

# QUESTION

ESSAYS & ART FROM THE HUMANITIES



*Exchange*  
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SEPTEMBER 2020

# QUESTION

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### Contribute to *Question* Issue #6

The theme of the sixth issue of *Question* will be chosen by members of the SWW DTP in October 2020. If you are interested in submitting an academic article or creative piece, please keep an eye on the 'Call for Papers' section of our website [questionjournal.com](http://questionjournal.com) and on our Twitter

and Facebook pages. We also welcome shorter pieces of work for the *Question* blog.

The editors actively encourage dialogue between issues of *Question*. If you would like to respond to any of the content you see here, please contact [questionsubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:questionsubmissions@gmail.com) with the heading 'Right to Reply'.

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**Content Warning:** Please be advised that pages 12–13, 15 and 50–51 contain references to incidents of sexual violence and allegations of sexual assault.

# Exchange

SEPTEMBER 2020

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When 'Exchange' was first chosen as the theme for Issue 5, we could never have predicted how relevant it would become. At the time, we envisaged discussions about cross-cultural art movements, transnational currents of commercial exploitation and globalised ideological debate. Little did we know that within a few short months the ways by which we usually experienced exchange would have radically altered and we would suddenly find ourselves adapting to a new, uncertain normality.

Despite the challenges faced this year, we have seen many positives in the responses of researchers. Home-working has led to an enhanced respect for working parents and carers. Educators have explored new ideas about the future of communicating knowledge. Online platforms have facilitated interactions between scholars who might once have only met if chance had brought them to the same conference. Through emotional, intellectual and technological exchange, researchers have adapted to and even flourished in this unprecedented situation.

Exchange thus continues to play a major – if evolving – role in our lives. As such, this issue showcases how arts and humanities researchers continue to engage with the concept of exchange. For some, exchange is a highly politicized issue. Joe Healy explores the concept of ideological exchange in the complex and ongoing negotiations between Spanish and Catalan political parties. Meanwhile, Sebastian Bustamante-Brauning discusses how Chilean protest artists have used 'visible exchanges' to mobilise anger towards state policies that stoke social inequality, police brutality and sexual violence.

The transition of ideas into art is a theme that runs throughout this issue. Thomas Metcalf charts the evolution of musical compositions that graphically represent ideas and places on the stave, ranging from star constellations to the Irish border. In his study of film, Peter Lederer takes us on a journey through the Jewish-Gentile romcom genre, exploring how directors from the 1960s to the present have taken a humorous approach to the strains of intercultural exchange.

Exchange likewise makes its mark on the field of literature. For Meg Dyson, this takes the form of an exchange of inspirations, as explored in her essay on how the poet Michael Longley draws upon Homer for his own meditations on the deaths of his parents. Furthermore, Emma Venter considers Shakespeare's use of exchange as a theme in his classical works *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*, centring on the language of economic exchange in each play.

Lastly, our writers have addressed the concept of balance within exchanges, thereby questioning the nature of 'Exchange' itself. Author

Leonie Gschwendtberger's creative piece *Bhumi's Poem* explores international cultural programmes and asks whether the transcultural dialogues they generate are truly those of equal partners. Meanwhile, historian Alex White turns to the decolonisation of Africa to discuss how radio facilitated surprisingly reciprocal interactions between anti-colonial activists on the ground and propagandists in Cairo, Moscow and Beijing.

These essays are richly illustrated with visual art by SWW DTP artist Catherine Cartwright. Her 'Brave New World' series seeks to question how facial recognition software and the exchange of images may impact upon our right to protest – a subject which has become especially apposite in light of the demonstrations witnessed across the world this summer.

This fifth issue of *Question* offers readers a snapshot of the dynamic work currently being produced by postgraduate scholars across the UK. The Covid-19 pandemic has added to the increasingly complex interpretations of 'Exchange' that have been developing over the last few years, and it is now more important than ever to highlight how early-career researchers are addressing this change through their studies. In the coming years it will be researchers such as those featured here who will be tasked with exploring, critiquing and redrawing the boundaries of how we communicate and share ideas. It is hoped that the seeds of their work might be found in these pages.

*Samuel Young and Rachel Beaney*  
*September 2020*



*Brave New World*, 60 x 84cm, 2019

## The Visible Pulse of the Possible: Exchanges, Protest and Possibilities in Chilean Performance Art

Sebastian Bustamante-Brauning, University of Bristol

### La casa de las recogidas and Las tesis<sup>1</sup>

I open my Instagram stories. The usual banality engulfs me. One image, however, on Chilean poet and artist Cecilia Vicuña's Instagram feed breaks the monotony. The photograph (Fig. 1) depicts a large red cloth trailing from the statue of Chilean historical military figure and national hero General Manuel Baquedano. On top of the statue is a cooking pot and indigenous Mapuche Wenüfoye flags fly alongside it. The red cloth in the performance contrasts with the women holding it who are all dressed in black. Their hands and eyes are stained red, evoking violence against women. Black text on the red cloth reads "We are the visible pulse of the possible."<sup>2</sup> Plaza Baquedano, the Santiago de Chile square where the statue resides, is now popularly called La Plaza de la dignidad (Dignity Square). The bright red cloth in the photograph, symbolises the way the Chilean state spilt demonstrator's blood as it repressed the recent wave of protest and rioting. Many people were seriously injured, and at least 23 died in confrontations with the police.<sup>3</sup> The violence reminded people of Chile's civic-military dictatorship (1973–1990) led by Augusto Pinochet when thousands of people were tortured, imprisoned, killed and forcibly disappeared. The protests voice wide-ranging issues in Chilean society, including the constitutional legacies of the dictatorship, privatisation of health and education, and gender-based violence. Since October 2019, Dignity Square has been a site of resistance against right-wing President Piñera's proposed metro fare increase and against income distribution in the country. The outcry led to the most significant mass protests the country has seen since the end of the dictatorship in 1990. As the central site of resistance to inequality and the government's violent response to demonstrations, Dignity Square is where demands to change the constitution, drafted in 1980 at the height of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, have been heard the loudest. For many this constitution codifies inequality in the country. The performance on my Instagram feed offers a striking visual denunciation of violence and inequality in Chile.



Figure 1 *La casa de las recogidas El Visible pulso de lo posible* (2019), Plaza Italia, Santiago de Chile  
Photograph by Paula Martínez Pastorino. Courtesy of La casa de las recogidas and Paula Martínez Pastorino.



Figure 2 *La casa de las recogidas* performance 8m (*El visible pulso de lo posible*), Plaza Italia, Santiago de Chile. Photograph by Paula Martínez Pastorino. Courtesy of La casa de las recogidas and Paula Martínez Pastorino.

This article examines the visible exchanges between artists at the centre of the recent mass movements in Chile. By visible exchanges, I refer to the aesthetic and participatory practices, such as public performance and protest, shared by two generations of artists from Chile.<sup>4</sup> These exchanges play a significant role in exposing societal violence and call for emancipatory change through activism which centre on visibility and awareness raising. I look at three interrelated examples through the lens of Cecilia Vicuña's *Palabrarma* poems in which she combines words to open up new meanings as a form of resistance and use the concept *Dar ver* (to give sight) to understand performance strategies in contemporary Chile.

I first examine work done by Cecilia Vicuña in the 1970s and its influence on contemporary performance practices. From there, I then assess how Vicuña's activism and art resonates today, looking at how it has been taken up and re-interpreted by artists demanding justice in contemporary Chile. I do this by focusing on feminist performance collectives *La casa de las recogidas* – The House of the Collected Ones (formed in 2018) and *Las tesis* – The Theses. Finally, I return to Vicuña's response to the protest and the inspiration she has taken from youth movements and artists in Chile in recent work. In this analysis, I aim to show the dialogue between activist art strategies in contemporary Chile and shared approaches to performance practice and the use of public space.

### Dar ver, giving sight, and language as resistance in Cecilia Vicuña's poetry and performance

On 11th September 1973, artist Cecilia Vicuña was studying in London on a scholarship at the Slade School of Art when she received news of the coup d'état which overthrew Salvador Allende's democratically elected socialist government. As the Chilean armed forces laid siege to the presidential palace, Allende committed suicide. With support from complicit parts of civil society, the military junta, headed by Augusto Pinochet, pronounced itself the country's ruler. During his seventeen-year dictatorship, thousands were imprisoned and tortured, while more than 3,000 people killed or forcibly 'disappeared'.<sup>5</sup>

As an Allende supporter fearing for her safety, Vicuña decided not to return to Chile. In response to the coup and in solidarity with the Chilean people, Vicuña and a group of artists formed *Artists for Democracy* (AFD), a collective which aimed to raise awareness about the dictatorship. Founded in 1974, one of AFD's early artistic actions was to participate in a protest organised by unions and solidarity groups in London's Trafalgar Square marking the first anniversary since the military coup (Fig. 3). The U.S. artist, and AFD founding member John Dugger created a large textile banner which included the words *Chile Vencera* [sic] (Chile will Overcome) which adorned Nelson's Column alongside an image of Chile's martyred president. For Vicuña, the AFD was a way to recuperate the lost dream of Allende's Chile and it provided hope in her difficult exile situation and distance from her home country.<sup>6</sup>

At the height of AFD's activity, Vicuña worked on a series of visual poems, which often comprised collage and words. These poems played with form, shape, pattern and meaning in an approach reminiscent of Concrete Poetry, a popular tradition in mid-century Brazil, where forms and words were accompanied to create poems which were both visual objects and linguistic texts. Her *Palabrarma* (1966–present) combined words to make new ones. *Palabrarma* contains two Spanish words: *Palabra* (word) and *arma* (weapon). Vicuña explains that "words are weapons, perhaps



Figure 3 Chile Vencera [sic] banner Trafalgar Square, London, 1974. Banner by John Dugger. Image Courtesy of Cecilia Vicuña Studio and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

the only acceptable ones”<sup>7</sup> She highlights the importance of language as a direct challenge to the dictatorship’s lies used to justify the coup:

“Understanding the violent effect of lies changed my view of language. I suddenly saw the word *verdad*, truth as *dar ver*: to give sight and the word *mentira*, lie, as “tearing the mind.”[...] the vision came with a name: *Palabrarma*, words were arming themselves to go to work.”<sup>8</sup>

The concept of *Dar ver* (to give sight) is a useful lens for understanding feminist performance practices in contemporary Chile. Words have the power to resist. Combining words with performance heightens visibility and challenges societal conceits that oppress people.<sup>9</sup> In the next section I will demonstrate how *La casa de las recogidas* (*Las recogidas* hereafter) and *Las tesis* have utilised giving sight to significant effect in recent protests.

Visibility and seeing are vital concepts for the protests. #*Chiledespertó* (Chile woke up) is used on social media to refer to the recent uprising. The hashtag implies that citizens have finally tired of social injustice, and they are allowing themselves to see the extent of societal wrongs and want to raise others to consciousness. Sight-giving has also taken on new significance as the Chilean police have been deliberately blinding protesters with rubber bullets, and other projectiles shot directly into their faces.<sup>10</sup> The tactic is a cruel metaphor for a state that does not want its citizens to see its oppressive behaviour.

### La casa de las recogidas (The house of the collected ones)

Casas de recogidas were an historical example of patriarchal efforts to make women invisible in Chile. In the colonial period, these casas (houses) were convents meant to ‘correct’ the behaviours of women deemed to be living immoral lives.<sup>11</sup> Appropriating this symbol of historic patriarchal repression of women by adopting and re-signifying the name of these repressive spaces, *Las recogidas* challenge the invisibility of women in contemporary Chile.

As with many feminist consciousness-raising activities, increasing visibility is key to the women’s movement in Chile. Works by *Las tesis* and *Las recogidas* echo Vicuña’s transformational use of public space. The roots of this recent resistance started in neighbouring Argentina when the murder of 14-year-old Chiara Paéz in 2015 spurred the *Ni una menos* (Not One Less) movement and ensuing mass mobilisation. Following this, the brutal rape and murder of 16-year-old Lucía Pérez in 2016 in Mar del Plata, Argentina intensified transnational resistance to gender-based violence across Latin America.<sup>12</sup> Chile has had its own horrific stories, such as the rape and murder of 1-year old Ámbar Lezcano in 2018 who died as a result of the sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of her uncle.<sup>13</sup>

In this context, demands for radical change take on an urgency that is difficult to ignore, and protest art plays an important role in contemporary activism from Latin America.

When the protest started in Chile, *Las recogidas* joined the marchers with their protest performance piece *El Pulso Visible* (Visible Pulse)<sup>14</sup>, the collective uploaded images of their performance in the Plaza Baquedano to their Instagram feed (Fig. 1).<sup>15</sup> The photos show a group of women carrying a red textile veil through the streets before arriving at the Plaza Baquedano and covering the statue of Baquedano with this red cloth. By choosing this statue, the group are challenging the dominance of violent male archetypes in the country’s national project. Baquedano is known as Chile’s foremost military figure who secured the country’s victory against neighbouring Peru and Bolivia in the War of the Pacific (1873–1883). The statue is a powerful signifier of Chile’s complicated history of military interventions in politics and was first inaugurated during General Carlos Ibáñez’s government. Ibáñez was involved in a military uprising against parliament and when in government, was instrumental in creating the Chilean Carabineros (police force) and ruled Chile through violent union repression and media censorship.<sup>16</sup> Originally a homage to Chile’s military prowess, the Baquedano statue is now being used to air grievances related to state violence committed by men. Using this site enacts new symbolic meanings in public space and promotes emancipatory change from patriarchal oppression and violence.

*Las recogidas*’ original Instagram post said: “With a quote by the great artist and poet Cecilia Vicuña we wanted to take our veil to the epicentre of this grand social outcry that we are all part of, so as to never again be *invisible*, *blind* or ever silence our voices again. We are the *visible* pulse of the possible (my emphasis).”<sup>17</sup> These powerful gestures remind public spectators that ignoring injustices is a violent act. In this performance, the collective metaphorically lifts the veil on unseeing, ignorance and societal complicity in Chile.

In many ways, the worsening violence against women is an unacknowledged legacy of the dictatorship: women were tortured, imprisoned, brutally sexually assaulted while in detention, and forcibly disappeared and killed. Moreover, women whose relatives had been detained or disappeared became a crucial part of the resistance to the dictatorship as they marched on the streets demanding the return of their relatives that the state had rendered invisible. Women marched with photographs of their loved ones, forcing the state to confront the visible traces of those it had so brutally tried to erase.<sup>18</sup> Gendered violence remains a state tool in post-dictatorship Chile. Since protests began in October 2019, women have stated that they were forced to strip naked whilst in detention and have suffered sexual violence at the hands of the Chilean police.<sup>19</sup>



For their performance, *Las recogidas* proposed a re-interpretation of Vicuña's Palabrarmas "We are the visible voice of the possible" which was reproduced on the red cloth they carried into the Plaza Baquedano (Fig. 1):

IN side the VISIBLE

IM pulse of the POSSIBLE.<sup>20</sup>

This act builds upon Vicuña's own design for her *Palabrarmas*:

The *Palabrarmas* were born from a *vision* in which individual words opened up to reveal their inner associations, allowing ancient and newborn metaphors to come to light [...] A word that means: to work words as one works the land is to work more; to think of what the work does is to arm yourself with the *vision* of words. (my emphasis)<sup>21</sup>

In referring to the transformative potential of language, Vicuña alludes to new ways of seeing words which creates new meanings, change, and an opening up of possibilities. In re-interpreting Vicuña's poem as an act of exchange between activisms, *Las recogidas* have re-signified Vicuña's original poem and have given it new meaning: the impossible becomes possible, the invisible becomes visible. As a tactic, it signals the right to be seen and heard by bringing these transformed words into the Plaza Baquedano, the centre of Chile's struggles against inequality and violence. The gesture uses *Dar ver* as resistance and makes these words work to give sight. I now turn to the second example of performance and *Dar ver* in the work of *Las tesis*.



Figure 4 Women performing *A Rapist in Your Path* in Mexico City. Photograph by Wotancito – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=84503250>.

### Las tesis

On International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the Plaza de Armas in Santiago de Chile, *Las tesis* first performed 'El Violador en tu camino' "The Rapist in Your Path", a choreographed routine and accompanying song with words inspired by Argentine anthropologist Rita Segato. The group used an Instagram call for participants to join them. The performance centres on state and judicial responses to violence against women and has since become a global phenomenon replicated in New Delhi, Athens, Mexico City, and London amongst other cities. The viral performance is another example of visible exchanges that promote strategies for resistance, exposing injustice and calling for emancipatory change.

The lyrics of *A Rapist in Your Path* demonstrate a strategy of *Dar ver*:

The patriarchy is a judge /  
who judges us for being born /  
and our punishment /  
is the violence that you don't see [...]  
impunity for the killer [...]  
and it wasn't my fault /  
not the fault of where I was /  
nor of what I was wearing.<sup>22</sup>

In the performance, the line "the rapist is you!" is powerfully accompanied by those performing pointing their index finger in an accusatory gesture. The action is a stark call for those turning a blind eye to confront gender-based violence. The choreography also recalls police violence as performers squat down in a reference to a pose the Chilean police force detainees to take whilst under arrest.<sup>23</sup>

Here, *Las tesis* deploy sight-giving to challenge the absence of justice for sexual assault survivors. Seeing is further alluded to in the piece as performers wear black blindfolds, indicating societal invisibility of those subjected to gender-based violence, and identifies with protesters who have received life-changing eye injuries at the hands of Chilean police.

Exposing injustice and embracing seeing is an artistic strategy that runs through *Las recogidas*' public performance in Baquedano Square. This performance challenges national symbols and reveals lesser known histories of women's repression and *Las tesis*' collective invitation to expose societal complicity in gendered violence in *A Rapist in Your Path*. I now return to Cecilia Vicuña's own artistic interventions in contemporary Chile which use protest, resistance, and visibility and *Dar ver* as an artistic strategy.

## Verdad (Truth)

A *Palabrarma* Vicuña made in the 1970s (Fig. 5) has been reawakened following the civil unrest in Chile since October 2019.

verdad

dadver

translation:

truth: to give light<sup>24</sup>

Vicuña returned to the above *Palabrarma* in her performance *El ver oír empezó – See-hearing Started* (December 2019) in the Centro Cultural Gabriela Mistral (GAM), an art space in central Santiago. Vicuña made a series of paper multicoloured eyeglasses with this poem on them, which participants held over their eyes using wooden sticks as they walked around the space looking at each other and other spectators. In *See-hearing Started*, a group of women sit in a circle in the patio area of the GAM facing each other, holding the glasses to their eyes. Vicuña sings an ethereal song with indecipherable lyrics. She pauses and then places her *verdad/dadver* paper glasses over her eyes and continues to sing in a high-pitched tone.<sup>25</sup> Possible meanings contained in *verdad/dadver* are Verdad (Truth), Ver (see), Da (give) Da d[e] ver (to give sight).

Vicuña dedicated her performance to the protesters who have lost their sight. The eyeglasses invite spectators to see the truth, to pass on vision and to see each other. The performance is both peaceful and confrontational; it asks people to see the reality of what is happening in Chile.<sup>26</sup>

When asked in an interview with the Chilean magazine *The Clinic* how she learned of the latest protests in Chile, Vicuña said that she first found out through Instagram:

I cried with happiness to see a million people on the streets. Finally, the lie of the “ideal Chile” had been shattered. The truth of injustice went dancing into the street glad to recognise itself, to see itself and to be seen. The collective body acknowledging the joy of truth was like a miracle. The pain which was denied for so long finally had a direction and an expression.<sup>27</sup>

Vision emerges once again. Seeing as an act of resistance exposes inequality in Chile. Truth personified, for Vicuña, is the voice of those who have used public space as one of contestation and denunciation.<sup>28</sup> The creative drive behind this mass mobilisation is contained in new visions and ways of seeing both society



Figure 5 Cecilia Vicuña, *Verdad* performance, Bogotá 1977–9. Image courtesy of Cecilia Vicuña Studio and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

and oneself, a strategic sight which challenges unseeing. In the same interview she continues: “In the world of exclusion, we do not hear each other, nor do we see ourselves or the other, because the hear-oneself and see-oneself is not even a valued nor desired pursuit.”<sup>29</sup> Vicuña’s *see-oneself* (ver-se) and *hear-oneself* (oír-ser) are the platforms from which contemporary performance practice in Chile, as manifested in the work of *La casa de las recogidas* and *Las tesis*, can be understood as a creative and transformational opening up. It is this strategy that lends visible exchanges such as those of Vicuña, *Las tesis* and *Las recogidas* a power for emancipatory change.

The cries of *Las tesis*’ *A Rapist in Your Path* force Chilean society to reflect upon itself and the injustices faced by women. Likewise, *La casa de las recogidas* find visual and performative expression in bringing words to the streets and lifting the veil of injustice against women in contemporary Chile. These are examples of the visible voices of the possible. In this article, I have used Cecilia Vicuña’s concept of *Dar ver* (to give sight) to understand contemporary performance art practices in Chile in the context of recent civil unrest. Although the latest wave of discontent in Chile has left questions unanswered, such as whether people support a new constitution, what is clear, is that these protests have bred a unique creative force. They have given sight to new possibilities.



*Brave New World*, 60 x 84cm, 2019

## Shakespeare's Language Economy: Considering *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*

Emma Venter, University of Leeds

**C**or<sup>i</sup>olanus and *Timon of Athens*, both written around 1605, at first appear to have little in common aside from their relatively scant performance history in the Shakespearean canon. Yet, there are further critical similarities between the two plays that have not yet been considered. Both plays focus on an increasingly isolated, unlikeable protagonist who tends towards uncontrolled anger and misanthropy. *Coriolanus*' protagonist is a brilliant soldier who turns on the Roman people when he is required to request their 'voices', or votes.<sup>1</sup> He abandons his city, joining the Volscian army in seeking its destruction before being killed by his nemesis for offering mercy to Rome. *Timon of Athens*, a play co-authored by Thomas Middleton, tells the tale of an infamous misanthrope who loans frivolously to his friends, bankrupting himself when they are unable to return the favour; exiled from the city, he finds gold again and uses it to fund wars against Athens, refusing pleas for mercy, and dies in the wilderness as a man that 'all living men did hate'.<sup>2</sup> Most crucially, however, while *Timon of Athens* is an explicitly economic play, I argue that the same ideas of credit in *Timon of Athens* operate in surprisingly similar ways in *Coriolanus*. Neither wealth nor usury are directly thematised in *Coriolanus*, yet, informal networks of "credit" operate much as they do in *Timon*. The politics in the two plays, Athens and Rome, have remarkably similar economies of exchange, both blending ancient values with Shakespeare's contemporary economy. Yet, both Timon and Coriolanus critically misunderstand how to commodify their social engagement and establish credit. Timon's generous giving is incompatible with the Athenian understanding of exchange, and he fails to cultivate the bonds he desires. The language of 'coining' in *Coriolanus* suggests the intertwining and balance of virtue and value, in which language and social behaviour is at once economic, exchangeable, and political as well as a form of personal communication.

In this article, I argue that the political and the economic are intertwined: the explicitly economic relationships of *Timon of Athens* are politicised in the Roman citizens of *Coriolanus*, who exercise their political power in their language. The political system of Rome is coded in economic terms, operating with a system of credit that reflects similar concerns of credit and value that developed in the latter half of the sixteenth century. In *Coriolanus*, these networks of credit

manifest themselves in the citizens, the obsessively characterised "voices" of Rome.<sup>3</sup> As Sandra Fischer writes in *Econolingua* (1985), a study of economic language in Renaissance drama, 'credit' meant 'honesty, trust, reliability' as well as 'reputation' and 'borrowing power', and was often used as all of these meanings simultaneously.<sup>4</sup> Like *Timon*'s Athens, the city of *Coriolanus* is an economy of credit: social interaction underpins the economy, itself a 'diffuse network of discursive transactions which hang together according to humanly established (and thus mutable) patterns of exchange'.<sup>5</sup> However, bonds in Rome are not created through friendship, unlike in Athens. Instead, the networks of Rome are made manifest exclusively through the currency of verbal exchange. Most crucially, the credit economy of *Coriolanus* is also a vouching economy, as one's credit can only be established through verbal exchange with others. The cultivation of credit is necessary for political power in Rome, where the meagre 'price' of the consulship is for Coriolanus to 'ask it kindly', and in doing so, shall his 'lungs | Coin words'.<sup>6</sup> He must request his power from the Roman people in an economic exchange, but one that is explicitly verbal.

Shakespeare's England had undergone a significant economic shift in the decades before he wrote these plays. During the sixteenth-century, fiscal currency was of indeterminate value, as England was suffering extreme levels of inflation in its coin economy.<sup>7</sup> Henry VIII minted coins of base metals, made with a fraction of silver or gold and circulated them at the same value as solid coins.<sup>8</sup> As a result, English currency lost its power, and coins with a high concentration of precious metal were hoarded for their value, and mixed metal coins were perceived to be worthless. As a Sussex shopkeeper recorded in his diary in 1573, 'the greatest part of trade is trust'.<sup>9</sup> Although Elizabeth I sought to end this practice, minting coins of higher quality with more precious metal, credit and trust remained a critical part of mercantilism in the seventeenth-century.<sup>10</sup> Around thirty years later, when Shakespeare wrote *The Life of Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus*, the value of hard currency was more stable, but credit remained a critical part of exchange. As Craig Muldrew argues, despite the reintroduction of coin, 'the central mediating factor [of the economy] was credit or trust'.<sup>11</sup> However, trust in an individual's credit was not necessarily grounded in the truth of one's character or behaviour, as credit was only established by mutual agreement of value and trust in another person's credibility; value 'might be conjured by nothing more than the collective belief in such value'.<sup>12</sup> Ideas of value and worth were cultivated by the community's witnessing and interpretations of an individual's behaviour.

*Timon of Athens* is deeply influenced by this early modern understanding of credit and credibility. Timon's Athens is an economy of both currency

(in this play, “talents”) and credit: Timon’s friends ask him for money, but code these requests in terms of ‘love’ and ‘friendship’.<sup>13</sup> Timon has a distinct trajectory from rich and generous benefactor to despairing misanthrope. He loans generous sums of money to his friends but refuses to characterise his loans as exchanges. Instead, he calls them gifts, claiming, ‘there’s none | Can truly say he gives if he receives’.<sup>14</sup> Timon is more than willing to give to his friends in their times of need and expects the same, admitting that in the future he may ‘have much help | from you – how had you been my friends else?’<sup>15</sup> Timon does not expect immediate repayment, nor does he have a concrete reciprocal value in mind, but since he clouds his exchanges in the language of giving and friendship, the necessity of reciprocity is lost. Timon’s vision of exchange is not explicitly economic. His friends see him as a benefactor, not a creditor, and as such they offer him their ‘love’ since he is ‘so full of gold’.<sup>16</sup> But as John Jowett argues, the reality for Timon is debt: his friends do not expect to repay him, and ‘in this, the play addresses anxieties about the foundations of monetary economy in a world at once increasingly mercantile and increasingly unable to conduct its transactions in hard coin’.<sup>17</sup> The crux of Timon’s downfall is his refusal to accept the role friendship as it functions in the Athenian economy; specifically, acknowledging the necessity of reciprocation and economic language in exchanges with friends. The images of inflated currency in *Timon of Athens* mirror that of the Elizabethan period, as Timon’s false friends are compared to worthless coins: ‘They have all been touch’d and found base metal’.<sup>18</sup>

As in Timon’s Athens, the city of Rome in *Coriolanus* is also an economy of credit. If Middleton contributed to the economic themes of *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare alone carried these themes into *Coriolanus*. In this play, language plays a critical role in the political landscape, as the political and economic participation of the plebeians is ‘dependent on their ability to make themselves heard and understood’.<sup>19</sup> The people demand ‘corn at their own rates’, and as a result are given five tribunes to represent their political and economic interests.<sup>20</sup> As such, the people’s voices are required to elect Coriolanus consul. In order to ‘earn’ these voices and gain political power, however, Coriolanus must first cultivate his credit.<sup>21</sup> His heroic actions in war are not sufficient for this cultivation – he must instead don the gown of humility, and ‘entreat them, | For [his] wounds’ sake’.<sup>22</sup> Although they know he has ‘deserved nobly of [his] country’, he has also ‘not deserved nobly’, for he has ‘not indeed loved | The common people’, berating them for their ingratitude rather than humbly requesting their voices.<sup>23</sup> The senate deem him ‘worthy’ of the role of consul, but to be elected consul he must still appeal to the people and ‘earn a dearer | Estimation of them’.<sup>24</sup>

While Timon could not establish credit because of his desire to deal in gifts, Coriolanus’ aversion to language demonstrates his desire to absent himself from the economy entirely. Timon’s misanthropy is born when he realises that the Athenians have misunderstood the intent of his giving, but Coriolanus’ misanthropy is consistent, because he already understands how the verbal economy functions, and his antipathy towards language is an attempt to preserve his reputation, to protect it from the possibility of manipulation. Yet, the manipulation of language is necessary to achieve political success, and Cominius, Menenius, and Volumnia all encourage Coriolanus to ‘stoop to th’ herd’ and appease the people in requesting their voices for his position as consul. Coriolanus fears that to speak of his actions, to commodify them and offer them in language in exchange for credit, is to render them counterfeit. In his temporary acquiescence to appeal to the people’s voices, Coriolanus curses the folly of such action: ‘since the wisdom of their choice is rather | to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the | insinuating nod and be off to them most | counterfeitedly’.<sup>25</sup> In speaking, even if only requesting the people’s voices, he is commodifying his actions, assigning them a value in order to earn his place as consul. In doing so, he is asking for validation from others who must acknowledge the value of those actions and confirm his credit in the economy. He is unable to proffer his heart in his language, as he does not believe such a thing can be done. But to proffer his hat, a superficial accessory that covers one up, would be a repugnant deceit. Coriolanus’ mistrust in speech is so severe that he cannot allow himself to cultivate any credit at all. Even the thought of hearing the General Cominius recount his deeds in battle is repugnant to him: ‘When blows have made me stay, I fled from words [...] | I had rather have one scratch my head i’ th’ sun | When the alarum were struck than idly sit | To hear my nothings monster’d’.<sup>26</sup> Anne Barton offers an interpretation of Coriolanus’ aversion towards language: ‘This word monster’d means something more than just “exaggerated”’; it suggests ‘distortion, a grotesque and degrading alteration’.<sup>27</sup>

To speak as a politician, to ask that others allow him credit and establish his worth, is contrary to Coriolanus’ character. When his friends advise a gentle entreaty to the people, he claims that doing so would be ‘False to [his] nature’.<sup>28</sup> His mother encourages this deceitful manipulation, recommending that Coriolanus constructs a false, rehearsed identity: ‘not by your own instruction, | Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you, | But with such words that are but rehearsed in | Your tongue [...] I would dissemble with my nature where | My fortunes and my friends at stake requir’d | I should do so in honor’.<sup>29</sup> Although she speaks to him in a language that he can understand – a language of ‘nature’,

'heart', and 'honor' – she recognises that he is 'too absolute', and their understandings of honour are entirely different. As Geoffrey Miles argues, Coriolanus is dedicated to the Roman virtues of 'courage, resolution, integrity, consistency, temperance, endurance of suffering', the embodiment which is known as *virtus*.<sup>30</sup> His nature is fixed; he cannot dissemble, and he cannot allow the people to estimate and value his actions for fear of what they will make of them. Although Volumnia tells him that in doing so, 'this no more dishonors you at all | Than to take in a town with gentle words', as Coriolanus demonstrates at the battle of Corioli, he is not the type to soldier with words, gentle or not.<sup>31</sup> The central conflict of the play is not Coriolanus's rivalry of *virtus* with Aufidius, but rather the incompatibility of his *virtus* and the economy of Shakespeare's Rome, where his *virtus* must be commodified to construct credit.<sup>32</sup> The problem for Coriolanus is that the economy of credit allows for the possibility of inconstancy, where credit, value, and worth are negotiated through mutual verbal exchanges linked to trust but not necessarily to truth. Yet, the certainty Coriolanus seeks, where actions stand on their own and language is unnecessary, does not exist in his society.

The citizens of Rome, on the other hand, cannot afford so blunt a rejection of language. The citizens are repeatedly characterised by their 'voices', which are their only means of expressing agency and engaging with the political body of Rome.<sup>33</sup> Their participation in society is 'dependent on their ability to make themselves heard and understood', and their political power is exercised through political rhetoric; as such, their expectation that Coriolanus humble himself to request their approval is unsurprising.<sup>34</sup> Although they respect Coriolanus's military might, they expect him to play a conciliatory role in order to serve as politician, one who will respect them enough if only to pay the meagre price of the consulship, 'to ask it kindly' of the people.<sup>35</sup> The Roman people do not wish to deny him their approval – such 'ingratitude' would be 'monstrous' – and they believe he has earned their voices by his 'noble deeds'.<sup>36</sup> Yet, their verbal confirmation of Coriolanus's bravery is essentially required, even if, as the Third Citizen acknowledges, their power is ultimately a custom, and to deny Coriolanus is 'a power that we have no power to do': if Coriolanus shows the people his wounds and requests their voices, they cannot deny his deserts.<sup>37</sup> Coriolanus's problem is that he believes that the people's voices have the power to distort the value and purpose of his actions. According to Aristotle, at the moment of exchange, whatever the objects of exchange may be – language, currency, or goods – there is a decree of equal value between both parties involved.<sup>38</sup> Timon, in calling his exchanges "gifts", refused to make this decree and as such could not establish his credit, as he believed he might. In Coriolanus, the decree is explicitly

verbalised, as custom dictates that exchanges of language effects political change. Even when he believes himself to be deserving, Coriolanus is unable to bear the idea of supplicating himself for this decree: 'Better it is to die, better to starve, | Than crave the hire which first we do deserve'.<sup>39</sup>

The problem for Coriolanus is that credit cannot be assumed or vouched for by one's self, even for a person of merit, as societal transactions depend on external validation. As a soldier, he has sacrificed his body for 'ungrateful Rome', but earning his wounds in battle is not enough.<sup>40</sup> The value of his actions, his dedication to *virtus*, is only assigned when validated by the Roman people. When he refuses to engage with them as custom requires, the people use their voices to banish him from the city, and he is rebranded as a 'traitor to the people'; his brave deeds, which earlier made him eligible for consul, a role 'he hath worthily deserved of his country', are reinterpreted as actions motivated by greed 'to take | From Rome all season'd office and to wind | Yourself into a power tyrannical'.<sup>41</sup> By rejecting language and its connotations, Coriolanus tries to live out the illusion that he can function in Roman society without commodifying his actions and cultivating credit. But ultimately, he fails. Words are used to construct Coriolanus's reputation even after his death, both by Aufidius and the Roman people, who "Unshout the noise that banished Martius".<sup>42</sup> Aufidius declares, 'Though in this city [Coriolanus] | Hath widowed and unchilded many a one [...] Yet he shall have a noble memory'.<sup>43</sup>

Language in *Coriolanus* functions in a politically and economically utilitarian way, in which credit may be created and destroyed purely through verbal exchange. But such an exchange is intended only to create the appearance of honesty and trustworthiness. And appearances cannot always be trusted, as verbal exchange does not eliminate the possibility of deceit, but neither does it presuppose it. "To coin" meant to produce or mint money, but alternatively, the same term could mean, 'to counterfeit, to plot, to invent'.<sup>44</sup> Shakespeare's plays routinely demonstrate the power that language has to distort another's reputation: Iago insidiously persuades Othello of Desdemona's infidelity in *Othello*; King Lear banishes and bankrupts his daughter for her failure of flattery in *King Lear*; Timon shifts from generous benefactor to loathed misanthrope in *The Life of Timon of Athens*. Credit and reputation were powerful political and economic tools, but fundamentally cultivated by interactions with others, and always sensitive to manipulation. Rather than improving upon a devalued coin economy, reliance on language and credit in *The Life of Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus* ultimately creates a similar environment of mistrust and confusion of value.

## ‘Spain, Sit and Talk!’: The Politics of Exchange Within the Nation-State

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### Context

At midday on 7th January 2020, incumbent Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez opened the debate on a parliamentary vote which would begin a new chapter in Spanish history: the investiture of Spain’s first coalition government in over forty years of democracy. It would, Sánchez hoped, mark the end of several years of political upheaval and signal a renewed capacity for ideological exchange in Spanish politics.

Since its Transition to democracy after the death of dictator General Francisco Franco in 1975, Spain had effectively been a two-party state, with power alternating between the social democrats of Sánchez’s *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) and its conservative adversary, the *Partido Popular* (PP). However, following the post-2008 economic crisis and revelations of corruption in both major parties, new political formations have broken through: anti-austerity *Podemos* (which, following an electoral alliance with *Izquierda Unida*, is now *Unidas Podemos*), liberal *Ciudadanos* and, latterly, an extreme-right grouping named *Vox*.

Indeed, it was a corruption scandal which initially brought Sánchez to power in the summer of 2018, when it was revealed that several members of the ruling PP – including then Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy – were embroiled in a web of fraud and money laundering. This episode was more than enough for opposition forces, led by the PSOE, to pass a vote of no confidence, eject the PP and install Sánchez as Prime Minister. Less than a year later, though, Sánchez himself was forced to step down and call a general election when his budget was rejected in parliament, and, despite winning the most votes in April 2019, the PSOE still failed to form a government, leading to yet another election in November – Spain’s fourth in four years.

As we will see, the most problematic issue in the turbulence of Spanish politics throughout this period was nationalism, with an already tense set of stand-offs significantly exacerbated by the apparent lack of room in Spain’s political arena for the exchange of conflicting ideas on the nation-state. The investiture vote on the afternoon of 7th January opened that space, and therefore constituted an extraordinary compromise.

Such an agreement would have seemed highly unlikely mere weeks beforehand, but with the far right gaining momentum and public exasperation with politics growing, the progressive forces which delivered the coalition government were driven to unite perceivably incompatible national ideologies. This piece seeks to demonstrate how such an exchange became possible and to reflect on its significance for examining interchanges in political decision-making during an era of so-called populism.

### Spanish nationalism(s)

Spain has long grappled with its identity as a nation, a battle which has been fought in great part thanks to Spanish nationalists’ deep antagonism to other nationalist movements within the Spanish state, most notably in the wealthier northern regions of Catalonia and the Basque Country. In fact, the fate of Spanish nationalism and that of peripheral minority nationalism are historically intertwined: ‘the successes of the first condition the failures of the second, and vice versa’.<sup>1</sup> Spanish nationalism, moreover, is and has always been far from homogenous in itself: approaches to the nation differ greatly with political hue, even among those who maintain the importance of its integrity. This will not be covered in detail here. Rather, it will suffice to explain that the ideologies which underpin historical conceptions of the Spanish nation are embodied by today’s political parties.<sup>2</sup>

Both the PP and the PSOE have built their views of the nation upon that which is legally enshrined by the 1978 Spanish Constitution, the cornerstone of Spanish democracy which was negotiated with extreme care after Franco’s death. Debate over the Constitution’s detail brought even the previously banned Spanish Communist Party to the same table as devout Francoists, and concessions were made on all sides to create a legal document which has indisputably granted Spain long-denied levels of democratic freedom. To this day, the constitutional framework is thus understandably held by many citizens and politicians as a non-negotiable constant.<sup>3</sup>

Article 2 of the Constitution makes explicit reference to the ‘indissoluble unity’ of the Spanish state, defines Spain as the only ‘nation’ within it (with regions such as Catalonia and the Basque Country addressed ambiguously as ‘nationalities’) and declares all Spaniards as equal under the law. This is largely in line with the national outlook of Spanish social democracy: the image of a multitude of cultures united within a common nation continues to ground the PSOE’s approach, which has been shown at several points in recent history through its calls for a ‘plural Spain’.<sup>4</sup> They are proud of the successes of the regional devolution of powers to so-called ‘autonomous communities’ like

the Catalans and Basques, and see this as reflective of a healthy relationship between nation and state.

The PP, meanwhile, has spent much of the post-Franco period trying to remake itself in this regard. The party was born out of Francoism (to this day many of its high-ranking members are the younger family members of officials who served under the dictatorship) and has consequently sought to repaint its image in the democratic era. This effort was solidified in 2002 with the release of a document named Constitutional Patriotism, which disassociated the party from Franco's hard conservatism and instead contended that 'the Constitution of 1978, with its stress on liberty, plurality, and civic responsibility, should be the basis of a new concept of Spain'.<sup>5</sup>

The modern PSOE and PP, therefore, can be (and frequently are, alongside *Ciudadanos*, which places itself between them) referred to as *constitucionalistas*, precisely for their deep commitment to the Constitution. For opposite reasons, however, this moderate take on the national question distances them from both *Vox* and *Unidas Podemos*.

*Vox*, itself a movement split from the right wing of the PP, clings to the ultra-conservative, pre-democratic idea of the nation, and combines this with the same facile right-nationalist rhetoric now seen across the globe: it promises to 'make Spain great again' by centralising power (through the abolition of devolved administrations) and illegalising Catalan and Basque nationalist parties.

*Unidas Podemos*, conversely, follows the post-communist traditions of federalism (i.e. further regional devolution) and plurinationalism, hence departing from the constitutional commitment to Spain as the only legitimate nation. The radical left's divergence from the PSOE over the Constitution has played its part in the deadlock of recent years. At April 2019's election, the two parties attained enough parliamentary seats between them to form a government, but Sánchez refused to offer *Unidas Podemos* leader Pablo Iglesias a cabinet position on the basis of 'deep disagreements' on issues of the Spanish state.<sup>6</sup> When Iglesias agreed to sacrifice his personal involvement for the benefit of an agreement, however, Sánchez's strategy was revealed to be hollow: he had never expected Iglesias to back away from a senior governmental role and, somewhat cynically, we might observe that he had hoped to use this as leverage to demonstrate Iglesias' unwillingness to compromise, with a view to increasing the PSOE's vote share in a repeat election.

This manoeuvre resoundingly failed and obstructed an opportunity for exchange on ideas of the nation between the two major parties of the Spanish left. Nonetheless, there is indeed a marked divide between the groups' national

ideologies, one which shapes their approaches to the problem at the centre of the recent conflict: the rise of the independence movement in Catalonia.

### The Catalan crisis

In the first instance, it should be clarified that, unlike Basque nationalism, which has always retained a committed (and famously violent) separatist current, the turn to independence within Catalan nationalism is a new phenomenon, firmly rooted in the twenty-first century. As recently as the beginning of this millennium, in fact, the case of Catalonia was being lauded as a 'model *par excellence*' of how to successfully abate minority nationalists' desires for their own state.<sup>7</sup>

It was in 2006 that the first of several catalysts for the rise of the Catalan independence movement appeared, when the PSOE government of the day approved changes to the devolution settlement for Catalonia (known as the *Estatut d'Autonomia*), despite fierce resistance in parliament from the PP. The new *Estatut* gave Catalonia modest tax-raising competencies (a power already granted in the Basque Country, parity with which has long been one of Catalan nationalism's principal aims) but also, importantly, defined Catalonia as a 'nation'. The PP was so incensed by this that, having failed to prevent the *Estatut* by parliamentary means, it took a legal case to the Constitutional Court on the grounds that the legislation's contents violated the Constitution.

After four years of wrangling, the Court eventually agreed with the PP: in 2010, the case was upheld and the *Estatut* was revoked. This sparked outrage in Catalonia, where the public had voted by referendum to approve the document, and this anger escalated into street protests under the slogan 'We are a nation. We decide'. The process of the *Estatut*'s approval and subsequent negation ignited the Catalan independence drive, but also began to expose a fundamental difference between the PSOE and the PP in dealing with the national question.

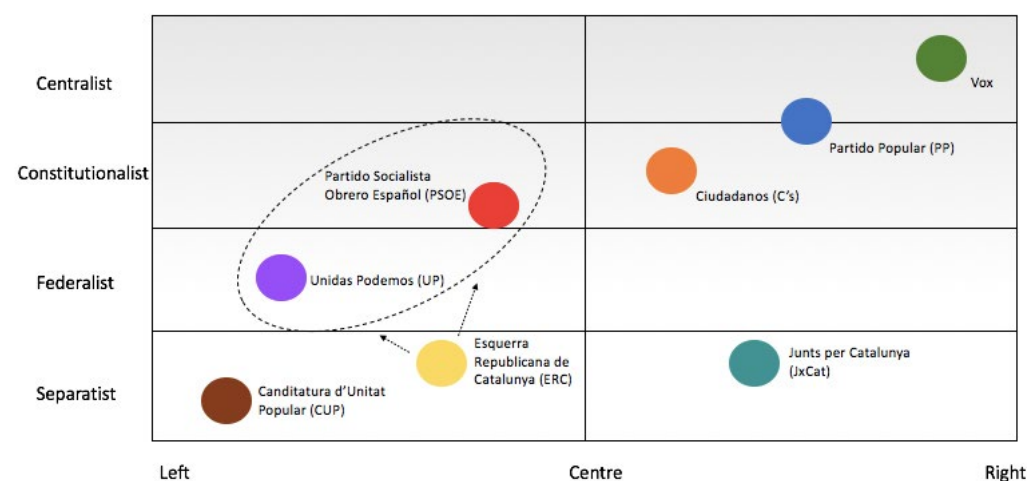
The 2008 financial crash further deepened the issue. Spain was hit particularly harshly: in an abrupt end to its property boom, half-built buildings blighted towns and cities and unemployment skyrocketed. Much as, in 2010, the British Conservative Party successfully normalised the discourse that the Labour Party had been at fault for an entire crisis of global capitalism, so the PP blamed the PSOE government for Spain's economic woes and was elected in 2011 on a commitment to financial responsibility. With the PP now in power, austerity combined with the residual discord over the *Estatut* to accelerate the growth of the Catalan independence movement.<sup>8</sup> The economic crisis bound together 'the accumulation of unrelated grievances' into 'a potent tool for political mobilisation' in Catalonia.<sup>9</sup>



It was in this period that conservative Catalan nationalists *Convergència i Unió* (now *Junts per Catalunya* and, at the time, Catalonia's biggest nationalist party), which had previously limited its ambitions to further devolution and the recognition of Catalan nationhood within Spain, moved behind self-determination and the formation of an independent state. In 2015, *Convergència* ran on a joint ticket with centre-left *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) for elections to the Catalan devolved government – the *Generalitat* – under the name *Junts pel Sí* (Together for Yes), with the promise of an independent Catalan republic within 18 months. This was the electoral high-water mark for the Catalan independence movement: despite attaining 48% of the vote, the separatist pact won a majority of seats in the *Generalitat*. It was thus able to set in motion its planned *procés* (process) towards independence.

Two years later, on 1st October 2017, the *Generalitat* attempted to hold its long-awaited independence referendum. This was taken as an attempt to break up Spain, violating Article 2 of the Constitution, and the PP government in Madrid responded by using force to prevent the vote from happening. Hundreds of people were injured in clashes with the police on the day in scenes that were shared worldwide, and yet over two million still managed to cast their vote. 90% of them voted in favour of independence, but on a turnout of only 43%, as the vast majority of would-be 'No' voters did not participate.

Nonetheless, the leaders of the Catalan government brazenly announced the result to be legitimate and moved to declare independence. In so doing, they were deemed to have personally rebelled against the state. Several separatist political



A map of the Spanish/Catalan political spectrum. Image: author's own.

elites were immediately jailed for their role in the events of October 2017, with others (including *Generalitat* president Carles Puigdemont, the figurehead of the *procés*) fleeing Spain to avoid arrest. Nine of the detained were subsequently sentenced in 2019 for the crimes of sedition and misuse of public funds. Of those, ERC leader Oriol Junqueras was given the harshest penalty: thirteen years in prison.

### Negotiating the nation

The dragging of the Catalan issue through the courts has served to further undermine the legitimacy of the Spanish state in Catalonia, where over 60% of the population favours greater devolution of powers, pro-independence parties are extremely well-supported and over a quarter of people do not identify with Spain whatsoever.<sup>10</sup> Public dissent at the treatment of Junqueras and his colleagues was also demonstrated by the mass mobilisations that took place in the days after the sentencing: a new movement by the name of *Tsunami Democràtic*, inspired by the Hong Kong street protests, occupied Barcelona airport and clashed violently with police for several days in reaction to the decision.<sup>11</sup> The 'judicialisation' of the conflict has also been roundly criticised by *Unidas Podemos*.<sup>12</sup>

Conversely, the threat of Catalan independence to the unity of Spain is one of the key explanations for the far right's recent electoral breakthrough: *Vox* now has 52 seats in the Spanish Parliament.<sup>13</sup> The party mirrors movements elsewhere which rail against mass immigration, political correctness and feminism, but the panic induced by a perceived threat to the territorial unity of the nation is a particularly Spanish phenomenon.

Spain's peculiar failure to engage with its pre-democratic history has allowed the ghosts of the past to hide out of sight for some time: the fact that many *Vox* supporters praise the authoritarian legacy of Franco is unsurprising when we consider that two-party politics had previously obscured the true opinions of many conservative voters.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, as has been shown, the approach to the national question continues to differ sharply across the left-right spectrum in Spain, adding a layer of ideology which makes it difficult for left-wing voters to switch allegiances. Thus, *Vox* have not enjoyed the movement of working-class voters away from progressive parties which has characterised the rise of the far right in other contexts.<sup>15</sup> Like its politicians, *Vox*'s support is predominantly a dissenting middle class split from the PP, radicalised in part by economic woes but also by a cultural crisis, in particular that of the nation.

Loss of support to a party to its right has additionally caused the PP to pivot towards them. The PP has, for example, adopted *Vox*'s view on banning Catalan separatist parties, creating a much wider space between the PP and the PSOE

regarding the national question today than has previously existed.<sup>16</sup> Pedro Sánchez and his party have, rhetorically at least, always agreed to engage in dialogue with Catalan nationalists (whereas the PP have refused to), but any party which claims to be *constitucionalista* is necessarily hamstrung by a legal system that is deliberately ‘rigid’, especially on the issue of the nation.<sup>17</sup> The Constitution places clear restrictions on the extent to which Sánchez could seek to negotiate, so it is unclear what his openness to dialogue means in practice.

Similarly, parallel to the street demonstrations, there has been a campaign from Catalan nationalists for dialogue with the Spanish government, under the slogan ‘Spain, sit and talk!’. The use of English-language mottos is a common feature of Catalan nationalism and is aimed (usually quite successfully) at generating foreign media attention, in this case highlighting a perceived lack of engagement from Madrid to try to solve the political conflict. Again, though, it is not obvious what they would gain from such exchanges: ideally, they would like a legal and binding referendum on independence, but the inflexibility of the legal framework – combined with the experience of the past few years – should tell them that it would be wholly unrealistic to expect the PSOE to agree one.



Protesters with the Tsunami Democràtic movement occupied Barcelona's El Prat airport in October 2019. The English-language banner calls for the release of the nine jailed Catalan political figures. Source: Wikicommons.

### Exchange in the political arena

This context of ambiguous promises to dialogue framed the remarkable proceedings of 7th January 2020. ERC, in a pact with the PSOE, chose to abandon the other Catalan separatists and abstain on the investiture vote, allowing Sánchez to form the coalition government with a simple majority of just two votes.

The parties of the Spanish right were, of course, enraged: they now face the prospect of a government containing communists from *Unidas Podemos*, kept in power on the slightest of majorities by a party that they believe should be banned. *Junts per Catalunya* were also frustrated – they feigned shock that their pro-independence allies had voted ‘against Catalonia and in favour of repression’ – but, in truth, the ERC-PSOE agreement represented the logical conclusion of a significant priorities shift from ERC.<sup>18</sup>

Firstly, given that support in Catalonia for full separation from Spain has failed to break the 50% mark, ERC was alone amongst the Catalan nationalist parties in accepting that independence was not imminent: that the construction of a wider base was needed and that, therefore, in the short term, there was a need to try to solve the political conflict in order to move forward.<sup>19</sup> The agreement, signed by both parties, commits to ‘a recognition of the political conflict and the activation of a political route in order to resolve it’ and ‘the creation of a bilateral platform of dialogue’ to that end.<sup>20</sup> This was accompanied by the lurking presence of an emboldened far right which, as has been discussed, would have sought to come down very hard on Catalan nationalism, given the opportunity.

The settlement could therefore be interpreted as the result of political expediency on both sides. Given Sánchez's previous game-playing with *Unidas Podemos*, we may assume that the promise to dialogue is an empty one, merely a vehicle for getting into power. ERC, for their part, are kingmakers: if they are unsatisfied with the progress of negotiations, they can withdraw their support and bring down the government, as they did with Sánchez's budget in 2018.<sup>21</sup>

However, both parties have their reasons for wanting to avoid another election (not least, the radicalisation of right-wing voters behind *Vox*) and, if we are to take them at their word, they recognise the need for resolution to this conflict in order to move forward. Furthermore, aside from their views on the nation-state, these two social democratic parties have much in common: ERC will be encouraged by the PSOE's commitments to tackling climate change and raising the minimum wage, for example. Through this lens, it looks as though they have set aside their views on the nation for a shared objective: a victory for progressivism over nationalism.

The reality, though, is that it is *both* a political manoeuvre and a genuine meeting of minds. The pact works well for both parties – giving Sánchez back

the presidency and ERC the necessary parliamentary importance to bring the government to the negotiating table – but it is only possible because of underlying consensus on the other key problems of the day, and is further facilitated by the presence of coalition partners *Unidas Podemos*, who, despite being more economically radical than ERC and the PSOE, can act as a nuanced arbiter in the battle of nationalisms. This pact, then, is best understood as recognition (for the time being only, perhaps) that the left's principal enemy is in fact the political right, both Spanish and Catalan.<sup>22</sup>

The ERC-PSOE pact shows that nationalism's malleability to different (and often conflicting) ideologies allows it to be used as a flexible political tool, on the condition that there are other, more concrete priorities present which will chart the direction of discussion. It is intriguing to conclude, encouragingly for some and perhaps dispiritingly for others, that in the post-2008 era of state crisis and political polarisation, nationalism itself can be negotiable, and can thus be used as a unit of exchange within political dialogue, particularly when there are more acute issues at stake. Nonetheless, Catalan separatism and Spanish constitutionalism remain irreconcilable long-term projects. The government's survival therefore depends on its ability to develop this brief agreement into an ongoing exchange which asks profound questions of the Spanish nation-state model.



*Brave New World*, 84 x 60cm, 2019

## Bhumi's Poem

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As she starts to read her poem, I am tempted to close my eyes. Not wanting to make a scene, I simply lower my gaze, allow the mustard-coloured surface of the table to blur ... and listen. She reads slowly, enunciates each word with great care and does not seem to mind long pauses of silence between the lines, allowing her work of art to breathe. The poem takes me to a space between my mother tongue and the room's evening heat, distant sounds of cars and auto rickshaws, and the smell of pencils, books, and board pens. It evokes images that are at once deeply familiar and strangely beautiful – roads, faces, fences, and the surface of the earth from afar – set in a synesthetic space between memory and presence. 'Ich will immer fremd sein' (I always want to be a stranger) is the last line. I can feel myself glowing. This is it. Consciously or not, this is what I was looking for the entire time I have been here: a profound cross-cultural connection. In the translation from Tamil to German, in this young woman's peculiar choice of words the sun sets, the moon rises, and poetry penetrates cultural boundaries; or rather, it shows they were never solid.

'That was very beautiful. Can you say something about what made you write this?' Bhumi smiles, frowns slightly, and explains, 'I wanted to show some of the beauty of being a stranger. How it can be a source of enrichment when you give yourself to it, and not let fear take over.'

We are in a Goethe Institute in India at the end of May. Assembled around the table are twelve students, young adults in their final year of learning German. As part of my role as German intern, I am running a poetry group every Monday evening. The exercise I gave for this session was to write a poem about the experience of being a stranger in a new place. How does it feel, how does it make you look at things, how do other people appear, how do they sound, how does your stomach feel? In the weeks before this session we had been reading and analysing poems by German poets in exile: Hilde Domin, Rose Ausländer, Walter Benjamin, Ingeborg Bachmann. We had been reading about 'coarse, unfamiliar hands' (Domin), about 'mother-light' (Ausländer), about missing one's language and home, and feeling at a loss. These were experiences of exile, of forced migration. None of us had had these kinds of experiences. So how did we feel about being a stranger, in a new country of our own choice, in a new situation, a new school? It is our last session, and most of the students have brought along the poems they

have written, some of them nervously folding the pieces of paper in front of them, giggling, others calmer.

The Goethe Institute: a place of cross-cultural exchange, of reciprocal inspiration. Nearly at the end of my stay, I finally realise the profundity of inter-cultural connection, and the power of poetry to create it. I finally realise that all we need to do is surrender into the in-between space of poetic thought – indeterminate, open, thriving with otherness. Two weeks ago, all managers of the Goethe Institutes in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal met here for a week-long discussion of their programmes. They gave presentations of what has already been done, and pointed out any organisational difficulties. I sat quietly at the back of the room and took notes. Almost all of the managers were men, and the few women who were there spoke significantly less than their male colleagues. Also, they were all Germans, and I knew, amidst the smell of coffee that was served by quiet figures rushing in whenever someone called for more, and the bright light of the projector, how problematic this was. Here too, there was a cross-cultural merging of some sort, albeit different to the deep, powerful exchange we were experiencing in our poetry group. These were German people – strangers – guests in South Asia, and yet they were in charge of *all* decision-making. Where does cultural exchange end and dissemination begin? I later decided to confront one of the managers about this on a daytrip to a reconstructed traditional town. The German managers and I had trotted along the quaint paths, made our own pottery, and "oh-ed" and "ah-ed", ducking down to enter the small houses, and running our fingers across the painted, dusty walls. At the meal afterwards, with yellow garlands sticking to our necks, I asked him about 'the unequal power relations inherent to the structure of the institute'. He was a sweet, petite man with a lovely French wife beside him who called him 'ma puce', so the change of topic came as a shock. The conversation was long, and left me feeling two things: pride in myself for having been so tremendously heroic and brave to ask this question, and absolute emptiness and lethargy at the ultimate reply: 'Yes, it is wrong, but when you are being pampered from morning 'til evening, you become very comfortable in believing you are superior.'

Not so in our poetry group. It is 6:52pm, and after all the poems have been read out, after I have responded to each one with a radiant, genuine smile, commenting on the beauty of their words, and the richness of their images, the gaze is returned to me. 'What about you Maya, have you written a poem?' I have to admit that I haven't. 'Well then, tell us something about your feelings about being in India. How is it different from Germany? For example, I heard that when you want to meet with friends you have to make an appointment. Is this true?

Because in India, you can just turn up at a friend's house at any time.' I laugh, play with the colourful beads around my wrist, and talk about German rules and regulations, still beaming with a sense of profound connection. The session ends, we all fold our pieces of paper away into our bags and say goodbye. Some of the students come to shake my hand, and wish me a safe journey home.

As I step outside into the dark, my face begins to cool. The path beneath my feet crunches, and the starless sky turns silently above me. This is where it hits me. It wasn't an exchange at all! They had written poems in another language, and I was the native speaker who could glow, radiate, and tell everyone how beautiful their words were. The beauty I had experienced was particular and one-sided. Instead of feigning a sense of multicultural harmony, I should have instigated a discussion about some of the issues involved in the institute's work. We should have talked about its challenges, as well as the wonders of cultural exchange. The poems were the perfect motivation for this. I walk, swallowing and trying to hold back tears.

But again I am brought back from the depths of self-absorption, as I see Bhumi standing by the side of the road. I clear my throat, and start to pick up my pace. 'Hello!' She turns around, greets me and we stand in silence for a moment as I catch my breath. 'What will you do after the internship?' she asks. I tell her I'm moving to Bristol, in England, to study Comparative Literature. She smiles broadly, and says: 'I lived in Bath for a year, I went to Bristol many times.'

I too smile. 'Really? What is it like?'



*Brave New World*, 60 x 84cm, 2019

## ‘Differentness’ and the American Jew-Gentile Heterosexual Romantic-Comedy

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Let him not marry the daughter of an am ha’arez [Hebrew for ‘people of the Land’, an ‘ignoramus’], because they are detestable and their wives are vermin, and of their daughters it is said, Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of Beast.<sup>1</sup>

POLICE OFFICER

Take her in. We’ll have her reprogrammed.

LUNA

What are you talking about?!

POLICE OFFICER

You’ve been contaminated by the alien.

LUNA

What?!

POLICE OFFICER

You’ve spent an unhealthy amount of time in the presence of the alien.<sup>2</sup>

The passages from the Babylonian Talmud (the written source of Jewish Law) and the scene from *Sleeper* (1973) confirm the prejudices both Jews and Gentiles have about each other, which are revealed through tradition and myth. The function of the non-Jewish woman in Jewish narratives has a long history. In Exodus 2.5, Moses, for example, was drawn from the river by the Pharaoh’s daughter.<sup>3</sup> This sets up the problem of how the Gentile woman helps define the Jewish Other. However, this relationship also brings with it an enormous amount of baggage. The Jew-Gentile coupling can be used as a format for interrogating intercultural attraction, stereotypes, and anti-Semitism within such a relationship. Jew-Gentile relationships in films such as *The Graduate* (1967), *Carnal Knowledge* (1971), *The Heartbreak Kid* (1972), *The Way We Were* (1973), *Sleeper* (1973), and *Annie Hall* (1977) have influenced works like

*Meet the Parents* (2000), *Keeping the Faith* (2001), *Meet the Fockers* (2004), and *The Heartbreak Kid* (2007) in identifying such problems. However, these more recent films avoid the cynicism of the previous ones, whose open endings emphasise incomplete and unsatisfying intercultural relationships. The newer films embrace an optimistic and contemporary view of intercultural romance in America. While these films’ themes and topics are numerous – the 1960s counterculture (*The Graduate*), sexism and masculinity (*Carnal Knowledge*), adultery (*The Graduate* and *The Heartbreak Kid*), tyranny and cultural trends (*Sleeper*), the entertainment industry (*Annie Hall*), family and trust (*Meet the Parents* and *Meet the Fockers*), and friendship vs. love (*Keeping the Faith*) – the main focus of this article is their interrogation of Jewish differentness in intercultural relationships. Antithetical histories, ideas, and beliefs often accompany intercultural relationships. Whether noticed or not, these competing narratives slip into such mixed couplings, as do the stereotypes implanted in them. Recognising and using the Other’s stereotypes of one’s own group play an important part in discrediting the biased narratives of both sides. The disintegration of false dichotomies and the emergence of new narratives centring on coexistence can occur, creating opportunities for new beliefs and principles.

The male protagonists in the comedies here connect with their love interests through hyperbole (i.e., by being ‘more Jewish’). Remaining stereotypical at first is advantageous for the unfulfilled Jewish protagonists in these films because their differentness is attractive and initially appears as a way for them to live as assimilated Jews. They believe that they can maintain a sense of tradition and be part of white mainstream America through relations with the *shiksa*, even if she is non-kosher. The Talmud states that the *shiksa* (‘detested thing’), the female Gentile, is a part of the blemished stock,<sup>4</sup> part of ‘the wicked [...] held up to shame’.<sup>5</sup> *Shiksa* is derived from the biblical word *sheketz*, described in the following passage. The female Gentile is an abomination like *treif* (non-kosher food, ‘the flesh of an animal torn or mauled’):

These you may eat of all that live in the water: anything in water, whether in the sea or in the streams, that has fins and scales – these you may eat. But anything in the seas or in the streams that has no fins and scales, among all the swarming things of the water and among all the other living creatures that are in the water – they are an abomination [*sheketz*] for you and an abomination for you they shall remain: you shall not eat of their flesh and you shall abominate their carcasses. Everything in water that has no fins and scales shall be an abomination for you.<sup>6</sup>

In this essay, I explain how the Other's differentness is part of the reason for attraction; the intercultural relationships discussed here, although imperfect, allow Jews and Gentiles to realise the uncomfortable but worthwhile advantages of exploring beyond their own culture's narrative.

*The Graduate* (1967) proved how successful a film with an unconventional Jewish-looking protagonist could be. Robert Redford was initially intended for the lead character of Benjamin Braddock, the twenty-year-old who is seduced by Mrs. Robinson (Anne Bancroft). However, Dustin Hoffman, a Jew, eventually took the role. What did the director, Mike Nichols, accomplish with a protagonist who was suddenly made Jewish? Changing a character who was supposed to be a tall, masculine blonde male had cultural significance; creative dimensions were being explored while thoughtful dialogue about sexual and ethnic identities was being introduced to an audience. Mrs. Robinson lures Benjamin into a sexual affair to purposely sabotage his chance of marrying her daughter, Elaine (Katharine Ross), something Benjamin's parents want. There are other signs of anti-Semitism throughout the film, including Benjamin's being viewed as an outsider by his landlord, his entering an all-white fraternity while searching for Elaine, and the final battle against the wedding guests at a Presbyterian church, where he wields a giant crucifix.<sup>7</sup> These scenes all underline the primary concept of Nichols's choice to show Benjamin as an alien within his own environment, something Jews in exile have been forced to live with for centuries throughout Europe. Barry Rubin's description of assimilation, then, rings true here: '[t]he ultimate result of ongoing assimilation is total assimilation through conversion, intermarriage, or fully entering another nation or ideological framework. This results in the disappearance of any Jewish identity or [...] anything distinguishing such people from the majority'.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the shot of Benjamin alone on the campus of Berkeley (shot at USC) reminds viewers that the work is more than the countercultural 'youth-oriented film about sex, protest, and the generation gap' Glenn Man describes it as being.<sup>9</sup> The role of the relationship with the Other in the process of establishing one's Jewish identity more clearly becomes essential.

With help from the writer Jules Feiffer, Mike Nichols more fully developed the problem of the *shiksa*-chasing Jewish suitor in *Carnal Knowledge* (1971). In this film Art Garfunkel plays Sandy, a gentle, bookish *nebbish* (from the Yiddish: 'a poor man,' 'one who is timid, ineffectual, submissive') who competes against Jonathan (Jack Nicholson), the stronger, more assertive Gentile, in games of sexual conquest. Jonathan ends up 'scoring' with the cherished female 'prize', Susan (Candice Bergen), first (Fig. 2). Sandy, though, eventually marries the *shiksa*, believing he is the true winner. As a lover, the *shiksa* is intense; as a wife, the sex is mundane and she causes the Jew to doubt assimilation. Anticipating



Figure 1



Figure 2

Alvy Singer (Allen) in *Annie Hall*, Garfunkel delivers one of the more memorable lines of the film when he says of sex: 'maybe it's just not meant to be enjoyable with women you love' (1:01:18–20).<sup>10</sup> This statement becomes the case when Sandy divorces Susan and ends up marrying a Jew, Jennifer (Carol Kane), retreating safely to his culture and giving up his pursuit of the *shiksa*. The misogynistic scopophilia in both films is underlined by the bumbling, inadequate male protagonists, emphasising the point that superficial sexual quests are inexhaustible and the courtiers' needs always insatiable. Their unrealistic vision of the perfect woman – signified by Benjamin's idolisation of Elaine Robinson's portrait (13:20),



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

and Sandy and Jonathan's fixation on the unattainable, unknown golden-haired skater (37:14) (Figs. 3 and 4) – guarantees their discontent. These are reasons for the characters' complete lack of feeling rewarded and why their wishes always go unfulfilled in both the Jewish and the Gentile worlds in these stories.

Nichols's films had a significant influence on Elaine May's *The Heartbreak Kid* (1972), which is arguably a parody of *The Graduate*. Confronting the difficulty of being a Jew, the protagonist, Lenny (Charles Grodin), chooses to chase an attractive Gentile woman, Kelly (Cybill Shepherd), in order to escape his Jewish wife, Lila (Jeannie Berlin), whom he begins to find unappealing on their honeymoon.<sup>11</sup> The *shiksa* offers liberation from the Jewish lifestyle, whereas Lila reminds Lenny of everything he despises about being Jewish. For example, on the beach, plain-looking, ordinary Jewish types appear, connecting unattractive Jewishness to Lila. The Jews in Miami, the typical vacation spot for New Yorkers, are not good-looking, nor people with whom Lenny would be unfamiliar. As normal middle-class Jews, they physically resemble the older generation of relatives shown at his wedding; they are Old World, not wealthy, unlike the healthy-looking Midwesterner, whom Alvy refers to in *Annie Hall* as looking really 'American' (45:00).<sup>12</sup> Lenny is embarrassed to be a part of this group, especially when Kelly passes by and sees his wife (25:00) (Fig. 5). The *shiksa* is outside the circle. She represents the opportunity for Lenny to question his lifestyle; he is physically attracted to her but also recognises that she is a cultural challenge. He wants to escape the New York crowd of which he is still a part in Miami and permanently associated with through his marriage to a Jewish woman.

For Lenny, the *shiksa* is part of the privileged environment, and she is the visualisation of something to be worshipped. The *shiksa's* Otherness is the reason for the Jewish male's pursuit.<sup>13</sup> More than an exotic Other, the *shiksa* also represents the Jewish protagonist's self-affirmation. The way the Jew 'sees himself' is less important than 'how he believes others see the Jew and the value they attach to that identity. The question then arises as to whom the individual regards as the significant "others" – Jews or non-Jews?' The 'non-Jewish appraisal' becomes important for a minority in such a situation.<sup>14</sup> Kelly becomes the 'significant other', with the courtship being the romantic test.

'Differentness' is a natural and relevant part of the conversation. Lenny and Kelly's differences permit 'closeness' to occur, as the scene described here shows. More than simply the subject of the Carpenters' song 'Close to You' at the couple's wedding, 'closeness' also becomes a strategic game and test for Lenny's new love-interest, as Kelly explains on the night they secretly go to her parents' Minnesota cabin:



KELLY

We take everything off and get as close as we possibly can without touching. It's a lot harder than it sounds.

LENNY

I love it. I love it! All my life I wanted to be in a place like this, with a girl like you, playing a game like this. Come on, hurry up. Let's play.

KELLY

I don't know if I can go through with it.

LENNY

Oh, yes you can, sure. I mean, it's just a game. The worst thing that could happen is you'd lose. (1:25:15–39)

Being farther away from the city in a cabin reinforces Lenny's urbanization (Jewishness) as they disrobe. The *shiksa's* whiteness is emphasised as he is placed within darkness in a contrast shot, increasing his Otherness (1:26:20–25) (Fig. 6). When they slowly come together, they are on equal terms; only their sexual attraction to each other matters. Lenny believes that he has seen God's 'master-piece' after seeing Kelly naked. They find the distance between them arousing, as is the distance between the Jewish and Gentile worlds for Lenny. More than a game of resisting temptation, the act of inching toward one another actually allows Kelly to gauge the length of Lenny's erect penis – the greater the distance, the greater the length of the erect penis, which prevents the two from touching. Kelly moves forward slowly until she giggles, signalling that she has felt his penis (1:27:08–30). When they leave, Kelly discloses the outcome of the game:

KELLY

I think my father misjudged you, Lenny. I really do. You're the most decent, honourable man that I've ever met.

LENNY

Well, thank you. Thank you, Kelly.

KELLY

I'll sleep with you tomorrow night. (1:27:37–59)



Figure 6

Differentness creates attraction between the two. Kelly acknowledges that Lenny is 'honourable' and 'decent'. Her explanation that her anti-Semitic father 'misjudged' him implies that he is sexually adequate. The intolerant father later rejects the young man's asking for Kelly's hand in marriage. Mr. Corcoran explains to Lenny that the notions in his 'New York head' ('Jewish mind') are crazy (the Yiddish word *Yiddishe Kop* is literally translated as 'Jewish head' and means 'smart person'). Kelly's father works with bankers (read: Jews), and he believes that he has the ability to expose people who are verbally manipulative; that is to say, he openly confirms that he is an anti-Semite who believes in the stereotype of the "silver-tongued" Jew (1:34:28–42):

MR CORCORAN

Where do you get ideas like that? They just come into that New York head of yours? [...] I see through you. You don't think I see through you? You could wear two wool sweaters and a raccoon coat, I'd still see through you. (1:35:28–48)

Kelly, however, is the provocateur in her seduction of Lenny. She is the one who is 'indecent' by suggesting the childish game, which allows her to see him fully undressed and fully aroused, to 'judge' him, and to inspect the size and shape of his circumcised penis, which verifies his Jewish differentness. He is desirable because he is forbidden in her Gentile world. The two eventually marry in the end, but the final scenes indicate the marriage will not be ideal.



Figure 7



Figure 8

Lenny secretly longs for his first wife, indicated when he sings ‘Close to You’ in the film’s last shot (1:44:05) (Fig. 7). This ending, however, is also a recreation of the final shot of Elaine and Benjamin in *The Graduate* (Fig. 8). These two segments interrogate Jewish assimilation into a society that can often be anti-Semitic; these are bittersweet victories with which both protagonists must cope. It is doubtful if any triumph can last for the protagonists living in these circumstances, and if such relationships are durable. At the wedding, Lenny suffers boring conversations with businessmen who deal in insurance, the all-American-sounding ‘Alexander and Alexander, a nationwide firm’,

and ‘tear gas’ (1:42:20–33), a useful product to dispel unwanted dissidents. They represent the middle-class Gentiles also found in *The Graduate* that try to persuade the young man to follow the superficial and capitalistic ‘American’ dream. This is the place that Lenny has done everything possible to reach, and it is supposed to be the best hope for his future. Neither route is an answer, though; the dilemma must remain unresolved. Lenny’s bringing his Jewishness to a Minnesota town – ‘this (Gentile) part of the country’, as Mrs. Corcoran calls it (1:30:21) – into a family whose patriarch is anti-Semitic, will continue to be problematic. In *The Graduate*, Benjamin is also nudged to painfully assimilate. Being an insurance salesman, or dealing in ‘plastics’, which Benjamin is advised to do (5:48), while sounding tedious, points to the necessity of compromise on the part of Lenny and Benjamin, and of Jews within American culture. Nicholas de Lange argues that being Jewish requires compromise: ‘A certain amount of assimilation appears desirable, if the Jews are to be socially integrated in the society in which they live, and if they are to avail themselves of the opportunities which this society freely offers them’. As long as it does not ‘threaten the [Jew’s] essential character’, ‘superficial assimilation’ may be preferable to ‘religious traditionalism’ or ‘Jewish secularism’.<sup>15</sup> Lange’s proposition, though, fails in Lenny and Benjamin’s case, in which only a profound sense of alienation seems to transpire.

This Jewish problem of exogamy, it is to be remembered, also transcends gender. The desire for the *sheketz* (the masculine version of the *shiksa*) appears in *The Way We Were* (1973). This is the story of a Jewish activist, Katie Moroski (Barbra Streisand), who has a complex relationship with a privileged Gentile, Hubbell Gardiner (Robert Redford). While this article’s emphasis is the Jewish male’s pursuit of the female Gentile Other, this film is interesting to note because of the reversal of the usual male dominant narrative, and because it also places losing one’s Jewishness as the cost of assimilation at the centre of its themes.

Jewish women in the films here are unattractive for their Jewish husbands because their looks are a reminder of their Jewishness; however, their Gentile suitors find their looks desirable. Hair, for example, acts as an ethnic identifier. In *The Heartbreak Kid*, Lenny watches as Lila becomes frustrated brushing her unmanageable ‘Jewish’ hair. The shot points to her being too familiar and too “average” for him. Her thick, curly locks are a reminder of her Jewishness and his realization of it (20:47) (Fig. 9). In *The Way We Were*, Hubbell is the golden-haired college boy whom becomes the object of desire for the kinky-haired woman. Their differences are identified right away: she is poor, Jewish, and first-generation. She is an outsider who can never fit into his world, but it is differentness that makes them attracted to one another. When a new, straight-haired Katie meets Hubbell again during the Second World War, sex between the two



Figure 9



Figure 10

is unsatisfactory. She has lost her Jewishness, and has become like the other women in his Gentile world. When she finally returns to being committed in her cause to fight against the HUAC hearings, she loses him. Upon marrying a Jewish man, she becomes Mrs. Cohen, and her hair returns to its natural state (Fig. 10).<sup>16</sup> She regains her Jewish identity, but the intimacy she had with Hubbell can never be replaced by love for her Jewish husband.

As *Sleeper* (1973) shows, the Jewish male is also a forbidden thing for the Gentile woman: he is an 'alien' who 'contaminates' (43:50). It would be very remiss of me not to mention the controversy surrounding Woody Allen's alleged sexual assault of his adopted daughter, Dylan Farrow, when she was seven years old, and how this incident affects new readings. However, while the filmmaker's biography certainly informs his works, it is not the key topic of discussion

here. In *Sleeper*, Miles Monroe (Allen) is defrosted after two hundred years of being cryogenically frozen and finds the world has been turned into a police state ruled by a dictator. Monroe is an alien creature who must be stopped. He and his love interest, Luna (Diane Keaton), must work to remove 'the Leader'. Miles's obstruction in winning Luna's affection is Erno (John Beck), a 'tall, blond, Prussian, Nordic, Aryan, Nazi type' with 'wall-to-wall muscles' (1:22:12–15, 1:07:00), not unlike Elaine Robinson's frat-boy fiancé. Miles jokingly refers to himself as a 'mulatto' (50:35–37). The line is a comment on the diversity of Jewish appearance, acknowledging that Jews are not merely members of a homogenous population. It serves as a reminder that they have often been associated with 'blackness': 'Negative ideas [...] were easily adapted to interpret Jews and their 'looks' in early modern England and elsewhere'.<sup>17</sup> Miles's remark also expresses an affinity for African-American people and culture. He is clutching a clarinet while he makes the comment. In *Annie Hall* (1977), Alvy Singer expresses his liking for jazz, referencing Billie Holiday (40:03). These scenes also underline the fact that during the civil rights movement 'Jews believed that by combating bigotry against blacks (sic), they were helping to create a more tolerant and open society in which anti-Semitism would diminish'.<sup>18</sup> The overrepresentation of Jews during the Civil Rights Movement must be pointed out. This argument is contrary to Tamara Zipora's claim that 'the shock of Nazi evils and the subsequent rise of the "Negro Question" and segregation as national imperatives helped to obliterate Jewish exclusion from the national landscape' and that Jews 'performed their [new] homogenous whiteness through displaying their aversion to [...] African Americans'.<sup>19</sup> Both Jews and Black people, however, were stereotyped as sexually promiscuous, and the Nazis often linked the two in propaganda. Their difference was a threat to Aryan endogamy, and they were equally viewed as lechers out to 'seduce and destroy German motherhood'.<sup>20</sup>

This was the anti-Semitic argument given to explain why Jews lusted after Gentile women. However, the Jewish-American author Philip Roth suggests that, for Jewish men, 'the sexual longing is for the Other' occurs because 'Jewish women are mothers and sisters'.<sup>21</sup> This longing appears in *Annie Hall*, a film in which the *shiksa*, Annie (Keaton), acknowledges that she is not 'smart enough to be serious about' (39:39–41). The Talmud states that an *am ha'arez* is a person to be avoided; staying away from the uneducated person is desirable for Jews.<sup>22</sup> Jews are taught to involve themselves in intense scholarly activities, for which *yeshivas* (Jewish educational institutions) were developed. Vincent Brook writes that 'the *yeshiva-bokhur* (religious scholar) models of Jewish masculinity – gentle, introverted, bookish, isolated from the larger society – [...] arose in early Roman and Christian times and congealed in the European diaspora'.<sup>23</sup> An *am ha'arez*

is looked upon as not only a Gentile but a foolish individual. The word can be compared with *ger toshav* ('resident alien'), a Gentile who is accepted by Jewish society and abides by the Torah.<sup>24</sup> Annie's lack of sophistication, though, does not deter her Jewish suitor, Alvy (Allen), who spends the film reflecting on his life with her and with his Jewish wives. She is a white Anglo-Saxon protestant (WASP), and as such she represents a class of people with British ancestry, traditionalists whom Alvy, to reiterate, believes typify the stereotype of the 'American' who is 'beautiful' and never gets 'sick' (45:03–14).



Figure 11



Figure 12

Again, here the male protagonist finds Jewish women less appealing because they remind him of his Jewishness, even if they appear to be perfect partners. Carol Kane's role in *Annie Hall* is essentially positive, even according to Allen's character. As Alvy's first wife, Allison, she possesses desirable qualities: 'she was beautiful; she was willing; she was real intelligent' (17:56–18:00) (Fig. 11). She is natural, comforting, sweet, unpretentious, and helps in pointing out Alvy's flaws. She is precisely what the protagonist needs in a mate; however, she is Jewish. Her sequence is followed by the lobster scene (Fig. 12), during which Alvy literally (lobsters) and figuratively (Annie) chases *treif*. This indicates his switch from Jewess to Gentile as the desirable partner, establishing his attempt to not 'belong to any club that would have someone like [him] for a member' (18:05–07). Alvy now prefers *treif* and hopes that Annie prefers him, so that he can safely assimilate into a world where he does not have to confront his tradition and ethnicity. He fails, however, after Annie realises her self-worth and decides to break up with him, demonstrating that intercultural romances in these films do not reach the stage at which the couples share similar dreams, raise children, or lead successful lives in which Jewish and Gentile relatives come together.

The twenty-first century has borne more positive cinematic depictions of intercultural romantic relationships between Jews and Gentiles that are still comical in their unearthing of deep-seated prejudice. In *The Graduate*, *The Way We Were*, *The Heartbreak Kid*, and *Annie Hall*, intercultural relationships are represented as a cyclical pattern of defeat, while in *Meet the Parents* (2000) and *Meet the Fockers* (2004) such couples are much more optimistic. *Meet the Parents* addresses the problem of assimilation for the Jewish protagonist ignorant of the white, suburban lifestyle of his future bride. The film explores the effects of a Jew's perception of the Gentile as fanatical and interrogating. Like Lenny Cantrow and Alvy Singer, Greg Focker (Ben Stiller) is unable to function in unfamiliar territory. Greg's Jewishness is exposed in front of Pam Byrnes's (Teri Polo) suspicious father (Robert De Niro). The 'distance' between the two cultures is most obvious at mealtime, recalling both Alvy's Easter dinner with Annie, during which they eat ham (Fig. 13),<sup>25</sup> and Lenny's uncomfortable experience with Kelly's parents, during which his Jewishness is alluded to through a conversation about New York's 'exotic' food (1:31:14–45) (Fig. 14). Here, however, Greg sits next to his future wife, demonstrating an acceptance of the relationship, even if it still needs to be formally approved by Pam's father. Mr. Byrnes is quick to test the young man's understanding of Christian beliefs and demands that he say grace. When Pam responds that Greg is Jewish, Jack asks his daughter, 'Are you telling me that

Jews don't pray, honey?' (23:29–36). Greg's blessing of the meal provides viewers insight into his perception of the Christian's relationship with God (Fig. 15):

It's not like I'm a rabbi or something. I've said grace at many a dinner table. Okay. Oh, dear God. Thank you. You are such a good God to us, a kind and gentle and accommodating God. And we thank you, oh, sweet, sweet Lord of Hosts, for the smorgasbord you have so aptly lain at our table this day, and each day, by day, day by day, by day. Oh, dear Lord, three things we pray: to love thee more dearly, to see thee more clearly, to follow thee more nearly, day by day, by day. Amen. (24:00–14)

The short prayer delivered is nonsensical, childish, and devoid of scriptural references; this is because Jews cannot intellectually accept Jesus or the Trinity. For Jews, God as three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is not supported anywhere in the Tanakh, and the worship of Jesus is idolatry. 'The problem with Christianity', argues Martin Buber, is 'the dogmatic faith in Christ propagated by Paul and his successors. [...] [W]hile Jesus is a great teacher and a great historical figure, as a Jew [Buber] cannot accept Jesus as the Messiah'.<sup>26</sup> Allen's *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986) is an excellent example of this criticism of Christ as the Messiah. In the film, Mickey (Allen) desperately tries to convert to Catholicism. He goes shopping to buy a cross, a Christian bible, a picture of Jesus, mayonnaise, and Wonder Bread (1:12:58).<sup>27</sup> Mickey's challenge is both philosophical and cultural. Confused, Mickey's father asks, 'Why Jesus Christ?! Why, for instance, shouldn't you become a Buddhist?' (1:11:01–04). 'That's totally alien to me', replies Mickey (1:11:05–06). For Jews, however, Jesus is also totally alien. In *Meet the Parents*, however, Greg's attempt shows he is willing to learn how to make his future in-laws happy. Furthermore, his comical personality is endearing, and the in-laws eventually accept him.

Greg's Jewishness is revisited and emphasised in the sequel, *Meet the Fockers*, with the introduction of his super-Jewish parents, Bernie (Dustin Hoffman) and Roz Focker (Barbra Streisand). In this sequel, Jewish stereotypes assist rather than hinder the formation of new, loving relationships. Differentness is both appealing because it plays a role in bringing the families together, and embarrassing for Greg, who is reminded that he is Jewish. In contrast to the reserved nature of the Byrnes, the Fockers are loud and obnoxious, reminiscent of Alvy's parents in *Annie Hall*'s dinner scene and playfully redrawing the Jew-Gentile dichotomy. Roz's role as an overbearing mother should not be ignored. Indeed, the Fockers treat their son like a boy-man in a manner as denigrating as Mr. and Mrs. Broderick's towards Benjamin in *The Graduate* (where Hoffman's character



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

is forced to wear a scuba outfit on his twenty-first birthday, destroying his opportunity to finally prove himself as an adult). Benjamin moves unsteadily forward, limbs made heavy and awkward by the large flippers he drags across the floor. He is forced to the bottom of the pool, another symbol of his Jewish 'boyiness'. Greg's parents similarly mistreat their son, revealing to their future in-laws how he slept in their room until he was ten (43:01).<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, when Roz recounts the story of Greg's circumcision, she refers to her now-adult son's penis as 'the tiny turtle' (43:50). When Mrs. Byrnes leafs through Greg's baby book at the dinner table, she discovers his foreskin, which Greg then accidentally tosses into the communal fondue pot (44:41). The scene, though, shows Greg as non-threatening and likeable. Benjamin, on the other hand, is continually viewed as a threat

to the Robinsons and to Christian culture throughout *The Graduate*, which the final crucifix scene demonstrates (Fig. 17). Unlike Greg, who tries to understand Christianity, Benjamin turns back the crowd with the oversized cross, underlining the anti-Semitism that has long been associated with the church since at least the time of Martin Luther, who vehemently attacked Judaism:

Now, what are we going to do with these rejected, condemned, Jewish people? We should not suffer it after they are among us and we know about such lying, blaspheming and cursing among them, lest we become partakers of their lies, cursing and blaspheming. We cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of God's wrath (as the prophets say), nor convert the Jews.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast, *Keeping the Faith* (2001) avoids the negativity of the earlier comedies and the animosity between the Christian and Jewish faiths. The film identifies the importance of peace and understanding within a multicultural society. Written by Stuart Blumberg, a Jew, and directed by Edward Norton, a Gentile, the film contains many contemporary multicultural themes. Father Finn (Norton), Rabbi Jake Schram (Stiller), and their attractive Gentile friend, Anna Reilly (Jenna Elfman), are childhood friends who discover each other again in their adult lives. They jokingly call themselves 'two Micks and a Yid' (6:45).<sup>30</sup> This early joke highlights the film's positioning as a positive interfaith comedy that avoids the cynicism of the 1960s and 1970s. Their differences are playfully pointed out right away to show how differentness within their group is beneficial.

Stiller's character is not neurotic, cynical, or immature, and the 'Outsider-ness' associated with characters like Lenny and Alvy is not present. It is revealed that Jake's family wanted him to be an 'investment banker' (9:00), but his decision to be a rabbi has positive consequences. However, the stereotypical Jewish mother is still present (Anne Bancroft). She represents the mother who refuses to let her child grow up, resulting in his being viewed as the boy-man, and, as Roth suggests, his inability to recognise Jewish women as possible sexual partners. The term 'Jew boy' is one anti-Semitic slur that is also connected to this stereotype. Jake, however, is athletic and popular, going against this stereotype. He escapes the mundane life of a rabbi through humorous sermons, bringing a Gospel choir to sing the Jewish hymn 'Ein Keloheinu' (31:30). This service is attended by Father Finn (30:10), emphasising the tone of interfaith harmony. Brian and Jake call themselves the 'God Squad' and use stand-up comedy in their services to appeal to their congregations. This multiculturalism is duplicated in *Meet the Fockers* when Kevin shows up to marry Greg and Pam: 'meeting



Figure 18

Greg made such an impression on Kevin', explains Jack, that 'he spent eight months in Israel on a kibbutz, then he took an Internet course and got ordained as an interfaith minister' (1:40:45–52) (Fig. 18).

In *Keeping the Faith*, Jake's final positive sermon on Yom Kippur summarises the film's argument:

We live in a really complex world, a world where boundaries and definitions are blurring and bleeding into each other in ways that I think challenge us, not just as Jews, but as human beings [...]. For a number of months, I've been seeing a woman who isn't Jewish. It doesn't matter if I'm still with her, which I'm not, or if I still love her, which I do, very much. What matters is that I shouldn't have been afraid to discuss it with you. I'm not sorry for loving her. (1:45:48–47:44)

Jake is successful in winning over his community and the board members who must decide his fate with the synagogue.

The newer version of *The Heartbreak Kid* (2007) also updates the familiar Jewish romantic-comedy.<sup>31</sup> While still focusing on a Jewish protagonist, it is an example of a Jewish film after it has been 'de-Judaized'.<sup>32</sup> Brook references Daniel Itzkovitz and his claim that Jews' otherness has 'largely faded from view'.<sup>33</sup> Here, the multicultural Jew replaces an anxious Jew full of doubt and despair. Stiller plays the protagonist, whose name is Eddie, not Lenny. The deeper questions of cultural norms and assimilation are removed. In the hands of the Irish-American Farrelly brothers, the narrative and the protagonist are new-world, well-assimilated, and secular. The importance of the Jewish wedding, the old-world

family members who embrace their new in-laws, and the questions of tradition and its deterioration are missing. Eddie and his non-Jewish partner Lila (Malin Akerman) have a non-religious, multi-ethnic marriage ceremony where guests drink Corona beer and dance to a Hawaiian wedding band. Instead of going to Miami for a honeymoon, the couple (from San Francisco, not New York) goes to Cabo San Lucas. There on the beach, the protagonist does not encounter a dangerous, golden-haired *shiksa* who presents a dilemma. Instead he meets a personable dark-haired woman, Miranda (Michelle Monaghan) from Mississippi. Even though Lila is still an outrageous, brash, obnoxious, and erratic woman, her impulsive behaviour is not connected with her ethnicity, which is never identified.

The remake has none of the dangers, neuroses, or anxieties caused by the conflict of tradition, assimilation and the intercultural relationship. Part of the reasoning behind this is the assumption that Jew-Gentile courtship is commonplace, no longer has a stigma attached to it, that assimilation is not an issue, and that the types of ethnic comedies produced by Jews in the 1960s and 1970s may perhaps be clichéd, dated, and no longer funny for contemporary audiences. Stiller's protagonists overcome the intercultural complexities of the Jew-Gentile courtship in ways that previous protagonists do not, while the open endings of the earlier films discussed question not only the illusion of happiness within intercultural relationships more specifically but also the values of marriage and tradition in general.

## Conclusion

The contemporary comedies examined here suggest that intercultural relationships can be positive and successful, while the earlier comedies emphasise the painful process of both detribalisation and assimilation. The flawed Jew-*shiksa* relationships speak of the protagonists' unique positions, stuck between tribalism and proactive engagement in romances where the dialectic of competing cultural narratives is created to rethink Jewishness. The reclamation of a unique American-Jewish identity, in both periods, is achieved not through cultural pride and a resisting of stereotypes but by a modification of these stereotypes. Driven by a diverse mainstream market, all of these films, then, are a relevant source of communicating how these directors view Jewishness as well as their critiques of assimilation and the intercultural relationship in two different eras.

## Who Will Overthrow Imperialism with Me? Culture and Interactivity in Anti-Colonial Radio for Africans, 1956–1964

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The decolonisation of Africa was a political and economic revolution, but it was also a cultural contest.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as the British, French and Belgian empires retreated between 1956 and 1964, African activists produced a wealth of books, poems, speeches and songs which sought to debate the meanings of freedom and usher in a new era of ‘national liberation’ across the continent.<sup>2</sup> As decolonisation progressed, furthermore, global and regional powers created media products for Africans in attempts to win influence amongst the new nations. Some powers, like Portugal and France, attempted to use media to build support for colonial rule.<sup>3</sup> Other states, including the Soviet Union, Egypt and China, turned to dramatic new forms of propaganda which aimed to spread support for independence, undermine the European powers and win allies in existing anti-colonial groups. Radio was particularly prominent: services could reach remote and impoverished regions and speak to literate and illiterate audiences alike. Broadcasts, unlike print propaganda, were also difficult for colonial authorities to trace and very costly to block entirely.<sup>4</sup> From the 1950s, therefore, anti-colonial broadcasts sought to bring Africans into a global media sphere and transform the continent into a key battleground of the cultural Cold War.

Following in the tradition of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, many media theorists have derided propaganda as a ‘misanthropic’ device, reliant on dull rhetoric and the manipulation of passive, uncritical audiences.<sup>5</sup> These assumptions were certainly prominent in colonial depictions of propaganda in Africa: one British survey of Dar es Salaam from 1956 complains that Radio Cairo was popular because it ‘makes no attempt to be fair... [fairness] gains few audiences among the uneducated and the ignorant’.<sup>6</sup> A similar account from 1965 describes the ‘rigid message’ of Radio Beijing, depicting its audience as the ‘tribesman smeared in red paint’.<sup>7</sup> However, this interpretation is misleading. Services from Moscow, Cairo and Beijing all carried political commentary, news and editorial – but they also played music, produced plays and held competitions. African audiences were not always able to interact with anti-colonial broadcasters – but hundreds could through mailbag programmes, song requests and guest presenter spots. In the complex media landscape of a decolonising Africa,

anti-colonial radio should not be dismissed as a simple transmission of political ideas from broadcaster to audience. Rather, it was a more complex site of cultural exchange and interaction in which African listeners were not only consumers but producers of meaning.<sup>8</sup>

### Developing an Anti-Colonial Radio

Anti-colonial broadcasts to Africa have a long history.<sup>9</sup> The first nation to mobilise radio against a colonial government was Mussolini’s Italy, which broadcast detailed reports of British and French atrocities from 1937 under the name Radio Bari.<sup>10</sup> These broadcasts were joined by a Nazi service, broadcast to Africa from September 1939, which combined vivid descriptions of colonial crimes with praise for Germany’s wartime successes.<sup>11</sup> While these broadcasts were principally targeted at North Africa, they were apparently influential throughout the continent: the broadcaster Hyder Kindy recalled that ‘every evening flocks of people [...] would come to my place to listen to the [German] announcer’ – sometimes so many that audiences would be forced to sit scattered around the house and wait for other listeners to relay the important news.<sup>12</sup> The colonial governments of Tanganyika and Zanzibar were eventually forced to ban radio listenership in public spaces because of the popularity of these broadcasts.<sup>13</sup> While interest in both programmes would diminish rapidly as the Second World War turned against the Axis powers, their early success helps to demonstrate the appeal of anti-colonial radio both as a source of information and entertainment as a focal point for gatherings where community cohesion may have been more important than the radio’s actual audibility.<sup>14</sup>

After the Second World War, new nations came to the fore of anti-colonial broadcasting. The first was Egypt, a post-colonial nation which had much to gain from diplomatic and economic links with an independent Africa. Under the authoritarian control of President Gamal Abdul Nasser, Radio Cairo inaugurated daily broadcasts to Africa in Arabic from 1953, in Swahili from 1954 and in English and French from 1959.<sup>15</sup> By 1965, after a significant expansion of its broadcasting infrastructure which allowed the station to reach southern and western Africa, Radio Cairo was broadcasting in at least twenty-two African languages.<sup>16</sup> In the same period, communist powers established their own broadcasts with the aim of undermining western hegemony and spreading left-wing thought across the decolonising continent. From 1958, the Soviet Union’s information bureau ran a regular service of anti-colonial radio for Africans in English and French, and later expanded to an array of African languages.<sup>17</sup> The People’s Republic of China followed suit from 1959, securing broadcasting hours from transmitters in Mali and Tanzania to ensure their broadcasts could be heard clearly across



the continent.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, pirate and clandestine stations emerged in the gaps between official anti-colonial programming.<sup>19</sup> These too, however, could be vehicles for the politics of larger powers. The Voice of Free Africa, a prominent example, claimed to speak ‘from the heart of Africa’.<sup>20</sup> In March 1960, the British government discovered that the clandestine broadcasts were transmitted from the same government facilities as the official Radio Cairo services, and a later account reveals that the two services even shared a presenter.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the period of decolonisation, therefore, African radio audiences were targets for foreign services which aimed to spread political thought, build diplomatic ties and demonstrate solidarity with the new nations. While these services were typically overt government communication, however, they could also take more subtle, innovative and clandestine forms.

Audience surveys attest to the popularity of these anti-colonial broadcasts. A 1967 survey found that thirty-nine per cent of Ethiopian students claimed to listen to Radio Cairo and seventeen per cent to Radio Moscow.<sup>22</sup> Another found that one to eight per cent of the population of each East African capital city listened regularly to Radio Beijing.<sup>23</sup> A British report from Malawi in 1959 revealingly praised an exceptional colonial programme ‘which is said to have surpassed even Cairo Radio in popularity’.<sup>24</sup> Other sources testify to the broadcasts’ potential to take on significant cultural meaning. A colonial sedition charge of 1954 recorded that the Zanzibar Arab Association posted details of their political activities directly to ‘Cairoradio’ [*sic*].<sup>25</sup> A decade later, Arab rioters on the island would quote Radio Cairo’s pan-Arab slogans directly.<sup>26</sup> Writing by Africans may also hint at the radio’s emotive potential as well as its limitations. In an interview with the BBC, the Zanzibari journalist Mohammed Adam gives a particularly positive account: ‘We heard on the radio of the Egyptian revolution... dreams were actually exported to us through the soundwaves [and] we were living a dream as a reality.’<sup>27</sup> A letter to the Tanzanian newspaper *Ngurumo* from 1969 is more critical. Pointing to the China’s continued attempts to influence Tanzanian opinion after independence, the author suggested that Radio Beijing had forgotten ‘that in our country we have our own president and our own party’.<sup>28</sup>

### Radio Propaganda as Public Culture

If anti-colonial propaganda were merely dull, political invective, it would be difficult to explain this socio-cultural importance. A close reading of the broadcasts themselves, with the aid of transcripts in the British Broadcasting Corporation’s *Summary of World Broadcasts*, suggests that anti-colonial radio was often innovative and imaginative. From their inception, broadcasts were tailored by region to suit the differing needs of propagandists. Egypt and China produced

separate services for different regions of Africa, varying the content in each to suit local interests.<sup>29</sup> The tone of propaganda also varied drastically by language. Where Egypt’s Arabic broadcasts to Zanzibar alluded to Arab unity, their Swahili broadcasts spoke ‘from African brother to African brother’.<sup>30</sup> That same Swahili service also made emotive use of Islamic imagery, urging its listeners to take up a ‘jihad against imperialism’, where its counterpart the Voice of Free Africa used a secular and occasionally Christian vocabulary.<sup>31</sup> These differences seem like conscious attempts to cultivate diverse audiences, avoid potentially divisive issues and widen anti-colonialism’s emotional appeal.<sup>32</sup> Certainly, the major services intentionally cultivated smaller publics with programmes like the Soviet Union’s ‘Peasants’ Programme’ and its youth broadcast ‘Sputnik’.<sup>33</sup> By setting these broadcasts at regular hours throughout the week and serialising longer documentaries, broadcasters created repeat listenership that turned anti-colonial radio into a daily or weekly routine.<sup>34</sup> As the media theorist Nick Couldry has argued, this ‘ritualised’ listening allows for an integration of media into everyday life, giving it social importance beyond its communicative role.<sup>35</sup>

Anti-colonial radio was more than a space for social ritual, however – it was also a space for cultural production in its own right. Egyptian, Soviet and Chinese broadcasts all made significant use of music: speeches were broken up by songs and many programmes were devoted entirely to music. In 1960, the Soviet Union broadcast an interview with the musician and civil rights activist Paul Robeson which combined talks about communism with samples of his most famous records.<sup>36</sup> Cairo’s ‘Kenya Newsletter’, similarly, was interpolated with rousing horn music to represent ‘the voice of the Kenya natives calling on all the peoples of the world’.<sup>37</sup> These songs were likely helpful in attracting listeners, who could then be induced to listen to political content between songs: indeed, André-Jean Tudesq’s audience surveys suggest music was a consistent draw for casual listeners.<sup>38</sup> However, the political content of much of this music significantly complicates this view. Radio Cairo’s Swahili and Somali frequently played songs with titles like ‘Africa’s Freedom’, ‘Freedom and Jomo Kenyatta’ and even ‘Who Will Overthrow Imperialism with Me?’<sup>39</sup> The broadcast monitor John Cooley recalls that Radio Beijing frequently broadcast Somali battle marches without words so that they could attract audiences whilst avoiding government censorship.<sup>40</sup> Anti-colonial songs were thus more than vehicles to attract listeners – they were also innovative cultural exchanges which brought African listeners into wider soundscapes of decolonisation.<sup>41</sup>

Songs were not the only cultural products given frequent airtime on anti-colonial radio. International services from Egypt, China and the Soviet Union also dramatized the dynamics of colonial rule with short plays. The most

common form in the *Summary of World Broadcasts* is the political melodrama. ‘Maygag’, a Somali-language play broadcast by the Egyptians in 1960, followed a fictional nationalist who flees to Cairo, where he is persuaded to fight for the freedom of all Somalis.<sup>42</sup> Other broadcasts dealt with the British abuse of Somali informants and the murder of a muezzin by colonial troops.<sup>43</sup> Plays could also branch into comedy and fantasy. ‘Post Mortem’ [*sic*], broadcast by Radio Beijing, satirised American view of the developing world through two presidential aides who complain that Asians and Africans were ‘beginning to act like they owned the place’.<sup>44</sup> One Soviet production even had a talking elephant guide the audience on a time-travelling tour of Africa, ending in a near future where Africa is independent and the ‘handcuffs and blackjacks’ of imperialism are literally confined to a museum.<sup>45</sup> Many of these productions, significantly, required extensive background knowledge to understand. Radio Cairo occasionally used the names of real British officials for their scheming officers while Radio Moscow broadcast a story of ‘Dedan Gituri and General Africa’ which alluded to the real Mau Mau insurgents Dedan Kimathi and General China.<sup>46</sup> As the media theorist Charlotte Brundson points out, however, this kind of ‘extra-textual’ knowledge plays a vital role in making audiences engage with in media products.<sup>47</sup> In this case, it also suggests that anti-colonial broadcasters did not always cater to as passive and uneducated an audience as many media theorists have assumed.

Even outside of drama, comedy was a consistent feature of broadcasts. Humour often revolved around catchphrases and transgressive racial insults – ‘we believe in being kind to all animals’, joked Radio Cairo in 1960, ‘including these white dogs’.<sup>48</sup> Insults were a particularly common feature of *The Voice of Free Africa* – it was rumoured that only the Queen of England was above reproach, and even this rule was sometimes broken.<sup>49</sup> At other times, anti-colonial radio mocked the officious and paternalistic language of colonial broadcasts. A typical example from Cairo warns its listeners about Arab imperialism – ‘be careful of them’, it claims, ‘for it is their wish to liberate you [...] fight them for they aim at maintaining your esteem’.<sup>50</sup> The postcolonial theorist Iain Chambers has described these inversions of hegemonic language as a tool for revealing the inherent hypocrisies of imperial rule.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, however, they likely created bonds of understanding and community between listeners engaged and knowledgeable enough to be ‘in on the joke’ – an exclusive identity that may be more emotionally resonant than universalist notions of radio’s ‘passive’ audiences.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, as the radio historian Marissa Moorman has suggested, radio was not just a tool of communication but a ‘political fashion accessory’ symbolising social engagement in an emerging movement of anti-colonial solidarity.<sup>53</sup>

### Interactivity as Cultural Exchange

If cultural products like songs, plays and humour helped to create a sense of community amongst African audiences, this feeling was reinforced by direct interactions between broadcaster and listener. One consistent theme across anti-colonial broadcasts was the mailbag programme, in which presenters responded to questions and requests submitted by their audiences. Correspondence programmes like these allowed listeners to direct the course of programming toward their own interests to a degree: multiple letters to Radio Moscow demanded more content about the space travel while some Egyptian programmes were devoted entirely to answering moral questions posed by the audience.<sup>54</sup> Some letters also asked for pen pals or information on scholarships, allowing broadcasters to forge direct personal ties across a decolonising world.<sup>55</sup> Song requests to Radio Cairo also carried frequent dedications to friends and family members studying in Egypt and demonstrate the considerable popularity of political songs: on a single day in 1960, ‘Who Will Overthrow Imperialism with Me?’ was requested no fewer than sixteen times.<sup>56</sup> As the former international broadcaster Donald Browne points out, mailbag programmes only offered interactions mediated by the interests of broadcasters.<sup>57</sup> Letters to Radio Moscow and Radio Cairo certainly tended to line up with relevant talking points, and broadcasters were able to judiciously select which correspondence to read. In some ways, however, the reality of these broadcasts is less important than their symbolic value. Mailbag programmes may have forged some concrete friendships, but they also simulated solidarity and political community within the decolonising world.

Quizzes and competitions over the radio also demonstrate a venue for African listeners to interact directly with a developing anti-colonial world. They were undeniably popular. One Radio Cairo quiz in 1960 received thirty-two responses in just under a month – an impressive number given the cost of airmail and colonial censorship.<sup>58</sup> Like theatre and comedy, quizzes were designed to encourage extra-textual political knowledge: a contest from Radio Beijing in 1963 asked for the names of a famous Chinese resort and the name of the African country which had sent a friendship delegation to China earlier that year.<sup>59</sup> Another from Egypt asked for the names of the countries ‘likely to gain independence’ in 1960 and ‘the leaders who are the protagonists of the policy of neutrality’ – the latter list surely including Nasser himself.<sup>60</sup> Prizes also helped to develop interactive ties between African citizens and aspiring anti-colonial powers. Radio Moscow employees incorporated the winning essays from its frequent writing competitions into their own political broadcasts and briefly considered giving out free air tickets to the Soviet Union.<sup>61</sup>

Perhaps most significantly, African listeners to anti-colonial services were also employed as creators, translators and presenters in their own right. Egypt, China and the Soviet Union all employed staff from their various broadcast regions – usually visitors to the country or students taken from the ranks of international universities like Cairo’s al-Azhar and the People’s Friendship University in Moscow.<sup>62</sup> Cairo’s position as a hub of anti-colonial activism in the early 1960s also allowed exiled groups to broadcast directly to their home countries.<sup>63</sup> The Kenyan socialist Oginga Odinga would later write that ‘Kenya took its place in the Pan-African movement’ through the broadcasts made in Cairo.<sup>64</sup> Egyptian services were also able to draw on the talents of African celebrities, including the Nigerian world traveller Olabisi Ajala and the Zanzibari football star Ahmad Rashad Ali.<sup>65</sup> Ajala would later speak highly of Radio Cairo as a staunch defender of the ‘have-nots and the oppressed’.<sup>66</sup> In repeated ‘Letters Home’ programmes, furthermore, Radio Moscow invited African students and guest workers to present short updates on their lives for families in Africa. Jokes about the poor Russian weather were common, but invariably followed by firm praise for the Soviet peoples’ generosity, their work ethic and their opposition to racism.<sup>67</sup> Like letter-writing and competitions, these activities blur the boundaries between producer and consumer. They suggest a more nuanced view of international radio as a direct exchange between broadcast and audience – albeit an uneven one where anti-colonial propagandists controlled the scope and terms of African participation.

### Conclusion: Anti-Colonial Radio in Retrospect

The legacy of the anti-colonial services to Africa have had a complex legacy. In the memoirs of supporters like Adam and Ajala, these services provided a clarion call against imperialism, the promise of a new and better world and the semblance of an anti-colonial community spanning the entire globe. Elsewhere, in the wake of more successful national and commercial broadcasters, their influence has been largely forgotten.

An understanding of the dynamics of anti-colonial broadcasting in Africa, however, helps to uncover much of the emotional appeal of propaganda in the twentieth century. Broadcasts were not just repetitive, unembellished rhetoric – they were engaging, innovative cultural productions which mixed music, debate, drama and comedy to examine the meanings of independence and perform a profound anti-colonial solidarity. Audiences were not just passive listeners but active participants in these productions as letter-writers, quiz-takers and presenters. All these exchanges, however, took place under the careful supervision of authoritarian governments attempting to manipulate these feelings of

solidarity and community to their own ends. Ultimately, it may be impossible to separate this political function as propaganda from radio’s profound cultural and social roles. If cultural contest was in their air across a decolonising Africa, it found its truest home on the airwaves themselves.

## Exchange and Recognition in Michael Longley's Homeric Laments

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I have been Homer-haunted for fifty years', writes the Northern Irish poet Michael Longley in 2007. He traces this Homeric contact back to the 'donkey-work' of school Greek lessons, and forward again to the role played by the epics after the loss of his parents, explaining that 'Homer enabled me to write belated lamentations for my mother and father'.<sup>1</sup> This article explores how and why Longley expresses his grief through classical reception. I argue that a crucial, yet understudied aspect of Longley's Homeric lamentation is the way in which he forges connections and exchanges between his Homeric and personal poems, creating an open-ended recognition of similarity that reverberates through the texts. It is clear from Longley's statement about his parents that the personal intrudes on the Homeric in his work, particularly in 'Laertes' and 'Anticleia', poems about Odysseus' father and mother respectively. Less obvious, though, is the way in which the Homeric poems in turn intrude on those which appear entirely personal – for example 'Northern Lights' and 'The Balloon', poems about Longley's parents, discussed below.

Longley's reception of Homer has drawn attention from critics of English and Classics. Yet, this scholarship often separates his personal and classical poems rather than analysing the connections between them. Critics also tend to focus on Longley's translations from the *Iliad* rather than the *Odyssey*. For example, Longley's allusions to the Troubles in the Iliadic poems are discussed by Hardwick, who argues compellingly for the importance of 'recognition' in his poetry.<sup>2</sup> She writes: 'the Homeric recognition of persons and identities is in Longley's poetic technique elided into moments of apprehension when past and present come together', giving examples from Longley's *Iliad* translations.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Taplin argues that Longley's translation of Homeric recognition scenes 'becomes a conduit for conversations that cross cultural, religious, and political divides' in relation to the poet's references to the Troubles.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars, such as John and Broom, do engage with the Odyssean and personal poems, but fail to consider the relationship between them in detail.<sup>5</sup> Reynolds suggests that moments in 'Laertes' and 'Anticleia' can be read as 'echoes' of 'Longley's own encounter with Homer'; I take this meta-textual reading further, arguing that Longley extends this sense of recognition into his personal poetry.<sup>6</sup>

Through Longley's emphasis on bereavement, these poems can also be analysed in the context of a subgenre of poetry which draws on ancient literature to express otherwise inarticulable grief. The most illuminating scholarship on this genre is often written by the poets themselves. Longley's comments on how Homer enabled his personal lamentation are from the 'Living Classics' volume, which also contains a chapter by the poet and translator Josephine Balmer about the origins of her collection *Chasing Catullus*:

Just as I began working on my Catullus translations, my sister's young daughter developed terminal stomach cancer at the age of six. [...] I found myself compelled to write about the experience, almost as a form of exorcism. Many of the poems I wrote were somehow connected with my work as a translator; versions – in some cases perversions – of classical texts or mythology, as if I could not write about such disturbing emotions except through the prism of classical literature.<sup>7</sup>

Balmer's collection responds directly to the meeting of grief and translation in her personal life; similarly, Anne Carson's *Nox* is both a lament for her brother and a translation of Catullus 101. In it, she writes:

I never arrived at the translation I would have liked of poem 101.  
But I came to think of translating as a room, not exactly an unknown room, where one gropes for the light switch. I guess it never ends.  
A brother never ends.<sup>8</sup>

Carson's depiction of translation and grief as unending processes echoes Reynolds' argument that Longley's translation-poems meta-poetically offer the reader an awareness of 'the imposition that inevitably accompanies the endeavour to grasp something in translation' – 'the loss that is inseparable from gain.'<sup>9</sup> These poets, then, are all potentially responding to the inevitable incompleteness of translation in their poetic expressions of grief. However, while it is certainly true that Longley's work explores loss and incompleteness, I hope to demonstrate that the theme of endlessness in these poems is primarily located not in a depiction of unfulfillment within individual poems, but in the open-ended, self-perpetuating exchange between Longley's personal and Homeric material.

Longley explains that he wrote 'Laertes' after catching sight of an elderly Italian neighbour, who 'reminded me of my own father, then of Odysseus' father'.<sup>10</sup> The poem that results from this act of memory is a loose translation of *Odyssey* book 24, lines 226–238 and 336–348.<sup>11</sup> Odysseus has returned from his years away at war and sea, and, in the text's final recognition scene



Figure 1 *Odysseus embraces Laertes in his vineyard*, Theodoor van Thulden.

(he has already reunited with his son and wife), he embraces his elderly father in a vineyard. Van Thulden's etching emphasises Laertes' confusion and surprise, as well his shabby appearance in contrast to his son (Fig. 1).<sup>12</sup> Longley's version of this scene reads:

When he found Laertes alone on the tidy terrace, hoeing  
 Around a vine, disreputable in his gardening duds,  
 Patched and grubby, leather gaiters protecting his shins,  
 Against brambles, gloves as well, and, to cap it all,  
 Sure sign of his deep depression, a goatskin duncher,  
 Odysseus sobbed in the shade of a pear-tree for his father  
 So old and pathetic that all he wanted then and there  
 Was to kiss him and hug him and blurt out the whole story  
 But the whole story is one catalogue after another,  
 So he waited for images from that formal garden,  
 Evidence of a childhood spent traipsing after his father  
 And asking for everything he saw, the thirteen pear-trees,  
 Ten apple-trees, forty fig-trees, the fifty rows of vines  
 Ripening at different times for a continuous supply,  
 Until Laertes recognized his son and, weak at the knees,  
 Dizzy, flung his arms around the neck of the great Odysseus,  
 Who drew the old man fainting to his breast and held him there  
 And cradled like driftwood the bones of his dwindling father.<sup>13</sup>

This poem diverts from the corresponding passage of the *Odyssey* in two key ways. The first is the fact that it is 'lightly Hibernicised'.<sup>14</sup> Irish-English words such as 'duds' and 'duncher' tether the translation to a non-Homeric context more specifically than equivalent non-local terms, for example 'clothes' and 'hat'. The second is Longley's inclusion of material that does not correspond to anything in the source. Interestingly, however, these sections are nonetheless noticeably Homeric, the most significant diversions from the Greek text being 'one catalogue after another' and 'cradled like driftwood'.

With the word 'catalogue', Longley alludes to the catalogue of ships in *Iliad* book 2.<sup>15</sup> The 'story' Odysseus wants to tell is characterised by the use of such catalogues, and is therefore identified as the same story which Longley is translating – the Homeric epics. Odysseus' decision to spurn these 'catalogue[s]' in favour of 'images from that formal garden' can thus be read meta-poetically as a parallel to Longley's translation of small lyric sections from Homer, based around individual images, rather than full (or perhaps 'formal') translations of the epics.<sup>16</sup>

The 'driftwood' simile, meanwhile, introduces another image not found in the Greek text, but clearly echoes the thematic importance of the sea in the *Odyssey*.

The intertwining of the local and the Homeric within this poem is complicated and complemented by its relationship with another poem from the same collection, 'Northern Lights'. In the original *Gorse Fires* collection, the two poems face each-other on a double page spread, while in Longley's *Collected Poems* they appear on the same page, 'Laertes' above 'Northern Lights', faced by 'Anticleia' and 'The Balloon'. Longley invites the reader to consider these poems alongside each-other through their visual layout, and rewards this attention with a series of verbal and thematic exchanges between the poems. The most obvious link between 'Laertes' and 'Northern Lights' is the theme of fathers and sons, and specifically adult sons recalling childhood memories of their fathers. Odysseus remembers 'evidence of a childhood spent traipsing after his father', and 'Northern Lights' follows with memories from Longley's childhood:

When you woke me up and showed me through the window  
Curtains of silk, luminous smoke, ghost fires,  
A convergence of rays above the Black Mountain,  
The northern lights became our own magnetic field –  
Your hand on my shoulder, your tobacco-y breath  
And the solar wind that ruffled your thinning hair.<sup>17</sup>

Through the correspondences between these two poems, Longley focuses his lament on children's paradoxical awareness of their parents' vulnerabilities. In both, the role of care-giver alternates between father and son. In 'Laertes', Odysseus is struck by his father's frailty, but he seems to become a child when he wants to 'blurt out the whole story'. The roles switch again as Odysseus 'cradles' his father, but the simile 'like driftwood', as discussed above, alerts the reader to Odysseus' vulnerability by evoking his perilous experiences at sea – Laertes is compared to a potential lifeline for the shipwrecked hero. Similarly, in 'Northern Lights' Longley is a child, comforted by the parental 'hand on my shoulder'. The poem's final line, however, draws attention to Longley's father's 'thinning hair', recalling Laertes' 'dwindling' 'bones'.

So far, then, we have seen how Longley links these two poems by a shared emphasis on the alternating roles of parents and children. This 'switching' is compounded by an alternation of roles *across* the poems, as well as within them individually. It is most obvious in the poems' opening lines: 'When he found Laertes alone on the tidy terrace, hoeing'; 'When you woke me up and showed me through the window'. Both are subject-verb-object clauses preceded by 'when' and followed by additional information about the place and the action.

But between these two opening lines, the father and son switch roles grammatically: Odysseus is the subject 'he' in 'Laertes', while Longley's father is the 'you' in 'Northern Lights'. Longley therefore positions himself and Laertes as paired grammatical objects, found or woken up, and perhaps in need of protection. This switch allows Longley to expand his focus on parental vulnerability within these two poems into the interstices between them, achieving a depth of cross-generational empathy that would be impossible in a single poem. The narrative also moves from the distance of the third person in 'Laertes' – mirroring the distance of translation – to the use of 'you' and 'me' in 'Northern Lights', increasing the intimacy of the characters, defined entirely by their grammatical relation to each-other. With the use of the second-person, moreover, Longley speaks directly to his father: the desire for communication and recognition expressed by Odysseus in 'Laertes' is met again here, as Longley uses the pronoun 'you' to identify and address, rather than simply describe, his father.

We can therefore see that it is in the exchanges between 'Laertes' and 'Northern Lights' that Longley expresses his parental lament. He implicitly exchanges Odysseus' memories of 'traipsing after his father' with his own, and in doing so achieves representation of the complex interdependence between parents and children. In the Odyssean passage, Odysseus recounts his childhood memories as evidence of his identity – it is by these *σήματα* ('signs') that his father recognises him, allowing them to reunite.<sup>18</sup> Through the exchange of memories between 'Laertes' and 'Northern Lights', Longley creates a connection between his own childhood and Odysseus', and between the function of both men's nostalgia. 'Northern Lights' becomes Longley's own 'evidence' – the sign of his identity and his formative relationships – which results in the poet's expression of empathy and ultimately recognition with his father. 'Laertes' thus acts as a stepping stone between the personal and the Homeric, enabling Longley to imbue his apparently personal lament with the significance of Odysseus and Laertes' reunion in the *Odyssey*.

In 'Anticleia' and 'The Balloon', poems about Odysseus and Longley's mothers respectively, Longley continues to explore the theme of parent-child relationships and makes explicit the metaphor of lament as communication with the dead. 'Anticleia' describes Odysseus' meeting with his mother's ghost in the underworld, roughly translating lines from *Odyssey* books 10 and 11 (see appendix), while in 'The Balloon', Longley imagines an encounter with his own mother after her death. Odysseus' meeting with the dead is one of many in ancient literature; however, most of these are *katabases*, in which a character makes a journey to the underworld. Odysseus instead attempts a *nekuia*: rather than travelling down to the dead, he brings them up to join him.<sup>19</sup> Longley's version of this

scene highlights the ritual sacrifices that summon the dead, as shown in a painting by Johann Fussli which depicts Odysseus meeting the prophet Tiresias (Fig. 2).<sup>20</sup> The poem reads:

If at a rock where the resonant rivers meet, Acheron,  
 Pyriphlegethon, Cocytus, tributary of the Styx, you dig  
 A pit, about a cubit each way, from knuckles to elbow,  
 And sacrifice a ram and a black ewe, bending their heads  
 Towards the outer darkness, while you face the water,  
 And so many souls of the anemic dead come crowding in  
 That you hold them back with your bayonet from the blood  
 Only to recognise among the zombies your own mother,  
 And if, having given her blood to drink and talked about home,  
 You lunge forward three times to hug her and three times  
 Like a shadow or idea she vanishes through you arms  
 And you ask her why she keeps avoiding your touch and weep  
 Because here is your mother and even here in Hades  
 You could comfort each other in a shuddering embrace,  
 Will she explain that the sinews no longer bind her flesh  
 And bones, that the irresistible fire has demolished these,  
 That the soul takes flight like a dream and flutters in the sky,  
 That this is what happens to human beings when they die?<sup>21</sup>

This poem revolves around the question of whether Odysseus will successfully exchange sacrifices for contact with the dead, and, if he does succeed, and ‘recognises’ his mother, whether she will speak to him. ‘Anticleia’ thus takes place entirely in the conditional mood, diverging significantly from the corresponding Greek passages. The initial word ‘If’ opens a conditional clause that is grammatically completed with the final four lines: *if* Odysseus makes the relevant sacrifices and finds his mother, ‘will she explain [...] that this is what happens to human beings when they die?’. Within these questions and conditions, Longley’s Odysseus has a further uncertainty, a question about death: ‘You ask her why she keeps avoiding your touch’, which is of course also answered by the words ‘this is what happens to human beings when they die’. The syntax and the content of the poem thus mimic each-other, with both the opening syntactical clause about the sacrifice and Odysseus’ central question culminating in the final line. Odysseus wants to know why he cannot be comforted by his mother, and the poem, fulfilling Longley’s expression of lament for his mother, asks the same question in wider terms by summoning the past.



Figure 2 *The Shade of Tiresias Appearing to Odysseus during the Sacrifice*, Johann Fussli.

In 'The Balloon', Longley encounters his own mother in a similarly unusual setting, casting further back than his own childhood and seemingly entering hers:

You are a child in the dream and not my mother.  
I float above your head as in a hot air balloon  
That casts no shadow on you looking up at me  
And smiling and waving and running without a limp  
Across the shallow streams and fields of shiny grass  
As though there were neither malformation nor pain.  
This is the first time ever I have seen you running.  
You are a child in the dream and not my mother,  
Which may be why I call out from the balloon to you:  
'Jump over the hedges, Connie, jump over the trees.'<sup>22</sup>

As before, verbal echoes (as well as the obvious shared theme of maternal relationships) link the poems, with the words 'dream', 'hot air', and 'shadow' in 'The Balloon' recalling 'shadow', 'dream', and 'sky' towards the end of 'Anticleia'. 'The Balloon' is not written in the conditional mood, but these verbal connections demonstrate that it deliberately continues the uncertainty and surrealism of 'Anticleia', literalising the dream-like atmosphere of the Homeric scene. Longley continues to vary his use of personal pronouns, seen most clearly as the child characters speak to their mothers: 'You ask her', 'I call out [...] to you'. Again, the change in personal pronoun signifies the poet's direct address to his parent in the latter poem, through the poem's narrational address ('You are a child') as well as the speech act ('I call out [...] to you'). Longley thus adds further layers to his complex representation of traditional parent-child roles, using the connections between these two poems to imagine recognitions across time, into both the past (his mother's childhood) and the afterlife (Odysseus' mother after her death). 'The Balloon' responds to the earlier poems with a final, total role-reversal – 'you are a child in the dream and not my mother' – that allows Longley to speak to his mother across the boundary between the living and the dead, and to offer her the encouragement and connection that Odysseus seeks in 'Anticleia' in a new, hopeful setting: 'You could comfort each other', 'Jump over the hedges, Connie, jump over the trees.'

Longley's use of Homeric reception in his lament-poetry thus allows him to represent the complexity of parent-child relationships, creating layers of meaning not only within the four poems discussed here but through the exchanges between them. In doing so, he extends the recognition theme found in the Homeric passages into the spaces between his poems. This theme is therefore

played out on three levels: firstly, in the passages from the *Odyssey*, Odysseus recognises and is recognised by his parents. Then, Longley metapoetically echoes this recognition in his 'meeting' with Homer, as Reynolds suggests. Finally, as argued here, the reader can organically partake in the recognition of the personal in the Homeric and vice versa, as we trace the complex exchanges between these poems. We, like the poet, are reminded of 'my father, then Odysseus' father', and back and forth again. Longley states in an interview that he realised Homer 'could open many doors into my life and memory';<sup>23</sup> here, he replicates that experience, opening doors between his personal and Homeric poems through which he constructs a lament for his mother and father.



## Graphical Ekphrasis: Translating Graphical Spaces into Music

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Pieces of music that are based on paintings, or the stars, or countries, are not uncommon in the Western canon of art music – take, for example, Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874), Messiaen’s *Éclairs sur l’Au-Delà* (1991), or Sibelius’s *Finlandia* (1899). They provide an impetus for a composer to create a tangential work of art that is inspired by the ideas and concepts of the original. It is fair to say that the music produced through this process embodies these inspirations as sonic effects, or goals, rather than accurate depictions of the *spaces* they inhabit. Siglind Bruhn introduced the term *musical ekphrasis* to describe processes in pieces such as this, defined as ‘a transformation of a message – in content and form, imagery and suggested symbolic signification – from one medium to another’<sup>1</sup> in a process she deems ‘transmedialization’.<sup>2</sup> For example, composer Henri Dutilleux’s *Timbres Espace, Movement* (1978), inspired by Van Gogh’s famous painting *The Starry Night* (1889), has processes which imitate ‘the strange impression of vertigo and cosmic space this picture gives you.’<sup>3</sup> There is a strong metaphorical link that makes the piece vivid in its imagery, or strongly ‘ekphratic’, that serves to comment on the original.

However, pieces such as this rarely derive their compositional material strictly from the inspirational source. The goal is to achieve a metaphorical link, or representation, of the original in the new. But what if a different view on the idea of a musical ekphrasis – one that is more focused on the organic generation of material as well as the general poetic expression – was taken? Here is where the translation of graphical spaces into music can be situated. I argue that through the incorporation of spatial properties of a representation (in whatever way), there is an achievement of a more robust ‘transmedialization’ of the source into music. In this way, one may be able to think about ekphrasis not only poetically, but as an elucidator of graphical space which is then supported through metaphor: *a graphical ekphrasis*. This article will begin by distinguishing the specific focus of graphical translation, noting its precedents and peculiarities, before turning to three contrasting works – *Sicut Umbra*, *Metastasis*, and *String Quartet No. 3, ‘Borderline’* – which demonstrate aspects of graphical translation into music.

### Foreword

One of the most significant ideas referenced throughout this article is that of a *pitch-time space*. This is a graphical representation of two variables: pitch (on the y-axis) and time (on the x-axis) which composers have used to incorporate and interpret spaces since the mid-twentieth century. A visual demonstration of this is provided below, with the axes creating a graphical space which contains the necessary data for translation into music:

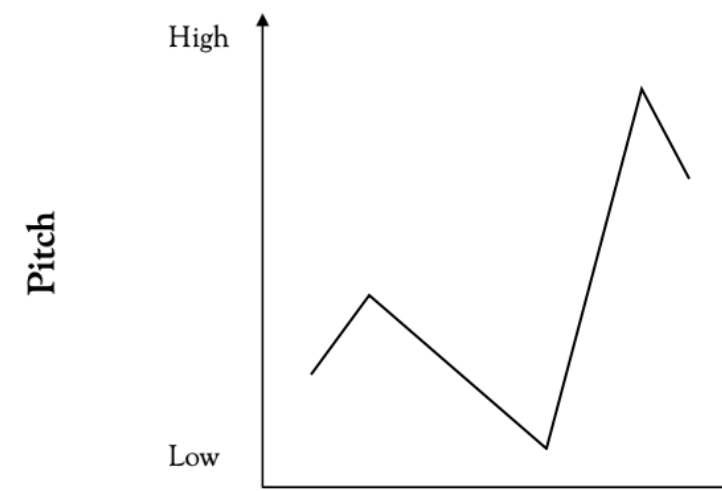


Figure 1 A simple pitch-time graph. Image: author’s own.

This is a basic rationalization of graphical space to both performers and composers alike. Indeed, this dichotomy is strongly seen in so-called ‘graphic scores’ or ‘indeterminate music’. This music is characterised by a lack of prescriptive information with regards to duration, rhythm, and pitch; its scores often represented graphically, with no consistent staff notation as we might expect from Western art music generally. In this music, the performance is hugely reliant on how the performer interprets the graphical symbols on the page; it is unlikely that two performances will ever be very similar. The focus of this article, however, is on the ability to detect the process of translation of graphical spaces into determinately-notated music, and consequently does not deal with indeterminate composers such as John Cage or Cornelius Cardew etc., who often utilised graphic scores.<sup>4</sup>

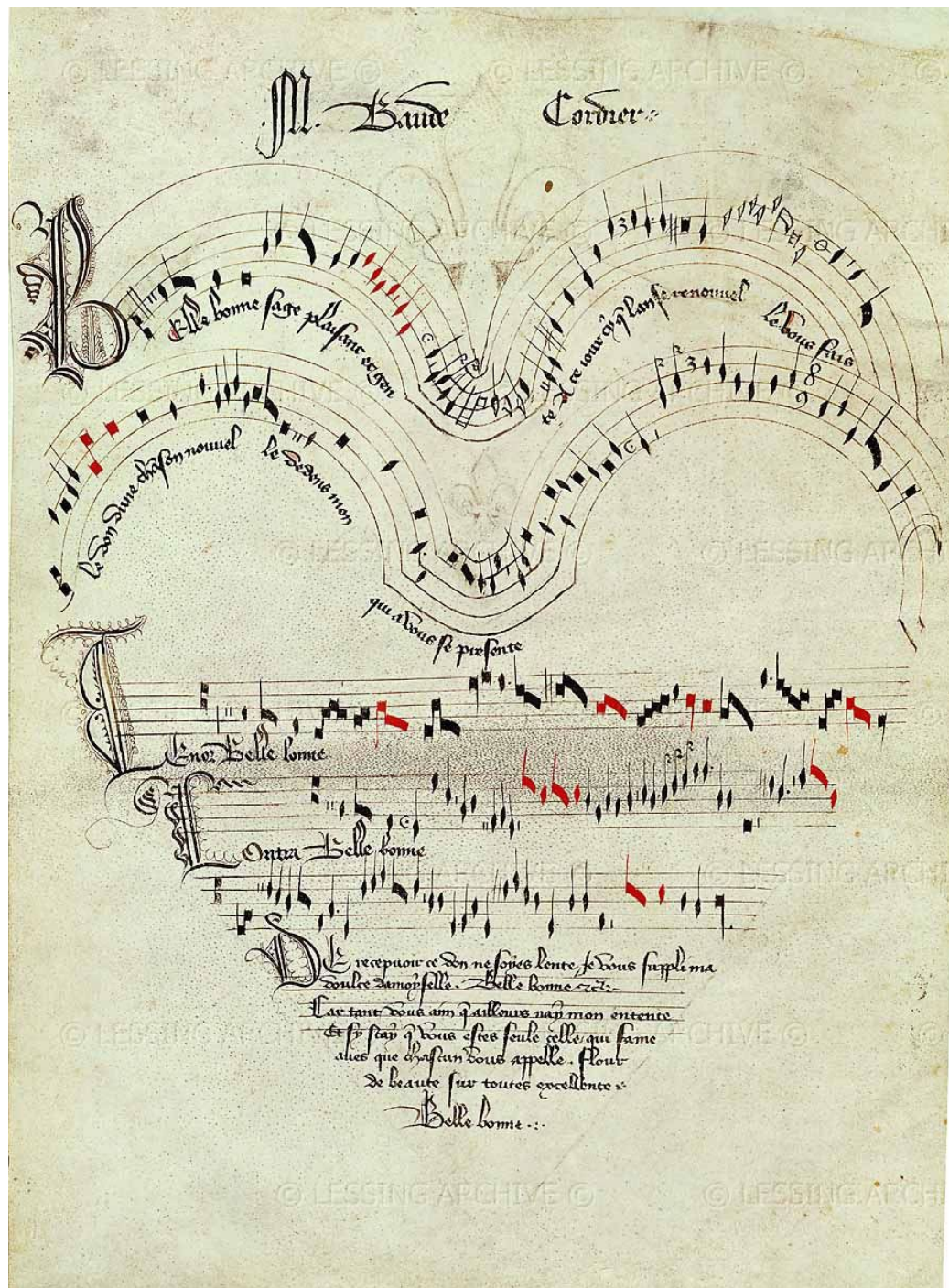


Figure 2 Baude Cordier's *Belle, bonne, sage* from the Chantilly Codex (Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 564).

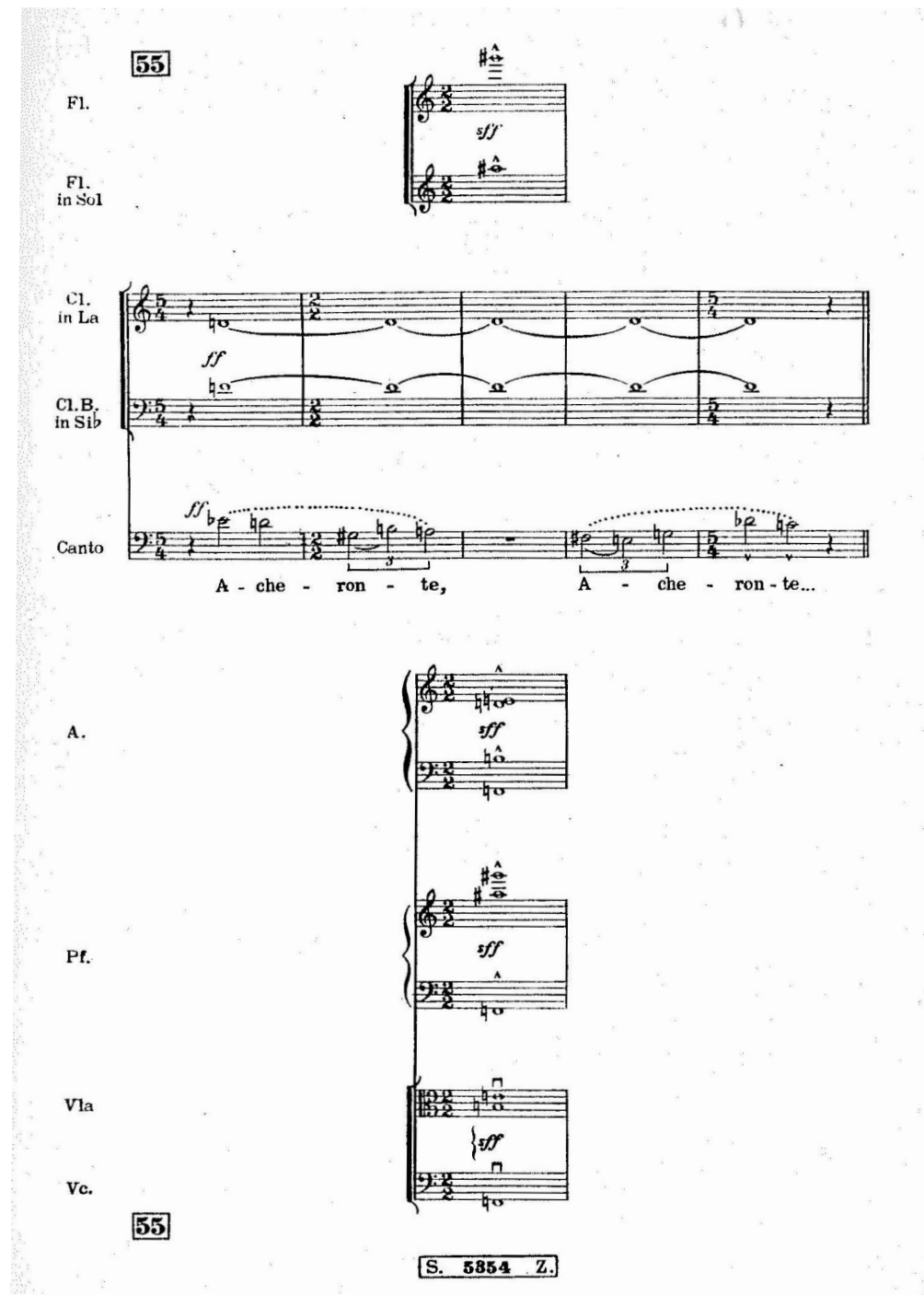


Figure 3 Excerpt from *Cinque Canti* by Luigi Dallapiccola. © Sugarmusic S.p.A. – Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, Milan.

The earliest examples of a *representation* of graphical space can be seen in *Augenmusik* (literally ‘eye-music’). In the Medieval and Renaissance periods, *Augenmusik* was a practice in which scores were laid out in unusual and novel ways, in order to provide an extra-musical commentary on the composition itself. A well-known example of this, found in the Chantilly Codex (c. 1350–1400) composed by Baude Cordier, depicts the shape of a heart (Fig. 2).

The key point to make with *Augenmusik* of this period is that its specific musical construction (i.e. the notes that make up the piece) are not directly affected by the decision to invoke a graphical space. It is presentational commentary, a *mise-en-page*, rather than a generator, or description of that space through the music itself.

### Dallapiccola and ‘Ideograms’

A slightly differing example, depicting a cross, can be seen in *Cinque Canti* (1956) (Fig. 3), a much later work by Luigi Dallapiccola (1904–1975).

The same argument regarding *Augenmusik*, that of presentation over generation, might be made here. However, there is a slightly closer link to the graphic and the music. The singer (*canto*) sings two phrases which, in the context of the graphic, are intended, according to Raymond Fearn, ‘to represent arms suspended from the branches of the cross.’<sup>5</sup> Here there is a larger concern of representation, in the construction of the notes that make up these two phrases are symmetrical to compound the image of Christ on the cross. Dallapiccola called this kind of device an ‘ideogram’ and it serves as a useful link into the article’s first study on the transformation of a graphical space into music: the final movement of his *Sicut Umbra* (1970).

Dallapiccola, arguably one of the most well-known Italian composers of the 20th century, had a fascination with stars and constellations. Hans Nathan remarks that, ‘[s]tars were always more than phenomena of nature to the composer. I know, for example, that in difficult times in Italy they once foretold for him the outcome of a political event.’<sup>6</sup> Raymond Fearn also notes that stars were an important image for Dallapiccola, citing the ‘stars’ motif which opens *Tre Laudi* (1937) and *Volo di note* (1937/1939), as well as the final scene of his opera *Ulisse* (1968).<sup>7</sup>

*Sicut Umbra* is a work for chamber ensemble and mezzo-soprano written by Dallapiccola which sets a selection of poems from Juan Ramón Jiménez’s 1919 collection, *Piedra y cielo* (*Stone and Sky*). The fourth, and final, movement is titled ‘*Epitafio ideal de un marinero*’ (‘Ideal Epitaph for a Sailor’), and it contains the line: ‘*Llueve tu muerte de una estrella*’ (‘Your death rains from a star’). Fittingly, Dallapiccola inserts the shape of nine constellations into the score, using them

to generate material by superimposing them onto musical staves. An example from the opening bar is shown below:

Figure 4 The constellation *Volans* in the final movement of Dallapiccola’s *Sicut Umbra*. © Sugarmusic S.p.A. – Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, Milan.

The importance of these shapes within the score can be observed in further iterations of the constellation shapes, for example, that of *Ursa Major* or *Pegasus*, shown below:

Figure 5 *Ursa Major* and *Pegasus* in the final movement of Dallapiccola’s *Sicut Umbra*. © Sugarmusic S.p.A. – Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, Milan.

The relegation of (very specific) rhythmic notation to a separate staff, which is not standard, shows the clarity put into creating these shapes visually in the score and the importance of this to the composer. Indeed, Raymond Fearn has noted that they were conceived as an ‘integral part of the musical workings of the piece, not as an element later added for coloristic or even idiosyncratic reasons’,<sup>8</sup> and this is shown in early sketches of relevant passages.

It is worth noting at this stage, that Dallapiccola was insistent on the printed editions matching his manuscript copy exactly. In a letter to Edizioni Suvini-Zerboni, Dallapiccola wrote, ‘[t]he engravers have not understood (nor on the other hand were they obliged to understand!) that, if in this work I have written things contrary to the normal rules of engraving, I have done it quite consciously.’<sup>9</sup> The shapes in this score are not performed *as graphics*, instead they exist as an *illustration of a process* that has already taken place by the composer: his insertion of constellations into a pitch-time space. They exist perhaps, to justify the material, or to create another facet of interpretation for a performer who is playing these shapes – they are Dallapiccola’s so-called ‘ideograms’.

The effect of these graphics must be considered sonically. Most of the constellation figures are played by vibraphone, harp, and celeste. The resonant yet light and percussive nature of these instruments represents stars and space effectively. When this is combined with the low dynamic level (either *piano* (quiet) or *pianissimo* (very quiet)) indicated for the constellations, this further contributes to this eerie, other-worldly effect. Therefore, this adds to the extent to which this transmedialization of the graphic maintains its metaphorical link with its source. Suffice it to say that very loud, low brass might not achieve the same preservation of this metaphorical link.

This particular example blends together ideas of transforming a graphical space while also representing it. It forms a crossover of generative composition and *Augenmusik*, which creates a pleasing balance between the formalism of translating the graphical source, and intuition (in composing the other materials).

### Xenakis and Scientism

A contrasting example of translating graphical space can be seen in the work of composer Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001). Xenakis was not initially trained as a composer, but as an architect and engineer, and was mentored by the architect Le Corbusier in his Paris studio in the 1950s. During this time, however, he did approach composer Olivier Messiaen who advised him against a standard approach to compositional education. Messiaen recalled:

I did something horrible which I should do with no other student, for I think one should study harmony and counterpoint. But this was a man so much out of the ordinary that I said... No, you are almost thirty, you have the good fortune of being Greek, of being an architect and having studied special mathematics. Take advantage of these things. Do them in your music.<sup>10</sup>

The first significant piece that resulted from this advice was *Metastasis* (1954), a piece for 61 performers. *Metastasis* uses the designs of the Phillips Pavilion (a joint design of Xenakis and Le Corbusier) as a generator of compositional material, creating the musical equivalent of ‘ruled surfaces’, shown in Figures 6 and 7.

Robert Wannamaker comments that these ‘ruled surfaces’ of the graphic are ‘a useful recipe for mechanically determining certain musical details’.<sup>11</sup> The fundamental innovation in *Metastasis*, described by Sharon Kanach as ‘one of the most signature contributions to the musical thinking of the second half of the twentieth century’,<sup>12</sup> is that of a *glissando* (a continuous ‘slide’ from one note to another, hitting all the intermediate pitches) as a fundamental element of musical design. Each one of the lines seen in Figure 6 is a movement from one pitch to another, measured over time. As can be observed, this creates glissandi of

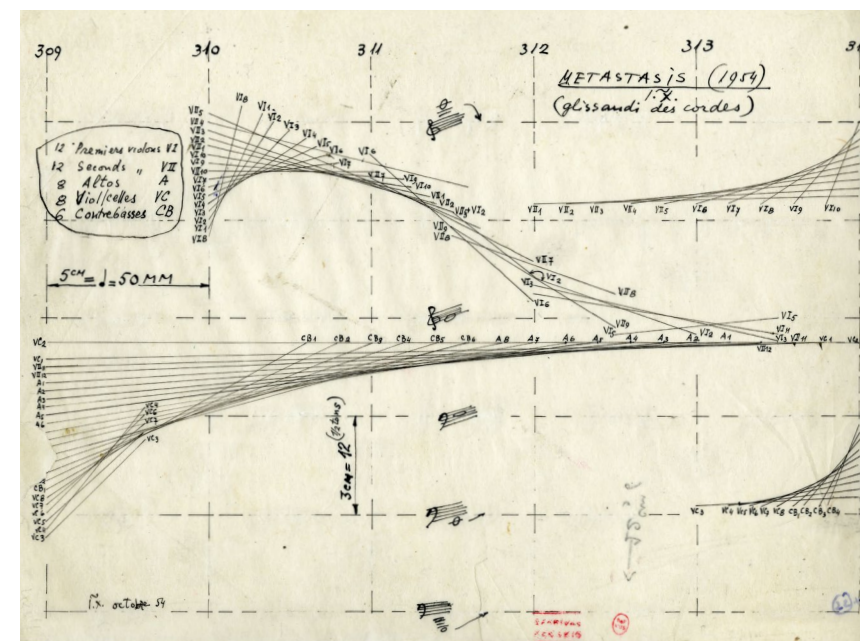


Figure 6 Sketch for bars 309–314 of Iannis Xenakis’s *Metastasis*. © Iannis Xenakis Family Collection.

The image displays a page of handwritten musical notation for Xenakis's *Metastasis*. The score is organized into five systems of staves, labeled VI, VII, A, C, and CB. Each system contains multiple staves with complex musical notation, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The notation is dense and intricate, reflecting the composer's experimental style. The systems are numbered 1 through 10, 11 through 12, 1 through 8, 1 through 8, and 1 through 6 respectively.

Figure 7 Bars 309–314 of Xenakis's *Metastasis*. © Copyright 1967 by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. Reproduced by permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. Solely for the use of Thomas Metcalf.

different speeds happening simultaneously and, as one could attest upon hearing the piece, a unique sonic atmosphere. This use of pitch-time space is more precise and on a larger-scale, but nonetheless similar to Dallapiccola's in its basic conception. It could be suggested that by using *glissando*, i.e. a continuous sound, Xenakis has created a *continuous* representation of data, rather than *discrete*, i.e. point to point, as is seen in *Sicut Umbra*.

Xenakis's music deals with ideas of science and mathematics as methods for generating material – so this graphical-musical crossover seemed natural, since it features heavily in these fields. Another of his inventions was the UPIC system, a computer console capable of transforming any graphical pattern into sound.<sup>13</sup> Latterly favoured as a pedagogical tool to teach schoolchildren about the connection between image and sound, Xenakis initially composed upon it. An excerpt from the first of these pieces, *Mycenae Alpha* (1978), showcasing Xenakis's characteristic preference for arborescences (tree-like shapes) can be seen below:<sup>14</sup>

The image shows two examples of graphical notation for Xenakis's *Mycenae Alpha*. The top example features a complex, arborescent shape composed of dense, overlapping lines, resembling a tree or a branching structure. The bottom example shows a similar shape, but with a more defined, blocky appearance, also composed of dense lines. Both examples are set against a background of horizontal lines, suggesting a musical staff or a time axis.

Figure 8 A page from Xenakis's *Mycenae Alpha* for the UPIC. © Perspectives of New Music, Vol. 25, No. 1/2.

This raises the issue regarding translating graphical spaces through the use of computation as a *generational* tool (rather than for analytical purposes). In cases such as these, there is a limited bound of possibility as to what can occur, since the computer has been programmed with certain instructions on how to realise the materials. This article does not deal with the specifics of how the UPIC does this, but it highlights a key consideration as to whether the translation ‘system’ itself is something stable or unstable.

Humans are innately individual: they possess biases and unique educational experiences that affect how they perceive things. People all *see* a graphical pattern the same, in that it exists in a fixed portion of space – and that space itself is stable. One person’s view of the space, their interpretation of it, is unstable; they may focus on something in a representation that another might not. This causes issues when one would try to transmedialize something in such a formal way, as there must be a filter or process that one devises in order to do this, and to be truly useful this must be *replicable*. A computer’s ability to replicate is far superior to a human’s, so whilst a human may be given credit for programming it, the agency of transmedializing the graphic is weighted towards the computer.

This seems an appropriate point to move onto the final work under consideration, a piece that was influenced heavily by another deeply unstable concept: geopolitics. The political, social, and economic concept of geopolitics is similarly filled with biases and ideology, and thus cannot be interpreted in a singular, objective way.

### Martyn Harry and Geopolitics

Martyn Harry’s (b. 1964) *String Quartet No. 3, ‘Borderline’* (2019) was commissioned in 2018 by the Villiers Quartet, who were interested in playing a political piece. The music’s main graphical input is the Irish border, evoking the political tension of Brexit and the fate of Northern Ireland within the UK, as well as Anglo-Irish politics writ large.

This is the composer’s first use of graphics in composition to such a large extent, and this seems to have been a challenging, yet fruitful, position to come from, ‘[j]ust as in UK politics, this border seemed to resist any easy solution, so would the presence of the “borderline” in my piece sound enigmatic and uncanny, resisting assimilation into the rest of the quartet.’<sup>15</sup>

This piece transforms a graphical space in many different ways, as opposed to the more singular ways we have seen in the previous examples. Two striking examples where indeterminate composition is combined with determinate can be seen at rehearsal mark S and X. Rehearsal mark S marks the first ‘Borderline Solo’, where the 2nd violin is instructed to play a boxed shape (a section of the

Figure 9 *Borderline Duet* from Martyn Harry’s *String Quartet No. 3, ‘Borderline’*.  
© Martyn Harry, reproduced with permission from the composer.

Figure 10 *Borderline Solo* from Martyn Harry’s *String Quartet No. 3, ‘Borderline’*.  
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Irish border) using a continuous *glissando*. Rehearsal mark X repeats this idea, but now uses two instruments as a ‘Borderline Duet’ (1st violin and cello) and instructs them to co-ordinate with one another (‘quasi in octaves’). The ‘solo’ and ‘duet’ are to be played ‘*molto espress.*’ (very expressively) and ‘*desolato*’ (desolate) respectively, which may colour the interpretation of the performance of the graphic, and its place within the wider musical context.

Both of these examples act as tracings of the graphic that will, invariably, result in slight changes in realization (as is the case with all indeterminate composition). Having said that, a certain level of prescriptiveness is imposed in the use of referential pitches that let the performer know where they should be at a particular moment in their realization of the graphic, as was the case in Xenakis’s *Metastasis*. This guides the interpretation of the indeterminate notation, thus adding more compositional control over the resulting music.

Contrasting to this, at rehearsal mark AA there is a fully pre-generated, determinate version of the border in the entire quartet, which is intended to be played ‘distant’ and ‘uncanny’. This was achieved by copying out the border onto large manuscript paper and creating a pitch-time axis using small units of equally tempered 12-tone notes, using approximations of horizontal space as rhythmic determinants.<sup>16</sup> This method is alluded to literally in the score, which states that the music is ‘Tracing the Map’.

**AA** Tracing the Map (distant, uncanny)

Figure 11 *Tracing the Map* from Martyn Harry’s *String Quartet No. 3, ‘Borderline’*.  
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This method may also explain why some strings on the viola and cello are detuned, known as ‘*scordatura*’.<sup>17</sup> If this graphical method was consistently followed, there is a likelihood that there would be material that fell below the bottom limit of the cello (unless the lower bound was the lowest note on the cello). By tuning the strings down, Harry not only stays true to his graphical method, but also creates something that can comment poetically and politically on the music, creating an unnatural sound that alludes to the unusual generation method as well as the uncertain political situation that infuses the entire piece.

One final way in which Harry generates his material is through the use of graphically-derived pitches which are then ‘multiplied’ – a method developed by composer Pierre Boulez in the 1950s known as ‘chord multiplication’ – which Harry teaches at Oxford University and is, therefore, very familiar with. The impetus of using such a method is to achieve the creation of material as well as distance from the original input. Arguably, the indeterminate glissandi of the strings in the solo/duet sections are gesturally characteristic and allude to an unusual process taking place within the piece. By using a method that can generate determinate pitches and chords which are not directly connected to the border, but are instead derived from it, the graphical source is more hidden. This invokes the issue of striking an effective balance of formalism and freedom once again. Further distance from this graphical method is implied through the use of ‘echoes’ of music by Béla Bartók (1881–1945)<sup>18</sup> and the striking references to *Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 11, ‘Serioso’*, (c. 1810) as well as his *Siegessymphonie* (Victory Symphony) from the incidental music of *Egmont* (1810). Indeed, both of these Beethoven pieces were written during the political upheaval of the Napoleonic Wars, which strengthens Harry’s geopolitical metaphor even more.

## Conclusion

The same approach to the translation of graphical spaces, i.e. the use of a pitch-time space as the basic rational tool, can be seen throughout all the examples discussed in this article. Despite this however, it seems clear that there exists incredible variation when composers approach and incorporate extra-musical source materials into their works. One strength in the idea of translating graphical spaces is the unpredictability of what will appear. Indeed, it is inconceivable to think what the Phillips Pavilion, astral constellations, or the Irish border sound like. In all these cases, composers are confronted with problems that they must navigate in order to achieve a descriptive translation, or ekphrasis, of the graphical spaces they wish to use. In this way, one may be able to think about ekphrasis not only poetically, but as an elucidator of graphical space which is then embellished through metaphor: *a graphical ekphrasis*.

Q

*Brave New World* is a body of work by Catherine Cartwright commissioned by the University of Exeter Arts & Culture responding to the theme of Urgency. The photographs document portrait-placards co-created with protesters local to Exeter and photographed in locations significant to their cause. The question motivating the making of this artwork was on automatic facial recognition (AFR) – what will happen to public protest if AFR becomes commonplace? Central to the making of the work was the dialogue with protesters, the public, AI business and academics responding to this question.



*Brave New World*, 84 x 60cm, 2019



## Endnotes

The Visible Pulse of the Possible: Exchanges, Protest and Possibilities in Chilean Performance Art, pp. 8–18

*Sebastian Bustamante-Brauning, University of Bristol*

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Shakespeare’s Language Economy: Considering *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*, pp. 20–25  
*Emma Venter, University of Leeds*

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- 'Spain, Sit and Talk!': The Politics of Exchange Within the Nation-State, pp. 26–34  
*Joe Healy, Cardiff University | Prifysgol Caerdydd*
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'Differentness' and the American Jew-Gentile Heterosexual Romantic-Comedy, pp. 40–59  
*Peter Lederer, Queen's University Belfast*

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Who Will Overthrow Imperialism with Me? Culture and Interactivity in Anti-Colonial Radio for Africans, 1956–1964, pp. 60–67

Alex White, Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge

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- 65 'Olabizi [sic] Ajala's Broadcast' (3.3.1960), SWB ME/276/b/1; Sykes, p. 59.
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#### Exchange and Recognition in Michael Longley's Homeric Laments, pp. 68–77

Meg Dyson, *University of Exeter*

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- 3 Hardwick, 'Murmurs in the Cathedral', p. 205.
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- 5 Brian John, 'The Achievement of Michael Longley's "The Ghost Orchid"' *Irish University Review*, 27.1 (1997), 139–151. (p. 148).
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- 8 Anne Carson, *Nox*, (New York: New Directions Publishing, 2009), Section 7.1.
- 9 Reynolds, pp. 214 [...] 216.
- 10 Longley, 'Lapsed Classicist', p. 100. Interestingly, another of Longley's Homeric translations – 'Ceasefire', which describes the meeting between Achilles and Priam in the *Iliad* – begins with an almost identical sentiment from the point of view of Achilles looking at Priam: 'Put in mind of his own father and moved to tears' (Longley, *Collected Poems*, p. 225).
- 11 See appendix.
- 12 Theodoor Van Thulden (after Francesco Primaticcio), close up from *Odysseus omhelst Laërtes in zijn wijngaard* (Odysseus embraces Laërtes in his vineyard), c.1632–33). Rijks Museum. URL: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-OB-66.784>. Accessed 22/06/2020.
- 13 Michael Longley, *Collected Poems* (London: Cape Poetry, 2006), p. 182. See appendix for Greek and literal translation.
- 14 Longley, 'Lapsed Classicist', p. 111. In this quote he is describing a different poem, 'The Evening Star', but he uses this technique throughout his poetry.
- 15 Homer, *Iliad*, 2.494–795.
- 16 Cf. Broom: "'But the whole story is one catalogue and then another" reflects Longley's tendency to see experience as a series of individual, discrete, unique moments and objects, rather than as a narrative or progression.' (p. 105).
- 17 Longley, *Collected Poems*, p. 182.
- 18 Homer, *Odyssey*, 24.346, as quoted in appendix.
- 19 Cf. Gregory Crane, 'The *Odyssey* and the Conventions of the Heroic Quest' *Classical Antiquity* 6.1 (1987), 11–37. (p. 11).
- 20 Johann Heinrich Fussli, *The Shade of Tiresias appearing to Odysseus during the Sacrifice*, c. 1780–85. URL: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann\\_Heinrich\\_F%C3%BCssli\\_063.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann_Heinrich_F%C3%BCssli_063.jpg). Accessed 22/06/2020.
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*Appendix: Homeric sources for ‘Laertes’ and ‘Anticleia’*

‘Laertes’

Corresponding text: Homer, *Odyssey*, 24.226–237 [...] 336–348

τὸν δ’ οἶον πατέρ’ εὗρεν εὐκτιμένην ἐν ἀλωῇ,  
 λιστρεύοντα φυτόν: ῥυπόωντα δὲ ἔστο χιτῶνα  
 ῥαπτὸν ἀεικέλιον, περὶ δὲ κνήμησι βοείας  
 κνημῖδας ῥαπτὰς δέδετο, γραπτῦς ἀλεείνων,  
 χειρῖδας τ’ ἐπὶ χερσὶ βάτων ἔνεκ’: αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεῖν 230  
 αἰγείην κυνέην κεφαλῇ ἔχε, πένθος ἀέζων.  
 τὸν δ’ ὡς οὖν ἐνόησε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς  
 γήραϊ τειρόμενον μέγα δὲ φρεσὶ πένθος ἔχοντα  
 στάς ἄρ’ ὑπὸ βλωθρῆν ὄγχην κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβε.  
 μερμήριξε δ’ ἔπειτα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν 235  
 κύσσαι καὶ περιφῶναι ἐὸν πατέρ’, ἠδὲ ἕκαστα  
 εἰπεῖν ὡς ἔλθοι καὶ ἴκοιτ’ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,  
 [...]  
 εἰ δ’ ἄγε τοι καὶ δένδρε’ εὐκτιμένην κατ’ ἀλωῆν  
 εἶπω, ἃ μοί ποτ’ ἔδωκας, ἐγὼ δ’ ἠτεόν σε ἕκαστα  
 παιδνὸς ἐών, κατὰ κήπον ἐπισπόμενος: διὰ δ’ αὐτῶν  
 ἰκνεύμεσθα, σὺ δ’ ὠνόμασας καὶ εἶπες ἕκαστα.  
 ὄγχνας μοι δῶκας τρισκαίδεκα καὶ δέκα μηλέας, 340  
 συκέας τεσσαράκοντ’: ὄρχους δὲ μοι ὦδ’ ὀνόμηνας  
 δώσειν πεντήκοντα, διατρύγιος δὲ ἕκαστος  
 ἦην: ἔνθα δ’ ἀνὰ σταφυλαὶ παντοῖαι ἔασιν –  
 ὅπποτε δὴ Διὸς ὄραι ἐπιβρίσειαν ὑπερθεῖν.  
 ὡς φάτο, τοῦ δ’ αὐτοῦ λῦτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ, 345  
 σήματ’ ἀναγνόντος τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ’ Ὀδυσσεύς.  
 ἀμφὶ δὲ παιδὶ φίλῳ βάλει πῆχε: τὸν δὲ ποτὶ οἴ  
 εἶλεν ἀποψύχοντα πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς.

English translation:

He found his father alone in the well-worked orchard  
 digging around a plant. He was wearing a filthy tunic,  
 it was sewn together badly, and he had tied patched ox-hide greaves  
 around his legs, avoiding scratches;  
 he had gloves on his hands for the thorns: and above, 230  
 on his head, he had a goat-skin cap, and he was letting his sorrow grow.

When much-suffering divine Odysseus saw him,  
 weakened by old age and bearing great sorrow in his heart,  
 standing under a tall pear-tree, he was letting tears fall.  
 Then he wondered in his heart and soul 235  
 whether to hug and kiss his father and tell him everything,  
 how he came and reached his fatherland  
 [...]  
 Or I’ll tell you as well about the trees in the well-worked orchard,  
 which you gave to me once, and I asked you about each one  
 being childish, following you through the garden. And we went  
 through it, and you called each one by name and spoke about it,  
 you gave me thirteen pear trees and ten apple trees, 340  
 forty fig trees. You promised to give me fifty vines,  
 each bearing grapes one after another.  
 There were bunches of grapes of all sorts there,  
 when the seasons of Zeus fell from above.  
 Odysseus said this, and Laertes’ knees and loved heart gave way, 345  
 knowing for sure that the signs Odysseus had given were certain  
 he threw his arms around his beloved son, and  
 much suffering divine Odysseus grasped him as he was fainting.

‘Anticleia’

The relationship between ‘Anticleia’ and the *Odyssey* is more complex than that of ‘Laertes’ and its source, so, within the limits of this article, I do not provide a translation of the corresponding passages. However, it is possible to point to the sources for different sections of the poem:

- ‘If at a rock [...] And so many souls of the anaemic dead come crowding in’ corresponds to *Odyssey* book 10, lines 513–530, heavily condensed. This is the direct speech of Circe telling Odysseus how to summon the dead.
- ‘Only to recognise among the zombies your own mother’ – Odysseus recognises Anticleia in *Odyssey* book 11, line 84.
- ‘And if, having given her blood to drink’ – Odysseus gives her the blood at 11.152–3, once he has spoken to Tiresias.
- ‘You lunge [...] That this is what happens to human beings when they die’ corresponds fairly closely to 11.205–222.



Graphical Ekphrasis: Translating Graphical Spaces into Music, pp. 78–91

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- 1 S. Bruhn, *Musical Ekphrasis*, p. xvi.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 3 H. Dutilleux & C. Glayman, *Henri Dutilleux: Music – Mystery and Memory: Conversations with Claude Glayman*, Translated by Roger Nichols, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 73.
- 4 A well-known example of this is Cardew’s *Treatise* (1963–1967). A quick online search will also reveal many others and make this distinction clear.
- 5 R. Fearn, *The Music of Luigi Dallapiccola*, Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2003, p. 201.
- 6 H. Nathan, ‘Review: Luigi Dallapiccola: Sicut Umbra [etc.]’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 64(4), Oct. 1978, pp. 557.
- 7 R. Fearn, *The Music of Luigi Dallapiccola*, Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2003, p. 258.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 256.
- 9 L. Dallapiccola in M. Eckert, ‘Text and Form in Dallapiccola’s Goethe-Lieder’, *Perspectives on New Music*, Vol. 17(2), Summer 1979, p. 107.
- 10 O. Messiaen in N. Matossian, *Xenakis*, London, Kahn and Averill, 1986, p. 48.
- 11 R. Wannamaker, ‘Mathematics and Design in the Music of Iannis Xenakis’ in S. Kanach (ed.), *Xenakis Matters*, New York, Pendragon Press, 2012, p. 130.
- 12 S. Kanach, ‘Music to be seen: tracing Xenakis’s Creative Processes’, in S. Kanach & C. Lovelace (ed.), *Iannis Xenakis: Architect, Composer, Visionary*, New York, The Drawing Center, p. 113.
- 13 For a comprehensive text on the UPIC, see *From Xenakis’s UPIC to Graphic Notation Today*, an open-access collection of essays produced by the ZKM in collaboration with the Centre Iannis Xenakis, Berlin, Hatje Cantz, 2020. Available at: <https://zkm.de/en/from-xenakiss-upic-to-graphic-notation-today>
- 14 I. Xenakis, ‘Mycenae – Alpha 1978’, *Perspectives of New Music*, 25(1/2), Summer 1987, pp. 14.
- 15 M. Harry, Programme Note, *String Quartet No. 3, ‘Borderline’*, 2019.
- 16 From a conversation with the composer in July 2019.
- 17 This is shown in Figure 11 in the cello. The ‘sounding’ note is a low A-flat, however the cellist plays their open C string. This means that the C-string has been detuned to sound a major 3rd lower than it usually does. The A-flat in the score is outside the range of the cello if scordatura is not applied.
- 18 Bartok’s music is generally seen as ‘national’, embodying his native Hungary. He was also instrumental in the collection of native Hungarian folk-song. For more on this, see David Schneider’s *Bartók, Hungary, and the Renewal of Tradition: Case Studies in the Intersection of Modernity and Nationality*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006.

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