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Issue Contents

Letter from the Editor

Any landscape is a condition of the spirit.
Henri Frederic Amiel

'Landscapes: real, digital, imagined': The theme of this third issue of Exegesis asked writers to become geographers of the various dimensions we live in. Tracing the ways in which landscape, art, society and psychology are symbiotic, each creative piece, article and review reveals fresh connections in how we make sense of our inner and outer worlds.

The creative works map psycho-geographies. In *Yellow House*, a compulsion to travel is contrasted with yearning for a home. In *Miracle Valley*, an awesome sky watches over movements of people and their human tensions: racism between believers claims life under God's thunderous gaze. Another storm: Grief over the illness of a parent and a pet stalks the dog-walker in *Certain Chimeras*, fitting to the backdrop of urban debris washed up along the Susquehanna river. Each of these landscapes is home to a thousand stories; the writers bring a handful to life and show that across the map, we are not so different in our angers, our desires or our despair.

Our critical selections analyse this symbiosis from a more distanced but equally engaging perspective. *Liverpool 8 and 'Liverpool 8'* interrogates the importance of the city, the river and a particular postcode at the heart of the Merseybeat Movement; how these act as muse and riddle for a group of poets of the 1960s. Crossing the world from Liverpool to Australia, a consideration of Gerald Murnane's novel *The Plains* reveals how physical landscapes are no more than how we interpret them. Murnane's work is acclaimed by literary masters including J.M. Coetzee but is little known outside Australia; *Exegesis* is delighted to bring new critical writing on the author to a wider audience.

The city as desire and impediment to the artist—what other combination of place and time embodies this more than Venice in the 1900s? The essay we publish on Thomas Mann and Gabriele D'Annunzio reveals the Venetian landscape as a central character and a link between two writers not often written about together. A quieter, but no less profound reflection tacks away from the built environment to the influence of the natural world in the poems of John Clare; importantly, the critical essay included here considers both Clare's published and unpublished work. An article on the influence of Shi'ism on the seventeenth-century tomb gardens of Iran bears witness to the epigraph of the journal. Landscape, in this sense, is planned according to spirituality; the orderliness of religious life is reflected in the gardens' geometric designs.

The landscape of spiritual reflection in Catholic England is reviewed in *Looking Inward*, analysing the power of a recently published collection of writings about faith that stretch from 1438 to 1999. An alternative religion is criticised in the film *UK Gold*. Our review discusses how effectively the production follows the money through the City of London to questionable tax dealings that taint the post-Olympic legacy and ideas of Great Britain, which were articulated as the games took place.

In a print landscape that feels ever more threatened by advances in digital technology, this issue of *Exegesis* itself adds to the debate in both its form and content. As *Exegesis* turns a year old, the team is delighted to map old tracks in new ways; we hope you enjoy your journey through the selection.

Preti Taneja
Acting Editor

Title: 'Reading landscape in Gerald Murnane's *The Plains*'
Author: Julian Murphy
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Reading landscape in Gerald Murnane's *The Plains*

Julian Murphy

> [P]lainsmen commonly consider all art to be the scant visible evidence of immense processes in a landscape that even the artist scarcely perceives, so that they confront the most obdurate or the most ingenuous work utterly receptive and willing to be led into bewildering vistas of vistas (Gerald Murnane, *The Plains* (Melbourne: Nostrilia, 1982), p. 123).

I. Setting the scene

Gerald Murnane has long been a writer's writer in Australia, with a relatively modest readership, but all that has changed recently with a spate of awards and a Nobel Prize nomination. The rise in Murnane's public profile was confirmed last year when the American republication of two of his novels was marked by an essay-length review in *The New York Review of Books* by Nobel laureate and fellow antipodean, J. M. Coetzee. In spite of Murnane's recent ascent to international prominence there remains very little critical discussion of his work outside of Australia and the two small enclaves of his admirers in Sweden and the United States. This essay hopes to go some way to rectifying this state of affairs by drawing prospective readers' attention to the unique treatment of the physical environment in Murnane's classic Australian novel, *The Plains*. Particular attention will be paid to the way Murnane's characters interpret their environment and the ontological understandings they reach as a result of this interpretative process.

This essay's reading of *The Plains* will rely on the work of contemporary geo-theorists like Donald Meinig and Kenneth Olwig who conceive of landscape as a construct of the human imagination. For these theorists landscape is the product of an interpretative process in which the individual tries to order the vast array of sense data heaped on them by the external world, the environment.[1] Such a theory of landscape, which will be further expanded on in a subsequent section of this essay, is a helpful way of explaining the prominence afforded characters' subjective responses to their environment in *The Plains*. It appears that Murnane himself ascribes to a theory of landscape and environment consonant with that of Meinig and Olwig. Murnane has revealed that he sometimes feels that his physical surroundings are demanding to be interpreted, and further that he considers landscape to be a product of the mind.[2]

The importance of the physical environment, and characters' responses to that environment, to Murnane's fiction cannot be overstated. In an interview with Susanne Braun-Bau Murnane said the following: 'My books are mostly about landscapes, because for me the world is mostly made up of landscapes. If you handed me a book of philosophy, I'd end up thinking of it as a book of landscapes.'[3] Although there are some important passages devoted to landscape in Murnane's first two novels it was not until his third, *The Plains*, that the interpretation of the environment first became an obsession for the characters. In *The Plains* landscape is not merely a backdrop for interactions between characters but is itself a focus; the characters' engagement with their physical surroundings is

[1] Donald W. Meinig, 'Introduction', in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. by Donald W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 1-7 (p. 3); Kenneth Olwig, 'Landscape: The Lowenthal Legacy', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93 (2003), pp. 871-77.
[2] Gerald Murnane, 'On the road to Bendigo', in *Invisible yet enduring lilacs*, by Gerald Murnane (Sydney: Giramondo, 2005), pp. 9-24 (p. 14); Gerald Murnane, 'The breathing author', in *Invisible yet enduring lilacs*, by Gerald Murnane (Sydney: Giramondo, 2005), pp. 157-90 (p. 177).
[3] Braun-Bau, 'A Conversation with Gerald Murnane', *Antipodes*, 10 (1996), pp. 43-48 (p. 46).

an intrigue central to the novel. Like all humans, the characters in *The Plains* are always *in* the environment, and it is the experience of this immersion that they seek to understand.

The narrator of *The Plains* is a film-maker from an unnamed Australian coastal city, most likely modelled on Murnane's birthplace, Melbourne. The narrative charts the film-maker's two decade stay in an inland region, known simply as 'the plains,' characterised by slightly undulating grasslands receding into haze. The film-maker initially travels to the plains intending to capture the essence of the enigmatic local landscape, and commit it to film. As the novel progresses though, it becomes clear that the narrator's is a doomed project; by the novel's conclusion he has not taken a single shot though he has composed thousands of pages of prefatory notes and research material.

That the novel is concerned with the interpretation of landscape is apparent from the first page, where the narrator describes his arrival on the plains:

> Twenty years ago, when I first arrived on the plains, I kept my eyes open. I looked for anything in the landscape that seemed to hint at some elaborate meaning behind appearances…the flat land around me seemed more and more a place that only I could interpret (*The Plains*, p. 3).

In a rare public comment on the novel Murnane suggested that it might be read as 'the story of a man who tried to see properly.'[4] This essay is concerned with unpacking the characters' engagements with landscape in *The Plains* and articulating the understanding of landscape they eventually arrive at, when they 'see properly.'

The task this essay sets for itself is no easy one. Despite the fact that Murnane's characters constantly try to interpret their surroundings their narrator only rarely deigns to clearly articulate the results of these interpretative processes. In *The Plains* a group of people thought it necessary to 'provoke the intellectuals of the plains to define in metaphysical terms what had previously been expressed in emotional or sentimental language' (*The Plains*, 28). This same injunction could be directed at Murnane's narrator in regard to his descriptions of the characters' experiences of their natural surroundings. Despite the numerous—and obviously significant—instances of engagement with the environment in *The Plains* it remains difficult to articulate exactly what metaphysical order, if any, Murnane's characters become aware of. This definitional difficulty is a product of the rich ambiguity of Murnane's prose as well as his, or his narrator's, professed aversion to philosophical and theoretical frameworks. At one point in *The Plains* the narrator admits that he 'had always had the greatest difficulty in understanding what metaphysics were' (*The Plains*, 28). Similarly, in his book of essays Murnane expressed his distaste for all systems of organisation not devised by himself.[5] Yet Murnane admits, almost in the same breath, that 'I have sometimes thought of the whole enterprise of my fiction-writing as an effort to bring to light an underlying order' ('The breathing author', 162).

This essay will proffer one possible 'underlying order' that Murnane's characters can be seen to arrive at through their interpretations of landscape. This underlying order will be both physical and ontological, and will be informed by Martin Heidegger's conception of 'Being-in-the-world'.[6] Although a number of critics have hinted at the echoes of Heidegger in Murnane's fiction the two have not yet been brought together in any depth.[7] In fact, very little work has been done to extract *any* ontological position from Murnane's fiction, let alone his characters

[4] Gerald Murnane quoted in Imre Salusinszky, *Oxford Australian Writers: Gerald Murnane* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 43.
[5] Murnane, 'The breathing author', p. 163.
[6] Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 78-82.

[7] Salusinszky, *Gerald Murnane*, pp. 3, 47; Andrew Zawacki, 'Foreword', in *The Plains*, by Gerald Murnane (Michigan: Western Michigan University, 2003), pp. 1-6 (p. 5).

engagements with landscape. Imre Salusinszky's monograph on Murnane purports to find a strain of solipsism underlying the fiction but does not account for the characters' engagements with landscape in this respect. The only other book-length study of Murnane's writing advocates for a totally different ontological armature. The book is *Grasses that Have No Fields*[8] by the Swedish translator of Murnane, Harald Fawkner. Fawkner reads the grassy plains of another novel of Murnane's, *Inland*, to be symbolic of a phenomenological zone of constitution.[9] While this essay will be indebted to Salusinszky and Fawkner at a number of points it doubts the applicability of their respective ontologies to *The Plains*. Such doubt is based on the fact that neither critic's reading can account for the importance of the *physical* qualities of the plains to Murnane's characters. In this essay's reading of *The Plains* the characters will be shown to arrive at their ontological understanding of the world through their experience of interpreting their physical surroundings.[10]

This essay will progress by first, expanding on the theory of landscape as a product of subjective interpretation; and second, adumbrating Heidegger's conception of Being-in-the-world. These theoretical discussions will provide the necessary context for the remainder of the essay, which will comprise a close reading of one particular passage of *The Plains*. The chosen passage recounts a representative moment from the novel in which a character has a profound experience of their surroundings. This experience will be unpacked and shown to result in an understanding of the physical and supra-physical world that is consistent with Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world. In its closing paragraphs this essay provide a brief argument for the significance of Murnane's treatment of landscape in *The Plains* and restate this essay's position in the existing scholarship on the novel.

II. The theory of landscape relied upon—landscape as interpretation

The idea that looking at one's topographical surroundings involves an act of interpretation derives from the work of landscape theorists such as Meinig, Olwig and others.[11] For these theorists the word 'landscape' denotes the individual observer's subjective interpretation of the physical surroundings, arrived at by ordering the sensual impressions or sense-data received from these surrounds.[12] Landscape is thus distinguished from 'environment,' which describes a physical space or location that exists independently of individual consciousness of it. Meinig elegantly articulates the important distinction between landscape and environment when he writes: 'Landscape is, first of all, the unity we see, the impressions of our senses rather than the logic of the sciences.'[13]

In the view of theorists like Meinig an individual existing in an environment will, at any given time, be interpreting the vast array of sense-data he or she is receiving through the faculties of sight, touch, smell et cetera. Through this interpretative process the individual attempts to construct a cohesive, unified 'picture.'[14] Such an understanding of the word 'landscape' is expressed in the following dictum from Yi-Fu Tuan: 'Landscape appears to us through an effort of the imagination exercised over a highly selected array of sense data.'[15] Simon Schama adopts a similar position when he writes: 'Landscape is…constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and

[8] Harald William Fawkner, *Grasses that Have No Fields: From Gerald Murnane's Inland to a Phenomenology of Isogonic Constitution* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2006).
[9] Fawkner, *Grasses*, p. 20.
[10] Given Murnane's reluctance to ascribe to any particular philosophical order it is not the intention of this essay to foist such a system onto Murnane himself. Rather, this essay aims only to define the ontological order that best fits the descriptions of characters' engagements with landscape in *The Plains*.
[11] Some other theorists who adopt similar positions include: Yi-Fu Tuan, 'Thought and Landscape: The Eye and the Mind's Eye', in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. by Donald W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 89-102; Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995); Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984).
[12] Meinig, p. 3; Olwig, pp. 871-877.
[13] Meinig, p. 2.
[14] Tuan, p. 90.
[15] Tuan, p. 90.

water and rock.'[16] Schama, Tuan and others stress the 'imaginative effort'[17] required for the individual to 'see' landscape. What is clear in the account of these writers is that landscape is not an immutable essence; rather it is always the product of an individual's act of interpretative construction.

A number of critics have used versions of the above theory of landscape as a lens through which to read *The Plains*, most notably Paul Carter, Gillian Tyas, Nicholas Birns and Salusinszky.[18] Tyas identifies the characters in the novel to be applying their own subjectively coloured meanings to the external environment with which they find themselves confronted.[19] Similarly, Carter writes the following: '[s]trictly speaking, Murnane's "plains" are a creative region, geography repossessed for the imagination to configure it differently.'[20] Expanding on the creative element of the process of landscape construction and the link between landscape and environment in *The Plains* Carter explains: 'landscape is composed in equal measure of recollection, imagination and invention.'[21]

Birns and Salusinszky have both relied on a particular passage from *The Plains* to support their assertions that characters 'interpret' their physical surroundings.[22] The passage, in its entirety, runs as follows:

> [the plains] are not…a vast theatre that adds significance to the events enacted within it. Nor are they an immense field for explorers of every kind. They are simply a convenient source of metaphors for those who know that men invent their own meanings (*The Plains*, p. 141).

It is easy to see why these two critics have chosen this particular narratorial utterance; the speaker seems to unambiguously support a dematerialised view of landscape in which it is purely the product of the human mind. On this view the rolling grasslands of *The Plains* are merely 'a Rorschach blot for human projections.'[23] To suggest that this passage definitively disappears landscape into the human mind would result in a disingenuous reading of Murnane's novel, and Birns, to his credit, acknowledges as much.[24] For the narrator of *The Plains* landscape is accepted to be the product of the human mind. Yet at the same time the narrator knows the mentally constructed landscape has its origins, its causal grounding, in the physical reality of the surrounding environment. It is this link between environment and landscape that leads Birns to concede that if landscape is a metaphor then the source of the metaphor is as important as the metaphor itself.[25] Accordingly, this essay's reading of *The Plains* pays attention to both the physical environment being observed and the subjective response to that environment.

III. The ontology relied upon—Being-in-the-world

In Heidegger's account of Being-in-the-world the conscious individual is always-already *in* the world. Heidegger takes exception to the French philosopher René Descartes, who asserted that any sound ontological theory had to

[16] Schama, p. 61.
[17] Tuan, p. 97.
[18] Paul Carter, *Ground Truthing* (Perth: University of Western Australia Publishing, 2010), p. 148; Gillian Tyas, 'What can you do with a horizon? Landscape in recent Australian Fiction and the Visual Arts', *ASAL Proceedings*, (1994), pp. 14-19 (p. 14); Nicholas Birns, 'Gerald Murnane and the Power of Landscape', *New Literatures Review*, 18 (1989), pp. 73-82 (pp. 74, 75); Salusinszky, *Gerald Murnane*, pp. 46, 50, 56; Imre Salusinszky, 'A Word or Two about *The Plains*', *Scripsi*, 3 (1985), pp. 59-63 (p. 62).
[19] Tyas, p. 14.
[20] Carter, p. 148.
[21] Carter, p. 155.
[22] Birns, p. 74; Salusinszky, *Gerald Murnane*, p. 45.
[23] Birns, p. 74.
[24] Birns, p. 74.
[25] Birns, p. 75.

begin with the idea of an isolated individual consciousness.[26] For Heidegger, Descartes' starting point was an artificial and naïve one. After all, the individual first becomes aware of itself as it exists 'in the world,' to forget or deny this original 'worldliness' would be to misrepresent the situation from the outset. Heidegger prefers to start from the position that the individual exists, first and foremost, in the mode of Being-in-the-world. This much is established, according to Heidegger, by the fact that 'Being-in-the-world is something of which one has pre-phenomenological experience and acquaintance.'[27] It is important to be alert to the fact that the phrase 'Being-in-the-world' does not employ the word 'in' to denote physical-spatial presence. Accordingly, when Heidegger writes 'world' he is not describing the purely physical world.[28] Rather, Heidegger's world is both physical and supra-physical, it combines all entities that present themselves to the individual whether these entities be tangible or abstract. Magda King, a contemporary Heidegger scholar, has said that Heidegger's '[world] is an existential-ontological concept.'[29]

The individual's knowledge of his or her existence as Being-in-the-world is a different sort of knowledge to that directional knowledge whereby the subject 'knows' an object. Heidegger notes that while knowledge has been traditionally set up as 'a relation between subject and Object'[30] this relation cannot apply to the individual's relation to the world. Heidegger writes: 'Self and the world belong together. [They] are not two beings, like subject and object [but]…the unity of Being-in-the-world.'[31]

Salusinszky and Fawkner both identify such an erasure of the subject/object binary in Murnane's fiction. Salusinszky writes that '[the plains] are neither mind nor world, but precisely where we find ourselves as soon as we have stopped thinking about things that way.'[32] Writing on *Inland*, Fawkner identifies a plane of existence more fundamental than the subject/object split. Fawkner's fundamental plane of unity is 'that which, this side of objects as well as subjects, brings the subjective-objective flanks of the world to view.'[33] For Fawkner, the grasslands in Murnane's fiction are an extended metaphor for the omnipresent zone of givenness that he identifies as undergirding existence.[34]

This essay is beholden to Salusinszky and Fawkner for their recognition that the subject/objet binary loses traction in Murnane's fiction. These two theorists use this position to propound readings of landscape that relegate it to the realm of consciousness. This essay is not so solipsistic, providing instead a dual level account of characters' engagements with the environment in *The Plains*. On this account the characters respond to their physical surroundings by first forming a landscape in which they view themselves as implicated *in* the physical world. It is only after, or on top of, this understanding of the physical world that the characters form a concomitant appreciation of their immersion in the Heideggerian existential-ontological world.

IV. Worked example—the blue-green haze on the horizon

[26] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 101-102.
[27] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 86.
[28] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 79.
[29] Magda King, *A Guide to Heidegger's Being and Time*, ed. by John Llewelyn (Albany: State University of New York Press), p. 52.
[30] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 87.
[31] Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 297.
[32] Salusinszky, *Gerald Murnane*, p. 44. Putting it another way Salusinszky writes: 'the philosophy of the plains…[entails] the bracketing of the whole dialectic of mind and world' (Salusinszky, *Gerald Murnane*, p. 45).
[33] Fawkner, *Grasses*, p. 20.
[34] Fawkner, *Grasses*, p. 60.

The setting of *The Plains* is, unsurprisingly, mostly made up of sparsely vegetated rolling plains. While such an environment might appear, at first glance, to be an uninspiring setting for fiction, it is the contention of this essay that it proves exactly the opposite. In its vague and spacious generality the physical space of the plains has both a physical and ontological effect on the characters. On the one hand, the characters interpreting this vast landscape come to an awareness of the essential *givenness* of the physical world—its infinite scope and inevitable encapsulation of the individual. At the same time though, an ontological awareness also arises concerning the individual's immersion in the realm of Being. Such a definition of Murnane's characters' experience of the plains can be mapped closely onto Heidegger's conception of Being-in-the-world. The body of this essay will now be given over to the analysis of one representative instance from *The Plains* where a character interprets their surroundings in such a way as to come to an awareness of their implication in both the physical and existential-ontological worlds.

Relatively early in *The Plains* the narrator describes an ideological split between inhabitants of the plains on the basis of their identification with either of two groups, the Haremen and the Horizonites. These two groups advocate oppositional approaches to viewing their physical surroundings. The Haremen view their surrounds on a micro level—conducting detailed studies of 'small patch[es] of native grasses and herbage' (*The Plains*, p. 30). By contrast, the Horizonites view the environment on a macro level—preferring to look upon plains stretching away into 'misty distances' (*The Plains*, p. 32). It is the Horizonites' response to landscape that will be analysed here. The narrator says of the Horizonites:

> what moved them more than the wide grasslands and huge skies was the scant layer of haze where land and sky merged in the farthest distance…[they talked] of the blue-green haze as though it were itself a land—a plain of the future, perhaps, where one might live a life that existed only in potentiality…[T]he blue-green veil…urged them to dream of a different plain (*The Plains*, p. 29).

In the Horizonites' experience the environment of the plains is both a physical horizon and a trigger for ontological reflection. The specific aspect of the landscape that moves the Horizonites is the blue-green band of haze on the horizon. In the following close reading of this important passage the characters will be shown to be arriving at an understanding of themselves as Being-in-the-world. This understanding is precipitated by two elements of their subjective landscape of the plains: first, the infinite space implied by the horizon-line; and second, the dissolution of physical boundaries mandated by the blue-green haze.

(a) The horizon-line

The Horizonites are entranced not by the 'foreground' of their surroundings but by the distant point at which land meets sky—the horizon.[35] The word 'horizon' derives from the Greek 'horizōn (kuklos)' meaning 'limiting (circle);'[36] but the horizon is not just a limit or an endpoint, not the 'farthest distance' (*The Plains*, p. 29) that the narrator suggests it to be. In fact, the horizon marks only an *illusory* end to the earth's surface—it constitutes a limit to one's visual *perception* of the earth rather than any limit to the physical *reality* of the earth itself. At one point in *The Plains* the narrator alludes to the illusory nature of the horizon by calling it 'the reputed horizon' (*The Plains*, p. 110). The idea that the horizon might constitute a *physical* boundary has been accepted as a fallacy since humans became aware that the horizon could be pushed back—to reveal more of the earth's surface—by the act of walking towards it or elevating one's viewpoint. As such, the horizon-line marks not just an outer boundary to the physical world but also the beginning of the invisible. This is why the horizon has such an important place in the

[35] The trope of the horizon is a recurring one in Murnane's writing. Appearing, for example, at the following points: Gerald Murnane, *Tamarisk Row* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1974), p. 36; Gerald Murnane, *Landscape with Landscape* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1987), pp. 10, 15, 129; Gerald Murnane, *Inland* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1988), p. 6; Gerald Murnane, *Velvet Waters* (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1990), p. 193.
[36] Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson (eds), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary: Eleventh Edition, Revised* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 687.

Horizonites' landscape of the plains—it offers an intimation of the infinite space beyond it, the infinite extension of the physical realm, or the Universe.

The phenomenon of the horizon-line implies the extension of physical space in two respects. First, the horizon-line suggests the extension of the Earth's surface as it curves away from view. The slight convexity of the horizon-line indicates to the observer that it is the spherical shape of the Earth that is preventing him or her from seeing any more of its surface. This indirect attention to the 'true configuration of the earth' (*The Plains*, p. 11) compels the observer—the Horizonite—to attend to the fact that the Earth is a *planet*; that is, a spherical body suspended in space. In acknowledging the curvature of the Earth, the Horizonites indirectly find themselves confronted with the task of imagining the Earth's place in the Universe. Barry Oakley calls this element of the Horizonites' landscape the 'horizontal equivalent of vertigo.'[37]

This difficult act of imagining the earth as a planetary sphere can be likened to the experience of the astronaut first seeing the Earth from space. The astronaut's experience of looking back on the Earth, or 'Earth gazing,' has been well documented and found to sometimes lead to an experience known as the 'overview effect.'[38] In the 'overview effect' the observer cannot avoid the difficult act of positioning him or herself in relation to the Earth-as-planet and the infinitely extending Universe. The result of the 'overview effect' is often that the individual comes to terms with his or her implication in the Universe, and concomitantly accepts the essential unity of the physical realm.[39] It is the contention of this essay that when the Horizonites look at the horizon they experience something like the 'overview effect' in that they become aware of their position relative to the world-as-planet, and their immersion in the space of the Universe. Salusinszky is also convinced that something like the overview effect is at play in Murnane's fiction, he writes: 'Murnane's recent fiction becomes more and more interested in this "ultimate" instance of perspectivisation—the fact that the whole planet is rolling through who-knows-what.'[40]

The second way in which the horizon-line implies the infinite extension of space is that it marks the point at which the trajectory of the observer's gaze leaves the surface of the Earth and extends into the sky. The experience of looking at the sky has been revealed to be a difficult one by the perception-theorist James Gibson. The difficulty arises, according to Gibson, from the fact that humans are most comfortable looking at surfaces and the sky is a surface-less phenomenon.[41] When looking at the sky, the Horizonite observer must accept the absolute lack of anchor for the gaze. Granted, the eye can rest on the edge of the earth, the *line* of the horizon, but the viewer cannot avoid that which exists above this line—pure, uninterrupted space. This space, and the absence of anything visible *in* it, is in turn an indicator of the infinite extension of cosmic space. In looking at the horizon, the individual is also looking *beyond* the horizon, into the infinite depth of cosmic space. The Horizonites' experience of the depth of the sky thus parallels that of a character in a later one of Murnane's books who spends pages trying to describe his experience of looking into a particular sky, he concludes: 'I can see more deeply into this sky than I have seen into any other, I seem to be looking at a part of the sky so deep it is not meant to be looked at' (*Velvet Waters*, p. 158). If an observer looking deep into the sky really attends to what he or she is looking at he or she will likely 'fear the hugeness of horizons' (*The Plains*, p. 49) as Murnane's plainsmen do. Arthur Shopenhauer has phrased this encounter with the infinite differently, calling it 'an awareness of the immensity of the universe's extent.'[42] Schopenhauer has suggested, correctly in the submission of this essay, that such an awareness will lead to an appreciation of the unity of the physical realm and one's integration in this

[37] Barry Oakley, 'It's the Landscape Within that Matters', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Reviews (6 November 1982), p. B6.
[38] Frank White, *The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
[39] White, pp. 12-13, 39.
[40] Salusinszky, *Gerald Murnane*, p. 86.
[41] James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1986), p. 54.
[42] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman and Christopher Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), paragraph 39.

unity.[43] This experience of belonging within a grand physical unity is exactly that which the Horizonites are moved by when gazing at the horizon of the plains.

But it is not only an appreciation of Being-in the physical world that the Horizonites arrive at through looking at the horizon. Attention to the horizon of the plains also leads the Horizonites to an understanding of their place in the metaphysical scheme of things. This is because in their interpretative imagining of the plains the Horizonites are spurred to reflect not only on what lies beyond the physical horizon but also what lies beyond the horizon of perception. The horizon, by highlighting that which cannot be seen, draws the mind not only to the parts of the physical world which cannot be seen but also to *the world that cannot be seen—the world of consciousness and the Self*.[44] Murnane's characters are constantly constructing landscapes that allow them to use the physical environment as a means of visualising or imagining the ontological realms of Being and the Self.[45] To provide just one example, the film-maker in *The Plains* intends to have a sequence in his film where the male lead 'saw, at the furthest limits of his awareness, unexplored plains. And when he looked for what he was surest of in himself, there was little more definite than plains' (*The Plains*, pp. 78-79).

Accordingly, it is contended that the Horizonites' understanding of their place in the physical world of the plains is accompanied by an understanding of their place in the existential-ontological world. This causal link between the characters' understanding of the physical and ontological worlds is apparent from the narrator's statement that 'people here conceive of a lifetime as one more sort of plain' (*The Plains*, p. 114). So it is that when the Horizonites view the horizon line of the plains to give intimations of the infinite extent of *physical* space, so too do they understand the perception limits, or horizons, of solipsism to be illusory. Instead of adopting the insular cogito of Descartes the Horizonites understand the essential implication of the Self in the broader realm of Being. Such an understanding aligns with what Heidegger calls Being-in-the-world, in which the world is the all-encompassing condition for the individual's existence.[46]

(b) The blue-green haze[47]

Another element of the environment that contributes to the Horizonites' understanding of Being-in-the-world is the 'zone of haze' at the point 'where land and sky merged' (*The Plains*, p. 29). There are two aspects of the zone of haze that are especially conducive to an understanding of Being-in-the-world. These are the haze's formlessness, and its colour—somewhere between blue and green.

As a formless phenomenon the haze encourages the Horizonites to consider the solubility of conventionally accepted boundaries, the 'blurring of distinctions' (*The Plains*, p. 110) that the narrator worries about. On a physical level the haze appears to merge into both land and sky. In doing so it challenges the Horizonites' received idea that the surfaces of physical entities constitute immutable and inviolable boundaries. Land and sky, though

[43] Schopenhauer, paragraph 39.
[44] Genoni has written than Murnane is always writing 'with the intention of reaching an understanding of the metaphysical rather than the physical qualities of the land' (Paul Genoni, *Subverting the Empire: Explorers and Exploration in Australian Fiction* (Melbourne: Common Ground, 2004), p. 95).
[45] Many critics acknowledge the obvious analogy of geographical with ontological space in Murnane's fiction. For example: Nan Bowman Albinski, 'Putting Value Back in the Land', *Meanjin*, 46 (1987), pp. 367-76 (p. 374); Sue Gillett, 'Gerald Murnane's *The Plains*: A Convenient Source of Metaphors', *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 26 (1995), pp. 25-39 (p. 32); Brian Matthews, 'Tamarisk Landscape With Plains', *Scripsi*, 5 (1988), pp. 143-49 (p. 147).
[46] The horizon's potential to yield revelatory knowledge is alluded to in a later piece of Murnane's fiction in which a character looking at the horizon-line senses that he is 'about to learn something of value' (Gerald Murnane, *A History of Books* (Sydney: Giramondo, 2012), p. 40).
[47] This image of a blurred band of ambiguous colour at the horizon arises at a number of points in Murnane's fiction after *The Plains*, including: Gerald Murnane, *Emerald Blue* (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1995), p. 127; Murnane, *A History of Books*, p. 40.

composed of different substances, surrender their status as sovereign entities as the haze implicates both into an apparent unity of materiality. This unity of materiality is all encompassing: land merges with sky, sky merges with atmosphere, and atmosphere merges with space, *ad infinitum*.

But the formlessness of the haze does not just demand a new conception of the world; it also has implications for the Horizonites' idea of the Self. If the haze succeeds in calling into question the significance of surfaces as boundaries then the Horizonites must reconsider their idea of their own corporeal being. The outer layer of skin which separates the human body from the material world suddenly seems like a rather flimsy demarcation; the skin being just another substance between substances.[48] The skin is not even a stable barrier; it is a porous membrane—another one of the narrator's 'deceptive surfaces' (*The Plains*, p. 110)—absorbing and excreting material from within and without.

Through the ramifying implications of the haze's formlessness it becomes apparent that the physical world can be conceived of as a unity into which the individual's corporal body is implicated. What should also be apparent is that the consideration of the haze's formlessness has ontological implications. A challenge to the individual's corporal sovereignty cannot but be accompanied by a challenge to the *idea* of the Self. As the body begins to show itself to be implicated in the physical world so too does the ontological understanding of the Self become 'en-worlded.' As the Horizonites come to an understanding of their implication in the physical plains they also 'dream' of an ontological plane in which the Self is similarly enmeshed as a Being-in-the-world.

The colour of the haze—blue-green—forms another significant aspect of the Horizonites' landscape of the plains, and it too goes toward their awareness of the solubility of boundaries. A number of critics have identified colours as important metaphorical devices throughout Murnane's *oeuvre* and the present case proves no exception.[49] In this particular evocation of colour two definite colours are named, conjoined by a hyphen. The Horizonites' use of a hybrid colour to describe the haze is further acknowledgement that this amorphous physical phenomenon eludes discrete categorisation. Blue is a primary colour, but green is already the product of a combination of two colours, blue and yellow. So in combining blue and green, dilution is being compounded by dilution, with the result uncertain, identifiable as neither blue nor green. This bleeding of colours prefigures a moment from one of Murnane's later novels where: 'Colours spilled over what should have been their boundaries. Many a colour had traces of another colour showing through from underneath' (*Inland*, p. 81).

The qualifying hyphen between blue and green in *The Plains* is not simply a short black line joining two words on a page of text. The line of the hyphen becomes symbolic of the infinitely divisible continuum of the colour spectrum and the countless species of blue-green that exist between the coordinates of blue and green. Further, considering Murnane's practice of imbuing colours with transcendent properties,[50] the Horizonites' fascination with the 'blue-green veil' (*The Plains*, p. 29) at the horizon can be read to suggest the blurring of metaphysical as well as physical boundaries. The Horizonites' ontological realm can thus be likened to a colour spectrum where each entity merges with its immediate neighbours so as to create an indissoluble fabric of Being. The Horizonites' appreciation of this indissoluble unity is precipitated by their being 'moved' by the blue-green haze at the horizon. In this experience, the Horizonites come to an understanding of themselves, not as individual entities but as Beings-in-the-world.

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[48] The narrator in the next of Murnane's novels expresses something like this view of the human body: 'I thought of myself as a skin-covered parcel of nerves and muscles and blood-vessels – and nothing more' (Murnane, *Landscape with Landscape*, p. 126).

[49] Salusinszky, *Gerald Murnane*, p. 86; Lena Sundin, *Iconicity in the Writing Process: Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse and Gerald Murnane's Inland* (Gothenburg: Gothenburg University, 2004), pp. 101, 104, 116.

[50] See, e.g., Murnane, *Tamarisk Row*, p. 66; Murnane, *Inland*, p. 34; Gerald Murnane, *Barley Patch* (Sydney: Giramondo, 2008), p. 141.

V. Conclusion

One of the achievements of *The Plains*, the one that this essay has focused on, is that it provides a richly complex rendering of a few people's attempts to interpret and draw meaning from their physical surroundings. The novel does this at such a level of abstraction that it remains relevant for readers, and 'landscapers,' who live nowhere near the remote region in which it is set. The novel can be read by anyone for the way its characters respond to, and find meaning in, their broad and generous surroundings.

This essay takes a unique place within existing scholarship on Murnane's fiction. It positions itself between the two authoritative voices of Salusinszky and Fawkner. While rejecting Salusinszky's solipsism this essay has not fully adopted Fawkner's phenomenological account of Murnane's writing. Instead, an approach has been carved out that neither denies nor relies upon the existence of the 'real' world, but focuses on Heidegger's existential-ontological world. Heidegger's philosophy has been used in an informative rather than procrustean manner; there has been no attempt to account for every element of *Being and Time* in *The Plains*. Rather, it has been suggested that Murnane's characters' interpretations of the plains result in a worldview that generally conforms to Heidegger's ontological structure of Being-in-the-world. As this essay is only the second systematic exploration of a possible ontology of Murnane's fiction—the first being Fawkner's—rebuttal and counter-suggestion is anticipated and invited.

The role of religion and tradition in garden conservation: A case study of Qadamgah tomb-garden, Neyshabur, Iran

Sara Mahdizadeh

Introduction

After the Venice Charter of 1964, the policies, guidelines, regulations, selection criteria, theories, concepts and terminology regarding heritage conservation changed, and continue to evolve. The approach towards heritage has expanded, moving away from a focus on single important monuments to include the environments and contextual surrounding of heritage, from a static, museum-like approach to a more dynamic one.[51] However, in practice, conservation works that are guided by the of ICOMOS[52] charters (e.g. the Nara Document on Authenticity of 1994, Burra Charter of 1999[53]) are more concerned with preserving the 'material authenticity' and the 'original fabric' of cultural heritage, without considering the importance of authenticity in terms of intangible/intrinsic values. Concerning architectural conservation, 'authentic restoration' is hard to achieve, in particular with respect to historical landscape and gardens, due to the nature of their dynamic process of change.[54] This paper will set out to depict the potential role of Shi'a belief and traditions as an alternative strategy for garden conservation through the examination of Qadamgah tomb-garden as a case study. This provides a contrast to the dominant material approach to conserving cultural heritage, motivated by the economic or political inclinations of the authorities or managers of the heritage sites.

Qadamgah is a physical representation of the belief of Iranians towards their eighth Imam. According to Shi'a Muslims, the twelve divine Imams are the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) through his daughter, Fatima and his son-in-law, Imam Ali. In Shi'a doctrine, the Imam acts as a mediator between God and Muslims, and is in a state of infallibility (*Ismah)*. [55] Therefore the status of the Imam and *Imamzadeh*' is exalted beyond that of any notable Sunni, and thus enjoys the nature of sacredness.[56] Qadamgah also embodies theological meaning, as well as aesthetic associations with the Paradise garden of the Hereafter described in the Qur'an. While the dead body of Imam Reza is physically absent, the blessedness of his presence in the early ninth century still exists, and it continues to play a crucial role for perpetuating the life of this garden in twentieth-first century Iran. In the case of Qadamgah, no matter whether the miraculous stories associated with its spring and footprint of Imam Reza are correct or bogus, no matter the extent to which the material authenticity of the tomb-garden remains, and no matter what kind of attitudes towards conservation have had an impact upon it, we can now say that the

[51] Jong Hyun Lim, 'Conservation Approaches to the Historic Urban Landscape in the Era of Globalization: In the Same Bed but with Different Dreams? ', in *Historic Environment* 23 (2011); S Weizenegger and W Schenk, 'Cultural Landscape Management in Europe and Germany', in *The Conservation of Cultural Landscapes,* ed. by Mauro Agnoletti (Wallingford: CABI, 2006), pp. 183-96.
[52] International Council on Monuments and Sites.
[53] ICOMOS-FILA, *Historic Gardens and Landscapes (the Florence Charter)*, (Florence: ICOMOS-IFLA, 1982).
[54] UNESCO, Towards a UNESCO culture and development indicators suite
Working document, Dimension n° 3: Sustainable management of cultural heritage for development ,
< http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/creativity/pdf/culture_and_development_indicators/Dimension%203%20Heritage.pdf > p.2. [accessed 9 October 2013]
[55] Shi'a Muslims have faith in twelve Imams as the best protectors and converters of Muhammad *Sunnah*, who have the best knowledge regarding Qur'an and Islam.
[56] Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p.266.

conservation of its intangible aspect is more achievable, and the garden is more 'authentic' in terms of its spirit and function, which is one part of an ideal conservation scenario in international ICOMOS charters.

Qadamgah garden: A brief history

Qadamgah tomb-garden is located in the village of the same name 24 kilometers east of Neyshabur, Iran, and was built in the early seventeenth century (Figs. 1 & 2). The development and formation of Qadamgah as a village rests on its association with a miraculous spring called *Cheshme Hazrat*, in addition to the carved stone footprint of Imam Reza, the eighth Shi'a Imam. In about 200 AH/815 AD, when Imam Reza (A.S.) travelled from Medina in Saudi Arabia to al-Ma'mun's court in Khorasan, on his way to Marv he stopped at the village to say a prayer. It is said that his retinue claimed that there was no water in that place, but Imam Reza removed a heavy stone and under that there was a source of water.

Fig. 1: Location of Qadamgah in Khorasan Province. (Source: Map from < http://www.geographicguide.com/asia/maps/iran.htm > [accessed 10 October 2012])

Fig. 2: The aerial view of Qadamgah, (Source: Photo by the author,2011)

Another narrative also said that due to the absence of water for ablutions before praying, he decided to perform *dry* ablutions *(Tayammum)*,[57] when the water sprang out miraculously at this spot. According to locals, after his prayer, the impression of his feet appeared on the stone, while others are of the belief that it was carved by stonemasons during the seventeenth century in order to depict the blessedness of Imam Reza's presence in this place.[58] Due to the existence of the carved stone footprint attributed to Imam Reza, the site was given the name of Qadamgah, literally the 'place of foot' or 'footing' (*Qadam* means 'foot' and *gah* means 'place'). However, the authenticity of feet could be debatable, as there are various centuries-old narratives about the carved stone footprint. 'A similar impression of the Imam's feet is preserved in the shrine of *Imamzadeh* Muhammad Mahrouq,[59] the relative of Imam Reza, in Neyshabur, which seems to suggest that a miracle also took place while Imam Reza passed through that city'.[60] Due to the governance of Sunni rulers in Iran, the sacred spring was covered over until the seventeenth century in order to hide its miraculous origin.

It was only during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) that emphasis was given to the construction and refurbishing of the holy shrines and tomb-gardens of Imam and *Imamzadeh* as a result of the domination of Shiism.[61] For the first time in the history of Islam, Shah Ismail, the founder of the Safavid dynasty, selected Shi'a as the official state religion to maintain the internal cohesion of Iran, and to differentiate it from its powerful neighbours, particularly the Sunni Ottoman Empire (1299-1923). Safavid Kings concentrated on the construction of tombs of Shi'a

[57] *Tayammum* is an act of dry Muslim ablution using sand or soil when there is no available clean water.
[58] Qadamgah village previously was known as Hemra, Sorkhak and Alibab.
[59] *Imamzadeh* Mahrouq burned alive by Sunni governors in 817AD, quoted in Talinn Grigor, 'Cultivat(Ing) Modernities: The Society for National Heritage, Political Propaganda and Public Architecture in Twentieth-Century Iran' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2005), p.406.
[60] Hillenbrand, p.262.
[61] After Arab conquest in the seventh century and almost 900 years of foreign domination, the Safavid, as native rulers, revived the Persian sovereignty and dominated most parts of Iran. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by E. Van Donzel, vol. 7 (Boston: Brill,1998), p.765.

notables and their ancestral *Sufis* to venerate the Divine, and also to reassert their significance as the symbol of their kingship. This was in contrast to Mughal kings, who generally built funerary tomb-gardens for the veneration of worldly love—the most famous example of which is the Taj Mahal in Agra, which Shah Jahan, the loving husband, constructed for his wife, Mumtaz Mahal—or the Homayun tomb in Delhi.[62]

In 1587, with the rise of Shah Abbas I, the fifth and greatest Safavid King, the embellishment and renovation of Shi'a shrines or tombs of *Imamzadeh* entered a new phase. From 1587 to 1629, in order to spread and consolidate Shiism, Shah Abbas decided to transform Mashhad, the authentic resting-place of Imam Reza, into the main Shi'a centre.[63] For that purpose, in 1601 he travelled to Mashhad from Isfahan on foot, ordered the reconstruction and development of Imam Reza's holy shrine, and through the construction of caravansaries opened a safe route for pilgrimage to Mashhad.[64] During his reign, grand purpose-built tombs were constructed for the ardent devotees of Imam Reza, such as Khajeh Rabi in Mashhad, or any area that was blessed by the Imam's attendance, such as Qadamgah in Neyshabur. Qadamgah gained the status of a tomb complex, as it was located on the pilgrimage route to Mashhad. Shah Abbas ordered the construction of a mausoleum around the sacred spring in approximately 1020AH/1611AD (Fig.3).

Fig. 3: The Ali mausoleum of Qadamgah garden. (Source: Taheri, *Neyshabur Tourist Guide* (Neyshabur: Abarshahr, 2009, p.65)

Under his rule, the run-of-the-mill mausoleum of Qadamgah and *Imamzadeh* Mahrouq in Neyshabour (1041AH/1631AD) and Khaje Rabi in Mashhad 'were formed in [a] definite architectural style that much differed from Timurid predecessors'.[65] After the construction of the tomb in Qadamgah, the reliquary of the Imam's feet was installed in its southern wall, set at the height of 1.5 m (Fig.4).

Fig. 4: Carved footprint of Imam Reza in Qadamgah. (Source: Photo by the author, 2012)

Considering its landscape design, the layout of Qadamgah garden adopted the typical *chaharbagh* pattern, with its physical form evoking the image of Paradise described in the Holy Qur'an.[66] However, in contrast to Persian palace gardens, the monumental tomb-garden of Qadamgah contains a dual connotation, as apart from its *chaharbagh* layout the garden itself also embodies and reinforces this theological and spiritual denotation.

[62] However, apart from religious dimensions manifested in the *chaharbagh* layout of these tomb-gardens, Taj Mahal and Homayun also had 'funerary-dynastic and religious associations' and many rituals were practiced. See Ebba Koch, 'Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan (1526-1648) ', in *Muqarnas,* 14 (1997), 143-65; Sadaf Ansari, 'Constructing and Consuming "Heritage": Humayun's Tomb in Popular Perception' (Unpublished master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003). Moreover, many of these tomb-gardens such as Data Ganj Bakhsh and Milam Mir in Lahore were constructed for Sufis. See James L. Wescoat, 'From the Gardens of the "Qur'an" to the "Gardens" of Lahore', in *Landscape Research,* 20 (1995), 19-29.

[63] Charles Melville, 'Shah Abbas and the Pilgrimage to Mashhad', in *Safavid Persia,* ed. by Charles Melville (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996).

[64] Grigor, p.86.

[65] Hillenbrand, p.306.

[66] James L. Wescoat, (1995); Elizabeth Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden: In Persia and Mughal India* (London: Scolar Press, 1980); Fairchild Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Bristol: University Presses Marketing, 2008).

As part of Shah Abbas I's agenda for fostering the Shi'a pilgrimage cult,[67] a caravanserai was constructed near the garden to accommodate pilgrims and caravans. Subsequently, water reservoirs (*Ab anbar*), a thermal bathhouse (*hamam*), and two *Qanats* (a traditional Iranian irrigation system**)** were built (Fig.5).

All were dedicated as *waqf* (endowment) for the welfare of pilgrims. Added near the sacred spring, these joint constructions transformed the simple area into a tomb-garden complex, which became a place for the worship of God which was visited by large numbers of pilgrims.

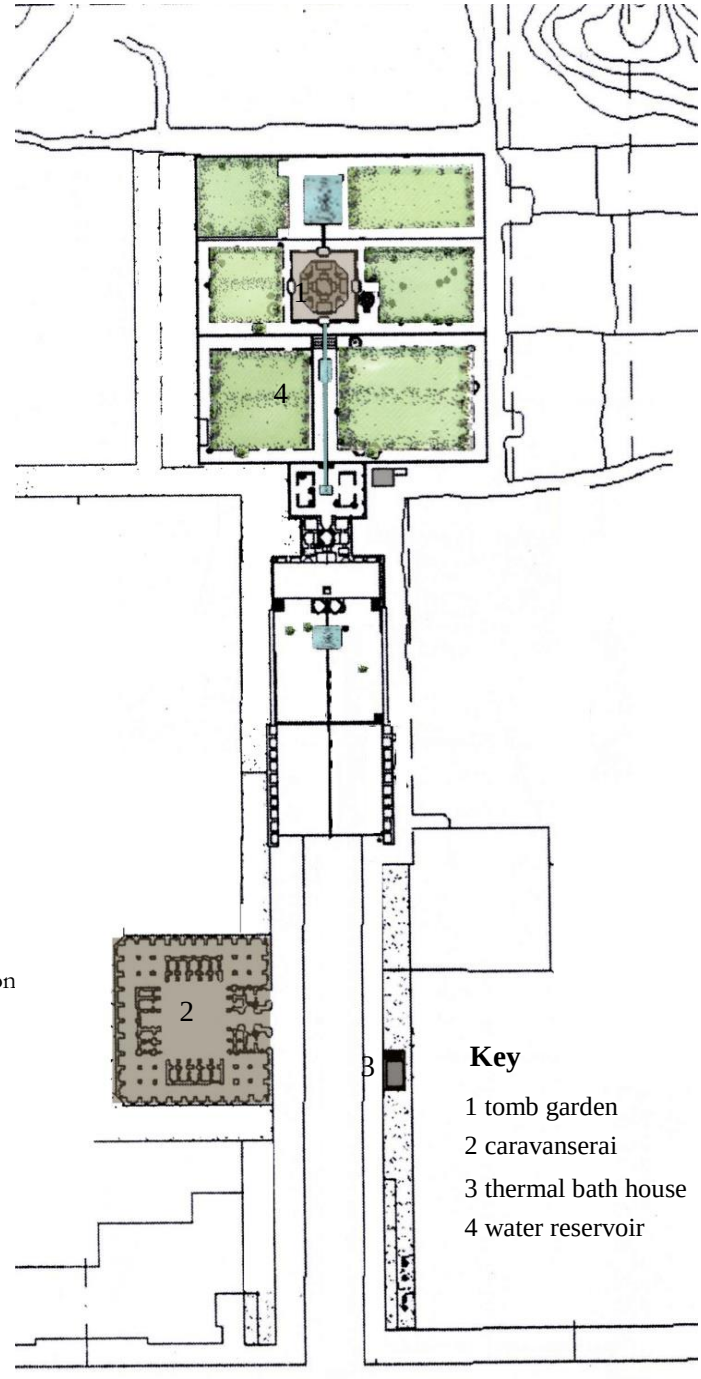


Fig. 5: Plan of Qadamgah garden. (Source: Redrawn by the author based on the plan provided by the Cultural Heritage Organisation of Khorasan.)

[67] Kishwar Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine: Architecture, Religion and Power in Early Modern Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), p.1.

Change and continuity in Qadamgah garden during the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979)

Qadamgah garden continued to function until the early twentieth century and was a religious destination for pilgrims. With the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty under the leadership of Reza Shah in 1925, Qadamgah experienced waves of change in its religious ideals and significance similar to other religious places. Under the rubric of the modernization of the country (or in the words of Katuzian, 'pseudo-modernisation'), Reza Shah underlined nationalism, de-Islamisation and Westernisation. He established a heavy-handed urban renewal programme, undermined the existing religion by banning women from wearing the veil in 1936[68] and focusing on pre-Islamic traditions. In the eyes of Reza Shah, any Islamic ceremonies that recalled Muslim traditions (but especially those with Shi'a essence, such as '*Taziyeh*') were considered as devoid of value, and thus were targeted as hallmarks of religious backwardness which jeopardised the 'Great Aryan Civilization' of Iranians. Moreover, he set an agenda to marginalise the *ulama* (community of Muslim clerics), and clerical deputies, who were perceived as an obstacle to progress and denounced as 'black medieval reactionaries'.[69] He closely scrutinised the accounts of religious endowments, aiming to disempower the *Awqaf* (Pious Foundations) that were established during the Safavid era to take care of shrines and *Mouqufeh* (properties and buildings consigned to a specific use). While according to the law of *waqf,* the revenue derived from such endowed buildings should be dedicated only for repair works or requested purposes mentioned in the written instructions of *waqfnameh*,[70] Reza Shah changed the system of *waqf* properties, ordering instead that the revenue coming from endowed buildings be spent for other purposes, in particular the restoration of pre-Islamic heritage, such as that found in Persepolis. These political reforms introduced by Reza Shah Pahlavi were reflected in the life of Qadamgah garden and contributed to the deterioration of both its religious significance and physical condition. However, Qadamgah was not completely set aside from Shi'a life, and the belief of people played a key role in encouraging Shi'a Muslims to make pilgrimage to it and perform religious activities there.

The policy of de-Islamisation was continued during Mohammad Reza Shah's reign (1941-1979), as well as through the land reform of 1962,[71] which led to the loss of a large amount of income for *Awqaf*. However, unexpected revenue flowing from the emergence of the oil industry after 1950s and the establishment of the National Organisation for Conservation of Historic Monuments (NOCHMI) in 1344 SH/1966 paved the way for the preservation of cultural heritage. In contrast to the early period of Reza Shah's reign that was marked by humiliation of Islamic traditions and buildings, from the 1960s both Islamic and pre-Islamic culture and monuments were depicted as layers of authentic Iranian history. Therefore, restoration works were established in Chehel Sotun, Hasht Behesht gardens in 1347 SH/1969 and spread to other gardens, including Dolat Abad, Arg, Fin, and Cheshmeh Ali, as well as the tomb-gardens of Qadamgah and *Imamzadeh* Mahrough in Neyshabur.[72] In 1972 the branch of NOCHMI in Khorasan took the restoration of Qadamgah garden into its hands and 25 million *Rials* was provided for its repair. For the first time, in the process of preparing an inventory of the tomb complex in 1352 SH/1974, plan documentation and maps of the garden were drawn up. Through the physical intervention and beautification that followed, Qadamgah garden, with its *chaharbagh* asymmetrical plan, once more

[68] When Reza Shah travelled to Turkey and was inspired by Atatürk's reforms, on his return, he decided to change the appearance and body of Iranians via a definition of a new 'dress code'. He forced all of the men excluding registered clergymen to wear 'Pahlavi cap'(*kolah Pahlavi*) and trousers with coat and banned the Islamic veil (*hejab*) for women in 1936, which met with opposition from the religious leaders and led to many conflicts.
[69] Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.152.
[70] Mehdi Hodjat, 'Cultural Heritage in Iran: Policies for an Islamic Country', (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 1995), p.95.
[71] The Land Reform Act of 1962, which after three main stages was officially approved in 1971, aimed to share the large land and agricultural properties with peasants, who 'worked on the same land', to end the unequal distribution of the land and traditional system of landlord-peasant relations (*arbab-rayati*). This reform was opposed by the landlords and certain clerics, who had acquired large areas of land under the rubric of endowments. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 778-86.
[72] *Society for National Heritage 131(Karnameh Anjoman Asar Meli from 1350 to 1353)* ed. by Hossein Bahroulmi (Tehran: Society for National Heritage, 1976), pp.778-86.

attained the physical form of Paradise Garden, as well as its religious connotation. These restoration works undertaken by the NOCHMI were not based on exact archaeological surveys or historical documents, and were halted following the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

The role of religion and tradition in shaping different conservation ethics in Qadamgah garden after the Islamic Revolution of 1979: *Qadamgah* as a multifunctional garden

This section elaborates the way in which the approaches and the ethics of conservation of religious places and *waqf* properties, including Qadamgah garden, are significantly different from other cultural heritage sites, particularly after the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Following 2500 years of imperialism, the shift of power to the Islamic Republic brought different ideologies and concepts towards religious places, paving the way for an enhancement of the religious dimension of holy shrines and other related Islamic monuments. Due to the domination of religious authority, the role of clergymen, including the *Awqaf* administrators, was praised for upholding Islam and Shiism. Subsequently the sanctuaries belonging to Shi'a notables received further attention, with the aim of towards turning them into a show of Iran's emergence as a main Shi'a centre in the world, with more than 70 million followers.

Fig. 6: An iron grille enclosure over the grave of Shi'a saint calling *Zarih*. (Source: Photo by the author, 2013)

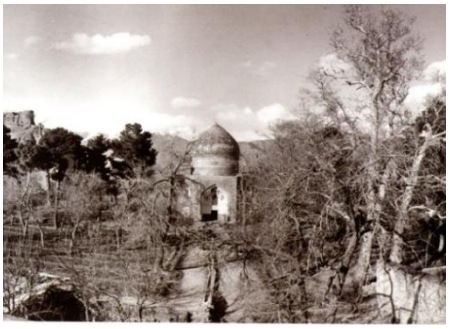
Therefore, after the Revolution, and in sharp contrast to the treatment of Royal gardens, whose symbolism has been made impotent, from the conservation point of view, the tomb-gardens and other sanctities of Shi'a notables have been transformed into 'living heritage'. Once more, religious and social meanings have been returned to holy shrines and tombs of Shi'a notables, as they become the focal point of religious authorities. These places have been portrayed by the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) not as 'simply a place of burial and commemoration',[73] but instead as a 'surrogate mosque' and mother-house for certain activities that lead Shi'a Muslims toward Paradise. [74]

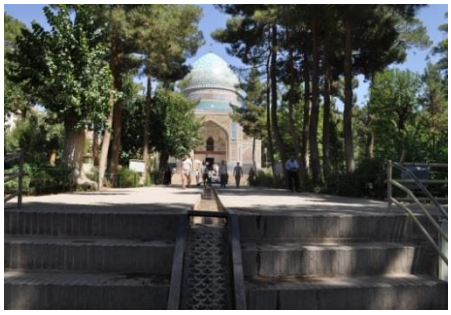
Fig.7: Making pilgrimage to Qadamgah and Mashhad on foot. (Source: Photo by Hossein Kamashad)

The annual reports of the National Relic Society bear witness to the fact that in 1362 SH/1984, in the mêlée of war, the restoration plans of 253 historical places, including Qadamgah in Neyshabur, which had been halted for five years because of the Revolution and Iran-Iraq war, was to be restarted. [75] From a financial point of view, while other historical buildings and gardens suffered from insufficient government budgets for their maintenance, this is not the case for Qadamgah. The law of *waqf* made Qadamgah self-sufficient, which facilitated the process of conservation.

[73] Hillenbrand, p.260.
[74] Rizvi, p.254.
[75] ICHO, *Gozaresh-E Hefazat Az Miras-E Farhangi (Cultural Heritage Conservation Report)*, (Tehran: Ministry of Science and Higher Education press, 1984), pp. 207-15.

As the prime aims of pilgrims are the upkeep and survival of Qadamgah in return for divine rewards and to benefit from the blessedness of Imam Reza, it received financial support from the public through covenants (*nazr*) and *waqf*. This distinctive conservation method guarantees the physical entity of the complex. Therefore, in the 1990s, thanks to a large budget obtained from the public, and under the supervision of *Awqaf* and the Cultural Heritage Organisation (ICHO),[76] maintenance of the garden resumed in an attempt to improve the visual appeal of Qadamgah garden (Figs. 8 & 9). The income derived from covenants and the economic activities surrounding the tomb-garden is sufficient to meet the restoration and maintenance cost of Qadamgah. Of the total revenue, 40% is spent on restoration and maintenance of the garden, 25% on organising socio-cultural events, 15% belonged to the *Awqaf* and 20% is spent on staff and garden administration. Unfortunately though, due to the absence of a comprehensive national framework and various conflicts between the organisations involved (in particular the *Awqaf* and the ICHO), the restoration works rarely attained even material 'authenticity', an ideal principle of ICOMOS charters such as the Venice charter of 1963.





Figs. 8 & 9: Above: Qadamgah garden before restoration plan. (Source: Archive of Cultural Heritage Organisation, branch of Khorasan-e-Razavi) Below: Qadamgah garden after restoration. (Source: Photo by the author, 2013)

In the case of Qadamgah, however, from a social and symbolic point of view, its traditional function and intangible values have remained relatively intact over the centuries. Pilgrims still are sincere in their belief towards the Imam—one of the important factors for transforming the garden into a living place. Qadamgah was and is used for major events with a traditional, cultural and religious nature that are deeply rooted in the daily life of Iranians. In Qadamgah and other holy shrines, touching and kissing the iron grille[77] (*zarih*) or threshold of the tomb complex (Fig. 6), reciting the Holy Qur'an or beseechment (*dua*), chanting, performing of *Ta'zieh* rituals, distributing offerings (*nazri*), and performing Muslim *Eid* prayers are all dominant and popular activities in order to obtain Divine reward (*adjr*). During specific Shi'a holy months—in particular Muharram—and on the eve of Shi'a Muslims' feasts—such as *Aid-e-Ghadir khum*—or on birth anniversaries of Imams, the communal and religious functions of all shrines and tombs in Iran have been enhanced.[78] The month of *Muharram* and the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Reza are the peak times for pilgrimage, during which the number of pilgrims rises dramatically (to over 100 times everyday levels). People make pilgrimage to Qadamgah from different cities in Iran, but mostly from Khorasan province: They are diverse in social status, colour, age, gender and academic background, but all participate in the same ritual to share and express their grief and allegiance to their Imam.

From early times in Qadamgah, during Muharram, *Taziyeh*, the passion plays of mourning for the death of Imam Hossein and his companions, has been performed on the eve of *Tasua* and *Ashura* (9th and 10th of Muharram), administered by *Awqaf* (Fig.10.5). The ritualistic behavioural pattern that was embraced by the post-revolutionary government as well, turns Qadamgah into a forum for social interaction and a locus of dynamic activities that draws millions of pilgrims annually.[79] Above all, Qadamgah is a venue where the ancient pre-Islamic feast on New Year's Eve is celebrated. Perpetuation of the nationwide festival of Nowrouz, a symbol of Iranian collective

[76] ICHO was established in 1985.
[77] The graves of Muslims oriented towards Mecca in *Qebleh* direction.
[78] Hillenbrand, p.266.
[79] This record of the number of pilgrims was for 1391 SH/2012. Source from interview with the manager of Qadamgah conducted by author in Qadamgah on 3 September 2013.

identity, demonstrates how Qadamgah garden has found its way to constitute an individual identity that makes it stand out from other historical gardens in Iran.

However, the activity that marks Qadamgah as a unique place and distinguishes it from other shrines in general, and tomb-gardens in particular, is the collection of water from the source of the sacred spring (see Fig.10.2).[80] Pilgrims are allowed to bring bowls or bottles to drink and collect small amounts of water. There are various narratives regarding the miraculous healing by Imam Reza in his holy shrine in Mashhad, and also concerning the occult nature of the water in Qadamgah. Interviews conducted by the author in the summer of 2013, confirmed that many pilgrims believed that, through the blessings of Imam Reza, the water could benefit the supplicant's spirit, protect them against discomforts and relieve their worries or have emotional consequences. According to the Manager of Qadamgah, two examples of the curing of disease have been recorded in Qadamgah. The spring, which has never gone dry—even in drought seasons—with its miraculous narrative, is a powerful incentive that motivates millions of pilgrims to travel to Qadamgah even on foot from remote areas (see Fig.7).

10.1

10.2

10.3

10.4

10.5

Fig. 10: Various activities and behavioural patterns in Qadamgah garden
1. Religious: Making pilgrimage (*ziarat*). (Source: Photo by Hossein Donyavi)
2. Spiritual: Collection and drinking of sacred water. (Source Photo by Mahboobeh Yousefi)
3. Commercial: Shopping from small bazaar. (Source: Photo by the author, 2013)
4. Recreational: Traditional restaurant. (Source: Photo by the author, 2013)
5. Social and religious: Performance of *Taziyeh* rituals. (Source: Photo by Ali Nabavi)

[80] This water was also examined by the Health Centre of Khorasan Razavi Province in about 1389 SH/ 2010 and it is said that the water is safe for human consumption. Source from interview with the manager of Qadamgah, conducted by author in Qadamgah on 3 September 2013.

In terms of marketing, Qadamgah is a true place for housing various functions that have provided a source of income for locals and brought benefits for *Awqaf.* During the post-revolutionary era, particularly after 1990, the urge to take a greater interest in the economic use of heritage was felt. This was due to the financial crisis following the 'post-war reconstructions' and the decline of oil revenue, which lead to priority being given to the development of the tourism industry.[81] Due to the lack of potential for the development of international tourism markets, pilgrimage tourism to holy shrines and tomb complexes has become the dominant type of tourism in Iran. This shift in approach was accompanied by the establishment of a series of new policies. The rites of visitation of Shi'a holy shrines were encouraged by the authorities. The Holy Shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad has been positioned at the heart of religious and political events, broadcast in national media frequently to make it as visible as possible. Mashhad became a magnet for absorbing annually about twenty million domestic pilgrims, in addition to two million international visitors, establishing it as the seventh of the great sanctuaries of the Muslim world. Qadamgah stood as a unique stopover on the itinerary of pilgrims en route to Mashhad.

Fig 11: Picture of caravanserais after restoration (Source: Photo by the author, 2011)

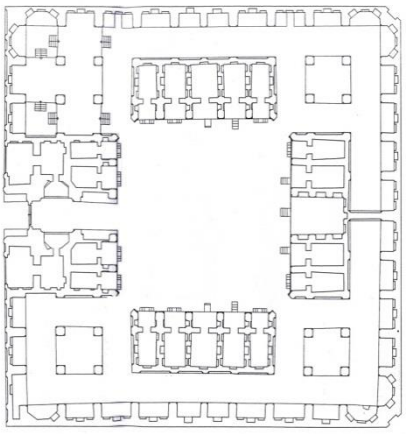


Fig 12: Plan of caravanserais (Source: Archive of Cultural Heritage Organisation, branch of Khorasan-e-Razavi)

From a commercial point of view, the increased number of pilgrims crystallising in the physical ambit of the garden has changed the economic activities on the site. Subsequently, the land-use and morphological pattern of the tomb's surroundings underwent change. From the 2000s onwards, under the supervision of the ICHO and with the budget of *Awqaf,* a restoration plan was proposed by the ICHO for the rehabilitation of caravanserais that had lost their original function and been abandoned for many years, as shown in Figures.11&12. It was successfully transformed into a traditional restaurant (*restoran sonati*) where visitors drank tea or smoked hookah (*qalyan*), not as religious veneration, but rather as Iranian recreational habits (Fig.10.4).[82] Moreover, the stalls around the courtyard of caravanserai, previously known as *Hojreh,* have been rented to the pilgrims. Exploiting the commercial aspect of old caravanserais provided an opportunity to improve the poor quality of the tomb complex and thereby the welfare of pilgrims. Many visitors asserted that due to the availability of guest rooms and additional services, they were encouraged to spend some nights in Qadamgah to benefit from the blessedness of the tomb complex. [83]

Moreover, a small bazaar, retail business and booths have emerged in order to meet the demands of pilgrims (Fig.10.3) bringing benefit for both *Awqaf* and locals.[84] Some vendors earn their living through selling local souvenirs. For pilgrims, souvenirs bought from the loci of Qadamgah form a significant part of the pilgrimage as they are considered blessed. During the peak times of pilgrimage, some locals are also encouraged to open their homes to host pilgrims, providing a seasonal source of income for these families. Implementation of all of these sub-projects in the proximity of Qadamgah has boosted business as well as the number of visitors to the garden, which reached more than eight million in 2012.[85] Through the combination of a sense of materiality and spirituality, Qadamgah garden finds the ability to balance the affairs of this world and the Hereafter, and continues

[81]Hodjat, p.264.
[82] It is noteworthy that during the last site visit by the author in summer 2013, the restaurant was closed and instead caravanserai rented to private sector for use as a gallery.
[83] From the interview with the visitors and pilgrims to Qadamgah, conducted by the author in Qadamgah on 3 September 2013.
[84] The shoppers contract with the *Awqaf.*
[85] ICHO report, branch of Khorasan Razavi, (Mashhad, Cultural heritage Organisation, 2011).

its life in a sustainable way. Nowadays, the life of a village with a population over 3,700 inhabitants connects the existence of Qadamgah garden and the frequent visits of devotees of Imam Reza.

Discussion and Conclusion

Could faith become an alternative strategy for the conservation, continuity and vitality of heritage gardens? The examination of Qadamgah garden has revealed how, when the motivation behind garden conservation is derived from the interest and belief of the people, the garden is more likely to survive, both in terms of tangible and, in particular, intangible values. This case study is a unique example of a living heritage garden in Iran, which has demonstrated its ability to resist complex ideological shifts and upheavals in the country, and which with unplanned policies, continues to function as a spiritual, commercial and social centre, due to the active involvement of people. In the case of Qadamgah, as a result of the sanctity (*barekat*) associated with the eighth Shi'a Imam, the symbiotic relationships have continued between tomb-garden and people, pre-Islamic and Islamic rituals that all contribute to changing the Qadamgah into a thriving centre. As long as the aura of holiness associated with Imam Reza encompasses the garden area, it motivates Shi'a Muslims to make pilgrimages or pledge money as a covenant for its restoration, leading to a continuity of the sense of vitality that is inherent in it. Should these beliefs and strong faith decrease or vanish, the impetus for the garden's existence would perish simultaneously.

Nowadays, Qadamgah is more than a garden for contemplation. It is a source of revenue for *Awqaf* and locals through tourism. Its garden is a source of pleasure for visitors, and still functions as a place of assembly for social gathering. Its sacred spring (*Cheshme Hazrat*) is a source of blessedness, the garden area and its tomb are spiritual centres for thousands of pilgrims, serving as a refuge from the hustle and bustle of city life. With regards to conservation practices, in contrast to other heritage sites, Qadamgah is self-sufficient and self-guarded against physical vandalism, for which much is owed to the traditional mechanism of *waqf*. Therefore, it has developed the ability to function consistently, safely removed from the world's political and 'mercantilistic' outlook. So far, all of the international guidelines on conservation have been written very much from a European perspective, which blocks the traditional ways of thinking in the spirit of Islamic principles that could benefit Islamic garden heritage. The distinctive conservation approach in the case of Qadamgah, which relies heavily on the degree of religiousness of Iranians, going hand in hand with traditions, might challenge the current ICOMOS charters, which have failed to address the alternative power of religion while emphasising the importance of saving the 'physical authenticity'. This case study, and the way of Qadamgah's conservation, could not be taken as an ideal or universal model, nor be directly applied to other gardens in Iran, because of the particular nature of this type of garden. However, as in Iran there are no specific measures and frameworks for the conservation and management of historical gardens, this particular case study does reveal to us that if conservation schemes come into line with Iranian beliefs and traditions, the long-term conservation of heritage sites is more achievable. By acknowledging and developing the influential role of belief, it could offer an alternative strategy through which garden conservation frameworks could be drafted in Islamic countries, especially Iran.

Title: 'John Clare: Natural history writing and a loco-descriptive poetics of landscape'
Author: Jeffrey Dories
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John Clare: Natural history writing and a loco-descriptive poetics of landscape

Jeffrey Dories

Abstract: John Clare used many different techniques to present the natural world to his readers. In order to understand his poetry, and his philosophical view of nature, one must examine his published and unpublished poetry and natural history writing. Through the use of extensive detail, an obsession with his local environment, and using writing techniques such as prosopopoeia, Clare presented a view of his local environment that deserves further study. Nature lovers of any generation can appreciate his work and learn from the way he viewed nature. At the same time, his work shows some of the dislocation and alienation that people feel when disconnected from land.

In reading John Clare's poetic oeuvre, two facts are completely undeniable: that his poetry is tied to his sense of place and that his emphasis on location serves as a primary defining characteristic of his writing. Clare's hometown and the surrounding areas influenced him and resonated throughout his writing, which is the major characteristic that makes his writing unique. Arguably, few British writers of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries were more influenced by their locations than Clare.

There were many critiques of Clare's poetry based on his intense focus on local natural history instead of symbolism, metaphor, and a deeper philosophical meaning. For instance, in an unsigned review from *New Monthly Magazine*, the writer argues, 'in his minuteness of detail he seems at a loss where to stop'.[86] In other words, Clare cannot help but give more detail than is needed. A critic, from *Monthly Magazine* made such an argument, writing that '[t]hough Mr C's poems are not devoid of merit, they will not stand the test of trial themselves' because they are not sufficiently philosophical.' One piece of advice given to Clare from Charles Lamb is especially notable as Lamb recommends that Clare 'transplant Arcadia to Helpstone'.[87] In other words, Lamb told Clare that his poetry would be better received if he did not use unique images from his hometown, instead, Clare should take idealized pastoral Arcadian images and superimpose them over his local area.

A central aspect of these critiques listed above is that they attack the most distinctive aspects of Clare's work, his minute descriptions of nature.[88] The critics favoured the sentiments that are commonplace throughout much of the poetry of this period: idealization of the scene, sentiments overlaying natural description, and philosophical ideas guiding poetics.[89] The aspect of Clare's writing that distinguishes it from other works is exactly what he was castigated for during his lifetime. Clare felt that much could be learned through lengthy descriptions without overtly inserting larger philosophical meanings directly into his descriptive writing. Clare was able to depict a scene in a manner in which the reader would learn about the natural world, humanity, and many other concepts with

[86] Storey, Edward, *The Letters of John Clare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.68.
[87] Storey, p.175.
[88] John Barrell investigated this comparison more fully in his book *The Idea of Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.50. He argues that many writers often took natural descriptions from the great poets back to Theocritus and superimposed these descriptions on the landscape of the area that they were attempting to describe in the present.
[89] Susan J. Wolfson, 'Wordsworth's Craft', *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth. Ed. Stephen Gill.* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.114, refers to this in her writing on Wordsworth as 'lofty contemplation'. Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.200, refers to this tendency in Romanticism as 'introspective and universalizing' of the natural scene, and William Galperin, *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993) p.173, wrote that this kind of writing originated from a 'mind that half perceives and half creates.'

pure description. If there was any idea that Clare rejected, it was transposing Arcadia over nature, especially his hometown.

This essay focuses on the intricate detail of Clare's natural history writing and his use of prosopopoeia to personify landscapes. The origins of Clare's poetry rest in his natural history writing, so in order to understand his poetry, we must examine how much of his philosophy derived from his natural history background. The main importance of this study is to emphasize Clare's intricate details in the landscapes he portrays and that natural history writing, in general, should be recognized as an integral genre in Romantic studies.

Privileging the Local over the Universal

In July, 1793, the poet John Clare was born in the little town of Helpstone, Northamptonshire. Clare, known as a peasant-poet, was born the son of a farm laborer, and his grandfather was an itinerant laborer whose lineage was a mixture of laborers, farmers, and clerks. Born in a simple cottage, his formal education was limited to classes in a church until the age of twelve after which he was self educated. Most of his life, he was a laborer who wrote poetry in his time off from work, including those times he found ways to avoid work. He did achieve some fame for his writing, but this formally lasted approximately three years, and then the rest of his life was spent in financial struggle and despair.

Gilbert White's natural histories influenced both Clare's natural history writing and his poetry. After reading White's *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789) in his teenage years, Clare decided to write a similar natural history of his hometown, Helpstone.[90] The disparity between the two natural histories is vast: White's was thoroughly formed, published, and became one of the most popular selling books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while Clare's ended up no more than a scattered series of fragments and letters that were not comprehensively assembled until Margaret Grainger compiled them in 1983. However, the themes that run throughout both natural histories show that Clare's philosophy of nature writing was shaped through this experience.

One theme throughout Clare's natural histories is a focus on detailed observation of the natural environment. He felt passionately that recording the intricate details of the natural world was integral in order to preserve the natural history of his hometown that was drastically altered by human and governmental intervention including, but not limited to, the Enclosure Acts. This concern for keeping record of the world he knew resulted in Clare being deeply invested in his home district. The threat of the loss of his childhood land and way of life helped provide an intense focus and rootedness to his writing that many other nature writers lacked. He never left England and only traveled outside of a ten-mile radius of his hometown on four occasions, which intensified his investment in locality throughout his work.[91]

Clare argued that by recording nature as accurately as possible, his readers would better understand their environment and act as witnesses to help future generations comprehend the changes in the natural world that would be altered for future generations. In a period of history that was defined by revolution (political, economic, industrial, religious, poetic, etc.), both the literal earthly landscape and the landscape of ideas were dramatically changing. Clare felt that if nature as it currently appeared was not recorded, it would disappear forever, and this fueled his passion for detail. Because of this, the act of bearing witness to the natural destruction is a political and poetic act that serves an important role in natural history writing.

[90] Margaret Grainger, *The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983)

[91] Grainger, p. xxxviii.

Natural history writers challenge the dominant discourse that enables nature to be wantonly used or destroyed. Writers like Clare confront the impending enclosure of his land, which many businessmen from his era thought of as a positive act that provided jobs and wealth to large groups of people,[92] and suggests that it will destroy nature, the communal aspect of the commons, and the traditional way of life that their families had experienced for generations. This testimony takes shape throughout their writing by providing a written record of the scenes that they loved.

An integral part of bearing witness to natural destruction is recording what the affected land was like prior to the acts that altered it. In order to accomplish this, the recording must be focused and detailed in order to gain a full perspective of what was lost. The argument for a recording of the natural history on the more narrow local level and not in a universalized manner is explained in this paragraph:

> I think an able Essay on objects in nature that woud beautifye descriptive poetry might be entertaining & useful to form a right taste in pastoral poems that are full of nothing but the old thread bare epithets of 'sweet singing cuckoo' 'love lorn nightingale' 'fond turtles' 'sparkling brooks' 'green meadows' 'leafy woods' & c & c these make up the creation of Pastoral & descriptive poesy & every thing else is reckond low & vulgar… in fact they are too rustic for… the fashionable or prevailing system of rhyme till some bold innovating genius rises with a real love for nature & then they will no doubt be considerd as great beautys which they really are.[93]

Clare criticized more traditional poetry for relying on metaphors and allusions to literary nature, false observations that had been passed down for generations and not real details of the natural world. He argued that more biologically accurate depictions of the natural world would enrich and beautify poetry, and that it would take an "innovating genius" to accomplish this feat. Clare argued that the job of nature writers was to dispel superstition and myths about the natural world in order to come closer to biological reality. He believed that through a qualitative, didactic, and more biologically accurate poetry that relies less on superstition and dispelled facts, readers would have a better understanding of the world that surrounds us. At the same time, more biologically accurate poetry would strengthen and alter the poetic world by creating a new kind of nature-based poetics that would act as a testimonial to nature. Of course, this movement would have needed to achieve popular appeal and this did not directly occur, but in analyzing and introducing their poetry to contemporary readers a new opportunity appears for instituting this alternate poetics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The act of recording and preserving biological details as an act of bearing witness represents a common thematic element between Clare's work and that of other natural history writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that need further examination.

One of the areas where Clare's observation and recording of the natural world excelled was in his depictions of birds, especially their nests. For instance:

> [t]he gold finch… builds its nest on the eldern or apple tree & make its outside of grey moss like the pinks which it greatly resembles but its lining is different & instead of cowhair it prefers thistle down it lays 5 pale eggs thinly sprinkled with feint red spots.[94]

[92] Kenneth Olwick in his book *Landscape, Nature, and the Body Politic* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin, 2002), p.119, explains that the Old Whigs, who were rooted in the old country traditions, were for maintaining the commons and generally against most aspects of enclosure. The New Whigs, on the other hand, disregarded traditional custom and were for enclosure. Clare seems to be calling the New Whigs hypocritical in both calling themselves Whigs and yet standing against custom in regards to enclosure.
[93] Grainger, p. 51.
[94] Grainger, p. 45.

In this passage, he wrote about where the nest was found, what it looked like, what it was made of, and what lay inside of it. After reading Clare's observations, it would be easy to distinguish the nests of the dozens of birds that reside in and around Helpstone. In this case, if you looked at the apple tree outside his cottage, there most likely would be a gold finch's nest. While most writers would see these nests as similar, or at least, not be able to distinguish the differences between them in such great detail, Clare studied them to the point that he could identify the bird just by seeing their nests. Most importantly, Clare saw intrinsic value in studying animals within their habitat, whereas many Linnaean naturalists normally killed plants and animals and took them out of their habitat in order to dissect and classify them. These writers painstakingly recorded their environments to make a record of the plants and animals that could not write their own histories.

In making their nests, Clare observed that the nightingale always uses 'dead oak leaves;' the pettichap makes its nest so small that they cannot get in without stretching the opening and Clare hypothesized that both the male and female birds sit on the eggs because they are so large that one would not be able to cover it.[95] The thrush builds its nest near 'large tree[s]' for protection, with 'twigs,' 'water grains,' 'dead grass moss,' 'cow dung,' mixed with 'wool' and a 'finer grass' lining.[96] In each of these examples, Clare used the common colloquial name of the bird rather than the Latin, in the case of the thrush, Turdus philomelos. He utilized the colloquial name throughout his natural history writing as a purposeful rejection of the Latinized systemic classification. While an argument could easily be made that Clare used this philosophical rejection in order to avoid learning the Linnaean system, throughout his life he proved that when he had the will to learn even very difficult concepts, he would easily do so. Clare's interest in exacting biological detail in his natural history writing helped him develop a talent for observing intricate details of the biological world that will later appear in his poetry. In order to understand Clare's poetics based in natural history, it is important to illustrate how dedicated Clare was to presenting the natural world accurately and recording details that many writers and poets would ignore.

The detailed example of the thrush's nest represents the extent of Clare's passionate recording of every minute detail in the surrounding area. The thrush has a long tradition in literature dating back to Homer, and in England, Chaucer, but after reading Clare's descriptions, there is little doubt that few other poets had a fuller understanding of the bird than he. There may have been naturalists who had similar knowledge of the thrush; although, they could not express their understanding as artistically and thoroughly. Because Clare presented these birds, and the natural world in such detail, no other writer of the nineteenth century straddled the naturalist and poetic divide more aptly than Clare. This is noteworthy because Clare viewed natural history poetry in a unique manner as a vehicle for recording and bearing witness to the natural world that may disappear. Few poets of his era have attempted to use poetry as a medium for natural advocacy and testimony for plants and animals that could not speak for themselves.\

The focus of John Clare's natural history writings emphasize the interactions that occur between the plants, animals, insects and their environment. His focus on landscapes tied together the scene in a way that other writers rarely did. When readers are presented with animals, insects, and even humans in their environment and the interactions between them and their environment, they understand the ecosystem as a holistic entity, not just discordant parts. Clare's writing acts as a composite image of the entire system of the natural world providing the reader with not just a series of incoherent parts, but instead, an organic, holistic vision of nature that will influence the way that he wrote poetry as well. Clare's landscapes are both detailed and poetic. When he portrays a scene, it is thronging with life, with plants and land just as alive as the animals in the scene:

> The tall poplars peeping above the rest like leafy steeples the grey willows shining chilly in the sun as if the morning mist still lingered on its cool green I felt the beauty of these with eager delight the gadflys noonday hum the fainter murmur of the beefly 'spinning in the evening ray' the dragonflys in spangled

[95] Grainger, p.69, p.80.
[96] Grainger, p. 47.

> coats darting like winged arrows down the thin stream . . . I lovd to see the heaving grasshopper in his coat of delicate green bounce from stub to stub I listend the hedgecricket with rapture.[97]

In this scene, the trees come alive 'peeping' and the 'murmur' of dragonflies mix with many other sounds to create a symphonic sound that penetrates through the scene. Clare illustrated, through his writing, a living and breathing ecosystem that was not a series of individual parts; instead, all the sounds combined to make an organic, living world that thrived around him as he enjoyed the experience. He recorded the scene in a manner that reflects the interconnected nature of the environment and portrayed the significance of all the elements of the ecosystem working together. If any part of the ecosystem is destroyed it will affect the entire system.

Clare wrote in his 'Essay on Taste' that taste is 'a uniformity of excellence-it modifys expression & selects images-it arranges & orders matters & thoughts'.[98] This definition of taste defined both his nature writing and his poetry. He argued that the writer's job is to 'select images,' 'modify,' and 'arrange' them. In his nature poetry, Clare did not attempt to lift imagination to a higher level, or create a subjective filter to view nature through. Instead, he viewed the job of a writer like that of a realist painter: to attend carefully to accurate, non-idealized representations of the natural world. Of course, it is impossible to completely present the scenes in a realistic manner, but that was Clare's lofty goal throughout his natural history oeuvre. Because of this, his poetry is didactic in the way it illustrates biological details for the reader.

Personification, Prosopopoeia, and Living Landscapes

One of the most fascinating aspects of Clare's writing is that he uses personification in ways distinctive from the poets whom he idolized. Instead of just giving plants, animals, or other parts of nature anthropomorphized characteristics, on multiple occasions he used prosopopoeia[99] as if the natural figure is the narrator of the poem. He attempts to give a voice to the elements of nature in a way that he imagines as realistic. For example, Clare gives a voice to an area of land named Swordy Well and a stream named Round Oak Waters. Both the quarry and the stream that he gives voice to were altered by the Enclosure Acts, so his attempt to portray their thoughts to the reader is an effort to help readers empathize and understand the negative impact of the acts. He uses this technique of making a part of nature act as the narrator in other poems as well; generally, this was not a common practise for the poets that he had been exposed to.

Clare's most powerful examples of personification in his poetry occur in his prosopopoeia Enclosure Elegies,[100] 'The Lament of Swordy Well' (1821-4) and 'The Lamentations of Round-Oak Waters' (1818). Clare wrote two poems about Swordy Well, a quarry area near his home, the first being 'I've Loved Thee Swordy Well' and the second 'The Lament of Swordy Well.' The first poem about this quarry was an expression of Clare's love for the wild flowers that he found there, and the second was an even more powerful expression because of the loss of this area, which Clare claimed was a direct result of the Enclosure Acts and human exploitation. The most powerful aspect of 'The Lament of Swordy Well' is that it is written as a dramatic monologue in the first person from the perspective of the quarry itself, and the land speaks of its own exploitation in the language of the

[97] John Clare, *Selected Prose and Poems of John Clare*, ed. by Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 24-25.
[98] Grainger, p.267.
[99] Paul de Man writes in 'Autobiography as De-facement' *Modern Language Notes 94* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 926, that prosopopeia gives voice to a 'deceased or voiceless entity, which posits the possibility of the latter's reply and confers upon it the power of speech.' De Man connects prosopopeia to autobiography, which in this case suggests that Clare is creating an autobiography or giving speech to both the land and the stream that were previously voiceless.
[100] Johanne Clare writes extensively on the 'Enclosure Elegies' in *John Clare and The Bounds of Circumstance* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

working class using the colloquial language unique to that area.[101] There has been debate about whether or not this is the first poem in literary history to personify a landscape and not just individual parts of that landscape;[102] regardless, it is a unique and interesting poem.

The 'Lament of Swordy Well' begins by decrying 'petitioners' as disingenuous and comparing them to churchgoers who believe they are better than 'saints' ('Swordy Well' 8).[103] In the second stanza, the unidentified speaker, blames profit for the problems of the poor, writing '[w]here profit gets his clutches in/ Theres little he will leave' ('Swordy Well' 13-4). Clare begins the third stanza of 'The Lament of Swordy Well' with a clear indication that it is not him speaking, and describes the devastation that has happened to this piece of land that he held very dear: 'I'm Swordy Well, a piece of land/ Thats fell upon the town,/ Who worked me till I couldn't stand/ And crush me now I'm down' ('Swordy Well' 21-4). Hearing from the land itself increases the reader's empathy for these fields that, because of the Enclosure Acts, are now being over-farmed and destroyed, despoiled from the haven that Clare had once deemed them. In line twenty-six of the poem, Swordy Well says that there was a time when his land '[m]ade a freeman of the slave,' which is Clare speaking through the land expressing the idea that even when he felt that he was doing the work of a slave he could visit this space to feel free from difficulty. The next two lines reference another benefit of the land, the fact that it provided sustenance for many animals: in the example given, an 'ass.' Swordy Well then explains that he made the dwelling 'free' for the gypsies that roamed the territory as well. Now that the land has been enclosed, it no longer provides a free space for Clare, gypsies, or the animals that had once roamed freely.

Swordy Well's language becomes strikingly blunt in the next section of the poem as Clare increases his advocacy for the working class and preserving the land. He also attempts to show the horrific effects of enclosure through the mouth of the land:

> In parish bonds I well may wail
> […]
> Harvests with plenty on his brow
> Leaves losses taunts with me
> Yet gain comes yearly with the plough
> And will not let me be
> […]
> And me they turned inside out
> For sand and grit and stones
> And turned my old green hills about
> And pickt my very bones ('Swordy Well' 25, 29-32, 61-4)

Swordy Well complains of the 'bonds' of the 'parish' and that the unyielding 'plough' 'will not let [him] be.' The use of the plough as a symbol of abusing the land is especially interesting because of Clare's familiarity with Thomson's use of the plough in *The Seasons* as a positive symbol representing the greatness of Britain. This image,

[101] Johanne Clare explains in *John Clare and The Bounds of Circumstance* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), p. 43, that John Clare uses the voice of the labourer for the voice of Swordy Well in order to show the inherent connection between the labourer and land. This inherent connection, she suggests, is formed from a 'common enemy, namely enclosure and modernization.

[102] James McKusick writes in *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 86, that 'The Lament of Swordy Well,' is 'one of the first and still one of the very few poems to speak for the Earth in such a direct and immediate way'.

[103] It is unclear whether Clare is using the word 'petitioner' in reference to individuals who are petitioning the government or the political organization known as the Petitioners, which later became the Whigs. If I had to venture a guess, I would think that he is referring to the political organization because of the Whigs' role in the Enclosure Acts as explained by Kenneth Olwick in his book *Landscape, Nature, and the Body Politic* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin, 2002), p. 119.

of the plough as destroyer, appears multiple times throughout the poem and inverts Thomson's plow symbolism. Then, a few stanzas later, the imagery becomes very physical as the voice of Swordy Well speaks about being 'turned inside out' and having his 'bones' 'pickt'. The abrasive physicality of these words creates an image that emphasizes the violent destruction that occurs in natural spaces abused by overuse. Through the words of this passage, Clare directly connects ownership of this land through the acts of enclosure to its over-cultivating. The land is being overused in a despotic way, and because of the voice representing the working class, the poem becomes a commentary on peasantry being treated like they are enslaved in the 'bonds' of the parish. While the personification that Clare uses is metaphorical, the intense language helps the reader imagine what it would feel like to be the land that is destroyed through this exploitation.

'The Lament of Swordy Well' continues to compare the plight of the land with that of the working class as Clare writes of the animals that are dying:

> The bees flye round in feeble rings
> And find no blossom bye
> Then thrum their almost weary wings
> Upon the moss and die
> Rabbits that find my hills turned oer
> Forsake my poor abode
> They dread a workhouse like the poor
> And nibble on the road ('Swordy Well' 81-8)

Clare creates a powerful, graveyard-like scene with weary animals dying and searching for food, including a powerful image of them 'nibbl[ing] on the road.' The choice of using bees and rabbits as examples of animals that suffer from the exploitation of the land is important in what they represent. The bees are dying because they cannot find 'blossom[s]' to pollinate, so they directly represent the loss of the flowers that Clare loved so much in the first Swordy Well poem. The honey that the bees produced represents one of the oldest food sources for humankind and, because of pollination, bees represent the thriving of plant-life in general. The loss of bees symbolizes the eventual death of plant-life throughout the land. The rabbits in this passage illustrate the multitude of homes that are lost for animals through the massive cultivation of land.

Clare writes a bit later in the poem about this lack of homes for the animals in this ecosystem, writing 'Ive scarce a nook to call my own/ For things that creep or flye.'

These animals are displaced and it dramatically alters the ecosystems present in that area. Overall, Clare is illustrating, through the mouth of the land itself, how ecosystems are altered and eventually destroyed through over-production that comes with enclosure and modernization.

Clare continues the theme of over-cultivation leading to destruction of the land by addressing the loss of the butterfly. Through the mouth of Swordy Well, he writes:

> The next day brings the hasty plough
> And makes her miserys bed
> The butterflyes may wir and come
> I cannot keep them now
> Nor can they bear my parish home
> That withers on my brow ('Swordy Well' 91-6)

This passage elaborates on how the land becomes inhospitable to even butterflies and uses the symbol of the plow to represent humanity's destruction of the land. At the same time, the fact that the land is inhospitable to these butterflies is representative of the loss of beauty. While the bees symbolized food production and rabbits the destruction of homes within the ecosystem, the loss of butterflies represents the loss of one of the most beautiful creatures in nature. Butterflies symbolize beauty throughout the Western tradition, and while Clare is writing about the reality of losing this insect, he is also lamenting the loss of the beauty of the scene. He mourns this loss of beauty throughout the poem, but one powerful passage towards the middle of the poem explains 'In summers gone I bloomed in pride/ Folks came for miles to prize/ My flowers that bloomed no where beside/ And scarce believed their eyes' ('Swordy Well' 133-6). This place was special to the village, a place of recreation and admiration, and now it is merely an exploited resource.

Clare, through the mouth of Swordy Well, condemns the greed inherent in agrarian capitalism by writing that if the 'price of grain [were to] get high' the land should not 'possess a single flye' or 'get a weed to grow' ('Swordy Well' 147-8). Then, Clare begins anthropomorphizing Swordy Well and dehumanizing the people who have demolished it. Swordy Well refers to trees getting 'their heads chopped off', and conveys the pain of the land as if it were hair torn out of skin. He illustrates the loss of the land's ability to produce as an excruciating pain. At the same time, he animalizes the people that are committing these actions, representing them as a pack of beasts. Reversing the human and animal binary so that the animals appear humane and humans appear animal-like is an effective way to destabilize the reader's anthropocentric mind-set. This continues a little later in the poem as Swordy Well refers to the men that now abuse this land as 'mongerel[s]' ('Swordy Well' 198). Clare maintains this line of reasoning, needling away at the commonly accepted idea that humans are more humane than animals and uses dehumanization as a technique to illustrate the harm done by humankind. It is obvious that the intensity of Clare's depictions, deconstruction of the human and nature binary, and use of personification has a much greater intensity and urgency than Thomson and many other poets of his era.

Perhaps the strongest lines of 'The Lament of Swordy Well' come as the narrator attacks enclosure directly, explaining, 'Till vile enclosure came and made/ A parish slave out of me.' Swordy Well compares the impact of enclosure on him as a form of slavery that is torturous, inhumane, and will hurt both the enslaved and the enslaver. Finally, Clare ends the poem in a familiar way by stating that soon there shall be nothing left of Swordy Well except its name. Throughout his poetry, he makes this argument that it is his job, both as natural history writer and poet, to bear witness to these actions and to accurately record the land as it once was and the events that altered it forever. Basically, people have stripped it of its resources as a 'greedy pack' who tore 'the very grass from off my back' so that he has 'scarce a rag to wear' ('Swordy Well' 136-140). Clare argues that even as the land he cherished disappears, he can record it for others to enjoy throughout history, and at the same time, by making the horrific events widely known, perhaps it will prevent this devastation from occurring in other places.

Clare uses a similar form of prosopopoeia in his poem 'The Lamentations of Round-Oak Waters' (1820); however, in this case, the voice is not a labouring-class voice, but a more poetic advocate for the land and working class. The speaker, who is assumed to be Clare, introduces the poem, but the narration is soon given to a voice generated from the water itself. Interestingly, the voice appears at the moment that the speaker is complaining about the inhumanity of the wealthy:

> (For when my wretched state appears
> Hurt friendless poor and starv'd
> I never can withhold my tears
> To think how I am starv'd
> To think how money'd men delight
> More cutting then the storm

To make a sport and prove their might
O' me a fellow worm) ('Round-Oak Waters' 17-24)

The lines here are put in parenthesis to signify that they are thoughts from the narrator that are left unspoken. Interestingly, in the past Clare often dehumanized the men that attack nature in many ways, but here, he explains how he feels dehumanized by 'money'd men,' as if he were a 'worm.' The word 'fellow' that modifies worm is vital to notice because it signifies both that he feels more in common with worms than these wealthy men. As the speaker decries that he is 'melancholy,' full of 'sorrow' and in 'misery,' a voice comes from the water to comfort him ('Round-Oak Waters' 26, 27, 30). The stream shows compassion for the narrator's pain and refers to him as an 'equal' ('Round-Oak Waters' 44). This reverses the technique that Clare often uses where the speaker suggests equality with nature, having nature claim equality with the narrator. Secondly, the water represents a figure with more education and is identifying with a labourer. Basically, Clare is both levelling the distinction between man and nature and also between different classes of people.

As the poem continues, Round-Oak Waters tells the speaker about all of the ways that people used to enjoy its water and how it made the stream contented to live in a mutually beneficial relationship with both animals and people. As with Clare's other poems, he does not promote the complete separation of land and humans, instead, he advocates for a mutually beneficial non-exploitative relationship. Then, a pivotal shift in tone occurs as Round-Oak is pulled into the present time and explains:

'But now alas my charms are done
For shepherds and for thee
The Cowboy with his Green is gone
And every Bush and tree
Dire nakedness oer all prevails
Yon fallows bare and brown
Is all beset wi' post and rails
And turned upside down' ('Round-Oak Waters' 93-100)

Clare begins this passage with Round Oak saying that its 'charms' are gone, which is a term that Clare uses often throughout his oeuvre. This is an interesting term for him to use to denote the loss of the resources from the land and the mutual relationship with nature and man. The word charm has a mystical meaning to it, so Clare is suggesting that when humans and nature work together in a way that is self-sustaining and beneficial to both, there is a holistic balance to this relationship. The second interesting point about this stanza is that Round Oak considers the 'Shepherd' and 'Cowboy' as parts of its environment that are missed now that enclosure has fenced in the land. Clare often references these two figures in his poems as figures that respectfully interact with nature. The land is not resentful of humans that view themselves as part of the natural world, but it is resentful of those who exploit it. Round-Oak also refers to a common symbol in poems where Clare uses anthropomorphism, that is, the idea of being naked. Just like pulling the hair from the back of Swordy Well, Round-Oak regards the overuse of the land that surrounds it as stripping and a painful experience. The brook complains that 'dire nakedness oer all prevails' and that it is 'stript' of all that is meaningful. This helps the reader to empathize with the land through the description of this experience that would be considered tragic if it happened to a human. Once again, the radical intensity of Clare's language surpasses most other natural history writers and is one of the benefits of using poetry as an avenue for protesting this exploitation.

The poem then takes a dark turn similar to that in 'The Lament of Swordy Well' as Round-Oak describes the losses that came with enclosure:

> 'The bawks and Eddings are no more
> The pastures too are gone
> The greens the Meadows and the moors
> Are all cut up and done
> […]
> Ah cruel foes with plenty blest
> So ankering after more
> To lay the greens and pastures waster
> Which proffited before
> Poor greedy souls—what would they have
> Beyond their plenty given?
> Will riches keep 'em from the grave?
> Or buy them rest in heaven? ('Round-Oak Waters' 116-20, 189-96)

As the speaker explains how the natural surroundings have been altered by enclosure, three familiar themes are returned to that recur throughout his oeuvre. First, he dehumanizes the perpetrators of the attacks on the land. In this case, Round Oak disembodies the people that have stolen from the land. They are no longer viewed as human; instead, he refers to them as 'greedy souls.' As he does this, he also comes back to a theme of death being a class leveller, expressing both hope and hopelessness. The third theme that appears throughout his work is attacking the abstract concept of profit and greed as forces behind the destruction. Both Clare and the stream have a common foe: profit seeking humans. It is especially important that he often separates the humans from the abstract concepts perhaps in a concerted effort to show that these motivations are not completely a part of the human spirit and that they can be combated with effort. Clare's main efforts are to make his readers think of the land as an equal rather than subordinate, remind the readers of the cruelty in their actions, and separate humans from the abstract driving forces in an effort to show that humans can resist these motivations.

Clare used prosopopoeia and personification in order to fight against the power of profit, greed and the exploitation of the working class. Through using these literary techniques and the intense focus on minute local description in the first section of this essay, his writing was able to describe the horrors of the enclosure movement, bear witness to its destruction, and ultimately, preserve a written record of all that might be lost because of this movement and modernization in general.

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Liverpool 8 and 'Liverpool 8': The creation of social space in the Merseybeat movement

Helen Taylor

The creative life of the city of Liverpool is wide-ranging, from Gerald Manley Hopkins to Levi Tafari, via the Pre-Raphaelite collection of the Walker Art Gallery and the Beatles' Cavern. In the 1960s, one of the most important literary and cultural phenomena of the city emerged: the poetry movement called Merseybeat. Liverpool itself is central to this movement and both the external effects of this on, as well as the poets' internal engagement with, the city need to be recognised. Liverpool owes its economic life to the Mersey, and it is from the Mersey that creative life flows into the city; it could not exist without it. This article will consider first the relationship of three of the Merseybeat poets to the city of Liverpool itself and then drill down to the district with which the poets most often identify: Liverpool 8.

The three poets at the centre of the Merseybeat movement were Adrian Henri, Roger McGough, and Brian Patten, who lived and worked in the city in the 1960s. Whilst all three would go on to work in different fields and have distinct writing styles, what binds them together in this place in this period is an emphasis on live performance. Merseybeat is a 'total art' movement, using the live event in order to foster a direct connection with an audience, and seeing verbal, vocal, and visual performance (music, visual artworks, collaborative poetic and comedy sketches, 'happenings'…) as key to the expression and dissemination of poetry. The live event is also crucial in this movement for another reason, its loco-specificity: The Merseybeat poets socialised and performed in the same spaces, creating and speaking directly to a scene. These poets used Liverpool in their work over and over again to place themselves within the city but also to claim it, deliberately creating and presenting a particular literary idea of 'Liverpool 8'.

Liverpool: the city and port

Adrian Henri's first experiences of Liverpool would have been via the Pier Head landing stage as he came 'over the water' from Birkenhead. The city as a port features in poems such as 'Mrs Albion, You've Got a Lovely Daughter', an important poem inspired by Allen Ginsberg's 1965 visit to Liverpool, which anthropomorphises the city as 'Albion's most lovely daughter' who 'sat on the banks of the Mersey dangling her landing stage in the water'.[104] For Henri, the port appears early in his 1971 collection *Autobiography*, where 'Part One' tells of his Birkenhead childhood:

> foghorns and hooters
> looking out of the kitchen window
> seeing the boats on the bright river
> and the cranes from the dockyards [105]

Although the opening of *Autobiography* is set in Birkenhead, it is significant that the opening lines look over to the city of Liverpool, making this the initial focus, as it would become Henri's home for the rest of his adult life. Thus, early in *Autobiography*, he recalls trips on the ferry:

> being taken over the river to see the big shops at Christmas
> the road up the hill from the noisy dockyard
> and the nasty smell from the tannery you didn't like going past (*A*, 11)

[104] Adrian Henri, Roger McGough, and Brian Patten, *Penguin Modern Poets 10: The Mersey Sound* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 55. Subsequent references in the text as '*TMS*1'.
[105] Adrian Henri, *Autobiography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), p. 12. Subsequent references in the text as '*A*'.

The premodifying adjectives here heighten the senses—the shops are 'big' (both to him as a child and also literally as they are the department stores of the city centre), and the docklands area is not only 'noisy', but has also impressed on his olfactory memory. This sets the tone for Henri's use of the city in his work, as he never mentions a specific place without giving it an emotional or personal aspect, as this article will show. This brief introduction to the wider city in Henri's work has been included here to indicate not only the importance of the city and port in the Merseybeat movement, but the necessity of it: This movement places great emphasis on the everyday, on their social space, and seek to engage with audiences through loco-specific and common cultural references.

The article will now go on to discuss a particular area and aspect of the city—Liverpool 8 and 'Liverpool 8'—as central to the Merseybeat movement. This is the postcode area east of the city centre, leading up from the south docks, around the Anglican Cathedral and, more importantly, the Art School. The area has been known as Toxteth since the thirteenth century, from the parkland seen on maps of this time, but, as J. Hillis Miller tells us, 'names are motivated',[106] and by using the name 'Liverpool 8' the poets both claim their area and also seek to legitimise their interpretation of it. '*Space*', for Michel de Certeau, '*is a practiced place*',[107] and this physical geographic place is transformed by the poets into their social space by detailing their relationships with and within the area as well as the wider city, port, river. The place is transformed into something much more than the postcode boundaries.

Liverpool 8

Whereas Henri grew up in Birkenhead, Patten was brought up in the city itself, in Wavertree and Sefton. At 17, in 1963, he moved to an attic in Canning Street, Liverpool 8, and it was from here that he became a crucial part of the poetry scene of the 1960s. The attic appears in some early Patten poems, such as 'After Breakfast', where he has:

> ...coffee and a view
> Of teeming rain and the Cathedral old and grey but
> Smelling good with grass and ferns (*TMS*1, 99)

His new status, suggested by him having his own room with a view, is also reflected in the reference to 'coffee', which was still rare in Liverpool at this time and is associated with a certain kind of lifestyle, that of bohemians and students.[108] McGough tells the reader of this lifestyle, referring to the 'the young Beats in the city's coffee bars', explicitly stating that the 'most exciting' coffee bars:

> were the ones that stayed open late and catered for students, artists and the beatniks who were appearing on the scene, the Masque, the Picasso, the Basement, run by a local painter Yenkel Feather, and best of all, Streate's.[109]

[106] J Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford: Standford University Press, 1995), p. 4.
[107] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 117.
[108] McGough's 'first cappuccino', in 'El Cabala, a glass-fronted, airy café on Bold Street', is considered a significant moment, both because of its novelty and for what it represents of this lifestyle (McGough, *Said and Done: the autobiography* [London: Random House, 2005], p. 142).
[109] McGough, *Said*, p. 142-3.

Whilst Liverpool as a whole is clearly a contributing factor to the creation of the movement, it is the specific area around this social scene which influenced the poets. The built environment of Liverpool 8 was a 'district of beautiful, fading, decaying Georgian terrace houses' (*TLS*, 13) when the Merseybeat poets experienced it, but owed its creation to rich shipping magnate families during the early nineteenth century. The city is bound up with the port: It is money from shipping that built it and shipping that sustained it. Quentin Hughes's 1969 survey describes Canning Street, where both Henri and Patten lived in the 1960s, as 'typical of many once-fine Georgian streets which stretch across the hillside east of the Anglican Cathedral'.[110] Considering the date when this book was published, it is perhaps inevitable that Hughes continues:

> This is the famous Liverpool 8, once peopled by rich merchants and now the flats of artists, poets and students—a variegated cosmopolitan area of some character. The pattern continues along Percy Street (No. 28), Huskisson Street, Catherine Street, Falkner Square and Upper Parliament Street to eventual oblivion in the twilight zones.[111]

The last comment is telling. The 'twilight zones' are the crowded peri-urban streets which make up much of the postcode further away from the city centre. In recent critical writings, the area has been quite clearly labelled a 'bohemian, multicultural district',[112] 'the bohemian district',[113] and even a 'mythologised bohemian quarter'.[114] Phil Bowen's first reference to the area in his biography of the scene is that: 'in the fifties, with the exception of Soho, the place for any Aspirational painter, poet, musician, bohemian or "bon viveur" on a tight budget was Liverpool 8'.[115] These four writers are all commenting on the specific cultural idea of 'the 1960s' several decades later, but the idea of the district as, to use Hughes's phrase, a 'variegated cosmopolitan area of some character' was certainly felt at the time. Henri himself stated that: 'the reason I moved back to Liverpool in 1956 was because it was an artists' town, cheap to live in', and, although it did have 'a thriving bohemia based on the inner-city Georgian/Victorian area' of Liverpool 8, it was primarily socioeconomic factors which led him there on his return from Art School in Durham.[116] The two factors, however, clearly feed off each other: The area is cheap to live in and near to the Art School, and so attracts artists, but because there are artists there it creates a certain scene; and then because there is a certain scene, more artists are attracted to it. Liverpool 8 became incredibly important for the Merseybeat poets in their self-identification as a movement—as Henri says: 'I cannot imagine what it would have been like to be a poet and not live here; or, indeed, whether I would have become a poet at all' (*LA*, 38).

One of the reasons that Liverpool 8 was so important was that the poets not only lived but also performed there, fostering a culture of live readings and open-mic style events (inspired by, but also setting itself up as a distinct scene from, the underground and counter-cultural poetry scenes existing in places such as London and San Francisco or New York). Most of the pubs, clubs, and cafés they socialised in were within 'their' quarter, or easily accessible in the city centre which abuts this district. Henri, who has many poems with similar titles to 'Poem for Liverpool 8', links the social aspect of the area with the local geography. He is:

> drunk jammed in the tiny bar in The Cracke
> drunk in the crowded cutglass Philharmonic
> drunk in noisy Jukebox O'Connor's (*A*, 31)

[110] Quentin Hughes, *Liverpool (City Buildings Series)*, (London: Studio Vista, 1969), p. 49.
[111] Hughes (1969), p. 49.
[112] Jon Murden, '"City of Change and Challenge": Liverpool Since 1945', in *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History*, ed. by John Belchem (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. 393-487, p. 426.
[113] Sam Gathercole, 'Facts and Fictions: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde in the late 196-0s and 70s', in *Centre of the Creative Universe: Liverpool and the Avant-Garde*, ed. by Christopher Grunenberg and Robert Knifton (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp. 134-155, p. 136.
[114] Darren Pih, 'Liverpool's Left Bank', in Grunenberg, pp. 112-133, p. 114.
[115] Phil Bowen, *A Gallery To Play To: The Story of the Mersey Poets* (Exeter: Stride, 1999), p. 35.
[116] Peter Robinson, ed., *Liverpool Accents: Seven Poets and a City* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996) *Liverpool Accents*, p. 35.

As the poem continues, the reader also encounters 'drunken lintels falling architraves/ Georgian pediments peeling above toothless windows' (*A*, 32) which automatically link the architecture back to the social practice of the earlier section. Yet these venues are not in Liverpool 8, despite Henri's title.[117]

J. Hillis Miller's *Topographies* tells us that the 'power of the conventions of mapping and of the projection of place names on the place are so great that we see the landscape as though it were already a map'.[118] The Merseybeat poets clearly map their territory, but their 'Liverpool 8' is not the same as the official postcode boundary. The 'Mersey' in Merseybeat is thus deliberately and specifically created from within to mean a specific social scene and grouping. The dust jacket of Henri's 1971 *City* (designed by Lawrence Edwards) is a visual representation of this. The title 'City' is not in type but rather picked out by block-highlighting parts of the streets to form the letters (see Figure 1). The streets on the *City* jacket cover much of the area important to Henri, including the addresses of the three venues mentioned above: Rice Street is just above the bowl of the 'y' of 'city', Hope Street runs along the tail of the 'y', and Hardman Street runs along the top of the word, across the opening of the 'y'. The area also includes two of Henri's homes; the first, 24 Faulkner Square, and the second, 64 Canning Street, are both just to the right of the 'y'. The cover subtly indicates that the city means that district, as the map focuses on this area rather than, say, the city centre, or a less detailed overview. This is continued in the poem, which includes loco-specific references to Liverpool 8, such as hearing 'schoolgirl hymnsinging voices into the mist outside Blackburne House',[119] as well as those references to everyday life in the city which are not explicit, such as 'walking with the dog along the early September already winter promenade' (*C*, 4), but which are clearly Liverpool-based.

What is also significant about the area of the map chosen is that it encompasses the area north of the official postcode of Liverpool 8. In his book—succinctly titled *Liverpool 8*—John Cornelius described the three venues quoted previously (Ye Cracke, The Philharmonic, and O'Connor's Tavern) as 'this fantastic three-cornered social scene' that he found as an art student during the height of the Merseybeat movement. He continues:

> Liverpool 8, although only a mile from the city centre, was like a small enclosed village where everyone knew everyone else and few people strayed socially from a handful of regular drinking haunts.[120]

But this village is a shift from the literal place of Liverpool 8 to the social space of 'Liverpool 8'. The physical places of the scene were used not simply to ground the poems in a geographical reality; they also function as a way of recoding the audience's access to the city. Henri Lefebvre's definition of social space, as discussed in *The Production of Space*, specifies that it is about relationships—'a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things',[121] and, by using these literal places to imply a personal connection, the social space of Liverpool 8 is created (see Figure 2 for a map of this area). In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau makes a distinction between *place* and *space*, that place becomes space when practiced, when used. This is exactly what the Merseybeat movement do, detailing their relationships with and within the city to create the social space of Liverpool 8. Cornelius is specifically referencing pubs and bars (not mentioning the cafés with their coffee which were discussed above as representative of a certain scene), and it is the social nature of the meeting places which is most important, and the claiming of them as belonging to a certain group of people. The Merseybeat 'Liverpool 8' is created from within, ignoring the official boundaries in favour of their own. The poets place importance on some places over others, appropriating parts of the actual topographical place to confer status on their area.

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[117] Ye Cracke, 13 Rice Street, L1, The Philharmonic, 36 Hope Street, L1; O'Connor's Tavern, 12 Hardman Street, L1.
[118] Miller, p. 4.
[119] Adrian Henri, *City* (London: Rapp and Whiting, 1969), p. 8. Subsequent references in the text as '*C*'.
[120] John Cornelius, *Liverpool 8* (London: John Murray, 1982), p. 34.
[121] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 83.

This, then, is the area which Henri describes in his poem 'Liverpool 8' in *The Liverpool Scene* anthology, referring to 'streets named after Victorian elder statesmen like Huskisson'.[122] There are also references to the two cathedrals, which show what he considers to be a part of the eponymous Liverpool 8, although the 'new Cathedral at the end of Hope Street', the Roman Catholic one, is actually in Liverpool 3, and the Anglican one 'which dominates our lives' is on the border where Liverpool 8 meets Liverpool 1 (*TLS*, 13). This is what Peter Barry refers to in *Contemporary British Poetry and the City* as 'cartographic precision',[123] but also utilises the extra-textual Cultural Code, the 'circumambient cultural geography',[124] to emphasise the sense of place. The sense of ownership is repeated again as the Cathedral is seen as 'towering over the houses my friends live in', placing his own social life firmly alongside the geographical details. Liverpool 8 functions as both a backdrop for, and an active character in, the Merseybeat poets' work.

The live poetry scene began in early 1960 at Streate's Coffee Bar, on May Street (off Mount Street—again, not in Liverpool 8). According to Johnny Byrne, the owner, Eddie Money, 'wanted to start some readings there and perhaps get a scene together'.[125] McGough remembers attending these readings in 'a candlelit white-washed basement that wore a duffel coat and echoed to the sounds of modern jazz', a venue which for him 'was to poetry what the Cavern was to rock'n'roll'.[126] It was at one of these nights that McGough first met Patten. Anecdotal history tells us that Patten's first encounter with the poetry scene in Liverpool was the result of reading an advert in the *Liverpool Echo*: 'MEET PETE THE BEAT AT STREATE'S'.[127] Patten was at the time fifteen, had just left school, and was working as a cub reporter. McGough recalls:

> Halfway through a reading one night in November 1961 Pete Brown told me there was a journalist I should meet, a guy from the *Bootle Times*, so I went upstairs expecting this hard-bitten forty year old who'd come along to write the usual 'Beatnik Horror!' piece, and instead met this hard-bitten fifteen year old who'd come along to read his poems.[128]

During the tour to celebrate the 30th anniversary of *The Mersey Sound*, Patten told the audience the same story of reading the advert, and that: 'Streate's turned out to be a basement coffee bar full of poets and painters and jazz musicians'.[129] The Merseybeat poets met in this poetry-and-jazz scene, but distanced themselves from it, looking for their own place to explore what Liverpool meant to them. They chose Sampson & Barlow's (a club on London Road, physically a way apart from Streate's), followed by another residency at O'Connor's Tavern (a pub with a regular public bar on the ground floor and 'upstairs, slightly more restrained avant-garde music and poetry evenings',[130] although Paul Morley suggests that this distinction was less rigid, with 'long haired rough spoken poets wandering into O'Connor's and screaming their poems above the bar noise'[131]), as well as pre-Scaffold 'late-night comedy sketch shows at the Blue Angel Club on the Friday',[132] and, within Liverpool 8 itself, evenings at the Hope Hall (later to become the Everyman Theatre).[133] The sheer number of events during this time shows the

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[122] A statue of Huskisson stood in St. James's cemetery, mere streets away from Henri's homes in this period, moved to the Walker Art Gallery in 1968. See Quentin Hughes, *Seaport: Architecture and Townscape in Liverpool* (London: Lund Humphries, 1964), pp. 162-3 on this.
[123] Peter Barry, *Contemporary British Poetry and the City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 48-9.
[124] Barry, p. 158.
[125] Johnny Byrne, cited in Bowen, p. 17.
[126] Roger McGough, *Said and Done the autobiography* (London: Random House, 2005), p. 149.
[127] Bowen, p. 46.
[128] McGough, *Said*, p. 150.
[129] BBC live recording of *Poetry Please: The Mersey Sound*, from the Liverpool University Special Collections and Archives, Patten/9/1/12.
[130] Cornelius, p. 36.
[131] Paul Morley, 'Liverpool Surreal', in Grunenberg, pp. 40-55, p. 50.
[132] McGough, *Said*, p. 154.
[133] Sampson & Barlow's was also home to the Black Cat club, a country and folk music venue. This early venue was literally distanced from Streate's, being on London Road, L3. O'Connor's Tavern, home to nights hosted by The Liverpool Scene

importance of the live performance and explains the emphasis on performance and aural experience within this poetry.

These venues are not all, strictly speaking, in Liverpool 8, but are within easy reach of the so-called 'bohemian quarter', the area surrounding Hope Street and the Art School and University. By claiming these venues physically but also talking about them in the poems performed there, we can see what de Certeau described as 'spatial stories' emerging.[134] There is 'a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal',[135] as the poets, using their own voices and their own experiences, seek to ground themselves even further in the area via the content of the poems as well as the context.

Walking as claiming

Directions and geographical landmarks are often used to show the writer has a direct connection with a place, in much the same way as the Merseybeat poets name-check venues and places within their scene to show their involvement. Poems about walking feature as another way of laying claim to the city, embodying a claim to be an authority on its navigation. See, for example, McGough's poems about the character PC Plod, full of references to his beat, such as standing on 'point duty in Williamson Square' or 'sitting in St Johns Gardens'.[136] The 'spatial story' is obvious here. For P.C. Plod, on the beat, the story does indeed begin, as de Certeau says, 'on ground level, with footsteps'.[137] In 'P.C. Plod versus Maggie May', for example, he begins on the beat, 'cruising up and down old Canning Place', where he sees Maggie May 'and followed her on tiptoe' to the docks, where, in the morning (when 'seagulls on ferries were hitching a lift'), Maggie May 'spotted him/ and was already halfway down Paradise Street', eventually catching her and leading her 'through the morning rushhour' (*ATM*, 61-2). It is not only the names of streets but also directional attributes which orientate the poems, as McGough claims knowledge of the map of the city. So, 'intertwined paths give shape to spaces'.[138] Walking the city and naming the route appropriates the topographical system and again links the poets to the place.

Henri's 'The Entry of Christ Into Liverpool'—a poem, a painting, a performance piece, and a poster-poem—is another example of loco-specificity. The painting collects together friends and heroes, all painted from memory, under a backdrop of the city. The poem describes the 'Entry', a procession which is specifically charted and clearly topographical, with the first 'direction', as it were, being 'round the corner into Myrtle St', starting the procession in the heart of Liverpool 8.[139] The procession begins decisively with 'then/ down the hill' (*TMS*3, 46), and is then again pushed on by 'down the hill past the Philharmonic The Labour Exchange/ excited feet crushing the geraniums in St Luke's Gardens' (*TMS*3, 47). It is interesting to see which landmarks Henri picks out, the pub and the place to sign-on, but not, say, the police station. The route does indeed go downhill (down Hardman Street), with the Gardens being the grounds of St Luke's Church on the corner of Berry Street and Leece Street, opposite the top of Bold Street in Liverpool 1—the 'bombed-out church' from air raids in World War II.

(Wednesday nights, according to Andy Roberts), was on Hardman Street. A great number of key venues for a number of Liverpool's music scenes have existed around Hardman Street, see discussion and map in Brett Lashua, Sara Cohen, and John Scofield, 'Popular music, mapping, and the characterization of Liverpool', *Popular Music History*, 4. 2 (2010), pp. 126-144, p. 136-7.

[134] de Certeau, p. 115.

[135] de Certeau, p. 105.

[136] Roger McGough, *After the Merrymaking* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), p. 57, 69.

[137] de Certeau, p. 97.

[138] de Certeau, p. 97.

[139] Adrian Henri, Roger McGough, and Brian Patten, *The Mersey Sound Revised Edition* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 46. Subsequent references in the text as '*TMS*3'.

The geography of the area is, for Henri, usually bound up with personal feelings about the place itself, as it is in *City*, a love poem connected to place:

> Walking through dead leaves in Falkner Square going to the Pakistani shop with Tony in the October afternoon sunlight thinking of you being woken up in the two a.m. Blue Angel rock'n'roll darkness by Carl who I hadn't heard singing thinking of you thinking of you drinking in the Saturday night everyone waiting no party pub walking with another girl holding cold hands in the autumn park thinking of you walking home everynight in Blackburne Place twilight thinking of you thinking of you. (*C*, 10)

The run-on lines and lack of punctuation represent the stream of consciousness, as Henri spends his hours thinking about the subject of the poem. The situations here are deliberately everyday: invoking normalcy in combination with spatial naming links his words (and him) even more closely to the quotidian life of the city and its streets. One section of *Autobiography* in particular lists street names of the district, and is worth quoting here at some length:

> *Rodney St pavement stretching to infinity*
> *Italian garden by the priest's house*
> *seen through the barred doorway on Catherine St*
> *pavingstones worn smooth for summer feet*
> *St James Rd my first home in Alan's flat*
> *shaken intolerable by Cathedral bells on Sundays*
> *Falkner Sq. Gardens heaped with red leaves to kick in autumn*
> *[...]*
> *Gambier Terrace loud Beatle guitars from the first floor*
> *Sam painting beckoning phantoms hiding behind painted words bright colours*
> *in the flooded catfilled basement*
> *[...]*
> *Granby St bright bazaars for aubergines and coriander*
> *Blackburne House girls laughing at bus-stops in the afternoon*
> *Blackburne Place redbrick Chirico tower rushing back after love at dinnertime*
>
> (*A*, 31)

Each place name is connected to an image, such as St James Road, which does indeed lead to the Anglican Cathedral, or Granby Street with its plethora of grocers, where there is a rather more gentrified market today. This connects Henri to his area, and, as the only one of the three Merseybeat poets who stayed in Liverpool throughout his adult life, Henri is perhaps best placed to comment on the changing nature of the city. Henri is not comparing the present with a remembered past, but has a layered remembered history of encounters with those urban spaces. Walking, for de Certeau, is 'a space of enunciation',[140] and by giving the reader an image to accompany a name, Henri spatially acts out what his area is for him.

'Liverpool 8'

By name-checking certain streets and venues the poets ground themselves in a specific place, but 'Liverpool 8' was also a shorthand for a cultural experience and the home of a certain scene. 'Liverpool 8' is part of the internal creation of Merseybeat and the poets' self-identification with this particular area and the scene they created in socialising and performing there, but it is also intended for external audiences. By appropriating both literal places

[140] de Certeau, p. 98.

and figures from elsewhere, the movement seeks to present itself in a certain light—bohemian, avant-garde, aligned with European modernism and American counter-culturalism.

As a painter, Henri literally used Liverpool 8: 'I did a series of assemblage-paintings called collectively "Liverpool 8", after the postal address of the district we lived and worked in, using the detritus, the textures, the graffiti and advertising hoardings of the area' (*LA*, 35).[141] In another poem connected with his life as a painter, 'I Want to Paint', Henri also uses specifically named places, such as wanting to paint 'enormous pictures of every pavingstone in Canning Street' (*TMS*1, 51), or 'Père Ubu drunk at 11 o'clock at night in Lime Street' (*TMS*1, 52). Henri also wrote a short poem/play, titled 'Père Ubu in Liverpool', where the protagonist is 'discovered walking round the corner of Lewis's' (*TLS*, 64), and, later, Père Ubu is seen 'toiling up the hill' (*TLS*, 66), where he gets into an altercation with some Mods standing outside the Sink Club. The idea of Père Ubu being in Liverpool brings us to another way in which Henri represents Liverpool 8 in his work. As well as the literal streets and the appropriation of other areas into this social space, Henri also figures Liverpool 8 as a hub of creativity with links to major figures in the arts, bringing his heroes into his work and into his Liverpool. Henri invokes figures of early modernism, contemporary or avant-garde practitioners, and favourite writers, artists, and musicians to both legitimise his own activities and perhaps suggest the importance of Liverpool 8.

In 'Adrian Henri's Last Will and Testament', dated 'Jan. '64', with Charlie 'Bird' Parker and James Ensor as witnesses (*TMS*1, 14)—an American and a European, a musician and a painter—Henri leaves his 'priceless collection' including Charlie Mingus records to 'all Liverpool poets under 23 who are also blues singers and failed sociology students' (*TMS*1, 13). Parker appears again in 'Love Poem', alongside Thelonius Monk and other musicians and composers who are also listed in 'Me', a poem listing eighty-eight of Henri's heroes, in answer to the question 'if you weren't you, who would you like to be?', ending with Henri admitting: 'and/ last of all/ me' (*TMS*1, 28). Almost all of the heroes appear again in other poems, such as 'Love Poem', which is worth quoting from at length to show the kinds of people and situations Henri envisages:

> Monk takes his hands off the keyboard and smiles approvingly
> The Beatles sing lullabys for our never-to-happen children
> Quietly in the shadows by Central Station
> William Burroughs sits dunking Pound Cake in coffee waiting for the last connection
> and sees us through the window
> Bartók has orchestrated the noise of the tulips in Piccadilly Gardens for us
> Marcel Duchamp has added your photograph to the Green Box
> Dylan Thomas staggers into the Cromwell for one last one
> and waves across to us
> Kurt Schwitters smiles as he picks up the two pink bus tickets
> we have just thrown away
> Parker blows another chorus of Loverman for us
> Ensor smiles behind his mask
> Jarry cycles slowly behind us down Spring Gardens
>
> Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns
> Bless the bed we lie upon (*TMS*1, 39-40)

What these artists, writers, and musicians are doing in this intensely personal poem of place is, as the final couplet quoted here says, blessing his relationship with Heather Holden, one of his art students at the Manchester Art

[141] See, for example, Henri's *Liverpool 8 Four Seasons Painting* (1964), which uses found objects, reproduced in *Adrian Henri Paintings 1953-1998* (Liverpool: Bluecoat Press, 2000), pp. 69-71.

College. It is important that the fantasy elements are set out in actual places, to create this other social space. But what is most significant is that the poem goes beyond blessing Henri's relationship, with another union: that of Liverpool and quotidian experience with the intellectual culture of American and European modernism.

Conclusion

McGough tells the reader early in his autobiography of the space his family inhabited: 'The first seventeen years of my life were spent within a half mile radius of 11 Ruthven Road, in an unlovely, unfashionable, part of north Liverpool'.[142] At the end of the chapter entitled 'Geography', he includes a poem which links him to the people and the streets of the city:

> For those early years this was my geography.
> My north, my south, I sailed between the two.
> Since then I've travelled the world and found
> That everything I learned, I already knew [143]

The last two lines of this poem recall the idea of Liverpool as a world city, while McGough's choice of 'sail' evokes the maritime. The poem also suggests that the poet did not need anything outside of his social circle, an attitude which is common in the early work of the Merseybeat poets. In contrast to the sentimentality of McGough, Henri's attitude to the city is that of a long-term resident, accepting the changes and still loving it. 'Adrian Henri's Talking Toxteth Blues' records the so-called 'Toxteth Riots' of July 1981:

> Well, I woke up this morning, there was buzzing overhead
> Saw the helicopter as I got out of my bed,
> Smelt the smell of burning, saw the buildings fall,
> Bulldozers pulling down next door's wall.
> Toxteth nightmare . . .
> . . . yes . . .
> . . . city with a hangover.[144]

The emphasis here is not his internal emotional response but on what he *saw*, as the poem continues: 'Heard the sound of engines in the bright orange night,/ Saw the headlights blazing, saw the crowd in flight' (*PA*, 39). There is still space for a joke, alluding to *Evita* and the character of Eva Peron in 'don't cry for me . . . / . . . Upper Parly' (*PA*, 39). He is still connected to the place, but it is significant that this is the first time Henri refers to this area as Toxteth, perhaps distancing this experience from that of 'Liverpool 8' of the 1960s.

Writings about, on, and in Liverpool have a clear purpose in this movement. 'Liverpool 8' is deliberately re-created as a social space with links to the international counter-culture and avant-garde, in order to embed the movement within a certain literary tradition. The use of the city in the Merseybeat movement is therefore twofold: first, the poets physically inhabited the space, performing their poetry live in order to connect with their local audiences; and second, they appropriated the names of these spaces into their work to both claim it for

[142] McGough, *Said*, p. 16.
[143] McGough, *Said*, p. 17. This poem has not been published in any of McGough's collections— it is possible that it was written solely for this autobiography.
[144] Adrian Henri, *Penny Arcade: Poems 1978-1982* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), p. 39. Subsequent references in the text to '*PA*'.

themselves and present both the local and a wider national and international audience with their interpretation of the city. It is, after all, *Mersey*beat.

Figures

Figure 1: Cover for Adrian Henri's *City*, designed by Lawrence Edwards.

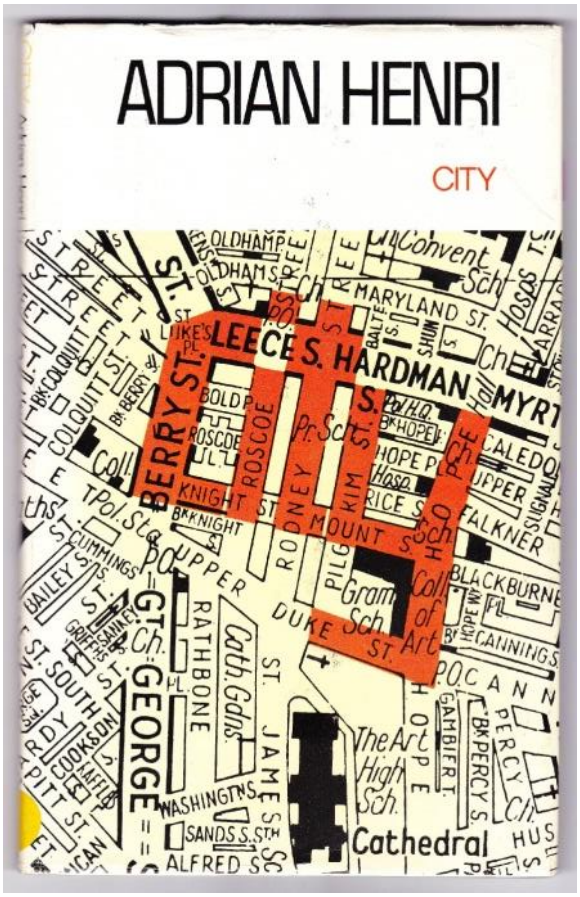
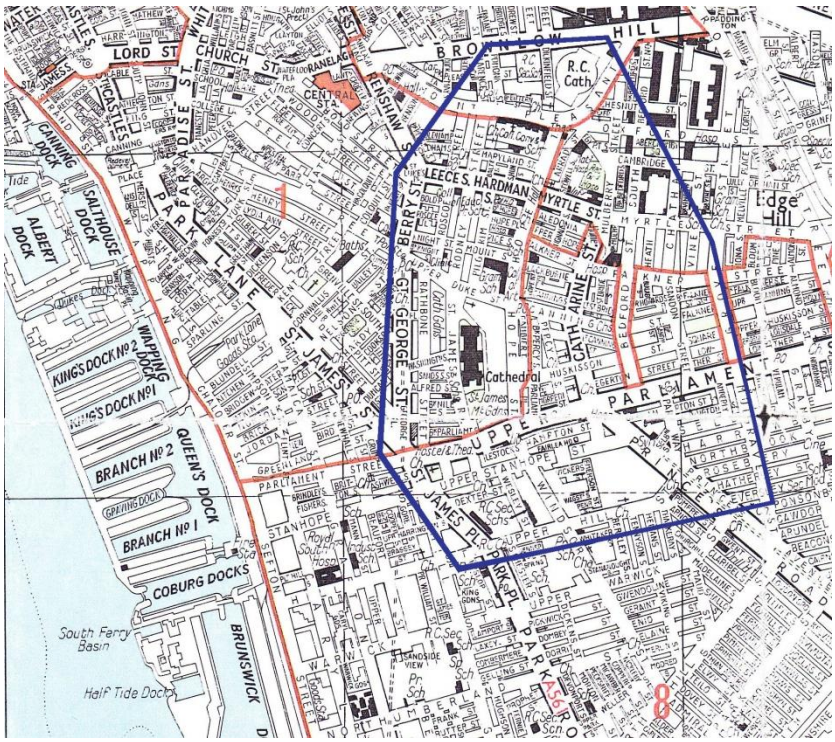


Figure 2: The 1965 *Geographia* map of Liverpool, overlaid with blue markings to show the area which the poets refer to as 'Liverpool 8' (information from poems and other sources), clearly outside the actual postcode boundary (on original map in red).



Title: "'A city of irresistible allure!" The Venetian landscape in Gabriele D'Annunzio's *The Flame* and Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice'*
Author: Jessica Wood
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, pp. 45-54

'A city of irresistible allure!' The Venetian Landscape in Gabriele D'Annunzio's *The Flame* and Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*

Jessica Wood

Gabriele D'Annunzio's *The Flame* (1900) and Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912) are two texts rarely considered in constellation, the authors of whom appear at first glance to have little in common. Yet several parallels seem to exist between the texts and, more broadly speaking, even between the authors themselves: In both we read of the experiences of an artist in Venice, where an object of desire exerts such an intoxicating allure that further artistic creation is threatened. Moreover, in both cases a manifestation of Nietzsche's Dionysus appears, offering creative insight and drive but also threatening to conduct the initiate into the abyss of self-forgetfulness and oblivion. In the two texts, Venice is no mere setting: the landscapes of this unique watery city pervade the very action of the texts and the city functions almost as an active character, rather than a passive backdrop. The landscapes depicted enhance the plots, such as they are, and interact with the protagonists. They also provide crucial elucidation regarding the psychology and state of mind of the protagonists. In this article I intend to give a critical comparison of the Venetian landscapes portrayed by D'Annunzio and Mann, to establish some idea of the extent of the parallels between these texts.

In *Death in Venice* and *The Flame* we witness the inner struggle of the artist who, confronted with debilitating desire, is distracted from his artistic goal. The object of desire (Tadzio for *Death in Venice*'s Aschenbach, Foscarina for *The Flame*'s Stelio) both aids and impedes the artist's creativity. Dionysus presides over the process releasing impulses to intoxication, abandon, and oblivion. In Venice, Aschenbach embraces Dionysus absolutely and dies watching his beloved against the sea—the intensity of his desire for Tadzio has eradicated the possibility of future creative production. Stelio and Foscarina reach a healthier conclusion: she eventually departs to allow her lover freedom to compose his great work, a move that yokes their potentially crippling desire and places it into the service of art. This allows Stelio to devote himself fully to his artistic aim of rejuvenating the stale cultural landscape and establishing a tragic tradition (and outdoor theatre to rival Bayreuth) for the modern age. Venice never goes unnoticed in the texts, and we find the Venetian landscape acting as an inspiration, a work of art, a labyrinth, a temptress, and an allegorical device.

Mann visited Venice in the summer of 1911 with his wife and his brother, Heinrich. Mann's diaries document his sojourn mentioning a young Polish boy who caught Mann's eye. His fascination with this boy was adapted to provide the central thread for Aschenbach's Venetian experience. It was in the Venice of 1895 that D'Annunzio became acquainted with the actress Eleonora Duse, who was to become his lover and the model for *The Flame*'s Foscarina. In the same year D'Annunzio also spoke at the first Venetian Biennale: His oration, entitled *Allegory to Autumn*, was adapted and incorporated into Stelio's climactic speech in *The Flame*.

One of the first functions fulfilled by the Venetian landscape of the texts is that of a mirror: Just as the waters of the sea and canals reflect the buildings and changing skies, so the landscape reflects both the psychology of the characters, and the cultural mood of the time as Mann and D'Annunzio perceived it. Both writers were intrigued by decadence,[145] which Paglia defines as 'a counterreaction within Romanticism, correcting its tilt toward Dionysus'.[146] Weir describes decadence as 'both an extension of and a reaction to Romanticism; as both a

[145] While D'Annunzio's works embrace decadence, Mann's opinion of the cultural phenomenon seems more ambiguous: but if he disapproved of decadence, he certainly felt compelled to depict it.
[146] Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 231.

languorous and a rebellious state of mind; as a decorative, superficial art and a pioneering, profound aesthetic.'[147] Weir also elucidates the decline associated with decadence, differentiating it from 'degeneration':[148] while the former is a standard to be maintained, the latter 'lets those standards slip'.[149] Mann and D'Annunzio employ the Venetian landscape, with its festering canals, crumbling *palazzi*, and overgrown gardens, as a space in which to reflect the cultural decadence and stagnation they recognised. The once preeminent city is for Mann 'the sunken queen';[150] for D'Annunzio, 'without pulse and without breath, dead in her green waters'.[151] The latter describes 'the leafless plants, villas in ruin, the silent river, the relics of queens and empresses, […] the wild labyrinth',[152] and Mann finds a 'sickened city'[153] with sultry, unwholesome air.

In both texts the decaying landscapes contrast starkly with the protagonists' ambitions: against the 'stagnant reeking lagoon'[154] Aschenbach feels spiritually elevated by his encounter with Tadzio, and on this 'torpid water'[155] Stelio searches for artistic inspiration. The rotting canals of Mann's landscapes play a crucial part in his parodic undermining of his protagonist: Foul smells and festering waters debase Aschenbach's vision of a noble Platonic experience, hinting at the degradation of his own once-respectable character. Motifs of death litter these descriptions of decay, creating deathly landscapes that reflect the characters who encounter them. Mann's deteriorating landscapes suggest Aschenbach's crumbling self-control and welcome him into a deathly realm en route to his own demise, an ending we come to expect. D'Annunzio offers many hints that Foscarina may expire: This melancholy woman has suffered much in life (rendering her a more talented actress but a more burdensome lover—and muse) and with her eyes like violets, symbolic of death and mourning, she matches the deathly landscapes D'Annunzio describes.

In their portrayal of such noxious spaces, both Mann and D'Annunzio turn the Venetian gondolas into funeral barges. For D'Annunzio, they are 'the boat of Charon',[156] and as Aschenbach is transported against his will in a 'coffin-black'[157] boat by a rogue gondolier, he idly considers that his rower might deal him a blow with an oar and send him down 'to the house of Hades'.[158] Both authors also reference the cemetery island of San Michele,[159] and as Stelio and Foscarina pass by in their gondola they enter 'dark water, passing under the bridge that looked to the island',[160] brushing past 'boats that rotted along the decaying walls'.[161] Overhead the sky rumbles thunderously and ominously; a moment later the lovers learn of Richard Wagner's death in Venice. The proximity of our protagonists to the cemetery island (Aschenbach notes the 'hideously brisk traffic'[162] going to the island amidst the cholera epidemic) clearly illustrates their states of mind and matches the sinister landscapes in which they find themselves.

At another point, as Foscarina rests exhausted from terror after losing her lover in a maze, they pass through a landscape that deals a bleak judgement on their relationship. Stelio has playfully eluded Foscarina in the maze despite her pleas not to be left alone; her attack of panic has demonstrated her absolute dependence on Stelio,

147 David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 10.
148 Weir, p. ix.
149 Weir, p. ix.
150 Thomas Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig* in *Frühe Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2004), p. 543.
151 Gabriele D'annunzio, *Il fuoco* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1900), p. 67.
152 D'Annunzio, p. 439.
153 Mann, p. 565.
154 Mann, p. 541.
155 D'Annunzio, p. 99.
156 D'Annunzio, p. 30.
157 Mann, p. 523.
158 Mann, p. 526.
159 Mann, p. 579.
160 D'Annunzio, p. 496.
161 D'Annunzio, p. 496.
162 Mann, p. 579.

exposing their relationship as a 'costly obligation'.[163] As they are rowed homeward, they encounter 'a wilderness, Stygian, like a vision of Hades: a country of shadows, vapours and waters. All things evaporated and dissipated like spirits.'[164] Darkness and silence make this a lifeless landscape: 'the sky could observe its own melancholy reflected in innumerable quiet mirrors. And here and there, along the discoloured shore, like the spirits of a vanished people, the statues passed by.'[165] This haunting landscape is colourless, joyless and dead; it reflects the lovers' mood and perhaps gives a metaphorical adumbration of the cultural landscape that would result if Stelio should succumb to overwhelming desire and fail in his artistic task. The statues evoke faded glory of extinct civilisations and perhaps remind Stelio of his aim to recapture such splendour again.

Comparatively gloomy and hazy is the landscape through which Aschenbach frantically pursues Tadzio: The place itself is a 'labyrinth'[166] and 'the air was still and foul, the sun burnt harshly through the vapours that coloured the sky like slate'.[167] The 'Arabian lattices [which] showed shadowy in the gloom'[168] recall both the east (Dionysus's origin) and even prison bars, suggestive of Aschenbach's transgression and captivity. The thick vapours in both D'Annunzio's and Mann's descriptions render the landscapes claustrophobic and oppressive, mirroring their protagonists' enthrallment to (the object of) desire. These Venetian landscapes offer confinement, decay, and death, not inspiration and art. Just as Stelio and Foscarina experience a desolate scene when they realise the crippling nature of their desire, so Aschenbach experiences a hostilely transfigured beach when he learns that Tadzio's family are shortly to leave Venice: 'it was inhospitable there. […] The pleasure spot, once so colourful and lively, now almost deserted, appeared now autumnal, out of season; the sand was no longer kept clean.'[169] Both Mann and D'Annunzio use a lack of colour to illustrate lifelessness and employ autumn (the season in which *The Flame* is set) as a symbol for past splendour. Stelio can embrace autumn in the knowledge that spring—renewing the Venetian landscape and rejuvenating his artistic landscape—will arrive; in Aschenbach's case, however, there will be no spring and no continuation of nature's cyclical renewal.

Despite the deathly scenes found above, Venice's spectacular beauty still survives and strikes both Aschenbach and Stelio. Aschenbach arrives in Venice to a 'blinding composition of fantastic architecture',[170] 'the light splendour of the palace and the bridge of sighs, the columns of lion and saint on the shore, the showy projecting flank of the fairy-tale temple'.[171] This welcome seems almost a seduction, given the unwholesome side of Venice (including the cholera epidemic) that will gradually be revealed. Indeed, Mann describes Venice's beauty as 'seductive and suspicious'[172] and Stelio asks Foscarina, 'do you know of a greater temptress?'[173] To his eyes, Venice can still appear as 'a dream of infinite beauty'[174] and 'there is no dawn and no sunset that can equal that hour of light on stone and on the waters.'[175]

As well as luring Aschenbach and Stelio into barren landscapes of decay, Venice also seduces the careless visitor to inertia and inactivity. For Aschenbach the seascape is a crucial feature of Venice here: As an exhausted artist, he finds a refuge in the sea that satisfies his need for 'the unorganised, the immeasurable, the eternal—in short, for

[163] D'Annunzio, p. 410.
[164] D'Annunzio, p. 406.
[165] D'Annunzio, p. 407.
[166] Mann, p. 567.
[167] Mann, p. 567.
[168] Mann, p. 567.
[169] Mann, p. 590.
[170] Mann, p. 522.
[171] Mann, p. 522.
[172] Mann, p. 567. The city is also described as being of 'irresistible appeal' (Mann, p. 517) by the ticket seller on the boat to Venice.
[173] D'Annunzio, p. 9.
[174] D'Annunzio, p. 66.
[175] D'Annunzio, p. 67.

nothingness'.[176] Arriving in his hotel room, Aschenbach immediately inspects his sea-view, finding a landscape of infinity and vastness: 'he glazed upon the empty afternoon beach and the sunless sea; the tide was coming in and sent small, elongated waves in quiet regular rhythm against the shore.'[177] This rhythmic and eternal element will effect inertia in Aschenbach as he watches Tadzio against the shoreline: As the seascape erodes his will to productivity Aschenbach will be lulled into a lethargy in which he allows time to dissipate in idle hours of voyeurism. In *The Flame*, Stelio periodically experiences a similar apathy. As the lovers pass the house of the ageing Countess of Glanegg[178] the landscape provokes languor:

> the inertia of things overwhelmed them, the humid ashy smoke engulfed them, thickening […]. The guttural wail [of birds] gradually diminishing became sweet like flute-notes on the weak air, they seemed to linger like those discoloured leaves that abandoned the branch […]. How long was the time it took the leaf to fall from the branch and reach the ground!'[179]

In this landscape, all becomes 'slowness, vapour, abandon, consumption, ashes'.[180]

But D'Annunzio promises hope in the struggle against cultural stagnation and, in contrast to Aschenbach, his artist-protagonist's torpor is not fatal. The Venetian landscape also stimulates Stelio intermittently to activity and creative inspiration, especially when he is granted clarity by Foscarina's absence (or the absence of those aspects of their desire that eclipse reason and purpose). After a chance encounter with Wagner, for example, Stelio feels artistically exhilarated and intoxicated and an aural experience of the Venetian landscape kindles the creative flame surging forth within him. A storm approaches, Stelio leaps to the crest of the Rialto bridge[181] and drinks in the sounds that the wind has gathered from the Venetian landscape. The sounds borne on the air condense a temporal landscape of centuries into the rich but disorganised wind:

> tremendous was the voice of the whirlwind in that stillness of centuries turned to stone: it alone dominated the solitude, as it had when the marble still slept in the womb of the mountains and on the muddy islands of the lagoon wild grasses grew around the birds' nests, long before the doge had taken seat on the Rialto, long before the patriarchs had led the fugitives toward their great destiny.[182]

In this wind, Stelio discerns a melody that requires his help to develop itself: 'The city of stone and water had become sonorous like an immense organ. The hiss and rumble transformed themselves into a type of choral invocation that grew and diminished with a rhythmic mode.'[183] In an almost symbiotic process the melody offers Stelio visions of distant ancient lands, 'the Libyan desert […], the Nile at Memphis, the parched Argolides.'[184] In this vivid episode of fervent creative inspiration, D'Annunzio's artist works with his landscape to reach his artistic goal. For this reason Stelio values Venice and her landscapes so highly: 'I do not know of another place […] where a strong and ambitious spirit can […] so expect the active power of his intellect and all of those energies of his being, to be incited to a superhuman degree.'[185]

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[176] Mann, p. 536.
[177] Mann, p. 528.
[178] The Countess shuns society and keeps no mirrors, to hide her fading beauty from the world and from herself.
[179] D'Annunzio, p. 231.
[180] D'Annunzio, p. 231.
[181] Stelio's placement on a bridge may be significant; we remember that Nietzsche likens mankind to 'a bridge' leading to the *Übermensch*; only superior individuals can cross this bridge.
[182] D'Annunzio, p. 283.
[183] D'Annunzio, p. 276.
[184] D'Annunzio, p. 284.
[185] D'Annunzio, p. 99.

Aschenbach's episode of creative production, the only one we witness, is also aided by the Venetian landscape. In Aschenbach's case, however, the landscape seems to act less benevolently, presenting the object of his illicit and inappropriate desire to him in a way that seems to tease the ageing writer, whilst still stimulating (briefly) his creativity. Aschenbach watches Tadzio on the beach as 'a wanton sun poured a lavish lustre onto him, and the noble distances of the sea was a film and a background to his appearance.'[186] The landscape interacts with Tadzio, ensuring that he appears to Aschenbach in his most alluring light. Just before his creative outburst, Tadzio and the landscape offer an even more seductive vision: Aschenbach gazes at 'the noble figure there on the edge of the blue, and in rapturous delight he believed to behold beauty itself'.[187] This entrancing vision triggers thoughts of Plato, offering an insight into Aschenbach's own interpretation of his (ever more sensual) desire. Along with the sight of Tadzio, 'from the rush of the sea and the glare of the sun he spun himself a sublime image'.[188] He sees an Athenian plane, 'that sacred-shady place, filled with the scent of cherry flowers',[189] a gentle grassy slope with a clear-running stream and shady trees, in contrast to the sweltering Venetian beach with its heavy air and relentless heat. In this landscape Aschenbach sees Socrates and Phaedrus, 'an elder with a younger'[190]—himself and Tadzio. For this is how Aschenbach justifies his behaviour to himself: To his mind, his desire for Tadzio is nothing more sinister or sensual than the affectionate and didactic attentions of a wise teacher for his pupil. After this vision of a balsamic landscape, and the sight of Tadzio in the Venetian landscape, Aschenbach is compelled to write and composes his most sublime prose—even if it is only one and a half pages long, and his last artistic output.

This is not the first time that Aschenbach has been transported to an imagined inner landscape. Just as the Venetian beach is transfigured into a landscape that matches Aschenbach's (deluded) mental state, so we witness his hallucinations of a wild and exotic landscape when he is struck by *Wanderlust*. Taking a walk through Munich he pauses to consider an 'exotic[191]' stranger in the cemetery grounds. Aschenbach becomes lost in his thoughts, sensing 'a strange expansion of his interior […], a kind of roving unrest, a youthfully thirsty desire for the far-off'.[192] He sees 'a tremendous landscape, a tropical marshland under a thickly vaporous sky, damp, lush and unwholesome, a deserted primordial wilderness of islands, morasses',[193] full of 'hairy palm trunks' and lush vegetation. A tiger crouches in a thicket and 'on the stagnant, green-shadowed, mirroring flood floated milk-white flowers, as big as dishes.'[194] The exotic landscape reflects Aschenbach's need for a change of scenery; its primordial wildness suggests the arousal of primitive impulses (the Dionysian) within this controlled character; the phallic tree trunks foreshadow an imminent sexual experience; and the tiger hints at lurking dangers. Several features (the islands and water) recall Venice and several hint at an eastern location, alluding to Dionysus's supposed historical origin. As Reed notes, Aschenbach may not make it all the way to the tigers,[195] but he will find himself wandering south, to the sea, and into Dionysus's embrace.

In *The Flame*, a similar use of an imagined landscape to reflect the protagonist's psychology can also be found. Stelio's vivid creative visions exemplify this, where he finds himself confronted with antique landscapes ripe for translation and insertion into his modern tragic work. He recounts one of his most intense visions to his companion, in which Stelio 'becomes' the archaeologist Schliemann,[196] uncovering ancient artefacts at the site of

[186] Mann, p. 552.
[187] Mann, p. 553.
[188] Mann, p. 554.
[189] Mann, p. 554.
[190] Mann, p. 554.
[191] Mann, p. 503.
[192] Mann, p. 504.
[193] Mann, p. 504.
[194] Mann, p. 504.
[195] Philip Reed, ed., *On Mahler and Britten* (Aldeburgh: The Boydell Press, 1995), p. 270.
[196] Heinrich Schliemann (1882-1890) was a German archaeologist most famous for uncovering Mycenae and what is regarded as the site of Troy.

Mycenae. The objects pulled from the earth work conjure up a hallucination of an ancient landscape for Schliemann/Stelio:

> a series of tombs: fifteen intact bodies, […] on a bed of gold, their faces covered with masks of gold, their foreheads crowed with gold, their breasts bound with gold; and everywhere, […] everywhere an abundance of things of gold, innumerable as the leaves that fall in a fairy-tale forest…[197]

Stelio becomes intoxicated by this mythical landscape and tries to transmit the living images he sees to his companion, just as he will incorporate these images into his great artistic work. The brilliance of this vision, with its abundant gold, promises rich rewards to Stelio if he applies himself to his artistic mission. Even the tombs do not spoil the mood: they are not dusty and decaying but resplendent and beautiful, perhaps foreshadowing the awakening of ancient tragic traditions that Stelio will effect, before adapting them for the modern era.

This vision of an ancient Mycenaean landscape opens up a new point of discussion: namely, the use of mythical landscapes in *Death in Venice* and *The Flame*. Both Mann and D'Annunzio make extensive use of figures, events, and places from classical mythology, and on several occasions the landscapes before Aschenbach and Stelio are mythically metamorphosed. Again, this often provides insight into the protagonists' state of mind. Aschenbach is subconsciously aware of the deviancy of his desire, and looks for precedence and familiar frameworks with which to defend his obsession. As a classical writer, he can turn to classical sources for reassurance. He casts himself and Tadzio in ennobling roles such as Zeus and Ganymede, and similarly observes the Venetian landscapes as transfigured. The quotidian events of daybreak and sunset undergo mythical metamorphoses and the landscape becomes a space in which Aschenbach can project his (subconsciously) guilt-ridden classicism: A classically-interpreted sunrise allows Aschenbach to imagine himself in ancient times, where pederasty was no shameful thing. The sun becomes Helios's chariot and Poseidon's horses drive the wind. He watches the sunrise, observing 'that first, sweet reddening of the farthest strip of sky and sea'[198] through which 'the creation makes itself perceptible'.[199] 'Child-like clouds, transformed, illuminated, hovered like attendant cupids in the rosy, bluish haze'[200] and, as he watches on, 'golden spears streaked from below toward the heights of the sky, the sparkle became a blaze, soundless, with god-like violence glow and heat and blazing flames heaved themselves upwards'.[201] This transformation of the mundane into the mythical suggests that Aschenbach's mind has been rendered imaginative and artistically fertile by his encounter with Tadzio; it is Aschenbach's failure to channel such potential into creative output that is his tragedy. Instead, he allows himself to luxuriate lazily in fanciful imaginings, preferring to keep his eyes on Tadzio rather than his hand on the pen.

For D'Annunzio's artist, the classical world holds the key to an artistically rejuvenated future and a reawakening of ancient figures and landscapes will stimulate Stelio's creativity to achieve this. When Stelio alludes to Greek mythology, he experiences an artistic fecundity of the mind similar to Aschenbach's, but in Stelio's case, creative potential will be realised. When the Venetian landscape appears to him as classically inspired, we therefore sense imminent productivity rather than Aschenbach's idle fantasies. Shortly before giving a speech on the artistic affinity of Venice and the need to recapture the glory of the past, Stelio observes the Salute, which becomes the domain of the pagan sea-god:

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[197] D'Annunzio, p. 293.
[198] Mann, p. 559.
[199] Mann, p. 559.
[200] Mann, p. 559.
[201] Mann, p. 559.

> the octagonal temple […] emerged from its own blue-green shadow, with its dome, its spirals, its statues, its columns, its balustrades, sumptuous and strange like a building of Neptune constructed in the likeness of the twisted marine columns, whitened as mother of pearl.[202]

Salt and water have spread over it, creating 'in the concavity of the stone something fresh, of silver and gem-like […], a vague impression of open oystershells'.[203] The building becomes Neptune's palace, and its architectural features suddenly reflect the fantastical nature of Neptune's realm. Like Aschenbach, Stelio interprets an everyday landscape as a vision from antiquity, illustrative of his artistically active mind and the importance he places upon ancient mythology.

The mythical landscapes Aschenbach sees testify to the intensification of his self-delusion and of his increasingly more sinister desire: The stronger his desire, the more frequently he turns to familiar (and comforting) classical sources. At times, however, mythical allusions offer no solace. One afternoon Aschenbach decides to pursue Tadzio and becomes lost in the 'alleyways, waters, bridges and piazzas of the labyrinth',[204] no longer able to tell north from south. 'The onlooker'[205] becomes 'the confused one'[206]. Allusion to the labyrinth, the legendary lair of the minotaur, evokes a perilous and unfathomable landscape from which there is no escape: Aschenbach is no Theseus, but rather a helpless and condemned victim sent down into the labyrinth to appease the savage beast. The landscape exacerbates Aschenbach's torture, seeming to collude against him in his chase by hiding Tadzio from view: 'the Polish family had crossed a short curved bridge, the peak of the arc hid them from the pursuer, and once he had climbed up, he could no longer discover them.'[207] Having once presented Tadzio to Aschenbach with the most fetching landscape as accompaniment, Venice now taunts Aschenbach by hiding the coveted object from his gaze.

Foscarina finds herself in a similar situation when she becomes lost in the maze mentioned earlier. The Italian word for 'maze' is the same as the word used to denote the mythical labyrinth and so D'Annunzio's description carries the same classical connotations. The maze has become 'overgrown, sad'[208] from neglect, lost all regularity and, become 'a closed bush, between brown and yellow, full of impenetrable ways, where the diagonal rays of the sunset here and there reddened the leaves, so that they appeared to burn'.[209] As with Aschenbach, the claustrophobic labyrinth carries an element of danger: 'she could see nothing but the multiple and regular maze of ways'[210] and in exasperation Foscarina looks up at the sky that 'curved immense and pure over the two walls of branches in which she was prisoner'.[211] Foscarina becomes as lost as Aschenbach and as feverishly afraid. So hostile is this landscape that she cannot 'separate in her mind the reality of the place from the image of her inner torment'.[212]

The mythically interpreted landscapes encountered by Aschenbach, Stelio, and Foscarina demonstrate artistic dispositions and creative potential. Whilst Aschenbach's potential to create dissipates along with the heightening of his desire, Stelio succeeds in sublimating his sexual urges for the sake of art and productivity. This is illustrated several times by the Venetian landscape, which offers decay, entrapment, and impotency, but also a hint of optimism for the future. It seems that Venice's deathly elements, like those of Dionysus, will not overpower

[202] D'Annunzio, p. 10.
[203] D'Annunzio, p. 10.
[204] Mann, p. 586.
[205] Mann, p. 552.
[206] Mann, p. 567.
[207] Mann, p. 587.
[208] D'Annunzio, p. 394.
[209] D'Annunzio, p. 394.
[210] D'Annunzio, p. 397.
[211] D'Annunzio, p. 398.
[212] D'Annunzio, p. 398.

Stelio, whose superhuman artistic prowess enables him to sublimate such dangers and even incorporate their expression into his art. As Felice notes, Stelio inhabits 'a Venice that is not always a Dionysian city of Life; but exactly this funereal desert was introduced as a conscious strategy to give value to the temerarious vitality of the hero'.[213] Stelio notes that while Venice may appear dead and withered, 'my feelings did not deceive me when I perceived that she was labouring in secret with a life-force sufficient to renew the most ancient wonders.'[214]

When Stelio begins to become impatient to return to his work, he encounters an auspicious scene:

> the squalid canal-banks, the crumbled stones, the putrid roots, the traces of destructive works, the odours of dissolution, the funereal cypresses, the black crosses […]. Stronger than all the signs, only that song of freedom and victory could touch the heart of he who had to create with joy. "Onwards! Onwards! Higher, even higher!"[215]

A decaying landscape cannot quench Stelio's creative drive—rather, he embraces the destruction and degradation as part of life's endless Dionysian cycle of death and renewal, creation and destruction. The deathly landscapes that seduce Aschenbach and lull him into inertia hold less power over D'Annunzio's *superuomo*. Confronted with a similar scene of decline shortly afterwards, Stelio's irrepressible revitalised creativity masters once again: 'a deep enchantment like an ecstasy rendered the desert blessed.'[216] Such sentiments are absent from *Death in Venice,* where the deathly landscapes deliver exactly what they promise.

At the heart of *Death in Venice* and *The Flame* we find a force that binds together the impulses of death, art, desire, classicism, and abandon that constitute the protagonists' experience. This is the Dionysian, strongly reminiscent of Nietzsche's appropriation of the deity, triggering loss-of-control, intoxication, licentiousness, and wantonness in his initiates. Nietzsche champions a re-embrace of Dionysus in order to rejuvenate the stagnant cultural landscape he perceives in his *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) but warns that the potentially destructive Dionysian requires sublimation through the Apollonian in order to remain useful. Both Aschenbach and Stelio flirt with Dionysus but only the latter succeeds in holding the unruly force in check, whilst Aschenbach—who has previously led an (excessively) Apollonian existence of control, reserve, and monk-like routine—succumbs to a wholesale embrace of the Dionysian and the unproductive self-forgetting that this induces. Within Mann's and D'Annunzio's versions of Venice we find Dionysian landscapes hinting at artistic fervour but warning of the protagonists' proximity to danger.

The most shocking and explicit Dionysian landscape appears to Aschenbach in a dream shortly after his fateful utterance of 'I love you!'[217] and immediately after his discovery of the cholera epidemic (that he keeps secret from Tadzio's mother). Naturally, Aschenbach cannot leave Tadzio prematurely and remains resident in the hotel, consciously risking his life. Aschenbach's dream signals his utter embrace of Dionysus and henceforth he is a helpless (but not unwilling) victim. The dream begins with 'fear'[218] and a night-time scene. Unsettling sounds herald the approach of a wild crowd of revellers, worshippers of 'the stranger god [Dionysus]':[219]

> [s]mokey embers smouldered: he recognised a mountainous land, identical to that of his summer-house. And in the torn light, from wooded heights, between trunks and mossy crumbled rocks they came

[213] Angela Felice, *Introduzione a D'Annunzio* (Bari: Editore Laterza, 1991), p. 96.
[214] D'Annunzio, p. 67.
[215] D'Annunzio, p. 526.
[216] D'Annunzio, p. 536.
[217] Mann, p. 563.
[218] Mann, p. 582.
[219] Mann, p. 582.

> pouring down, lunging down reeling: people, animals, a swarm, a clamorous horde, and inundated the place with bodies, flames, tumult and a swaying circular dance.[220]

The landscape is dominated by nature with which Dionysus is strongly associated as a 'god of vegetation'[221] signalling Aschenbach's return to primordial elements. The riotous pagan worship of the horde (which engages in *sparagmos*[222]) supports this and we realise that the once-controlled Aschenbach is surrendering to those most primitive, almost animalistic energies that his experience of desire has caused to surge forth. He now inhabits a 'realm of chaos and self-negation'.[223] The summerhouse in the mountains mentioned by the narrator no longer suffices as a restorative retreat for Aschenbach: he has gone far beyond this and such simple respites can no longer save him.

D'Annunzio's Dionysian landscapes remain grounded in Venice, the city that is so crucial a participant in Stelio's creativity. After Stelio's oration, Venice becomes a space that reflects the incitement of Dionysian energies, illustrating the creativity that can be stimulated once Dionysus is welcomed back onto the cultural landscape. After Stelio's speech a bacchic chorus arises from the crowds, intoxicated by the speaker's words. Stelio waits for his boat observing the landscape and 'it seemed that in that moment the Dionysian delirium, recalling the burning of ancient woods on sacred nights, had given the signal for the conflagration in which the beauty of Venice could be gloriously resplendent'.[224] Fireworks and flames light up the Venetian night:

> all the innumerable appearances of the volatile and multi-coloured Flame extended itself across the sky, they brushed the water, they wrapped themselves in the masts of the ships, garlanding the domes and towers, decorating cornices, wreathing the statues, bejewelling the capitols, […] transfiguring every aspect of the sacred or profane architectures within whose courtyards the deep lagoon was like an enchanting mirror that multiplied the marvels.[225]

The fireworks themselves, of eastern origin, could be a reference to Dionysus and extravagant Dionysian pleasures: Their myriad colours evoke 'perfumes and spices'[226] creating a landscape of exotic sensory delights in abundance. The mood after Stelio's speech is optimistic: The crowds have responded positively to his calls for artistic rejuvenation and welcome Dionysus back to Venice with their delirious spontaneous chorus. The sinister notes of Mann's Dionysian landscape in Aschenbach's dream are absent here, perhaps because D'Annunzio's artist is the artistic *superuomo* to whom such dangers pose no real threat.

With such Dionysian landscapes in mind it is worth considering where we may find Apollo. The landscape of light and clear architecture of Aschenbach's arrival[227] seems Apollonian, as do the statues littering D'Annunzio's descriptions.[228] Yet in Mann's Venice, reflecting Aschenbach's shift from Apollonian to Dionysian, Apollonian features quickly recede in the Dionysian landscapes that emerge. In D'Annunzio's Venice the statues appear, on closer inspection, lifeless and forgotten,[229] and the Apollonian aspects of the landscape in general are dilapidated. The long-neglected Dionysian now seems the more active impulse here, invigorating Venice with a Dionysian

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[220] Mann, p. 582.
[221] Harold Willoughby, *Pagan Regeneration, A Study of Mystery Initiations in the Graeco Roman World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 70.
[222] 'Sparagmos' was an ancient Dionysian ritual involving the dismemberment of a victim, animal or human, re-enacting Pentheus' dismemberment by the maenads. The flesh would sometimes be devoured raw.
[223] Hannelore Mundt, *Understanding Thomas Mann* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), p. 93.
[224] D'Annunzio, p. 125.
[225] D'Annunzio, p. 130.
[226] D'Annunzio, p. 132.
[227] The narrator admires the 'blinding composition of fantastic architecture' (Mann, p. 522).
[228] Before entering the maze in which she becomes lost, Foscarina comments 'How many statues!' (D'Annunzio, p. 391).
[229] Myriad statues appear in the Stygian landscape encountered after the fiasco in the maze: 'like the spirits of a vanished people, the statues passed and passed' (D'Annunzio, p. 407).

frenzy that rekindles artistic passion. Perhaps once the Dionysian is embraced again, and the artistic landscape rejuvenated, the harmonious balance of Apollo and Dionysus will once again create true art.[230] In both texts, the Venetian landscape displays Apollonian features overshadowed by an emerging Dionysian dominance; for D'Annunzio this seems to foretell the reconciliation of these energies, but in Aschenbach's case we understand that his embrace of the Dionysian will prove irreversible and fatal.

As proof of Stelio's capacity to overcome the obstacles he encounters and to reign in those impulses of desire and Dionysian abandon that jeopardise his artistic success, one of the final landscapes of *The Flame* is an imagined one depicting the theatre Stelio wishes to build as Italy's answer to Bayreuth. Impatient for coming times of great productivity, Stelio sees 'the Roman hill, the growing building, the evenness of the cut stones, […] the vigilant and stern architect, the bulk of the Vatican opposite the Theatre of Apollo.'[231] Nature is abundant in this landscape and 'one hears nothing but the song of birds, the roar of fountains, the murmur of leaves'.[232] Mythical nature-spirits, including companions of Dionysus, are present and the poet discerns 'the pulse of the Hamadryads and the breath of Pan'.[233] This is a clear indication of Stelio's return to artistic focus and his triumphant and productive harmony with Dionysus.

By contrast, the final landscape Mann describes is pitifully hopeless, promising no redemption. Aschenbach, ever-solitary, watches Tadzio against the 'hazy-infinity'[234] of the seascape and ironically interprets his stance as an inviting gesture towards the 'promising-vastness'.[235] But the promise of this immense space is illusory, the final, and fatal, part of Aschenbach's self-deception. Naturally, Aschenbach 'follows' Tadzio and in four rather dispassionate lines we read of Aschenbach's departure from the world.

The Venetian landscape takes on many guises in the texts of D'Annunzio and Mann and constitutes a substantial thematic parallel between them. It becomes a vital part of the protagonists' Venetian existences, actively interfering with their experiences and influencing their behaviour and thoughts. Deployed as a reflective space in both texts, it becomes a crucial key to understanding the characters' psychological development and reveals which force is likely to triumph in the battle between desire and creativity. With this article I hope to have demonstrated that *The Flame* and *Death in Venice* warrant further comparative analysis and that the parallels between these two seldom-linked texts run deeper than may be assumed at first glance.

[230] When Stelio calls his Theatre of Apollo 'harmonious' (D'Annunzio, p. 524), it seems likely that this harmony refers (at least partly) to the perfect balance of Apollo and Dionysus that for Nietzsche was so crucial for the creation of great art.
[231] D'Annunzio, p. 523.
[232] D'Annunzio, p. 525.
[233] D'Annunzio, p. 525.
[234] Mann, p. 592.
[235] Mann, p. 592.

Title: 'Poetry, the archive and the engine houses of West Cornwall'
Author: Annabel Banks
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Poetry, the archive and the engine houses of West Cornwall
Annabel Banks

Abstract: In 2006 selected Cornish mining areas were validated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here are found numerous remnants of the mining industry that drove Cornwall's prominence from the industrial revolution up to the close of the last major mine in 1998.

Of all the traces of mining that remain above ground the most recognisable is surely the engine house. This is a silhouette you see constantly from the moment you cross the river Tamar into Cornwall. The engine house has come to represent Cornish past and present through the paradox of an industrial shape that has picturesque value, a shape that, although completely dictated by function, is now fully associated with Cornwall's landscape of memory: the post-industrial as archive of industrial.

An essential part of Cornish mining history is to be found in a corresponding archive. The Boulton & Watt Mining Company was formed when Midlands businessman Matthew Boulton (1728-1809) joined with Scotsman James Watt (1736-1819) and began their trade in Watt's improved steam technology. This partnership influenced the history of Cornish mining and the whole industrial revolution. Correspondence between the two men and Cornish mine manager Thomas Wilson (1748-1820) is held at the Cornwall Records Office and is available online.

This writing uses moments from the Boulton and Watt archive to illuminate ideas around the engine houses of West Cornwall.

Poetry, the archive and the engine houses of West Cornwall

In 2006 selected Cornish mining areas were validated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here are found numerous remnants of the mining industry that drove Cornwall's prominence as a source of mineral wealth and expertise from the industrial revolution up to the close of the last major mine, South Crofty, in 1998.

Of all the traces of mining that remain above ground, the most recognisable is surely the engine house. This is a silhouette you see constantly from the moment you cross the river Tamar into Cornwall. Like playhouse castles, each blocky build is offset by a turret-like chimney, which peek through trees next to leisure trails, or poke above the sea-battered granite cliffs along the coastal paths. The shape of the engine house has become a motif of Cornwall, proudly displayed on key chains and car stickers, used by tourist information and accommodation websites, and is arguably as much a symbol of Cornwall as the region's St Pirran's flag, where the white cross on a black background is said to represent veins of white tin through granite. Unlike the flag, however, the engine house manages to bypass associations with Cornish nationalism due to its positive association with tourism, encompassing Cornish past and present through the paradox of an industrial shape that holds picturesque value, a shape dictated by function that has become part of Cornwall's major commodity: its industrial heritage.

This writing accesses this landscape through an archive of eighteenth century letters. The Boulton & Watt Mining Company was formed by Midlands businessman Matthew Boulton (1728-1809) and Scotsman James Watt (1736-1819). Together, they influenced the history of Cornish mining and thus the whole industrial revolution. Correspondence between the two men and Cornish mine manager Thomas Wilson (1748-1820) is held at the Cornish Records Office and is available online.[236] Inside this archive is found engineering details, business dealings, exasperation at the mines and their debts, and the collection of life events that remember each correspondent as an individual: births, deaths, illnesses, comfort and humour offered and received.

I work with the Wilson Papers, seeking moments, words and gestures in the letters that illuminate or resonate with narratives of the contemporary post-industrial landscape. These narratives are discovered through interviews with locals, tourists, students, mining enthusiasts and those who know nothing of the Cornish industrial past. We cycle and walk the dedicated mining heritage trails, the Mineral Tramways, which take us through green and bronze valleys, past the stone Cornish 'hedges' that wall the view into manageable fields. The trails are flat, to help the ponies that tugged coal from the coast to the hungry engines, and so we climb the ruined engine houses to gain perspective, numbering the cold chimneys on the horizon. We wear waterproofs, because Cornwall is a

[236] Cornish Mining World Heritage, 'Introduction to the Boulton & Watt Papers'.
< http://www.cornishmining.net/story/bwpapers.htm > [accessed 3 June 2013]

county of coasts, with rain a generous gift from the sea. The rain is important: mining, never an easy occupation, is dependent upon the control of water removed from the shaft.

Dig a hole in Cornwall and watch it fill... This is a saying I have often heard. It's an opener for a conversation about mining technology, about the fight with granite and gravity, and the stories of those men whose ingenuity was constantly employed in the improvement of steam engines and pumps. How can you mine when water constantly threatens the integrity of the shafts? Only with pumps, powered by the engine house. How do you get the men down and the ore out? A cage strung on a winder, powered by the same.

Roofs

My daughter writes me that I must find a Lodging for myself, & must buy some Sail Cloth to keep the rain out of my House as part of the Roof is taken off & the whole must be in the Course of the Month haveing prepared new Carpentry & Slates to put on. I therefore must go home to take care of my household...

Matthew Boulton, June 5th 1797

The 2009 Mineral Tramways Heritage Project was part of a six million pound regeneration scheme funded by different groups and managed by Cornwall Council. The fifty miles of leisure trail that resulted provides access to locals and tourists while also engaging with mining history and the preservation of its historical sites. In the project's first stages the county's remaining engine houses were surveyed and recommendations were made as to which ones were to be kept, to be made safe and promoted. They were scored on such things as their condition and their proximity to the trails, with careful attention paid to 'special' engine houses of particular historical value.[237] Yet no matter how well preserved or important, they all had a similar note: the roof was missing.

The report tells that the youngest engine house in the project area is seventy years old, while the oldest, from the works of Wheal Henry[238] is nearer two hundred.[239] Although therefore old enough to have lost their wooden roofs through the rot brought about by age and salt air, I am assured by mining heritage enthusiasts that this is not the case: the roofing materials had been salvaged because Cornish people have always been 'very good at recycling'. It is surprising to hear that the star attractions of the heritage trails were once so little valued. However, I am repeatedly assured that the wood and slate would not have been the only materials taken if it were not for the particular dimensions required for the walls. My guide at King Edward Mine agrees: 'Engine houses are there because no one could sell them, or steal them. That is the only reason they have survived.' He points out the huge stones that are impractical to remove and unusable for new work, explaining how the main wall was designed to bear the weight and power of the engine, so now, when the grasses bend in the wind they reveal foundations that are more boulder than brick. He adds how the stacks, the high chimneys, had to be solid enough to bear the gales that batter the Cornish peninsular. Stacks 'upcountry' are a different design.

In deciding not to re-roof the engine houses the investors, while maintaining valuable Cornish mining heritage, also allowed visitors to provide their own, often more romantic, readings of the scenery. Those without knowledge of cylinders and winders must still appreciate the engine houses, for they seek them out as they cycle or tramp coastal or cross-country paths. They must create their own narratives of the landscape, and so I am not surprised to hear of tourists who refer to the structures as 'castles'. Indeed, many of the explorers I speak to use

[237] Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Kerrier Groundwork Trust & Massie, Ludnow and Jenkins. 1991. *Engine House Assessment: Mineral Tramways Project.* (Cornwall: Cornwall County Council. 1991), p.62.
[238] 'Wheal' means mine or shaft in Cornish.
[239] *Engine House Assessment*, p.42.

terms like 'picturesque' and 'beautiful' as they explicitly link the engine houses' aesthetic pleasure to the state of being 'tumbledown'. Indeed, this word is often applied to the engine houses despite the careful, and costly, improvements. In most cases, the engine house is not tumbledown at all, but rather a roofless, glassless structure that is otherwise secure.

Castle in undergrowth
broken neck with a bramble bandage
we saw chimneys, don't know what they were

Called home to hold the house
when a roof is a sail that turns
the unstealable brick and boulder boat

that could be a cafe if given a kettle
could be a shop if gifted stock
could be a home if plans would allow.

Houses

I have constantly had persons at my house upon business, insomuch that every Bed hath been full & nothing interupts one so much as Company

Matthew Boulton, January 23rd 1786

D.B. Barton's thorough work on the Cornish engine records the pride of engine workers who kept the houses bright and clean, even installing geraniums on the windowsills to match the woodwork's red paint.[240] This element of domestication was prescient, for ruined engine houses have been the basis for many private renovation projects. I am told that there are almost thirty in the area now used as contemporary domiciles, with one particular renovation project documented in detail by the British television series *Grand Designs*.[241] In these projects, the engine-house-house's interior design must be a secondary consideration to the preservation of exterior.

The houses do not lend themselves easily to domestic use. They are tall and narrow, thick-walled and often they are near deep shafts that need to be made safe before construction can begin. After the work and the expense, the end result becomes a landmark, but an oddly private one. Staring at someone's home can feel awkward, as I found as I viewed an engine house-house in West Cornwall.

To discover this landmark I walked part of the coast-to-coast Mineral Tramway with a resident of the area. She led me behind the renovated house, well-made, of which nothing except the shape seemed old. We paused to admire the high red balcony, imagining taking tea as the valley opened below us. But even as we joked about the length of vacuum cleaner cable necessary for the housework, she told me how important she feels it is that this heritage is looked after. 'Because what happens when you lose it?' she said, hands out to the valley. 'It's gone.'

What makes a house
keep outness out
with steps you climb
to under-roof
given to generating
Bedsheet belt drives
the winder towards morning
these widows, now glassed
reflect.

I bring up the subject of engine houses becoming homes with local mining history enthusiasts, and learn how the shaft at one property was closed before the engine was installed. Thus the home-house is built from an engine house that never housed an engine.

No strokes per minute power story
marked the chimney stacks unmarked
picture a folly we don't mean anything by it
this simulacrum these falser loves

[240] D.B. Barton, *The Cornish Beam Engine* (Truro: Wordens of Cornwall, 1965), p.178
[241] 'The Engine House, Cornwall'. *Grand Designs*. 11:6. Channel 4. First broadcast October 2011.

Housing concerns appear in my interviews and conversations. Local concern targets 'incomers' who are accused of buying holiday properties to be left vacant, eroding communities and inflating house prices.

'Every bed hath been full,' as Matthew says—
but look. A bed of bolt and old oil
lasting as the walls will last.

For every bed comes a sleeper:
comes two. Track them
That stride of legs descend

which troubles the resting
Nothing interrupts so much as
that doubled roof, this quiet school.

Door (closed)

Don't go quite mad [...] C. has nailed up the doors & windows of the Engine house & no one is admitted. The men got orders to remove all their cloathes from the boiler – as they would be seized by B & W's agents

Gregory Watt (James Watt's son), June 21st 1798

The King Edward Mine Museum in Troon is responsible for four engine houses, two of which lie in its immediate grounds. The buildings that make up this friendly and energetic storehouse of mining history are well maintained and accessible. Yet from the museum another engine house can be seen, its familiar block and spire still recognisable despite being covered in ivy. Here is another story, told in the house's indistinct edges. Although still an essential part of Cornish mining heritage and history, the houses have lost their mandate to perform a regulated, mathematically-approved task. Released from toil, they can become overgrown with vegetation that blurs the sharp edges into softer visions of a rural landscape.

If you try to reach this engine house you will be thwarted by wire fences and 'keep out' signs, private land markers and the lack of footpaths. I circled the shape though field and ditch, each time coming back to the notions of trespass, unwelcome, and closed doors.

Although many engine houses are owned and maintained by the National Trust, I am told of landowners who demolished the remains of their engine houses because of insurance cost concerns. Here, history had become a liability. Grade Two listed status does not afford much protection, for the fine, if it came, would be cheaper than the insurance premium and the necessary fencing or rebuilding costs. Then come whispers of surveyor reports deliberately commissioned to prove a site was dangerous. Encouraging discussion of lost engine houses, I learn that American troops used them for blasting practice during the Second World War, and how others on the North coast were taken down to prevent their prominent and recognisable shape being used as navigation aids for incoming bombers.

No one is admitted / we were glad to get rid
like a lighthouse / Fortescue, Marshall, Black Dog, Golden
The men got shot holes / without movement
drilled and blasted / you did it or you starved
effort needs deliberate / people like trees and bushes
they would have shown / serving orders still
remove yourself lightly / chain and block.

Chimney (smoking)

On the Sunday after I left Truro I dined with a friend at Winsor who Complimented me with the best parlour which had not been opend of 2 Months nor had a fire of 6 Months. I often complaind of Cold but a Lady thought it warm I complaind no more but in consequence thereof I have had a most intolerable bad Cold with all its concomitant Evils ever since...

Matthew Boulton, October 15th 1792

On 30th June 2008 over twenty engine houses once again had smoke rising from their chimneys in a celebratory event that brought five thousand spectators to the hills. King Edward Mine was included in the planning and execution of 'Smoking Chimneys', which benefited from professional PR and a large budget. However, the original plans had to be altered when those volunteers who understand the innards of the structures became involved. Over the decades, perhaps the centuries, the ground levels have shifted and access to many flues was impossible. There were also the nesting habits of jackdaws to negotiate, for these birds compulsively drop sticks down chimneys to build nests. Some chimneys were completely bird-blocked.

Selections were made, and where pyrotechnics failed, damp straw succeeded. The weather, I am assured, was uncharacteristic in its perfection. A warm summer's evening with no breeze allowed the smoke to be seen from far away. In the anticipatory hush voices were heard calling across the valleys. 'It was fun,' I was told. 'Everyone had silly grins on their faces. It was more than people lighting chimney: people reacted in a way not anticipated.' The reactions were tears, big sighs and applause as the smoke rose across the drowsing landscape.

Sooty wings filled sooted space
with thoughts of home, with watered stalks
to release that tenderness to the air

round the perfect angle stacks
up and out. A signal for the crowds
to draw breath, exhale in heat

and follow clouds backwards.
As particles bloomed upon the sky
the valley sniffed, remembering.

Conclusion

...all at present wanted is some one to see the engine house built, and perhaps a clever mason might be the best…

James Watt, November 23rd 1792

With the close of the industrial base of Cornwall the economic future of the area is highly dependent upon tourism. Thus the Cornish post-industrial landscape is, like the engine houses, executing a deliberate move from a functional existence to one where aesthetics and concerns of historical value are paramount. The working landscape and its close past have been described to me by many who played as children in its ruined, debris-strewn fields. To hear them tell, the land was covered in slime pits, rusted machinery and uncapped shafts that waited for the unwary. At this point the mining remnants were merely the setting in which the industry had failed, and was left to rot.

Now, when you walk the tidied Cornish countryside, particularly in the Camborne/Redruth mining district, each house comes to meet you on your way. They had their different functions: engines for pumps; for winders; perhaps for driving the stamps: those great machines that smashed ore in preparation for mineral processing. Inside each house was a thumping, thrusting combination of metal, water and fire, the noisy fundamentals of engineering, and whatever they drove was part of the ore extraction process that increased the county's value to the British Isles, and the place of Britain in the wider world.

The engine houses are preserved, but perhaps at the cost of other buildings that industrial archaeologists and mining history enthusiasts mourn. In many of my conversations, I have heard the same mutter: 'There are lots more bits that are much more rare than engine houses'. Yet the structures along the Mineral Tramways network are restored incompletely: they are paused in their decay, roofless remains of a mining past that dot the landscape for cyclists and walkers to pause at, grab a mouthful of sandwich, jump up on the stones, or frighten themselves, grinning at gravity, as they stand over the capped shaft. Although some became houses, and some were blown up, the engine house remains a mutable symbol through its stories of hard work and easy leisure, tourist use and local pride, tensions and tenderness, and the smoke of cold chimneys.

So wander: follow signpost trails
discover stones piled in a shape
you think you've seen before

Let the guidebook list their names
try on a helmet with a lamp
be interactive with the sky

And each time a different story
that needs a clever mason
to point the brickwork back.

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Title: 'Shards'
Author: Jaclyn Bergamino
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, pp. 65-66

Shards
Jaclyn Bergamino

Her memories are round. They sit on the mantel and she fingers them slowly one by one, as if touching them brings back the sights and smells. They are self-contained, held in proper place by perfectly spherical glass, so that the snowflakes of experiences and emotions do not intermingle. Each one collects its own dust, attracting mites with sparkling recollections. For each globe, an ornate, dainty pedestal calls out the name of the place and cradles the round, full memory that it holds.

Prague. One of the few globes that has snow in it. It's unclear even which century it's from. It holds days that were ripe with inspiration. Bridges over the Vltava and Gothic architecture with snowy-tips. It seemed that lightning was everywhere. Circuses popped up in her favourite park and artists chased the buildings. It was a country ruled by writers and it seemed that Milan Kundera was on every street corner. Gargoyles caught the eye of old Communist statues from across the river and dared them to join in staring contests. On tram rides to school, everyone was a character. War widows and Russian spies, past lives and secrets sat all in a row waiting for their stop. "Better Red than dead!" her grandmother joked, reminding her of generations who once lived in this land, when it had another name and held a shameful family past. This memory holds side trips to Cologne and Vienna, Budapest and Bratislava. It's one of the few snow globes that holds pieces of her family. Aunt and uncle, mother and grandmother, all curious about this homeland. Nightclubs filled with expats and whispers of absinthe. Maybe if she drank what they drank, she could write like them.

The house itself is sparse. As she places the snow globe from Prague back on the mantel, the noise echoes an emptiness, bouncing off bare walls and floors.

Alaska. A summer that was constant spring. The trees were always that new shade of green, as if they were permanently fresh. Mountains grew into glaciers. Snow was stuck in crevasses so that it didn't float as you shook the snow globe. This was closer to what she remembered anyway. The water in the globe seemed to be cold to the touch, as if it had just melted, as if it had been melting these past 8 years. It was bright blue, but not clear, like the runoff from ice age giants. They hid toothpaste tubes in trees to keep them from grizzly bears and played games to learn to run zigzag away from moose. Even the plants seemed like overgrown prehistoric remnants, with mammoth leaves and sabretoothed thorns. There was no electricity or Internet there. Unconnected, but somehow much more connected. Her younger self still sits on one of those glaciers, too small to be seen, wrapped in the inciting cold. The water was 39 degrees, and still she couldn't keep from swimming.

She wonders briefly how many people have seen this globe. She doesn't keep her snow globes in order, chronological or otherwise. They cluster together in the centre of the mantel, as if vying for attention, at odds with each other. Alaska might be in back most days.

San Francisco. There are no row houses or piers in this one, like most people would expect. She didn't take home that Bay Area. There was no Golden Gate Bridge jutting out from the water or Coit Tower thrusting up over the bay. Instead she captured potlucks in the park and quiet BART rides. No-pants parties and the murals of Mission Street swirled fancifully around pirate stores. There were parks and parks and parks. The water in this globe churned, far from pacific, but alive all the same. There were misplaced bison, grazing on grass in the Golden Gate Park. At 4pm every day, the fog rolled in, keeping the globe fresh, sheltered.

And all the people from San Francisco stare back at her from inside the globe. They don't speak. They don't move. They stand as they were then, snapshots of friendships that only live in this one memory.

Thailand. Water from the Chao Phraya fills the dome, so packed with life that you can't see inside. Water monitor lizards hide as ochre-robed monks send turtles into the waves and birds into the air. The globe gives off a commingling of smells, each indistinguishable, one setting off a rush of memories that seems unending. Dried squid and fresh rain. Jasmine, incense and sewage. Mixed. Until you are no longer sure if you want to inhale deep or hold your nose. Bodhi trees and strangler figs burst from the cracks, tiny parodies of each other. Rambutan and mangoes and durian bob to the top of the riverwater, beckoning and repulsive in the same call. Water hyacinth spurt purple blooms and ladyboys call from beneath temple gates. Bangkok sparkles with grime and seems to drown in promise.

Her hair had gotten darker in Thailand. From a fiery red to an anonymous black. She lived inside that globe for so long that she could no longer look through the murky river out into the world. This globe encased the majority of her adult life and was also so, so far away.

The Bahamas. Tiny sea biscuits float in what she imagines is a little piece of the Atlantic. Periwinkle shells scurry through the water and dance around a Junkanoo parade. The drummers are paused mid-beat and ready to strike. Horns are held to lips as if they may scream any minute. Feathers burst out from heads, from hands, from hips. The sand is pink, reflecting millennia of queen conchs sticking their tongues out at the waves. The roosters never know what time it is, but it doesn't seem to matter on the island, as long as you make it to the beach by sunset. The globe harbored its own miniature Sargasso Sea, hiding the mystery of deep-blue depths and the growth of sea turtles and eels. Mermaids' purses and conchs burst with song.

This snow globe is her newest.

It is sudden and confusing when the house begins to shake. At first it's as if someone very large is trampling down the stairs, but in the back of her mind, she knows she is alone. As it gets stronger, she holds the corner wall that hugs the fireplace for balance. The snow globes begin to jostle and bounce, dancing side to side and right off the edge. They throw thirty years of dust into the air like confetti and she briefly wonders what they are celebrating. They jump, glass heads first. Freely into an ocean that begins to form on the floor.

It is alive and choppy.
Gargoyles and Buddhist monks swim like fish amongst each other.
Gothic buildings and Alaskan mountains jut out from the sea like islands.
Friends from Thailand stare in awe at the aurora borealis that plays on the water.
Lizards play Junkanoo while park-bison dance.
The interactions are rich and charged.
Alive and fresh.

Title: 'Miracle Valley'
Author: April Conway
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, p. 67

Miracle Valley
April Conway

Clouds to the north stretch like racing horses' necks.
Two miles south, Mexico is lightning pricked:
hot pins stick the earth. The valley turns

on its back in the flagging heat to the dim bloom of sun
obscured by mountain range and monsoon.
Those clouds that trail the star's rotation

stain the basin, the tent revival church—
the shell of it—cement floor, cracked; roof, splintered;
scaffolding, a ladder to the firmament;

plastics sheets pooled in puddles;
musty piano benches; warped podium;
chipped red folding chairs for pews.

A piece of paradise in a far-flung scrap
of southern Arizona's Wild West—
christened a name of what only god can enact.

Weed-locked, fire-licked and peeling:
dorms where, decades ago Evangelical campers once laid their heads
now doves and migrants rest on their northerly treks.

Across the two-lane highway, the husk of a store-front church
a Black congregation settled in
when their neighbors across the blacktop

denied to share their holy space. The hackles rose
on Valley residents and today, to poke at it,
a hive of yellow jackets, a nest of serpentine creatures.

To interfere with the natural order of Cochise County in 1978
a curse was sent, a Manichaeistic casting of each participant,
though to stack each transaction, the guilt is infinite**:**

slurs, burglaries, bombs, and children's deaths,
the shoot-out volley from which three ghost hearts shuddered.
A shake-down of testimonies followed: deputies, the congregation—

A slow sting that'll never materialize completely
shifts in the dead air of dirt lots, trailers,
cinderblock homes pegged with mulberries and *cholla*.

This evening, from the hill above, it's all a smudge
beneath columns of thunderclouds ushering the last light of the earth
through the blue valley, over our heads.

Title: 'Certain Chimeras'
Author: Jen Hirt
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, pp. 68-72

Certain Chimeras

Jen Hirt

In the glow of the evening news, Paul and I notice a huge fisheye of a sore on our dog's neck. Pausing the TV and setting down our dinner plates, we separate brown fur away from this eruption. We know it wasn't there an hour earlier. Not a tick nor scrape or cut. Just a round of skin, turned inside out. Olly grinds his teeth. It sounds like a rasp edging concrete in his stoic Labrador head. It's the canine way for pain that we've not often heard in his repertoire of small noises.

The vet shaves the left half of Olly's neck to uncover an acreage of rash. It's a common dermatitis. "But where did he get it?" I ask, my eye on the $300 bill for four weeks of antibiotics and painkillers.

The vet shrugs, shaking his head. "Damp fur, dirt, dander. Happens all the time."

I want a better answer, but can tell he is impatient because his waiting room is full of old women, cat carriers and the inevitable universal cure regardless of the complaint.

I drive home along the Susquehanna River. Olly is sleeping on the backseat, unaware that he will not be allowed in the river for most of September, which is when the mid-Atlantic humidity of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania makes this water his favorite place. I don't know for sure, but I convince myself that it was the stagnating humidity in the shallows which blended the bacteria that now live on Olly's neck.

The blue pill bottles roll as I take a turn too fast because I'm distracted by the vet's specific instructions to give Olly the pills with peanut butter, not cheese. We're out of peanut butter.

I stare blame at the Susquehanna, clench my jaw against it, and drum my fingers on the steering wheel as I plan waterless walks.

I know that the real problem is not the humidity, but the sewage.

Combine a downpour and crumbling brick walls of century-old sewers and you get into the river a torrent of brown wastewater, white slips of condoms, maxi pads, toilet paper, and who knows what else. During these times, the city hangs yellow signs warning of *combined sewage overflow*. The mess roils from pipes laid in a time of ignorance, pipes still active in a time of budget shortfalls and displaced blame. Most of what I call "raw sewage" and what the city calls "CSO" grabs currents bound for the Chesapeake Bay and its great mix into the Atlantic Ocean, which doesn't make it OK. Cue the adage *we all live downstream.* Too much shit settles in the mud that squishes around the dog's paws.

When I walk him along the abandoned lots on Third Street instead of the river, he leans starboard toward the alleys that route him to water, a tugboat on a leash. I cringe as the collar rubs the rash.

I buy an expensive harness but he refuses to move forward. Olly stares at me, then steps backward as if to get away from the strap across his chest. I return the harness.

There's no way of explaining anything to him. There's no way to temporarily shut off the long pipe of DNA that links him to Canadian dock dogs from previous centuries, famous for their desire to haul fish nets, or even Olly's more recent kin, long-legged American Labradors bounding through marshland, nose on duck scent.

He's never done either of those things, but it doesn't matter, because water is where he would have to be if either will ever happen.

The vet had said one month, no river. We follow orders for two weeks.

***

Near the end of September, Paul, Olly and I are at the river, not following orders. Our side of the river has a century-old set of steps, which go straight down to the water. The steps parallel the river for miles, echoing part of a nineteenth-century beautification movement. The bottom steps are submerged, which suits Olly and us — feet wet, neck dry. He trots along at the end of his leash, focused on the challenge of splashing the water while balancing on the underwater step. We approach a young man who has on the steps three Steel Reserve beers lined up Last Supper style. Because he's dark-skinned, I'm expecting him to say he likes the color of our dog — an unexpected result of owning a brown dog in this city is that anyone with skin darker than mine inevitably stops to pet Olly. "Mocha puppy," people say, "He's a Hershey's Kiss. So chocolate. He's a gorgeous color, that shade of brown. He's milk chocolate." Passengers at stoplights sometimes lean from their cars to pet Olly. Children hug him after asking if he's a pit bull.

But the shaky guy this evening will not talk about our dog. He turns to us and says, "Would you call the police if I told you I was going to kill my girlfriend tonight?"

The red sky shreds sparrows. Olly wags his big otter tail, either blissfully clueless about danger or Lassie-esque in his calm demeanor. I reel him in from the bottom step, looping the long leather leash, and look around to see who else is listening, but we've witnessed this alone. Paul says something I will never remember, and the guy launches into a tale of betrayal, of walking in on his girlfriend with another man and how he never wanted it to come to this, but "that bitch. *That bitch.*" Fish dart to the depths like spears of sterling.

I tell him he should stay down here tonight, down at the river. It's a public park, no one minds. Walk it off. Think it through. Don't go to the girlfriend's apartment.

He finishes beer #1 with jerky tips of a wrist that will never have enough to punch. He seems impatient with the sun whose setting signals the night. He elaborates his murder plan to us, extends it to the other guy, whom he will kill first. I have no idea what to do but I know how some people will say things they don't mean just to provoke a response, and I leash my words against all danger.

Then, suddenly, the shaky guy is like a river that tilts and flows backwards. "Pray for me tonight," he asks, not just of us, it seems, but of the silver fish, the green islands, the low Appalachian hills across the water, the things that have to listen because they are ancient and have seen it all.

And Paul, an English professor and writer who has floored me for seventeen years with his uncanny ability to say the right thing at the right time, says, "I'll pray for you before tonight. I'll pray for you right now."

The man's body language translates into something other than rage. I see it flow — his back softens under his cheap red sweatshirt. His shoulders fall, like the 80% of him that is water is now water drawn down. The last of the sunset shoots bullets at his beer can and when he sets it down, both he and the can are empty in good ways. He rubs his palms on his jeans. His crow flock of "thank you" fills the gloaming. "Beautiful dog," he adds and Olly thumps his tail at these words he's been waiting for.

We walk away. Our cell phones are on the table at home. Three blocks. We have a total of six college degrees to help us figure out the next step, the right thing to do. We decide against a call.

It seems like the kind of call the police will not rank as urgent, and we know this because we've called during gun shots and dog fights and vandalism; it always takes too long before a squad car rolls around. Why is there always a drunken angry person at the river? Sometimes *we* are the drunken angry people at the river. But neither of us wants to be the white person calling in again the description of an angry black man.

Plus, I'm an atheist who might now pray, or at least tell the story of a prayer.

***

Three days after the incident at the river, a woman I've never spoken to calls on behalf of Wadsworth Pointe Healthcare Facility in Ohio. I'm from that area of Ohio, but I've never heard of the place.

She says, "This is a courtesy call from Wadsworth Pointe. We need you to come get your mother's cat."

Slipping into the autopilot of family drama response, I paw through the kitchen junk drawer for paper and pen. The important thing, with these calls about my mom, is to write everything down and ask questions.

But before I can decide which of my immediate questions takes priority, the courtesy caller adds, "She's being transferred from the hospital in half an hour. We initially told her we could take the cat but we're really not set up for animals. Do you have power of attorney over her?"

Power of attorney. It's one of those dangerous phrases. I will my heart not to stop.

***

My mom has had multiple sclerosis and ill-behaved pets since the 1980s. Mostly immobile since 2009, she resides at an independent living place with the last of her seven cats, an old grey Maine Coon weighing 30 or 40 pounds who can no longer lift his legs over the edge of the litter box. He's the cat in question, but he quickly becomes the last thing I have questions about.

Eventually I glean from this "courtesy" call that my mom has been in the hospital for *three days* with severe edema, which is swelling of her legs due to water retention. The tight skin is blistering more and more by the hour, necessitating intravenous antibiotics and an armada of bandages.

Doctors have determined that she should be admitted to a skilled nursing facility.

Skilled nursing facilities don't allow cats.

And my mom, I learn, is refusing to tell Wadsworth Pointe who her power of attorney is unless her cat is picked up at the independent living place and transported to the skilled nursing facility. However, Wadsworth Pointe needs the info on her power of attorney before they admit her. Why is everything on hold when it can't be on hold?

They have tried calling my brother, who lives 10 minutes down the road from the facility and could handle the whole situation before dinner, but he hasn't answered. So, I'm second on the list of emergency contacts. Even though I'm 5 hours and 300 miles away and incredulous over my mother's petulance, I understand that my statements, not my questions, will solve this problem.

I tell the woman that my aunt in upstate New York has power of attorney, but I have a copy of the paperwork and can fax it to her tomorrow if she can't get a hold of my aunt. I say all of this, calmly. I assure her that my brother will deal with the cat.

And now she has a question for me. "Does your mother have a college degree?"

"*Why* do you need to know *that*?" I hear the tipping point in my tone and smash it against the roof of my mouth.

The woman says she is just filling in some paperwork and that is the next question, and this is just a courtesy call; she just does what they tell her.

I could say "yes" but I go with "sociology, Ohio State University" because it feels good to know a precise fact in this moment of grand uncertainty.

"Thank you. We just needed to know that."

I call my brother. He has the cat. He's had the cat for a few days, in fact, and has changed its name from Jodie to Fat Cat and has posted funny photos of it online. He says he knew Mom was in the hospital. He says he's sorry he didn't tell me, but he didn't want to bother me. Neither of us can figure out why Wadsworth Pointe didn't know he had the cat. He missed their earlier calls because he was mowing the lawn. He's the kind of guy who shrugs things off and doesn't ponder the peculiarities of communication, the missed calls, the signs of danger. I guess I have those genes.

I thank him profusely because now I don't have to worry about any of this. I hang up and try to reset myself into the evening routine. Let the dog out, check the mail, heat leftovers, change clothes. I roll two of the horse-pill-sized antibiotics in peanut butter for Olly, who looks forward to his medication. I can't help but notice he is more cooperative and logical than some humans.

I mix a vodka tonic. Next I call Mom, who I already know will not answer. Her therapist once diagnosed her with phone phobia. Mom's rationale is that she just plans on calling everyone back later. But "later" is a mirage in the land of chronic illness. I know she doesn't want to talk to most people, and I don't think I would either, in her circumstance. This call I make because there are many motions we're all just going through, saying the things we're supposed to say. I realize I'm making a courtesy call. I realize I'm a city maintenance worker putting up the obligatory sign about potential danger instead of stopping the danger. I mix a second vodka tonic, a courtesy to myself if I want to sleep tonight.

When she doesn't answer, something washes over me; relief (I suppose), but also annoyance, frustration, and wonder at how badly we communicate; how circuits cross and short out; how our big brains jump to wild conclusions or flood the body with speculation, assumption, and anxiety, all flowing down to us from the tributaries of a family that we alternately know very well and not at all.

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Researchers have recently discovered a new river between a mother's brain and her unborn child. What they've found is that the mother's brain can harbor the cells of her children — some fetal cells traverse the Rubicon of the placenta, bound upriver for the ultimate headwaters where the protective blood-brain barrier sometimes lets down its defenses during pregnancy. Researchers are certain that the cells from a male fetus can make their way to the mother's brain because they've found evidence of the Y chromosome. And they extrapolate, then, that cells from a female fetus would do the same, but with the shared X they are harder to identify.

What do those child cells do in the mother's brain? No one knows yet, but they've given it a name — microchimerism. Since 1907, biologists have co-opted *chimera* to refer to any organism that has something else's genetic material. I picture the mythical chimera, as if in the wilds of the infant aorta, the literal heartlands, the fetal cells gain lion heads and goat torsos and serpent tails, then roar tiny roars while snaking into the cortex.

I read one article that speculates it's for the good, for tissue repair; Disney lions, dancing their way to fix gray matter with ribbons and bows. The article says that women with sons are less likely to have Alzheimer's.

But I read another study that gives me a mighty pause, for it claims the opposite, that the child cells are dangerous. They are rogue lions. When they cross currents with toxins or a virus, they might start a brawl by triggering autoimmune disorders in the mother. Multiple sclerosis is top of the list.

All the science articles emphasize how the male fetal cells seem to be the obvious chimeras, but mythology tells me the chimera was always female. I'm 38, twelve years past Mom's age that marked the onset of symptoms, and I know what to watch for. But what does it matter? There is no prevention, except, perhaps, not having children. No cure. No blue bottles of antibiotics, no words for the painful stranger who sits by the river.

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No sooner does Olly's neck heal over then another sore fissures open just behind his right shoulder. Trimming the fur, I press a paper towel to the seepage, and Paul gives him homemade organic peanut butter with a high-powered antibiotic in the middle. We were supposed to give the entire bottle with the first sore, but we saved some instead, thinking of avoiding another expensive vet visit. We know we've saved money yet everything feels like a bad decision.

But the skin scabs over within hours and the fur grows back fast into a dark chocolate leopard spot, follicles somehow changed by the bacteria. Then one day I notice it's all the same color again and when I ruffle his coat backwards I can't even see where the sore was.

As for the man at the river, I read the news carefully for a few weeks, looking for domestic violence reports. Nothing. I never see him again, although I don't really remember his face, it's just his red sweater that remains vivid, a laceration on my memory. I convince myself that I do not think he harmed anyone. And if thinking counts as prayer, then I've since said entire liturgies not for him but for his girlfriend.

My mom returns my call by way of a blank picture mail with a voice memo attached because she doesn't understand her cell phone. Why she doesn't use a landline, I'll never know. In the message I recognize the loud TV, the background noise of every call we've ever shared. Her voice sounds drugged and exhausted. She says the skilled nursing facility is OK. She misses her cat, but already there is a salve for that wound — the place has a permanent therapy dog, a three-legged black Labrador knows how to wait at the elevator to visit different floors.

I replay the message a few times and think about how sores split my dog's skin and my mom's skin within weeks of each other; there's no easy decision about what to do with either. I wonder about how I don't know if my fetal cells created multiple sclerosis in my mother, or if her half of my DNA will trigger multiple sclerosis in me. I wish I could see the microchimeras. I wish I could have a slice of brain tissue on a slide, a microscope on the kitchen table, eye to lens, the only decision one of focus.

I save the message like it has floated to me in a bottle, a gift from upriver. I save it as if I know exactly what it is and will study it later, for clues, for certainty, for chimeras.

Title: 'The Yellow House'
Author: Rachel Marsh
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, pp. 73-76

The Yellow House

Rachel Marsh

"I am an architectural stalker, but eventually the architecture began stalking me."—Rosemary Pentecost, April 13, 1974

Being awarded a gift for languages was a blessing, especially as I did not have a gift for much else.

I cannot draw.

I cannot dance.

I cannot sing.

I cannot write stories.

Math and science are tiresome.

I am a natural born linguist, absorbing words and syntax, grammar and nuances like a sponge. I am fluent in seventeen languages. Perhaps it was my upbringing: a Polish mother, an Italian grandmother, an English grandfather. I grew up in Switzerland studying German, French, Italian and Rumantsch in school. I had no choice but to be poly-linguistic.

Taking in languages like a sweet drink, I was greedy for more, hiding and lurking in corners listening to others. Stealing a sip of a word, or a gulp of a phrase. Our Indian gardener cultivated spicy flavours of Urdu, and our chef from Burgundy fed me a French dialect which I rolled around on my tongue. Icelandic sagas stuffed in the back of grandmother's library provided a stew, peppered with Norse, Danish and Norwegian that kept my mind warm during winter nights. Evening galas, I was to be tucked-in, asleep in the nursery; but, instead I would slip down stairs hiding beneath tables eavesdropping, silently repeating the words of exiled Russian aristocracy.

My paternal grandfather was a big man, with strong hands and a fixed stance. He rarely spoke, but I wanted to hear what he thought, and knew if I listened hard enough I would be able to taste his mind, know his thoughts and see what he saw.

If I could drink the language of so many, why couldn't I sip from him?

I stalked; I listened; I prayed. I needed to hear what he saw. His stoic gestures were light and minimal – straight back and strong legs. Where he went I followed, silently behind him, listening and waiting. He did not see me. I hid in corners, in stables, cupboards, butler's pantries, attics and in hallways. He did not grunt or use his eyes; he kept them dry as stone and dilated only enough to let in light. George Winthrop Pentecost IV passed not a word to me in the years we were acquainted. But because of my attempt to uncover him, I became familiar with the family home and its secrets.

The less my grandfather said, the more I crept and followed and hid. Hoping to hear. But he said nothing, and at times my attention would wander. I noticed the great mouldings on the ceiling. With a wave of the hand I would become distracted, and the exact cut of the wainscoting became intriguing. His lips pursed tight, I looked elsewhere for attention and found above me a green a shutter or a **fleur-de-lis** in plaster. A checked pattern in a carpet hit a right angle beneath my feet, as I stole words from the help and tried to place them in the pocket of my grandfather. The angle of a wall stood above me as I translated the maids' conversations and hoped to find meaning in my grandfather's deaf ear. Before long the words flew in and out, the room and buildings surrounded me, all swirling about as sounds and sight, rhythm and design fused.

My grandfather's death was quick and silent. Having left for his afternoon constitutional, he never returned. I did not follow him then; instead I passed the day in the study knocking on the wall, listening for hollow spots dreaming of secret passages. He was found that evening, he was blue faced and his heart stopped. His epitaph was a name and dates. That was all I ever knew of my grandfather.

From his funeral I turned to a world that was hard-edged hard angled, well planned and strong. A world influenced by the masses, built with hands and planned with intensity. A world that could be read and seen and understood and interpreted. A world that did not die suddenly without explanation. A world of architecture.

At late adolescence my father's political beliefs became known. Switzerland, a place that was to be our family's haven, a land of impartiality, sent us away. The rest of my childhood was spent fleeing from country to country until it became my life, well into adulthood. A life of travel without stop, without permanent walls or language.

I wanted stability. I wanted walls.

The more I moved, the more I craved a box around about my body and head. I became a stalker. Each place I landed, I found a building, and that building would be my conquest. Taking a fancy to her, I would repeatedly pass by her front door or peek in her windows. I walked silently across balconies to look at the fixtures in an elderly couple's bathroom. I have stood in the middle of a busy road to get the view of a New York skyscraper at sundown. Daydreaming about a ballroom's interior caused momentary lapses in judgement and lost stops on public transportation. I would enquire about the building's past, mentally planting myself on ancient

settees, in downy beads, and next to Tiffany lamps on mahogany desks in filled libraries. In each city, countryside and hamlet I would fantasize about a chosen building, hoping that one day I would be a fixture in residence.

Perhaps the old church in Newhaven would become my home as I took vows?

Would I become a teacher and reside at that boarding school for the deaf in Denver?

What about the flat with the six gargoyles near Gare de Nord?

Would I someday get inside to find if the furnishings are pealing gothic or an interior clash of modern?

How could I fit into the box and make the place mine?

Obsessed I would continue on until I left the area. Dropping my fascination and finding another at the next port of call.

I was to give up, exhausted and weary—obsessions can grow tiresome and methodical. I was to give up… but then she found me. Out of the corner of my eye, over the back of my right shoulder, I first saw her. We both stood still, afraid to be the first to turn. I flitted my gaze. Just a glimpse. She was gone.

Much like the century in which I was living, I was young but at the nesting stage of life. Young enough to have many years ahead of me, but old enough to feel the blood in my veins slow on a cold morning. I made a tidy sum of money translating languages. My linguistic expertise sought after, a trifle to tickle a diminishing ego. Room and board always included. Travel expenses paid. No friends or family left to lavish. No children to spoil. My savings flourished. I wanted to stop the wandering. Return to a place called home that I had never known. Instead of allowing me to settle, she gave me a peak of destiny. Many would die to know their own fate, despite creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. My future was shown to me, free of charge, and that future was a yellow house with white trim, rectangled and dormered.

The house followed me. Using my own techniques. Showing her face briefly but never getting close enough to touch me. Keeping her distance in the shadows.

Near the University of Al Karaouine she showed her façade, daring me to marvel at her Edwardian severity in a world of squiggles and Eastern prayers. I spotted a yellow corner down an alley. I twisted and turned and she was gone. At the University I asked for a map. The house was not there.

In London the air raids sounded. We filled into our tin igloos. Over the garden hedge a light shined in the blackout. An attic of the yellow house was calling me to her. She was afraid in the night. A commander pulled me into the shelter, when I came out the yellow house was gone beneath a pile of rubble called the blitzkrieg.

In Tokyo walking with a M.A.S.H. officer he talked of palaces regained after the war. Of monuments seized for the personal glory of the visiting occupants on the way to the Battle of Inchon. He showed me a picture of his company and their accommodation. The yellow house laughed out at me from the photo, daring me to breech propriety and ask for the address.

In Leningrad I sought refuge from the cold by stepping into the warmth of the Hermitage, and there she was smiling down from an oil painting. The Mother and the Cherub gazing outward from a garden, in the style of the Masters, design, composition, texture and meaning all present, along with the yellow house hiding behind an olive tree in the distance.

In West Berlin I saw her just beyond grasp on the other side of the wall. In a forbidden zone. In a place I would not be allowed to go. In Mississippi she sat on a shore as I watched from a far. Waves and wind in the

name of Betsy beat her down and took her out to the Gulf. In a green jeep on the dark continent passing through hordes of young boys holding guns longer than their own supple legs, she screamed for help riddled with bullet holes and broken glass and splintered wood.

My yellow love has become as obsessed as I. Sometimes she was too afraid to approach and other times we are kept apart by forces greater than ourselves. She had approached and recoiled, and I turned and she was gone.

My hairs are tattered and her curtains are grey. I could no longer travel, and deciphering youthful slang had begun to tax my brain. My head was full of words and they began to slip away. It was time to finish. When I fell, they called the doctor and the ambulance. They took me away. The sister held my wrist and measured the beats by her watch. As the sheet was lifted over my eyes I saw her smile. She was yellow on the inside as well. She had recovered. She was immortal, and she was waiting for me. Her fraying edges rejuvenated with gloss and her floors polished. She holds me. My nest is fixed around me, yellow, bright and clean; singing a song in a language I always knew but could not hear.

Title: 'Looking Inward'
Review of: *Firmly I Believe and Truly: The Spiritual Tradition of Catholic England*, ed. by John Saward, John Morrill and Michael Tomko (Oxford University Press, 2013). ISBN 978-0199677948 (pbk) £25.00
Author: Jamie Callison
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, pp. 77-78

Looking Inward

Jamie Callison

Firmly I Believe and Truly: The Spiritual Tradition of Catholic England, ed. by John Saward, John Morrill and Michael Tomko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). ISBN 978-0199677948 (pbk), £25.00

A number of the authors featured in this anthology of writings by English Catholics—Eric Gill, Evelyn Waugh or Francis Thompson—would prove hard work for any budding hagiographer. Incest, class snobbery and opium addiction are not standard fare in the genre. Yet the editors of this collection make repeated references to Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, citing with approval Butler's insistence that:

> The more deeply a person is immersed in tumultuous care so much the greater ought to be his solicitude [...] to plunge his heart, by secret prayer, in the ocean of divine immensity, and by pious reading to afford his soul some spiritual reflection.[242]

The choice of an academic publisher for this anthology suggests a desire to serve as a scholarly introduction to writings situated within a particular religious setting for the general educated reader. At the same time, the editors remain clear about their intentions to offer up 'devotional reading' (xxiv) by English Catholics for English Catholics.

Like Butler's *Lives of Saints*, the editors take a single-author approach, selecting a number of texts from each individual writer. These selections, which range in length from the 15 pages allotted to Newman to paragraph-length extracts from less illustrious figures such as Canon Frederic Oakley, are organised in three chronological sections: 1483-1688, 1688-1850, and 1850-1999. These reflect common divisions in the organisation of English Catholic history. The first incorporates the fierce controversies occasioned by the schism of the Church of England and Rome and the resulting spates of martyrdom; the second marks accommodation to a period of comparable quiet without active persecution, yet lacking the hope of restitution of the Catholic Church in England; and the third flows from the re-establishment of a hierarchical presence of the Roman Catholic Church in England.

The anthology brings together texts from English Catholic writers in all these periods, many of whom have passed out of both print and cultural memory. The editors are thus to be applauded for recovering texts such as the account of the death of Dame Laurentia MacLachlan OSB, Abbess of Stanbrook Abbey, which is marked by her plainspoken but assured faith, saying to one nun who had yet to make her final vows: 'I am sorry that I shall not be alive for your profession, but, Child, *I shall be there*' (Dame Laurentia's Final Days, 549). Dame Laurentia immediately precedes selections from the poet Lionel Johnson, whose Catholicism is more commonly presented as the fruits of literary decadence. As such, readings of the lines 'Sorrow is sweet with grace/ Here, and here sin hath cease' (Ash Wednesday, 551) might be seduced by the alliteration of 'Sorrow', 'Sweet' and 'Sin' into focusing on issues of paradox, as if Johnson's Catholicism were primarily an aesthetic strategy. With the preceding text from the anthology ringing in our ears, we are more inclined to hear the emphasis falling on 'Here' and on the genuine peace that the speaker finds in the Church. This is a peace that enabled Dame Laurentia to confront her

[242] *Firmly I Believe and Truly: The Spiritual Tradition of Catholic England*, ed. by John Saward, John Morrill and Michael Tomko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.xxiv. All other references are to this edition and are given in the body of the text.

own demise with her matter-of-fact 'I shall not be alive'. As such, the anthology enables us to recover a Catholic worldview that has often been neglected in academic literary studies.

The chronological, author-based approach does, however, create problems. The editors include in the selections for seven authors—Bonner, Harpsfield, Huggarde, Campion, Jenks, Manning and MacNabb—extracts labelled 'Transubstantiation', 'The Real Presence' or 'The Sacrament of the Altar'. The doctrine of transubstantiation has a fraught history; it became a flashpoint for the Reformation and, during the resultant controversies, acquired something of its rigid dogmatic form. Given this, it is understandable why English Catholics wrote on the topic.

It is more difficult to understand the differences between the viewpoints on the sacrament in this anthology. While Cardinal Manning focuses on the words of consecration, which 'elevate the bread and wine from the natural to the supernatural order' (Transubstantiation, 478), Vincent McNabb OP insists that, in the real presence 'There is someone there […] A Friend' (The Real Presence, 553). There is a marked difference in tone and register between Manning's dry, textbook analysis of transubstantiation and McNabb's affective rendering. Are the editors suggesting that there is a historical shift in attitudes towards the Eucharist between Manning (1808-1892) and McNabb (1868-1943)? Can it be explained away by a difference in genres or temperament? If the former, the editors would have been better served by a thematic approach that could have provided contextual detail to help interpretation. If the latter, it is unclear why the Manning text was included. Its description is reminiscent of many other texts, both English and continental, and while lacking the energy of Counter Reformation polemic on the issue, replicates the intellectual content.

Repeated expositions of dogmatic or sacramental issues are found throughout this collection (look in the Index under the 'Catholic Church' or the 'Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation' for further examples). The effect is to present an understanding of English Catholicism that is turned in upon the Church. Discussions of dogma—regardless of particular interest or novelty—mark one's allegiances with English Catholicism and also serve as suitable subjects for 'devotional reading'. In this vein, the editors include a letter from Tolkien in which he states '*The Lord of the Rings* is, of course, a fundamentally Catholic work […] the religious element is absorbed in the story and the symbolism' (*The Lord of the Rings,* 649) rather than looking for an example of this absorption in the story or the symbol. The pledge of allegiance is sufficient and the documentation of how a Catholic mind-set might influence imaginative work is not deemed suitable 'devotional reading'.

Richard P. McBrien in his book *Catholicism* notes that combinations of communion, mediation and the sacramental are the distinguishing features of Catholic Christianity.[243] The editors of *Firmly I Believe and Truly* do an excellent job at restoring a historical sense of the English Catholic communion and, through their documentation of English Catholic writing on issues affecting the Church, demonstrate the importance of the mediation of God in the world. The sacramental, however, is interpreted narrowly as the sacraments. There is little sense of how God is or might be seen to be operative in the world outside the Church; a theme pursued by Muriel Spark, another Catholic writer who, while Scottish, made significant contributions to Catholicism in England and who is notably absent from this collection. The omission of writing on the aesthetic features of Catholicism, either as a lure to converts or an important part of religious practice, presents a significant distortion of English Catholicism.

On the rare, and yet tantalising, occasions in which God's presence in the world at large intrudes on this collection—for instance when Hopkins declares 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God' (God's Grandeur, 518)—we get a sudden flash of a completely different reference point for the documentation of an English Catholic cultural landscape.

[243] Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism: New Edition* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), pp.9-14.

Title: 'We are the Mods'
Review of: MSA 15: 'Everydayness and the Event' at University of Sussex (29 August – 1 September 2013)
Author: Sarah Chadfield
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, pp. 79-80

'We are the Mods'

Sarah Chadfield

MSA 15: 'Everydayness and the Event' at University of Sussex (29 August – 1 September 2013)

> Modernism radically breaks from the ordinary and the received, staking its claims on making it new. But how might modernism also engage with the ordinary, the quotidian, the mundane or the banal? What kinds of events are precipitated by this conjunction?[244]

The Modernist Studies Association's 15th annual conference, 'Everydayness and the Event', was recently held at the University of Sussex. In the UK for the first time in a decade (the last UK location, in 2003, was the University of Birmingham), it brought modernist scholars from all over the world to Brighton for four stimulating days of panels, seminars, and roundtable discussions.

One of the focuses of the conference, neatly complementing ideas of the everyday and the event, was the social research organization Mass Observation (M-O), which has its archives at the University of Sussex. Founded in 1937 by anthropologist Tom Harrison, poet Charles Madge, and filmmaker Humphrey Jennings, M-O aimed to create an 'anthropology of ourselves'. Key speakers on M-O included David Bradshaw, Andrzej Gasiorek, Nick Hubble, Deborah Rae Cohen, Michael McCluskey, and Laura Marcus. Marcus' paper, 'The "film-mindedness" of Mass-Observation' was particularly memorable, noting the ways in which the Mass Observation research conducted on May 12th 1937 could be considered filmic with trained observers, supposedly like objective film cameras, recording the events in front of them with no biased or personal interest.

Griselda Pollock's opening plenary was a fascinating example of the how the conference's theme could be applied to a specific artist. Pollock's paper, 'An Event between History and the Everyday: Encountering the Secret of Charlotte Salomon's *Life? or Theatre?*', examined Salomon's only major work, a book of nearly 800 paintings (most of which incorporated text—either in the picture itself or on an overlay—to create a graphic novel of sorts). The work was created in the South of France, after Salomon fled Nazi Germany in January 1939. She was killed in Auschwitz in October 1943, shortly after the completion of *Life? or Theatre?*, which is often read in relation to the Holocaust (*the* event in history).

However, Pollock chose to focus on the event of death in Salomon's life. Salomon's mother, aunt, and grandmother committed suicide, and *Life? or Theatre?* documents these tragedies, carefully echoing and replaying the events as they structure and shape the narrator's everyday experiences. Pollock discussed the previously censored final pages, in which the narrator (whom many of the critics read as synonymous with Salomon herself—although Pollock was careful not to collapse this distinction) claims to have poisoned her grandfather. Based on this recent discovery, Pollock's rereading of the text identifies the trauma at the heart of *Life? or Theatre?* as the secret of a grandfather's sexual abuse of his family. Pollock presented a thoroughly engaging study of the work and received a well-deserved standing ovation.

The plenary round table (with Gillian Beer, Rachel Bowlby, Ben Highmore, Esther Leslie, Gabriel Josipovici, and Michael Sheringham) threw up many interesting questions about the nature of the everyday. Rachel Bowlby discussed the Memoto, a camera with no off-button that is worn clipped onto the front of a shirt and which takes

[244] Conference website < http://msa.press.jhu.edu/conferences/msa15/ > [accessed 6 September 2013] (para 1 of 3)

pictures at 30-second intervals throughout the day and night. Through a discussion of the Memoto, Bowlby considered the problem of bestowing value on every moment thereby fetishizing the everyday as the eternal. She also emphasized the potential boredom of the everyday and questioned the conceptual ambiguity of ordinary life and the moment.

This was a problem that the keynote by Terry Eagleton seemed to encounter. His paper, 'The Event, Everydayness, and Modernism', presented a grand trajectory of western philosophy criticizing modern thought's resistance to the everyday and the idea that for the everyday to assume significance it must be reshaped or redeemed. For Eagleton, Walter Benjamin represented a break from this tradition: Instead of attempting to rework the everyday, he saw it as a source of messianic potential. In the question and answer session, the recurring problem of the everyday as having historical, political, and class implications arose. As Gillian Beer repeatedly emphasized in the plenary round table, the everyday is bounded: temporal and limited. A number of questions invited Eagleton to expand on notions of the everyday beyond the canon of white male philosophers. In response to a question about feminism and the importance of the everyday to female experience, Eagleton answered with an examination of Virginia Woolf that seemed to shift the emphasis from gender to class. The overall theme of the conference was challenging. When located specifically, the 'everyday' and the 'event' provided a helpful framework; when dealt with in the abstract, the conceptual difficulties surrounding the terms were apparent—just whose everyday are we talking about?

At the end of the four days, the event was over and academics began making their way back to their different institutions. In a nod to the famous 1960s youth-culture clashes, the conference tote bags we carried away proudly reminded us: 'We are the Mods'.

Title: 'The Olympic Legacy'
Review of: *The UK Gold,* directed by Mark Donne, UK, 2013
Author: Elliott Morsia
Source: *Exegesis* (2013) 2, pp. 81-82

The Olympic Legacy

Elliott Morsia

The UK Gold, directed by Mark Donne, UK, 2013

During a short introductory speech given prior to the East End Film Festival's opening-night screening of *The UK Gold*, director Mark Donne discussed the location of the Troxy in Limehouse, which hosted the event. He touched upon the harsh socioeconomic realities of Limehouse and its London borough, Tower Hamlets, which is representative of the east end in continuing to register among the very poorest boroughs in London.[245] Positioning his film in relation to the spotlight placed upon Stratford and the east end by the recent 'summer of glory', the London 2012 Olympic Games, Donne challenged his audience to question the legacy of recession-hit Britain and to ask, what does it really *mean* to back Britain and the UK gold? The Troxy is stationed on Commercial Road, and Donne highlighted the significance of this historic route connecting the former banking centre of London to the west, and the East and West India Trading Docks to the east; high symbols of imperial Britain—the eerie relevance of which was later apparent.

Donne's stark yet electric documentary opens with Hackney vicar Reverend William Taylor and his quest for political transparency in the City of London. Standing on the issue of tax avoidance, he is running for election into one of the twenty-five wards which together comprise the City of London Corporation. We begin following the Reverend's journeys on the 149 bus, from his church door in Hackney to the doorsteps of the Bank of England. Narrated by *The Wire*'s Dominic West and with music by Radiohead's Thom Yorke (among others), the film soon unravels into deeper questions about the full extent of the UK's financial chicanery.

Developing through a spliced series of interviews with esteemed politicians, hedge fund managers, investigative journalists (as well as Channel 4 News presenter John Snow and UN adviser on economics, Professor Jeffrey Sachs) the film gradually exposes a vast network of global tax avoidance, as well as revealing the fundamental role played by the City of London in this process. By retaining sovereignty over a number of overseas states, pillaged during the UK's colonial past—like the Cayman Islands, whose Ugland House houses 19,000 corporate entities—the UK has, through its mastery of the tax haven, gone on to facilitate the world's new (corporate) economic colonisers. Even more shocking, perhaps, is the documentary's tax-related dénouement, which details how just as established UK tax havens are 'politely asked to show the world some leg on transparency' (following the global financial crisis of the past decade), 'City UK', with its unparalleled expertise in the ways of the offshore world, is busily setting up a new 'global financial centre' in Nairobi, Kenya.[246] The film closes on a personal note, as the Reverend William Taylor discovers his run for election into the City of London Corporation has ended unsuccessfully; defeated by an appointee business executive. In the final shot, the Reverend slowly descends into Bank station.

A distinction can be made between, on the one hand, the genre of the exposé, and on the other, the ethical values which are at stake in the matter of tax avoidance (and the increasingly corporate nature of the UK's landscape). Had the filmmaker shied away from the integral ethical issues, the important work undertaken by *The UK Gold*

[245]London's Poverty Profile < www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk > [accessed 20 July 2013]
[246]Mark Donne, 'Tax havens are here to stay, thanks to "City UK"', *The Guardian*, 25 June 2013. <www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jun/25/tax-havens-here-to-stay-city-uk> [accessed 20 July 2013] (para. 4 of 13)

would slide into the conspiratorial sensationalism that undercuts much journalist work. In this regard though, *The UK Gold* is a resolute example of both courageous and visionary filmmaking. Stuffy interviews with political economists are juxtaposed with still long-shots of London, in which the city pulses with golden lights. And though a central thread in the narrative exposes a scandalous global network of tax avoidance, another follows the journey of a local vicar, who himself notes: 'I feel I'm out of my depth here. We're all out of our depth. And this is deep. We're in a deep bit of lagoon here, and we need to be careful as we cross it'.

Beneath the fleeting shock value which surrounds and attracts the castigation of figureheads for governmental corporate machines (see the status of George Osborne in the UK press), there are solid and disturbingly vast networks of digitised data and correspondingly vast computerised, bureaucratic machines assimilating information, all of which encompass national tax operations. What is at stake here hangs on whether we are listening to an individual voice whose messages we can therefore locate. It is easy to forget that a corporation is not an individual: it is a revenue machine; particularly when it speaks an unerringly familiar language. In his recent novel, *The Pale King,* which considers tax in the U.S.A, David Foster Wallace notes that 'corporations are getting better and better at seducing us into thinking the way they think—of profits as the *telos* and responsibility as something to be enshrined in symbol and evaded in reality.'[247]

An injunction which was central to the iconography of the London 2012 Olympic Games was to: 'inspire a generation'. The truly sweeping development in situ to the Olympic site in Stratford signals the most significant change to the landscape in the east end of London for many a generation. This includes the building of Stratford City Bus Station, Stratford International Train Station, a high-rise housing development project and, most strikingly, the Westfield shopping centre, a 1.9 million square foot retail and leisure destination, the billboards besides which announce: 'gateway to London's Olympic Park / over 300 dynamic brands / welcome to the next generation'.

If we turn to the history of the Troxy itself we can also detect an ominous circularity to such developments:

> Troxy originally opened as a grand cinema in 1933 and was designed to seat an audience of 3520 people. Erected on the site of an old brewery, it cost £250,000 to build.
>
> The cinema had luxurious seating areas and mirror-lined restaurants and all the staff wore evening dress. It seemed like Hollywood had come to Commercial Road in all its glory.[248]

The UK Gold is an independently micro-budgeted film that questions the UK's disorientating culture of tax (or accountability) avoidance. It currently has no UK distributors. As was outlined by Festival Director Alison Poltock, the East End Film Festival has no corporate sponsors. It too is an independent celebration, supported by its local borough, Tower Hamlets.

[247]David Foster Wallace, *The Pale King* (Penguin Books: London, 2012), p.132-133.
[248]'Home to Astonishing Events',<http://www.troxy.co.uk/troxy_history/> [accessed 20 July 2013] (para. 1-2 of 8)

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Arts Emergency at the Hackney Empire
(20 June 2013)
Essi Viitanen

Rarely have I seen a more homogenous group of theatre-goers. The line at the door bears a striking resemblance to the checkout at Urban Outfitters and the wealth of neon-coloured sneakers is staggering. We're in Hackney all right.

The flyer promises an impressive lineup of well-known comic talent and live art, including Stephen K Amos, Isy Suttie, Mark Watson, Kate Tempest and 'guest star' Jimmy Carr. All in the name of charity, of course—how else would you get this ensemble for a £20 ticket (£10 for students)? The event is organised by the Arts Emergency charity, founded by Josie Long and Neil Griffiths, which aims to keep the study of arts and humanities at degree level accessible to everyone regardless of their background. With funding cuts to arts programmes and the continuing escalation of tuition fees, they need all the support they can get.

The evening sets off with Josie Long introducing the charity, and her enthusiasm and ease set an upbeat tone for the evening. Long gives a call to arms on behalf of arts and humanities education, and delivers some Jay-Z with a 1930s film noir spin, which works surprisingly well. And we're off. First up is Mark Watson's breakneck speed set on his new-found sobriety, funny in a frantic breathless way, which makes you doubt the future of his endeavour. Stephen K Amos tells warm and amusing stories about his horse-faced sister and encounters with racism growing up in 1970s London. Robin Ince does an inspiring set about curiosity and the wonders of a scientific mind by recalling his young child's explorations of the world. This year's Ted Hughes Award winner, Kate Tempest, breaks up the comedy bill with a spoken-word recital. Her impassioned poems on studying, love, and keeping true to oneself fit well with the theme of the evening and hit home with the crowd. Despite my slight cringing in the presence of such grand emotion, Tempest gets the biggest applause so far.

More to my liking is the next act, Greg Jenner from *Horrible Histories*, who delivers a stimulating and worthy argument for the importance of studying history. His set is one of the few that directly addresses the importance of arts and humanities education. Using the example of historical fluctuations in same-sex partnership laws, he demonstrated how historical awareness can alter the understanding of contemporary society, and simultaneously provided a convincing case for supporting the Arts Emergency. Jenner is followed by a curious musical piece by Brigitte Aphrodite, accompanied by some of her mentees. She blends song, spoken word, and a bucket of glitter with impressive vigour, the circus-like performance taking over the musical merits. Aphrodite literally exudes glitter with every movement, and her backup vocalists sway in the corner wearing tinfoil hats. Literally. It is confusing. Just when I start to think that if this is the future of arts and humanities, I would rather keep my donation, Aphrodite's protégée Shmoovy takes the stage to surpass her teacher, singing and rapping with skill and confidence.

After the interval, the British Humanist Association Choir sing an eerie rendition of Lou Reed's 'A Perfect Day'. Perhaps it is the *Trainspotting* effect, but the words 'You're going to reap what you sow' take on a deeply depressing quality when sung at an event that is highlighting the inequality of British higher education. Luckily they are followed by Isy Suttie (aka 'Dobbie from *Peep Show*'), whose songs on driving instructors and learning Welsh verbs offer some charming and genuinely funny comic relief. One would think that a book reading in the latter half of a music and comedy night would be a recipe for disaster, but Joe Dunthorne's reading from his book *Submarine* gives a touching, captivating, and at times slightly disturbing look into the psyche of his young

protagonist. In the second part, compere Josie Long's intermissions take a more overtly political tone; and with some 'screw-the-pricks-in-government' rhetoric she revs up the crowd before introducing the star of the evening, Jimmy Carr. He comes on stage and begins to rattle through a selection of largely unrelated one-liners. The wordplay is at times witty, but disappointingly turns out to mostly be a slog of tedious digs. Choking women to death with his penis, burying his mother in a ditch; it does not take long for the crowd to turn on him. Heckles begin to be thrown as Carr is branded a tax-dodging misogynist who, on top of this is not 'one of us'. It remains a mystery which 'us' this refers to; bold righteous hecklers, Hackney hipsters, or underprivileged youths. Safe to say Carr is none of the above, and he wisely backs off to praise the efforts of Arts Emergency.

Carr's contribution is, however, an ill-fitting end to an evening which had until then been characterised by warmth and playfulness, much of which was owing to Long's sincerity and exuberance, but at least all parties seemed in agreement of the importance of the work Arts Emergency is doing.