Memoirs*, written between 1889 and 1893. Symonds's work has rightly seen increased attention in recent years and Gough builds on Amber K. Regis's 2016 Critical Edition of *The Memoirs*. The expression of homosexual love at this moment in history is, of course, radical in itself, but Gough's argument highlights the formal radicalism of Symonds's autobiographical composition, 'highly intertextual' and 'polyphonic' in its approach to self-expression. Gough's reading of the *Memoirs* draws attention to the vital role of poetry, as 'an essential component in the process of sexual self-formation in literature for queer male Victorian writers'. Symonds's text is radical, he argues, because it moves beyond 'the formal strictures of traditional life-writing'. In doing so, it indirectly constructs a queer identity which is 'collective' rather than 'singular', departing from contemporary understandings of homosexuality that pathologised the individual.

Poetry is also the subject of the next two articles in this issue, which perhaps reflects the suitability of poetic form as a vehicle for radical ideas. Rory Edgington's article explores the uses of medievalism in works of Romantic poetry by William Wordsworth and his lesser-studied contemporary Joseph Cottle. Edgington compares Cottle's *Alfred; An Epic Poem* to Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Sketches,* arguing that the former combines Anglo-Saxon discourses from the radical protestant tradition of the

[6] Bristol Radical History Group centres histories 'from below' and has organised over 250 talks since its founding in 2006. Further details can be found at www.brh.org.uk. Pendle Radicals is 'a research and creative project, exploring the stories of some of Pendle Hill's extraordinary change makers, radical thinkers and nonconformists'. It is supported by the social enterprise and charity, Mid Pennine Arts – further information can be found at www.pendleradicals.org.uk.

[7] Radical publishers frequently reprint radical 'classics' as well as new texts, emphasising their continued relevance: see Verso's 'Revolutions' series, for example.

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with 'the aesthetic and political sensibilities' of Romanticism, while the latter adapts 'the idiom of dissenting radicals in order to defend the established church'. What strikes the reader of Edgington's piece is the longevity and above all, the malleability, of the Anglo-Saxon narratives discussed – their political usefulness predicated on symbolic power rather than historical accuracy.

Continuing the discussion of medievalism, but moving our focus into the mid-nineteenth century, is Susan Mooney's article on William Morris's early poem, 'The Defence of Guenevere' (1858). Morris is certainly the best-known, and most straightforwardly radical figure to appear in this issue, both in terms of his commitment to socialist revolution and his leading role in the Arts and Crafts movement. Mooney's article returns to his early work, in a period before the full development of his radical politics, to discuss his approach to the highly moralised issue of female adultery. The piece contrasts Tennyson's contemporaneous portrayal of Guenevere, which upholds conventional Victorian attitudes towards women's illicit love, with what Mooney reads as Morris's radical defence of not only the queen, but of adultery itself. Undermining the social tenets that condemn 'fallen' women, she argues, Morris defends the realisation of 'natural' desire and unfettered passion.

If poetry has often served as an outlet for the expression of radical thought, others have favoured more direct, unequivocal forms of writing. In the fourth article of this issue, Helena Drysdale asks what a series of oppositional pamphlets might tell us about the conflict over British rule in the Ionian Islands in the mid-nineteenth century. The two individuals at the centre of this 'pamphlet war' were the Ionian radical agitator Dracato Papanicolas and the British Vice-Chancellor of the Ionian University, the travel writer George Bowen. The tensions articulated through these pamphlets in the early 1850s ultimately resulted in capitulation to radical nationalist demands, as Britain ceded the Islands to Greece in 1864. Through these pamphlets and their reception in the press, as well as archival materials such as private correspondence and diary entries, Drysdale suggests that the individuals involved in the Ionian case cannot be easily grouped into 'radical nationalist' and 'colonial oppressor'. Recognising their complex, overlapping personal motives and sometimes contradictory political beliefs, she argues, helps to nuance our understanding of this particular imperial dispute, in which ideological divisions 'were not so clear-cut'.

The final article in this issue also invites us to view a wider radical history through the lens of an individual's experience. Frank Jacob's piece discusses the autobiographical notes of Isidore Wisotsky (1895-1970), an Eastern European Jewish immigrant in New York involved in the anarchist movement at the end of the long nineteenth century. Against a prominent contemporary stereotype that characterised Jewish radicals as a 'foreign menace' importing political ideologies from abroad, Jacob argues that this radicalism was a product of the New York context itself. The exploitative conditions of the metropolitan labour market, as well as the poverty and overcrowding experienced in tenement housing – representations of the unmet expectations promised by the American Dream – led to the forms of anti-capitalist radicalisation exemplified through Wisotsky. Jacob's contribution to the study of the Jewish radical labour movement seems a fitting end to this issue, only too relevant in this period of resurgent labour struggle in Britain today.

Composing this issue's Call for Papers back in 2021, I felt that this theme would be particularly appropriate for *RRR*, as a journal that prides itself on its innovative, forward-thinking model. When Zack White and Katie Holdway founded the journal in 2018, their aim was to carve 'a new niche in a dynamic area of scholarly publishing', primarily by offering postgraduates an unusual level of editorial responsibility through its 'pioneering PGR-led board structure'.[8] *RRR*'s support for postgraduate researchers operates on two levels: offering editorial and leadership experience and encouraging, developing and showcasing the work of postgraduate and early-career authors. What makes *RRR* different is that it refuses the limiting title of 'postgraduate journal', working instead with a broad community of students, academics, and independent scholars. We pride ourselves on providing supportive, constructive feedback at all stages of the process, whether an article is published or not, thus treating scholarship as a collaborative effort – something that we might consider a small radical gesture amid a neoliberal atmosphere of academic competition. Just as the articles in this issue suggest the suitability of certain forms as vehicles for radical ideas, we might also think of the journal as an apt platform for research on this theme.

In preparing this issue, my intention was to demonstrate the variety, creativity, and continued relevance of nineteenth-century radical thought. My hope is that you,

[8] Zack White and Katie Holdway, 'Editorial: Region, Identity, and the Genesis of *Romance, Revolution and Reform*', *Romance, Revolution and Reform,* 1 (2019) 4-8 (p. 8).

the reader, will find something within its pages that resonates with your own research, or perhaps even your own mode of twenty-first-century radical thinking.

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Re-reading the Radical in John Addington Symonds's *Memoirs*: Poetry, Intertextuality, and Queer Self-Construction

CHARLES GOUGH

ABSTRACT: Throughout his literary career, John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) wrote about queer identities and relationships in almost every conceivable form – a body of work which culminated with the *Memoirs*. A detailed account of Symonds's life as a homosexual man in the nineteenth century which traces chronologically the stages of his sexual development, in the *Memoirs* – commenced in 1889 – Symonds attempts to construct his sexual identity through a number of authorial voices in a highly intertextual method of autobiographical composition. Most significantly, the interpolation of poetry written by himself and others foregrounds verse as the dominant textual authority of the *Memoirs*. This article enacts a re-reading of the radical in the *Memoirs*, investigating Symonds's assertion that poetry occupies a privileged position in the process of sexual self-formation for queer subjects, and, as an extension, his understanding that poetry displays (and somewhat facilitates) the queer self to be collectively experienced and articulated, as opposed to existing as an individual, alienated identity.

KEYWORDS: John Addington Symonds; Queer; Poetry; Life Writing; History of Sexuality; Intertextuality

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NEARING THE END of a prolific literary career spanning several decades, poet, critic, and cultural historian John Addington Symonds began working on the creation of his comprehensive autobiographical project, the *Memoirs*, in 1889. A detailed account of Symonds's life as a homosexual man in the nineteenth century which traces chronologically the stages of his sexual development, the *Memoirs* exists as the product of a relentless desire to construct and articulate his sexual self through literature; an endeavour which saw him write and publish works on queer identities and relationships

in almost every conceivable form.[1] Despite tackling the subject of same-sex love in poetry, literary criticism, historical essays, and sexological studies, by the age of forty-nine – a few years before his death in 1893 – Symonds felt that he had not yet fully accomplished his mission of sexual self-revelation. In a letter to his close friend Henry Graham Dakyns, Symonds cites this perceived gap in his oeuvre as the motivation for commencing his *Memoirs*: 'You see I have "never spoken out."'[2] In this text, then, Symonds 'speaks out' about his sexual identity, but he does so through a number of voices which emerge from a highly intertextual practice of autobiographical composition. Chief among them is Symonds's poetic voice, which repeatedly displaces Symonds's autobiographical prose and foregrounds verse as the principal textual authority of the *Memoirs*. Not only, then, is the text itself a radical exposition of homosexuality in the nineteenth century (and a work of queer confession that was in Symonds's own historical moment unprecedented), the polyphonic approach to textual self-construction employed in the *Memoirs* also encourages a radical re-reading of the text, which proposes that poetry was an essential component in the process of sexual self-formation in literature for queer male Victorian writers. The *Memoirs* can thus be read as radical in several distinct but overlapping ways. The relationship Symonds establishes between lyric poetry and autobiography in his attempt to articulate his experience as a queer man makes the radical literary claim that the formal strictures of traditional life-writing cannot sufficiently accommodate queer self-construction. Symonds's continued emphasis on the importance of reading, writing, and assembling poetry in the *Memoirs* also proposes a radical conception of queer selfhood that is for himself at least partially contingent on consuming and composing verse. Lastly, Symonds repeatedly (though indirectly) asserts that the queer subject may be plausibly

[1] Acknowledging the anachronism, I occasionally use the term 'homosexual' as a convenient shorthand to demarcate sexual differences and draw focus specifically toward male-male love, which occupies most of Symonds's *Memoirs*. I will most often use 'queer' as a more historically appropriate term which acknowledges the wider potential of ideas discussed in this article beyond the strict focus of male homosexual self-formation in poetry and autobiography. The phrase 'queer self-construction' is used specifically to discuss the dual processes of the formation and expression of (non-hetero)sexual selfhood in literature, and to consider how these processes intersect and overlap.

[2] John Addington Symonds to Henry Graham Dakyns (March 27, 1889), in *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, 3 vols (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967-69), III (1969), p. 364.

understood as a collective rather than a singular identity, taking a radical stance that significantly diverts from contemporary notions of queerness as an individual and solitary pathology.

In his various writings on non-normative desire and the queer self, Symonds had two principal aims. First, he sought to use literature as a vehicle for his own sexual self-formation. Symonds used writing not simply as a means of articulating an already established (homo)sexual self, but to uncover those fragments of his sexual identity which in Michel Foucault's assessment were 'incapable of coming to light except [...] through the labor of confession'.[3] The memoir as an innately confessional mode therefore ostensibly functioned as a suitable and effective arena for Symonds's construction of self. Secondly, as he grew increasingly aware of the social, medical, and legal discourses which respectively demonised, pathologised, and criminalised the queer individual, Symonds wished to advocate a radical shift in the existing cultural (mis)understanding of non-heterosexual selves in the nineteenth century. As a means of realising these objectives in the *Memoirs*, Symonds fuses different genres and modes of expression to construct the richest, most accurate portrait of his sexual self. Explaining his practice of autobiographical composition, Symonds writes that the 'report has to be supplemented indeed, in order that a perfect portrait may be painted of the man'.[4] The result of such an approach to textual construction is a highly heterogeneous narrative which is described by Amber K. Regis, the most recent editor of the text, as a 'bulky assemblage of diverse materials, genres and narrative voices', asserting that the *Memoirs* is a fundamentally intertextual account which Symonds creates by drawing from and interpolating into the text numerous other works.[5] Of the various intertexts he incorporates, including letters and diary entries written by himself and others at different stages in his life, no literary mode is more significant in Symonds's sexual self-construction in the *Memoirs* than poetry.

[3] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 66.

[4] John Addington Symonds, *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Amber K. Regis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 478. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text, abbreviated as *Memoirs*.

[5] Regis, 'Notes on the Text' in *The Memoirs*, p. ix.

From beginning to end, Symonds consistently inserts or alludes to works of poetry by himself and others, as well as devoting large sections of the text to the contemplation of poetry as a literary form and the processes of reading and writing verse. This insertion of poetry into the *Memoirs* manuscript is achieved using different methods; with some poems transcribed, others cut and pasted from privately printed pamphlets, and a small number cut and pasted with additional revisions in Symonds's hand. In keeping, then, with the assemblage of authorial voices that narrate the *Memoirs*, Symonds's material engagement with poetry in the composition of the manuscript implicitly rejects the notion of queer selfhood as monolithic, instead producing a textual portrait of the queer subject that is complex, composite, and flexible. At various points, Symonds also interrupts his retrospective life narrative with self-conscious reflections on the limitations of autobiographical prose and shares his occasional struggle with using this form to express the intricacies of his emotional and sexual past. This struggle often leads Symonds to consider the complete abandonment of his autobiographical undertaking. In a passage marked for deletion in the *Memoirs* manuscript, Symonds writes: 'Here I feel inclined to lay my pen down in weariness. Why should I go on to tell the story of my life?' (*Memoirs*, 188, n. 50), and several letters written to close friends when he commenced the *Memoirs* also show him pre-empting this persistent temptation to discontinue the project: 'I do not know therefore what will come of this undertaking. Very likely, I shall lay it aside'.[6] Poetry, then, enables Symonds to circumvent some of the constraints of the prose commentary typically deployed in conventional life writing, because, throughout his life, verse functioned in his own words as 'the vehicle and safety-valve for [his] tormenting occupations' (*Memoirs*, 367).

The importance of poetry in Symonds's sexual self-formation is established in the *Memoirs* in several ways. First, he reflects on his readings of many hugely impactful poems consumed throughout his life, works which articulated his experience of queer desire and in which he saw himself represented for the first time, living as he was in a cultural epoch which saw virtually no legitimate representation of same-sex love or relationships. Symonds arranges these influential poetic works in conjunction with key episodes in the broader life narrative that unfolds in the *Memoirs*, assembling the poems he read as a means of mapping his sexual development and further shaping his sexual identity. Most significantly, however, he interpolates into the *Memoirs* a number

[6] Symonds to Dakyns (March 27, 1889), in *Letters*, III (1969), p. 364.

of extracts and full poems of his own creation, works in verse which reveal, as he himself claims, his 'deepest self'.[7] He thus consistently relies on his poetic voice to accompany, or supersede, that which narrates his autobiographical prose commentary, both because of its temporal proximity to the moods and feelings experienced during significant sexual episodes in his life, as well as the depth of introspection and space for creative experimentation offered by the lyric poem in particular. In devoting close attention to the insertion of Symonds's own poetry in the *Memoirs* – which enables a comparison of the generic features of autobiographical prose and the lyric poem – this article seeks to negotiate the function and significance of these contrasting forms in queer self-construction. Such an investigation allows us to uncover the most radical notion to be drawn from Symonds's *Memoirs*: that reading, writing, and assembling poetry is not merely an effective tool for his articulation of sexual selfhood but is, instead, of vital importance to this practice.

Existing scholarship on Symonds, in David Amigoni and Amber K. Regis's assessment, has largely been dominated by a fascination with his 'life – and his attempts to order and understand that life', a trend that I continue to engage with.[8] Following the publication of Phyllis Grosskurth's edition of the *Memoirs* in 1984, a renewed interest in Symonds resulted in a substantial collection of essays gathered in John Pemble's *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire* (2000) which began 'the important work of repositioning Symonds as a central part of Britain's nineteenth-century queer heritage'.[9] However, Amigoni and Regis's survey of more recent critical attention directed toward Symonds serves to highlight the glaring oversight of poetry as a crucial element in this very process of self-formation that has been of persistent interest to Symonds scholars. Criticism has focused broadly on the *Memoirs*, 'travel writing and autobiographical essays', and his 'contributions to histories of the Renaissance and Antiquity', while Symonds as poet remains largely overlooked.[10] Even those works which have offered astute and interesting perspectives on the *Memoirs*

[7] Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown (November 13, 1881), in *Letters*, II (1968), p. 708; Symonds to Dr George C. Wilkinson (December 26, 1881), in *Letters*, II (1968), p. 723.

[8] David Amigoni and Amber K. Regis, 'Introduction: (Re)Reading John Addington Symonds (1840-93), *English Studies*, 94 (2013), 131-136 (p. 3).

[9] Ibid., p. 1.

[10] Ibid., pp. 3, 4.

have repeatedly discarded or overlooked the unique intertextual fabric of the text and thus the broader role of poetry in Symonds's attempt to articulate a queer self, or selves, in literature. Additionally, in almost every piece of scholarship on Symonds, 'poet' is elided from the list of titles frequently attributed to him – Sarah J. Heidt calls him a 'translator, historian, and man of letters', Emily Rutherford refers to him as 'historian and essayist', while Dustin Friedman opts for 'historian and defender of homosexuality', and the list goes on.[11] Examining in depth the omnipresence of poetry in the *Memoirs*, this article seeks to initiate the necessary work of reclaiming Symonds as poet whilst simultaneously undertaking a re-reading of the *Memoirs* itself as a radical text.

This complex and hugely significant relationship between poetry and queer self-construction therefore serves as the central focus of this article, and in my examination of Symonds's *Memoirs* can effectively be divided into two central halves which comprise the respective sections of this study: *reading* the self and *writing* the self. First, I closely analyse two of the most significant poetic intertextual references and allusions in the *Memoirs*: William Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and William Johnson Cory's *Ionica* (1858). Another substantial poetic influence is Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855-1891), though, as the most frequently explored in critical scholarship before now, the influence of this text has been omitted here in order to devote sufficient attention to those less familiar (namely, Cory's *Ionica*).[12] Considering the influence of these poets and their works on Symonds's continually evolving sexual self-understanding, as well as his textual arrangement of them as key autobiographical events in his life narrative, this section asserts the importance of reading poetry produced by others in the formation of Symonds's sexual identity. I then turn to the insertion of Symonds's own poetry in the *Memoirs* and compare the generic features of autobiographical prose and

[11] Sarah J. Heidt, '"Let JAS Words Stand": Publishing John Addington Symonds's Desires', *Victorian Studies*, 46 (2003), 7-31 (p. 7); Emily Rutherford, 'Impossible Love and Victorian Values: J. A. Symonds and the Intellectual History of Homosexuality', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 75 (2014), 605-627 (p. 605); Dustin Friedman, *Before Queer Theory: Victorian Aestheticism and the Self* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2019), p. 38.

[12] For key discussions of Whitman's influence on Symonds and others, see: Michael Robertson, *Worshipping Walt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 139-197; William Pannapacker, *Revised Lives: Walt Whitman and Nineteenth-Century Authorship* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 107-130; Gregory Woods, '"Still on My Lips": Walt Whitman in Britain' in *The Continuing Presence of Walt Whitman*, ed. Robert K. Martin (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), pp. 129-140.

the lyric poem, considering the function and significance of these contrasting forms in queer self-construction. This section directs particular attention to notions of (queer) lyric subjectivity and literary form, and recognises Symonds's dual objectives as poet and memoirist: to shift elegantly between recounting the idiosyncrasies of his personal life as a singular, individual subject, and envisioning the queer self as dialogic and communal. A diversion from the tendency of queer nineteenth-century writers to foreground the queer subject as solitary, unique, and displaced, Symonds continues to demonstrate a progressive and unorthodox conception of the male homosexual self.

Reading the Self: Poetry and Queer Self-Formation

Many years before John Addington Symonds turned to writing his own verse as a means of expressing his 'deepest self', the importance of poetry in his sexual self-understanding emerged first in the act of reading.[13] The commencement of this lifelong relationship between poetry and the formation of Symonds's sexual self is documented at the beginning of the *Memoirs* in Chapter Two – containing material which he duplicates almost verbatim in his case study for *Sexual Inversion* (his collaborative work with Havelock Ellis) – where he takes the opportunity to describe 'the first stirrings of the sexual instinct' in himself (*Memoirs*, 99). Before recalling his earliest memories of poetry and art, which appear inextricably tied to, or, indeed, partly responsible for these 'first stirrings' in his budding sexual identity, Symonds shares his belief that: 'Our earliest memories of words, poems, works of art, have great value in the study of psychical development. They indicate decisive points in the growth of personality' (*Memoirs*, 101). Thus, in a critical analysis of Symonds's intertextual selves and the function of poetry in his *Memoirs*, one need not rely merely on conjecture to assert the significance of poetry in the development of his sexual self, as Symonds himself explicitly recognises the immense value of one's early interactions with 'words, poems, [and] works of art'. Such an assessment of the importance of Symonds's engagements with poetry in his sexual self-construction aligns with recent scholarship on late Victorian sexual identities, such as Dustin Friedman's *Before Queer Theory: Victorian Aestheticism and the Self* (2019), which claims that for queer aesthetes such as Michael Field and Oscar Wilde, 'art could

[13] Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown (November 13, 1881), in *Letters*, II (1968), p. 708; Symonds to Dr George C. Wilkinson (December 26, 1881), in *Letters*, II (1968), p. 723.

be crucial for gaining sexual self-knowledge'.[14] As such, in this brief quasi-sexological interlude, which directly follows the opening chapter of the text, Symonds introduces his sexual and textual selves as indivisible from one another and equally contingent on the acts of reading and writing poetry.

Among his juvenile engagements with the poetic form, Symonds specifically recalls the very first poem that struck his incipient sexual self: 'the first English poem which impressed me deeply – as it has, no doubt, impressed thousands of boys – was Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. […] It gave form, ideality and beauty to my previous erotic visions' (*Memoirs*, 101). Outside the realm of the written text, then, poetry was consumed by Symonds in his childhood and beyond as it served as one of very few modes of queer representation in his own cultural moment. Though *Venus and Adonis* of course centres around the potential of a heterosexual romance between its two titular characters, in the adolescent Adonis, Symonds witnesses for the first time an image of idealised masculine beauty that counters the coarseness of the erotic visions he was subject to in his youth. While in his erotic dreams, which he details in his own case study for *Sexual Inversion*, he 'imagined himself the servant of several adult naked sailors' and 'crouched between their thighs and called himself their dirty pig', upon reading *Venus and Adonis* Symonds was able to liberate his conception of sexuality from what appears to be a mixture of confused sexual urges, a potentially masochistic proclivity, and internalised homophobia.[15] Yet, as well as recognising Adonis as an idealistic object of desire that contrasted the illusory sailors, Symonds's sexual self-conception is transformed by imaginatively inserting himself into the story of the poem. Despite identifying with Adonis 'in some confused way', presumably because in the poem he is immune to the charms of female beauty, Symonds primarily envisions himself as Venus: 'She brought into relief the overwhelming attraction of masculine adolescence and its proud inaccessibility. […] I dreamed of falling back like her upon the grass, and folding the quick-panting lad in my embrace' (*Memoirs*, 101). Positioning himself in the place of Venus is perhaps the logical imaginative leap for a young man attracted not to women but to other men.

[14] Friedman, *Before Queer Theory*, p. 2.

[15] Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Ivan Crozier (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 143.

This section of Symonds's *Memoirs*, which deals with the notable influence of poems such as *Venus and Adonis* and others that he read as a boy (those which featured 'certain male characters' he was attracted to), has a dual function within the broader structure of the text.[16] In addition to providing a useful insight into the beginnings of Symonds's sexual evolution, Symonds's choice to essentially begin his *Memoirs* with reflections on the earliest poems that shaped his sexual self-understanding positions this section as the first act in a narrative of self-revelation built around the textual arrangement of the various impactful poetic works he read in his lifetime. Across the *Memoirs*, Symonds assembles the poets and poems he encountered in the different stages of his life as a means of tracing his sexual development. Thus, the structural composition of the text demonstrates that poetry was not only instrumental in Symonds's sexual self-construction through acts of reading and composing poems throughout his life, but also through assembling poems in his attempt to retrospectively record this life in the *Memoirs*. In Oliver Buckton's discussion of self-revelation in Victorian autobiography, effective use is made of the works of Philippe Lejeune and Linda H. Peterson, both of whom share the view that, in Buckton's words, 'autobiographical discourse is instrumental in shaping subjectivity and self-consciousness, rather than being merely the expression of a pre-existing identity'.[17] Assuming this theoretical stance, the arrangement and discussion of specific poetic works in the *Memoirs* is therefore as integral to the continual evolution of Symonds's sexual identity as his actual reading of them many years before. By shaping the delineation of his identity around certain poetic milestones in his autobiographical endeavour, Symonds thus flaunts his ability to mould and transform his sexual self, revealing yet another radical underpinning to his textual construction of sexuality – the plausible self-malleability of the queer subject in the nineteenth century, which for Symonds himself was largely granted by poetry.

[16] Ellis and Symonds, *Sexual Inversion*, p. 143.

[17] Oliver Buckton, *Secret Selves: Confession and Same-Sex in Victorian Autobiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 86; Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, ed. by Paul John Eakin and trans. by Katherine Leary (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1989), p. 192; Linda H. Peterson, *Victorian Autobiography: The Tradition of Self-Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 2.

As the *Memoirs* progresses beyond Symonds's boyhood, then, more of these impactful poetic works emerge as significant markers in the concurrent progression of his sexual and textual identities. One such work is William Johnson Cory's *Ionica*, which, unlike the heterosexual narrative of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, eroticises the male from the perspective of another man and foregrounds male-male bonds by appropriating the ancient Greek model of pederasty (the culturally sanctioned attachment of an older and a younger man). Published anonymously in 1858, Cory's collection of verse was addressed to a 'young man, since identified as a former student Charles Wood, later Lord Halifax', and some years later in 1872, Cory would 'resign from Eton in disgrace' on account of his intimate relationships with students.[18] Symonds first read *Ionica* as an undergraduate when he was gifted by a copy by his Oxford professor, John Conington, whom according to Symonds in the *Memoirs*, similarly 'sympathized with romantic attachments for boys' (*Memoirs,* 170). Though Symonds does not quote directly from *Ionica* in the *Memoirs*, he writes of Cory's collection: 'that volume of verse, trifling as it may appear to casual readers, went straight to my heart and inflamed my imagination' (*Memoirs*, 170). Again, Symonds highlights the distinction he identifies between himself (together with other homosexual men) and the 'casual' reader. The 'casual' reader is therefore euphemistic for what would most straightforwardly be defined as the heterosexual reader, and Symonds's use of the term suggests that the illustration of same-sex desire in poetry such as Cory's, coded as it was through language and motifs evocative of ancient Greece, was only perceptible at the time by men who identified themselves in this type of sexual or romantic model. The intensity and immediacy of the impression that Cory's poems made on Symonds can conceivably be attributed to the fact that he saw within them a kind of intimate male-male relationship that he had hitherto only been able to visualise in his imaginative queering of heterosexual romances such as that seen in *Venus and Adonis*. So strong was the influence of this representation of queer desire that it ultimately 'helped to shape Symonds's unconventional understanding of love between men', in the words of Morris B. Kaplan.[19]

[18] Morris B. Kaplan, *Sodom on the Thames: Sex, Love, and Scandal in Wilde Times* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 111; 130.

[19] Kaplan, *Sodom on the Thames*, p. 112.

One of the poems in the collection that was perhaps most easily distinguishable for a readership of men like Symonds as an expression, or a celebration even, of male-male love, was 'Αλιος Αμμι δεδυκε' (retitled 'A Separation' in later editions). The speaker spends much of the poem eulogising the object of his affection, but there is one point at which a more self-conscious voice emerges. Following the homoerotic musings of the speaker, the loose narrative of the poem is interrupted by a single distinctive stanza in which Cory as poet supplants the lyric voice to share his own unfulfilled wish for queer representation: 'I'd thought some poet might be born | To string my lute with silver wires' (*Ionica*, 88). The use of the past tense in 'I'd thought' confirms that such a poet, who Cory (as speaker) hoped would have given voice to the thoughts and feelings about his sexual identity that he himself was unable to wholly comprehend or articulate, never appeared. As no poet before him was able to effectively encapsulate his experience as a queer man, Cory *became* this poet, and Symonds followed this same trajectory of reading himself in the poetry of others before lifting the pen and writing himself into his own verse. Cory also gestures outward to the company of homosexual men in which he perceives himself in the closing lines of the stanza: 'At least in brighter days to come | Such men as I would not lie dumb' (*Ionica*, 88). Much like Symonds does in his reflections on reading in the *Memoirs*, Cory vows not to focus on the isolation and individuality of the queer experience, but conceives instead that the act of reading poetry for queer men is an inherently collective rather than an individual practice.

The poetry Symonds reads thus offers him a mode of understanding and self-interpretation that is otherwise inaccessible to him, supplying him with the necessary tools to build a lexicon of queer desire which he is able to exploit in his sexual self-formation. In this way, Symonds pre-empts Matthew Arnold's assertion in 'The Study of Poetry' (1880) that 'more and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us'.[20] For queer subjects such as Symonds in the nineteenth century, this 'turn to poetry' was a far more literal and, indeed, essential endeavour than for a vast majority of individuals who did not need to rely on poetry as a foundation for their self-conception, because they saw their emotions, desires, and sexual and romantic experiences represented and legitimised in

[20] Matthew Arnold, 'The Study of Poetry' in *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (London: Macmillan, 1888), pp. 1-55 (p. 2).

every aspect of their culture. The textual arrangement of the *Memoirs* thus reflects that the formation of Symonds's sexual self heavily relied on reading impactful works of poetry in which he saw himself represented, but also, in a continuation of this process, on subsequently assembling these poems as a means of further shaping his sexual identity both textually and in his real life. More broadly, then, the structural composition of the *Memoirs* gestures to the importance of poetry in queer self-understanding in the late nineteenth century, and Symonds's tendency to read himself in the poetry of others as part of a figuratively collective reading experience with other homosexual men asserts the queer self as fundamentally dialogic, discursive, and diffuse.

Writing the Self: Symonds as Poet

'I am not a poet: this I know emphatically', writes John Addington Symonds in a letter to close friend and confidant Henry Graham Dakyns in 1864, rejecting the title of poet despite a relentless literary pursuit that saw him write and publish a mass of poems throughout his life.[21] This contradiction is characteristic of Symonds's persistent crisis of identity as a writer of poetry, torn as he was between a lack of belief in his own abilities which can be partially attributed to the discouragement of his peers and those who reviewed his published works, and a simultaneous urge to 'make verse the vehicle and safety-valve for [his] tormenting occupations' (*Memoirs*, 367). Symonds was acutely aware of this polarity and acknowledges it directly in a diary entry interpolated in the *Memoirs* which shows him ultimately recognising that his deep-rooted need to express his desires in verse triumphed over any doubts he had over his literary faculties: 'Whether I am a poet or not, I am haunted by certain situations and moral tragedies which demand expression from me' (*Memoirs*, 312). Therefore, regardless of the level of creative or technical skill at work in Symonds's poems, they form an essential component of his sexual identity and the construction of this identity in his literary output. It is no great surprise, then, that Symonds's *Memoirs* – the product of an attempt to write his life as fully and frankly as possible – is pervaded by innumerable poems he composed across several decades which document the precise mood and impression of several notable episodes in his sexual self-formation. As such, contrary to the largely tepid reception given to Symonds's poetry in his own time, as well as a relative neglect of his poetic works in subsequent critical scholarship, the embedding

[21] Symonds to Henry Graham Dakyns (March 23, 1864), in *Letters*, I (1967), p. 450.

of such poems in the *Memoirs* encourages an examination of poetic intertextuality and queer self-construction, but also a reconsideration of Symonds as poet more broadly.

In his lifetime, Symonds wrote an 'estimated 1,000 poems', 776 of which have survived according to Ian Venables.[22] Symonds published four stand-alone volumes of original poetry in total: *Many Moods* (1878), *New and Old* (1880), *Animi Figura* (1882), and *Vagabunduli Libellus* (1884), but also wrote, in Venables' assessment, '232 poems that appear in 15 privately typeset booklets' (some of which were also featured in one of the published volumes).[23] In addition, Percy L. Babington's *Bibliography* shows that between 1862 and the year of his death, 1893, Symonds made a number of contributions to periodicals such as the *Cornhill Magazine* and *The Cliftonian*, but a majority of these poems were later included in one of the four aforementioned published collections, rather than serving as separate individual works.[24] Though the privately printed pamphlets evidently evaded public criticism, the published collections were met with a number of reviews that were mildly encouraging in that they recognised Symonds's potential as a capable writer of verse, but which concluded that his poems were 'not the outcome of original creative genius', in the words of Edward Dowden.[25] Without doubt, however, the view most commonly expressed among his critics was that Symonds as poet was simply unable to contend with Symonds as cultural historian and writer of prose. By the time that Symonds had published his first collection of poems, *Many Moods*, in 1878, he had already gained a favourable reputation for his two-volume *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873, 1876) and multi-volume *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-76). As such, reviews of Symonds's collections frequently noted that the poems were inevitably overshadowed by his works in prose. Dowden summarises this perspective in his review of *Many Moods*, claiming that 'Mr. Symonds the maker of verse has to compete with Mr. Symonds the student of Greek literature and historian of the Italian Renaissance'.[26]

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[22] Ian Venables, 'Appendix: Symonds's Peccant Poetry' in *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire*, ed. by John Pemble (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 178-185 (p. 178).

[23] Ibid., p. 178.

[24] Percy L. Babington, *Bibliography of the Writings of John Addington Symonds* (London: John Castle, 1925), pp. 131-212.

[25] Edward Dowden, '*Many Moods* (Book Review)', *The Academy*, 14 (1878), 103-104 (p. 103).

[26] Dowden, '*Many Moods* (Book Review)', p. 103.

Symonds repeatedly avows his confidence in the ability of these poems to communicate most accurately the events and emotions they explore, even more so than that which the autobiographical form will allow. For instance, in his effort to meticulously recreate his experience of first love and the emotional turbulence of his infatuation with Willie Dyer, Symonds invokes the poetry he wrote at the time in order to fill the inevitable gaps induced by breaks in his memory, or a struggle to express himself as articulately in autobiographical prose. He explains that these poems 'portray the state of [his] mind at that epoch better than [he] can now describe it', and that 'no autobiographical resumption of facts after the lapse of twenty-five years is equal in veracity to such contemporary records' (*Memoirs*, 178). While Symonds here attributes his inclusion of the poems to their temporal immediacy to 'the state of [his] mind' at that specific epoch, elsewhere in his writing it becomes clear that he also chooses to intersperse poetry throughout the *Memoirs* because the form of the lyric poem itself affords him certain advantages in the depiction of his sexual identity. In a letter written to Horatio Forbes Brown about his collection *Vagabunduli Libellus*, Symonds confesses: 'I do not suppose I have ever expressed my deepest self so nakedly before as I have here', and in a similar letter to Dr George C. Wilkinson, he is more direct: 'The last nine months have been spent by me in a sustained effort to express my deepest self in poetry'.[27] Thus, in order to circumvent his struggle to communicate the intricacies of his emotional past and represent the supposed truth of his life in the autobiographical form, Symonds calls on his poetic voice to offer a seemingly authentic account of key moments in the development of his sexual self-knowledge. Any reading of the ostensible veracity of the *Memoirs* must, of course, take into account the slippages inherent in any form of life writing between autobiography and fiction, as well as the 'radical ambiguity' of the term 'autobiography' itself, which Max Saunders explores in *Self-Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (2010).[28] Though Symonds's insertion of poems written contemporaneously with the events he discusses somewhat resolves this ambiguity by removing the questionable reliability of the author's memory that is typical of retrospective life narratives, his

[27] Symonds to Horatio Forbes Brown (November 13, 1881), in *Letters*, II (1968), p. 708; Symonds to Dr George C. Wilkinson (December 26, 1881), in *Letters*, II (1968), p. 723.

[28] Max Saunders, *Self-Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 4.

comments above and the textual composition of the *Memoirs* actually encourage a fluid and ambiguous understanding of autobiography that recognises the possibility of writing oneself in multiple generic modes (most importantly, in this case, poetry).

When Phyllis Grosskurth made the decision to excise what she deemed to be Symonds's 'execrable poetry' in her 1984 published edition of the *Memoirs*, she was not, therefore, merely removing some inconsequential superfluous material, she was severing a substantial part of Symonds's sexual self from his life narrative.[29] Thankfully, Regis restores most of this material in her critical edition of the *Memoirs* in order to remain faithful to the heterogeneity of the text. As a result, the text functions, in essence, as a dialogue between Symonds's intertextual selves – dispersed amongst autobiographical prose, letters, diaries, and verse – rather than conforming to the more established monologic form of life writing akin to Lejeune's oft-cited definition of the autobiography as a 'retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality'.[30] In this sense, the text is more closely aligned with Brian Loftus's examination of the queer autobiography, which Loftus claims renders 'the unitary "I" plural and tautological [and] refuses the binary oppositions constructed by the "I" – spoken/silenced, subject/abject, symbolic/unrepresentable'.[31] Without a singular, stable referent, Symonds's "I" is scattered between multiple forms and voices, signalling an exploration of queer subjectivity that is constantly evolving and transforming, and collectively contributing to the textual formation of his composite sexual identity.

Though Symonds does not entirely disregard the autobiographical conventions demarcated by Lejeune, as he frequently provides retrospective reflections in prose on the poems he wrote when he was younger, commenting on the real-life experiences that motivated their composition, the juxtaposition and occasional overlap of Symonds's disparate selves is most apparent when full poems or extracts are inserted into the *Memoirs*. In Chapter Seven, Symonds relies almost entirely on poetry to recount the Alfred Brooke episode (another of his romantic attachments),

[29] Phyllis Grosskurth, 'Foreword' in *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Grosskurth (London: Hutchinson, 1984), p. 11.

[30] Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, p. 4.

[31] Brian Loftus, 'Speaking Silence: The Strategies and Structures of Queer Autobiography', *College Literature*, 24 (1997), 28-44 (p. 32).

demonstrating that the idiosyncratic textual capabilities of the lyric poem allow him to most effectively capture the thoughts and feelings associated with his experiences of homosexual love. Following a fleeting introduction to Brooke in his autobiographical prose, which serves structurally as a preface to the dominant textual authority of this chapter – poetry – Symonds quickly turns to the first of several intertexts, an extract from a poem (transcribed in the *Memoirs* manuscript) that he presents as 'truly' written out of his 'own heart's experience' (*Memoirs*, 194). The extract, drawn from one of his privately printed poems, 'Genius Amoris Amari Visio' (which in English translates to 'The Genius of Greek Love'), in Symonds's own words dwells on the 'doom of anguish and disappointment and useless longing' experienced by men who loved men in his 'modern age' (*Memoirs*, 194).

The entire section of the poem that Symonds transcribes is comprised of rhyming couplets, with the exception of just one pair of lines that deviates from this pattern: 'The keen divisions of quick thoughts, the void | Of outstretched arms, the subtle suicide' (*Memoirs*, 194). As the sole divergence from the consistent rhyme scheme – particularly one that consists of simple, regular pairs which regiment the rhyme – these lines function as a jarring interruption of the rhythm of the poem thus far. This rhythmic interjection mimics the 'void' referenced at the end of the first line and serves as a structural reflection of the inevitable detachment between himself and Brooke. The cultural conditions of their historical moment prohibit them from resolving their love and forming a legitimate pair, just as Symonds prevents these two lines from uniting in a single rhyme as seen elsewhere in the extract. Here, then, we see Symonds grappling with what John Holmes recognises as 'the paradox that the resolution he seeks [in poetry] requires unity and holism, while the language in which he has to express it can only produce division and a lack of completeness'.[32] Poetry thus presents its own difficulties for Symonds in his effort to articulate his sexual identity, but it remains nonetheless a more effective space to work through and play with these structural and linguistic obstacles than the less experimental prose sections of his *Memoirs*. In the extract, the break in rhyme also assigns emphasis to the content of the two lines themselves, especially the final word of each line, 'void' and 'suicide', frankly encapsulating the 'doom of anguish and disappointment' that is symptomatic of the

[32] John Holmes, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Late Victorian Sonnet Sequence: Sexuality, Belief and the Self* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 123.

queer male experience in the nineteenth century. Such rhythmic and structural subtleties are unique to poetry and are not easily transferrable to the prose used in conventional life writing, hence Symonds's tendency to foreground his poems in the *Memoirs* as a means of painting an accurate portrait of his experiences and ensuing emotional responses to them.

Subsequent to this poetry extract, Symonds introduces yet another text external to the *Memoirs* – a 'prose dithyramb' which outlines the various acts of the Symonds/Brooke relationship, followed by a second version converted into blank verse which he also inserts into the chapter in full. Again, Symonds's faith in the advantages of the poetic form for constructing his narrative of sexual self-revelation is clear, as this blank verse poem records the exact same experience as the prose account that immediately precedes it, yet he feels a need to include both. These choices of narrative construction beg the question, in addition to its rhythmic intricacies, what are the particular features of the lyric poem that encourage Symonds to rely on it as the most productive arena for sexual self-delineation? As a literary mode specifically concerned with the expression of the interior emotional mechanisms of the self, or in Symonds's own words, a realm in which the poet sings 'subjectively, introspectively, obeying impulses from nature and the world', the lyric poem demands a depth of introspection incomparable to any other form, including the autobiography itself.[33] To explain this further, and to elucidate Symonds's attraction to the lyric mode, Marion Thain's study *The Lyric Poem and Aestheticism: Forms of Modernity* (2016) and her invocation of Hegel's theorisation of the lyric are particularly valuable. The necessary 'alienation' of oneself in the lyric, according to Hegel's definition, is achieved when the poet 'discloses his self-concentrated heart, opens his eyes and ears, raises purely dull feeling into vision and ideas, and gives words and language to this enriched inner life so that as inner life it may find expression'.[34] Using Hegel's conception of the lyric, Thain theorises further that 'the nineteenth-century lyric subject provided an experimental space in which relationships of identity and difference could be productively negotiated' – an ideal

[33] John Addington Symonds, 'A Comparison of Elizabethan with Victorian Poetry', in *Essays: Speculative and Suggestive*, 2 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1890), II, p. 243.

[34] G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art: Vol 2*, ed. and trans. T. M. Knox, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II, p. 1111.

space, therefore, for a negotiation of queer selves such as that which Symonds constructs in the *Memoirs*.[35]

Conversely, the autobiographical form does not always provide such room for experimentation or the creative negotiation of queer subjectivity. This is demonstrated by Symonds's self-conscious reflections on the autobiographical form and his style of prose in the *Memoirs*, which suggest that he understands the autobiography to be a less emotionally subjective testimony of the central events in his life. It seems, then, that Symonds identifies a clear generic distinction between poetry and autobiography – the former allows for the authentic formation and expression of self as it emerges from the moods and emotions induced by key episodes in his sexual life, while the latter is useful for retrospectively analysing this self, by utilising a knowledge of sexology and scientific discourse that was largely gathered in the years immediately preceding, and during, the composition of the *Memoirs*. This distinction is evident in the Brooke episode discussed above, and Heike Bauer observes a clear linguistic discrepancy between the poetry extract from 'Genius Amoris Amari Visio' and the evaluation that follows. Bauer notes that the 'adult Symonds interprets his desire for Alfred Brooke in a prose commentary that contrasts the naturalness and innocence of his love with an account of the 'illness' that overcame him' after his erotic impulse toward Brooke remained unsatisfied.[36] Bauer continues by explaining that the 'symptoms' Symonds describes such as an 'aching brain and overwrought nerves' and a 'tyranny of the flesh' are 'borrowed from the language of Victorian discourses around nervous illness and sexual health'.[37] Though reflecting on his own individual experiences and the physical and psychological impacts they had on him, adopting the pragmatic vocabulary of scientific discourses drives a slight subjective distance between Symonds and the events he recalls, hence the importance of the more emotionally literate poetry that is incorporated into the text.

Interestingly, however, despite their formal differences, in the *Memoirs*, autobiography and lyric are united by a 'universalising impulse' that Hegel, Thain, and

[35] Marion Thain, *The Lyric Poem and Aestheticism: Forms of Modernity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 187.

[36] Heike Bauer, *English Literary Sexology: Translations of Inversion, 1860-1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 63.

[37] Ibid., p. 63.

Symonds himself specifically identify as a defining feature of the lyric.[38] Paraphrasing Hegel, Thain explains that in the nineteenth century, this impulse 'enables a subjectivity that both is and is not personal; a lyric poet that 'both is and is not himself'.[39] Similar to Symonds's experience as a reader of poetry – relating to and reading himself in works by poets such as Shakespeare and Cory, whilst simultaneously recognising such works as reflective of a more universal queer experience not unique to himself – Symonds as a writer of poetry assumes this same duality. In an essay of his own, Symonds writes that the lyric poet may 'give the form of universality to his experience, creating magic mirrors wherein all men shall see their own hearts reflected and glorified without violation of reality or truth'.[40] This practice is particularly significant in the context of the queer subject, who in the nineteenth century was most often forced to look to forms of art and literature for self-representation and expression, and in Friedman's estimation, to gain important 'sexual self-knowledge'.[41] When Symonds writes in 'Genius Amoris Amari Visio', for instance, of 'All the sterile years, | The vain expense of salt-draining tears', he is at once expressing the emotional torment arising from a very specific moment in his own life (the Brooke relationship) and speaking more broadly of homosexual love in the nineteenth century as a fruitless and futile form of desire (*Memoirs*, 194).

In the prose segments of the *Memoirs*, Symonds is similarly motivated by this 'universalising impulse' and attempts to strike this same fine balance between recounting the particularities of his life as a solitary, individual subject, and envisioning the queer self as discursive and collective. He shares in the preface his hope that among the future readers of his autobiographical project, 'a fellow creature will feel some thrill of pity' in reading the record of his life (*Memoirs*, 60). Several such references to his so-called 'fellow creatures' are scattered through the text from beginning to end, where in the penultimate chapter Symonds writes: 'Alas, while writing this, I must perforce lay the pen aside, and think how desolate are the conditions under which men constituted like me live and love' (*Memoirs*, 502). Nonetheless, the linguistic and structural rigidity of Symonds's autobiographical prose does not compare to the creative liberties

[38] Thain, *The Lyric Poem*, p. 179.

[39] Ibid., p. 179; Hegel, *Aesthetics*, p. 1121.

[40] Symonds, 'Is Poetry at Bottom a Criticism of Life?' in *Essays* (1890), II, p. 163.

[41] Friedman, *Before Queer Theory*, p. 2.

granted by the lyric poem in the literary construction of his sexual identity. Thus, while both forms are entered into a creative exchange with one another in the *Memoirs* – a formal encounter that is arguably necessary for producing the richest possible portrait of the self – my assertion is that the autobiographical mode, for Symonds, ultimately serves as a convenient textual skeleton to string together the phases of his sexual life as told through his engagements with, and writing of, poetry. The radical, then, can be identified in Symonds's assertion that poetry occupies a privileged position in the process of sexual self-formation for queer subjects, and, as an extension, his understanding that poetry displays (and somewhat facilitates) the queer self to be collectively experienced and articulated, as opposed to existing as an individual, alienated identity.

Conclusion

In a passage marked for deletion in the *Memoirs*, Symonds writes, 'we are, all of us, composite beings', gesturing to a foundational notion of his autobiographical project (*Memoirs*, 188, n. 50). From this philosophy emerges a life narrative that is heterogeneous, polyphonic, and inherently radical, and the text serves as one of the most fascinating and idiosyncratic records of queer self-construction in the nineteenth century. Contrary to Symonds's mission to paint a 'perfect portrait of the man', then, the enduring allure of the *Memoirs* lies in the precise opposite: its textual imperfection (*Memoirs*, 478). Of the diverse modes deployed by Symonds throughout, this article has illustrated that poetry is the most consistent and significant textual authority in the formation of his sexual identity, revealing itself to be at the core of Symonds's life both as it was lived and as it was written. In addition to uncovering the importance of poetry in Symonds's sexual development and self-construction, as well as considering the broader ramifications of the relationship between autobiography, poetry, and how queer lives are assembled in literature, this article has thus affirmed the value of studying a vastly overlooked part of Symonds's oeuvre. The value of re-reading and reclaiming Symonds as both poet and radical, an act that is encouraged by his explicit depiction of homosexuality and the intertextual configuration of the *Memoirs*, lies not in an endorsement of his technical or creative skills as a writer of verse, but in revealing that poetry was a crucial component of both his sexual self-understanding and his notion of a communal and discursive queer experience. Considering the question

famously posed by Paul de Man – 'can autobiography be written in verse?' – one is therefore tempted to conclude that the *Memoirs* exemplifies the affirmative.[42] Yet, more than simply demonstrating that it is possible to write one's life in verse, Symonds's practice of 'poetizing' every aspect of his sexual identity and incorporating the resultant poems into his *Memoirs* suggests that, in his case, autobiography cannot be written without it.

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[42] Paul de Man, 'Autobiography as De-facement', *MLN*, 94 (1979), 919-920 (p. 920).

RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

‘The Curfew’s Knell’: Anglo-Saxon England and the Tradition of Dissent in English Romantic Poetry

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ABSTRACT: At the turn of the nineteenth century, the growing strength of medievalism in aesthetic and cultural discourse renewed interest in England’s Anglo-Saxon past. However, the tropes and motifs that came to define perceptions of pre-Norman society had a gestation period which already stretched back at least as far as the English Reformation. The Romantics, often coming from backgrounds of Protestant dissent themselves, found in these discourses many synergies with their own political and artistic projects. This article will therefore explore the representations of Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Yoke in Romantic poetry. It will do this by focusing on the work of two writers: Joseph Cottle and William Wordsworth. Though not nearly as well-known as many of his contemporaries and friends, Joseph Cottle was a key figure in early Romanticism. Moreover, his major work, *Alfred*; *An Epic Poem*, is one of the most substantial representations of Anglo-Saxon England in Romantic literature, combining many of the discursive elements passed down through the radical Protestant tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the aesthetic and political sensibilities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, Wordsworth similarly uses England’s pre-Norman past to explore the role of religion in the continuity of national identity. However, his treatment is more ambivalent, adapting the idiom of dissenting radicals in order to defend the established church. In exploring the aspects of Anglo-Saxon history represented in this poetry, the article seeks to uncover the roots of these discourses, analyse the innovations contributed by the Romantics, and point towards the directions these discourses would take in the future.

KEYWORDS: Wordsworth; Cottle; Romanticism; Anglo-Saxons; Medievalism; Reformation

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IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND one of the strongest and most distinctive cultural forces to develop in politics and aesthetics was what came to be known as medievalism. As

Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner explain, medievalism was both 'wide ranging and diverse', drawing on a broad spectrum of peoples, epochs and political agendas.[1] One consequence of this trend was a renewed interest in England's Anglo-Saxon past and its significance for contemporary society. This strain of medievalism had a particularly long gestation, stretching back at least as far as the English Reformation, and the motifs which resulted from its complex evolution would weave their way into cultural discourse throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all the way up to medievalism's immediate 'prehistory' in the Romantic era.[2] For this reason, political radicals like Thomas Paine would still rail against the 'French bastard landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives', and poets like Samuel Taylor Coleridge would still praise the liberty and political wisdom of the 'Northern barbarians'.[3] Indeed, some the most famous lines ever written about the fate of the Anglo-Saxons come from Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe: A Romance* (1819):

> Norman saw on English oak,
> On English neck a Norman yoke;
> Norman spoon in English dish,
> And England ruled as Normans wish;
> Blithe world in England never will be more,
> Till England's rid of all the four.[4]

The sheer success of Scott's novel meant that it came to define many of the perceptions of the period for much of the Victorian era; according to Chris Jones, it was 'Ulrica's Death Song', not *Beowulf,* which was regarded as 'the crown of Anglo-Saxon poetry' in the early nineteenth century.[5] Ironically, it might even have been *Ivanhoe* which first

[1] Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 1-22 (p. 3).

[2] David Matthews, 'The Ballad Revival and the Rise of Literary History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism,* ed. by Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 85-97 (p.86).

[3] Thomas Paine, *The Thomas Paine Reader* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 76; Jeff Strabone, *Poetry and British Nationalisms in the Bardic Eighteenth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 217.

[4] Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 286.

[5] Chris Jones, *Fossil Poetry: Anglo-Saxon and Linguistic Nativism in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 39.

introduced the name Beowulf to a non-specialist audience. Thus, by the time Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, discourses of lost Saxon freedoms, the Norman Yoke and the cult of King Alfred were already firmly established.

Yet while the histories of Saxon England and the Norman conquest would continue to grow in importance as the nineteenth century drew nearer, progress in scholarship was staggered and knowledge patchy. As Sharon Turner trenchantly commented in the 1807 preface to his seminal three-volume study, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons*,

> No other portion of our history has been so negligently studied. It has been the fashion to treat it as an unimportant excrescence of our general history… our most popular historians, averse to the drudgery of research, have passed over the Anglo-Saxon period with contented ignorance.[6]

What is more, although literary representations often contained a hard kernel of fact, the form the narratives had acquired throughout the culture wars of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was overdetermined. Having originated in a period of unparalleled religious conflict, these narratives had already passed through many different, historically determined permutations even before reaching the Romantic era. Then, at the cusp of the nineteenth century, '[s]upposed medieval authenticity is fused with what we identify as distinctly Romantic priorities: sublime and/or picturesque landscapes, a deeply introspective self, and the expression of an effusion of emotion and spontaneous feeling'.[7] Having inherited the narratives as they were passed down from generations of writers and antiquarians before them, the Romantics adapted these representations of Anglo-Saxon society to meet their own creative needs. Hence, uncovering the historical roots of these narratives and tracing the channels by which they reached the Romantics is key to understanding firstly how they influenced Romantic poetry and political discourse and secondly, what unique contribution they made to the medievalism of the succeeding Victorian era.

[6] Sharon Turner, *The History of the Anglo-Saxons,* 2nd edn, 3 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), I, p. iv.

[7] Parker and Wagner, p. 3.

This article will therefore explore the representations of Anglo-Saxon England, especially the portrayals of Alfred the Great and the narrative of the Norman Yoke, in Romantic poetry. It will do this by paying special attention to the points at which these representations intersect with Protestant radicalism. This is of particular importance, for as Harold Bloom once provocatively wrote: 'all the English Romantic poets [had a background] in the tradition of Protestant dissent, the kind of nonconformist vision that descended from the Left Wing of England's Puritan movement'.[8] The article will focus on the work of two writers in particular: Joseph Cottle and William Wordsworth. Though not nearly as well-known as many of his contemporaries and friends, the former was a key figure in early Romanticism. Moreover, his major work, *Alfred*; *An Epic Poem*, is one of the most substantial representations of Anglo-Saxon England in Romantic literature, combining many of the discursive elements passed down through the radical Protestant tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the aesthetic and political sensibilities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The latter is, of course, far more renowned, yet far less straightforward in his commitments. Though a lifelong member of the Church of England, Wordsworth's early religious upbringing was deeply influenced by Methodist and other dissenting ideas.[9] These influences notwithstanding, by his later years he had become increasingly attracted to High-Church teachings, and movements like the Oxford Tractarians sought to present him as their 'poetic patron'.[10] Thus in *Ecclesiastical Sketches,* Wordsworth, like Cottle, uses England's pre-Norman past to explore the role of religion in the continuity of national identity. However, his treatment is more ambivalent, adapting the idiom of dissenting radicals in order to defend the established church.

There has been a great deal of scholarship produced on this topic, both in terms of the roots of Anglo-Saxon narratives in the Reformation, and their later impact on Romanticism. This article takes as its point of departure Simon Keynes' extended article, *The Cult of King Alfred the Great* (1999), which provides a broad overview of the ways representations of the Saxon monarch have evolved throughout history and the contextual specificities which have shaped these narratives. As for in-depth explorations

[8] Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. xvii.

[9] Richard E. Brantley, 'Spiritual Maturity and Wordsworth's 1783 Christmas Vacation', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 14.4 (1974), 479–87.

[10] Jessica Fay, *Wordsworth's Monastic Inheritance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 196.

of how the Romantics explored and integrated narratives of England's Anglo-Saxon past, texts such as Jeff Strabone's *Poetry and British Nationalisms in the Bardic Eighteenth Century* (2018) and Clare A. Simmons's *Popular Medievalism in Romantic-Era Britain* (2011) have been indispensable. Yet while there has also been scholarship, such as that carried out by Jessica Fay, which explores the way in which representations of Anglo-Saxon England and religion intersect, particularly in the case of Wordsworth (less so in the case of Cottle), less attention has been paid to the ways the Romantics translated these connections into their own modes of expression and why. This article therefore seeks to address some of these gaps.

In many ways, it is unsurprising that England's Anglo-Saxon past should appeal to the Romantics. Many previous representations of pre-Norman society had portrayed the Anglo-Saxon peoples of England as living in free and equal societies, whose peaceful existence had been upheld by their singularly enlightened structures of government.[11] Individual rights were guaranteed by common law, which included trials by jury. Decisions were taken collectively through democratic institutions such as Witenagemots or parliaments. And the monarch's role, epitomised by the saintly Alfred the Great, was to resolve disputes, defend the Christian faith, and act as the national executive.[12] King, church and nation were at one. However, in the fateful year of 1066, the country was invaded by a foreign power and subdued by force. All native political structures were suppressed and the indigenous population was subjected to the yoke of Norman feudalism. The history of English society henceforth was the history of reclaiming those lost freedoms; Magna Carta was one such moment, the Bill of Rights

[11] Key sources for these kinds of representations in the period immediately preceding the Romantic era include *An Historical Essay on the English Constitution* (1771), attributed to Obadiah Hulme, and *Political Disquisitions* (1776) by James Burgh. For further studies, see Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 261-279. Kidd here provides a succinct overview of some of the more salient features of political Saxonism, particularly in the decades prior to the American Revolution. In his words, '[t]he eighteenth-century colonies imported the staples of English whig historiography' (p. 265), which included many of the ideas surrounding common law, Magna Carta, and ancient English freedoms. Other studies of interest include Trevor Colbourn's *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998) and J.G.A. Pocock's *The Ancient Constitution and Feudal Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[12] For a fuller discussion of the ways Alfred was incorporated into such representations, see Simon Keynes, 'The Cult of King Alfred the Great', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 (1999), 225–356.

another. To the citizens of the newly independent former colonies, the American Revolution was the latest of these reclamation efforts and in England the outbreak of the French Revolution suggested to many that another such moment was in the offing. In one influential study on the subject, Christopher Hill linked these representations to both the discourses of the 'noble savage' and of the Biblical fall, all of which form part of the 'Golden Age' theories, which he claims have existed in different forms in nearly all cultures.[13] Thus by the 1790s, the Anglo-Saxons were becoming 'significant in a continuing discourse on nationalism and revolution'.[14]

The synergies that exist between these discursive features and many of the central concerns of Romanticism are therefore patent, and some of the first representations of the Anglo-Saxon past can be found early in the Romantic era. The very first work exhibited by William Blake at the Royal Academy, for example, was a piece called 'The Death of Earl Goodwin'. According to Simon Keynes, this watercolour was most likely one of a series of drawings made by Blake on the subject of English history but which he never completed.[15] Other works produced by Blake on the theme of Old English history include 'St Augustine converting King Ethelbert of Kent' and 'The Ordeal of Queen Emma', the latter presumed to have been finished in the early 1790s. Interestingly, the death of Earl Goodwin and the trial by ordeal of Queen Emma also form the subject of a theatrical work by Ann Yearsley entitled *Earl Goodwin, An Historical Play*, first performed in 1789. What is significant about this representation of Anglo-Saxon England is that, according to Clare Simmons, the play explores 'Goodwin's role in reaffirming English law against Roman Catholic "oppression"'.[16] This is noteworthy because, as Pearson highlights, Yearsley is not likely to have been well-read in Anglo-Saxon history and most probably got most of her information from Thomas Chatterton's depictions of the pre-Norman past.[17] It is, therefore, evidence of a

[13] Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. 46.

[14] Jacqueline Pearson, 'Crushing the Convent and Dread Bastille: the Anglo-Saxons, Revolution and Gender in Women's Plays of the 1790s', in *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century,* ed. by Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 122-137 (p. 124).

[15] Keynes, p. 302.

[16] Clare A. Simmons, *Popular Medievalism in Romantic-Era Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 84.

[17] Pearson, pp. 125-126.

discursive link between the Anglo-Saxons and Protestantism being passed down through the literary tradition. Yet despite its clear significance in early Romantic thought, it would be another ten years before there was a major poetic portrayal of Anglo-Saxon society expressed in the language of Romanticism. What is more, when it did arrive, it would not be produced by one of the canonical Romantic poets.

That one of the first major portrayals of the Anglo-Saxons in Romantic literature should not be written by a canonical poet might actually have been an accident of circumstance. Richard Poole, a political radical who had met Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge in Bristol in 1796, had encouraged the latter to produce an epic poem on the theme of Alfred the Great. Coleridge, however, 'had other plans' and so passed the idea on to Joseph Cottle.[18] Although not nearly as well-known as some of his contemporaries, Cottle is an undeniably significant figure in the history of Romanticism. Aside from being a close friend of Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge early in the poets' careers, he was also the first publisher of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Furthermore, he was present at some of the most formative experiences of the poets' lives. Like Poole, he first met Coleridge and Southey in Bristol when these young political idealists were preparing for their journey to the Susquehanna River. As a life-long religious dissenter, he would often accompany Coleridge to the Unitarian meeting halls where the poet would preach his sermons. He was even to join the budding writers on their famous trips to the Wye Valley, with Wordsworth's 'Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey' later being written in Cottle's parlour.[19] Unlike Coleridge, he successfully completed the project first proposed by Poole and in 1800 published *Alfred; An Epic Poem*. Unfortunately for Cottle, this may well have been the only successful thing about the '13,500 dreary lines', of which Coleridge is reported to have remarked: 'it bore a lie on its title-page, for he called it *Alfred*, and it was never halfread by any human being'.[20] This harsh assessment may be the reason why, despite his clear significance to the artistic milieu of early Romanticism, scholarship on his work has been relatively scant. Amongst the few notable exceptions is Richard Cronin, who makes the case that Cottle's role went beyond that of mere witness to the more canonical writers, but that he had

[18] Keynes, p. 329.

[19] Basil Cottle, *Joseph Cottle of Bristol* (Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1987), p. 9.

[20] Ibid., p. 10; *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, ed. by E. J. Morley, 3 vols (London, 1938) II, p. 663.

in fact cultivated artistic ambitions which influenced his contemporaries in ways seldom acknowledged.[21] Lynda Pratt attempts a similar rehabilitation, comparing Cottle's epic poem with that of the then poet laureate, Henry James Pye, whose own effort of the same name was first published the year after Cottle's. Pratt notes that, 'if we return to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a very different picture emerges. In 1800-1802, both poems were widely reviewed and accorded a status and significance that more recent criticism has overlooked'.[22] However, the neglect continues, with Cottle featuring as little more than a footnote to the first generation of Romantics. This oversight should be rectified as, notwithstanding its artistic and commercial failures, the poem is a prime example of how previous representations of the Anglo-Saxon past were incorporated and subordinated to the exigencies of Romantic ideals.

Book I begins *in media res* with Ivar, the poem's antagonist, preparing to set out for England. Before he leaves Denmark, however, he must travel to consult the oracle. The descriptions of this journey feature precisely the fusing of the mediaeval with the Romantic that Parker and Wagner claim define these writers' treatment of the Anglo-Saxon past. As Ivar crosses the ocean towards the black mountain, the narrator describes how 'Thick darkness veil'd the sky, the tempest howl'd' as

> The waves, like heaving mountains, held their heads
> Suspended in the clouds, to aid the still
> And petrifying silence: then, again,
> Descended in loud cataracts; the winds
> Burst on resistless, and together join'd
> Ocean and air t'augment the fearful scene,
> Unspeakable.[23] (108-113)

[21] Richard Cronin, 'Joseph Cottle and West-Country Romanticism', *The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge* 28 (2006), 1-12.

[22] Lynda Pratt, 'Anglo-Saxon Attitudes?: Alfred the Great and the Romantic National Epic', in *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century,* ed. by Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 138-156 (p. 138).

[23] Joseph Cottle, *Alfred*; *An Heroic Poem in Twenty-Four Books* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1850), p. 12.

These images are clearly heavily indebted to *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* which demonstrates representations of pre-Norman England being subordinated to the aesthetic demands of the Romantic era. The darkness of the setting alludes to Burke's idea that '[to] make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary', while the choice of location recalls the passage of Burke's tract in which he writes that 'the ocean is no small terror… terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime'.[24] The analogy of the waves being 'like heaving mountains' finds its parallel in Section VII, where Burke states that '[a] perpendicular has more force in forming the sublime, than an inclined plane; and the effects of a rugged and broken surface seem stronger than where it is smooth'.[25] The brief hiatus in the ocean's roar can also be explained by Burke's assertion that '[a] sudden beginning or sudden cessation of sound of any considerable force, has the name power […] we have a perception of danger, and our nature rouses us to guard against it'.[26] Finally, the cacophony of loud cataracts and bursting winds is an echo of Section XVII: 'Excessive loudness alone is sufficient to overpower the soul […] The noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery, awakes a great and awful sensation in the mind'.[27] The descriptions continue in this key as Ivar is guided into the witch's abode and is exposed to all manner of horrors which inhabit the inner recesses of the earth. He is eventually led back to the surface with instructions that his three sisters are to weave a standard bearing the emblem of a raven to protect him in his crusades against the Saxons.

Though these images borrow from Norse mythology, they have far more in common with the likes of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Matthew Gregory Lewis than they do with *Beowulf*.[28] Indeed, as many academics have noted, Cottle's poem was

[24] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 53-54.

[25] Ibid., p. 66.

[26] Ibid., p. 76.

[27] Ibid., p. 75.

[28] It is difficult not to hear *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in lines such as, 'Not a word | Answered the mariner, and as the prince | Look'd with dread expectation,' while the description of the underworld as 'a ravine, deep, | O'er which his foot half hung, and in the gulf | Conflicting torrents, such as when some whale | Or ocean monster lashes the great deep' echoes the descriptions of the Sierra Morena in the climatic final moments of the *The Monk*. Cottle, pp. 13, 22.

deeply influenced by Southey's *Joan of Arc*.[29] As for the poem's eponymous protagonist, Lynda Pratt has gone so far as to describe Cottle's Alfred as a 'proto-Romantic poet':

> A sensitive appreciator of nature and of the natural world, a man that wanders round the countryside talking to rural folk and listening to their tales 'of misery', and who is as likely to address poems to the moon as to make high-sounding speeches urging his army into battle.[30]

This aspect of the Saxon monarch's character is clearest in Books III, IV and V, where the defeated Alfred is often portrayed at his most Wordsworthian:

> At evening hour,
> In the warm summer months, while yet a boy,
> Oft would he wander by the slow brook's side,
> And mark its gentle noise, serving to break
> Th' intensity of silence which oppressed
> His listening sense, and gave to all around
> New and obscure solemnity.[31] (19-25)

Yet this penchant for ruminating on the natural world is not the only characteristic that Alfred shares with the writers of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. Twenty-two books in, Alfred meets his guardian angel and in what is far and away the epic's longest stretch of exposition, Cottle has the angel deliver the poem's religious manifesto. What is striking about this covert sermon is the extent to which its teachings align not with pre-Norman Christianity but with the reformed, and specifically dissenting, tradition of Cottle's own time.

From the opening lines of Book XXIII, it is clear that the poem is rejecting High-Church interpretations of faith and religion: 'Whilst, on his couch, Alfred, at midnight,

[29] Cronin, p. 5.

[30] Lynda Pratt, 'Anglo-Saxon Attitudes?: Alfred the Great and the Romantic National Epic', in *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 138-156 (p. 153).

[31] Cottle, pp. 62-63.

slept, | He saw, or thought he saw, a Spirit, tall' (1-2).[32] Rather than appearing to the Saxon monarch in a miraculously incarnate form, Cottle presents the angel as communicating with Alfred through oneiric visions. This is an implicitly materialistic presentation of divine phenomena and is in stark contrast to Book I, where Ivar physically enters the supernatural environs of the witch's cave. Indeed, Alfred rejects this kind of superstition in Book X:

> tho' strange it seem,
> Truth lies beneath - Thou hast much lore to learn,
> And much to unlearn, ere thou wilt be wise.
> Thine are the idle, weak and wandering dreams,
> Which, hearing, we might smile at, not deride,
> But for their baneful influence on man's heart.[33] (100-105)

This sceptical attitude towards supernatural phenomena is, of course, closely associated with the more radical forms of Protestantism. The angel goes on to instruct Alfred 'in truths, needful to know | In [his] high station' (44-45), all of which bear a distinctly Protestant colouring.[34] He restates, for example, the cliche that 'Protestantism' is the 'doers' religion: 'if they seek a treasure in the skies, | They must be up and doing, and become, | While yet they may, their own sweet almoners' (132-135).[35] However, the angel also repudiates the traditional Catholic belief that 'works' have inherent worth and affirms the Protestant doctrine that inner conviction is source of godliness: 'Not in th' Eternal's all-pervading eye | Is the same deed by different men perform'd: | Motives and principles to him appear, | Clear, tho' conceal'd from human scrutiny' (253-256).[36] The angel continues by emphasising the purity of the early church and restating the various '*solae*' of Protestantism: 'Like ancestors revered, you worship God | As conscience dictates: read the sacred page; | Practise its precepts; trust its promises; | And prize the Saviour' (707-710).[37]

[32] Ibid., p. 341.
[33] Ibid., p. 148.
[34] Ibid., p. 342.
[35] Ibid., p. 345.
[36] Ibid., p. 348.
[37] Ibid., p. 361.

Although Cottle is certainly writing anachronistically, conflating the religious beliefs of pre-Norman England with later Protestant interpretations of Christianity, this discourse had pervaded interpretations of Anglo-Saxon society since the mid-sixteenth century. In fact, it was the attempt to provide a historical foundation for the English Reformation which first stimulated interest in the Anglo-Saxon past. When Elizabeth I ascended the throne in 1558, the country had just come out of a period of violent counter-reformation. With sedition at home and the threat of invasion from abroad, the English ruling elite knew that it would have to move quickly to consolidate its power. The result was the Elizabethan Religious Settlement: a theological compromise which was uneasy yet sufficiently stable to secure the realm. This, together with the siege mentality which came to define much of Elizabeth's reign, produced a flurry of patriotic mythmaking which revolved around the state church and the monarch as its head.[38] Yet while contemporary theologians were keen to emphasise the break with Rome, the new regime would now have to consolidate its legitimacy. It is in this context that we find renewed interest in England's past beyond Edward the Confessor. Fittingly, it was also Matthew Parker, Elizabeth's first Archbishop of Canterbury and one of the chief architects of the new religious settlement, who began to amass and publish ancient texts which he thought 'might help to encourage the study of the early English language and to deepen understanding of early English history, and which might help thereby to provide a firm basis for the newly established "Ecclesia Anglicana"'.[39]

The work of men like Archbishop Parker was thus 'centered on the establishment of a Protestantized antiquity, an ancient precedent for the institutionalization of the English church under Elizabeth'.[40] In practice, this also meant uncovering (and inventing) a 'pure primitive church' whose 'ecclesiastical corruption could be dated from the invasion of 1066, which the Pope had blessed'.[41] Much was made of the fact that, like the reformers of their own day, the Anglo-Saxons had translated the Bible into the common vernacular. There was also evidence of clerical marriage and communion

[38] For more on the Elizabethan Religious Settlement and the cultural discourses this produced, see Patrick Collinson, *This is England: Essays on the English Commonwealth and Nation in the Sixteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

[39] Keynes, p. 240.

[40] Benedict Scott Robinson, '"Darke Speech": Matthew Parker and the Reforming of History', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29.4 (1998), 1061–1083 (p. 1062).

[41] Hill, p. 55.

under both kinds without the distinctions made in the Catholic ceremony.[42] Parker further attempted to demonstrate that there were Anglo-Saxon precedents for the Church of England's position on the eucharist, while the antiquarian William Lambarde discussed how the Anglo-Saxon church had been tainted by the introduction of:

> the vain titles of Romane arrogancie… Monkes, Friars, Priestes, Nonnes… the whole rablement of [Satan's] religious armie, for the holding of simple soules in wonted obedience, and the upholding of his usurped Empire.[43]

The cumulative effect of this was to create the idea that Anglo-Saxon England was an organic, proto-Protestant community of the godly. The 'inseparability of religious reform and national identity' continued into the period of political radicalisation during the early- and mid-seventeenth century, when Parliamentarian factions (often themselves religious reformers and radicals) began to develop theories about the Anglo-Saxon legacy which were in open conflict with the interests of the monarchy.[44] This was motivated in part by the anxiety that church policy was being manipulated by foreign, Catholic agents at court. By the start of the revolutionary 1640s, the Saxons and the 'Norman Yoke' had taken centre-stage in parliamentarian rhetoric. Those on the moderate wing of the parliamentary faction tended to favour the version of the narrative which emphasised the continuity of common law and the inherited 'rights of Englishmen'. The political radicals, on the other hand, increasingly viewed the Norman Conquest as a usurpation not because it deprived the Anglo-Saxons of an older constitution but rather because it deprived the people of England of their God-given, 'natural' rights. While these differences between the moderates and radicals would eventually contribute to the splitting of the common front, at the beginning of the English Revolution the two wings were united in their opposition to the perceived Catholic innovations in church and the foreign influence in state.

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[42] In the Catholic mass during the medieval period, it was common for the aristocracy and clergy to receive both the eucharistic wafer and the sacramental wine, while the lower orders were offered only the former. This hierarchical distinction was later rejected by many reformers, and there was a theological debate about whether the mass had to be administered 'in both kinds' or whether one was sufficient.

[43] William Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (London: Adams and Dart, 1970), p. 71.

[44] Scott Robinson, p. 1064.

It is for this reason that Cottle's subsequent philippic against the Church of Rome, though anachronistic, is fully in line with the radicals' interpretations of the Saxon past. Moreover, in the revolutionary ferment of the late eighteenth century, the syzygy between biblical millennialism and Enlightenment utopianism was at its strongest, as both 'looked forward to the universal establishment of peace, freedom, morality, and truth in the ruins of political tyranny and religious superstition'.[45] In the eyes of many like Cottle, the Saxons' battle to preserve their ancient freedoms, the dissenters' war on episcopal tyranny, and the radicals' struggle for political liberty all formed part of the same chiliastic history. Hence the angel warns Alfred about the threat a Catholic 'fifth column' could pose to the future of his kingdom:

> 'Britain, beware! There is a leaven at work!
> Priestcraft, with nightly vigils, broods unseen!
> It heaves the social system, and, alone,
> (Whate'er they say of alter'd purposes)
> Needs but the power to light the faggot pile
> To scatter round them vengeance,— God to please!
> (That God a god of mercy!) who again
> Would forge the chain[46] (786-791)

Then, for some three hundred lines in the middle of Book XXIII, the angel inveighs against 'idolatry', 'indulgences', 'superstition' and a host of other heresies associated with the Catholic faith:

> … thou striv'st
> To shroud this lamp of truth—so, to enforce
> Thine own vain fancies, prescripts, doctrines, lies.
> Thou giv'st to hungry souls the frothy food,
> The tinkling bell! the incense rising high!
> The flaming tapers! Relics false, (if true,
> Worthless as weeds that perish in the sun)

[45] Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 187.

[46] Cottle, p. 364.

> And pouring tawdry garments on the sight!
> Wonder is none, that thou should'st interdict,
> And shroud this hostile Book, so to enforce
> Thy senseless bendings, vain observances,
> Mock'ry of sacred things![47] (954-965)

In his presentation of Alfred and Anglo-Saxon society, Cottle here echoes both the preoccupations and the language of his sixteenth and seventeenth-century precursors. From the paranoia surrounding Catholicism's potential to infect the body politic and 'forge the chain' anew, to his savage criticism of relics, vestments and ornate ceremony, the writer takes many of the same anxieties which had animated the Elizabethan antiquarians and expresses them in the new idiom of the Romantic era.

Yet Cottle was by no means alone in these kinds of representation. Some twenty years after the first publication of *Alfred; An Epic Poem*, another collection of poems was published which contained much of the same imagery, not to mention animus, as Cottle's earlier efforts:

> The tapers burn; the odorous incense feeds
> A greedy flame; the pompous mass proceeds;
> The Priest bestows the appointed consecration;
> And, while the Host is raised, its elevation
> An awe and supernatural horror breeds,
> And all the People bow their heads like reeds,
> To a soft breeze, in lowly adoration.[48] (2-8)

These lines come from the poem *VI. Transubstantiation*, a sonnet published in Part II of Wordsworth's collection, *Ecclesiastical Sketches*. The similarities between Wordsworth's sonnet and the lines from the middle of Book XXIII of Cottle's epic are striking. In the first instance, they both criticise the grandiloquence of the ceremony, be that the 'tawdry garments' or the 'pompous mass'. They both attack the notion of idolatry, directed at relics in the former poem and communion bread in the latter. Both lament the ritualistic use of genuflexion, considering it an outward show of subjection to the

[47] Ibid., p. 369.

[48] William Wordsworth, *Collected Reading Texts from The Cornell Wordsworth Series*, 3 vols (California: Cornell University Press, 2009), III: *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, p. 388.

episcopacy. And both use the language of the sublime, either to give a sense of God's greatness or to produce a sense of terror at the superstitious rites of the Catholic mass.

Ecclesiastical Sketches was published in 1822 and, as pointed out by Jessica Fay, one of Wordsworth's key motivations was his own opposition to Catholic Emancipation.[49] The collection itself is divided into three sections (Part I: 'From the Introduction of Christianity into Britain, to the Consummation of the Papal Dominion'; Part II: 'To the Close of the Troubles in the Reign of Charles I'; and Part III: 'From the Restoration, to the Present Times'), the first of which explores the Anglo-Saxons at length.[50] Indeed, Fay writes that the collection as a whole is deeply indebted to the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (c. 731) and attempts 'to remind British citizens of the protection they receive from an established Church in which the excesses and subversive impulses of popery are tempered'.[51] Though not as widely-read as many other works by Wordsworth, much has been written about the *Sketches*' religious politics, most significantly by Tim Fulford and Jessica Fay, as well as by Michael Tomko, Regina Hewitt, and others.[52] Clare A. Simmons has also briefly touched upon the relationship between Wordsworth's religious politics and his use of the Saxon past in *Ecclesiastical Sketches*.[53] Less explicit attention, however, has been paid to the links between the religious politics on the one hand, the representations of the Anglo-Saxon past on the other, and how Wordsworth's evolution out of the radical tradition inflects both. Despite being written two decades after *Alfred; An Epic Poem,* and Wordsworth's gravitation towards more High-Church positions, the poems share many similarities of diction with Cottle's work. In the introductory poem, for example, Wordsworth identifies himself as 'I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace | Of Liberty' (5-6) and lays out his intention to 'seek upon the heights of Time the source | Of a holy

[49] Fay, p. 175.

[50] Wordsworth, pp. 368, 387, 401.

[51] Fay, pp. 174, 176.

[52] Tim Fulford, *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1815-1845* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), eBook [subsequent references given by chapter in the absence of pagination]; Michael Tomko, 'Superstition, the National Imaginary, and Religious Politics in Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Sketches"', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 39.1/2 (2008), 16–19; Regina Hewitt, 'Church Building as Political Strategy in Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Sonnets"', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 25.3 (1992) 31–46.

[53] Clare A. Simmons, 'Medievalism in "The Excursion"', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 45.2 (2014), 131–37.

River' (9-10).[54] The rhetoric of 'Liberty' was, of course, a common trope of the revolutionary era; yet in the specifically anglophone context, be that the English Revolution of the 1640s, the Glorious Revolution of 1680s or the American Revolution of the 1770s, the spread of liberty was inseparable from the spread of Protestantism.[55] Wordsworth thus assumes the role of a Prophet of the Reformed (albeit established) church to show the nation how Protestantism runs through its genetic make-up.

The first ten sonnets of the collection depict the original introduction of Christianity into Britain. However, Wordsworth takes great care not to apportion to Rome too much of the credit for the advent of Christianity. In one striking image from *III. Trepidation of the Druids*, Wordsworth compares Rome's role in the spread of Christianity into Britain with the lance that pierced Christ's side on the cross: 'the Julian spear | A way first open'd; and, with Roman chains, | The tidings come of Jesus crucified'.[56] The violence perpetrated by the Roman conquest, like the violence perpetrated by the Roman soldier Longinus, might have served to confirm and spread the knowledge of Christ's sacrifice to the world but it invests the perpetrator with no further theological authority. In sonnet *VIII. Temptations from Roman Refinements*, Wordsworth further warns against indulging in the excesses of Rome:

> Watch, and be firm! for, soul-subduing vice,
> Heart-killing luxury, on your steps await.
> Fair houses, baths, and banquets delicate,
> And temples flashing, bright as polar ice,
> Their radiance through the woods—may yet suffice
> To sap your hardy virtue, and abate
> Your love of Him upon whose forehead sate
> The crown of thorns[57] (1-8)

Throughout the subsequent sonnets, Wordsworth describes the vicissitudes of early Christianity, including the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons themselves, which ushers in 'a

[54] Wordsworth, p. 368.

[55] Bloch, p. 194.

[56] Wordsworth, p. 369.

[57] Ibid., p. 371.

second and a darker shade | Of Pagan night'.[58] That is, until *XVII. Conversion,* when 'Woden falls—and Thor | Is overturned' and the Saxons are converted en masse.[59]

The Anglo-Saxon legacy was a thorny issue for antiquarians attempting to prove the original, pre-Roman-Catholic purity of the Church of England. As has already been highlighted, sixteenth-century defenders of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement had been quick to deploy any evidence of similarities in Anglo-Saxon religious practices. Yet Anglo-Saxon Christianity was tainted by an original sin; they had been converted to Christianity by Saint Augustine on the orders of Pope Benedict. In the eyes of many, the original, pristine Christianity from which the Church of England had descended was in fact that of the Britons. In contrast, the Anglo-Saxons had admitted the corrupting influence of 'popery' into the islands and persecuted those original Christians. Be that as it may, as Strabone points out, 'the elevation of the ancient Welsh was not a simple zero-sum gain at the Saxons' expense'.[60] Any evidence unearthed by antiquarians which suggested affinities with Protestantism was put to use regardless. Indeed, it was here that the Anglo-Saxons enjoyed an advantage. In spite of its supposed purity, the ancient British past was 'vague and sketchy'.[61] The Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, could boast written precedents which, in the words of Colin Kidd, meant that 'the Saxon phase of English church history came to play a more significant role in its identity than was warranted by confessional correctness'.[62] Wordsworth appears to adopt a similarly pragmatic approach in *XIX. Primitive Saxon Clergy*, where he repeats the trope of Anglo-Saxon Christianity being a proto-Protestant faith, describing its priests in terms reminiscent of puritan ascetics: 'outwardly as bare | As winter trees, yield no fallacious sign | That the firm soul is clothed with fruit divine!' (3-5).[63] In the following sonnet, Wordsworth reflects on how grief, which 'ill can brook more rational relief' (7), helped produce those superstitions which would ultimately lead to the oppression of the Catholic Church: 'prayers are shaped amiss, and dirges sung | For those whose doom is fix'd! The way is smooth | For Power that travels with the human heart' (8-10).[64] The

[58] Ibid., pp. 372-173.

[59] Ibid., p. 376.

[60] Strabone, p. 150.

[61] Kidd, p. 107

[62] Ibid., p. 107.

[63] Wordsworth, p. 377.

[64] Ibid., p. 377.

juxtaposition that the enjambement creates between the 'misshapen' prayers in line eight with the idea of a 'fixed doom' in line nine serves to foreground the vanity of such rituals in the face of God's predestination. He therefore warns the clergy: 'Of your own mighty instruments beware!' (14).

From sonnet *XXI. Seclusion* through to *XXVIII. Influence Abused*, Wordsworth discusses the spread of Christianity throughout Saxon England, including a portrait of Alfred in which he describes the monarch as 'a Pupil of the Monkish gown, | The pious Alfred, King to Justice dear' (*XXVI. Alfred,* 1-2).[65] Here, Wordsworth once again indulges the idea that the Saxons tied nation, law and religion together into one pious state. Even the two poems which discuss Viking raids and settlement focus on Christianity as a catalyst for integrating disparate national identities. In *XXIX. Danish Conquests*, he describes how 'widely spreads once more a Pagan sway; | But Gospel-Truth is potent to allay | Fierceness and rage; and soon the cruel Dane | Feels, thro' the influence of her gentle reign, | His native superstitions melt away' (4-8).[66] Similarly in *XXX. Canute*, as the Danish monarch is passing Ely Abbey, he hears the 'pleasant music' floating along the mere: 'quoth the mighty King, "draw near, | "That we the sweet song of the Monks may hear!" | He listen'd (all past conquests and all schemes Of future vanishing like empty dreams)' (3-7).[67] As Fulford explains, in the context of the public debate on Catholic Emancipation, Wordsworth's intention is to demonstrate 'the Anglican Church's central place as the historical institution binding the English together as a cohesive, Protestant nation'.[68] Thus, just as in Cottle's poem, the purpose of these 'sketches' is to illustrate the evolution of the English nation through the continuity of English Christianity.

One of the clearest examples of this continuity is to be found in the last sonnet of the collection to address England's Saxon past, entitled *XXXI. The Norman Conquest*. Here, Wordsworth broaches the subject of the 'Norman Yoke' and describes how, despite the imposition of a new regime, religion ultimately perdures. The poem also marks an interesting point in Wordsworth's transition from youthful Jacobin and to middle-aged Tory, as the language deployed in the poem is reminiscent of the kinds

[65] Ibid., p. 380.

[66] Ibid., p. 381.

[67] Ibid., p. 382.

[68] Fulford, ch. 7.

of 'Norman Yoke' narratives previously favoured by political and religious radicals. The narrative itself is that part of Saxonist discourse which focuses on the suppression of native English institutions by the invading Normans. What is especially curious about that part of the discourse is its apparent novelty, as there is very little documented evidence of its existence before the wave of antiquarian scholarship in the late Tudor period. This is not to say that the narrative is entirely an invention of the sixteenth century, for as Christopher Hill notes, opposition to the 'Norman Yoke' would most likely have been strongest amongst the illiterate and therefore part of the 'underground of largely-unrecorded thinking'.[69] However, the core elements were beaten into their canonical form by the radicals in the tumultuous period of the English Revolution, where it began to be articulated in terms which suggest 'a rudimentary class theory'.[70]

Traces of this can be found in Wordsworth's sonnet. After announcing the 'evanescence of the Saxon line' (2) in the sonnet's opening octave, the narrator declares: 'Hark! 'tis the Curfew's knell! the stars may shine; | But of the lights that cherish household cares | And festive gladness, burns not one that dares | To twinkle after that dull stroke of thine' (3-6).[71] Wordsworth employs many of those motifs related to idealised representations of Anglo-Saxon England. The reference to 'festive gladness' evokes the typical 'Golden Age' notion of 'merry England', while the reference to 'household cares' suggests a more Protestant interpretation of domesticity, much like Cottle's representations of Alfred in Books II and III of his epic. Yet Wordsworth's choice to refer to the invasion metonymically as the 'curfew' is revealing, as the same reference was famously used by the radical pamphleteer Thomas Paine in his tract, *A Vindication of the Rights of Man*: 'Though not a courtier will talk of the curfew-bell, not a village in England has forgotten it [...] The conqueror considered the conquered, not as his prisoner, but his property'.[72] To the radicals, the curfew represented the oppression inflicted on the Anglo-Saxon community by the stratification of society into feudalism. Wordsworth continues with the metaphor of the curfew, evoking an apocalyptic night falling on Anglo-Saxon England:

[69] Hill, p. 54.

[70] Ibid., p. 53.

[71] Wordsworth, p. 382.

[72] Paine, p. 271.

… as the terrors of the lordly bell,
That quench, from hut to palace, lamps and fire
Touch not the tapers of the sacred quires;
Even so a thraldom, studious to expel
Old laws, and ancient customs to derange,
Brings to Religion no injurious change.[73] (10-14)

What is significant in Wordsworth's presentation is that while the change to the national culture is all encompassing, wreaking havoc on the Saxon constitution and society, the Protestant soul of the nation escapes the invasion unscathed. Yet it is evident that in the case of this maturing former-Jacobin, it is no longer the throwing off of feudal oppression which animates his writing but the defence of the established church order. For Wordsworth, it is England's Protestant faith which binds the modern nation to its ancestors, while its ancestors provide models for the modern nation to emulate. Like Cottle, he uses many of the tropes and ideas about Anglo-Saxon history that had been passed down from those antiquarians and political radicals who had first renewed interest in the pre-Norman past and imbues the discourse with the spirit of his own age. This in turn would help lay the foundations for the representations of Anglo-Saxon England in the era that followed.

In their literary portrayals of Anglo-Saxon England, both Cottle and Wordsworth employ many of the same tropes and motifs that had first emerged during the tumultuous period of the English Reformation and the Civil War. These portrayals often included the idea of an egalitarian indigenous community, protected by an enlightened justice system, and united by a 'purer' form of Christianity not unlike the contemporary Protestantism. The poets inherited these discursive elements through the traditions of religious and political dissent, of which they themselves were a part. What is more, just as the original discourses of Saxon England were galvanised by the revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so the representations of pre-Norman England in the work of the Romantics were shocked into life by the French Revolution. Though it might seem paradoxical that a revolution precipitated by the founding of a secular state should, alongside an intense political radicalism, also awaken deep religious

[73] Wordsworth, p. 382.

enthusiasm, in the Anglophone context these two things were not necessarily mutually exclusive. As Bloch explains:

> In the mid-1790s… both biblical millennialism and radical Enlightenment utopianism saw the French Revolution as a key agent in this glorious transformation. They shared the fervent expectation that France would deliver a mortal blow to European monarchism and Roman Catholicism, thereby opening the way to freedom and truth.[74]

This is perhaps clearest in Book XXIII of Cottle's epic, where Alfred's guardian angel sermonises like a reformed preacher and leaves the reader in no doubt of the poet's political and religious sympathies: 'Man, prone to error, in ten thousand ways | Diverges from the Truth. This Book alone, | Instructs, alike, the mighty and the mean, | Age, youth' (608-611).[75] These lines, repeating the Protestant injunction of *sola scriptura* whilst also affirming the belief in the equality before God, are as much the effusions of a political radical as they are a dissenting Christian. Wordsworth's handling of the source material in *Ecclesiastical Sketches* is more ambivalent. As Fulford writes, 'the sequence neither debates the poet's own struggles of faith nor dramatizes the religious crises that fundamentally shaped the church; it glosses over the theological arguments of the Reformation and almost entirely omits the Civil War and Commonwealth'.[76] Notwithstanding this, Wordsworth uses episodes from England's Anglo-Saxon past to explore the relationship between national identity, politics and religion. He deploys much of the same language and imagery favoured by the radicals, only here it is to argue in favour of an established church rather than the kind of emancipation he favoured in his youth. Yet what is common to both writers is the rendering of older discourses into the idiom of their day, expressing the past with the modern aesthetic values of the sublime.

Naturally, the narrative's evolution did not end with the Romantics. In the words of Simon Keynes: 'It was during the long reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) that Alfred achieved his apotheosis'.[77] In this period, the figure of the Saxon monarch was

[74] Bloch, p. 200.

[75] Cottle, pp. 358-359.

[76] Fulford, ch. 7.

[77] Keynes, p. 333.

definitively purged of its radical content and became the subject matter for much of the artwork and poetry of imperial Britain. Indeed, Keynes believes that Cottle had his part to play in this process, as the epic represents 'a stage in Alfred's transition from the politicized legend of the eighteenth century into the more (but not exclusively) romanticized legend of the nineteenth'.[78] Meanwhile the 'Norman Yoke', shorn of its ethnic ties, found its way into the discourse of the various working-class movements of the early and mid-nineteenth century. The structure of its argument can be seen in the discourses of the Chartists, radical publications like *The Black Dwarf*, and in early socialist ideas. However, these movements now framed the narrative in terms of the democratic and economic rights which were being withheld from the masses by a ruling minority. A poem by William Hick, published in *The Northern Star* in 1841 is illustrative:

> Oh, where is the justice of old?
> The spirit of Alfred the Great?
> 'Ere the throne was debas'd by corruption and gold,
> When the people were one with the state?
> 'Tis gone with our freedom to vote.[79]

The remnants of the 'Norman Yoke' and lost Saxon freedoms are still visible here in both the politics and the poetry. Yet it is no longer the feudal invader exerting his power over a dispossessed native; it is political and economic injustices which deprive the people of democratic rights. Like the biblical narrative of the fall and the myth of the noble savage, Anglo-Saxon England would become part of the sunken foundations of political discourse and continue to influence culture long after its origins were forgotten.

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[78] Ibid., p. 331.

[79] William Hick, 'The Presentation of the National Petition', *The Northern Star*, 5 June 1841 [qtd. in Hill, p. 46].

the English Romantic poets. He has also carried out research on the political ramifications of the domestic sphere in the work of John Milton, and is interested in the use of the sublime to break ideological structures in the poetry of William Blake and P. B. Shelley.

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Defending the Indefensible: Morris, Tennyson and Arthur's Adulterous Queen

SUSAN MOONEY

ABSTRACT: This article looks at William Morris's early poem 'The Defence of Guenevere', highlighting Morris's sympathetic approach to Guenevere's illicit love, and comparing it with Tennyson's more conventional treatment of the queen's adultery, written in the same year, 1857. At a time when British society was sharply focused on female immorality, Tennyson upheld social norms and expectations, while Morris radically undermined the tropes on which the idea of the immoral woman depended. Rather than arguing for her innocence or guilt, Morris asks us to make a paradigm shift in thinking about morality. He disregards the relevance of fidelity or duty to Arthur, focusing instead on Guenevere's 'faithfulness' to her true self and to love.

KEYWORDS: William Morris; Alfred Lord Tennyson; 'Idylls of the King'; 'The Defence of Guenevere'; Victorian Poetry; Gender Relations

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IN 1857 WILLIAM Morris, then aged 23, was compiling a book of his own poems based on Arthurian themes. He had been writing poetry prolifically for several years. Morris had studied at Oxford to take holy orders but, together with close friend Edward Burne-Jones, had abandoned religion and belief, and vowed to pursue Art. Burne-Jones told a cousin in 1855 that the study of French and German philosophy had 'shivered' (shattered) Morris's belief in religion and palsied his own, although both men continued to use medieval and Christian iconography in their work.[1] Morris had acquired the Southey edition of the Arthurian tales of Malory in 1855.[2] The title of Morris's collection of poems, published in 1858, was taken from the opening poem 'The Defence of Guenevere'. 'In Malory's tale, Guenevere, Arthur's Queen, has been

[1] Nicholas Salmon, with Derek Baker, *The William Morris Chronology* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1990), p. 14.

[2] Salmon, p. 13.

caught in adultery with Launcelot and sentenced to death. Morris's version, a long, dramatic monologue, presents Guenevere responding to the accusations levelled against her by her captors.

Unbeknownst to each other, as Morris worked on his Arthurian poems, Tennyson was also writing about the same fashionable tale and adulterous queen as part of his sequence *The Idylls of the King*.[3] As Mark Girouard has shown, the mythic setting adopted by these poets was popular at this time and reflected current ideals. Knightly codes of honour and quests offered a model for masculine behaviour while upholding religious and social conventions and the class system, and themes of romantic love in conflict with moral and social codes could be well understood by the contemporary population.[4] Both Morris and Tennyson addressed the subject of the immoral woman. This article compares each author's shaping of the tale of Arthur's queen to show that Morris uniquely challenged the arguments that categorised Guenevere as immoral, and the concept of immorality itself, while Tennyson's treatment of the subject promoted the current ideology regarding the adulterous woman.

Because of its novel style, and as an example of Morris's juvenilia there have been many studies of Morris's title poem. These have analysed feminist aspects of Guenevere's situation, and the way her words elicit sympathy and evidence a critique of medieval and masculine violence. Virginia Hale and Catherine Barnes Stevenson's 'Morris' Medieval Queen: a Paradox Resolved' maintains that Morris's familiarity with Malory's version of the tale meant that his Guenevere, as a queen and an autonomous woman of the court, has no need to defend her courtly love of Launcelot.[5] Ingrid Hanson sees Guenevere's monologue in terms of a battle, in which she uses her 'voice and her body as weapons of offence', buying time while awaiting Launcelot's rescue, but also attacking the moral and political order of her captors.[6] Several studies also

[3] Morris spells the queen's name with an e: Guenevere, while Tennyson spells it with an i: Guinevere.

[4] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 112-128.

[5] Virginia S. Hale and Catherine Barnes Stevenson, 'Morris' Medieval Queen: A Paradox Resolved', *Victorian Poetry*, 30.2 (1992), 171-178.

[6] Ingrid Hanson, *William Morris and the Uses of Violence: 1856-1890* (London: Anthem Press, 2014), p. 36.

compare this poem with Tennyson's, mentioning the variation in style, with Tennyson's 'modern' and Morris's 'medieval'.[7]

The key question of the success or failure of Guenevere's defence is much debated.[8] Florence Boos outlines the principle question on which critics have focused their attention: 'Does the poem provide a coherent intellectual, moral or artistic 'defence' of Guenevere? Or is her monologue simply a painterly flourish of deviously emotional self-revelation?'[9] The response would generally seem to be that the poem does not provide an adequate defence, with Boos suggesting that Morris either sidesteps or deliberately ignores the question of immorality, and others such as Hale and Barnes Stevenson leaving Guenevere's technical innocence a possibility. Guenevere can also be seen as a conventional Victorian female, trapped in her role as 'idealised male projection', or helpless victim waiting for rescue.[10] In both 'Justice and Vindication' and 'Sexual Polarities in the Defence of Guenevere', Boos notes the poem's erotic intensity and its rare Victorian suspension of judgement about female sexual conduct. She argues that the Guenevere poem does provide a defence of 'female passion and sexuality', a vindication of 'a limited but admirable female psyche' struggling against the social constraints and emotional suffocation, and 'a heroine's right of self-determination'.[11]

These studies all start with the question or paradox of the title: a 'defence'. But do these things – validating a woman's rights of self-determination against the patriarchy, using combative language, or having elevated station or autonomy – really constitute a 'defence' for her adultery? While Morris argues for all these rights and freedoms for Guenevere, and praises her beauty and agency, he also engages with the

[7] For example, Laura Struve, 'The Public life and Private Desires of Women in William Morris's "Defence of Guenevere"', *Arthuriana,* 6.3 (1996), 15-29; and Clare Broome Saunders, *Women Writers and Nineteenth-Century Medievalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[8] See for example recent articles on the subject by Florence Boos, Claire Bloom Saunders, Hale and Barnes-Stevenson, Laura Struve, and Michael Patrick McGrath.

[9] Florence Boos, 'Justice and Vindication in William Morris's "The Defence of Guenevere"', in *King Arthur Through the Ages*, II, ed. by Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1990), pp. 84-106 (p. 84).

[10] Florence Boos, 'Sexual Polarities in The Defence of Guenevere', *Browning Institute Studies,* 13 (1985) 181-200 (p. 182).

[11] Boos, 'Justice and Vindication', p. 102.

supposedly shameful concept of adultery at a time when it was seen as both a serious moral issue and a threat to society. Furthermore, Morris realised that the question of adultery would be central to the reception of the poem. As Clare Broome Saunders has pointed out: 'Morris… allows [Guenevere] to focus on her roles as queen and lover, while being aware that contemporary society would judge her only as an adulteress'.[12] If Guenevere's innocence cannot be proven by her words, actions, or beauty, wherein lies the 'defence' promised by the title? One way to read the poem that would answer this question is to interpret it as a 'defence' of the very act of adultery. This article contends that Morris asks us to make a paradigm shift in thinking about morality. By vividly depicting the truth of Guenevere's inner life, I argue, he aims to undermine the set of 'man-made' ideas that categorised women as 'immoral'.

At this time Morris and Tennyson, among other artists and writers, were focusing on morality for a specific reason. Society's concern with the sexual behaviour of women had been simmering for decades and, according to Lynda Nead, had reached a peak of intensity.[13] In 1860, the *Saturday Review* noted that,

> [W]e seem to have arrived at this point – that the most interesting class of womanhood is woman at her lowest degradation […] and painters, preachers, and sentimentalists have kept the excitement at fever pitch.[14]

In July of the year these poems were written, there was an ongoing debate about sexual equality in the House of Commons.[15] Contagious diseases legislation, a law against pornography, and divorce laws grew out of a society that believed itself under moral siege.[16] The behaviour and proclivities of women from all classes were discussed and

[12] Saunders, p. 146.

[13] Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 211.

[14] 'The Literature of the Social Evil', *Saturday Review*, 6 October 1860, pp. 417-418 (p. 417).

[15] Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Virago Press, 1989), p. 60.

[16] The *Contagious Diseases Acts* were first passed in England in 1864, after a committee had been appointed to investigate the incidence of venereal disease in 1862. See Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention & Reform in England, 1860–1914* (London: Routledge, 2000). Divorce law reform occurred from 1857 under the *Matrimonial Causes Acts*.

scrutinised. Posing a threat to society and to a woman's immediate family, middle-class female adultery was deemed particularly heinous; as one social commentator put it:

> Let the "Social Evil" be made a *punishable* offence, whether it be in its rather less sinful, or its more aggravated, form of "Adultery:" the *latter* being forbidden by God's Holy Commandments as much as murder, theft, or any other offence which our laws admit to be criminal, and the *former* by His holy Word.[17]

Despite Christian belief in chastity and marital fidelity, and, importantly, notions of sin and damnation, it was widely accepted that, as men had strong desires, moral failures were inevitable, if regrettable, and often such failures were attributed to women.[18] In 1857, Dr William Acton wrote that '[w]hat men are habitually women are exceptionally'.[19] Victorian society expected that the majority of women would, by their nature conform to an ideal of purity and devotion, while no such ideal existed for men. Prostitutes (as working women) and adulteresses (who strayed outside their domestic realm) were therefore regarded as abnormal or deviant.[20]

Less judgemental about illicit love in his earlier Arthurian poetry, Tennyson decided to adjust his treatment of Guinevere to better suit the contemporary debate. In the words of Elliott Gilbert:

> [He] came to feel that only some contemporary significance in the Arthurian retellings, only some 'modern touches here and there' [...] could redeem his poetry 'from the charge of nothingness', from Thomas Carlyle's characterization of it as 'a refuge from life [...] a medieval arras' behind which the poet was hiding 'from the horrors of the industrial revolution'.[21]

[17] Publicus Mentor (pseud.) *The "Social Evil"! Is there no Remedy?* (London: W.H. Guest, 1876), p. 4.

[18] Martha Vicinus, ed., *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age,* (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 163.

[19] William Acton, *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life*, 4th edn (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1875 (1857)), pp. 162-3.

[20] Poovey, p. 14.

[21] Elliott Gilbert, 'The Female King, Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse', *PMLA,* 98.5 (1983), 863-878 (p. 863).

As Morris had, Tennyson focused on human sexuality and female passion. The four idylls published in 1859 – 'Vivien', 'Guinevere', 'Enid' and 'Elaine' – were collected under the general title *The True and the False*, and focus on '[t]he polar extremes of feminine purity and carnality'.[22] Tennyson's emphasis is on the corrosiveness of female sexuality; mirroring current discourse about social collapse, he places the blame for the decay of the Round Table and the fall of Camelot on Queen Guinevere's infidelity. The description of her fall is very much in tune with contemporary thought. As a Victorian woman, she is exposed and degraded through a somewhat theatrical exhibition of shame, submission, guilt, self-accusation, physical corruption, suicidal ideation and physical contamination. First Tennyson outlines the ideal woman and her attributes:

> I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought, and amiable words
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man.[23] (474-479)

A failure of duty or purity on the part of women threatened not just her home and family, but society at large. Guinevere must accept blame for her failure of virtue, even taking on Lancelot's share of responsibility: "Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou (|) Unwedded". Guinevere confesses publicly - "Weep for her that drew him to his doom" - and in the face of Arthur's forgiveness, but still 'cast out', renounces her affair, vowing to love Arthur until death. In renderings of the immoral woman, the adulteress or prostitute invariably expresses shame and self-loathing, apparently only realising these feelings when in the presence of a powerful man or husband.

A common view in this period, expressed by Acton, William Greg and others, was that 'normal' women were 'not very much troubled (happily for them) with sexual

[22] Gilbert, p. 864.

[23] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, edited by J.M. Gray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 356. Further references to the poem are from this edition and will be given by line number only.

feeling of any kind' and so were unlikely to stray.[24] William Acton opined that in the 'deviant', sexually aware woman, 'the sin of unfaithfulness is often inherited, as well as many other family diseases'.[25] Female children of an adulteress were considered tainted with the same sinful proclivities. Like prostitutes, their 'unnatural' sexual desire linked them with disease or even insanity.[26] Tennyson's Arthur outlines the course of action to deal with such a wife. The husband must drive the source of corruption from his home, or the sin will transfer, and *he* will become a public foe:

> I hold that man the worst of public foes
> Who either for his own or children's sake,
> To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
> Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house (512-516)

Tennyson likens Guinevere's sin to the visitation of disease, spreading from the queen to contaminate society:

> An awful dream; for then she seemed to stand
> On some vast plain before a setting sun,
> And from the sun there swiftly made at her
> A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
> Before it, till it touched her, and she turned—
> When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet,
> And blackening, swallowed all the land, and in it
> Far cities burnt (76-83)

and

> Like a new disease, unknown to men,
> Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
> Makes wicked lightenings of her eyes and saps
> The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse

[24] Acton, p. 162. William Rathbone Greg was a Liberal manufacturer, and author of 'Why are Women Redundant?' *The National Review*, April 1862, pp. 434–60.

[25] Acton, p. 131.

[26] Ibid., p. 162-3.

With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young (518-522)

In Tennyson's version of the legend there is no mention of the death sentence because he concentrates on Guinevere's sin. Victorian society did not execute such women, it 'cast them out'. Augustus Egg's *Past and Present* academy triptych, painted the same year as the *Defence*, show the descent of the middle-class adulteress from her comfortable and secure home to life as a destitute mother clutching an illegitimate baby, and seeking shelter under the arches of a London bridge – now in ragged clothing, she lives a squalid existence, cut off from her two daughters and on the verge of suicide.[27] Under the same moon as their mother, the orphaned and downcast adult daughters are depicted living in 'reduced circumstances', now probably unmarriageable due to their mother's 'fall', and the idea of inherited 'disease'.[28]

Like Tennyson, Morris employs the attributes of adultery exposed: shame, blame, unnatural desire, physical corruption, and self-disgust, but he subverts, or inverts them to undermine the concept of the deviant woman. Guenevere has been discovered with Launcelot in her room by a troop of disgruntled knights, who have long suspected their true relationship, and now at last they 'have' her. She faces the full weight of the medieval power structure, represented physically by a group of sword-wielding, vengeful knights, for not only has she flaunted Christian morality, but as the king's wife, she has committed treason. Though written in 1857, the opening lines sound surprisingly immediate and timeless:

But, knowing now that they would have her speak,
She threw her wet hair backward from her brow,
Her hand close to her mouth touching her cheek,

As though she had had there a shameful blow,
And feeling it shameful to feel aught but shame
All through her heart, yet felt her cheek burned so,

[27] Augustus Leopold Egg, *Past and Present* (1-3), 1858, oil paint on canvas, Tate Britain, London.

[28] Nead, p. 74.

She must a little touch it:[29] (1-7)

Modern critics engaged with Victorian tropes of shame and dishonour have read this first reference to 'shame' as Guenevere's acceptance of her shame in the eyes of her captors and the world, the starting point of her 'defence'.[30] However, a close look at Morris's first use of the word shows that it is not *Guenevere* who is shamed. Instead, the narrator's reference is to a shameful blow, the shame assigned by Morris to the violent individual who would strike her. At the outset, while raising the question of 'shame' so central to the Victorian's idea of the fallen woman, Morris transposes the shame from the woman to her male captors, the representatives of the power structures that have put her at their mercy. Morris is also hinting at the kind of physical treatment possibly meted out to such Victorian wives, rather than the pious pity of Tennyson's Arthur.

Morris establishes early in the poem that Guenevere *does not* demonstrate this expected shame. In fact, she feels it is somewhat shameful that she actually feels *no* shame for what she has done. She 'feels aught but shame all through her heart', as is evident by what she says next:

"God wot I *ought* to say, I have done ill,
And pray you all forgiveness heartily!
Because you *must* be right, being great lords – still (15-17)

Guenevere uses the word 'great' to emphasise domination rather than goodness – 'Arthur's great name', 'great lords' and the 'great god's angel' contrasting the power of Church and State with her own lack of it. She says they 'must be right' because they

[29] William Morris, *Collected Works of William Morris*, ed. by May Morris, 24 vols, (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910-1915), I (1910), 1. Further references to the poem are from this edition, and will be given by line number only.

[30] For example, Laura Struve, 'The Public Life and Private Desires of Women in William Morris's 'Defence of Guenevere'', *Arthuriana*, 6.3 (1996), 14-30; and Carole Silver, 'In Defence of Guenevere', in *Arthurian Women: A Casebook*, ed. By Thelma S. Fenster (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 229-244.

are great, but unlike Tennyson's queen she does not feel or see it. By contrast, Guinevere unquestioningly accepts male authority and her own abasement:

> My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?
> The shadow of another cleaves to me,
> And makes me one pollution: he, the King,
> Called me polluted: shall I kill myself?
> What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
> If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame; (617-622)

Instead of appealing to Arthur or accepting the judgement of her captors as Guinevere does, Morris's queen simply tells the history of her passionate love as if that in itself is a defence. In renditions of fallen women, shame and self-disgust often resulted in suicidal thought. Tennyson's Guinevere, speaking of sin and shame, asks 'Shall I kill myself?'. Morris too raises the question of dying, but not as part of a confession of sin and shame, but from a sense of the hopelessness of this love under the circumstances: '[…] moan, (|) And roll and hurt myself, and long to die'. The concept of female suicide as motivated by moral shame, rather than other factors such as poverty, was romanticized in art and poetry. Nicoletti writes that,

> Until the "black ocean" of prostitution was purified through hygiene and regulation, the nation symbolically cleansed itself of polluted and polluting urban women through their visualized —and ironically beatific — drownings. [31]

Highlighting that her marriage was not for love, Guenevere recalls how, before meeting her future husband, she wondered what her life would be like in an 'arranged' marriage:

> '[…] ere I was bought :
> By Arthur's great name and his little love,
> Must I give up forever then, I thought,

[31] L.J. Nicoletti, 'Downward Mobility: Victorian Women, Suicide, and London's Bridge of Sighs', *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London*, 2.1 (2004), par. 5.

"That which I deemed would ever round me move,
Glorifying all things; for a little word,
Scarce ever meant at all, must I now prove

"Stone cold forever? [...] (84-90)

Commonplace in the medieval period, there were also many Victorian marriages of convenience, usually with age disparities such as is implied in the marriage of Guenevere and Arthur. Victorian women's lack of economic autonomy meant that many women without independent means were compelled to marry, and it was accepted that love matches were a luxury many could not afford. In a fragment of a novel on contemporary life Morris began in 1872, he describes the plight of a young woman, Eleanor, abandoned by her lover who has decided to marry elsewhere for money. Eleanor becomes homeless and desperate, but eventually is able to find a home with her godfather, who 'in spite of all' has asked her to live with him, because '[he] knows and cares so little for the ways of society that [...] he looks upon marriage as quite as shocking as anything else'.[32] One contemporary definition of a prostitute by Acton was: a woman 'who gives for money that which she ought to give only for love'.[33] The logical conclusion of Acton's claim is that if some women married for money, Eleanor's godfather was right – marriage and prostitution are equally 'shocking'. In 1886, during his socialist years, Morris called marriage a 'system of venal prostitution'.[34]

Morris has Guenevere vividly identify her growing desire for Launcelot with the changing seasons and the beauty of nature, suggesting that her passion is a blameless aspect of the natural world:

"And in the summer I grew white with flame,
And bowed my head down – Autumn, and the sick

[32] William Morris, *The Novel on Blue Paper*, ed. Penelope Fitzgerald (London: The Journeyman Press, 1982), p. 11.

[33] William Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects,* 2nd edn (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870), p. 166.

[34] William Morris, *The Collected Letters of William Morris,* ed. by Norman Kelvin, 4 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984-1996), II (1988) p. 584. Other Victorian radicals expressed similar views about marriage, for example, John Stuart Mill in 1869 and Eleanor Marx in 1886.

Sure knowledge things would never be the same,

"However often Spring might be most thick
Of blossoms and buds, smote on me, and I grew
Careless of most things, let the clock tick, tick,

"To my unhappy pulse, that beat right through
My eager body; (72-79)

Her love and desire for Launcelot blend with the seasons, and this imagery is used to reject the man-made notion that such love and desire can be sinful. He made this thought clearer in later life: 'if we feel the least degradation in being amorous, or merry, or hungry, or sleepy, we are so far bad animals, and therefore miserable men'.[35] The 'unhappy pulse that beat[s] […] through [Guenevere's] eager body' contrasts with Tennyson's description of the same pulse as 'Devil's leaps' or 'poison', implying an unnatural and evil origin. Through Guenevere, Morris expounds the radical view that he developed during his years at Oxford: that as love and sexual desire are natural, even sacred, they should therefore be beyond the control of society or individuals. In a passage redolent of sexual yearning and its fulfillment, Guenevere surely incriminates rather than 'defends' herself:

…as if one should

"Slip down some path worn smooth and even,
Down to a cool sea on a summer's day;
Yet still in slipping was there some small leaven

"Of stretched hands catching small stones by the way,
Until one surely reached the sea at last,
And felt strange new joy as the worn head lay

"Back, with the hair like sea-weed; yea all past
Sweat of the forehead, dryness of the lips,

[35] William Morris: 'The Society of the Future', quoted in E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary,* rev. edn (London: Merlin Press, 1976), p. 704.

Washed utterly out by the dear waves o'ercast. (95-104)

Guenevere tells of a time leading up to only one illicit kiss, but these verses, with their evocation of an irresistible slipping-down, the ineffective 'catching at small stones', the anxious 'sweat of the forehead, dryness of the lips' finally quenched in union with the sea, with its 'dear waves o'ercast', form a potent metaphor for union and sexual release, while the 'path worn smooth' hints at the many who have passed that way before.

As has been noted, Morris's words about female desire here and elsewhere show that he did not subscribe to the idea that women had a different or lesser amount of amorous feeling, or that such feeling was deviant or evil. In his prose romances, and *News from Nowhere* (1891), as well as in his earlier work, his heroines' desires equal that of their men. In this he stood apart from religious and medical notions during this period, which linked strong desire in women with deviance and depravity, particularly in the case of the 'adulteress'.[36] Morris seems to have held opinions similar to Dr. George Drysdale. A vehement supporter of the women's movement, in 1855 he anonymously published a work defending contraception entitled *The Elements of Social Science; or Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion* in which he argued:

> To have strong sexual passions is held to be rather a disgrace for a woman [...] this is a great error [...] In woman exactly as in man, strong sexual appetites are a very great virtue [...] If chastity must continue to be regarded as the highest female virtue; it is impossible to give any woman real liberty.[37]

It is tempting to speculate whether Morris had read Drysdale's work, a reaction to current discussion on women and sexuality. It was published just at the time Morris was writing his Guenevere poems, where Morris has Guenevere argue against prevailing notions of purity and chastity: 'must I prove (|) Stone cold forever?'.

While Tennyson promotes the idea that physical corruption follows from immoral love, Morris is at pains to show that Guenevere's physical presence is beautiful and vivacious, although she is an adulteress:

[...] say no rash word

[36] Acton, p. 162; Nead, pp. 77-8.

[37] George R. Drysdale, *The Elements of Social Science; or Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion*, 4th edn (London.: E. Truelove, 1861 [1855]), p. 172.

Against me, being so beautiful; my eyes,
Wept all away to grey, may bring some sword

"To drown you in your blood; see my breast rise
Like waves of purple sea, as here I stand;
And how my arms move in wonderful wise,
[…]
See through my long throat how the words go up
In ripples to my mouth: how in my hand

"The shadow lies like wine within the cup
Of marvellously colour'd gold;
[….] look you up,

"And wonder how the light is falling so
Within my moving tresses: will you dare,
When you have looked a little on my brow,

"To say this thing is vile? (415-427)

Unlike Tennyson's queen, Guenevere is not polluted by illicit love. The movement of her arms and long hair, and the 'waves of purple sea' of her breast – give the impression of a distinctly erotic and radiant life force expressed through a female body. Morris's Defence is not an appeal for leniency for the shameful immoral feelings or acts of the queen, instead he rejects the idea of immorality outright. Guenevere's desire is natural, therefore, says Morris, it is not sinful and should not be unlawful. Morris would use the figure of a beautiful woman as both an example of, and an emissary for, freedom and liberation in love across his poetry and writing, through characters such as Mrs. Mason in his unfinished novel, Ellen in *News from Nowhere*, and the heroines of the prose romances.[38]

Morris's early interest in the illicit aspect of erotic love can be seen in several of his other poems and works from this time. In 'Old Love', a poem in 'The Defence'

[38] Sue Mooney, 'Self-Revelation in Morris's Unfinished Novel', *The Journal of the William Morris Society,* 10.2 (1993), 7-8.

volume, an ageing knight seems to recall a previous, adulterous relationship with his dead friend's wife:

> Her eyes are shallower, as though
> Some grey glass were behind; her brow
> And cheeks the straining bones show through,
> Are not so good for kissing now.
>
> Her lips are drier now she is
> A great duke's wife these many years,
> They will not shudder with a kiss
> As once they did, being moist with tears
>
> Also her hands have lost that way
> Of clinging that they used to have;
> They look'd quite easy, as they lay
> Upon the silken cushions brave.[39]

A particular example of this interest is Morris's 1856 review of Robert Browning's book of poems entitled *Men and Women*, in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine,* a journal written for and by the students of both universities, which Morris funded and edited. A great admirer of Browning, Morris was driven to write a review himself because of the poor reception of the work. He praised the love poetry in earnest terms, with an impassioned statement about his own views on love as central to life and art:

> This and all the other [poems] seem to me but a supplement to the love-poems, even as it is in all art, in all life; love I mean of some sort; and that life or art where this is not the case, is but a wretched mistake after all […]. And in these love-poems of Robert Browning there is one thing that struck me particularly; that is their intense, unmixed love; love for the sake of love […] I cannot say it clearly, it cannot be said so but in verse; love for love's sake, the only true love, I must say. – Pray Christ some of us attain to it before we die.[40]

[39] Morris, *Collected Works of William Morris*, p. 89.

[40] William Morris, '*Men and Women* by Robert Browning. A Review', *Bibelot*, 4.3 (1898), p. 110.

Reviewing one poem entitled 'The Statue and the Bust' Morris went on to defend illicit love, as Browning had seemed to:

> Unlawful love that was never acted, but thought only, thought through life; yet were the lovers none the less sinners, therefore; rather the more, in that they were cowards; for in thought they indulged their love freely, and no fear of God, no hate of wrong or love of right restrained them, but only a certain cowardly irresolution. So Robert Browning thinks.[41]

Such writing unsettled Morris's friend and fellow student William Fulford, who complained to a mutual friend: 'I did not like Topsy's review at all. You men at Oxford must not let your love of Morris carry you away to admire such of his writings as don't deserve admiration'.[42] Morris's university friends were still Christian, and Fulford no doubt sensed the radical implications of Morris's 'religion' of love, where *failure* to surrender to true love is the sin. This ideal also appears in another early prose work of 1856, 'Gertha's Lovers', where Morris's hero says that 'the love of man and woman should go before everything, before 'all friendship, all *duty*, all *honour*'.[43]

In her critical introduction to a 1981 edition of the Defence poems, Margaret Lourie examined the poems in depth, characterizing the works as romantic escapism, with which Morris is frequently associated:

> [The Guenevere poems] refused to confront a single moral or intellectual question of their own age or any other. So far from displaying 'the powerful application of ideas to life' later recommended by Arnold, they display no ideas at all.[44]

Lourie's conclusion relies upon a definition of 'moral question' as one that conforms to accepted social norms. But to approach Morris's poem assuming that the Defence will attempt to exonerate Guenevere of unfaithfulness, as many have, is to mistake Morris's

[41] Morris, 'Browning's *Men and Woman*', p. 114.

[42] Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1995), p. 100.

[43] William Morris, *Collected Works*, p. 189. My emphasis.

[44] Margaret Lourie, ed., *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (New York, Garland: 1981), p. 21. Lourie's introduction is currently published on the *William Morris Archive* as a definitive discussion of the work.

aim. Morris upholds Guenevere's 'faithfulness' to her true self and love. He disregards the relevance of fidelity or duty to Arthur, which seems, by comparison, a false intellectual construct.

More so than modern readers perhaps, Victorians would have been primed to detect the radical views implied in Morris's poem, and that is probably why the *Defence* received a largely unsympathetic response – both stylistically and morally. As a *Saturday Review* critic observed in November 1858:

> …he does not give us people and passions with which we can sympathise. […] We never knew any knights or ladies of this class, but […] though there was a great amount of kissing, both according to the chronicles and Mr. Morris, it appears that the kissers and the kissed had but little respect for the marriage service [….] if he would but consider that poetry is concerned about human passions and duties – with men of like moral nature with ourselves […] he might win a great place […] among his contemporaries.[45]

This critic's important linking of *duties* with passions, and his implication that the morality of the *Defence* is nothing like the morals of those reading the poems, indicates his ready identification of the work as subversive.

Therefore, at a young age, and at the height of a debate on the subject, Morris publicly challenged the validity of a precept that was almost universally accepted in Britain and that punished women while excusing men; one that used the concept of sin and damnation to limit the possibility of passionate relationships. Morris would carry what Boos terms his 'reverence' for passion through life.[46] As made clear in later writings such as *The Pilgrims of Hope*, and *News from Nowhere*, Morris did not simply believe that freedom in love would always mean lasting happiness or fulfillment: 'as we exult in all the pleasure and exaltation of spirit which goes with these things, so we set ourselves to bear the sorrow which not unseldom goes with them also'.[47] However, Morris did

[45] Unsigned review in *Saturday Review*, [20 Nov. 1858], in *William Morris: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Peter Faulkner (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 46.

[46] Florence Boos, ed., *The Juvenilia of William Morris*, (New York: The William Morris Society, 1983), p. 8.

[47] Morris, 'News from Nowhere or, An Epoch of Unrest: Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance', *Collected Works*, XVI, p. 57.

believe that such sorrow was the price paid for 'true' love, or 'genuine unions of passion and affection'.[48]

Morris and Tennyson, both couching their social comment within a popular antique setting, tackled the same themes of shame, desire, power, and women's role with very different aims. Morris's poem radically argues that desire is as natural a part of women's nature as it is men's, and for true relationships to exist, this desire should be unfettered. Upholding the status quo, Tennyson argued that such desire in women is unnatural, sinful and dangerous, an argument perhaps devalued by its entanglement with women's economic, social and political dependence upon men. The argument that desire was natural in men was used to justify male sexual transgressions; Morris uses the same argument to defend an adulteress, and by implication, all women. Morris's views on relations between the sexes before his marriage to Jane Burden would make sense of his evident tolerance of her later relationship with Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It is therefore thought-provoking to read a quote from one who only knew Morris in the 1880s: 'If I thought [Morris's] opinions on the relations of the sexes in old days were the same as he professes to hold now – why then, you might believe anything'.[49]

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[48] William Morris, *Collected Letters,* II p. 584.

[49] Jack Lindsay, *William Morris: His Life and Work,* (London: Constable, 1975), p. 322.

RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

A Pamphlet War: Colonialism versus Radical Nationalism in the Ionian Islands, 1848-1864

HELENA DRYSDALE

ABSTRACT: In the early 1850s the vice chancellor of the Ionian University wrote a pamphlet supporting British colonial rule in the Ionian Islands, a British protectorate. He soon found himself embroiled in a vitriolic pamphlet war with an Ionian radical. This paper contextualises and scrutinises their pamphlets, producing a nuanced reading that augments our understanding of some of the tensions between mid-nineteenth-century British imperialism and Hellenic radical nationalism. It asks what can be added to current debates by elucidating the motivations and historical contingencies of certain individuals and their articulation of colonial subjectivities and power dynamics. It shows that the networks that formed the British world-system often depended on the principal protagonists and their overlapping interests, egos, alliances and antipathies and ways in which they expressed themselves in the press. It argues that a critical reading of their publications and personal histories complicates conventional narratives of 'oppressive coloniser' versus 'radical nationalist' and demonstrates that in the Ionian context divisions were not so clear-cut.

KEYWORDS: Ionian Islands; George Bowen; Greece; Protectorate; Pamphleteering; Imperialism

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IN 1848 A CLASSICIST, travel writer and vice-chancellor of Corfu's Ionian University named George Bowen toured the Ionian Islands, a British protectorate. Joined by his friend the artist-poet Edward Lear, Bowen admired the landscapes and antiquities and was courteously entertained by Ionian Liberals, one of whom he would marry.[1] Bowen did not anticipate that in Cephalonia he would witness an anti-British riot that heralded a radical nationalist campaign for decolonisation, nor that he would consequently become embroiled in a politically significant pamphlet war with Dracato Papanicolas, a

[1] George Bowen, Journals 1847-1851, private archive.

prominent Ionian radical 'agitator'. This led to Bowen being expelled from the protectorate along with the Lord High Commissioner, Sir John Young.[2] Britain subsequently capitulated to radical demands, and in 1864 exited the Ionian Islands and ceded them to Greece.

This paper contextualises and scrutinises these pamphlets, producing a nuanced reading that augments our understanding of some of the tensions between mid-nineteenth-century British imperialism and Hellenic radical nationalism. British historiography has traditionally blamed Ionian unrest on a seditious radical minority stirring up a previously contented people, while Greek historiography has attributed it to national aspirations and dissatisfaction with the protectorate, and has generally been positive towards those who supported it and negative towards those who did not.[3] Recent historians have broadened the debate with socio-economic, political, theoretical and trans-European dimensions.[4] What, then, can be added by elucidating the motivations and historical contingencies of certain individuals and their articulation of colonial subjectivities and power dynamics? In his masterly survey *The Empire Project* John Darwin argues that the empire was less a hegemonic rule of the periphery by the centre, than the management of ever-shifting global networks and spheres of influence.[5] This paper shows that many such networks depended on the principal protagonists and their overlapping interests, egos, alliances and antipathies and on how they expressed themselves in the press. It argues that a critical reading of their publications and personal histories complicates conventional narratives of 'oppressive

[2] Sir John Young (1807-1876), Anglo-Irish MP and Chief Secretary for Ireland (1852-1855), was appointed Lord High Commissioner of the Ionians in 1855 but recalled in 1859. He became Governor of New South Wales (1861-1867) and later Governor-General of Canada (1869-1872).

[3] Maria Paschalidi, 'Constructing Ionian Identities: The Ionian Islands in British Official Discourse; 1815-1864', PhD thesis, University College London, 2009. Paschalidi describes Bowen as Secretary to Lord Seaton; in fact, Bowen was University vice-chancellor under Seaton and Secretary to Henry Ward and John Young.

[4] See, for example, Roderick Beaton and David Ricks's edited collection, with relevant contributions from Socrates D. Petmezas and Paschalis Kitromilides, among others: *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

[5] John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

coloniser' versus 'radical nationalist', and demonstrates that in the Ionian context divisions were not so clear-cut.

At the 1815 Treaty of Paris, the islands – previously colonised by Venice, then briefly occupied by Russia, Turkey and France – were granted autonomy with their own legislature and justice system, but Britain would provide military protection under the governorship of a Lord High Commissioner (LHC). From the start of the protectorate relations between the British and Ionians were troubled. Andrekos Varnava argues that almost every colonial venture was a search for an El Dorado or utopia destined for disappointment.[6] Other scholars have been more circumspect, noting that British officials were ambivalent about the Ionians' place in the empire.[7] Colonial Secretary Earl Grey believed that protection was more in Ionian than British interests 'and that it is upon their [Ionians'] continuing to value and to support it, that its being maintained must depend'.[8] Bruce Knox, one of few historians to have studied Bowen's controversial role in the protectorate, proposes that Britain accepted the islands mainly to deny their use to some other power.[9] By contrast, Darwin demonstrates that despite being small and commercially insignificant, the Ionians had huge geostrategic meaning, enabling Britain to keep a navy in the Eastern Mediterranean to watch the French and Russians; to protect Britain's rapidly expanding trade; and to bestride maritime routes to the Dardanelles, Egypt and India. 'The age of "free" trade', Darwin notes, 'was about to begin'.[10]

If gaining the Ionian Islands marked a significant increase in British power, governing and retaining them proved challenging. This was partly because their status was ambiguous. The Ionians were fellow Europeans, but this was not a semi-autonomous settler colony like Australia with strong ties to the mother country; nor was

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[6] Andrekos Varnava, ed., *Imperial Expectations and Realities: El Dorados, Utopias and Dystopias* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

[7] Evangelos Zorokastos, 'From Observatory to Dominion: Geopolitics, Colonial Knowledge and the Origins of the British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands, 1797-1822', PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 2018, p. 2.

[8] Grey Papers, 13 August 1849, qtd in Dracato Papanicolas, *The Ionian Islands* (London: Ridgway, 1851), p. 126.

[9] Bruce Knox, 'British Policy and the Ionian Islands, 1847-1864', *English Historical Review,* 99.392 (1984), 503-529 (p. 505).

[10] Darwin, p. 27.

it an extractive state exploiting slave labour like in the Caribbean where Westminster exercised more direct authority. One problem was the Paris Treaty's wording, which did not specify how far protection should extend, and the more power the British tried to wield, the more resistance they excited.[11] In 1855 LHC John Young complained that the Ionians were 'one of the very few, if not the sole dependency of the Crown which views with suspicion and dislike the terms of its connection with England'.[12] In her study of Ionian radicalism, Eleni Calligas summarises the relationship as 'one of mutual mistrust'.[13]

During Bowen's island tour this mistrust emerged as anti-British nationalism. Bowen was hosted in Cephalonia by the hospitable British Resident Charles Sebright, Baron D'Everton, and before midnight on 21 April 1848 they stood on the Residency balcony to watch the procession for Good Friday's Service of Lamentation, Orthodoxy's most emotive event. [14] The Archbishop processed ahead of a flower-decked bier bearing an icon of the dead Christ, while the clergy chanted dirges and Cephalonia's most respected citizens followed solemnly behind. Traditionally the Archbishop paused outside the Residency to offer a prayer for Queen Victoria, and Bowen and the Baron stood ready to receive this grateful tribute, but at mention of the Queen's name an anti-British 'mob' started hissing and shoving. Police tried to keep order, but were stampeded almost into the harbour, along with the clergy and the Archbishop himself. The Archbishop insisted on continuing with the loyal prayer, so the radicals punished him by locking him out of his cathedral and forcing him to strip off his robes ignominiously in the street. The 'despotic' Baron had thirty-three Cephalonians arrested.[15]

Bowen dismissed the riot as a 'little fracas', but he underestimated the growing strength of popular resentment. 1848 was the decisive year when revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity spread from the rest of Europe to the Ionians, and

[11] Robert Holland and Diana Markides, *The British and the Hellenes: Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean 1850-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 16.

[12] Young to Labouchere, 1 Dec 1855, British Library, BM Add MS. 62940.

[13] Eleni Calligas, 'The "Rizospastai" (Radical-Unionists): Politics and Nationalism in the British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands, 1815-1864', PhD Thesis, London School of Economics, 1994, p. 39.

[14] Bowen, Journals, 21 April 1848.

[15] Ibid., 22 April 1848.

volatile Cephalonia, a poor island riven by family feuds and social discontent, saw increasingly violent uprisings. In 1849 LHC Henry Ward tried to stem the bloodshed by clamping down with martial law, a rare step in the British Empire, particularly for a former Whig MP. Ward dispatched 900 British troops who ransacked houses and rounded up innocent people. Around 80 perpetrators were flogged with cat-o-nine-tails, others banished without trial, and twenty-one executed.[16] The unprecedented severity 'brought much odium on Ward's head and made most Cephalonians thoroughly Anglophobe'.[17]

When radical anti-British ideas in the Ionian and Greek press were translated and echoed in British papers, the debate spread from periphery to metropole. Much of mid-nineteenth-century Europe was exploding with a plethora of pamphlets, periodicals, weeklies, dailies and quarterlies, making this 'a profoundly textual era' and 'a new media moment' as significant as the arrival of the internet and social media.[18] This was thanks to immense cultural and technological changes, but in the Ionians it was also due to liberalisation of censorship laws. After the 1848 riots Lord Seaton, Ward's predecessor as LHC, did not clamp down like Austria's authoritarian Hapsburg regime in Italy and Austria but instead granted sweeping constitutional reforms. Elements of press freedom had been introduced elsewhere in the empire such as in India in 1835, and it had caused a furore in the Cape Colony in the 1820s when used to expose the corruption of governor Lord Charles Somerset.[19] In the Ionians it unleashed a long-suppressed hunger for print, with numerous new publications scrutinising the British authorities, criticising institutions, reporting on European revolutions and articulating radical ideas.[20] Ward felt compelled to exonerate himself. In 1851 publisher John Murray received a proposal for a pamphlet, explaining that events had drawn attention to these

[16] Ward to Grey, 17 September 1849, Colonial Office Archives, National Library, CO 136/132.

[17] Michael Pratt, *Britain's Greek Empire* (London: Rex Collings, 1978) p. 135.

[18] Innes Keighren, Charles Withers and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 8; Elizabeth Miller, 'Reading in Review: The Victorian Book Review in the New Media Moment', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 49.4 (2016), 626-642 (p. 626).

[19] J.M. MacKenzie, ''To Enlighten South Africa': The Creation of a Free Press at the Cape in the Early Nineteenth Century' in *Media and the British Empire*, ed. by C. Kaul (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) pp. 20-36 (p. 21).

[20] Calligas, p. 111.

relatively unknown islands, but that the ignorance displayed needed correcting.[21] This marked the beginning of the pamphlet war with which this paper is principally concerned.

The proposal claimed that the pamphlet would

> contain much curious, original and important information – both with regard to this country and to the state of the Levant in general, as I have had access to all the archives and official documents of every sort. Besides, my local knowledge is infinitely greater than that of any other writer on the subject.[22]

Although pamphleteering allowed individuals the freedom to be more scurrilous, abusive and seditious – or more detailed, serious and 'highbrow' – than newspapers and periodicals, John Murray believed newspapers had overtaken the pamphlet's intellectual role so he declined the proposal.[23] It was accepted instead by James Ridgway, a radical publisher noted for his stand on socio-political issues.[24] The pamphlet was entitled *The Ionian Islands Under British Protection* (1851). According to the accepted norm, it was anonymous to protect the author from charges of sedition (punishable by life imprisonment), but George Bowen, the University's vice-chancellor, was swiftly outed as the writer.[25] A fulminating riposte appeared, entitled *The Ionian Islands; What they have lost and suffered under the thirty-five years' administration of the Lord High Commissioners sent to govern them* (1851). The anonymous author was a London-based Ionian lawyer-merchant named George Dracato Papanicolas, who campaigned for the Islands mainly in the radical *Daily News* and Peelite *Morning Chronicle,* and who Bowen identified as Ward's principal assailant in the press. Papanicolas was also published by Ridgway, presumably a commercial decision because now a pamphlet war – good for sales - was underway.

The pamphleteers appear to exemplify the oppositional narrative of 'oppressive coloniser' versus 'radical nationalist'. While Bowen wrote to support British policy and

[21] Bowen to Murray, 6 Jan 1851, John Murray Archive, MS.40136.

[22] Ibid.

[23] George Orwell, *British Pamphleteers*, I (London: Alan Wingate, 1948), p. 7; Murray to Hobhouse, 2 Oct. 1844, JMA, MS.41911, 188.

[24] Ralph Manogue, 'James Ridgway and America', *Early American Literature*, 31.3 (1996), 264-288.

[25] Papanicolas, p. 4.

educate readers in what he considered the truth, Papanicolas claimed he wrote to arouse metropolitan sympathy for those suffering the 'cruelties and tyrannies' perpetrated by the British on this imperial outpost. He argued that the Ionian people had moral justice on their side and were supported by British public opinion: 'all that remains for us to do is to influence that opinion as far as possible, by publishing our remonstrances in the English language'.[26] Thus both authors manipulated the press to their advantage.

The level of vitriol was extreme. Papanicolas denounced Bowen's 'splenetic attack', calling it 'equally malicious, equally false, and, worse than all, equally dull'.[27] Papanicolas's own pamphlet was wittier; he branded Bowen a 'pamphleteering pedagogue' and 'an unripe scholar - of a pedantry that reaches almost a dandyism of philological classicality [...] and the laughing-stock of English as well as Ionian society in Corfu'.[28] Papanicolas called Bowen a liar, signing off:

> You have flourished in newspapers, and spat your spite in pamphlets – you have abused us; in fact, you have done everything but what we pay you to do - *instruct our youth*. May I recommend that you eschew politics and try teaching. [...] If there be any sight in nature more disgusting than a drunken woman, it is that of a *political schoolmaster*.[29]

Bowen accused Papanicolas of being a radical mouthpiece, and Papanicolas retaliated with a libel suit. Bowen unearthed flimsy evidence to prove his case and submitted a Plea of Justification, claiming that his crime was outweighed by the public benefit of exposing Papanicolas as an 'avowed correspondent' of seditious anti-British Ionians.[30] Although Papanicolas was forced to drop the charge, he continued to abuse Bowen in the press almost until he died in 1862.

In many ways, Bowen's pamphlet is evidence of his perpetuation of an oppressive colonial ideology: it reads like a typically Saidian Orientalist text, replete with stereotypes and patronising superiority, even declaring that 'all Orientals have much in

[26] Ibid., p. 157.

[27] Ibid., pp. 144, 112.

[28] Ibid., pp. 29, 142. Bowen acknowledged receipt of Papanicolas's pamphlet. Bowen to Gladstone, 20 February 1852, Gladstone Papers, British Library, Add. MSS, 44371, fos. 194-7.

[29] Papanicolas, p. 158.

[30] Bowen to Murray, 21 February 1853, JMA, MS.40136.

common with children; they are always either in ecstasy or misery'.[31] For theorists like Homi K. Bhabha such rhetoric is central to colonial discourse, denoting megalomania or paranoia that produces imagined constructions of cultural and national alterity, which were used to define Britain's self-image by creating a contrasting other in order to propagate imperialism.[32] Bowen underlined the superiority of British institutions by repeating the construction of Ionian identity familiar in British colonial discourse as diminished from its classical glory by 400 years of corruption and misrule by Venice.[33] He construed the Ionians as politically naive and dependent on the British to teach them how to govern themselves, articulating the civilising mission – 'the real moral warrant of Victorian imperialism' - that was shared across Britain's outposts and at home.[34] As their chief educator he embodied that relationship. However, Bowen declared, Ionian insolence had undermined British protection and stirred up Hellenic sentiment and discontent.[35] He cited 'ardent radical' Panagin Xidian, Cephalonia's new head of Public Instruction, testing the proficiency of village pupils by asking them to write: 'The Turks ought to be driven out of the Greek provinces on the mainland, and the English out of the Ionian Islands by the united efforts of the whole Greek race'.[36] Bowen felt personally and patriotically insulted.

Papanicolas retaliated by accusing Bowen of insulting the Ionian character as 'degenerating from our ancestors' and libelling the country.[37] He resisted Bowen's paternalism, sneering at his 'ever-ready cane for the little boys (the Ionians), and the polite praise and perpetual goodness of the fathers and mothers and guardians (the English officials)'.[38] Indeed, the way Papanicolas deconstructed Bowen's assumptions, motivations and modes of discourse and interrogated the implications of Anglo-Ionian power relationships makes it tempting to frame him as a proto-postcolonial critic, writing nearly 130 years before Said.

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[31] Bowen, *The Ionian Islands Under British Protection* (*IIUBP*), p. 122.

[32] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Oxford: Routledge, 1994).

[33] Ibid., p. 4.

[34] Darwin, p. 61.

[35] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 9.

[36] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[37] Papanicolas, pp. 4, 158.

[38] Papanicolas, p. 4. Parentheses in original.

Nonetheless, despite the jousting, the conflict between 'colonial oppressor' and 'radical nationalist' was more nuanced than appears. Bowen admitted that foreign rule never inspired universal good-will, but argued with some justification that the English administration, whatever its defects, was the best government in the Mediterranean. Mainland Greeks frequently appealed for British protection from pirates which their own government could not supply, and after the Cephalonian riots Ward was thanked for restoring order by many leading Ionians.[39] This speaks to the complexity of Ionian politics, which varied from island to island, class to class and family to family. The landed feudal elite, particularly conservatives with vested interests keen to retain their grip on power, were generally pro-British. Papanicolas belonged to a more progressive circle of Ionian intellectuals, lawyers and politicians, many of whom had been educated abroad and active in Europe's political upheavals since the 1830s, returning home radicalised. This influential Liberal circle campaigned for extended suffrage, socio-political and economic reform, and press freedom after years of censorship, with the long-term goal of independent self-representation under Westminster's umbrella, like in New Zealand and Australia.[40] However, in Cephalonia more extreme radical nationalists, many of them ambitious but frustrated middle-class professionals, were emerging from their ranks. While Papanicolas and his cohort came to be seen as 'old' reformist liberals or radicals, he termed this new breed 'ultra liberals'.[41] They demanded not constitutional reforms that would pacify the population into maintaining the status quo, but socialist politics and national self-determination that stipulated an end to the protectorate altogether, and *enosis*, union with Greece.[42]

Papanicolas dropped his libel case, but argued that far from being a seditious radical, he had in fact been repudiated by the radicals for his moderation.[43] His stance was further complicated by the fact that while he attacked the protectorate's governance and even questioned the 1815 Paris Treaty's validity, thereby challenging the protectorate's moral and practical foundations, he simultaneously denied being

[39] Ward to Grey, 3 April 1850, CO 136/135; D'Everton to Ward, 19 Oct 1851, CO 136/140; Ward to Grey, 16 September 1849, CO 136/132.

[40] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 31.

[41] Papanicolas, p. 126.

[42] Calligas, pp. 77, 103, 143.

[43] Papanicolas, p. 121.

anti-British or even anti-colonial. Indeed, Papanicolas conceded that he had benefited from British colonialism in being a protégé of the philhellenic Lord Guilford, who founded the Ionian University of which Bowen was vice-chancellor, and where, ironically, many anti-British pro-*enosis* views were formulated. Papanicolas agreed with the 'ultra liberals' that 'the Ionian Islands in "bonds" to Great Britain, and side by side with Greece a free kingdom, are a visible anachronism', but he rejected their confrontational tactics and uncompromising opposition to the protectorate.[44] Although Papanicolas resisted Bowen's patronising superiority, he nevertheless trusted that under Britain's shelter Ionian commerce would expand, institutions flourish, and education increase.[45] This seems contradictory, but as Holland and Markides argue, the notion of Britain as an idealised Greek patron, manifested by British support for the War of Independence and financial and political involvement in the foundation of the new Greek kingdom, was central to ongoing Anglo-Greek relations.[46]

Indeed, it was not British colonialism that Papanicolas opposed so much as maladministration by the 'pestiferous' individual bureaucrats sent to rule over them. As he expostulated:

> Mr. Bowen is a fresh leech. He is new at his work; but just come over amongst us; and can bite and suck freely at his salary, supposing all the while that he is doing the patient good. The old leeches of the Bureaucracy, however, know better. They find the draught comes slowly, that the patient is exhausted, and, therefore, they are getting ready to drop off.[47]

Nevertheless, even this insult is not as straightforward as it seems, because Bowen credited leeching with saving his life when he nearly died of malaria in Athens in 1848. To Bowen leeches symbolised recovery. Britain, he hoped, would continue to cure the Ionians of corruption and folly as long as was deemed necessary, before departing.
This signals the complexity of imperial politics, wherein the colonial versus radical dichotomy did not always run along national lines but was disrupted by the individual personalities and politics that were woven into the global network of influence in

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 12.

[46] Holland and Markides, p. 6.

[47] Papanicolas, p. 136.

Britain's world-system, as Darwin outlines. Papanicolas blamed Ward for inciting unrest, for example, but Bowen claimed Papanicolas was seeking revenge on Ward for humiliating him by refusing him a job.[48] Bowen blamed the unrest on the Ionian press, accusing it of inciting seditious pro-Hellenic and anti-British radical sentiments with 'unfair' and 'pert' insults that in Ireland – currently embroiled in the militant separatist Young Ireland movement – would have had the authors clapped in gaol.[49] Papanicolas attributed this to Bowen's revenge on journalists who had humiliated and ridiculed him for publishing a pedantic and patronising Greek grammar.[50]

Bowen's criticism was aimed chiefly at the man who liberalised Ionian censorship laws and therefore allowed these debates to take place: Lord Seaton, Ward's predecessor as LHC. Bowen conceded that constitutional reforms were necessary, but declared Seaton's to be 'crude and injudicious', going further than the most ardent demagogue had hoped.[51] It is a paradox that Bowen, a liberal-leaning don, should deride the liberal reforms of a Tory general. Indeed, the reforms were surprising for a Peninsular War veteran and later Field Marshal: many of Wellington's generals were employed as colonial governors and most were anxious to prevent the spread of seditious European Jacobinism. However, Bowen also detested Seaton personally, perhaps because Seaton thwarted his intentions towards Seaton's daughter.[52] Bowen criticised Seaton for enacting his reforms in a flurry before he resigned, leaving Ward to pick up the pieces; Papanicolas criticised Ward for trying to reverse Seaton's reforms.[53] To support Ward Bowen sneered at Seaton's use of Greek, claiming it was unused by 'the gentlemen of Corfu […] [except] as a badge of national, that is, of *anti-English* sentiments.'[54] Papanicolas scoffed at the contradiction that a man should dismiss a language he was paid to teach in a university founded to foster its use.[55]

Yet Bowen's position was as complicated as Papanicolas's, and his negative stereotyping was contradicted by his genuine love of Hellenic culture: 'We envy neither

[48] Ibid., p. 2; Bowen, *IIUBP* , p. 89.

[49] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 112.

[50] Papanicolas, p. 144.

[51] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 60.

[52] Bowen, Journals, 1 October 1848.

[53] Papanicolas, p. 4.

[54] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 47.

[55] Papanicolas, p. 48.

the head nor heart of the man […] who is ever seeking for motes in the bright eye of Hellas. For our own part we love the country and the race'.[56] Papanicolas dismissed this as hypocrisy, but an intertextual reading of Bowen's pamphlet and journals demonstrates that his passion was genuine, and surpassed conventional nineteenth-century admiration.[57] He did not share the disappointment of many philhellenes on encountering the realities of modern Greece, and instead he often connected across socio-cultural boundaries with sympathy and respect.[58] He travelled throughout Greece and European Turkey (today's northern Greece), wrote the scholarly *Murray Handbook to Greece* with a fresh emphasis on modern history, married an Ionian, and was proud of his fluent modern Greek.[59] While his love of Greece did not necessarily preclude a colonial perspective, this does demonstrate a complicated relationship that nuances the purely oppositional narrative.

Apparent contradictions in Bowen's pamphlet are further explained by his conflicted identity as both representative of an increasingly oppressive power and life-long champion of Greek national liberty. His earliest memory was of the Greek and allied triumph at the 1827 Battle of Navarino that brought the Greek state into being, which he believed triggered his passion for Greece.[60] As such, he was a mid-century heir to the Romantics, whose contribution to Greek independence and the emerging ideology of nationalism was based on ancient Greek culture, philosophy and politics.[61] Yet Bowen supported Greek nationalism when it meant ousting the Ottomans, but not when it challenged the British.

Additional contradictions were caused by the fact that Bowen was writing less what he believed than what he was paid to write. In his private journals, for example, he eulogised the bloodless 1843 constitutional coup in Athens as the epitome of liberalism, praising it for limiting the powers of autocratic King Otto and introducing a

[56] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 141.

[57] Papanicolas p. 16. In his journals Bowen wrote frequently of his love and sympathy for Greece and reprimanded those who spoke against it.

[58] Papanicolas, p. 105.

[59] See Helena Drysdale, 'George Bowen and his 1854 Handbook to Greece', *Romance, Revolution and Reform*, 4 (2022) 10-34.

[60] Bowen, Journals, 23 August 1847.

[61] Roderick Beaton, 'Introduction', in *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797-1896)*, pp. 1-18 (p. 3).

degree of democratic representative government in Greece. Ironically, however, although the coup was reputedly orchestrated by the British, its effect was to encourage anti-British dissent in the Ionians because it made union with Greece a more attractive prospect for those whose own constitution was condemned even by their own LHC Lord Seaton as 'indefensible'.[62] Rather than protecting the Ionians, Britain had come to seem like 'the frustrater of national aspirations'.[63] Consequently, for all his private enthusiasm, in his pamphlet Bowen supported Ward's anti-radicalism by decrying the 1843 Athens coup as 'imported from the manufactories of […] Bentham, and such-like liberty-mongers'.[64] Thus he was pulled in opposing directions by his Romantic liberal sensibility, and his need to serve imperial elements of his career as the protectorate's mouthpiece.

Power dynamics between Bowen and Papanicolas – 'protector' and 'protected' - were further blurred by the way each manifested a combination of inferiority and superiority. Thomas Gallant examines reciprocal Anglo-Ionian misunderstandings and misrepresentations, making analogies with British treatment of the Irish: both presented a dilemma for their rulers in being white, Christian Europeans – neither entirely 'us' nor 'them' - and both were stereotyped as heavy drinkers, idle, mendacious and violent.[65] The analogy seems apt for Bowen, who was born in Donegal, son of an Anglican vicar, so arguably part of the colonial elite in Ireland as well as in the Ionians. However, Bowen's journals reveal that his relatively humble upbringing gave him an inferiority complex, which Papanicolas exploited by mocking his Hibernian pronunciation of Greek.[66] Bowen was conscious that although he held a position of authority in the Ionians, his own culture was outshone by the glories of ancient Greece, and Papanicolas exploited this too: 'To hear this pedant prate to us about liberty, one would think that

[62] Pratt, p. 131.

[63] Pratt, p. 155.

[64] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 32.

[65] Thomas Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity and Power in the Mediterranean* (Paris: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

[66] Papanicolas, p. 114. Bowen had nothing good to say about the 'Green Isle', and having been educated in England considered himself English. He described an evening in the Athens Agora with a Greek officer who had been ADC to King Otto and who spent two hours bemoaning Greece's present conditions. Bowen reflected on the irony that his own humble country was unheard of when Greece was at its height. Journals, 14 August 1848.

the Greeks had not known it before the first Celt had risen from the mist and mud of his early birth – had never fought for and won it with their blood, even within the last quarter of a century'.[67] Thus Papanicolas compared Ireland's continued colonial subjugation to Britain with Greece's triumphant liberation after the 1821-27 War of Independence, a touchstone of Greek national pride. At the same time, Papanicolas complained that the British elite took all the best jobs and made the Ionians feel inferior, but when Bowen snobbishly dismissed him as 'brother of a shopkeeper at Corfu', Papanicolas retorted that his family lacked estates but was 'of the purest Greek blood,' having proudly resided in Leukadia for 380 years and previously on the Greek mainland.[68]

All of this points towards their nuanced relationships with Greek nationalism, which lay at the heart of the debate but also helped to bridge disparities between them. Knox argues that 'one can hardly overstate the degree of incomprehension with which 1850s Englishmen encountered "nationalism", if by that we mean something apparently distinct from some desire to achieve a free constitutional system'.[69] However, Bowen was unusual in not only understanding but sympathising with Hellenic nationalism. He recognised that most Ionians considered themselves Greek 'in the three chief elements of nationality, — in blood, religion and language'.[70] This was a relatively new construction of 'homeland' not as birthplace but as a more amorphous imagined political community, as famously configured by Benedict Anderson.[71] However, there were subtleties in Ionian relationships with Greek nationalism which complicated the radical nationalist stance. Many leading pro-Greek Ionian radicals were Hellenised Venetians, some of whom spoke Italian as their mother tongue, while Greek – still largely the language of landless peasants, particularly in Corfu, and not the official

[67] Papanicolas, p. 63.

[68] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 88; Papanicolas, p. 114.

[69] Bruce Knox, 'The British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands, 1847-1859, and the Dispersion of a Foreign Elite', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 10.1/2 (2000), 107-124 (pp. 111-12).

[70] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 126.

[71] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism,* rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991).

Ionian language until 1851 – was itself divided into formal Katharevousa and popular Dimotiki.[72]

If language was not a straightforward element of Greek nationalism, neither was religion, and Bowen understood this too. Unlike many European radicals, the Ionians equated their church not with political oppression but with national emancipation. As Holland and Markides note, British prestige and Hellenic nationalism both 'fed on a diet of symbols conducive to their respective senses of power and authority'.[73] That Bowen recognised this was demonstrated when, on visiting the prisoners after the Good Friday riot, he advised the Baron that it would be diplomatic to try them not for impugning British sovereignty but for insulting their own religion, an offence in the Ionian penal code generally punishable by excommunication.[74] However, Bowen misunderstood the nuances. When the Greek kingdom severed ties with the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1833, influential and often radical Ionian priests chose union with Greece and the new autocephalous Greek church, while the Archbishops and Bishops remained with the protectorate and the Patriarch. Therefore, it was not their own church that the radicals insulted but the Archbishop himself, who was a detested British appointment. By humiliating the Archbishop the radicals paradoxically upheld their church's dignity and independence and garnered more respect from their compatriots.[75]

Bowen's response to radical nationalism was influenced by personal experience. After the 1848 Good Friday uprising Bowen travelled to Austria and was trapped in the Siege of Vienna. His is the only first-hand English account, and it was published in the *Times*.[76] Appalled by what he saw as the savagery of the radical 'mob', he feared similar violence spreading to the Ionians and believed certain restrictions were necessary for peace. 'Now in Germany, France & Italy, the wisest and best friends of the people are owning what shame & sorrow that even liberty must be sacrificed to preserve civilization', he wrote.[77] Bowen privately deplored the gunboat diplomacy manifested

[72] Socrates D. Petmezas, 'From Privileged Outcasts to Power Players: The 'Romantic' Redefinition of the Hellenic Nation in the Mid-Nineteenth Century' in *The Making of Modern Greece*, pp. 123-36 (p. 127).

[73] Holland and Markides, p. 18.

[74] Thomas Gallant, 'Peasant Ideology and Excommunication for a Crime in a Colonial Context: The Ionian Islands (Greece), 1817-1864', *Journal of Social History*, 23.3 (1990), 485-512 (p. 487).

[75] Calligas, p. 88.

[76] 'The State of Vienna', *Times*, 22 November 1848, p. 5.

[77] Bowen, Journal, 26 October 1848.

in the notorious 1850 Don Pacifico affair, but shared Palmerston's desire to maintain Europe's balance of power. Darwin argues that Palmerston was full of bluster but actually nervous of events in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, his first priority being to preserve the 1815 gains and the geopolitical equilibrium and prevent the rise of European hegemony, particularly of France.[78] Britain provided stability in the Mediterranean that, if shaken, could cause all of Europe to tremble.[79] Bowen recommended a clampdown in the Ionians like in Austria:

> There are two points which should never be lost sight of in dealing with a large portion of this people. 1. That they hate the English Government. 2. That they fear it. It is only by working on the latter feeling that the effects of the former can be counteracted. A foreign Government can never seek to be loved without putting itself first into a condition to be respected.[80]

While this exemplifies the 'oppressive coloniser' trope, it is interesting to note how strongly Bowen's attitude was influenced by his own experience as well as his ideological commitments. Bowen was also afraid for his own future: threats to the protectorate could cost him if not his life then his job – as it transpired.

Their differences notwithstanding, Bowen and Papanicolas were united in endorsing the popular rhetoric that modern inhabitants of greater Greece descended from ancient Greeks. Despite his experience in Vienna, Bowen remained sympathetic towards Greek nationalism, partly because Greek and Ionian radicals differed from their revolutionary European counterparts in not trying to forge a new society but instead espousing a conscious restoration of a civilisation two thousand years old – one Bowen deeply admired.[81] The notion of reinvention underpinned the irredentist *Megali Idea*, the great idea to reunite all Hellenic peoples, which lay at the heart of the Greek

[78] Darwin, p. 5.

[79] Robert Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London: Penguin, 2013).

[80] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 139.

[81] Beaton, p. 3. Beaton contextualises Greek exceptionalism and the marginalisation of modern Greece in the historiography of European nationalism. See also Effi Gazi, 'Revisiting Religion and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Greece' in *The Making of Modern Greece*, pp. 95-106.

kingdom's foreign policy.[82] Both Bowen and Papanicolas supported the desire for 'national regeneration', which had survived 400 years of 'shame and slavery' under Ottoman and Venetian rule, and which Bowen believed was as intense as the Jewish desire for Israel.[83] However, that too was muddied by individual approaches. Bowen feared it was being used by the Greek government to 'foment insurrection,' and he distinguished the 'natural and laudable aspiration for a union of all Greeks into one Greek state' from 'the morbid clamour for immediate annexation to the existing kingdom of Greece. The latter is the cry of a faction; the former is the inevitable instinct of nationality'.[84] Papanicolas denied King Otto's involvement in Ionian unrest, but echoed Bowen's distinction between factionalism and nationality, albeit using different terminology. Indeed the *Megali Idea* was subject to different Ionian interpretations and disagreements: while some radical unionists sought the establishment of a pan-Hellenic government based on the principle of equality, which would therefore be republican and involve deposing King Otto, others disagreed. Papanicolas did not make his views clear, but both parties concurred that the Greek monarchy was a foreign imposition, and any future form of government should be determined by the people themselves.[85]

For all his anti-radical bluster, Bowen proposed a surprising solution to the Ionian question which traversed the boundary between 'colonial oppressor' and 'radical nationalist'. Lord John Russell had previously criticised the Ionians as a source of irritation and expense and proposed handing them to Austria.[86] Bowen's suggestion was more finely drawn. He argued that Britain should accept that it had lost legitimacy and power and should satisfy the Greek spirit of nationality by surrendering the southern islands – 'broken fragments of Hellas' – to Greece. Meanwhile, he proposed annexing the more northerly and stable Venice/Albania-orientated Corfu, the British administrative base, as a full-blown British colony along with Paxos.[87] This would remove the 'troublesome' nationalists in the southern islands, while as colonies Corfu

[82] Paschalis Kitromilides, 'Paradigm Nation: The Study of Nationalism and the 'Canonization' of Greece' in *The Making of Modern Greece,* pp. 21-31 (p. 26).

[83] Bowen, *IIUBP*, pp. 126, 131.

[84] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 126.

[85] Calligas, p. 300.

[86] Grey to Russell, 9 May 1848, Grey Papers, Durham University, GRE/B122/4/36; Russell to Grey, 9 May 1848, GRE/B122/4/35; Russell to Grey, 15 May 1848, GRE/B122/4/37.

[87] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 127.

and Paxos 'would be enriched by the English capitalists and settlers' and have privileged access to British markets, while their citizens would be allowed into British professions and the military. Meanwhile Britain would retain its strategic base and commercial hub.[88] However, Bowen accepted that this plan was unlikely to be accepted by the other Great Powers, given that according to the Paris Treaty England had to deal with the islands as a whole or not at all.

If by recognising and submitting to radical nationalism Bowen's proposal complicates his role as colonial oppressor, Papanicolas's response is equally unexpected. Far from seizing the opportunity to liberate the Ionians, he was appalled. This was not because he opposed the plan to divide up the Ionian Islands, nor the plan to annexe Corfu, but because although he sympathised with 'ultra liberals' and supported the *Megali Idea*, the reality of union with Greece was not appealing. As if he and Bowen had exchanged roles, he fumed:

> Does he [Bowen] suppose that a population of 260,000, far in advance, whether wealth, commerce, or civilization be considered, of the new kingdom of Greece, are willing to unite themselves for the present to a nation of yet undeveloped resources, overwhelmed with debts?[89]

Papanicolas predicted that by joining the Greek state the Ionians would turn into a provincial backwater. He and other 'old' reformist radicals sought independence, not severance, and constitutional reform under Britain's aegis that would, when the time was right, lead to *enosis*.[90] The difference between them and the radical unionists was how and when to achieve it. 'The question can only be one of time, convenience, and prudence', he argued.[91] In that sense Papanicolas and Bowen agreed. As Bowen put it so sonorously, 'The long silent voice of patriotism and nationality is heard once more […] Such are the feelings,—noble and generous in themselves,—on which the agitators have so successfully worked to excite their countrymen against foreign rule'.[92] But while

[88] Ibid.; Paschalidi, p. 278.

[89] Papanicolas, p. 155.

[90] Ibid., p. 121.

[91] Ibid., p. 126.

[92] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 31.

Bowen proposed a solution that appeared to be both a capitulation and a power grab, Papanicolas took a more cautious approach of watching and waiting.

At first sight, reaction to the pamphlets seemed to run along British-coloniser-versus-Ionian-radical lines. Bowen's pamphlet was read in the Ionian Islands where he was satirised in the press for his presumption and pomposity, the satires helpfully translated by Papanicolas in his pamphlet.[93] Meanwhile Bowen told Murray that British officials in the Ionians had thanked him for establishing 'the case of truth and English policy' in the Levant, an opinion shared by Lord Stratford (Stratford Canning) as well as former LHC Howard Douglas 'and other good judges in England'.[94] Bowen's pamphlet was quoted in parliament by Colonial Secretary John Pakington in defence of Ward and British policy; Bowen boasted that it had become 'quite the text book of the Colonial Office on the subject'.[95] However, these boundaries were not clear-cut because Britain's pluralistic society had always included an anti-imperialist minority; Papanicolas's pamphlet was also favourably quoted in parliament by radical MP Joseph Hume, who had visited the Ionians and since the 1820s had been vocal in attacks on the imperial establishment and 'old corruption'.[96] Ward had offered $1000 for the leading insurgents, dead or alive, which caused outrage as this was contrary to the English presumption of innocence, and Hume nicknamed him 'Dead or Alive Ward.'[97] Hume likened Ward to the despotic Hapsburgs, and echoed Papanicolas in demanding that the government send out a commission of enquiry into Ward's actions.[98]

Other responses were not straightforward and underline the power of both the press and the interplay of individual egos and ambitions in the broader network of the British world-system. Pamphlets were seldom reviewed, but John Murray, who was creating space in the publishing market to reach as wide an audience as possible, reinforced Bowen's position in the colonial establishment by commissioning a glowing 37-page reprise of his pamphlet in the prestigious *Quarterly Review*.[99] The review was

[93] Papanicolas, pp. 145-150.

[94] Bowen to Murray, 8 December 1852, JMA, MS.40136.

[95] Hansard, HC Deb 05 April 1852 vol 120 cc718-34; Bowen to Murray, 22 April 1852, JMA, MS.40136.

[96] Zoe Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-1845: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 42.

[97] *Hansard*, HC Deb 09 August 1850 vol 113 cc976-1005, p. 998.

[98] Ibid., p. 181.

[99] 'Ionian Administration', *Quarterly Review,* xci, September 1852.

anonymous, according to the norm. Anonymous reviewing was criticised for permitting dishonest 'puffing' for friends' books, which led Victorian critics to adopt 'a disinterested, impersonal voice to ward off doubts about critical impartiality'.[100] The *Quarterly* review included one criticism: that the pamphlet's author had drawn too positive a portrait of the Ionian population, while the *Times* had published a 'sterner but truer' picture: 'We took under our aegis a people who combined Italian crime with Greek cunning; who were strangers to private honesty or public virtue; who were remarkable for strong passions, dark superstitions, ignorance and laziness'.[101] However, Bowen's discussions with Murray and receipt of £35 from editor John Lockhart reveal that the reviewer was none other than Bowen himself.[102] Far from guaranteeing his objectivity, anonymity provided a mask behind which he could promote his pamphlet and lend it the *Quarterly's* authority. The *Times* article was also anonymous, but the style, tone, content and rhetoric are familiar: Papanicolas was convinced the author was Bowen.[103]

As we have seen, Bowen used the press to pursue a vendetta not only against Papanicolas and Ionian journalists, but also against Seaton, his former employer. He undermined Seaton's reforms in order to support Ward's attempt to reverse them, arguing that they were a knee-jerk reaction to the 1848 uprisings and a last-minute bid for popularity that left Ward to pick up the pieces. Calligas refutes Bowen's accusation, arguing that Seaton's reforms linked in with the agenda for devolved representative self-government on the Westminster model that he had brought from Canada where he had previously been Governor, and were designed to appease the reformist radicals like Papanicolas and shore up the protectorate.[104] Knox on the other hand calls Bowen's criticisms intemperate but deserved.[105] There is truth in both interpretations: Seaton's well-meant reforms were popular with many Ionians, but they did lead ultimately to the

[100] Miller, p. 632.

[101] 'Editorial', *Times*, 17 September 1849, p. 4.

[102] Bowen to Murray, 12 Oct 1852, JMA, MS.40136.

[103] Papanicolas, pp. xxxvii, 146.

[104] Calligas, 'Lord Seaton's Reforms in the Ionian Islands, 1843-48: A Race With Time', *European History Quarterly*, 24 (1994), 7-29 (p. 24).

[105] Knox, *The British Protectorate,* p. 114.

demise of the protectorate. As Sakis Gekas asserts, they paved the way for the radical unionist politics that ultimately ended it.[106]

Retaliation came thundering back in a lengthy anonymous review of Bowen's pamphlet in the *Edinburgh Review,* Whig rival to the Tory *Quarterly Review.*[107] This dismissed Bowen's pamphlet for having been dictated by vindictive feelings, and defended Seaton's reforms, declaring that his only fault had been to employ the frightful University vice-chancellor. Within weeks of arriving in Corfu, Bowen had 'checked, interrupted and disturbed [...] the educationary current' and was universally agreed to be unfit for the job.[108] Bowen disgusted the Ionians with his 'extravagant and uncontrollable garrulity and absurdity', which cost him the respect necessary to teach. Seaton, it transpires, wrote the review himself.[109] Again we see the power of the individual at work, undermining the straightforward dichotomy of unified colonial powers against radical nationalists.

Partly because of his personal support for Ward, in 1854 Bowen was promoted to Chief Secretary. Anglo-Ionian relations continued to deteriorate and in 1857 Ward's successor John Young sent the Colonial Office a secret dispatch arguing that Britain's position had become untenable and that to prevent more embarrassment the southernmost islands should be ceded to Greece, and Corfu and Paxos annexed by Britain. It was a reprise of Bowen's pamphlet. Bowen added two pages of his own and claimed that 'all men of substance & respectability in this island [Corfu] desire [annexation to Britain] in their hearts'.[110] Corfu's Ionian Attorney General Demitrios Curcumelli concurred and sent a similar secret dispatch.[111] Although supported by Palmerston, Gladstone rejected the proposal because of its potential complications, and the fact that he regarded possessing territory beyond British shores without strong reason as disadvantageous.[112] Colonial Secretary Edward Bulwer Lytton dismissed the

[106] Sakis Gekas, *Xenocracy: State, Class and Colonialism in the Ionian Islands, 1815-1864* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2016), p. 15.

[107] 'The Ionian Islands Under British Protection', *Edinburgh Review*, CXCVII, Jan-April 1853, pp. 41-87.

[108] Ibid., pp. 73, 75.

[109] Knox, *The British Protectorate*, p. 114.

[110] Bowen to Merivale, 30 Aug 1858, CO 136/161.

[111] Knox, *The British Protectorate*, p. 115.

[112] Gladstone to Bowen, 2 Feb 1855, BM MSS, qtd in Temperley, p. 50, and Add MSS 44530.

proposal, believing that the radical nationalists would be appeased by reforms.[113] He persuaded Gladstone, a philhellene, classical scholar, lover of political freedom and currently out of office, to visit the Ionians to assess the situation and resolve issues of bad governance with Bowen as his escort.[114] But while Gladstone was en route, Bowen and Young's secret dispatch was leaked to the *Daily News.* Publication fell 'like a thunderbolt', outraging unionists who wanted Corfu to be included in any cession, and protectionists who wanted to retain the status quo but with reforms.[115] Gladstone was embarrassed, Young vilified, and Bowen blamed by both sides. Bowen's nemesis Papanicolas derided him in the *Morning Chronicle* as a 'silly though malicious mover of mischief […] holding a high appointment, into which he has been foisted by peculiar patronage in a manner most offensive to the Ionian people'.[116]

However, although evidently still at personal loggerheads, again Bowen and Papanicolas were not as divided along adversarial lines as might appear. Ward's successor John Young was surprised by how often Bowen's thoughts and inclinations turned to Greece.[117] Young conceded that it was natural in someone who had studied, talked and written about Greece so extensively, but nonetheless criticised Bowen's *'couleur de rose* views of Greece and Grecians'.[118] Bowen attempted to unite the two sides by marrying the daughter of Candiano Roma, the President of the Ionian Senate. However, Young, who had encouraged this dynastic marriage, now complained that Bowen was too closely entwined with 'a numerous needy family actively engaged in the struggles'.[119] Bowen's erstwhile friend Edward Lear accused him of becoming 'the verist tool of Greek factionaries', and nicknamed him 'the sieve' for leaking government measures to the Ionians.[120] Lear dreaded losing his Ionian home should the islands be surrendered to Greece, and railed against Bowen: 'Every effort is being made by the Gks to use their wretched tool as much as possible […] - & if the madness of statesmen

[113] Holland and Markides, p. 19.

[114] Knox, *The British Protectorate*, p. 118.

[115] Young to Carnarvon, 23 Nov 1858, Carnarvon Papers, BL, Add MS 60783.

[116] 5 August 1857, CO 136/160.

[117] Young to Labouchere, 23 Dec 1856, BM Add MSS 62940.

[118] Young to Labouchere, 20 April 1856, BM Add MSS 62940.

[119] Young to Labouchere 10 Aug 1857, BM Add MSS 62940.

[120] Lear to Fortescue, 11 Jan 1857; 1 May 1857, Fortescue Papers, Somerset Heritage, DD/SH 337.

or rather their indifference, allows him to stay on here, he will be forced to cause every English influence to cease & he will end by aiding the Gk gang'.[121]

Gladstone felt compelled to demonstrate that union with Greece was out of the question, so in 1859 sacrificed Bowen and Young. They were sacked, and dispatched as far away as possible, Bowen to govern Queensland, and Young to govern New South Wales. Bowen asked Gladstone to present his move as a promotion, because he feared the Ionians (doubtless Papanicolas in particular) would claim he was punished for having married one of *them,* and use it to attack Britain for being anti-Ionian. Gladstone found this credible, given that 'some not unimportant persons here make it a point not to admit an Ionian within their doors'.[122] Thus Bowen's history demonstrates the important role of individuals in shifting global spheres of influence.

No one, however, was appeased. Calligas shows that in the late 1850s Ionian radicalism placed less emphasis on socio-political reform than on pure unionism, thereby boosting its popularity across social classes. The radical nationalist minority grew louder than the moderate majority, sidelining 'old' reformist radicals like Papanicolas who opposed *enosis* but were nevertheless still considered heroes 'by a rather bewildered popular following'.[123] Gekas argues that the ten-year battle for union owed more to the constitutional struggle than the 'rather timid' Ionian mobilisation; this was about attitudes rather than actions. [124] The Ionian attitude was that any government was welcome, constitutional or not, so long as it was Greek, and in 1864 the final LHC Henry Storks surrendered to nationalism and ceded all the islands to Greece.

To conclude, the publications examined here led to an international spat, tarnished reputations, increased hostility between two nations and caused the expulsion of the LHC and his Chief Secretary. In an early form of decolonisation, they hastened the independence of one state from a much larger bloc and its union with a much smaller and less powerful 'mother country', thereby helping to shape the development of the British empire and the Greek nation, influencing British-Greek relations, and contributing to the evolution of nineteenth-century Europe. In his pamphlet Bowen had predicted that in the end the Ionian question would come down

[121] Lear to Fortescue, 18 June 1858, DD/SH 337.

[122] Gladstone to Newcastle, 25 Nov 1858, BM Add MSS 44550.

[123] Calligas, *Rizospastai*, p. 1.

[124] Gekas, pp. 2, 13.

to money: 'The cool, calculating genius of Great Britain will always weigh with careful anxiety all questions affecting her commerce'.[125] However, equally significant in this case was the power of the press, politics and people. The pamphlets demonstrate the growing political and moral power of nationalism and the press, and connections between them. Above all, they articulate the complexities of the clash between 'protector' and 'protected', which did not always conform to a simple narrative of 'oppressive coloniser' versus 'radical nationalist', and remind us of how unmapped and personality-driven geopolitics can be.

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[125] Bowen, *IIUBP*, p. 138.

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Romance, Revolution & Reform

Jewish-American Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century: A Case Study of Anarchist Radicalisation in New York City

FRANK JACOB

ABSTRACT: Isidore Wisotsky was a young Jewish immigrant to the United States at the end of the long nineteenth century. Having arrived to live the American Dream in New York City, this young Jewish man, who had left not only Eastern Europe but also parts of his family's identity behind, became radicalised amid the spatial and temporal context of the city. Wisotsky became an anarchist. The extent to which New York City and a particular politically radical Jewish element played a role in this transformative development will be discussed in detail in this article. It will show that nineteenth-century radicalism in the United States was not imported, but rather created by the exploitative means of a capitalist industrial complex that shattered the hopes and dreams of many first-generation immigrants, as Wisotsky's case represents. I will rely on Wisotsky's autobiographical notes as an ego document that serves as a contextual frame within which the story of Jewish immigration to, and radicalisation in, the United States can be told.[1]

KEYWORDS: Anarchism; Jewish Anarchism; Jewish Radicalism; New York City

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IN THE YEARS before the United States entered the First World War in 1917, New York City, as historian Tony Michels remarks, 'could be considered the [...] unofficial capital' of the Jewish labour movement.[2] Jewish political radicalism seemed to flourish in the United

[1] I would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers as well as the journal's editorial board members, whose invaluable comments and remarks helped a lot to improve the present article.

[2] Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 6.

States metropolis.[3] Jack Jacobs, who has worked extensively on the Jewish Left in the United States, emphasises that 'Jews played highly visible roles, over an extended period, in the leadership of leftist movements—including socialist, communist, and anarchist organizations—around the world'.[4] In reference to this Jewish influence within the American Left, a stereotype was gaining ground from the late nineteenth century, one that categorised Jews as radicals from abroad, particularly since around two million Jews from Eastern Europe reached the United States metropolis between 1880 and 1924.[5] This 'foreign menace' stereotype was particularly prominent during the Red Scare after the Russian Revolution of 1917, when foreign radicals, and especially anarchists, were considered to be a threat to the integrity of the United States.[6] After their arrival on American shores, 500,000 Jewish immigrants stayed in the city of New York and would become an essential part of its radical milieu, being employed 'in the hyper-exploitative sweatshops of the city's booming garment industry' that acted as 'ideal breeding grounds for radicalism'.[7] Considering the political impact of the Jewish immigrants, the question of where and how these new citizens of New York City had been radicalised is of particular interest, especially since their political radicalism was regularly depicted as something foreign by the authorities and the mass media and, eventually, in the broader public opinion as well. In the case of the radicalisation of Jewish immigrants in the United States metropolis, to cite Arthur Liebman, '[a] theory seeking to explain the politics of this minority cannot rely on one factor or several

[3] On Jewish radicalism in general, see *Jewish Radicalisms: Historical Perspectives on a Phenomenon of Global Modernity*, ed. by Frank Jacob and Sebastian Kunze (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019).

[4] Jack Jacobs, 'Introduction', in *Jews and Leftist Politics: Judaism, Israel, Antisemitism, and Gender*, ed. by Jack Jacobs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 1-28 (p. 1).

[5] Anarchists themselves, Jewish or not, were often depicted or imagined as terrorists, especially within the popular culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Mike Finn, *Debating Anarchism: A History of Action, Ideas and Movements* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 3.

[6] Frank Jacob, 'The Russian Revolution, the American Red Scare, and the Forced Exile of Transnational Anarchists: Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman and their Soviet Experience', in *Yearbook of Transnational History: Volume 4*, ed. by Thomas Adam (Lanham: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2021), pp. 113-134.

[7] Kenyon Zimmer, 'Saul Yanovsky and Yiddish Anarchism on the Lower East Side', in *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street*, ed. by Tom Goyens (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), pp. 33-53 (p. 33).

factors that characterise or affect virtually all Jews'.[8] It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at the individual experiences of Jewish immigrants who became radicals to better understand this transformative process.

In this article, I will highlight this process of the radicalisation of Jewish immigrants, specifically in the anarchist milieu of New York City, by providing a close reading of an individual case study: Isidore Wisotsky Autobiographical Typescript, henceforth IWAT. Instead of considering more prominent cases, like those of the well-known anarchists Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Milly Witkop, or Rudolf Rocker, who were also radicalised in the United States context, I look at this lesser-known case of the young Isidore Wisotsky (1895-1970), whose radicalisation nevertheless matches similar experiences of other Jewish immigrants who turned towards anarchism in the spatial context of New York.[9] Wisotsky arrived from Eastern Europe (specifically the area that is now Ukraine) in 1910 and was attracted to anarchist ideas after his personal experiences with the United States' exploitative labour system.[10] He shows a set of

[8] Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left* (New York: Wiley, 1979), p. 25.

[9] See Frank Jacob, *Emma Goldman: Identitäten einer Anarchistin* (Leipzig: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2022), pp. 41-54; Paul Avrich and Karen Avrich, *Sasha and Emma: The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2012), pp. 7-60. See also the forthcoming Frank Jacob, *Alexander Berkman: Zwischen Gefängnis und Revolution* (Leipzig: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2023); Rudolf Rocker, 'Milly Witkop-Rocker, 1877-1955: Zum Gedachtnis', Rudolf Rocker Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam. See also Augustin Souchy, 'Milly Witkop-Rocker zum Gedächtnis', Rudolf Rocker Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam; Mina Graur, *An Anarchist Rabbi: The Life and Teachings of Rudolf Rocker* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); based on Yoysef Kahan, *Di yidish-anarkhistishe bavegung in amerike* [The Jewish Anarchist Movement in America] (Philadelphia: Radical Library, 1945), pp. 16, 303, 308, 425, 435. There is an entry on Wisotsky in the *Yiddish Leksikon*: Joshua Fogel, 'Izidor Visotski (Isidore Wisotsky)', *Yiddish Leksikon*, 13 June 2016. His case is also mentioned by Sarah Schulman, 'When We Were Very Young: A Walking Tour through Radical Jewish Women's History on the Lower East Side 1879-1919,' in *The Tribe of Dina: A Jewish Women's Anthology*, ed. by Melanie Kaye and Irene Klepfisz Kantrowitz (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), pp. 125-148.

[10] Emma Goldman similarly argued that it was this labour experience in particular, in combination with the events related to the so-called 'Haymarket tragedy', that made her politically aware and an anarchist: 'Then came America, America with its huge factories, the pedaling of a machine for ten hours a day at two dollars fifty a week. It was followed by the greatest event in my life, which made me what I am. It was the tragedy of Chicago, in 1887, when five of the noblest men were judicially murdered by the State of Illinois. […] The death of those Chicago martyrs was my spiritual birth: their ideal became the motive

overlapping identities — those of a first-generation Jewish immigrant, an anarchist, and a metropolitan New Yorker of the early twentieth century — which all, in one way or another, stimulated his radicalisation.[11]

It is important to consider the living and working situation of the immigrants who lived in New York's Lower East Side, i.e., their particular 'Jewish space,' as a breeding ground for radicalism which was fed by poverty and the exploitation of workers in the thriving garment industry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[12] While, of course, many immigrants had already been in contact with radical ideas in their Eastern European homes or in transit hubs like London, where they waited for their final transfer to the United States, many Eastern European Jews arrived with hopes and dreams, but their default positions would lead to their eventual radicalisation on American soil. The history of Jewish radicalism therefore interacts with other factors, such as immigration and labour, debates about assimilation, identity, and gender, as well as social struggles within the urban space of late nineteenth-century North America.[13] The Jewish immigrants who were part of these multiple histories and debates were therefore not simply immigrating radicals but radicalised immigrants, whose political radicalism was due to their experiences of shattered hopes and dreams in the United States.[14] The United States was actually less open and democratic than many immigrants had expected it to be, especially when they were confronted with repressive

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of my entire life.' Emma Goldman, 'An Anarchist Looks at Life' (London: 1933) in Emma Goldman Papers, International Institute for Social History No. 191 (Amsterdam), pp. 4-5.

[11] Frank Jacob, 'Radical Trinity: Anarchist, Jew, or New Yorker?' in *Jewish Radicalisms: Historical Perspectives on a Phenomenon of Global Modernity*, ed. by Frank Jacob and Sebastian Kunze (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 153-180.

[12] Albert Waldinger, *Shining and Shadow: An Anthology of Early Yiddish Stories from the Lower East Side* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2006). For an important introduction on this theoretical category for the study of Jewish history, see Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup, 'Introduction: What Made a Space "Jewish"? Reconsidering a Category of Modern German History,' in *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, ed. by Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup (New York: Berghahn, 2017), pp. 1-20.

[13] On these issues see, among other works *The Immigrant Left in the United States*, ed. by Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas (Albany, SUNY Press, 1996) and Thomas Mackaman, *New Immigrants and the Radicalization of American Labor, 1914-1924* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2017).

[14] Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 176-199.

state actions towards labour rights.[15] Many Jewish immigrants were also more attracted to radical political ideas that were being shared within other immigrant communities, for example the German anarchist community in New York City, than to the capitalist ideals considered to be part of the English-American tradition.[16] Jewish radicalism also relied upon what Paul Buhle refers to as 'a peculiar cosmopolitanism'.[17] Buhle argues that

> The Jewish Left of the United States has been a conscious part of a physically (and not just emotionally) international movement, in several senses different from other immigrant radicalisms. Its intimate international relationships included not only the European emigrant homelands and Soviet Russia [...] but every land where Yiddish speakers gathered. [...] Coupled with their own sense as a persecuted people and sympathies for others similarly pressed, Jews could see the possibilities and indeed the outline of a future cooperative world system, to be built in part through their connected efforts in Moscow, Vilna, Budapest, Paris, Sofia, London, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Jerusalem, and New York, all the way across wide America to the chicken farms of Petaluma, California.[18]

Regardless of the transnational and respective impact factors for Jewish radicalisation within the United States context, one also has to consider local experiences of these 'foreigners' who arrived in numbers, intending to make a new life for themselves, but instead became the backbone of a new leftist political movement whose representatives demanded the end of exploitation and a better world for all members of the working class, Jews and non-Jews alike.[19] In the first part of this article, I will

[15] Andrew Kolin, *Political Economy of Labor Repression in the United States* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), p. 120.

[16] Tom Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880-1914* (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 2007); Deborah Dash Moore et.al., *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People* (New York: NYU Press, 2017), pp. 155-186.

[17] Paul Buhle, 'Themes in American Jewish Radicalism', in *The Immigrant Left in the United States*, ed. by Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 77-118 (p. 78).

[18] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

[19] Zimmer, p. 35. The anarchist movement itself was transnational in nature, yet the decision to join it was often and initially determined by the individual and her/his local experiences. On the transnational perspectives on anarchism, see Constance Bantman, 'Internationalism without an International? Cross-

therefore briefly reflect upon the general idea of a Jewish radicalism before describing the role of New York City as a breeding ground for its formation. Then, I will turn to the case study of Isidore Wisotsky to show how a young Eastern European Jew transformed into an American anarchist in the Jewish spaces of New York City.

Jewish Radicalism

Jewish immigrants could be found in trade unions, political parties of the American Left, and clubs of all sorts, visibly representing the radicalism of a United States metropolis at the turn of the century. When considering the Jewish labour movement, it can be stated that '[n]o movement won more support or inspired greater enthusiasm among Jews during the four-decade era of mass immigration between the 1880s and 1920s'.[20] Nevertheless, many of those who reached the shores of New York City at this time were not genuinely radical, but rather disillusioned with their personal American dream once they realised that poverty and exploitation were the natural allies of the economic success stories in their new home. In Eastern European *shtetls*, people

> described life in America in glowing and enthusiastic terms. The workers [...] were paid high wages for very little work. [...] Anyone who did not work in a factory made easy money by picking up valuables from nearly nothing in junk yards and selling them at enormous profit. People were rich and had gold in their teeth! [21]

Channel Anarchist Networks, 1880-1914', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 84.4 (2006), 961-981; Constance Bantman and Bert Altena, 'Introduction: Problematizing Scales of Analysis in Network-Based Social Movements', in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, ed. by Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 3-22; Constance Bantman, 'The Dangerous Liaisons of Belle Epoque Anarchists: Internationalism, Transnationalism, and Nationalism in the French Anarchist Movement (1880-1914)', in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, pp. 174-192; Frank Jacob and Mario Keßler, 'Transatlantic Radicalism: A Short Introduction', in *Transatlantic Radicalism: Socialist and Anarchist Exchanges in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. by Frank Jacob and Mario Keßler (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021), pp. 1-20.

[20] Michels, p. 3.

[21] *Shtetls* is a Yiddish term that had been used for smaller towns or villages in Eastern and Central Europe that were predominantly inhabited by Ashkenazi Jews. Michael L. Zlatovski Papers, Immigration History Research Center Archives, University of Minnesota, IHRC2914, p. 32.

It was only a matter of time before reality shattered these dreams, and '[t]housands of people, who knew nothing of Karl Marx or his ideas before stepping foot on the island of Manhattan, were soon marching and striking and educating themselves in his name'.[22] The experience of labour exploitation that was shared by so many was an important factor that stimulated individual radicalisation, as we will see in Wisotsky's case.

Of course, Jews were not the only immigrants who developed a radical agenda in the United States because, to quote David P. Shuldiner, the 'trade union and socialist movements in the United States had a multiethnic character'.[23] The Jewish factor within the radical American Left is nevertheless particularly visible because many leaders of Jewish origin held prominent positions and consequently became increasingly identified with the political movements they represented.[24] The radicalisation of Jewish immigrants in New York City was not only political radicalisation, but also, more generally, secularisation and a change in the Jewish way of living.[25] Such changes were also closely related to other radical elements within the city, like German communities of anarchists or socialists. The city space seems to have naturally stimulated an overall transformation from religious heritage to political engagement as well, from '*shtetl* Jews' to atheist political actors within the United States context.[26] How Jewish the

[22] Michels, p. 4.

[23] David P. Shuldiner, *Of Moses and Marx: Folk Ideology and Folk History in the Jewish Labor Movement* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1999), p. 1.

[24] Percy S. Cohen, *Jewish Radicals and Radical Jews* (London: Academic Press, 1980), pp. 2-4.

[25] Robert Wolfe, *Remember to Dream: A History of Jewish Radicalism* (New York: Jewish Radical Education Project, 1994), p. 7. Political radicalisation is understood here as a leaning towards political activities or identities that were considered to be radical in their respective contexts. For example, orthodox Jews considered more secular Jews, who joined the political left and claimed to be atheist, radical, while the latter would be considered radical by conservative forces solely due to their political identity, while other leftists would not consider them to be radical at all. The terminology 'Jewish radicalism', which is applied here, is consequently related to contextual categories, especially since people like Wisotsky probably do not appear so radical today.

[26] *From the Shtetl to the Metropolis*, ed. by Shlomo Berger (Amsterdam: Menasseh ben Israel Institute, 2012) and Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman, 'Jewish Ethnicity and Radical Culture: A Social Psychological Study of Political Activists', *Political Psychology*, 3.1/2 (1981/82), 116-157 (p. 118).

radicals ultimately remained is a question of context, as Liliana Riga emphasises with regard to the Jewish Bolshevists or Bolshevist Jews:

> I revise the traditional argument that [...] the Bolsheviks of Jewish origin were highly assimilated 'non-Jewish Jews' whose Jewishness played no role in their political radicalism. Instead, the claim is made that for the Jewish Bolshevik elite ascriptive Jewishness was a social fact mediated by ethnopolitical context, and therefore a dimension of varying significance to their radicalism, even for those for whom Jewishness was not a claimed identity.[27]

Other scholars have pointed to the role of orthodox religion, as well as growing antisemitism in Eastern Europe in the radical potential of the younger generation of Jewish migrants.[28] There have been warnings not to overemphasise the Jewishness of American radicalism, as 'most of the evidence for the connection between Jewishness and radicalism is 'impressionistic' 'not statistical'.[29] However, it cannot be denied that many Jewish immigrants turned towards radical ideas once they arrived on American soil. This was, nevertheless, a socio-religious transformation, in which many young immigrants became more political and less religious as '[t]heir radicalism ... involved the abandonment rather than the intensification of their faith in Judaism as a religion'.[30]
One must be careful not to identify a generalised Jewish tradition of radicalism, but rather consider the specific spatial and temporal context, such as the industrialising US metropolis at the end of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century, which played an essential role in the development of a new generation of Jewish radicals who, like Wisotsky, lived, worked and debated political ideas and utopian ideals on the Lower East Side of New York City.[31] I consequently disagree with Robert Wolfe's argument that '[i]n short, modern Jewish radicalism is a secularized expression of

[27] Liliana Riga, 'Ethnonationalism, Assimilation, and the Social Worlds of the Jewish Bolsheviks in Fin de Siècle Tsarist Russia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48.4 (2006), 762-797 (pp. 762-763).
[28] See Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and Liebman.
[29] Cohen, p. 2.
[30] Allen Guttmann, 'Jewish Radicals, Jewish Writers', *The American Scholar*, 32.4 (1963), 563-575 (p. 563).
[31] Arthur O. Waskow, 'Judaism and Revolution Today', in *Jewish Radicalism: A Selected Anthology*, ed. by Jack Nusan Porter and Peter Dreier (New York: Grove Press, 1973), pp. 11-28 (pp. 11-12).

traditional Jewish Messianism'.[32] I argue instead that it is the combination of individual suffering as part of an exploited labour force, and a particular consequence of Jewish identity, that became a trigger for antisemitic violence and exclusion on the one hand, and the existence of radical ideas or a radical milieu where such ideas could be exchanged and debated on the other, that established modern Jewish radicalism. A poor Jewish immigrant, whose dreams of a better life in North America had been shattered, could therefore have found no better place to radicalise and become part of a transnational anarchist movement than New York City. That Jews turned to the Left when politically radicalised, however, is not a surprise. According to Percy S. Cohen, the relationship between the two can be explained very simply:

> [Jews] were, for two reasons, less opposed to radicals, as such: first because radicals were often opposed to anti-semitism, seeing it as a device for displacing the anger of the masses from its true object, the ruling class; second, because the religious leaders of Jewish communities in the older diasporas felt no solidarity with the upholders of tradition in the wider non-Jewish society whom they often saw, rightly, as aiders and abettors of anti-semitism.[33]

How Jewish the radicals ultimately remained, and whether they considered themselves radical Jews, Jewish radicals, or something in between, can often only be answered in relation to individual cases. As a critical mass, however, there were many Jewish radicals or radical Jews within the United States labour movement, where they built a substantial cadre of rank and file members. To better understand the phenomenon, it has to be placed in its geographical and chronological context.[34] It is therefore essential to take

[32] Wolfe, p. 10. This argument was previously made by Moses Rischin, who stated that '[f]or most Jewish socialists, although often unaware of it, socialism was Judaism secularized' in Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 166. See also Moses Rischin, 'The Jewish Labor Movement in America: A Social Interpretation', *Labor History*, 4 (1963), 227-247.

[33] Cohen, p. 4.

[34] Wolfe, p. 13.

a closer look at New York City's Lower East Side, where Jews 'played an extraordinarily disproportionate role in socialism and other radical movements'.[35]

New York City as a Radical Hub

The Lower East Side at the end of the nineteenth century was, according to Hasia R. Diner, typical of Jewish life in nineteenth century New York City: a 'warren of crowded, dirty, and mean streets', where immigrants would live in poverty, 'thick with the smells, sounds, tastes, and noises' of Eastern Europe.[36] Similar images are continuously used in writings about Jewish life in New York City by other authors, too, and thereby have turned into stereotypical perceptions of the Lower East Side in American popular culture. Wisotsky initially lived on Suffolk Street and later described the area as follows:

> Suffolk Street, New York [...] full of sounds and shrieks, an assortment of men, women and children, shouting, yelling screaming [...] a symphony of discordant noises. Everyone bent on selling his wares—from pushcart, his hand or from pieces and scraps that lay on the crowded sidewalk. From early morning until late night, there is no calm. Wagons, autos, streetcars, a five-cent movie house and a harsh music that plays a kind of ear-grating music designed to draw a cord.[37]

Considering recent studies on Jewish topographies which have argued that '[n]o space is a given—and Jewish space even less so when compared to the spaces of societies that have been more or less continuously settled within the boundaries of a stable territorial power', the Lower East Side must also be understood as a space that was adjusting and had been adjusted by the existence of thousands of Jewish immigrants who were trying to find their own place in this particular space. [38] Wisotsky was one of

[35] Gerald Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority: American Jewish Immigrant Radicals, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 1.

[36] Hasia R. Diner, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 20.

[37] Isidore Wisotsky Autobiographical Typescript (IWAT), Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, TAM.071, p. 1.

[38] Anna Lipphardt, Julia Brauch and Alexandra Nocke, 'Exploring Jewish Space: An Approach', in *Jewish Topographies: Visions of Space, Traditions of Place*, ed. by Julia Brauch, Anna Lipphardt, and Alexandra Nocke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 1-23 (p. 1).

them, but for him, the existent environment also turned into a more political and radical space. The people there were disillusioned when they arrived into a new form of poverty, exploited not by a landowning nobility, but by the mills of capitalist production. Nevertheless, their new American home offered some alternatives as well as '[t]he recurrent themes of oppression, constriction, and danger, on one hand, [were] followed by the expansiveness of liberation, on the other.'[39] Therefore, regardless of its elements that reminded a visitor of Eastern European Jewry, the Lower East Side was a 'kind of transitional zone' for the Jewish immigrants, wherein they 'underwent an ordeal of cultural reeducation as they learned to be free'.[40] While most reached this radical hub as Jewish immigrants, many turned into active supporters of the American labour movement in almost no time at all. The oppression that was common in Czarist Russia was no longer accepted, and in the United States, every man and woman had the right to take a stand against exploitation by capitalist factory and sweatshop owners. The Lower East Side consequently did not provide 'a mere replica of eastern European Jewry' but 'served as a laboratory of political and cultural innovation that influenced eastern Europe in ways historians are just beginning to recognize'.[41]

Anarchists would meet at the drinking hall of Justus H. Schwab, a German immigrant, on 50 East 1st Street, where political ideas were exchanged as often as drinks went across the bar.[42] It was, however, not only drinking halls where political radicals met. There was also a Jewish coffee culture in the city, and at Sachs', Schmuckler's, and Sholem's, politically interested people could get involved in all kinds of theoretical debates while enjoying a hot cup of coffee. [43] It is therefore not surprising that Tony Michels concludes that '[i]f one were to identify a capital of Jewish radical politics in the late nineteenth century, it would have to be New York City.'[44] When one considers New York City as a transatlantic hub of Jewish radicalism at the end of the nineteenth century,

[39] Diner, p. 20.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Michels, p. 5.

[42] Tom Goyens, 'Introduction', in *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street*, pp. 1-11.

[43] IWAT, p. 74. Shachar M. Pinsker, *A Rich Brew: How Cafés Created Modern Jewish Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2018).

[44] Tony Michels, 'Exporting Yiddish Socialism: New York's Role in the Russian Jewish Workers' Movement', *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society*, 16.1 (2009), 1-26 (p. 8).

one also has to emphasise that the stream of politically radical ideas was not only stimulated by Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, but also created ties that would send radical thoughts, mostly in the form of newspapers and journals, back across the ocean.[45] Yiddish print products crossed the Atlantic and reached those who were still in Europe, and, as such, New York's radicals must be understood as part of a transatlantic network of Jewish radicalism. Socialist ideas, to name just one example, were consequently re-exports of those who had not yet left their homes in Eastern Europe. The workers' movement, the parties of the Left, and leftist intellectuals in the United States and Eastern Europe alike were consequently products of a globalised and interconnected political space, connected by a radicalising ocean between.[46]

Michels is therefore correct with regard to his overall evaluation of a suitable methodology to study and understand global Jewish radicalism:

> [I]nstead of a core-periphery model for understanding the relationship between American and Russian Jewry, it would be more helpful to adopt a transnational framework in which individuals, ideas, publications, money, and organizations moved between countries, sometimes in one direction, other times reciprocally.[47]

This transnationalism is especially visible with regards to the Jewish radicals who became active during the 1890s in New York City, where they acted first and foremost within their own community. Yiddish became the language of the labour movement on the Lower East Side, where the United Hebrew Trades were the most important unions. Alongside the *Arbeter Tsaytung,* the press organ for Jewish activists and workers, and the Socialist Labor Party, with its Yiddish-speaking branches, these represented the three pillars of the politically active Jewish immigrant in the 'New World'.[48] Due to its connections with Eastern Europe, Yiddish, next to German or Russian, became the lingua franca of Lower East Side radicalism since the new waves of immigrants, who

[45] On the role of the Atlantic Ocean see also Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). On print capitalism and its historical impact see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

[46] Michels, pp. 1-2.

[47] Ibid., p. 3.

[48] Ibid., p. 8.

after 1900 could also have been radicalised in the Bund or the Poale Zion in Russia, could easily be integrated into an already existent movement. By reading or attending lectures and debates, the Jewish immigrant, who was used to the autocratic and repressive environment of Czarist Russia, could use the advantages of the politically less suppressed environment of New York City to involve her- or himself in the workers' movement to eventually live the American Dream: a better life in a different world. Until the First World War, when immigrants would arrive already radicalised, having been in contact with leftist ideas in Eastern Europe, it was often the spatial context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New York City that would drive the Jewish workers into the arms of a radical movement directed against capitalist exploitation and social inequality.[49] The Second World War would destroy this 'revolutionary Yiddishland, a world that is more than lost, being actually denied', whose remains and actors were only alive in their legacy, which became as much American as it used to be Eastern European, or as Alain Brossat and Sylvia Klingberg put it: 'Having failed to achieve its hopes, its utopias, its political programmes and strategies, broken on the rocks of twentieth-century European history, Yiddishland survives, in the account of the past, as a culture, a lost treasure entrusted to antiquarian remembrance'.[50]

New York City could not have been any more different from the world the Jewish immigrants came from, such as the *shtetl*, although many of them had had previous experiences in larger European cities such as Warsaw or London on their way to the United States.[51] They had lived in a society divided by class in their Eastern European 'homelands' too, where orthodox traditionalism was a form of resistance against the ruling elites.[52] This space stimulated the wish, and sometimes the necessity, to start a new life abroad, and the United States seemed to offer more freedom. The political radicalisation of many young Jews consequently also took place along the lines of a generational conflict, between them and their parents:

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[49] Jack Nusan Porter and Peter Dreier, 'Introduction', in *Jewish Radicalism: A Selected Anthology*, ed. by Jack Nusan Porter and Peter Dreier (New York: Grove Press, 1973), pp. xv-liv (p. xvii).

[50] Alain Brossat and Sylvie Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History of Jewish Radicalism*, trans. by David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2016), p. xi.

[51] Sorin, pp. 11-18. Susan L. Tananbaum, *Jewish Immigrants in London, 1880-1939* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 1-14.

[52] Aviva Cantor Zuckoff, 'The Oppression of America's Jews', in *Jewish Radicalism: A Selected Anthology*, ed. by Jack Nusan Porter and Peter Dreier (New York: Grove Press, 1973), pp. 29-51 (p. 31); Sorin, p. 16.

> Breaking with the old […] meant […] a break with the condition of the Luftmensch living on air, on expedients, on tricks, on little jobs […] for a different and more solid [world], broader and with positive values: the world of the workers.[53]

Jewish immigrants began to redefine their different identities, forming a new milieu that was rather more radical than Jewish, but which was nonetheless still Jewish in heritage. Radical Jewish women faced even more problems, which were related to the overlap of their different identities. 'Their dilemma', as Melissa R. Klapper remarks, 'was at once unique and representative of the many other American ethnic and immigrant groups that were continuously renegotiating their identities'.[54] In addition, the identity of the radicalising Jewish immigrants was contested by an existent Jewish financial elite. The new arrivals were consequently 'subjected to powerful assimilative pressures from the already established Jewish community of New York'.[55] The latter had mostly arrived during the 1840s and 1850s from Germany and were financially successful and were therefore interested in 'the quick and total Americanization of the new immigrants' to avoid a wave of antisemitism, which would have threatened their own established position of wealth. [56]

The new immigrants consequently had to deal not only with poverty, which was an unavoidable part of their lives on the Lower East Side, but also with pressure from other Jews, who disliked the continuation of their previous 'lifestyle', expressed first and foremost by the use of the Yiddish language. The struggle against classism and workers' exploitation was consequently also an inter-Jewish struggle.[57] The radicalisation of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants was therefore primarily due to their working experiences and the frustration they felt in their new lives. As David P. Shuldiner correctly expresses it, '[p]olitical activism was for many an immigrant worker an essential

[53] Brossat and Klingberg, pp. 36-38, 41.

[54] Melissa R. Klapper, '"Those by Whose Side We Have Labored": American Jewish Women and the Peace Movement between the Wars', *The Journal of American History*, 97.3 (2010), 636-658 (p. 638).

[55] Selma C. Berrol, 'In Their Image: German Jews and the Americanization of the Ost Juden in New York City', *New York History*, 63.4 (1982), 417-433 (p. 418).

[56] Ibid., p. 419.

[57] Ibid., p. 422.

part of the struggle for economic survival'.[58] The immigrants wanted to escape a life of sorrow and suffering, and socialism, anarchism, and communism presented suitable ways out of their misery.

Many of the radicals, like Wisotsky, were immediately thrown into a world where work determined their daily routine but could not save them from poverty. Resistance was often punished and stimulated further radicalisation, though the latter's geographical and temporal contexts must also be kept in mind. The United States garment industry played an important role in that process because its low wages, long working hours, and non-existent of workers' rights provided fruitful ground for radical ideas to gain influence.[59] In the sweatshops, where subcontractors were hired, the situation was even worse than in the factories, and '[e]xploitation [...] was more than intense'.[60] Since many Jewish *landsleit* worked in the shops, the creation of a radical Jewish milieu within a community that provided some kind of homogeneity was a natural consequence.[61] An almost natural solidarity made the organisation of strikes and protests much easier, and their communal identity became even more intensified. The suppressed members of this community acted as a unit, as '[t]hey were organized around articulated interests that were shaped by social change, hardship, class-consciousness, and cultural background'.[62] As such, these men and women were also a phenomenon of a global modernity which allowed them to move across borders and become essential elements in a foreign labour movement. When distinguishing between the important features of this process, one would have to conclude, as Gerald Sorin did, that a mix of 'increasing proletarianization, exploitation, and Jewish culture', factors that were all present in New York City around 1900, were responsible for the establishment of a larger protest movement, which, as a whole, not only consisted of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, but also Germans, Russians, Italians, Irish, and many other radical immigrant communities. [63]

[58] Shuldiner, p. 1.

[59] Sorin, pp. 54-57.

[60] Ibid., p. 61.

[61] Ibid., p. 96-97.

[62] Ibid., p. 8.

[63] Ibid., p. 3.

The Lower East Side, like many other places in the city, was the stage for protests against a capitalist system that was built on the exploitation of the weak. The social transformations that were demanded in protests and strikes would eventually be the cause of changes within the traditionally foreign communities of the city as well. Foreign labourers became American citizens, demanding their rights, in the tradition of independence and the rights of man which went back to the Atlantic Revolutions, suggesting that they increasingly felt like Americans rather than foreigners, unlike their parents' generation. While the immigrants' community initially provided a space of convenience, those who became politically active found a place of belonging among others who demanded radical changes to the suffering that was so common within immigrant groups. These developments also created a better situation for those generations who would follow the path of the transatlantic community, as 'New immigrants, those arriving after 1890, were no longer coming to a wholly alien world. They endured many of the same hardships as the first wave, but in a milieu even more structured, more shielding, more *familiar*'.[64] Together with the German immigrants, who provided radical inspiration, the Jewish workers from Eastern Europe would eventually shape the American workers' movement.[65] However, as emphasised before, neither of these groups arrived as radicalised activists against the United States, rather, this was a result of the world they were part of in an American context.

Eventually, a new intelligentsia was established whose members spoke Yiddish and provided the Jewish American labour movement with theoretical works and debates, discussions, and lectures: in short, a rich canon of radical knowledge to which to refer. A second generation of Jewish immigrants stimulated further radicalisation, especially after the Kishinev Massacre of 1903 and the failed Russian Revolution of 1905, as those who were now arriving had already been radicalised within the Bund or the Poale Zion.[66] The Jewish intellectuals in New York City consequently argued on behalf of socialist, anarchist, and communist ideas, but they all agreed that change was necessary to achieve a better society for all. They used Yiddish to communicate and therefore relied upon a 'cultural code of communication' that had traditionally

[64] Ibid., p. 70. Emphasis in the original.

[65] Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts*, pp. 4-5.

[66] Shuldiner, p. 32.

connected the two Jewish worlds on both sides of the Atlantic with each other.[67] A Yiddish-speaking labour movement eventually evolved from the Lower East Side, demanding better working conditions, better wages, and more social justice. The labour movement in New York City used many languages, one of which was Yiddish. Others included German, Russian, and Italian, but they all sang the same song: the International. The influence of the Yiddish-speaking radicals on the Lower East Side caused fear among those who had profited from a capitalist system.[68] The traditional Jewish language of Eastern Europe was looked down upon, but this attitude of the bourgeois German Jewry of the first generation of Jewish immigrants could not change the facts: the Jewish labour movement spoke Yiddish, and it gained more ground every day, as some Russian revolutionaries and other radicals even learned the language to gain more influence on the masses of workers in this part of the city.[69]

The success of the Jewish labour movement in the United States in general, and in New York City in particular, shows that the efforts to use Yiddish as a revolutionary language were not for nothing. In the 1880s, there already existed more than twenty unions for Jewish workers that were eventually merged to form the United Hebrew Trades (UHT), an umbrella organisation, in 1888. The unions could recruit members so successfully because the misery of the sweatshops created an unbroken stream of workers who were willing to join the unions to regain control over their lives and their workforce.[70] In 1890, the UHT consisted of 27 unions with around 14,000 members and sent delegates to the meetings of the Second International. While '[s]ocialism was […] a vigorous and vital theme in Jewish immigrant life almost from the beginning', it was the sweatshops that stimulated its growing influence.[71] Between 1903 and 1912, the number of members of the Socialist Party increased from 15,975 to 118,045, and Jewish socialists became part of a mass movement, the success of which was not solely based on immigration but also on the fact that many workers were discontented with their working conditions and capitalism in general.[72] The militant members of the party,

[67] Ibid., p. 43.

[68] Berrol, p. 423.

[69] Zimmer, p. 36.

[70] Sorin, p. 78.

[71] Ibid., p. 86.

[72] Ibid.

however, in contrast to the 'conservative leftists' from abroad (first and foremost immigrants from Germany, who especially left after the failed revolution of 1848 and due to anti-socialist policies in the years afterwards), were Americans, such as William Haywood, Jack London, and Frank Bohn. The left was further diversified by the failure of the Russian Revolution in 1905, which caused many revolutionaries to seek a new home in the United States, especially members from the Bund, who needed to leave Russia after the events of 1905, but at the same time resisted assimilation in the United States as '[t]hey desired to remain Jews—atheists, socialists, but Jews'.[73] In 1917, the *Forward*, a Yiddish socialist daily newspaper, sold 200,000 copies, highlighting the impact of the Jewish radical community in the United States, and which was particularly strong in New York City.

As has been shown, different waves of Jewish immigrants were responsible for the shaping of the radical milieu on the Lower East Side and for the success of socialist, anarchist, and communist ideas in the metropolis.[74] Further waves would follow in the 1920s, but they would find a radical world already existed in New York City that they could attach to and with which they would feel familiar.[75] To further emphasise these developments with regards to the Jewish radical milieu in New York City, a case study of Isidore Wisotsky will provide an understanding of the role the United States metropolis played in the political radicalisation of young Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in their new home across the Atlantic. His individual case study will serve as a frame within which the process described so far can be comprehended and understood. Examining Wisotky's ego document presents an opportunity to study a historical source that is emblematic of the named aspects of immigration and anarchist radicalisation within the Jewish community of nineteenth century New York City.

Isidore Wisotsky and Jewish Anarchism in New York City

Wisotsky wrote his autobiography in 1965, remarking that he felt obliged to do so despite having been 'a public school drop-out' at sixteen years old.[76] I argue that he

[73] Ibid., p. 93.

[74] For further details, see Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts*, pp. 26-68.

[75] Brian Horowitz, *Russian Idea—Jewish Presence: Essays on Russian-Jewish Intellectual Life* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2013), p. 124.

[76] IWAT, preface.

considered the writing of his autobiography as an act of radicalism, as he wanted to preserve the existence of and knowledge about a world that seemed to have disappeared by 1965, especially since anarchism was already considered dead until it was globally reinvigorated during the events in relation to the global protests of 1968. Like many other Jewish immigrants in New York, Wisotsky grew up in a *shtetl* before his parents decided to leave for the New World. Several generations of his family had been born in Lypovets (part of present-day Ukraine), but the place 'was sunk in mud and poverty. There were no streets, no layouts. The houses were built of mud and straw'.[77] Wisotsky emphasises the class division in the *shtetl*:

> You seldom saw a brick house. If you did it belonged to a rich man. A thorough-fare paved with cobblestones was the main and only street of the town, and boards nailed together for about half a mile served as a sidewalk. When the mud rose you could not find it. There were also a few kerosene lamps that lit the street at night. That was your night life, hanging around those lamps.[78]

In school, the students were beaten by a violent teacher who used his cane as a pedagogical and disciplinary tool, which is probably why Wisotsky did not feel too attached to school and education. When his father experienced financial trouble,

> The have-nots of Lypovets came together in our house for a consultation, to help out Father. The only way out was to run away to America in the darkness of the night, so he could get rid of the money lenders. In America he will make a living.[79]

After a long wait at an immigrant house in Latvia, the family were able to board a boat — they had missed the first one — on which a 'few hundred passengers were stuck together', all on their way to a supposedly better life.[80] In New York, the family, comprising of Wisotsky's father and mother, Wisotsky himself, his four-year-old brothers Max and Abe, and his two-year-old sister Esther, rented a three-room

[77] Ibid., p. 3.

[78] Ibid., p. 4.

[79] Ibid., p. 34.

[80] Ibid., p. 3.

apartment between Grand and Hester Streets.[81] In contrast to the quiet *shtetl*, the metropolis was loud and crowded.

Wisotsky later lived in one of the numerous tenement houses of the Lower East Side,

> with dark hallways, small gaslights on every floor, wooden stairs, no electricity and no steam, toilets, assigned to the living room, were strategically shared by two tenants. A big black iron stove in the kitchen used coal for cooking, for boiling the wash, and in winter, served as a heater for all the rooms.[82]

Other Jewish immigrants often came to visit him there, where they would discuss matters and enjoy time together: 'Refreshments consisted of beer, salted pretzels, [and] herring'.[83] During such meetings, news from the Old World was exchanged and stories about relatives shared. In America, all felt themselves to be freer, although working conditions were harsh in the sweatshops. Only Wisotsky's half-uncle Moishe seems to have escaped this sorrow:

> Round-shouldered, hoarse-voiced and glassy-eyed, a wandering drunk, Moishe had left his wife and children. He earned his living by going to Slavic neighborhoods throughout the country, miners' towns, and steel factories where Polish, Russians and Ukrainians worked. He spoke their language fluently and sold them portraits of their grandfathers, grandmothers, grandchildren, fathers, mothers. He would carry a large painted portrait which he would show his prospective customers as his sample. Then he would ask for a small picture of whom they would want, and make an enlarged copy. This cost them one dollar. When he brought the picture back, he would say, "You don't want this beautiful picture without a frame?" Then he charged whatever he could get. This was how Moishe earned his living, roaming from town to town. This was how he avoided the sweatshop. No bosses for him![84]

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., p. 6.

[84] Ibid.

In contrast to his uncle's 'bossless' life, Wisotsky's father worked as a skirt operator in the sweatshop mill, receiving $4 a week as an apprentice at his cousin's shop. He slept at the shop to save rent and 'did not earn much considering that he worked 60 to 70 hours a week'.[85] At the same time, the apartment was partly rented out to boarders, to whom Wisotsky's mother sold soup for 25 cents per meal. The young immigrant listened to their stories about politics, strikes, and other matters, coming into contact with the labour world of the Lower East Side.

When a strike was called, Wisotsky realised for the first time that the struggle for workers' rights was a violent business. The family was once visited by a finisher named Gussie, a 'middle-aged, well-built woman, with dark hair and black burning eyes', who was very angry about a strikebreaker called Becky, whom she wanted to confront at the sweatshop the next day. Gussie says: 'I would rather see her in the hospital!'[86]. The next day, the two women met and 'Gussie hit Becky with her pocketbook'. Becky fell, and '[l]ater, when Gussie was asked what she had in her pocketbook, she answered: "Nothing, only a half a brick"'.[87] Eventually, the strike was settled, but this episode had already provided Wisotsky with a deeper insight into the workers' struggle. Events like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911 also made it clear that the lives of common workers did not count: '146 girls were burned because of locked doors. On a dreary, foggy, rainy day, thousands of workers cried and marched to bring them to their last resting place'.[88]

Instead of being interested in school, the young Wisotsky visited lectures by Saul Yanofsky, 'a maverick in the Yiddish Labor movement', and other anarchists, and he soon got involved with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).[89] Due to conflicts with his parents, Wisotsky eventually left home to live on the streets:

> The home atmosphere started to choke me […] to prey on my mind […] the congestion, the nagging, the misunderstanding, between me and my parents. My inability to get a half-decent job to help out the family chased me out into the street. On a hot summer evening, I left and moved into 7th Street Park, a three by three square block affair, an

[85] Ibid., p. 8.

[86] Ibid., p. 13.

[87] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[88] Ibid., p. 22.

[89] Ibid., p. 26.

> improvement on Hester Park. It had a couple of trees, spots of grass and a shanty where they sold a schooner of milk for one cent, and for one more penny, you could buy a salt pretzel. That made a good meal for the day.[90]

In addition to the park, Wisotsky also slept close to the East River on 8th Street. Nevertheless, he realised that the summer would soon end and began to look for a steady income. Initially, he cleaned tables in a cafeteria during lunch hours, making 75 cents for three hours of work a day, and stayed with friends or people he knew from anarchist meetings: 'Some comrades also helped by inviting me several nights a week to share their meals and lodging. When I worked, I did the same thing for those rugged-individualists who were in need'.[91] Working casual jobs before staying with friends or sleeping outside, Wisotsky lived from day to day. He nevertheless attended anarchist and IWW meetings, cheering for a soon-to-come revolution. The winter, however, was extremely tough: '[There was] no dock, no park, no cafeteria […] in fact, no place to hide from the cold'.[92] Wisotsky searched for shelter from the cold and found it in the library on East Broadway for a while, but then he became a member of a commune:

> We rented a two-room apartment on 5th Street on the top floor. There was no heat, no toilet, no water. Everything in the hall. Of course there was no bath and no hot water. One room was completely dark and without windows. The cost? Six dollars a month rent. The rooms were bare […] not one piece of furniture. None of us had anything. There were ten of us.[93]

This 'Don't Worry Group', as they called themselves, regularly had 'debates and discussions on all kinds of subjects—socialism, anarchism, individualism, philosophy, literature, vegetarianism, and men like Nietzsche, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Marx, Zola, Maxim Gorky, Jack London, Sholom Asch, Tolstoy, Peretz, Ibsen, Raisin, Strindberg and others'.[94] Wisotsky's political and intellectual horizon was consequently considerably

[90] Ibid., p. 38.

[91] Ibid., p. 40.

[92] Ibid., p. 42.

[93] Ibid., p. 44.

[94] Ibid., p. 45.

broadened, and he became more and more interested in the situation of the labour movement in the United States.

When he received his working papers a few months later, he had the 'inner feeling that I was no longer a child. I eagerly looked forward to being a man, finding a job, and going to work like all grown up men and adults'.[95] Regardless of his high hopes, it was obviously not easy to find a job where he would also be taught a trade, and found it difficult: 'And so it continued, every day for several months. I kept looking for a job, arriving home tired, heartbroken and disappointed'.[96] Wisotsky went from job to job, always fighting with his bosses in the end because he criticised them for exploiting their employees:

> I took any job: errand boy, bus boy, dish washer, apprentice operator on caps [...] I was a painter, I sold large picture paintings [...] I was a waiter [...] I worked in a printing shop. [...] All these jobs lasted from one day to several months and all these jobs wound up in a fight between me and the boss.[97]

For years, Wisotsky drifted between short-term jobs, nights in the park, and the IWW headquarters. When he has an accident, in which he burned his fingers on an exposed electrical wire, Wisotsky could make a case against his employer:

> I won the case. I got enough money with which to pay some of my debts, and three months rent. I also bought myself a new suit, new shoes, a few shirts and underwear, and I still had some money left over to live on for a few weeks. My Wobbly friends also had a good time on that money. They kibbitzed and now called me a bourgeois.[98]

In 1912, Wisotsky attended a debate at Carnegie Hall, at which Emma Goldman and Sol Friedman discussed the ideas of anarchism and mass strikes. This event was essential for the political socialisation of Wisotsky, who then became a member of Goldman's entourage.[99] Due to this engagement and his contacts at the IWW, he 'stepped into a

[95] Ibid., p. 88.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., p. 90.

[98] Members of the IWW were called Wobblies. IWAT, p. 94.

[99] Ibid., p. 58.

new world of thoughts and ideas that [he] frankly did not understand clearly'.[100] Socialism, anarchism, and other radical ideologies became important to Wisotsky, who was easily radicalised, especially since he well understood what exploitation meant. He dove deep into the world of political debates in the many halls of the Lower East Side, where Goldman was one of his favourite speakers. Step by step, this autobiography traces how this young Jewish immigrant became an American anarchist. Wisotsky was evidently a product of his environment. Like many before him, he became radicalised on the Lower East Side, where young Jews entered a world that could not fulfil the dreams of those who had left the *shtetl* in Eastern Europe looking for a better future.

Conclusion

New York City produced its own radicals, including those who had originally come from different countries, like the thousands of immigrants from Eastern Europe. The Jews who had first left the *shtetl* and then the European continent did not find the American Dream, but rather a reality that was as oppressive as the one of Czarist Russia. Of course, they were politically free, but now they were being used as cheap labour within a capitalist system that was based on exploitative practices. The Jewish immigrants initially found work in sweatshops, but at the same time, they connected with others. As a critical mass, they became the backbone of the socialist, anarchist, and communist movements in New York City and began to organise Jewish trade unions, read Yiddish papers, and develop a culture of debate that discussed and developed alternatives to the capitalist exploitation of the working class.

The immigrants did not arrive as radicals in the US metropolis, but were instead transformed there into the next generation of political activists. The sweatshop experience became the catalyst for many to turn towards radical ideas and develop a political identity that would eventually replace their religious heritage. Jewish immigrants like Wisotsky, who I would consider to be a relatively representative case for Jewish anarchists within the city, then became disaffected with the capitalist system and naturally became important allies for those in the political struggle against the existent order. Many immigrants with different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds shared this experience, but many Jewish immigrants would, as a consequence of this experience and an almost traditional anti-Jewish ostracisation, end

[100] Ibid., p. 57.

up in radical left circles of larger cities, not just in the United States. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the political radicalism of the Jewish immigrants in New York City was a combination of the Jewish struggle for identity in their new world and their personal experiences, especially within the world of labour.

The radical labour movement in the US was 'foreign' in the sense that it was the existent transatlantic network that allowed immigrants to reach American shores, but the radicalisation process was the consequence of local factors rather than the foreignness of those who joined the radical movements, especially in New York. The city would continue to be a hub of radical ideas for many decades, and radicalism continued to be fuelled by the potential of people who were considered to be, and depicted as 'foreigners' within the context of a nation of immigrants, and who were only searching for the safety that the United States promised. Eventually they would only find out that the American Dream was nothing more than a promise. In the end, they all had to adjust to a new environment that stimulated radical responses. Integration was partly possible within the immigrant community, but generational struggles, such as the one between Wisotsky and his parents, also drove young workers away from their Jewish heritage and into the arms of radical ideas, which promised a sense of modernity and a better world. Wisotsky might have been only one among many, but the fate of those many would eventually change the United States because, as a critical mass, the Jewish immigrants had a tremendous impact not only on the workers' movement but also on its positive achievements.

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Sarah Comyn and Porscha Fermanis, eds., Worlding the South: Nineteenth-Century Literary Culture and the Southern Settler Colonies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021) 430pp. ISBN 978-1-5261-5288-6, £30.00.

CHLOE OSBORNE

IN RECENT YEARS, what was once treated as the largely unidirectional travel of metropolitan culture to colonial periphery during the long-nineteenth century has been reassessed and remodelled. This shift has partly been invigorated by growing attention to the local specificities of settler interactions with the material culture of different indigenous colonised peoples. Instead, global nineteenth-century literary cultures are increasingly framed in ways that reject the binary of metropole and periphery, Europe and World. Recent debates about 'worlding' have emphasised how the logics of Enlightenment and universalism have continued to inform contemporary research into non-European literary cultures, particularly those from settler colonised lands. Emerging critical work increasingly focuses on the ways non-European peoples have been appropriated and rendered within a European globalising of the world since exploration began in the sixteenth century. For instance, work by Nikki Hessel, James Clifford, and David Chandler and Julian Reid has undermined British periodisations (Romantic, Victorian) of the non-European nineteenth century in favour of indigenous epistemes and notions of time.[1] Recent calls to 'undiscipline' likewise draw on the longstanding work of Indigenous and Black scholarship from settler colonised places, with theorists like Linda Tuhiwai Smith drawing attention to the ways decolonising studies attend to long-term methods of divesting colonial power.[2]

The issue of 'worlding' is, as the title of this work suggests, thematically and methodologically central to *Worlding the South*. In its eighteen chapters, this ambitious edited collection draws together literary studies of the British southern colonies in

[1] Nikki Hessel, *Romantic Literature and the Colonised World: Lessons from Indigenous Translations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); James Clifford, *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); David Chandler and Julian Reid, '"Being in Being": Contesting the Ontopolitics of Indigeneity', *The European Legacy,* 23:2 (2018), 251-268.

[2] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Auckland: Zed, 1999).

nineteenth-century Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, South America, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific Islands. With its focus on southern colonies, the editors propose a paradigm shift in their approach to the global nineteenth century. They take as their starting point the tension between north and south through which peoples of the south have been shaped by their approximate otherness to a northern gaze. As such, the editors consider the south less as a location and more as an indexical category of conceptual space, 'belated, inverted, nugatory, and even pathological in its relation to the time/space coordinates exported by Euro-American capital and territorial expansion'; the antithesis to northern modernity.[3] The book thus proposes a shift away from the dialectical comparatism between Anglo-America and elsewhere, which imagines the literary histories of the southern hemisphere as largely 'nation centred and globally marginalised'.[4]

In their exceptionally rich and critically wide-ranging introduction, Comyn and Fermanis explain the collection's aims with broad reference to ground-breaking recent works in the field of global/settler nineteenth-century literature. These aims primarily involve the need to reflect on the historical interconnectedness between southern colonies, drawing out shared 'thematic concerns, literary forms and tropes, and aesthetic and stylistic practices' in these regions.[5] In bringing together studies on such a diversity of geographic southern locations, the collection imagines how methodologies ranging from worlding to hemispheric analysis can displace prevalent nation-based forms of literary scholarship to emphasise oceanic and local accounts.

The chapters that follow are ordered around a set of dialectic themes which speak to some of the problematics of the project: 'Globe/World', 'Acculturation/Transculturation', and 'Indigenous/Diasporic'. Chapters in the first section, 'Globe/World', respond to theories of the imperial processes of worlding that have historically drawn the globe into a temporal and spatial order in line with European systems of knowledge. Peter Otto's chapter on the 1828 panorama 'A View of the Town of Sydney' stages a particularly clear example of how colonial media technologies enacted world-making, with the panorama representing both the 'modernising'

[3] Sarah Comyn and Porscha Fermanis, eds., *Worlding the South: Nineteenth-century Literary Culture and the Southern Settler Colonies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), p. 1.

[4] Ibid. p. 2.

[5] Ibid. p. 3.

processes of settlement and the unsettling of these processes. Likewise, Comyn's chapter on 'Southern doubles' brilliantly exposes how 'antipodean thinking' reflects the inversion between north and south that the collection is invested in unravelling. Drawing on a selection of examples from the Australian periodical press in the 1850s, Comyn unveils a trajectory of antipodean self-positioning in relation to the British Empire's origin, which followed Australia's move from colonial self-governance to nationalism in the 1880s. The chapters in this section highlight how literary forms did more than replicate settler politics: they embedded the logics of settlement within burgeoning settler groups, sustaining increasing expansion by naturalising the settler imaginary of new lands awaiting domestic conquest.

The second section on 'Acculturation/Transculturation' pertinently approaches settlement as an aesthetic process of acclimatisation and adaptation – or indeed, failure or refusal to adapt – which evinces the 'affects of belonging' in examples of cultural encounter and colonial blending.[6] Following the subversive travel from metropole to colony and vice versa, and the subsequent recontextualisation of literary artefacts draws together Jane Stafford's chapter with that of Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver. They trace the journeys of *Robinson Crusoe* from Britain to New Zealand, and the antipode naturalisation of the kangaroo hunt narrative from Australia to England respectively, reflecting on the nuances of cultural proliferation from metropole to periphery and its reversal as transcultural colonial import. Lindy Stiebel and Matthew Shum's chapters consider the geo-political significance of Southern African exploration and mapping in critically underappreciated reports of colonial expedition. Stiebel examines the artist-explorer Thomas Baines as a writer and mapper of settler interests, looking particularly at his accounts of his last expedition to Zululand for Cetshwayo kaMpander's coronation. Meanwhile, Shum considers the naturalist William Burchell's two-volume *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* to problematise readings of the colonial scientist as merely a conduit of empire.

The final section, 'Indigenous/Diasporic', perhaps best achieves the useful comparatism of local specificity and contextualisation of south-south relations proposed in the introduction. This is in no small part down to the particular staging of

[6] Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989), p. 13.

the relationship between settler colonised and indigenous which these chapters investigate. As Comyn and Fermanis highlight, there are practical and ethical tensions that exist between Settler Colonial Studies and Indigenous theorists, who attest that Settler Studies reify and replicate the 'structural inevitability' of colonial power.[7] The editors carefully draw on the work of Indigenous Studies scholars to position *Worlding the South* as something of a porous intermediary between these divided fields. Indeed, chapters that attend to indigenous ontologies and epistemes throughout the collection are some of the most effective in their analysis. For example, Grace Moore's chapter on Louise Atkinson's recasting of the Australian landscape thoroughly accounts for indigenous ways of knowing land and succeeds in being neither appropriative nor reifying of settler logics.

Chapters in 'Indigenous/Diasporic' particularly address the racialised nature of the colonial archive. Anna Johnston's contribution, for example, considers the efforts of Australian colonialists Eliza Hamilton Dunlop and Harriott Barlow to learn local indigenous languages, while Michelle Elleray examines the Cook Islander Kiro's travel journals in England. Others are concerned with imperial literacy and specific indigenous and diasporic reading and writing cultures under colonisation. Nikki Hessel's brilliant chapter concerns the reappropriation of Thomas Babington Macauley's verse by Aotearoa Mauri in petitions to secure their lands in colonial New Zealand. Meanwhile, Manu Samriti Chander examines the tensions raised by literary productions in British Guiana, where the rise of periodical culture furthered a systematic othering of the Indigenous Guianese. Chander's analysis of the political role of periodical culture is complemented by Porscha Fermanis' chapter on the *Straits Chinese Magazine,* in which she reads subversions of imperial notions like European comparatism to reveal a strategically anticolonial project.

The sheer number of chapters, and geographic scale, of the literary cultures covered in *Worlding the South* is both a strength and a weakness of the volume. In the introduction, Comyn and Fermanis propose that the chapters each speak to a methodological position that prioritises 'southern perspectives and south-south relations'. Simultaneously, however, they emphasise a focus on '"worldings" – rather than on south-south exchange'. At times, it can be difficult to comprehend the nuances

[7] Comyn and Fermanis. p. 8.

of this position, and particularly to trace these unifying themes through a study of this size. Rather, the reader is left to draw their own conclusions as to the nature of 'south-south relations' from the ordering of the studies. Specific attention to these relations will be a fruitful next step for nineteenth-century global literary studies.

Nevertheless, the collection certainly achieves the editors' broader aim of reorienting the competing perspectives of the British empire's southern colonies and their peoples against metropolitan perspectives; achievement enough in a study of such widescale and heterogenous literary cultures. Although some scholars of global long-nineteenth-century literature may be inclined to read this collection as a whole, its wider use may be as a reference for those researching specific southern literary cultures. Either reading mode will have value, although, as Elleke Boehmer puts it in her afterword, understanding southern hemisphere histories holistically reveals many 'tenuous and yet still tenacious conjunctions [...] often realised in or crystallised through maps, books, letters, panoramas, and other kinds of inscription and installation'.[8] Boehmer imagines the south as network – verbal, textual, cartographic – with *Worlding the South* presenting the kind of transnational and transactional account that undermines existing approaches to the colonial archive that reinforce notions of inevitability. This theoretical variety and exercise in 'worlding' render the book an exceptional introduction to settler colonial literary cultures. It is an important read for any scholar of the global nineteenth century.

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[8] Ibid. p. 379.

RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Mark A. Allison, Imagining Socialism: Aesthetics, Anti-politics, and Literature in Britain, 1817-1918 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021) 288pp. ISBN 9780192896490, £70.00.

SOPHIE THOMPSON

IN *IMAGINING SOCIALISM*, Mark A. Allison takes as his subject the entanglement of nineteenth-century British socialism with artistic, literary, and other aesthetic endeavours. This is by no means a new project: Ian Britain, Ruth Livesey, Diana Maltz and Chris Waters, among others, have noted the central role aesthetics played in late nineteenth-century socialist circles.[1] What makes Allison's *Imagining Socialism* unique, however, is its association of the creative and artistic socialism that emerged towards the end of the century — well-known for its major figures like William Morris — with other, earlier proponents of nineteenth-century socialism in Britain, such as Robert Owen, the Chartists and the Christian Socialists. While the work of Britain, Livesey, Maltz, Waters and others focuses on the fin de siècle, Allison traces a socialist aestheticism throughout the century. Allison's connecting thread is the anti-governmental ideological underpinnings of these individuals and groups, which he terms 'anti-politics': a utopian, emancipatory and imaginative vision of decentralised communality that defined many early socialist movements.[2] *Imagining Socialism*'s premise is itself boldly utopian, opening with Allison's claim that socialism 'is best understood as *a goal to be imagined*, rather than an ideological program to be instantiated'.[3]

Imagining Socialism strives to make new connections between what are traditionally read as distinct strands of socialism — Owenism, Chartism and Christian Socialism — by identifying their subtle and overlooked aesthetic qualities. Allison's

[1] See Ian Britain, *Fabianism and Culture: A Study of British Socialism and the Arts 1884-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Ruth Livesey, *Socialism, Sex, and the Culture of Aestheticism in Britain, 1880–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Diana Maltz, *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870–1900: Beauty for the People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

[2] Mark A. Allison, *Imagining Socialism: Aesthetics, Anti-Politics, and Literature in Britain, 1817-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 7.

[3] Ibid., p. 2, emphasis in original.

description of both Owenism and Christian Socialism — usually regarded as strictly utilitarian — as aesthetic is particularly novel. Allison also resists the distinction usually made by scholars of nineteenth-century socialist history between early socialism (defined as approximately 1817-1845) and the fin-de-siècle 'socialist revival' (beginning in the early 1880s). Instead, Allison proposes a 'long socialism' to trace an anti-political socialist aesthetic throughout the entire century.[4] Bookended by two very specific moments in British socialist history, *Imagining Socialism* traces this anti-political line: beginning with the unveiling of Robert Owen's 'Plan' for communitarian villages in the summer of 1817 and ending with the adoption of a constitution for the parliamentary Labour Party in 1918. For Allison, these defining moments mark a century of an idealistic, 'imaginative', anti-political socialist aesthetic.

Allison identifies Robert Owen's radical blueprint for 'Villages of Unity and Mutual Cooperation' as 'British socialism's symbolic birth'.[5] Owen's plan was rejected by parliament in 1817 and so he ultimately enacted it himself in the village surrounding his cotton mill at New Lanark. Despite Owen's reputation for utilitarianism, Allison identifies a latent aesthetic logic in Owen's plan to create a model society of 'universal harmony', a logic of which Owen himself may not have been aware.[6] Allison bases this argument principally on an examination of Owen's radical curriculum at his New Lanark schools, which elevated the arts — particularly music, dancing and singing — over more traditional subjects. Allison persuasively argues for a fundamentally aesthetic basis to Owen's urban planning, from the parallelogram shape of his villages to his 'childlike fondness' for visual demonstrations, such as drawings and three-dimensional models.[7]

Chapter two remains in the early nineteenth century, but turns to Chartism, with an exploration of Capel Lofft's incendiary Chartist poem, 'Ernest; or, Political Regeneration' (1839). In the first analysis of the poem in English since the century of its publication, Allison finds Lofft's narrative of agrarian insurrection intriguing, though not for its author's use of the aesthetic: the aesthetic character of Chartism is well-established, and scholars have already studied in detail 'the unity of politics and poetry'

[4] Ibid., p. 6.

[5] Ibid., p. 25.

[6] Robert Owen, 'Petition to Both Houses of Parliament' in *A Supplementary Volume to the Life of Robert Owen* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1858), p. xxiv.

[7] Allison, pp. 37, 59.

that underpins the 'Chartist imaginary'.[8] Rather, Allison focuses on the poem's distinctive 'ideological extremism', which led to fears that the poem itself would incite revolution, making it too seditious at the time for publication in its original form.[9] While this chapter is based on a more conventional literary analysis than the previous one, Allison's foregrounding of the poem's commitment to revolution and provocation of violence will certainly be of interest to scholars of Victorian radicalism and working-class culture.

In chapter three, Allison re-evaluates the mid-century Christian Socialists, arguing for the critical importance of the movement as 'a hinge' between early and late nineteenth-century socialism.[10] Challenging criticisms that their political project was inauthentic and that Christian and Socialist values were incompatible, Allison contends that the Christian Socialists managed to reach 'a purposive, meaningful alignment for only the briefest of periods — when they made use of the resources of the aesthetic'.[11] To illustrate this, Allison undertakes an analysis of Charles Kingsley's influential novel, *Alton Locke: Tailor and Poet* (1850) and, more abstractly, shows that, despite their practical failure, Christian Socialist cooperative workshops or 'Working-Men's Associations' functioned as an aesthetic symbol.[12] As with the first chapter on Owen, Allison's most fruitful analysis is that which deals with aesthetic forms beyond literature, such as workshops and urban planning.

Allison finds more evidence of the interplay between anti-politics and aesthetics '*between* the two major waves' of British socialism in chapter four, finding utopian socialist influence in an iconic text of the period: George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-2).[13] Allison's argument in this chapter — that socialist doctrine forms *Middlemarch*'s principal structure, as Eliot exploits socialist discourse to narrate the utopian (and anti-political) possibilities of love and gender equality — gives a new perspective on this

[8] See, for example, Margaret A. Loose, *The Chartist Imaginary: Literary Form in Working-Class Political Theory and Practice* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2014) and Mike Sanders, *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 6.

[9] Allison, p. 78.

[10] Ibid., p. 115.

[11] Ibid., p. 115.

[12] Ibid., p. 134.

[13] Ibid., p. 6, emphasis in original.

much-studied novel. Nevertheless, this chapter is substantively weaker than the rest: in the absence of any major movements in the period between the Chartists and the so-called 'socialist revival', Allison relies on a single literary text without further evidence and context to support his thesis.

It would be impossible to write a book about socialist, anti-political aesthetics without mention of William Morris, the subject of *Imagining Socialism*'s final chapter. As such, this is the book's least revelatory chapter, although it does manage to cover some new ground. Here Allison investigates the conflict between Morris's simultaneous desire for radical material simplification and domesticity, and an aesthetic ideal of cooperative craft in *News from Nowhere* (1890). This conflict has been theorised by numerous critics, including the previously mentioned Ruth Livesey. Allison does, however, add fresh insight by identifying Morris's ideological struggle in the character of Ellen, whom he posits as the personification of utopian desire through which Morris repeatedly problematises the novel's utopian message.

Allison chooses to end his study at 1918, citing the advent of Bolshevism, the formation of the Labour Party and modernism's individualist aesthetic. As Allison himself admits, this is a somewhat arbitrary endpoint in his attempt to define a 'socialist century' in Britain.[14] Allison addresses this temporal untidiness in the epilogue with a concluding analysis of H. G. Wells, who, for him, epitomises both the late-Victorian socialist and proto-modernist: not just an outlier ahead of his time but the beginning of a real shift in socialism towards a non-aesthetic statism. However, there are more fundamental issues that Allison does not address. For instance, Allison's argument that socialism transformed into a pragmatic, statist movement around 1918 overlooks the enduring influence of Owen, Morris and others' utopian aestheticism on modern political and anti-political thought. One can see the same aesthetic, anti-political bent in the utopian communities of the mid-twentieth century, such as Dartington Hall, and even in the recent resurgence of community initiatives to provide access to green spaces, such as community gardens and guerrilla gardening, based on both aesthetic and egalitarian principles.

[14] Ibid., p. 223.

Nonetheless, I applaud Allison's efforts to counter the imperfect periodisation that persists in studies of socialist history. *Imagining Socialism* considers the ambiguous, unexamined and latent aspects of socialist discourse in the long nineteenth century; its most exciting chapters are those on Owen, the Chartists and the Christian Socialists, which look not just at specific literary works but aesthetic logics, symbols and underpinnings. The text's greatest strength is the success with which Allison has drawn a line of anti-political aestheticism from Owenism through to Morris in ways not done previously. By illuminating the movement's commonalities and connections throughout the nineteenth century, Allison's move away from strict periodisation is a productive one. It opens up the possibility for more reappraisals of socialist lineage and further consideration of the significance of the middle of the nineteenth century, a period often forgotten in socialist histories.

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Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: James Epstein and David Karr, British Jacobin Politics, Desires, and Aftermaths: Seditious Hearts (London: Routledge, 2021) 404pp. ISBN 978-1-003-02880-2, £120.00.

JOSHUA SMITH

'I ADOPT THE term *Jacobinism* without hesitation', wrote John Thelwall in 1796, 'because it is fixed upon us, as a stigma by our enemies'.[1] In *Seditious Hearts*, James Epstein and David Karr seek to understand the motives of those who, like Thelwall, committed themselves, often openly, to radical reform. The introduction and opening chapter of this monograph are co-authored by Epstein and Karr, who each contribute four further chapters respectively. A number of these essays have appeared as earlier versions elsewhere, here they are expanded and brought together to constitute a robust analysis of British radicalism in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. The work is structured into two parts. The first analyses a 'strain' of Jacobinism existing in British radicalism in the 1790s, the second examines its resurrection in 1817 and memorialisation during the 1830s. The work concludes with a consideration of the political and intellectual life of social historian E.P. Thompson (1924-1993).

Chapter one is an able demonstration of what kind of work *Seditious Hearts* is. Epstein and Karr are not concerned with re-examining long standing historiographical questions such as how revolutionary the 'British plebeian movement' was, nor with demonstrating the existence of a 'faction' of British Jacobins.[2] Indeed, they generally sidestep debates of conceptual nomenclature around the applicability of the term 'Jacobin', whilst acknowledging that it was both a pejorative title foisted upon reformers by their political opponents and multi-stranded ideology in its own sense.[3] Epstein and Karr instead chart a 'Jacobin moment', a brief period within the early 1790s in which British reformers were able to identify publicly with French revolutionary principles and

[1] John Thelwall, *The Rights of Nature Against the Usurpations of Establishments... Part the Second* (London: H.D. Symonds, 1796), p. 32.

[2] James Epstein and David Karr, *British Jacobin Politics, Desires, and Aftermaths: Seditious Hearts* (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 20, 42.

[3] Ibid, pp. 4, 19. The epithet has, however, seen a recent revival in its use as a term of analysis. See, for example, Tom Scriven, 'The Electoral Politics of the English Jacobins and Its Legacy, 1796-1807', *The Journal of British Studies*, 60.4 (2021), 890-918.

in which a 'Jacobinism', as 'a dialogic construction', was articulated within a space between loyalist, government and radical exchange.[4] To illustrate this, Epstein and Karr re-analyse traditional sources, such as court records and histories by 'respectable' radicals such as Thomas Hardy or Francis Place for the performative gestures of radicals which speak to more conspiratorial actions and 'desires'. This is the methodology at work through the resulting chapters, highlighting the instability of language and meaning and the diversities within British radicalism through an analysis of performance, emotion and space. As such, it goes one step beyond the methods of discourse analysis used by scholars such as Mark Philp and Jon Mee, whose work Epstein and Karr engage with throughout *Seditious Hearts*.[5]

The strands of 'Jacobinism' within British radicalism of the 1790s are persuasively outlined in the following chapters, even if the authors repeatedly recognise that the reformist movement, as a whole, remained primarily constitutionalist in its actions and aims.[6] Chapters two and four examine British Jacobins' relation to space and sociability, in the meetings of the London Corresponding Society and within the London bourgeois public sphere respectively. Chapter three explores the role of 'Jacobinism' in radical theatre through a close reading of two plays by Thomas Holcroft, *The Road to Ruin* (1792) and *The Deserted Daughter* (1795), including an analysis of his theatrical practice. Closing part one, chapter five analyses the place of America in the imagination of British radicals who constituted a network of craftsmen, early Romantics, middle-class intellectuals and Dissenters centred on Newgate prison.[7] Throughout, both Epstein and Karr argue that the actions of radicals during this period were tightly managed and that 'Jacobinism' itself was granted meaning by the 'communicative conditions' enforced by loyalist authority, including the threat of social ostracism, political violence, prosecution, imprisonment and transportation.[8] Yet this repression could be productive, opening up

[4] Epstein and Karr, p. 20.

[5] Mark Philp, 'The Fragmented Ideology of Reform', in *Reforming Ideas in Britain: Politics and Language in the Shadow of the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 32-35; Jon Mee, *Print, Publicity and Popular Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[6] Epstein and Karr, pp. 19, 197.

[7] This is by no means an unexplored topic. See, for example, Emma Macleod, *British Visions of America, 1775-1820: Republican Realities* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 127-152.

[8] Epstein and Karr, p. 42.

spaces to politically-radical performance, or 'counter-theatre', whether in the courtroom, public theatre, coffeehouse or tavern.[9] This is a valuable line of enquiry, one that builds upon contemporary studies of performance and linguistics.[10] However, this opposition, whether popular or civic, is frequently depicted by Epstein and Karr as vindictive and paranoid, even one-dimensional in its outlook, overlooking recent attempts to nuance political loyalism in the revolutionary period.[11]

The second part of the monograph explores the 'aftermaths' and 'recurrence[s]' of British Jacobinism after the 1790s. Chapter six examines its re-emergence in political and literary culture in 1817 at four key moments: the mass petitioning campaign of that year, the publication of Robert Southey's *Wat Tyler*, the Blanketeers' march and the execution of the Pentrich rebels. Chapter seven analyses the memorialisation of radical memory and the 'Scottish Martyrs' during the 1830s. In doing so, Epstein and Karr valuably expand the scope of this work to encompass the legacies of 1790s radicalism that persisted into the nineteenth century. Chapter eight concludes the work with an examination of the life, writing and methodology of E.P. Thompson. This inclusion proves that more than half a century after the publication of *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), Thompson's work continues to be a major reference point in British radical studies.[12] The chapter is a fitting end to a work which greatly expands on many of the themes raised by Thompson, even if its content means it stands slightly out of step with the essays that precede it.

This is a lengthy and intricate work that covers an extraordinary variety of topics, from Covent Garden theatre to the printing network at Newgate prison, early Romantic poetry to radical intrigue in colonial Australia. It is a challenging but rewarding read, meticulously grounded in the literature of several scholarly fields. Considering this, its few deficiencies seem marginal. One limitation is that for a study of 'British Jacobin

[9] Ibid, p. 20.

[10] For example, Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[11] See Mark Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism 1792/3', in *Reforming Ideas in Britain: Politics and Language in the Shadow of the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 40-70.

[12] See also Roger Fieldhouse and Richard Taylor, eds., *E. P. Thompson and English Radicalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

Politics', much of the focus is upon a London circle of English radicals. Beyond chapter seven, and briefly chapter one, little mention is made of Scotland, and even less of radical and 'Jacobin' actors in either Ireland or Wales.[13] Moreover, the book may have benefitted from a co-authored conclusion in parallel to the co-authored introduction and opening chapter. This would have provided an opportunity to draw out further themes from previous chapters and to re-affirm one of the work's key contentions: that there existed a 'Jacobin' strand within British radicalism of the 1790s which continued to have implications for the radical movement into the nineteenth century, an argument made openly in chapter one, but only implicitly in subsequent chapters.

Nevertheless, *Seditious Hearts* is successful in synthesising and building upon recent scholarship in a range of fields, including spatial analysis, print culture, the history of emotions and memory, radical theatre, as well as transatlantic and trans-imperial radicalism. The work should be praised for analysing British radicalism within a larger frame of context than the decade of the 1790s, remaining alive to its continuities and alterations beyond this period. By untangling the competing actions, thoughts and emotions of reformers in the aftermath of the French Revolution, Epstein and Karr provide a valuable contribution to scholarship on British radicalism in the early nineteenth century.

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[13] Epstein and Karr do acknowledge these omissions in chapter one (p. 19). On radicalism in the British Isles beyond London, see Marianne Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982); J.D. Brims, 'The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh (1983); Elaine W. McFarland, 'Scottish Radicalism in the later Eighteenth Century: "The Social Thistle and Shamrock"', in T.M. Devine and J.R. Young, eds., *Eighteenth Century Scotland: New Perspectives* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 275-98; Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), pp. 13-44.

borrowing records of eighteen historic libraries in Scotland over the course of the long eighteenth century.

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Béatrice Laurent, Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021), 262pp. ISBN 978-1-789-97486-7, £45.00.

GEORGIA TOUMARA

Béatrice Laurent's latest volume *Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination* provides a well-researched study on how the notion of the 'liquefaction of woman' gradually formed the '"water woman" complex'.[1] In the tradition of Clifford Geertz's theory of thick description, Laurent uses a collection of 'facts, objects, texts of fiction and non-fiction, art and other visual sources', in order to illustrate 'how the aquatic element became gendered and how water-related questions manipulate and qualify analogically questions related to femininity'.[2] At the intersection of ecocriticism and new materialism, Laurent's focus on materiality (water, art, infrastructure) constructs an intricate semiotic web that demonstrates the connection between the environment and the female figure in the Victorian imagination.[3]

The linkage of mythical qualities with womanhood in the nineteenth century has been the subject of various studies, such as Susan Casteras's *The Substance or the Shadow: Images of Victorian Womanhood* (1982), and Stephanie Barczewski's chapter, '"I have made his glory mine": Women and the Nation in the Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood' in the volume *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain*: *The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (2000). Susan Casteras recognises the heterogeneity of Victorian 'cultural mythology', pointing to the depiction of women as hybrid sea creatures, vampires and nymphs.[4] More specifically, Barczewski explores Victorian authors' endeavours to present King Arthur's and Robin Hood's female figures

[1] Béatrice Laurent, *Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021), p. 7.

[2] Ibid, pp. 1, 2.

[3] Ibid., p. 3. Stacy Alaimo posits that 'once materiality – that of human bodies, animal bodies, environments, ecosystems, water, chemicals, and other substances – is recognized as active, as doing things that we may or may not be able to capture or understand, then it is difficult to divide human from environment, mind from body, knowing from being'. Stacy Alaimo, 'Foreword: Gender, Ecology, and New Materialisms,' in *Gendered Ecologies: New Materialist Interpretations of Women Writers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Dewey W. Hall and Jillmarie Murphy (Clemson, SC: Clemson University Press, 2020), pp. 1-6 (p. 3).

[4] Susan Casteras, *The Substance or the Shadow: Images of Victorian Womanhood* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1982), pp. 47-49.

(Guinevere, Vivien, Maid Marian) as vicious, dangerous and over-sexualised entities that menaced gender spheres, reflecting the 'New Woman' anxieties of the late nineteenth century.[5] While such works pay considerable attention to the nuances of women's representation in nineteenth-century culture, Laurent is the first to deal in full with the implications of the association between water and women, building on her previous work in *Sleeping Beauties in Victorian Britain*, which took Victorian attitudes towards femininity in fairytales as its subject.[6] Laurent's achievement in her monograph lies in her construction of an all-encompassing definition of the 'water woman', which 'signif[ies] the junction where scientific, cultural, literary and artistic interests converge at a particular moment in the larger network of intellectual history'.[7]

In chapter one, entitled 'Context: Speculations on the Origin of the Water', Laurent opens with a consideration of several proto-scientific 'speculations on the origins of the world'.[8] From Thomas Burnet's cosmogony theory, *Telluris Theoria Sacra, or Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681-9), Laurent's discussion turns upon the representation of the Deluge. Building upon George Landow's seminal work *Images of Crisis: Literary Iconology, 1750 to the Present* (1982), she notes that the representation of the Deluge is ingrained in the social consciousness and functions as a creative force; as she puts it, 'the Flood moved from a remote and almost mythical distance to a very contemporary experience'.[9] For Laurent, the Deluge offers a starting point in understanding the presence of water in early-nineteenth-century scientific and artistic thought. This is not necessarily an original position –in his 2013 study, *Discovering Gilgamesh: Geology, Narrative and the Historical Sublime in Victorian Culture*, Vybarr Cregan-Reid devotes a substantial part of his analysis to the significance of water and the theme of the Deluge in art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[10] Although

[5] Stephanie Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legend of Kind Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 171- 200.

[6] Béatrice Laurent, *Sleeping Beauties in Victorian Britain: Cultural, Literacy and Artistic Explorations of a Myth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2015).

[7] Laurent, *Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination,* p. 65.

[8] Ibid., p. 9.

[9] Ibid., p. 29.

[10] Vybarr Cregan-Reid, *Discovering Gilgamesh: Geology, Narrative and the Historical Sublime in Victorian Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 74.

Laurent's thread on proto-scientific theories and Hippocratic elements provides the reader with interesting new material thereon, it does little at this point to elucidate the connections between science, gender and the nineteenth-century imagination.

In chapter two, 'Pure Water', Laurent moves from cosmogony theories to the integration of water cures in nineteenth-century Britain, laying stress on how hydropathy influenced artistic endeavours. She argues that the numerous paintings featuring bathing nymphs in the early nineteenth century 'echoed the contemporary concern with water cures'.[11] She proposes that this movement in art can be split into two periods. The first period revolves around the motif of watching women bathing from a distance using elements from Greek mythology (e.g., Thomas Stothard, *Diana and her Nymphs Bathing,* 1815), while the second period draws material from national mythology, namely Musidora and Sabrina (e.g., William Etty's *Musidora: The Bather 'At the Doubtful Breeze Alarmed'*, 1846). Laurent links the convergence of national identity, water cures and science to the construction of the 'water woman complex'.[12] Here, water becomes, as she explains, a 'pure – and therefore angelic or feminine – element', a notion promogulated by the hydropathist, Richard Metcalfe, who championed water's ability to 'restore the national pride and sense of wholesomeness'.[13]

In chapter three, '"Troubled" Questions: Water and Women', Laurent explores how, 'the innocent association of water and women implemented in the first half of the nineteenth century, to support water cures for instance, took a different turn in the second half, and promoted a corpus of literary and artistic drowned, suicidal, hysteric or fallen women'.[14] Laurent's focus turns to still water, the image of 'woman-by-the-pond', and the figures of Father Thames and Ophelia.[15] Her analysis of Charles Allston Collins's painting, *Convent Thoughts* (1851) presents an interesting angle on how 'watery surface creates *mise en abyme*'.[16] This point might have been better elucidated through exploration of other artistic works which capture women gazing at themselves in bodies of water. The following section on the unhygienic state of the river Thames

[11] Laurent, *Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination*, p. 38.

[12] Ibid., p. 65.

[13] Ibid., pp. 67, 69.

[14] Ibid., p. 72.

[15] Ibid., p. 72.

[16] Ibid., p. 75.

and the figure of Father Thames seems less relevant to the rest of the chapter. Laurent's association of fallen women and suicide with the water of the Thames could be better integrated with her previous discussion on water, women and reflection. The figure of Ophelia, for example, might have been linked from the start with the concept of 'woman-by-the-pond'.[17]

In chapter four, 'Sea Water' and Chapter Five, 'Sirens and Storms', Laurent takes a different direction from the previous chapters, dealing with contemporary maritime evolutionary theories and imaginative constructions of the 'water woman'. Her analysis, inspired by the work of Gillian Beer, revolves around three representations of the water woman: the fertile figure of seawater, the eroticised figure of Venus and the 'seductive water woman' in the form of the mythical figures of sirens and mermaids.[18] For Laurent, both the mermaid and the siren 'represented the primal, uncivilised world of bestial barbarity, because she lived in water her femininity was let loose in her natural element'.[19] Laurent links back to Chapter One in her relation of the uncivilised nature of the woman, shipwrecks, catastrophe, and the Deluge, but, once again, these connections would have benefitted from greater depth over breadth.

In chapter six, 'Domesticated Water', Laurent continues her analysis of fears surrounding the water woman, concentrating on the materiality of water, and especially practices of sanitisation and the controlling of water. Acts of Parliament, the Thames embankments, water fountains and improved sanitisation contributed to differing perception of water from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Laurent contends that the construction of embankments along the river Thames in the 1860s worked to counter the rebellious potentiality of the water woman, bringing her closer in line with the image of 'The Angel in the House'; the main purpose of this confinement was 'to rule elusive water by giving it boundaries [...] to enclose fluidity within solidity'.[20] Laurent's final chapter doubles as a conclusion, making for a somewhat abrupt end. Briefly discussing paintings such as Frederic Leighton's *Actaea, the Nymph of the Shore* (1868) and *Psamathe* (1879-1880), and John William Waterhouse's *A Mermaid* (1900), where women now present harmless and quiet figures, Laurent argues that by the end

[17] Ibid., p. 72.

[18] Ibid., p. 179.

[19] Ibid., p. 179.

[20] Ibid., pp. 207, 208.

of the nineteenth century, after a 'full cycle of worshipping, demonising, chastising, taming and finally commodifying the water woman', she had been neutralised as a threat.[21]

Laurent's volume brings together a wealth of material from the visual arts, literature, philosophy, acts of parliament, evolutionary theories and engineering projects. As such, it is an important addition to nineteenth-century studies, demonstrating how the notion of water pervaded British society and shaped women's identity. Even though Laurent provides dense, well-informed, interpretations of complex cultural situations, at times the sheer range of material makes for weak synthesis. The use of subheadings in each chapter might have helped to better signal the various changes of subject to the reader. Despite these caveats, *Water and Women in the Victorian Imagination* constitutes a detailed critical discussion on the interconnections between gender, society and water in the Victorian imagination, leaving the door open to further interrogations of the 'water woman' at the fin de siècle and beyond.

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[21] Ibid., pp. 238-239.

RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Sarah Bartels, The Devil and the Victorians: Supernatural Evil in Nineteenth-Century English Culture (New York: Routledge, 2021) 236pp. ISBN-978-0-367-44420-4, £120.00.

HAYLEY SMITH

SARAH BARTELS'S *THE Devil and the Victorians* invites readers on a journey across a range of nineteenth-century cultural and religious landscapes, with a view to identifying and assessing the various guises and conceptualisations of the Victorian Devil. In doing so, Bartels provides an exploration into the Devil's complex representations in nineteenth-century religion, folklore, occultism, popular culture, literature and theatre, demonstrating the continually ambivalent and fluid relationship between the Devil and his contemporaries. Focusing specifically on the role of the diabolic in Victorian England, *The Devil and the Victorians* thus seeks to negotiate a complicated site of conflicts and intersections between theological, popular, and creative perceptions of the Devil. Challenging the 'still relatively common perception among historians that the Devil was only of minor cultural and theological relevance in a nineteenth-century English context', Bartels presents readers with ample evidence that the Devil continued to retain a hold on the Victorian imagination.[1]

Given the level of scholarly interest in the supernatural in nineteenth-century England, there is a surprising silence surrounding the Devil.[2] Research has instead often focused on the role of Spiritualism and other contemporary occult movements, not least because of their 'striking popularity' during this time.[3] Bartels suggests that this 'neglect is related to the broader issue of the lack of research

[1] Sarah Bartels, *The Devil and the Victorians: Supernatural Evil in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2021), p. 224.

[2] See, for example: Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); and Alison Butler, *Victorian Occultism and the Making of Modern Magic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[3] Oppenheim, p. 160.

into the modern diabolic'.[4] The most extensive investigations into the nineteenth-century Devil to date include David L. Pike's *Metropolis on the Styx: The Underworlds of Modern Urban Culture, 1800–2001* (2007) and Per Faxneld's *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Women in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (2017). These studies, however, do not offer the broader cultural and religious history necessary to understanding the significance of the Victorian Devil, situating Bartels's research as a crucial intervention in the field.

Any discussion of Victorian religion and spiritual belief (or disbelief) must contend with the so-called 'crisis of faith', a term used to describe the shifting attitudes towards organised religion throughout the century. Bartels navigates this with ease, pointing out that the Devil did not simply disappear from Victorian society because of this contemporary religious crisis. Rather, 'tradition and innovation' can 'coexist', Bartels argues, 'with older ideas about evil being both rigorously challenged and passionately defended as well as constantly remodelled and repurposed'.[5] The identity of the Victorian Devil becomes, therefore, a story of adaptation and transformation, as much as one of controversy and decline. Bartels must be praised for the breadth of primary sources she utilises throughout *The Devil in the Victorians* to exemplify this argument, including – amongst others – newspapers and periodicals, fiction and poetry, books on spiritualism, religion and folklore, broadsides and ephemera.[6] Although the vast array of material used in this survey attempts to mitigate any evidential gaps, as Bartels herself acknowledges, most of the sources have middle- and upper-class origins. Consequently, Bartels's discussion of the popular role of the Devil in Chapter Four forms a relatively brief part of the work. The relative lack of source material written by or for the working classes poses a greater challenge in understanding the Devil's place within this segment of Victorian society.

Nevertheless, Bartels's study provides an impressive range of cultural backdrops against which she grounds her investigation into the Victorian Devil. The first chapter examines the theological Devil, surveying the diverse ways in

[4] Bartels, p. 9.

[5] Ibid., p. 11.

[6] Ibid., p. 12.

which he featured in the beliefs and practices of contemporary religious denominations, from the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church to Nonconformist and Secularist groups. Despite his increasingly complex and protean role in the nineteenth-century imagination, the Devil, Bartels notes, could also appear in his traditional form, as a 'safe-guarder of cultural morality'.[7] The first chapter, therefore, immediately illustrates Bartels's argument, as readers learn how the diabolic was perceived as both traditional and yet strikingly modern – a concept in a constant state of adaptation and change. Chapter Two similarly examines the mutability of the Devil, this time placing the figure within a folkloric context in which he was treated with seriousness and humour alike. A constant presence in Victorian folklore, the Devil presents himself, Bartels suggests, through direct encounters, the landscape, flora and fauna, entertainment, magic, and as a 'scapegoat for […] inexplicable and devastating problems', from disease to crop failure.[8] Bartels recognises that opinions on the folkloric Devil were divided but argues that ultimately such differences only serve to highlight the figure's continual presence, persistence and adaptability.

Bartels's third chapter turns to the occult Devil in Victorian England. While the Devil has been considered in passing within scholarship surrounding nineteenth-century spiritualism and occultism, Bartels's study offers the first sustained assessment of the role that the Devil played – amongst other groups and movements – in mesmerism, spiritualism, occultism, and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.[9] Bartels goes on to argue that the ambiguous role of the occult Devil in these controversial and nonconformist environments was often symbolically charged, with the diabolic appearing to exemplify 'whatever an individual disagreed with or wished to define themselves in opposition to', or as an 'emblem of spiritual rebellion'.[10] Once again, Bartels captures the ever-present yet ever-changing nature of the Devil in Victorian culture; there in all his subversive possibility. Moving on to consider the Victorian conceptualisation of the Devil in

[7] Ibid., p. 43.

[8] Ibid., p. 84.

[9] See, for example, Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture, 1736-1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

[10] Bartels, p. 147.

popular culture, Chapter Four reflects upon the versatility of the diabolic in 'pastimes enjoyed chiefly by the Victorian lower classes', thereby working towards, if never fully attaining, a more holistic view of the Devil across different socio-economic backgrounds.[11] According to Bartels, the Devil infiltrated popular culture, from the English language to broadsides, and from popular literature to live entertainment, such as Punch and Judy shows. The chapter aptly focuses on the 'murky interrelationship of humour and horror' which defined the popular Devil, revealing the figure's ambivalence as crucial to his marketability in contemporary culture.[12]

In the final chapter, Bartels considers the various representations of the Devil in nineteenth-century literature and theatre. Acknowledging the Victorian humanisation of the literary and theatrical Devil, Bartels explores the significant influences acting upon writers' conceptions of the diabolic, including the Satan of John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* (1667) and the influence of the Faustian legend, appearing in versions like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (1808). Bartels investigates how the publication of Goethe's *Faust* at the beginning of the century inspired and influenced a range of works that employed the diabolic in both verse and prose, demonstrating the legend's ubiquitous place in contemporary literature. Bartels concludes that 'Victorian writers took advantage of the Devil's mutability, with their work veering from the nonsensical humour of the pantomime to the terror of the ghost story', with laughable figures like the 'Demon King' of the Manchester Queen's Theatre 1886 Christmas production and Marie Corelli's chilling *The Sorrows of Satan* (1895) populating the same literary and theatrical landscape.[13] This variety of representations reveals the creative potential of the Devil's plasticity for nineteenth-century writers and theatre-makers, and once again attests to his widespread presence in the Victorian cultural imagination.

Bartels's study consequently demonstrates the constant existence of the Devil throughout a range of cultural and religious landscapes in Victorian England, continually revealing the complexity, ambivalence, and shifting nature of the

[11] Ibid., p. 159.

[12] Ibid., p. 180.

[13] Ibid., pp. 208–210.

diabolic in the nineteenth century. While *The Devil and the Victorians* certainly employs a wealth of material, there may be further room for research to investigate contemporary representations of the Devil amongst other visual and auditory media, like art and popular music. Such investigations might – in part, at least – help to fill the evidential gap in source material pertaining to the working classes, and allow critics to further account for the sensorial dimensions of the Devil in the popular imaginary. Nevertheless, Bartels's work convincingly challenges the implication that the Devil was of little importance to nineteenth-century culture, showing that the Devil was not simply in the details, but at large in Victorian society.

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Emma Rice (dir.) Wuthering Heights, Wise Children (National Theatre, London), 4 February - 19 March 2022.

BETHANY APPLETON

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH Emma Rice's work will not be surprised to find that her production of *Wuthering Heights* at the National Theatre puts an unconventional spin on Emily Brontë's 1847 novel.[1] After stepping down as Artistic Director at the Globe in 2018 due to creative disagreements with the theatre's board, Rice founded her own theatre company, Wise Children, with whom she now brings to the stage this latest endeavour.[2]

Rice's metatheatrical approach to adapting the novel is clear from the outset. The set is stripped back and bare; the legs have been removed, granting a view straight into the wings, around which black-clad stage managers can be seen moving during the performance, tossing props to the actors. By exposing the bones of the theatre space in this way, the set design establishes a production at pains to remind its audience that they are watching a constructed reality. Rice's approach thus stands in contrast to previous adaptations, like the most recent major film adaptation, Andrea Arnold's gritty and naturalistic 2011 version, low on dialogue, but full of shaky-camera shots of skies and hillside vistas, animals and inclement weather.[3] This production has more in common with Armando Iannucci's 2019 *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, or even Carrie Cracknell's 2022 *Persuasion.*[4] Both films cast a racially-diverse group of actors, and, with differing levels of success, strive to show viewers that they are wry, self-reflexive, and aware of their own artifice. Rice follows suit: the play opens with the Leader of the Moor (Nandi Bhebhe) beginning to read from a book, and closes

[1] The performances at the National Theatre were part of a tour which originated at the Bristol Old Vic and concluded at the King's Theatre in Edinburgh.

[2] Kate Kellaway, 'Emma Rice: "I don't know how I got to be so controversial"', *The Guardian,* 1 July 2018.

[3] *Wuthering Heights*, dir. Andrea Arnold (Curzon Artificial Eye, 2011).

[4] See *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, dir. Armando Iannucci (Lionsgate, 2019) and *Persuasion*, dir. Carrie Cracknell (Netflix, 2022).

with a projection of the final page of the novel's manuscript – the audience is never to doubt that they are being told a story.

Rice's script is also more expansive than most. The complicated family tree and timeline of the novel has presented a challenge to many writers and directors; the solution is, generally, to cut the second half of the narrative and focus on the tragic love affair between Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw. Charles McArthur and Ben Hecht took this route for their screenplay in 1939, as did Nigel Kneale in 1953, and Patrick Tilley in 1970.[5] Rice chooses to tell the whole story, with steps taken to ensure that audience members unfamiliar with the novel can follow along. This makes for some slightly stilted and expository dialogue, and, once again, involves the use of devices which draw attention to the artificiality of performance. Once deceased, characters' names appear written on blackboards, brought on and off, and carried around by the ensemble; a conceit that is occasionally played for laughs, but that demonstrates a key concept of this adaptation. 'To die in *Wuthering Heights* – and so many do – usually means to be bundled speedily offstage, ungrieved and soon forgotten', observes Deborah Lutz, but this production is inclined to keep them around.[6] The effect is exacerbated because, with the exception of Catherine, Heathcliff and the Leader of the Moor, all of the actors double roles. Witney White as Frances Earnshaw – played here as a screeching Essex girl – shows her softer side as the younger Catherine, whilst Hindley is never totally banished from the story as Tama Phathean continues to walk the stage as his son Hareton. 'The dead are not annihilated', says Heathcliff in the novel, and Rice's casting decisions offer an afterlife of sorts; the stage is a space where no-one is ever truly gone.[7]

Yet Rice's adaption differs from the original, in that she continually teases out the complicated web of characters and familial relationships for a theatre-going audience, through accent, costume and the script's exposition (writing a

[5] See *Wuthering Heights*, dir. William Wyler (United Artists, 1939), *Wuthering Heights*, dir. Rudolph Cartier (BBC, 1953), and *Wuthering Heights*, dir. Robert Fuest (American International Pictures, 1970).

[6] Deborah Lutz, 'Relics and Death Culture in *Wuthering Heights*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 45.3 (2012), 389–408 (p. 391).

[7] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (London: Pan Books, 1967), p. 318.

monologue for the Doctor in the second half, for example, which updates the audience on the births, marriages and deaths). The novel has no such impulse. Brontë has her characters constantly blur boundaries between people; she also blurs them herself. Catherine and Heathcliff's longing to be subsumed into one another serves as the most extreme example, but Hareton, too, is compared variously to Heathcliff, Hindley and Catherine, while the younger Catherine and Linton by their very names are blurred with older members of their families.

There is an on-stage band of guitar, drums and upright bass, which is complemented at points by cello and accordion, with some stunning music and dance sequences created by composer Ian Ross and choreographer Etta Murfitt. These are largely led by The Moor, an ensemble of actors, which Rice has explained functions as a Greek chorus: 'I cut Nelly Dean, took the form of a Greek Tragedy and created a chorus of The Moor'.[8] The Moor takes on a variety of roles, dispensing commentary, advice and admonitions to the characters. Unlike with a Greek chorus, however, characters often interact with The Moor. The audience is encouraged to identify Catherine and Heathcliff with this landscape, the refrain of Catherine's solo declaring: 'I am the Earth'. In a play continually negotiating inside/outside spatial boundaries (a prominent piece of set is a door, wheeled on and off), and where characters often discuss being elsewhere (Cathy Linton pleading to return to Thrushcross Grange, Linton Heathcliff begging to return to London), The Moor is the only constant. This impression is heightened by the practical need for the ensemble to move scenery, manage props and manipulate puppets – by necessity The Moor is woven into every aspect of the on-stage world.

Lucy McCormick is fantastic as Catherine Earnshaw, bringing a wild, anarchic energy to the stage. Playing the younger version of the character, she leans into the stereotype of the troublesome teen: she is stroppy and raucous, running around the stage and into the audience in a white dress and boots. In the second half, after her death, she literally haunts the stage (as Heathcliff has wished for) in a dirty torn nightgown and smudged eye makeup. Ash Hunter's Heathcliff is stoic and brooding, but never seems quite to deliver the level of menace and

[8] *Wuthering Heights,* dir. Emma Rice, Wise Children (National Theatre, London), 10 March 2022, Programme. All further citations are from this production and are given in the text.

volatility expected from the character. When he says to Catherine, of Isabella, that he would 'wrench her nails from her fingers', he does not entirely convince. Perhaps Hunter's task is a more difficult one than McCormick's. He is certainly disserviced by the script's placement of his biggest monologue, in which he curses Catherine and the Lintons (with an emphatic 'I smudge you!') immediately before a solo by McCormick, which turns the atmosphere of the National Theatre briefly into that of a rock concert. The adjacency of the two scenes makes it difficult to avoid comparison: any monologue would pale before the drama and spectacle of Catherine's literal moment in the spotlight. The chemistry between Catherine and Heathcliff could also have been stronger – their connection through an adolescence spent roaming the moors is conveyed credibly, but McCormick and Hunter falter somewhat as the relationship becomes more bitter and fractious.

The production embraces its comedic moments and veers at times almost into camp – for one, Rice is unafraid to flirt with musical theatre as a genre. One of the novel's most famous scenes, where Catherine's ghost appears at Lockwood's window, verges on horror-movie melodrama here – it does not chill or unsettle, either like the 1939 film's eerie and understated interpretation of the encounter, or in the way the 'lamentable prayer' of what Lockwood 'discerned, obscurely, [as] a child's face' does in the novel's equivalent passage.[9] This aspect is most pronounced with Sam Archer's Edgar Linton and Katy Owen's Isabella and 'Little' Linton Heathcliff. They are brilliant comic creations, with their exaggerated physicality, fancy clothes and RP accents distinguishing them from the rest of the characters. Owen, double cast as Isabella and her son, gets the biggest laughs of the night, with her extraordinarily physical performances of the childish, mincing Isabella, and the spoiled, nagging Linton. They struggle, however, to make the emotional beats of the story land. Having set up mother and son as amusing and somewhat pitiful, the script asks us to reevaluate them (and perhaps our laughter at them). This is more successful with Isabella, whom we see shattered by Heathcliff's abusive behaviour, begging the audience not to forget her; it is less so when the younger Linton's petulance turns threatening. He has been set up too well as the comic relief to deliver the gravitas this episode demands, and like

[9] Brontë, pp. 54-5.

Hunter's Heathcliff does not quite convey the malice that is part of the character in the novel – the cowardly torturer of cats, the 'little tyrant'.[10]

Rice's *Wuthering Heights* is a fantastic night of theatre, and if it is not the moving and unsettling *Wuthering Heights* of Brontë's novel, it is because that is not its aim. It sits more comfortably in a tradition of nineteenth-century adaptations that are self-consciously theatrical than in a tradition of *Wuthering Heights* adaptations that attempt to capture the dark and violent heart of the novel. Consequently, some of its raw power is lost: the relationships between the characters are less well-drawn, the emotional impact lands more lightly. Its power is in its spectacle, originality, charismatic performances, and irreverent spirit.

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BIOGRAPHY: Bethany Appleton is an independent scholar whose research interests include Victorian women's poetry, lyric theory, and theatre and performance. She graduated with an undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Cambridge and with an MSt in English Literature (1830-1914) from the University of Oxford.

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[10] Brontë, p. 267.

RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Afterword

GEMMA HOLGATE
(EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

BEGINNING MY TENURE as Editor-in-Chief, I will be the first to admit that I was a little daunted by the task ahead. The leadership structure of the journal offers a high level of responsibility for the postgraduates in the two senior editorial positions and suffice to say that the previous Editors-in-Chief had left big shoes to fill. It is with great pleasure, and some relief, then, that I write this afterword reflecting on another successful issue of *RRR*.

As Deputy Editor in 2021, I had the privilege of organising the journal's annual January event. Departing from the traditional conference format, I took the opportunity to start conversations around Issue 5's 'radical' theme through a series of roundtables. Featuring scholars from all stages of study, from postgraduates to professors, the 'Radical Roundtables' saw lively discussion on a wide range of nineteenth-century subjects: gender and sexuality, the labouring-class poetic tradition, the Romantic political imagination, and late-Victorian socialism. The roundtable format, in which participants were able to find common ground in their individual projects, engage in debate with each other and with audience members, and discuss future directions for their research fields, seemed particularly appropriate for both the issue's theme and the collaborative ethos of the journal more broadly.

I am pleased that the articles published here reflect the variety and scope of those initial discussions, spanning the long nineteenth century in its entirety from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Many congratulations to the authors featured in this issue, all of whom worked with patience and dedication through rounds of revisions over the past year: Charlie Gough, Rory Edgington, Susan Mooney, Helena Drysdale, Frank Jacob, Chloe Osborne, Sophie Thompson, Joshua Smith, Georgia Toumara, Hayley Smith, and Bethany Appleton. Thank you for working with us to produce such a diverse and engaging edition of the journal.

It takes more than just the diligent work of authors, however, to publish a journal issue, and our editorial board have been hard at work behind the scenes at all stages of the publication process. To all board members, past and present, who have

contributed to this issue's publication – David Brown, Megen de Bruin-Molé, Aude Campmas, Rosa Dyer, Aaron Eames, Mary Hammond, Roger Hansford, Johanna Harrison-Oram, Emma Hills, Pauline Hortolland, Will Kitchen, Beth Mills, Nikita Mujumdar, Anisha Netto, Cleo O'Callaghan Yeoman, Michelle Reynolds, Fraser Riddell, Ellen Smith, Claudia Sterbini, Sophie Thompson, and Clare Walker Gore – I would like to extend my sincere thanks for giving your time and attention to making it a success. In the current high-pressure academic climate, additional work is not to be taken on lightly, but I hope that this issue is something of which we can all be proud. Beyond this achievement, we have been able to offer detailed feedback to all potential contributors, regardless of whether we could include their work in the final issue, once again fulfilling our mission of supporting students and early-career scholars in developing their academic work.

The publication of Issue 5 marks the end of my time as Editor-in-Chief, as I hand over the reins to the capable hands of the next leadership team. Taking on this role has been one of the best decisions of my PhD, and I am grateful to Katie Holdway and Emma Hills for encouraging me to apply for the Deputy Editorship back in 2020. *RRR* has given me a wealth of experience that will benefit me both in and beyond academia, and I strongly encourage any interested postgraduate students to get involved if the opportunity arises. In leading the editorial board, I have benefited from the support of our Lead Academic Editor, Dr Chris Prior. It is no exaggeration to say that Chris is about the most reliable academic I could have hoped to work with on this project and his advice, guidance and reassurance have been invaluable over the past year. I am very glad that Chris will be continuing in this role, providing a steady foundation upon which future postgraduates can make their mark on the journal.

Alongside Chris, Olivia Krauze will be beginning her new role of Editor-in-Chief, and Johanna Harrison-Oram will be stepping into her place as Deputy Editor. Since joining the journal in 2021, Johanna has gone above and beyond in her editorial work, and I have no doubt that she will do an excellent job of managing the reviews section for Issue 6. I wish the three of you the very best of luck in leading the journal to new heights in 2023.

I will end this afterword with two final thanks, to two people who have extended both their support and friendship to me during my time with the journal. Firstly, I would like to thank Emma Hills, my predecessor, who has shown great kindness and patience

throughout my tenure, regularly taking time to offer guidance and answer my countless questions whenever called upon. Emma is stepping down from the editorial board this month and deserves our enormous gratitude for almost four years of hard work on *RRR*'s behalf.

To close, I would like to thank Olivia, whose work this year has proven that there is no better person to take the journal forward. Olivia has managed her duties as Deputy Editor with great competence, but what has impressed me most is her ambition in organising *RRR*'s biggest event yet, her conference on 'Feeling in the Long Nineteenth Century'. Running a full-scale, in-person conference is never easy, and has required some troubleshooting along the way, but as with all she does, Olivia has made a great success of it. Thank you, and good luck with what will no doubt be a brilliant sixth issue!

30th December 2022