European Spaces of Conflict—Past, Present and Future

Florian Lippert,
Vera Alexander,
Alberto Godioli and
Elizabeth Pinilla Duarte
(Eds.)

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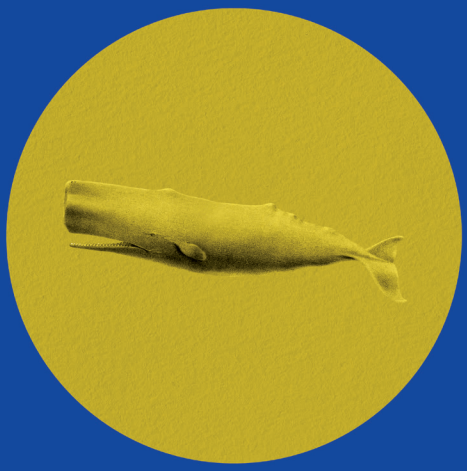

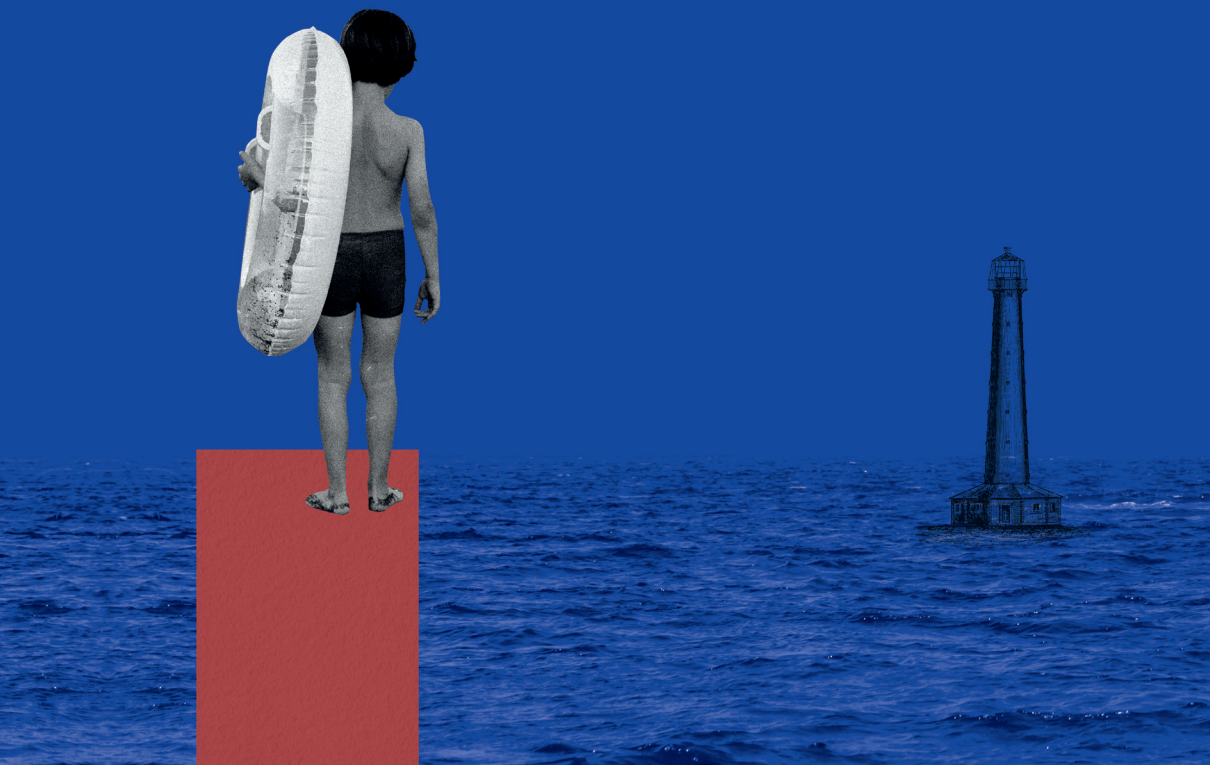

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IN COLLABORATION WITH
Tessa Jutstra

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FOREWORD

Contested Spaces from Homer to Star Trek

Hamish Williams

I was delighted to accept the offer by Prof. Pablo Valdivia to write a short foreword to this collection of diverse and thought-provoking essays by some of the most exciting young minds working in the Bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures and in several of our Master's programmes at the University of Groningen. All the pieces in this volume share the common pursuit of meditating over some space of conflict, particularly, but not limited to, a European context. These conflicts cover spaces as diverse as the modernist struggle between rationality and irrationality; reinterpretations of the old nature-culture dichotomy, now understood between the poles of the Anthropocene and the post-human; and the pursuit of a path between realism and utopianism in political discourse—not to forget that most recognisable of physical conflict spaces, the battlefield, whether on the plain of ancient Troy or in the trenches of the First World War.

The collection of essays is divided into three sections: past, present, and future. These distinctions are made according to the objects of analysis, the primary sources: the 'past' section mainly focuses on literary texts from the modernist period, and the 'present' section on twenty-first century cultural texts; the 'future' section is more provocative and argumentative in its tone,

with, accordingly, less emphasis on past scholarship. Over and above these divisions, many of the essays across sections intersect in, for example, their probing of concepts such as nature, temporality, and utopia. Impressive for me in the volume was the range of different primary materials which the various essays employed, including genre fiction such as science fiction, ancient poetry, literary fiction, a low-budget YouTube miniseries, commercial television series, and video games; outside of an interest in the representational arts, several discussions drew on narratological and discourse-analysis approaches in order to interrogate contemporary political manifestos or general vernacular discourse. To match this diversity of materials, a great variety in different academic fields can be recognised, introducing the reader to theoretical backgrounds and the typical tools employed therein, for example humour studies, memory studies, and cognitive narratology.

In what follows, I provide a brief summary of the different chapters as well as some contextualisation of key debates therein.

In the first essay in the first section, 'An Irreconcilable Conflict', Judith van Weringh examines the novel *The Confusions of Young Törless*, by Austrian philosophical novelist Robert Musil. Van Weringh examines how the novel is centred on the crisis of meaning which was particularly evident in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and involved a conflict between rational ways of thinking, most obviously modern scientific thought, and irrational ways of thinking, mystical thought. Weringh shows how the character of Törless ultimately achieves some perspicacity by observing the clear separation between these two cognitive realms.

Weringh's interpretative attitude to the cognitive space we call 'the irrational' and to the necessity of retaining this way of thinking, as embodied by the irreconcilable complexities of Törless, made me think of the philosophical speculations of Friedrich Nietzsche; more particularly, I was reminded of Nietzsche's dark realm of the Dionysiac, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, in a quotation given from the Austrian's novel—of a world which was "an untrammelled one full of darkness, blood, and undreamt-of-surprises," (Musil 43) a chaotic, subliminal experiential world which the German philosopher contrasted with a realm of ordered illusion called the Apolline.[1] Although no

1 "[T]he highest impact of Apolline culture [...] must always overthrow a realm of Titans and slay monsters, and [...] must emerge triumphant over a terrible abyss in its contemplation of the world and its most intense capacity for suffering, by resorting to the most powerful and pleasurable illusions" (Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* 24).

expert on Musil's work, I was unsurprised to quickly find scholarly literature devoted to the reception of Nietzsche in his writings (e.g., Willemsen). Nietzsche's dichotomy suggests that both religious, pre-modern thinking and modern, scientific thinking are, in fact, similar rational ways of making sense of our experience of the universe, the Apolline will to order, but that they are both essentially illusions, placed over a fundamental Dionysiac human experience. In the wake of the failed religious experiment ('the death of god')[2] and at the start of a period of scientific hegemony (a new way of rational sense making), this Nietzschean suspicion of various rational ways of sense-making of our (aesthetic) world experiences as fundamentally illusive is endemic to many works of modernist fiction penned at the start of the twentieth century.[3] The rupture between the promises of rational, scientific thought and its incommensurability with lived experience was only augmented by the collective trauma of the First World War, involving industrialised killing on a mass scale.

The next essay 'Homer and the Wounds of War', by Ninah Danique Tiemersma, is embedded in the fast-growing academic sub-field of classical reception studies, which seeks to put ancient-world texts, particularly those of Greece, Rome, and to a lesser extent, various near-Eastern cultures, in conversation with modern culture.[4] The relationship is not simplistically diachronic, suggesting 'cultural legacies' on a linear line of development from the canonical landscape of the classical world to the modern, 'post-classical' world. In fact, modern cultural phenomena and lived experiences can help us reassess and reinterpret ancient narratives in a way which shows their universal applicability beyond the contextualising tendencies of scholars who are experts in specific periods and cultures. In the case of Tiemersma's chapter, the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as captured in modern psychiatric definitions, can provide a new way of reading one of the oldest works of Western literature, Homer's *Iliad*, which is focused on the Trojan War, an important mythologised moment in the late Bronze Age, around 1250 BC. Although the topic has been covered before, most famously by Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam*, Tiemersma's focus is more on a

2 "[B]elief in the Christian God has become unbelievable" (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 362).

3 As an aside, I was reminded of how even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the British author of that bastion of rational agency and of the scientific processes of induction and deduction in the late Victorian period, the detective Sherlock Holmes, turned later in life to séance to communicate with his first wife —and to fairies as well, as one does.

4 For an introduction to the field, see Hardwick and Stray.

rereading of the ancient text than a comparative attempt to historicise the experience of American GIs in the jungles of North Vietnam or to assess modern cultural texts (one thinks immediately of the films of Coppola and Kubrick). In brief, then, Tiemersma shows how the Greek heroes Achilles and Odysseus display symptoms (for instance, aggression and self-destructive behaviour) which can be interpreted as signs of PTSD.

Whereas the first essay in this volume revolves around the modernist conflict between the rational and the irrational, Tiemersma's essay brings to light another key conflict in the emotional-ethical cognitive landscape: between shame and guilt. In his influential monograph, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Irish scholar E. R. Dodds first brought to the attention of classicists the [twentieth-century] anthropological division between a shame-culture, where the individual is concerned with gaining the 'external' or social-based approbation of his or her compatriots (honour) and with avoiding disgrace (shame), and a guilt-culture, where the individual is concerned with an internal rubric of accountability or, in other words, has that which we would term a *conscience* (see Dodds 28ff). Such divisions often led anthropologists in the twentieth century to posit diachronic, civilisational, even occident-centred narratives: typically showing progression from primitive shame-cultures, whether in non-western cultures or in ancient societies, as depicted in the Homeric poems where characters such as Achilles are motivated mainly be questions of honour and disgrace (the positive and negative sides of shame-culture), (see Hooker) to more modern, often Christian-based guilt-cultures. Tiemersma's analysis, however, points to an interiority of the ancient hero which tries to deconstruct any such historical development, and by extension the artificiality of such broad diachronic developments of man, and so allows the reader to find compelling psychological nuances in Homeric characters.

The final essay in the first section, 'Life Will Find a Way' by Yannick de Graaf, brings into focus that age-old dualism of nature and culture, with a close reading of *The Time Machine*, a novella by English science fiction writer H.G. Wells. The relationship between these two, apparently distinct, spheres has, as de Graaf points out, traditionally been antagonistic. In the European literary tradition, one can think of pre-modern, heroic epics such as *Beowulf* where the eponymous hero of the Geats has to tame and defeat three wild, monstrous embodiments of the natural world, such as the giant Grendel or the dragon (a polymorphous creature capturing the kaleidoscopic threats

of 'the forest beyond the tribe'). The civilisational narrative of subduing nature was also well-developed in literature of the European colonial age, for example, the economic exploits of Robinson Crusoe, bringing about order to his new-found island environment, in Defoe's era-defining novel.

H.G. Wells was certainly part of a rapidly industrialising society in the late nineteenth century, and the English writer was himself clearly fascinated by societal progress and the possibilities of science. In his personal diatribes, Wells showed himself to be a staunch supporter of scientific education, particularly in schools, over and above traditional, 'conservative' disciplines; Wells was also greatly interested in notions of ideal, perfective societies (utopias), as reflected in numerous historical and social essays he penned later in life. This progressive, utopian vision is captured in his creative fiction. As de Graaf points out, *The Time Machine* is, in part, focused on a future where "[o]ne triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed another."[5] Wells' creative writing shows a general fascination with new technology which can change our experience of the world: whether it be a way of rupturing time itself, a way of conquering materiality as in *The Invisible Man*, or even the simple bicycle, then a radically novel technology, of *The War of the Worlds* as a convenient way to escape the alien invaders (see Whithers).

While such a vision of nature is essentially antagonistic, de Graaf interestingly uncovers in Well's *The Time Machine* the seeds of later, twentieth and twenty-first century approaches towards the natural world by drawing attention to scholarly discussions of posthumanism and the Anthropocene. Posthumanism is essentially concerned with decentralising the primacy of the human agent, and such posthumanist moments can be seen in the meditations by the novel's narrator on the vast spatial-temporality expanse beyond humanity (although this could also be viewed as an incentive towards colonisation, typical in early science fiction) and, more importantly, in the continued thriving of the natural world in a future era in which the human species has ceased to exist. De Graaf's essay title links this posthumanist theme to Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*, where human hubris to understand and control a revivified natural world is the primary theme of the theme-park. Tokens of the Anthropocene, a term referring to the current geological age in which human endeavours have a defining impact on the

5 See de Graaf in this volume.

planet, are perhaps also apparent in Well's science fiction, particularly in the way in which evolutionary progress seems to be reversed, and our own scientific advancement paves the path for our own apocalyptic destruction as a species.

In the first essay in the second section, 'Navigating the Union', Bastiaan van der Werff is concerned with overcoming the gap between political promises and their actual delivery in the context of the European Union; the problem has been referenced by Frans Timmerman, then vice-president of the European Commission, as well as in *The White Paper on the Future of Europe*. Intriguingly, van der Werff's suggestion is a combination of apparently incongruent, or conflicting, approaches from political science: incrementalism and utopianism. Incrementalism is concerned with marginal or small adjustments which are made to prevailing legislation or policies; this approach is based on the thought of American political scientist Charles Lindblom, who believed that the multiplicity of factors in decision-making negated the effectiveness of broader policy implementation and could lead to unwanted consequences. Such a pragmatic approach is largely embedded in the school of political realism—a case by case approach to decision-making, both domestic and international—which is of course opposed to political idealism;[6] to this end, utopianism, most commonly associated in popular American political discourse with communism and thus bringing up Cold-War antagonisms, is usually the enemy. Van der Werff, however, argues that utopianism can be blended with incrementalism (realism)—it just depends on how we define utopianism. If we think of it as a short-term, progressive, essentially hopeful striving towards a goal, rather than a concrete land of plenty, as in Thomas More's creation or the mediaeval Land of Cockaigne, then utopianism can indeed play an important role in decision-making. In such a progressivist, realist rearticulation of utopia, I was reminded of Dutch philosopher Rutger Bregman's recent discussion of the topic in *Utopia for Realists*, wherein he constantly invokes the spatial metaphor of an island visible on the edge of the horizon, but never quite reachable, as a desirable way of conceptualising this hopeful emotion, and

6 From an international relations perspective, Eric Blanchard defines the field thus: "Realists, as the name implies, dedicated themselves to the dispassionate study of international reality, focusing on "what is" in contrast to the utopian visions of "what should be," [...]. Privileging the state and the military sector and viewing violence as endemic to the international system, realist prescriptions gained ascendancy in cold war U.S. academic and governmental discourses of strategy and security" (Blanchard 1291).

of surpassing the apparent impasse of utopian, future imaginings in the contemporary cultural milieu.[7]

In the subsequent paper in this section, 'Zooming in and Zooming out', Anastasiia Konobrodska turns our attention to the conflict zone of World War One (WWI), with a focus not on contextualising the experiential ruptures which this key marker in the modernist period produced on the individual, but on our contemporary memory of this traumatic event (no longer a living memory). WWI, argues Konobrodska, is a conflict which transcends nation-based understandings of memory in a European context and which has the potential to create a shared memory landscape and, thus, to play a large role towards mending the factures in the European project. Konobrodska makes use of the growing field of game studies to address her topic, analysing how three recent video games centred on WWI—*Battlefield 1*, *Valiant Hearts*, and *11/11: Memories Retold*—can disrupt the accustomed continuity of gamer experience and so can help the player empathize with the lived experience of WWI combatants.

It is interesting to note that there is a far greater range of video games devoted to World War Two—such as the *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* series—which is indicative of the fact that popular narratives on this subsequent war tend towards clearer polarisations of good (allies) and bad (axis). Conversely, in the WWI games which Konobrodska analyses, gamers at times are forced to switch sides, so disrupting their heroic building of an identified character, as in typical first-person shooters (FPSs); disruptions are also created through the permanent death of playable characters, through spatial experience of memorialised places of trauma, and through the changing of perspective to non-human agents (in one game, a pigeon's point-of-view). Konobrodska's study certainly is innovative, and analyses of WWI games warrant further investigation in memory studies, particularly in their role in shaping broad popular perspectives of this complex conflict.

Christa Lankhaar's essay 'Even the Dead Pay Their Bills' shifts the focus from video games to television series, namely, the American comedy-drama series *Dead Like Me* (2 seasons), which introduces watchers to the very

7 "According to Oscar Wilde, upon reaching the Land of Plenty, we should once more fix our gaze on the farthest horizon and hoist the sails. "Progress is the realization of Utopias," he wrote. But the far horizon remains blank. The Land of Plenty is shrouded in fog. Precisely when we should be shouldering the historic task of investing this rich, sage, and healthy existence with meaning, we've buried utopia instead. [...]. No, the real crisis is that we can't come up with anything better" (Bregman 10–11; cf. 20–21).

mundane, bureaucratic 'after-life' of main character Georgia Lass, who dies in the first episode and soon finds herself to be but a cog in the wheel, one of a number of not-so-grim reapers who co-exist with the living (without manifest reference to any heaven-like sphere) and who have the chore of managing deaths. Lankhaar analyses the television series as an example of a contemporary popular cultural production which emphasises the loss of the notion of externality, the possibility of reaching anything (eschatological, metaphysical, spiritual) beyond the current, human-experienced, capitalist, social-political milieu; this kind of temporal stagnation Lankhaar shows to be a defining characteristic of the Anthropocene, which puts her essay in conversation with de Graaf's earlier discussion on H.G. Wells. Lankhaar's examination of this loss of externality in *Dead Like Me* can perhaps be contextualised within a wider sub-genre of popular television series, particularly in horror, which seem increasingly to be normalising the 'after'-life, often satirically so, and thus denying the possibility of the beyond. To this end, one can mention zombie comedies here, such as *Izombie*, or even a horror adventure series such as *Supernatural*, where each season's attempt to find 'something beyond' the grimy world of hunters—demons, angels, death itself, leviathans, chaos—seems destined to return to the bathetic materialism of the present life (cars and guns) and the struggles of the two brothers Winchester.

'Borderless Humour' by Katharina Krüll takes us from the bigger-budget, network-endorsed series of the previous essay to the low-key, small-budget production of a YouTube miniseries called *Eurobubble* (consisting of ten episodes, each of about four minutes in length), which follows the lives of a group of young Europeans, of various nationalities, living and working in Brussels, and which provides typical scenarios of this lifestyle (dating, work conferences, etc.). The series is analysed by Krüll in terms of its humoristic function, illustrating how the episodes poke fun at the typical incongruences which are a stock of a transnational European community such as that in Brussels, particularly the bureaucratic absurdities; more to the point, she discusses whether such a satire—especially a low-budget, bottom-up production such as *Eurobubble*—can have an important transnational function in allowing for shared debate across a European public sphere. Ultimately, according to Krüll, the miniseries fails in this respect: "the series risks to offer mere platitudes about this bubble instead of a substantiated critique that invites the audience to look beyond the humourized facts".[8]

8 See Krüll in this volume.

Humour is, as Krüll reveals at the start of the essay, a complex field of enquiry, bringing together many different approaches and disciplines (sociology, literary studies, psychology, and so on). Following some traditional conceptualisations, (see Billig 6) we might think of humour in terms of three essential functions: the pleasing oppositions it exposes through jokes (incongruency theory); its purgative psychic effects for the listeners (not to discount the physiological effects of laughter itself) (relief theory); and its relation to power structures (superiority, Hobbesian theory—originally in a negative sense). While *Eurobubble* creates funny jokes (incongruencies) and clearly has a target audience who can relate to and enjoy these short anecdotes and inside jokes (relief theory), Krüll is sceptical of the extent to which this YouTube miniseries can act as critical, political satire, a type of active, bottom-up humour which often prods at hierarchical structures and their inequalities and, at best, even provides some alternatives to the criticised structures. On the different relationships with power which satire can have, Krüll at the end of her essay brings up the personae of two Roman satirists, regarded as founding writers of the genre, Horace and Juvenal, with their perceived different approaches to satire. According to Krüll, *Eurobubble* does not veer sufficiently towards the Juvenalian, as perhaps a more effective form of satirical social critique. Horace's satires are full of verbal dexterity and witticisms, but his gentle, playful prodding at social problems in his *Satires* seems not to have affected his esteemed standing with the Emperor Augustus Caesar (unlike his contemporary poet Ovid, who was exiled to the Black Sea for some unknown affront). Does such Horatian satire risk veering towards trivial humour and implicitly endorse power structures even when it makes a playful show of discontent? Juvenalian satire, on the other hand, is all about outrage, about aggressively listing the ills of one's times and not taking a step back to moderate one's social position—although, it must be said, such an outraged persona can itself easily become a mere comic caricature, a performance of affront.[9]

9 For more on Juvenalian satire, see Courtney 10; Quintero 1ff. Billig (200, 209–14) has questioned whether such humour (like satire) which is directed upwards against hierarchies/power structures is truly rebellious/resisting (the favoured interpretation of positivist humour critics) or whether it is rather complicit/conformist in maintaining the social order. Two important factors to consider here are the commodification of contemporary joking 'rebels' (switch-on/switch-off rebelliousness) (209, 212) and the transitory, generally innocuous nature of jokes (211).

'Coming Full Circle' by Lisa Smit, the final essay in the second section, returns the reader to the genre of science fiction, though about a century after H.G. Wells' seminal *Time Machine*, through a close analysis (involving methods from the digital humanities, in tandem with a cognitive narratology approach) of 'Story of Your Life', a short story by Ted Chiang, and its film adaptation, *Arrival*. The narrative of the stories, in short, revolves around an alien race characterised by a simultaneous experience of temporality (conjoining past, present, and future), who arrive on earth in order to augment our own linear experience of time and unite the human race; alongside this typically grand science-fiction narrative is the story of an academic expert in linguistics, who comes to learn the time-deconstructing language of these aliens and so gains knowledge of a future tragedy, the death of her as-yet unborn child. Smit's analysis has a largely illustrative function as part of a transmedial approach, in showing the different ways in which the forms of a literary text and film go about the task of disorienting the reader or viewer's experience of time: in the written text, different tenses of verbs (for example, using the future tense to describe memories) play a large role; in the film, the editing and ordering of shots are significant techniques.

The final section of the volume concludes with five provocative essays examining contemporary problems such as climate change, the limits of the European project, the possibility for global citizenship, and the prospects for extra-planetary colonisation. All of these essays return to topics which have been covered in some way or another by other contributors, such as our agonistic relationship with nature, the problems of creating a cohesive European public sphere, and the progressive imagination of science fiction beyond earthly bounds; the focus in this part of the volume is not, however, concerned with analysing how cultural texts define and reflect prevailing conflicts in social, political spaces, but in posing problematic questions for the future. In 'Narrating Climate Change', Julia Schmahl argues that narratological and discourse approaches in the human sciences can play a much larger role than they have already in framing how people receive and react to scientific narratives of climate change. In 'Dark Paper on the Future of Europe', Ola Medzińska takes a more pessimistic view of the European project by highlighting the unwillingness of elites to tackle the very real disparities (such as the west-east divide) which threaten the continued

functioning of a collective Europe. In 'Only us. The Future of Citizenship', Loura Kruger, drawing on Benedict Anderson's ideas on nation and nationalism, suggests that European citizenship can provide the framework for an even larger project of global citizenship (or perhaps, I might suggest in a somewhat more anarchic tone—no citizenship). Marina Grisko, in turn, investigates future possibilities for cross-disciplinary cooperation between STEM and the Humanities in the context of sustainable technological development. Finally, in 'Space: The Final Frontier. Our Future among the Stars', Iris Bakker hypothesises what form of ideal government would be needed in future colonies beyond earth and considers the challenges to traditional ways of thinking that interplanetary colonisation poses.

From Homer's *Iliad* to the speculative interstellar voyaging of *Star Trek*—and what next…? In this foreword, I have tried to give some broader contextualisation of the arguments, approaches, and theories tackled in this volume, but that is of course no substitute for reading. From the current evidence, though, the future of the humanities is in good hands.[10]

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10 My thanks to Florian Lippert, Alberto Godioli, and Vera Alexander for support and comments on this foreword.

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I. PAST

1.

An Irreconcilable Conflict: The Eyes of Reason versus the Other Eyes in *The Confusions of Young Törless*

Judith van Weringh

The heart has its reasons of
which reason knows nothing.

Blaise Pascal

1. Introduction

Robert Musil's novel *The Confusions of Young Törless* (*Törless*), first published in 1906, provides the reader with a glimpse of modernity as experienced by a young adolescent. The story evolves at a military boarding school in a remote area of the Habsburg Empire around 1900, "presumably to shield the growing boys from the pernicious influence of a big city" (Musil, *Törless* 6). It soon becomes evident, however, that Törless' isolation from the urbanized world does not shield him from an influence that runs much deeper and proves more fundamental: the influence of the rational, modern mind. A feeling of alienation confuses Törless which is described as an unbridgeable gap between rationality and something that lies beyond conventional understanding: "He felt himself, in a way, torn between two worlds: a solid, bourgeois world where ultimately everything was ordered and rational [...] and an untrammelled one full of darkness, blood, and undreamt-of-surprises. And the one seemed to exclude the other" (Musil, *Törless* 43). Törless attempts to gain clarity by searching for moments in which these two worlds seem to overlap. The presence of an ungraspable

world is most evidently experienced during Törless' involvement in bullying and abusing a classmate called Basini. Törless feels that, when observing and participating in the abuse of Basini, unexplainable emotions enter his mind. He asks himself why Basini undergoes torture and humiliation without fighting back. From an outside perspective, everything might seem explainable and ordered, yet Törless senses that he cannot understand human actions and emotions by rationality alone. Basini becomes an experiment by which Törless tries to grasp a reality he does not understand, he asks Basini questions during the— almost sadistic—humiliations: "Yes, I am tormenting you. But that's not what I'm after; I just want to know one thing: what's inside you when I stick all this into you like knives. What goes on inside you?" (Musil, *Törless* 121). Basini is unable to explain his exact motives and feelings, which provides Törless at last with the insight that "between the life we live and the life we feel, sense, see far off, there is the invisible border" (Musil, *Törless* 123). This invisible border becomes the object of Törless' fascination and investigation.

McBride (28) stresses that Törless discovers "that ordinary experience does not fully exhaust the possibilities of existence but rather unfolds alongside an alternative reality or state of being that discloses itself within normal experience in fleeting moments of illumination". It becomes clear that Törless fails to reconcile the two worlds, yet learns to accept "the fundamental ambivalence and doublefacedness of experience" (McBride 40).

Why Törless reaches a state of acceptance in experiencing this ambiguous reality will be explored in this essay. Numerous critics connect Törless' confusions with the various developments that characterised modernity, such as the distortion of the self (Kitcher; Wilson), the questionability of fixed rules and patterns (Whitinger; Herity) and the inadequacy of the scientific worldview (Smith; Stolzenberger). In taking a complex approach to describing reality and modern experience, Musil can be compared to other modernist writers such as Proust, Hesse, Mann and Woolf. They faced the challenge of describing modern reality which was perceived as "an inordinate proliferation of partly interrelated, party incoherent realms of experience [...] necessarily perceived as fragmented, disjointed and devoid of a centre of meaning" (McBridge 32). How can one possibly approach such a reality, especially when it comes to understanding matters of the soul? Musil, like many other modernist writers, searches for alternative ways to describe and interpret modern experience, thereby challenging a purely

rational analysis. The realm of the mystic or "the other condition"—a term used by Ulrich, the main character in Musil's masterpiece *The Man without Qualities* (*Man without Q*)—provides an alternative way to do so. Various characters in Musil's work get a glimpse of this "other condition" through singular experiences that lie beyond unambiguous rules and intelligible language (*Man without Q* 833). Yet, unlike many characters in contemporary novels from writers such as Mann, Hofmannsthal and Rilke, Musil's main characters refuse to become altogether sceptic towards rational analysis. "Whereas for most of these characters [Lord Chandos, Thomas Buddenbrook and Malte Laurids Brigge] the event often literally remains clad in clouds [...], for Musil the search for the possibility of expressing it in a precise and careful manner remains the focus" (Brouwer 518). Musil attempts to find a balance between the scientist's passion for precision and the (inner) realm of feeling: "We do not have too much intellect and too little soul, but too little intellect in matters of the soul" (Musil 131). It is, however, the attempt to analyse singular (mystical) experiences in a *precise* and *careful* manner that Törless seems to struggle with.

This essay strives to shed new light on Törless' confusions and subsequent clarity in experiencing modern life. It will connect Törless' feeling of *being torn between two worlds* with the "disenchantment of the world", as Max Weber termed—ten years after the publication of *Young Törless*—the increasing rationalisation and intellectualization in *Science as a Vocation* (1917).

2. Rationality and modernity

Musil's *Young Törless* can be situated in modernity, a time in which urbanisation, industrialization, intellectualization and mechanisation rapidly changed the world. According to Feger (95), *Young Törless* can be explained in the light of a fundamental crisis in the perception of reality, which is seen as fundamentally fragmented and disordered. Musil believed—according to Feger—that the individual experiences a deep sense of loneliness in modern life, especially because of an excess of impressions, sensory triggers and ongoing progress. One of the major characteristics of modernity is, subsequently, the loss of stability concerning the individual's orientation: "Absolute values, unchangeable laws and strict rules are replaced by [...] dynamics, functional processes, vitalism, coincidence, the unique instead of the doctrine, the unpredictable instead of the repeatable [my translation]" (Feger 82).

How can we understand the rapid developments and changes of modernity in relation to Törless' confusions about "the invisible border [...] between the life we live and the life we feel" (Musil, *Törless* 123)? One possible explanation can be found in the central role of rationality in modern life, something that started to be challenged in various ways.

2.1 The central role of rationality around 1900

In 1903 Simmel published *The Metropolis and Mental Life,* in which he analyses modern mentality in the city and, by extension, modernity in general. It should be mentioned that Törless attends a boarding school in a remote area in the Habsburg Empire in order to shield him from the influences of the city as described by Simmel. Yet, as Stopp (99) states, this could well be "an observation which, in view of what actually goes on at the school, places the whole action in a realm of detached irony from the very beginning". One of the characteristics of modern life, highlighted by Simmel (31), is the central role of rationality, which is perceived as standing above emotional reactions and "imposing a higher level of mental governance". The individual is said to be overwhelmed by impressions and excessive "stimulations of the nerves". As a result, the rationality of the intellect serves as "an organ protecting him against the threatening currents and discrepancies of his external environment which would uproot him". In other words, the individual starts to react "with his head instead of his heart" (Simmel 32). The rational governance of the modern man is then connected with a calculating mindset, the ideal of science. What follows is, according to Simmel, a life which is coloured by "punctuality, calculability, exactitude" and an *exclusion* of "irrational, instinctive sovereign traits and impulses that seek to determine the form of life from within rather than absorb it from outside in a general, schematized way" (Simmel 32). Simmel criticises the decreasing role of the unique and subjective individual because he perceives the so-called "objective mind" as a weak substitute for the "genuine personal colorations and incomparabilities" (Simmel 40). Simmel shows the central role of rationality in modern society, a development which he evaluates as a threat for the uniqueness of the individual.

Max Weber is another sociologist analysing the role of rationality in modern life, also discussing the limits of science and reason. His well-known lecture *Science as a Vocation*, dating from 1917, will be considered in

the following. In contrast with Simmel, Weber merely examines the nature of science, that is without necessarily classifying rationality as a threat for modern man. According to Weber (7), the increasing intellectualization and rationalisation implies the idea "that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation". Modern life is without "mysterious incalculable forces [...] this means that the world is disenchanted" (Weber 7). Weber subsequently explains the presupposition of science, which he describes as "a rejection of religious bonds, it does not know of the *miracle* and the *revelation*" (Weber 11). Thus, science leaves one of the biggest questions in life open and, as such, already demonstrates its limits: "What shall we do and how shall we live?" (Weber 9). It is—essentially—this question that drives Ulrich, the main character of Musil's work *The Man without Qualities*, to take a year's holiday from his professional life. As a big city dweller, Ulrich experiences the central role of rationality at numerous occasions. To name just one example: When questioned in a police station, Ulrich feels as "though he had got up in a machine, which was splitting him up into impersonal, general component parts". Ulrich then evaluates the interrogation as "the statistical disenchantment of his person" (Musil, *Man without Q* 186). Musil applies, interestingly enough, the exact same word as Weber: disenchantment (translated: *Entzauberung*). Ulrich stumbles—like Weber—upon the limits of science: "Ulrich realised that even in science he was like a man who has climbed one mountain range after another without ever seeing a goal" (Musil, *Man without Q* 44). Questions about the meaning of life and the sense of living in the world as it is are left unanswered. Science and rational thinking, then, contribute to the possibility of "controlling life by calculating objects as well as man's activities", provide "methods of thinking, the tools and training for thought" and help the individual "to gain clarity" (Simmel 13). An important side-remark is that science presupposes that the individual himself possesses clarity, something that proves to be problematic in *Young Törless*. In the end, Weber stresses, the question of life's meaning is a matter of the individual's presuppositions, a question that *cannot* be answered in the realm of science.

2.2 Searching for the limits of the rational worldview

While separating religion (and by extension: life's possible meaning) from science, Weber acknowledges and criticises the fact that many students of

his time turned to the irrational, "the only spheres that intellectualism has not yet touched" (Weber 9). This trend is said to have its origin in modern life, in the *meaninglessness* of modern life: "What is hard for modern man, and especially for the younger generation, is to measure up to workaday existence" (Weber 12). Weber essentially describes an unbridgeable gap between the rational realm and the mystical realm, between science and religion. Asprem (2) defines the modern disenchanted mentality as positive towards factual knowledge, yet sceptical about knowledge of values. One has to leave the realm of reason in order to say anything about the transcendental, as such it requires an abandonment of intellectual thinking. The conclusion that these realms remain in "irreconcilable conflict with each other" is, however, not so easy to accept (Weber 12).

Larese (223) considers Robert Musil as someone who spent his entire life investigating "the fundamental problem of how to bridge the gap between the sphere of emotion and that of the intellect". Musil refuses, in a way, to set aside the realm of the unknown, not because he doubts the *validity* of science but because of an experienced *struggle* to simply tear apart the two worlds. In Weber's view, rationalisation and intellectualization divested the world of any inherent meaning and purpose. Yet, Musil seems to struggle with the fact that one can still *experience*, *sense* or *feel* something that transcends factual reality, something McBride calls "the intimation of moments of mystical illumination, whose bliss is however not translatable into the categories of ordinary life" (McBride 35). For many young people in Weber's time, the disoriented and purposeless worldview that comes with modernity seemed to provoke a radical break with reason and conceptual modes of thinking altogether. McBride states that young people searched for salvation—as Weber also notes—in the "mystical, intuitive grasp of experience" (34). This development can be identified in various modern works, for example in Hofmannsthal's *The Letter of Lord Chandos* (1902), in which the nature of grasping reality by means of conceptual thinking is questioned. Lord Chandos expresses his confusions about moments in which he feels that "everything that exists, everything I can remember, everything touched upon my confused touch, has a meaning", which might be unravelled "if only we begin to think with the heart". Yet, he regrets being unable to present "this strange enchantment" in a language that makes sense (Hofmannsthal 77). The same line of thought can be identified in Rilke's *The Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910). Indeed, it seems as if Lord Chandos,

Malte Laurids Brigge and—as will be discussed in the next chapter—Törless do, in fact, acknowledge the strict separation between the realm of rationality and the realm of 'mystical illumination'. It is, however, important to note that every single protagonist has difficulty in learning to live with this division and, as Weber puts it, to "measure up to workday existence." The reason for their struggles can be found in the very origin of these so-called 'moments of mystical illumination': the inner life of the individual. *Young Törless* shows that the 'irreconcilable conflict' not only lies in the juxtaposition of worldviews (e. g. the scientific worldview versus the religious worldview, the latter demanding an intellectual sacrifice) or the unbridgeable gap between science and meaning but also in the juxtaposition of the intellect and *feeling*. The following question arises: Does the disenchantment of the world inevitably mean a disenchantment of the inner life?

3. An irreconcilable conflict in *The Confusions of Young Törless*

Already before Törless' confrontations with Basini, it becomes evident that the protagonist's confusions are characterised by an inner conflict. After a conversation with Beineberg, Törless' thoughts are commented upon as follows:

> Indeed, the more precisely he grasped his feelings with his thoughts [...] the more alien and incomprehensible they at the same times seemed to become to him, as if it were not they who were shrinking back from him, but he himself who was moving away from them yet could not shake off the idea that he was approaching them. (Musil, *Törless* 26)

What are the feelings Törless tries to grasp with his thoughts? Interestingly enough, the conversation with Beineberg had religion as a topic, which Törless then defines as "a kind of mental gymnastics" (Musil, *Törless* 22). The mental effort that comes with thinking about the meaning of life is one of the most interesting things about school for Törless, even though it has no place on the timetable: "All these things we spend the whole day on at school—how much of it really has a point? [...] we come out of it empty—empty inside, I mean, we have a kind of inner hunger..." (Musil, *Törless* 23). McBride (47) connects the (renewed) interest in mystical ideas and subsequent experiments around 1900 with the loss of meaning in modern society,

driven by "the hope that a holistic, intuitive grasp of reality would provide ways for overcoming the persuasive sense of crises linked to the modern phenomena [...] so as to disclose new coordinates of orientations and ethical horizons". Yet, it would be too quick to identify Törless as a person who completely abandons rationality and intellectualism as a result of his feeling of alienation or lost orientation, something which McBride argues as well. Indeed, Törless rather tries to make sense of the gap between his own rational way of thinking and the ungraspable feelings inside him—this becomes his quest.

3.1 The wooden yardstick of reason

The first episode said to have relevance for Törless' further development is his friendship with someone called Prince H, whose main characterization is described as his religiosity, something which Törless perceives as a "special virtue in the prince, for it heightened his individuality that he felt was not only completely unlike his own but also beyond comparison with his own" (Musil, *Törless* 9). Törless' attitude towards religion can be found in the following key passage:

> Despite everything, they had started to argue about religious matters. [...] Before he knew it, his intellect, as if it had nothing to do with Törless, was hitting out at the delicate prince, heaping the mockery of the rational mind on him in a barbaric demolition of the filigree structure housing his inner being, and they parted in anger. [...] Törless was vaguely aware that he had done something senseless, and had an obscure feeling that using the wooden yardstick of reason at entirely the wrong time had shattered something delicate, a source of pleasure. (Musil, *Törless* 10)

It becomes clear that Törless does not necessarily reject religiosity; on the contrary, he even admires the prince for being different. He describes their friendship as a "source of subtle psychological pleasure", which could refer to Törless' developing interest in scrutinising the gap between his rational thoughts and his unexplainable emotions. An important question is what his intellect—without the conscious approval of Törless himself—destroys in this case. The term *mockery* seems to imply an attitude of disrespect for religious matters, driven by a rational mind. It can easily be assumed that

Törless merely destroys the foundations of the prince's religiosity and, as such, their friendship. Yet, the action is immediately judged as *senseless*, leaving Törless with an obscure feeling of loss and longing. Törless vaguely realizes that his *reason* destroyed something he actually enjoyed. Why, one might ask, should one's intellect destroy the mystery of religiosity? Does it even make sense to do so?

Smith (39) argues that *Young Törless* expresses "a dissatisfaction with the role of science, whose authority had appeared unchallenged in the nineteenth century". According to Smith, Musil attempts to show the ambiguity of not only religious matters but also of a rational approach to reality. Smith (42) states—for example—that "the mathematics master [overlooks] the metaphysical assumptions inherent to [his] own ideas". His claim can be illustrated by Törless' challenging attitude towards mathematics, thereby questioning the assumption of a transparent and unambiguous rational language. While looking at the never-ending sky, Törless is confronted with the idea of infinity, that is, he strangely senses the incomprehensible concept of infinity. It immediately becomes clear that rational language is, in a way, concerned with grasping a reality that might be ungraspable: "*Infinity!* Törless knew the word from maths lessons. [...] He felt it was a tamed concept with which he had daily performed his little tricks and which had now suddenly been unleashed" (Musil, *Törless* 68). This experience stimulates Törless to consider mathematical calculations with imaginary numbers, performed with "something that doesn't exist at all". Yet, Törless feels that "the really uncanny thing is the power there is in such a calculation, that holds you so that you end up in the right place again" (Musil, *Törless* 82). The mathematics teacher fails to offer a satisfying explanation and refers to "things that are beyond the strict limits of reason", he then advises Törless to simply "believe it" (Musil, *Törless* 86). In other words, the idea that rational language is completely deprived of metaphysical assumptions can, in fact, be challenged. In doing so, Törless does not necessarily reject the rationalistic worldview altogether, he merely demonstrates its incompleteness. Smith (46) argues that the authority of rationality and intellectualism around 1900 appears to be "inadequate to describe the complex approach to reality that he (and the culture of which he is part) is struggling to accommodate". Having said this, it is important to note that Törless experiences a more complex or strange reality *in himself*. At the start of the novel, Törless' intellect shattered the incomprehensible or even mystical inner life

of his friend, thereby ending a psychological pleasure and leaving a feeling of emptiness. Was it the influence of modern rational thinking that Törless failed to resist, the unchallenged authority of rationality? Could it be that Törless slowly discovers the existence of a mystical side or "filigree structure" present in every individual? Surely, one can work with concepts such as 'infinity', but moments of almost mystical illumination transform the idea—through experience—into a trick, a *tamed* concept in the face of one's own feelings.

3.2 Törless' insight: a second face

On the one hand, *Young Törless* demonstrates the incompleteness of rational thought (leaving Törless with a sense of purposeless in an empty and boring world); on the other, placing hope in rare moments of intense mystical illumination seems to lead to a confused and possibly harmful life. For example, after the affair with Basini, Törless explains—to the headmaster—that he observed and participated in the maltreatment of his classmate because it provided him with the opportunity to experience "a quite different perspective [...] something curious going on inside" (Musil, *Törless* 158). He then explains how he *felt* and *sensed* the limits of rationality during his confrontations with Basini (as he experienced while looking at the sky), a reality beyond understanding. At the end of the book, however, Törless makes clear that one should *not* blindly search for these strange experiences in the outside world nor in confrontations with other people. This conclusion can be drawn based on Törless' final speech, in which he identifies the very origin of his confusions at last:

> No, I wasn't mistaken when I talked about a second, secret, unheeded life of things. It is I—I don't mean it literally—not these things that are alive, it was I, not Basini who had two faces—but inside me there was a second face that did not look at all with the eyes of reason. (Musil, *Törless* 161)

Törless admits that he had feared the idea of everything around him having "a silent life" and that "our whole life was like that" (Musil, *Törless* 162). He provides his headmaster with the example of people, events or walls unexpectedly coming to life, intervening in his own ordered life. However, Törless is no longer afraid of the idea of an ungraspable side of reality; the world

around him can simply appear to him in two forms. It is, in Törless' words, a matter of perspective: "I know: things are things and will presumably always remain so; and I will look at them [...] now with the eyes of reason, now with my other eyes... And I will stop trying to compare them with each other..." (Musil, *Törless* 162). Törless feared the outside world to be either empty and purposeless or full of a so-called ungraspable mystical life. Yet, his final speech puts his confusions in a very different perspective and provides the individual with a conscious choice: with which eyes do you look at reality?

Precisely this question gives rise to Sokel's (41) argument that the novel, thus, presents the nature of reality as inherently meaningless. He argues that Törless' rich emotional and intellectual life signifies a "duality [that] is in the protagonist rather than in the world [...] inside the person who experiences it" (40). Sokel concludes that *Young Törless* therefore rejects the idea of good and evil in the world; it is "only a way of seeing, experiencing, and reacting to events and things, not a quality inherent in the things themselves" (41). Yet, his interpretation goes one step too far: he postulates a value judgement in Törless' final acceptance of two perceptions (eyes of reason versus other eyes). It is, however, a very different thing to accept the idea of two *perceptions of reality* than it is to say that—in doing so—*reality itself* becomes inherently meaningless. This is where Weber's lecture *Science as a Vocation* might prove helpful.

4. Törless' early understanding of separating two realms

As already mentioned, Weber strictly separates science not only from religion but also from life's ultimate meaning. He explains that science presupposes its generated knowledge to be worth knowing, yet argues that this remains to be seen "for this presupposition cannot be proven by scientific means" (Weber 9). Scientific knowledge, he claims, "can only be interpreted with reference to its ultimate meaning, which we must reject or accept according to our ultimate position towards life" (Weber 9). It is, thus, the individual who must decide for himself how to *interpret* the factual knowledge that science generates. Weber demands a specific attitude in doing so:

> And science 'free from presuppositions' expects from him no less—and no more—than acknowledgment that if the process can be explained without those supernatural interventions, which an empirical explanation has to

> eliminate as causal factors, the process has to be explained the way science attempts to do. And the believer can do this without being disloyal to his faith. (Weber 11)

It should be clear that Weber does not necessarily provide a solution for the feeling of meaninglessness or disorientation that follows his idea of the disenchanted (modern) world. However, his analysis is very much like Törless' idea of perceiving the world around him: the idea of bridging the gap between the two realms by following a scientific approach is said to be impossible (even undesirable). As such, Törless finally learns to develop a more modest way of looking at science and—by extension—rational thinking. He seems to reject a kind of re-enchantment of the modern world in the sense that he refuses to believe in spirits or mysterious powers in the world around him ("I know: things are things and will presumably always remain so"). The question of how to approach his ungraspable feelings and emotions, nonetheless, remains open for debate. The idea that one *can* or *should* make a clear division between reason and, say, an inner ungraspable reality provides Törless with a feeling of "remarkable clarity" (Musil, *Törless* 165). He experiences a slight sense of shame when remembering his speech in front of the headmaster and concludes that he indeed did "behave in an unreasonable manner". Still, he tells himself that he had no choice since "the whole thing does seem to have had very little to do with my reason". His new clarity enables him, in a way, to put his confusions in perspective: "He had the memory of a terrible storm in his inner self, and the reasons for it, that were still there inside himself, were far from being sufficient to explain it." Törless then concludes: "So it must have been something much more necessary and deep-seated [...] than can be judged with reason and abstract concepts..." (Musil, *Törless* 164). The narrator adds:

> He now knew how to distinguish between night and day. [...] but the memory that it can be different, that there are fine, easily erased boundaries round people, that feverish dreams steal round our inner being, eating away at solid walls and opening up eerie passages—this memory too had sunk itself deep inside him and radiated pale shadows. There was not much of this he could explain, but this absence of words felt delightful ... (Musil, *Törless* 165)

The (remarkable) clarity is gained only when Törless learns to distinguish between day and night, which could refer to his decision to look now with the eyes of reason, now with the other eyes. The insight that rational thinking *cannot* be sufficient in making sense of one's own emotions, feelings and senses is no longer perceived as a problem, it is simply accepted. As for Weber, he does not necessarily place the inner being of an individual, the ungraspable side of one's inner life, outside the scope of science. He does, however, pose a question which suggests one should look beyond the scope of science, maybe even closing the eyes of reason when confronted with it: "Who—aside from certain big children who are indeed found in the natural sciences—still believes that the findings of astronomy, biology, physics, or chemistry could teach us anything about the meaning of the world?" (Weber 8). One might extend this question as follows: Who still believes that rational thinking could lead to understanding the meaning of the *inner* world of the individual? Surely, a scientific worldview provides the individual with an ordered way of thinking, eventually helping him to gain clarity. But *Young Törless* is an ultimate example of the fact that one cannot grasp nor understand everything there is to know about the complex inner life of the individual by following the mere path of rationality and intellectualism. To put it more sharply, it appears to be impossible to really understand the "feverish dreams round our inner being", yet rather than perceiving this as a problem, Törless has learned to appreciate the "absence of words" (Musil, *Törless* 165).

5. Conclusion

The central role of rationality and—by extension—rational thinking proved to be insufficient around 1900; writers, philosophers and sociologists started to challenge its firm authority in modern life. Simmel feared for the uniqueness of every individual, Weber argued that modern life was disenchanted, deprived of its meaning and purpose. Writers such as Rilke, Hofmannsthal and Musil played with an ungraspable reality, beyond the scope of reason altogether. In the face of a rapidly changing world the individual's emotions, feelings and experiences appeared to be in conflict with a mere rational way of thinking. Eleven years after Musil wrote *Young Törless* (1906), Weber gave his well-known lecture *Science as a Vocation* (1917), in which he proposes a clear separation between the realm of science and the realm of religion. The

rational worldview, he claims, does *not* lead to answers about life's value and ultimate meaning. It is important to stress that Weber refuses to evaluate one realm as standing above the other, he primarily describes the situation as he perceives it. Weber argues that the question of life's meaning—dealt with in religions—and the practice of science remain in an irreconcilable conflict with each other.

This essay showed how Törless arrives, in a way, at a similar insight: he will never again compare his *rational* worldview and the experienced *ungraspable* reality inside him. The disenchantment of the world, as Weber terms it, deprives the world of mysterious, incalculable forces and presupposes the possibility of mastering all things by calculation. Yet, certain things fall beyond the scope of a scientific worldview; they are no concern of science (e.g., meaning, values and virtues). Although Weber leaves the inner life of the individual out of consideration, this essay proposed the idea that it is not only the meaning of the outer world falling beyond the scope of rational thinking —the idea can also be applied to the *inner world* of the individual. *Young Törless* tells the story of a confused adolescent trying to bridge the gap between his rational worldview and an ungraspable reality as *felt* and *sensed* deep inside him. Throughout the story, however, he discovers that he will never understand his moments of mystical illumination with rational thinking; on the contrary, he must shut the eyes of reason in the face of this so-called 'reality beyond words'. Törless' quest thus demonstrates the limits of rationality and intellectualism, thereby challenging the very foundation of rational thinking (e.g., imaginary numbers, infinity) and presenting a realm beyond abstract concepts and reason. In doing so, *Young Törless* proposes a more modest way to look at the rigid authority of rationality around the turn of the century: there are certain things in life beyond the scope of reason. Yet, a complete abandonment of a scientific worldview is never desired nor is the assumption made that life is inherently meaningless. If there is one thing Musil shows—more than ten years before Weber's *Science as a Vocation*—it is this: the *interpretation* of a disenchanted reality is ultimately a matter of perspective. It might be grasped with abstract concepts and reason but sometimes it remains beyond factual understanding, never to be translated in a rational language. This does not necessarily mean that one perspective or approach is better than the other: they remain in irreconcilable conflict with each other. A strict separation between the two provides the confused Törless finally with clarity, thereby pointing to a

complex reality that can be approached in different ways; sometimes with the eyes of reason, at other times with the other eyes…

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2.

Homer and the Wounds of War: PTSD in Achilles and Odysseus

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1. Introduction

Achilles, like Odysseus, is remembered as a hero of Greek myth. Ancient Greek heroes were men of pain who were both needed by their people and were dangerous to them. This contradiction can already be seen in their names, Achilles meaning “he whose host of fighting men have grief”, Odysseus meaning “man of hate”. Both men were the cause of numerous deaths on their own sides; Achilles harmed the Greek and the Trojan army during the war; Odysseus harmed his own people on Ithaca after the war (Shay 2).

Nevertheless, these two characters are seen as heroes and so they are, in an ancient Greek sense. But they are not just that, they are also portrayed as war veterans who fought in combat and suffered a lot. They have seen the deaths of their beloved fellow soldiers, limbs of those same soldiers being torn apart, and they themselves have killed many men. All of this, the reader imagines, must have had an enormous impact on both of them. Their mental state must have been disturbed and although Homer does not explicitly mention this, he ascribes certain features to the two heroes and he lets them

do certain things that indicate that afterwards they are not the same people as they were before the war started.

Disturbances caused by war were recognized in United States military veterans of the Vietnam War. During the two World Wars, this condition was known as "shell shock" and "combat neurosis". Shell shock was a reaction to the intensity of the fighting that led to a helplessness that included an inability to talk, walk, sleep, reason or eat and feeling anxious and scared. Combat neurosis was just another term for the same symptoms. In the 1970's the term "posttraumatic stress disorder" came into existence and PTSD was officially recognized as a serious mental illness in 1980, when it was incorporated in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders by the American Psychiatric Association (Luckhurst 1).

In order for an individual to get diagnosed with PTSD, there had to be a stressor, which includes direct exposure to a traumatic event, witnessing a trauma, learning that a relative or close friend was exposed to a trauma or indirect exposure to aversive details of a trauma (Brainline.org). Three ruptures characterise the experience of trauma: a rupture of time, identity and cognition (Theconversation.com). The symptoms of PTSD can further be divided into four categories: 1. intrusion symptoms (e.g., nightmares, flashbacks and unwanted upsetting memories), 2. avoidance (e.g., avoiding trauma-related thoughts/feelings and avoiding trauma-related external reminders), 3. negative alterations in mood and cognitions (e.g., feeling isolated, not being able to recall key features of the traumatic event, decreased interest in activities and overly negative thoughts about the self and the world) and 4. alterations in arousal and reactivity (e.g., hypervigilance, difficulty sleeping, destructive behaviour and heightened startled reaction or even aggression) (Brainline.org). Anyone who has gone through a traumatic event needs at least one stressor, one intrusion symptom, one avoidance symptom and two negative alterations in mood and cognitions to get diagnosed with PTSD. These symptoms also need to last longer than one month, otherwise they are just signs of a strong reaction to stress. The last two criteria entail that symptoms have to create distress and cannot be due to medication, substance abuse or any other illness (Luckhurst 1–2).

The term only exists since the 1970s and scientists keep refining the above mentioned categories, but what about these symptoms? Are they of all times, or do they only apply to World War and Vietnam War veterans? The thesis of this paper is that it is not the case that these symptoms can only

be applied to war veterans from modern times. The symptoms of PTSD are of all times, even though they were not recognized as such in ancient times. Where the ancient heroes acted in madness, they were not actually "mad", but this was the ancient Greek way to explain certain behaviour they could not explain, since they did not have the same knowledge of mental illnesses as we have nowadays.

The Greek terms for madness are of great importance here. The word ἄτη (*atè*) for example means blind destructiveness and it is "given" or "sent" by the gods in Homer (Padel 8). Where we would speak of psychological injuries like PTSD or another mental illness, the ancient Greeks tend to use *atè*. When someone acted in blind rage, this behaviour was brought upon them by the gods. This is different from how someone would explain a temper nowadays, but the characteristics of such a tantrum seem to be exactly the same. The person who is the victim of *atè* is damaged, which means damage has been done to his mind with the result that he cannot act rationally anymore. Other words like *mania* (madness), *mênis* (rage) and *trauma* (physical wound)[1] or the frequency of negative words like *dustuchès* (wretched) and *paschoo* (to suffer) can also tell the reader something about the way Homer and the ancient Greeks looked at combat trauma (Padel).

Some research has been done on the subject of PTSD and classical literature. The two most important authors are Jonathan Shay, who has written *Achilles in Vietnam* (1994) and *Odysseus in America* (2002) and Bryan Doerries, who is an important scholar in this field due to his book *Theatre of War* (2015). Both of them connect the term PTSD to the ancient world and conclude: 'PTSD is from BC.' They connect the stories of war veterans to the stories told in classical epics and tragedies. There are quite a few resemblances: ancient heroes had to deal with the same problems as war veterans struggle with today. Although Achilles and Odysseus have been extensively compared to Vietnam veterans, their characters have not been elaborately analysed in terms of suffering from mental illness.[2]

By contrast, Jason Crowley refutes such theories in his book chapter "Beyond the Universal Soldier: Combat Trauma in Classical Antiquity" in

1 Although the ancient Greek word *trauma* seems to only entail physical pain, in Greek tragedy (e.g., *Andromache* 259–60) it is also associated with "mental blows".

2 This has already been done for Clearchus, a military leader in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, by Lawrence Tritle in his book *From Melos to My Lai: War and Survival.* It must be noted that Achilles and Odysseus are literary figures, where Clearchus is a historical figure, hence the distinction made here.

Meineck's and Konstan's *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks* (2014). According to Crowley, PTSD sufferers cannot be traced back as far back in history as the Greek heroes. He thinks that PTSD is not universal and that the people who compared Achilles to Vietnam veterans meant well, but that they did the soldiers a disservice. For ancient Greek heroes, violence and killing was normal, says Crowley, and their culture protected them from mental illnesses like PTSD. Crowley argues that the feeling of "I have done something I should not have" was completely absent in ancient society.

This article would like to disagree with Jason Crowley. Achilles and Odysseus will be the two examples to support my thesis. It is important to note that I will be analysing two literary and not historical figures, so it is about how Homer portrays these two men. My goal is not to psychologize Achilles and Odysseus, but rather to investigate how Homer represented the psychological consequences of conflict. Which elements of the modern diagnosis PTSD can be found in these two war victims, if any? An analysis of their behaviour compared to the above-mentioned list of PTSD symptoms will follow. When both characters are elaborately analysed, a comparison of both will be made to look at the different symptoms and how they occur in the two men. Based on this I will come to a conclusion whether it is possible or not to call these two ancient Greek heroes PTSD sufferers, based on how Homer portrays them.

It is important to note that Jonathan Shay in his books *Achilles in Vietnam* and *Odysseus in America* has already compared Achilles' and Odysseus' mental state to war veterans. The goal of this paper is not to repeat his study, but to contribute to this by analysing how exactly Homer portrays these two heroes, comparing them and by analysing the Greek words that are used and their connotations. I will also combine this with research on the genre of epic and general studies on emotions in Antiquity and particularly in Homer.

2. Achilles in the *Iliad*

2.1 Achilles's character before his psychological injuries

Before starting the analysis of Achilles's trauma and his symptoms, his character before his psychological injuries will first be examined. What changed after the traumatic experiences and were these changes due to the trauma? Achilles was a high-ranking officer, so his social horizon was very wide. In

the beginning of the *Iliad* Apollo devastates the Greek army with plague. Achilles is the one who calls for an assembly of the army to end the plague; Achilles cares about the whole army. Homer makes him say:

> "Son of Atreus, [...] I deem that we should now turn roving home if we would escape destruction, for we are being cut down by war and pestilence at once. Let us ask some priest or seer [mantis], or some reader of dreams (for dreams, too, are of Zeus) who can tell us why Phoebus Apollo is so angry, and say whether it is for some vow that we have broken, or hecatomb that we have not offered, and whether he will accept the savor of lambs and goats without blemish, so as to take away the plague from us." (*Iliad* 1.60–67)

He has broad sympathies and wide moral commitment: these two character traits are inseparable from Achilles's good character prior to the horrible events that are about to take place.

Agamemnon, one of Achilles's comrades, had to return his "war prize", Chryseis, the daughter of the priest of Apollo. He gets furious and demands an immediate replacement. Achilles speaks on behalf of the whole army and says "we will make it up to you" (*Iliad* 1.156ff). Agamemnon however is not satisfied with this solution and demands Achilles his own war prize, the slave girl Briseis. This is undeserved and Achilles responds by withdrawing his moral, emotional and military commitment from the army. He cared about his fellow soldiers deeply, but this betrayal makes him numb to any responsiveness to the catastrophes of the Greeks. Homer described this by using the metaphor of a "wanderer": in the *Iliad* wandering is seen as a disgrace. Being disgraced by Agamemnon makes Achilles feel like a "wanderer without honour" (ὡς εἴ τιν᾽ ἀτίμητον μετανάστην) (*Iliad* 9.648). Although this does not fit our modern definition of trauma, it is wrong and takes away what Achilles lives for as a warrior: his honour. As we will see further on, this will be an event that Achilles cannot erase from his memories and keeps hunting him.

One other character trait of Achilles has to be mentioned, since this one is brutally altered afterwards: his respect for the dead. He was not in the habit of defiling his fallen enemies and early on in the *Iliad* (6.414ff) Andromache, Hector's wife, praises his respect for the dead. He had killed her father, but she praises Achilles for not despoiling him. He burned his body and his gear and he heaped up a barrow over the ashes. The *themis*, the definition of "what is right", was of great importance to the Greek hero (Shay 29).

The betrayal of "what is right" by Agamemnon changed Achilles's character and made him do things that he himself regarded as bad. There is however a more traumatic event that changed the hero: the death of his beloved friend Patroclus. Since Achilles did not want to fight anymore, Patroclus asked if he could lead the army of the Myrmidons. Achilles approved of this, but his friend had to wear his armour to scare off the Trojans. Eventually Patroclus was killed by Hektor: an event which infuriated Achilles so that he rejoined the battle against the Trojans to seek vengeance for the death of his comrade.

2.2 Achilles's character and behaviour after his psychological injuries

The first word of the *Iliad* is *mênis,* roughly translated as rage, and this is an important theme throughout the epic, since this *mênis* is *oulomenè* (destructive). This emotion steers Achilles' actions throughout the epic. When Achilles has been betrayed by Agamemnon, he reacts with inappropriate emotions, since he instantly wants to kill Agamemnon (*Iliad* 1.188–195). It does not take a long time of reflection to recognize that killing Agamemnon in his fury is the worst possible way to keep Briseis (Most 3–4). Due to the disrespect and the unfair taking away of Briseis, Achilles lost his sense of reason. It seems to be Greek custom to erase an insult from memory (*Iliad* 9.646–648), but Achilles makes clear he cannot and that every time he thinks about how Agamemnon did him wrong, he gets furious again.

After the death of Patroclus Achilles started grieving. He did so by self-mutilation, weeping and restraining himself from food, since he had lost all of his appetite. Homer makes it look like Achilles is "already dead": "Straightway may I die, seeing I was not to bear aid to my comrade at his slaying" (*Iliad* 18. 98–99).

The above mentioned respect for the dead is slowly disappearing, since all he can think about is taking revenge. His anger is not just expressed in his speech, but also in his cruel actions. At the end of book 22 of the *Iliad* Achilles kills Hector, but that is still not enough for him. By this time Achilles has already killed countless others and will sacrifice twelve young men on the pyre of Patroclus. When Hector begs for his body to be given back to his father and mother, Achilles refuses and scolds him. He ties Hector's dead body to his carriage and drags the body around the walls of Troy and the barrow of Patroclus for all Hector's family and friends to see. This fits the

third and fourth category of the PTSD symptoms mentioned above: alteration in mood and alteration in arousal and reactivity, since this is both an act of aggression and an example of destructive behaviour. The trauma has actually changed who Achilles is as a person.

When Achilles drags Hector's body around Patroclus's barrow for three days straight, all of the abovementioned character traits can be ascribed to him. He has "lost it". What exactly did Achilles lose? He lost his humanity, because of the anger that rose from the traumatic event he experienced. Homer uses the word λύσσα (*lussa*), which means raging madness that was caused by the gods. In *Iliad* 21.542 this *lussa* possesses Achilles's heart.[3]

When he experiences this reaction, he in medical terms experiences an adrenalin rush. He is hyperalert, which means he is constantly on guard and prone to overreaction. Achilles experiences sleeping problems, as is mentioned in *Iliad* 24. 3–8,[4] since he cannot sleep and keeps thinking about Patroclus, tossing around from one side to the other longing for him.

Achilles speaks of anger as pleasurable (*Il.*18.107ff).[5] Bodily strength can seem superhuman at such times and this state of mind can reduce the sensibility to pain and fatigue. Homer uses the word χόλος (*chólos*), which is used 49 times in the *Iliad*, and the verb χολόω, which is also used 49 times in the *Iliad,* to describe this kind of anger, an anger that comes from within (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae). The Homeric χόλος is a "whole-body reaction, the adrenaline surge that drives men to violent speech and action" (Redfield 14). This form of anger seems to not specifically be god-driven, as for example is the case with *atè*. A form of the verb χολόω is mentioned in the prooimion of the *Iliad* (1.9), which describes what the book will be about: anger is thus an important theme in this epic.

Achilles also experiences symptoms that could be placed into the first category, the intrusion category. After Patroclus has died, his dead friend visits Achilles in a dream (*Iliad* 23.54–107). Although he does not see the actual event, the feelings that accompanied the death of his friend hunt Achilles in

3 The same happens to Agamemnon in 9.239, when *lussa* has him in her power and he gets mad.

4 "But Achilles wept, ever remembering his dear comrade, nor did sleep, that subdues all, lay hold of him, but he turned ever this way and that, yearning for the manhood and valiant might of Patroclus, thinking on all he had done with him and all the woes he had borne, passing through wars of men and the grievous waves" (Murray).

5 "May strife perish from among gods and men and anger that sets a man on to rage, though he be very wise, and that, sweeter far than trickling honey, increases like smoke in the breasts of men; just as but now the lord of men, Agamemnon, moved me to rage" (Murray).

this dream. Patroclus speaks and says: "You sleep, and forget me, Achilles. You neglect me now I'm dead, as you never did when I was alive". After this Achilles tries to embrace Patroclus, but this is not possible, which angers him even more. He sprang up in turmoil, beat his hands together and he cried: once again an example of him not being able to control his emotions. His companions even feared that he could commit suicide (*Iliad* 18.22–34).

It is quite obvious that the Greek hero has a decreased interest in activities. He does not want to fight anymore, after he has been betrayed by Agamemnon. He refuses to eat or to wash himself after Patroclus has died (*Iliad* 19.230ff). He does not want to talk to any of the other kings and he has to be pursued in the 23th book to come eat at king Agamemnon's hut. There they try to convince him to clean himself up, but he still does not want to: all he wants to do is grieve.

This also has to do with another emotion he is experiencing: guilt. In verses 19.328–330 Achilles says: "My heart's desire had been that I alone should perish here at Troy: that you should sail [home]". Achilles experiences the feeling of "It should have been me who died there out on the battlefield", which is common in those who have PTSD.[6] Guilt feelings are an example of negative alterations in mood, but also of how the trauma can keep intruding one's everyday life (Leys 100–01).

This character analysis seems to contradict the fact that characters in the epic are mono-dimensional, since, for example, these feelings of guilt do not seem to exist at the beginning of the *Iliad*. It is therefore not the case that Homer does not aspire to certain complexities of character that is an essential element in the creation of characterizations of interest.[7]

3. Odysseus in the *Odyssey*

Whereas Achilles's first "symptoms" occur when the war is still going on, Odysseus has to be analysed more as a war veteran, since his problems first come to existence, when he is sailing home. In the *Iliad* Odysseus is mentioned 120 times (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae), but there is no sign of character development. His purpose in the *Iliad* is to show strong demonstrations of tact, leadership and self-control. Odysseus, or as he is introduced

6 According to Crowley Greek soldiers could not experience this kind of feeling. Achilles's reaction here contradicts this.

7 This contradicts what Scholes and Kellogs say (164).

by Homer, the man who has suffered a lot (πολύτλας), has seen many acts of violence and deaths of his companions in the Trojan war.

In the *Iliad* he seems to be handling this quite well,[8] but the *Odyssey* shows the Greek hero from a different point of view. It is a story about an *aner*, a man, a story about an individual and his adventures. From the ninth book onwards Odysseus tells the story of his journey so far to the Phaeacians. The difference between him and the rich civilians here becomes strikingly clear, when a bard, called Demodocus, starts singing about the Trojan war. For the Phaeacians this is all just entertainment, but Odysseus starts crying and tries to hide this: for him it was reality and the song opens the path to grief for him (*Odysseus* 8). He however does not want to show this, probably out of shame, because he is still not recovered from the war (Shay 16).

The first story he tells is of the sack of Ismarus (*Odysseus* 9.39–61). His comrades get drunk and Odysseus loses all control over them, which results in them destroying Ismarus. Both Odysseus and his crew stay in combat mode even though not against the original enemy: they together sack the city, they slay the men and take the wives with them. Their state of mind is still a war state of mind and they cannot get rid of this.

He lost six men in Ismarus and after sailing another ten days he arrived at the Lotus-eaters. Although Odysseus does not eat the flowers these people eat, his men do. Homer probably had some kind of narcotic plant in mind and if you would eat from it, you would get into *lotus* abuse and forget about your goals, in this case about your homecoming. The *lotus* seems to say to them: "Forget your pain! Eat us!"[9] This is exactly what many war veterans turn to: drug or alcohol abuse.[10] The soldiers and Odysseus himself are experiencing the fight or flight reaction, something very common in PTSD sufferers. Where his friends choose to flee the pain, Odysseus is fighting it. This reaction can be seen as a symptom of the fourth category: a particular form of an alternative way of saying hypervigilance. His adrenaline levels are up all of the time, because he fights his sorrow and ignores his bad mental state.

8 On one occasion he is not handling the situation well: when Leukos, a *hetairon* of Odysseus is killed, he flies into a rage at his death and kills Leukos's killer in the battle.

9 In 4.235ff Helen mixes an anodyne in the drinks of Telemachos and Menelaos to make them forget about their sorrow. Chemically induced forgetting is something we see occurring regularly in the men who just returned from the Trojan War and their families.

10 From the Vietnam veterans with current PTSD 73.8 percent seek their attempt in forgetting in alcohol, 11.3 percent in drugs (Shay 36).

When he returns from the Cyclops, he gets a perfect wind to take him to Ithaca. Odysseus wants to guard this wind on his own and stays awake for nine days and nine nights, a clear sign of insomnia and hypervigilance. He does not trust any of his comrades to keep an eye on it. For Odysseus falling asleep is dangerous and it turns out it actually is: the minute he falls asleep, his shipmates open the bag and an enormous storm breaks out.[11] When Odysseus wakes up, he immediately thinks of taking his own life: "Then I woke, and debated in the depths of my heart whether to hurl myself from the ship and drown, or suffer in silence among the living" (*Odyssey* 10.49–52). In this passage Odysseus shows symptoms of both the third and fourth category: negative alterations in his thoughts about the world, because of the mention of suicide, and signs of change in arousal, because of his lack of sleep.

Although in the *Iliad* Odysseus seemed to be a strong leader, a brilliant planner and strategist, these qualities seem to slightly disappear and change. We have already seen he cannot keep control of his men, he shows poor judgement and lacks leadership backbone. His trauma has already changed him quite a lot and the rest of his journey will make that even clearer.

When Odysseus visits the Underworld, the phenomenon of "secondary traumatisation" becomes clear. Odysseus meets Elpenor, one of his fallen soldiers, Ajax and his mother. This last one indirectly blames Odysseus for her death. Because of his absence, all she could do was yearn and, just as Achilles who was yearning for Patroclus, she withheld herself from eating and drinking. She starved herself to death and she does not say it, but this seems to be Odysseus's fault. The point of this is not that veterans spoil everything, but rather that they believe this about themselves. When Odysseus realizes he can never hold his mother again (*Odyssey* 11.204–209), he feels guilty and extremely desperate: (ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος ὀξὺ γενέσκετο κηρόθι μ ᾶλλον 11.208). He wants her to wait for him: is this another indication that Odysseus would rather die? Even if this is not the case, the guilt and despair are obvious symptoms of the third category. The whole scene in Hades can also be seen as a symptom of the first category, since in our times this would be described as a flashback or a nightmare.

Although Odysseus has been fighting the pain up until now, he does cave in to one addictive thing: sex. When Scylla and Charybdis had taken away all of his shipmates, he got stranded on the island of Calypso. The nymph

11 Odysseus says the gods sent him sleep towards *atè* (10.68–69).

held Odysseus captive as a sex slave for seven years.[12] The Circe and Calypso episodes can be seen as a way to calm the violent blowback of war with sex, one year with Circe, seven years with Calypso (Shay 118). This behaviour can be explained by seeing it as a symptom of the second category: avoiding his true feelings by letting himself get distracted by beautiful women who adore him. As has been already explained, when the episode at the Phaeacians was discussed, Odysseus has trouble being confronted with anything that has to do with the Trojan war. He shows several avoidance symptoms and a sex addiction might be one of them.

Homer however is not done with Odysseus yet: after the seven years with Calypso, the Greek hero finally reaches Ithaca in book 13 of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus however does not recognize his own homeland and thinks the Phaeacians have betrayed him by once again sending him to a foreign country. His mistrust of other people comes forward again. He does not even trust his own wife, Penelope, and misleads her by being disguised as an old beggar. The biggest change in his character has however yet to be revealed.

He seeks revenge, since suitors have been trying to seduce his wife and have been eating and drinking all his food and wine. He seems very cold, especially when he sees his wife weeping (*Odyssey* 19.209–212). He holds back his tears and is unresponsive, because he learned to be that way as a survival tactic in Troy. Odysseus finally puts his boiling rage into action and slaughters the suitors and hangs the maids in book 22. He is cruel and without any restraint. Odysseus is once again very cruel and cold, when he sees his father again for the first time (24.220ff).

The whole metaphor of "wandering", already discussed when Achilles was analysed, is especially important for Odysseus. A *daimon* makes Odysseus wander, turning him from his goal, which is returning home (24.307). A wanderer is ill-starred and Odysseus's different false identities express the atopic pain of his untethered wandering: not feeling at home and feeling alone is one of the consequences of experiencing a trauma (Padel 108).

4. Comparison

Both Achilles and Odysseus have undergone some serious character changes due to the trauma they experienced. Whereas we get to read about Achil-

12 On his way home Odysseus also had sexual relationships with Circe. This is something that, according to Shay Vietnam veterans also do (14).

les' trauma in the *Iliad*, we meet Odysseus when he is already traumatised. Betrayal of "what is right" and the berserk state are the key pathogens for PTSD in combat soldiers: both Greek heroes have experienced these two things. When Patroclus dies, Achilles goes berserk and when Odysseus arrives home and sees the suitors, he goes berserk. When Agamemnon betrays Achilles, he experiences the betrayal of "what's right", Odysseus experiences this, when he is not allowed to reach his homeland, after he left Troy. Both are described as wanderers and wandering was a way of describing madness in ancient Greek literature: it means chaotic displacement (Padel 104–06).

Although they experience the same symptoms, two different sides of PTSD are shown: PTSD in combat and PTSD after leaving a combat zone. Both heroes face different problems, but because of their trauma tend to react in quite a similar way. This is interesting because of the big differences between the two men. Achilles, the consummate Greek warrior and Odysseus, the sly strategist. The trauma changes their character to such an extent that the two can be compared, since they both act in rage and without restraint: something that does not fit who they were before the traumatic events.

It is thus not the case, as Lukács claims, that epic does not portray the inner life of the heroes and other characters. That individuals simply had to accept the totality of meaning within their world, even if they did not understand it, is not the case for Achilles and Odysseus. Individuality and interiority might not be constantly present, but with his word use Homer makes room in his epic for the interior of the characters.

This comparison also explains why war veterans can relate to each other and to these ancient Greek heroes, even if they have not fought in the same war (Doerries). The experiences are similar and the problems that occur due to these traumatic events are more or less the same, although not every war veteran gets PTSD and not every war veteran suffers from the same symptoms. Their characters are unmistakably changed and because of this it might be hard to readjust to the life you used to live, as can be seen in the case of Odysseus.

5. Conclusion

Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* show the reader that trauma can cause ugly deformities of character. The two Greek heroes par excellence, Achilles,

who is praised for his brave behaviour and strength and Odysseus, who is praised for his strategic qualities and his great leadership, lose these qualities because of their trauma. They turn into warriors without restraint who cannot get rid of their combat mode. They are hyperalert, mistrust everything and everyone, think about killing themselves, experience flashbacks and try to not think about the hurtful memories: all symptoms of the modern term PTSD.

Jonathan Shay comes to the conclusion Odysseus does not have PTSD, but I would dare to disagree. The same goes for Achilles. In *Achilles in Vietnam* Shay states: "I do not believe the official PTSD criteria capture the devastation of mental life after severe combat trauma, because they neglect the damaging personality changes that frequently follow prolonged, severe trauma" (169). I however think the third category of symptoms does exactly what Shay says here: describe the negative alterations in someone's character. His conclusion probably differs from mine, because of the constant development in and changes of the term PTSD and what is meant by it.[13] His conclusion is also different from mine, because he mostly focuses on the comparison with Vietnam war veterans, while I isolated the two Greek heroes and compared their behaviour to the list of PTSD symptoms.[14] What however is obvious, is that both heroes experience a form of anger that they did not experience before the traumas.

I do believe that the two warriors can be diagnosed with symptoms that are at least partially categorised under the term PTSD, since they show various symptoms that cause modern therapists to give someone this diagnosis. The term may be relatively "young", but the symptoms are not. I do believe one should not stress the term too much; it is not about the term, it is about the symptoms that give meaning to the term. It is quite hard to claim that neither Achilles nor Odysseus suffers from a post-traumatic stress disorder, since they underwent several traumatic experiences and due to them they suffered from symptoms that can be linked to high doses of stress.

It has to be stressed once again that I have not been dealing with historical characters, but with literary figures. Since it is impossible to know for sure whether or not either Achilles or Odysseus actually lived, it is all about how Homer presents them. Rage and war are important themes in both the

13 Shay uses his own list of symptoms that does not always match the list of the DSM mentioned above.

14 This is the standard methodology for this kind of research.

Iliad and the *Odyssey*. Homer puts a lot of emphasis on how the Greek heroes dealt with those things and the reader actually gets a look inside the mind of both Achilles and Odysseus. This is how it is possible to establish their character changes and the elaborate analysis of those. Classicists often seem to forget about the fact that both epics are about war and the results of it: they are not just beautiful stories, they make the reader think about war and the consequences. Roberta Stewart, a professor in classics at Dartmouth College, once wrote to a war veteran: "Homer can help you. Homer knows" (Apnews.com).

The *Odyssey* has to later centuries suggested all kinds of relationships between emotional and geographical wandering, displacement, loss of identity and the continuance or development of identity through the experience of a journey-in-the-wild (Padel 113–4). As has been stated before, Achilles and Odysseus can be compared to each other and Homer does this too by ascribing the same characteristics to them. He makes them both wanderers, they both suffer from inner madness and they both lose their identity.

The ancient Greeks did not isolate such a syndrome in their soldiers: this could be, because it was so common, since war and violence were a big part of their life and society. It did not stand out: it was practically universal. Maybe we can even speak of a culture of trauma, but this still does not mean that soldiers did not suffer from what they saw in war, even when they were prepared for it (Konstan 3). Seeing your comrades die and fearing for your life every minute of the day leaves scars, even if the culture is one of war and violence. It cannot be denied that Achilles and Odysseus were changed by the war and therefore, without stressing the term too much, I conclude that it is possible that the two heroes suffered from combat trauma and that the symptoms of PTSD are therefore not exclusive to modernity.

This conclusion also has implications for our understanding of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Both Achilles and Odysseus cannot get rid of their memories; they persist. Homer uses his understanding of this phenomenon in his construction of character. The repeated intrusion of memories is a source of distress and can cause anger (Minchin 4). What psychiatrists nowadays call intrusion symptoms are nothing more than the persistence of memories described by Homer. This contradicts the idea that in epic there is no place for emotions and the characters are flat.

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3.

Life will find a Way: Humanity and Nature in *The Time Machine*

Yannick de Graaf

1. Introduction

Ecocriticism is a theoretical approach that has surfaced quite recently. It focuses on certain questions regarding the relation between nature and humans. Should nature be left alone, should it be protected, or should it be conquered? Is it even possible to assert control over nature or are we controlled by it? Ecocriticism also has the view that not everything is socially or linguistically constructed, nature being that exception. As Peter Barry states: "For the ecocritic, nature really exists, out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept by enclosure within knowing inverted commas, but actually present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect, perhaps, fatally, if we mistreat it" (243). The rise of popularity could be attributed to the increasing relevance of the relation between humans and nature with regards to global warming and the natural disasters or environmental effects that follow from it. However, humankind's relation with nature has always been a subject of interest, as can be seen from the already existing conflict narrative of man against nature.

The 'man against nature' narrative can be described as a struggle where the character has to overcome the challenge from either an animal or a force of nature, such as a flood or a tornado. Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, for example, shows the old man protagonist in a struggle with a marlin. The 1993 film *Jurassic Park* deals with the interference of humans in nature's affairs in a rather disastrous way. Another novel preoccupied with nature is H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, where the Time Traveller travels to a distant future and encounters the Eloi and the Morlock in a dystopian society. The novel reveals the ideas on nature of the Time Traveller while simultaneously giving a prediction of how the relation between man and nature will develop.

The Time Machine argues for a united humanity that will conquer over nature, but it is exactly that conquest which allows nature to once again triumph over humankind. It is then possible to compare the ideas presented in *The Time Machine* to recent developments in science and healthcare to see if those ideas still hold validity and can perhaps aid in the current struggle with nature. In this paper I argue that *The Time Machine* takes an entirely antagonistic stance on nature and does not allow for the idea of coexistence. Moreover, when read more closely it can be seen that in the representation of the Eloi and the Morlocks and what is essentially the end of humanity, there is a warning to not continue on the path that has been laid out since the late nineteenth century.

In the past the take on nature seems to be primarily antagonistic. Sheldrake ascribes the source of environmental antagonism to "the mechanistic theory of nature which has dominated scientific thinking since the beginning of the seventeenth century" (14). It is basically the idea that the universe is a mechanical system operating entirely on mechanical principles and it rejects the idea that nature is a living thing. The opening paragraph of Hobbes' *Leviathan* is commonly accepted as a mechanistic theory:

> Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life. (Hobbes)

Hobbes posits that life is the same as movement, which removes the distinction between humans and machines or institutions. Nature is not removed from the equation, but it is made into a mechanical system and has all substance taken away from it. Essentially, Hobbes transforms nature from an entity into an object and allows for the manipulation of said object. Thus, while antagonism between man and nature has existed for longer, the ability for manipulation of nature (as a mechanism) arose in the seventeenth century and that line of reasoning allowed for the ideas of the conquest of nature which are present in *The Time Machine*.

The Time Machine was published in 1895 and as such presents ideas about man, evolution, and nature that are over a century old. However, as the title of the novel suggests, it deals with time travel and also presents a glimpse of a possible future. This future springs from several ideologies of the late nineteenth century. Firstly, it heavily features Darwinian evolutionary theory. Secondly, it was written after the Industrial Revolution and after the Romantic Era, during which there was a glorification of nature (as opposed to technology or modernity). Both these aspects deal with man and nature and how they influence each other. As mentioned in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*: "when the great Romantic lyrics [...] remark on an aspect in the natural scene, this attention to the external world serves only as stimulus to the most characteristic human activity, that of thinking" (Greenblatt 13). The Romantic lyric, the most used poetic form of the Romantic period and one H.G. Wells would have been familiar with, already deals with the relation between man and nature. It is in nature where poets find inspiration and it is in nature where human thinking originates. It is then not surprising that *The Time Machine* is also saturated with thoughts about nature, especially with regards to the future, seeing as it was written in such a rapidly changing era.

One of the first great changes in modes of thinking came about when Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species* in 1859. It introduced the idea of evolution and natural selection, two concepts at the centre of *The Time Machine*. Evolution is the gradual change of an organism (over the course of generations) from a simple to a more advanced or complex organism. Darwin states that "from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely the production of higher animals, directly follows" (223). Essentially where there is adversity stronger organisms will rise. This is also where natural selection comes in. Darwin defines natural selection as follows:

> if variations useful to any organic being do occur, assuredly individuals thus characterised will have the best chance of being preserved in the struggle for life; and from the strong principle of inheritance they will tend to produce offspring similarly characterised. (62)

In other words, natural selection means that the organisms that are either the most adaptive to or have the most favourable traits for whichever environment they find themselves in will survive and pass on these traits to their offspring, which causes the gradual change also known as evolution. Meanwhile the organisms that are unable to adapt or pass on traits will die out. The process of evolution and natural selection are taken to an extreme in *The Time Machine*, as can be seen in the two native species of the future, the Eloi and the Morlocks. The Eloi seem to be human descendants, but they are significantly meeker and less intellectual than humanity of the late nineteenth century. In the Time Traveller's words: "a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail" (Wells 19) and "however great their intellectual degradation, the Eloi had kept too much of the human form not to claim my sympathy" (Wells 53). Instead of humanity evolving to become more and more intellectual, they have evolved to become lethargic and simple. The second species, the Morlocks, are quite different. Unlike the Eloi, the Time Traveller instantly loathes these creatures as they appear more apelike than human. They remind him of "our cannibalistic ancestors of three or four thousand years ago" (Wells 52). Rather than having evolved further away from their cannibalistic ancestors, they have degenerated towards a more primal form. This also explains why they appear more apelike as Darwin argued that humans are descendants from apes (so a reversal would mean reverting to a more apelike form). As Clark mentions: "nature [is] understood as the other of culture, that which arises of itself without human agency. It may be reverenced as wilderness or pristine animality, or feared as the bestial and cruelly inhuman (75). The Morlocks are seen as bestial and inhuman, since they are depicted as aggressive and since they feed on the Eloi. Neither the Eloi nor the Morlocks are shown in a positive light, which puts evolution in a negative light. In addition to that, the return to nature is also placed in a negative light, as the more natural Morlocks are linked to cruelty and cannibalism.

Evolution and natural selection are processes that originate from nature. It is the struggle for survival in the war of nature that brings these

processes to life (Darwin 223) and arguably is what has granted humans their bipedalism, opposing thumbs, and remarkable intellect. The Time Traveller corroborates this statement when he says:

> It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. (Wells 65)

According to the Time Traveller it is nature that has bestowed humans with their intellect so they could survive. This means that it is nature that has allowed humanity to survive and therefore it is nature that has the power in this dynamic. Nature predicated that humanity would survive and is also shown to be able to take that capability of survival away. The final realisation of the Time Traveller about the future is "how brief the dream of human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had set itself steadfastly towards comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword, it had attained its hopes—to come to this at last" (Wells 65). The *this* refers to the state of humanity in the future. Humankind has worked towards a society where there is no more danger and no more change. Combining that with the previous statement, the need for human intelligence has been eliminated with their desire for the perfect society. The Time Traveller's explanation of the Eloi's lethargic nature strengthens this claim:

> I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of intelligence and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity had been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lives. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions. (Wells 27)

It is humanity's desire for the improvement of living conditions that has caused the degeneration of the Eloi. It is a reaction to a way of living in which everything is provided and where intellect is no longer required in day-to-day life. Therefore, evolution has been both a blessing and a curse, as it has granted humans their intelligence, but will ultimately also strip them

from that intelligence. This cycle gives the impression that human agency did not matter, as it is nature that will dictate the end, not humans. Nietzsche perfectly describes this cycle as "how pitiful, how insubstantial and transitory, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature; there were eternities during which it did not exist; and when it has disappeared again, nothing will have happened" (764). Human intellect is an impressive trait, but it pales in comparison to nature itself.

2. Nature as the Other

Yet, humanity has left their mark on nature. Otherwise it would have been impossible for them to create their perfect society. The humanity of the future (i.e., somewhere after 1895) has managed to shape the world into a system that is perfectly equipped to serve humankind's needs. It is "the work of ameliorating the conditions of life—the true civilising process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on to a climax. One triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed another" (Wells 26). To better the living conditions of humans, that is the true goal of civilization. Here, Nature stands in the way of that goal. Nature is presented as an enemy of all humanity and as something that can be beaten. It also represents danger, because it is contrasted with security. It is nature that has to be overcome in order to achieve a secure life for humanity. Nature is made into the Other that is a threat to our existence. The threat of nature can be illustrated with Jim Mason's statement on the transformation from animals as teachers to "bloodthirsty, ravenous beasts snarling at the gates of civilization, cruelly intent on bursting through to ravage innocent humanity" (174). The idea of nature as the Other is emphasised even more when the Time Traveller states that "the whole world will be intelligent, educated, and co-operating; things will move faster and faster towards the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs" (Wells 26). Nature can be subjugated and bend towards the human will. Humans will be able to dictate the balance of animal and vegetable life. Darwin actually mentions this process as well and calls it "artificial selection" (54), as opposed to natural selection. However, this human interference with nature's course is far from perfect as "our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hands" (Wells 26). Since humans

are unable to converse with nature, their ability to understand nature and to work with nature is also limited. On top of that, humans are uncertain what exactly their goals are. It is mentioned that a secure life is the ultimate goal, but that goal is still vague. A secure life for one does not necessarily equal a secure life for another. Humans view nature as a tool that can be harnessed to achieve their uncertain goals. Pollini states:

> The environment is, by definition, an anthropocentric concept, in contrast to nature, which refers, by definition, to an otherness, or to the otherness, the mysteries, within ourselves. The environment, as well as its representations, are socially constructed, at least in part, whereas nature, by definition, is not socially constructed (only its representations are). (39)

Nature is an Other, but it is also the mysterious or unidentifiable Self. The relation between humans and nature is a paradox. Humans are nature, but nature is also the other, the unknown. It seems that the Time Traveller has not yet realised that humans also belong to nature and therefore argues from the point of view that nature is the Other. To further emphasise this view, Clark states that "the ultimate source of humanity's destructive relation to the natural world is dualism—the assumption that humans and nature are quite separate, that the human is radically divided in kind from the rest of creation" (77). In the Time Traveller's mind humans are above everything else. This includes nature, but also the Morlocks and the Eloi as they are according to his view only part human or a previous iteration of humanity and therefore inferior to his image of the human. Thus, in *The Time Machine* nature is met with an antagonistic view and seen as something to be feared or conquered or even as something that can be wielded as a tool.

The most relatable human aspect of the novel is the Time Traveller. Arguably the Eloi and the Morlocks are also human, but since they are such extreme forms of humanity, there is very little of a connection established between them and the reader. Since the Time Traveller is the narrator of the story, the reader is given a direct insight of his thoughts. The Time Traveller is first and foremost a scientist, he has travelled to the future to research the development of humanity. After his arrival to the future he says to himself: "face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of too hasty guesses at its meaning. In the end you will find clues to it all" (Wells 33). After the adversity of losing his time machine, he recites what is essentially the scientific

method to himself in order to keep calm and survive. He chooses to rely on his intellect in order to survive and still accomplish his goal of research. Throughout the majority of the novel the Time Traveller manages to maintain this scientific approach. However, in what can be considered the final confrontation with the Morlocks, he is stripped of all that his intellect has provided him with and reduced to a more primal form of himself:

> I stood there with only the weapons and the powers that Nature had endowed me with—hands, feet, and teeth; these, and four safety matches that still remained to me. (Wells 46)

The Time Traveller is reduced to his most natural form, unarmed and without requirement for intellect. From this point onwards he relies solely on his strength advantage over the Morlocks and on animalistic savagery not unlike the Morlocks themselves. At first the Time Traveller felt a sense of superiority over the Eloi and the Morlocks, but after his adventure in the future he has been stripped of his precious civilisation and put on equal footing with them. Again, man is seen as a product of nature and when the human intellect is no longer required, it is basic nature that is left (i.e., hands, feet, and teeth as the only defence).

3. Struggle against Insignificance

There is another power at work in *The Time Machine*. It is perhaps so obvious that it initially goes unnoticed, but time has had its influence on both humans and nature. The influence of time becomes clear when looking at man made structures: "I found the Palace of Green Porcelain [...] deserted and falling into ruin. Only ragged vestiges of glass remained in its windows, and great sheets of green facing had fallen away from the corroded metallic framework" (Wells 53). The creations of humans stand no chance against the destructive force of corrosion. So time has had a negative effect on the unkept man made structures (those that are inhabited and maintained by the Eloi and the Morlocks are still intact). In contrast, nature has thrived over time, as can be seen from the Time Traveller's account of the world soon after his arrival: "My general impression of the world I saw over their heads was of a tangled waste of beautiful bushes and flowers, a long neglected and yet weedless garden" (Wells 21). The vegetation has grown abundantly

without needing to be attended to. It can be concluded that, in this case, nature has time on its side. Humans will perish over time, their constructions will deteriorate, while nature will only continue to grow. It is exactly as Nietzsche (764) mentioned, in the end human intellect does not matter. And the Time Traveller agrees:

> I thought of the great precessional cycle that the pole of the earth describes. Only forty times had that silent revolution occurred during all the years that I had traversed. And during these few revolutions all the activity, all the traditions, the complex organisations, the nations, the languages, literatures, aspirations, even the mere memory of Man as I knew him, had been swept out of existence. (Wells 51)

Thus, human action is insignificant in the face of time and nature. Neither they or their creations can outlive these great forces. However, there is one counterargument that can be made. The Time Traveller has managed to create a time machine, which grants him power over time. It allows him to move through time and possibly affect the timeline. To avoid going further into the details of time travel, it can be assumed that the time machine does not affect the timeline, since it was created in the past and the future remains unchanged. So does human action even matter at all?

If the ending of the novel should be believed, it does not. In the end, the universe will die a heat death. The earth's rotation has stopped and the surface has become "cold" and "all the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives—all that was over" (Wells 69–70). Yet, even in this cold and dark world, there was a sign of life, "a round thing, the size of a football perhaps, or, it may be, bigger, and tentacles trailed down from it; it seemed black against the weltering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about" (Wells 71). An unidentified creature seems to have survived the heat death, showing once again nature's incredible resilience. In the wise words of Dr. Ian Malcolm: "Life finds a way" (*Jurassic Park* 36.15).

The ending of the world (if it is even going to end in a heat death) is still very far off into the future and it is more relevant to focus on the relation with nature in the present and how it is possible to impact it to avert the dystopian future laid out in the novel. It is then useful to compare the predictions and ideologies of *The Time Machine* with actual events and milestones of the

twenty-first century and see how much truth can be attributed to them. The first prediction is the evolutionary split of humanity into the Eloi and the Morlocks. The Eloi are associated with the upper class who lost their intellect due to their comfort and the Morlocks are associated with the working class who due to their toil in the mines became the degenerated cavemen. Or as Bergonzi puts it: "the opposition of Eloi and Morlocks can be interpreted in terms of the late-nineteenth-century class-struggle" (61). Is there then evidence of such a struggle in the present? There is not an extreme split (that presents itself physically or intellectually) as shown in the novel, but there is an ever-growing gap between rich and the poor. For example, the Occupy movement which started in 2011 is currently still organising protests against social and economic inequality in the form of the Yellow Vests in France and the Occupy Ice protest around the globe ("Occupy Movement"). It is quite possible that a permanent socio-economic split between the upper class and the lower class will happen, if the current gap can ever be bridged at all.

Then there is artificial selection, humans grooming their surroundings for their living benefits. The novel argues that humans will continuously change vegetables and animals to maximise their production value. As a BBC article from 2016 shows, researchers "used genetic modification to increase the amount of sunlight energy crop plants can channel into food production" (Gill par. 2). Humans have artificially influenced the genetic makeup of a crop so it can produce more food for the benefit of society. In other words, the desirable genetic traits of the plant have been amplified and reproduced, outside of the influence of nature. As the Time Traveller mentioned this is one of the important steps towards a "conquest of Nature" (Wells 27). These breakthroughs in science as they are called are at the core of the reasoning on nature in *The Time Machine*. Then, "the defining problem becomes that of the antagonistic opposition between culture and nature" (Clark 76). In the time after the publication of *The Time Machine* there has been very little change in society's attitude towards nature as it is still seen as an Other or as an enemy of culture.

Lastly, there is the eradication of disease, which will allow humans to live in comfort and without danger. The novel stresses the importance of a united humanity which will eradicate diseases one by one. This is exactly what is happening with the World Health Organisation (WHO), as it is the combined effort of the United Nations in order to improve the health and living conditions of all global citizens (WHO, "Our Values" par. 3). When

one looks at the rate at which the WHO has been operating, it becomes apparent that the eradication of diseases has been made a priority and that the WHO has been quite successful at this operation as well. The records of the WHO state that: "In 1980, following a historic global campaign of surveillance and vaccination, the World Health Assembly declared smallpox eradicated" (WHO, "Smallpox" par. 1). Currently, the WHO is attempting to globally eradicate Poliomyelitis, Dracunculiasis, Yaws, and Malaria (WHO, "Diseases" par. 2). There are countless more diseases that are being targeted, but these are restricted to certain regions of the world, such as hookworm in Mexico (WHO, "Diseases" par. 1). Although it is progressing slowly, the eradication of diseases is most definitely on the agenda of humankind and it seems that with enough time and resources, they will succeed in their mission. Humanity has already shown to be able to completely eradicate a disease (smallpox) or to isolate a disease to a specific region (hookworm), which essentially means eradication is a matter of time. For this reason, the novel's criteria for a full eradication of disease in order for humans to live without danger is already in full process.

4. Beyond Humanity

All of the phenomena described in *The Time Machine* are predictions of the future, a time beyond our current understanding. Recently, debates have started about the merit of a new geological epoch called the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene Working Group is working on a formal proposal, which is planned for submission in 2021, for the official approval of the Anthropocene (Subramanian par. 2). The Anthropocene is characterised as an epoch where geological change has been caused by human influence. In this case, it is humanity, once again, asserting its influence over its environment. In addition to the introduction of the concept of the Anthropocene, the future perspective also invites interpretations from the Posthumanism critical approach. As Francesca Ferrando argues, these two tend to go together:

> While Philosophical Posthumanism focuses on decentering the human from the center of the discourse, the Anthropocene marks the extent of the impact of human activities on a planetary level, and thus stresses the urgency for humans to become aware of pertaining to an ecosystem which, when damaged, negatively affects the human condition as well. (22)

The most significant change in the discourse is the decentralisation of the human subject. Previous approaches (Darwinism, Marxism, and Post-nature) argue from a human-centred perspective, whereas the aim of Post-humanism is to debate from a more environmental perspective. Therefore, notions of 'the human', 'the human condition' and 'human nature' are challenged by this approach.

Although the environmental question remains in the background, *The Time Machine* most certainly comments on the human subject (and its irrelevance). On a quiet night in the future when the Time Traveller looks up at the stars he contemplates "looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life" (Wells 51). The Time Traveller reinforces the idea that in the grand scheme, the entirety of humanity is insignificant. Here, the onset of early science fiction is visible, an era of science fiction which is, according to Tom Idema, "notoriously obsessed with science and technology, space flight in particular, and more or less oblivious of environmental concern" (10). Science fiction of the period is marked by a futuristic ideal of humanity's endless expansion into and conquest of space. This future would be a capitalistic utopia, where resources have become unlimited and humanity, in turn, can procreate limitlessly.

However, "in the late 1950s, this began to change, [with New Wave science fiction, where] humans are denaturalized, caught in sublime landscapes of technological design or polluted natural landscapes, and technologies often pervade the human body itself" (Idema 10). This is partly true for *The Time Machine* as well, since the Time Traveller is marooned in the sublime landscape of the future, except it is not polluted, but has thrived due to the absence of humanity's influence. Although descendants of humanity are present, these are, in the context of the novel, not regarded as human and are more akin to animals who have established a natural equilibrium between both themselves and the environment. In that sense, the human element is removed from the story and it has allowed Nature to thrive again.

5. Conclusion

In essence, *The Time Machine* argues for the subjugation of nature, otherwise nature will destroy us. To achieve this conquest of nature the novel explains that humanity should unite in order to eradicate disease and to adapt natural resources to human needs. It uses Darwinian reasoning by claiming

that the desirable traits of vegetables and cattle should be promoted, while the undesirable traits of sickness in humans should be eliminated. As can be seen in recent developments of science (for example, the eradication of disease and the bioengineering of vegetables), humanity is well underway towards the achievement of these goals. However, the degeneration of the future human species and the overall negative attitude towards them should also serve as a warning. The Time Traveller is telling his audience to not end up like the Eloi and the Morlocks, as it is nature who controls them (the Morlocks due to their reversal to a more animalistic form and the Eloi due to their intellectual degradation). It serves as a warning to future generations to not continue in the same way as the nineteenth century society. Therefore, it is possible to look at something as radical as changing the entire view of humanity against nature. The antagonistic view does not make sense in the novel, as it argues both for the subjugation of nature, but still views humans as part of nature. It has described nature as Nature (the entity), as the Other, and as a tool for the use of humanity (the mechanistic nature view). Instead of following any of the views presented in *The Time Machine*, a more understanding view is necessary. Humanity will never be able to converse with nature, but it is possible to change the attitude towards it. Instead of viewing nature as the Other and as a threat, it should be viewed as an essential part of humanity and the world. It should not be tampered with in a manner that is only suitable for humans, as this will result in the extinction of all animals and plants that serve humankind no purpose. Nature should be viewed as something tangible, something that can be affected, and something that can be interacted with, albeit not through the conventional language or social means. Nature can be understood and it can be influenced, but the influence should not be taken too far. The novel emphasises this, as it shows that if the modifications are taken too far it will be the end of humanity. After all, it is nature that was here before us and it is nature that will still be here after us.

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II. PRESENT

4.

Navigating the Union: Finding Direction by Bringing Political Decision-Making and Literary Studies Together?

Bastiaan N. van der Werff

1. Introduction

"Listen carefully to the real concerns of our voters, they are not happy with us. We need to change our ways. We need to do better, but walking away is not the answer. Providing concrete solutions for concrete problems is the answer," argued Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission, in July 2016 (Timmermans). This fragment of his speech, given shortly after the Brexit referendum was held, reflects the nature of the *White Paper on the Future of Europe*, in which the European Commission (EC) tries to orientate the collective future for the remaining 27 Member States.

One recurring theme—both in Timmermans' speech and the *White Paper on the Future of Europe*—is the perceived gap between promise and delivery. The Commission even states that "closing the gap" provides a continuous challenge, and also specifies why that still proves challenging. According to the Commission, "the EU is not an easy construct to understand as it combines both the European level and the Member States" (EC 12), and there is "a mismatch between expectations and the EU's capacity to meet them" (EC 13). Nevertheless, the Commission holds that "Europe and its Member States

must move quicker to interact with citizens, be more accountable and deliver better and faster on what has been collectively agreed" (EC 13).

It could be claimed that this demanding goal ought to be achieved by implementing far-reaching policy alterations capable of inducing such change. However, in this vision report we will observe another route, one that brings political decision-making and literary studies together, that could serve as an alternative way of moving forward. It will be argued that (1) incrementalism, as a pattern for decision-making, and the concept of utopia could complement each other, which in turn (2) provides a new direction for the remaining Member States of the European Union. This direction may help to close the gap between promise and delivery as it not only incorporates the political side of decision-making, but also adds a cultural understanding of change and improvement to the process.

2. Applicability of Incrementalism

The model of decision-making known as incrementalism was developed by Lindblom. In his article *The Science of "Muddling Through"*, Lindblom observed that "democracies change their policies almost entirely through incremental adjustments. Policy does not move in leaps and bounds" (Lindblom, *Muddling Through* 84). In addition, he argued that wise policy-makers ought to change policies this way, because they expect that their policies will achieve only part of what they hope and at the same time will produce unanticipated consequences they would have preferred to avoid (Lindblom, *Muddling Through* 86). Lindblom thus maintains that frequent but small policy changes, made at the margin of existing policies, provide the most effective way of creating satisfactory policies and avoiding "serious lasting mistakes" (Lindblom, *Muddling Through*).

Lindblom's idea has been challenged by Dror, who maintains that incremental change only works as a policy mechanism if three conditions are met: "(1) present policies must be to a high degree satisfactory; (2) there must be a continuity of problems; (3) there must be continuity in means available for dealing with these problems" (Dror 154). Other authors added to Dror's critique. Etzioni, for example, argues that the incremental approach is "valid and appropriate" for making non-fundamental decisions, but that fundamental ones require a wider horizon (Milakovich and Gordon 14).

The objections of Dror and others are to be taken seriously insofar as they provide a basis for critique on incrementalism as a policy theory. However, the notion of incrementalism should not be seen only as a form of policy analysis, but also as a political pattern (Lindblom, *Still Muddling*). This distinction, which was only explained thoroughly by Lindblom in 1979, proves useful in tackling the central challenge of "closing the gap" between promise and delivery.

Incrementalism as a form of policy analysis can be seen as an approach that could help determine how to create and improve policies (see Lindblom, *Muddling Through; Still Muddling*). Incrementalism as a political pattern, on the other hand, can be defined as "political change by small steps (regardless of method of analysis)" (Lindblom, *Still Muddling* 517), and may therefore, following its successful application, result in small but significant political changes in our contemporary European society. This does not necessarily mean that progress can only be made slowly. In fact, Lindblom argues that "a fast-moving sequence of small changes can more speedily accomplish a drastic alteration of the *status quo* than can an only infrequent major policy change," and that these changes can be made in a rapid manner since they "do not rock the boat, do not stir up the great antagonisms and paralyzing schisms as do proposals for more drastic change" (Lindblom, *Still Muddling* 520). For this reason, it may well be argued that incrementalism as a political pattern "offers the best chance of introducing into the political system those changes and those change-producing intermediate changes that a discontented citizen might desire" (Lindblom, *Still Muddling* 521).

A more contemporary evaluation of incrementalism provides us with two interesting insights. Bendor shows, in his article *Incrementalism: Dead yet Flourishing*, that "incrementalism as a coherent strategy of decision making is not discussed much" (Bendor 194). However, he also stresses the relative success of some of the basic elements of incrementalism, and concludes that incrementalism "is probably dead, even though its constituent parts are flourishing" (Bendor 195). This is most clearly highlighted when we look at other approaches[1] to policy-making that overlap with incrementalism, which are also "infused by a spirit of pragmatism: try new policies, then see whether they work" (Bendor 200). Moreover, the comparison also points out that the tactic of introducing change step by step is still very much

1 Such as social experimentation and program evaluation, see Bendor.

valued. This means that policy alterations are first being tested and evaluated before taking another step forward or even a step back. It further suggests that this tactic is still successfully applied and that these steps do not necessarily need to be the result of a particular form of policy analysis.

3. The Function of Utopia

The notion of utopia, first coined by Thomas More in order to name the unknown island that is described in his eponymous book, carries several meanings in our contemporary society. The term is nowadays used as a way of referring to both imaginary places and a particular kind of narrative (Vieira). Moreover, it gave birth to an academic discipline—utopian studies—which is based on the assumption that "utopia is not escapist nonsense but a significant part of human culture" (Levitas 1).

Within this field of study, the concept of utopia has been subject of debate. The different meanings attributed to the concept demonstrate not only how utopia has been defined over time, they also provide a basis for discussion because these definitions can be challenged (see Levitas; Vieira). Vieira shows us that utopia has traditionally been defined "with regard to one out of four characteristics" (Vieira 6),[2] namely: (1) "the content of the imagined society," meaning that the imagined society is being identified "with the idea of 'good place', a notion that should be discarded since it is based on a subjective conception of what is or is not desirable, and envisages utopia as being essentially in opposition to the prevailing ideology" (Vieira 6); (2) "the literary form into which the utopian imagination has been crystallized," a characteristic that has proven limiting "since it excludes a considerable number of texts that are clearly utopian in perspective but that do not rigorously comply with the narrative model established by More" (Vieira 6); (3) "the function of utopia," better known as the impact it has on the reader, "urging him to take action (a definition that should be rejected as it takes into account political utopia only)" (Vieira 6); (4) an attitude, or, "the desire for a better life, caused by a feeling of discontentment towards the society one lives in" (Vieira 6). Vieira argues that the latter meaning has proven most important because it concentrates on the distinguishing element of hope, and thus serves as

2 See Vieira; Levitas, the characteristics are highlighted and discussed by Vieira, but thoroughly analyzed in and based on Levitas' work.

"an aspiration to overcome all difficulties by the imagination of possible alternatives" (Vieira 7).

Critics have claimed that utopia is disappearing. In other words, it is observed that we are "witnessing a moment of cultural retreat, as well as of a vanishing of real political convictions" (Vieira 19). They even argue that the publication of various dystopias instead of utopias shows an "incapacity to put forward positive images of the future" (Vieira 19), and have come up with various arguments to strengthen their claim.

Two main arguments can be distinguished. First, some critics noted that Marxist ideology, which is highly influenced by utopian thought, lost ground, and secondly, it is suggested that utopia will disappear because we nowadays possess the means necessary to change society (Vieira 20). Although we do not "hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner … without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic," as Marx envisaged and suggested (Marx 160), the arguments put forward beg the question if utopia should always be seen as a political plan (Vieira). Vieira argues that it should not, and states that "utopia may well be nourished by a project, but its strength is not totally exhausted by it; it has an energy of its own, which outlives the blueprint" (Vieira 21). Consequently, it is argued that utopian thought might prove effective in tackling short-term problems, and that utopia, by establishing expectations for the near-future, should be seen as "a program for change and for a gradual betterment of the present" (Vieira 23).

4. Reaching the 'Good Place'

Raphael, the sailor who visited the island of Utopia and describes it in the second part of the book *Utopia*, tells us that reaching the island is both rewarding and nearly impossible. He explains that:

> The entry into the bay, occasioned by rocks on the one hand, and shallows on the other, is very dangerous. … The channel is known only to the natives, so that if any stranger should enter into the bay, without one of their pilots, he would run great danger of shipwreck; for even they themselves could not pass it safe, if some marks that are on the coast did not direct their way; and if these should be but a little shifted, any fleet that might come against them, how great soever it were, would be certainly lost. (More 28)

The European Commission, with its intention to close the gap, finds itself in a similar situation. In other words, it could be seen as the stranger that tries to navigate his way without any help, insofar as it is yet to be discovered how to close the gap. This perspective illustrates why it would be a mistake to assume that the gap could be easily closed, but it also indicates that perhaps the most promising way of moving forward would be to look for—and to act upon—signs that could steer the Commission in the right direction. However, it would be sensible to remember that the gap may never be entirely closed, because international organisations—such as the European Union—still do not meet the standards of accountability and participation that is expected of a domestic democracy (Keohane). Consequently, Keohane argues that it would be unfair "to demand too much of them" (Keohane 9).

This understanding helps us to see that the approach that is to be employed by the European Commission should be a careful one. Drawing on the nature of both notions discussed here—the concept of utopia and incrementalism as a political pattern—, we can construct such an approach, which in turn could be used as a direction for the remaining Member States. The concept of utopia shows us that, by focusing on the short-term perspective, we can in fact create a program for sociopolitical improvement (Vieira). And incrementalism might add a political layer to this program by making sure that small steps are taken only, this way potentially speeding up the process without losing the possibility of rectifying mistakes (Lindblom, *Muddling Through; Still Muddling*). This direction, which promotes gradual change and improvement, without causing antagonisms or polarisation, may well be the cautious approach that the European Commission is looking for.

5. Conclusion

In this contribution we have seen that "closing the gap" between promise and delivery provides an ongoing challenge for the European Commission. Furthermore, we observed that this challenge contributes to the difficulty of finding a new direction for the remaining Member States. As a way of taking on this challenge, it was argued that incrementalism, as a political pattern, and the concept of utopia could complement each other, thus providing a new direction. This direction, which is cautious in nature but might serve as a way of creating a concrete solution for a concrete problem, may also improve the Commission's chances of finding a collective way forward.

The direction outlined here may well be one of many ways to find a solution to the central problem. Moreover, we should consider that the direction might not be compatible with policies existing at the European level, which begs the question if such policies—aimed at "closing the gap," but open to doing so using small steps—even exist already. This is a critical point, because incrementalism is usually applied to existing policies and the concept of utopia can help to set horizons for the foreseeable future, but neither of these notions are capable of generating a starting point for change on their own. The nature of such a starting point, in the form of an existing policy or one that is yet to be created, must therefore also be examined with regard to two interrelated features: the strategy of the new or already existing policy, which should reveal if that policy is aimed at rigorous change or if it is open to change by small steps; and the applicability of the direction outlined here. These and other considerations could serve as a basis for further research, which is needed to navigate the Member States towards their collective future.

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5.

Zooming in and out: European cultural memory of the First World War in video games

Anastasiia Konobrodska

1. Introduction

Historical games are increasingly seen as tools able to not only shape the perception of history in players (Boyle et al.; Chapman, "It's Hard to Play"; Hammar), but also to teach it (Boyle et al.; Crabtree) and even to act as commemorative texts (Chapman, "It's Hard to Play"; Rughiniş and Matei). Games are able to challenge history as usually perceived. They offer an opportunity to experience important historical events through gameplay and historical reenactment, and consequently, based on play experience, they allow to (re)construct the established historical norms or to put them into new perspectives, thus offering new interpretations and connecting them to new modern contexts (Matei). Games, similarly to books and movies, shape the way their users see certain events and link them to the present (Chapman, "Privileging Form"; Hammar).

This article focuses on the First World War (henceforth abbreviated as WWI)—a conflict, which, harrowing as it was, became a major incentive for the European community to rethink the importance of establishing world peace (Cameron). It was a push towards the creation of supranational

institutions that would act as governors of that newly founded peace, and an important step towards the conception of the EU as we know it today (Cameron). Collective memory overall and the memory of WWI specifically is constantly reconstructed and redefined according to modern realities, and video games, like many other contemporary narratives, can impact and shape this process. WWI happened over a hundred years ago, and there is barely anyone alive who could describe it and remind the current generation about its horrors. In addition to countering that loss of memory, video games can actively contribute to its ongoing construction through experientiality (Caracciolo), which is further enhanced by the interactivity factor of video games.

Today, common European values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights (European Union) appear to be overshadowed by the current rise of populist nationalistic sentiments. Taking issues such as nationalism, Brexit, and the tensions between Russia and the EU into account, the long journey of the European project that began in the aftermath of WWI faces another challenge (Castells et al.). It is in this time, that the renegotiation and remembrance of the shared history of past losses, and historical justifications for certain decisions need to be reminded of no less than shared 'success stories' (Leggewie; Sierp), since they play a key role in maintaining a course towards a consolidated union and peaceful coexistence. WWI, therefore, acts prominently as a conflict that transcends the nation-based approach to history and thus has a potential to unite Europe around its shared memory. In the words of José Semprun, only "when our memories have been shared and brought together as one", will the European project prosper (Leggewie 218). Commemoration of forgotten aspects of war through material culture or, as described here, through play activity, contributes greatly to that goal. Now more than ever, a "mutual recognition of all the members' identities and of their shared values" (Speekenbrink 258) needs to be clearly articulated in the common European narrative in order for the nations to remain united against exclusion, violence and the horrors of war. Video games can act as a way to (re)negotiate European memory, to update cultural imaginaries, and to redefine the developmental direction of the European Union.

When it comes to video games about WWI, it is extremely rare for developers to put a player in a virtual body of an individual soldier in the trenches, or a civilian, and tell their stories (Chapman, "It's Hard to Play" 5). Game

genres that use WWI as their setting are usually focusing on strategies (*Toy Soldiers*, Xbox Game Studios; *Supreme Ruler: The Great War*, BattleGoat Studios), flight simulators (*Wings of Glory*, Origin Systems; *Red Baron*, Dynamix; *Snoopy Flying Ace*, Smart Bomb Interactive) and an occasional alternative history title (*NecroVision*, The Farm 51), save for a few notable exceptions. It is those exceptions that might be seen as going beyond WWI as an entertaining backdrop for gameplay, to actually act as commemorative, thought-provoking texts (Chapman, "It's Hard to Play"; Matei). The three games that I chose as case studies for this paper are *Battlefield 1* (EA DICE), *Valiant Hearts: The Great War* (Ubisoft Montpellier) and *11-11: Memories Retold* (DigixArt), which all belong to different genres and vary greatly in gameplay styles, but all tackle the topics of individual soldiers' and civilians' stories in WWI.

In this contribution, I build upon the methodology of Arjoranta, who applied selected narrative theories in a close reading of WWI video games, and conclusions of Chapman ("Privileging Form"; "It's Hard to Play"), who outlined a gap in research of historical video games—namely the lack of examination of the tools and tricks that game designers apply to historical video games to convey emotions or values. So rather than evaluating games merely on historical accuracy, which is done more often than not in recent academia, Chapman ("Privileging Form"; "It's Hard to Play") suggests shifting the focus to the techniques and inner workings of the game—a largely unexplored territory which I will look into in order to answer the following general research question: How do historical video games contribute to the creation or update of a shared European memory of WWI?

As mentioned before, instead of proving that video games possess learning and teaching potential, and assessing historical accuracy, this paper attempts an in-depth, close look at two specific narrative features, namely characters and spaces, that are used in the three selected video games, in order to recognize possible tendencies and methods developers use to (re) construct, highlight or shape the shared (European) memory of WWI. Both space and characters are crucial features within the structure of (interactive) narratives. The importance of space in video games was highlighted by Aarseth, who noted that "[the] defining element in computer games is spatiality" (Aarseth 153). Playable characters, on the other hand, define the point of view of the player, or focalisation. This, in turn, defines the kind of emotional response (Järvinen) as well as level of immersion a player experiences with regard to what is happening on the screen, with immersion

being recognized as one of the most desirable effects of play activity (Christou; Jennett et al.).

Some of the sub-questions addressed further in the following include:

- How does the choice of the first-person/third-person view and other changes of focalisation influence the emotional impact of the selected games?
- Taking into consideration the concept of *lieux de mémoire* (Nora), what locations, events, notions or items do the case-studies commonly focus on?
- Based on the understanding of strategic versus emotional conceptions of space (Ryan, "Emotional and Strategic"), how do the games in case studies utilize space during gameplay and how does it add to the general premise of the games as commemorative texts?

Furthermore, this paper can set the basis for future empirical research into what effect can historical video games have on the perception of shared history and how historical video games can contribute to the formation and renegotiation of transnational memory of WWI (or other significant events).

Firstly, I will outline the academic debate surrounding WWI and video games, after which I will introduce the three selected games, and dive into the narrative tools they utilise in order to provoke an emotional response from the player. Finally, the main points will be summarised in the conclusion.

2. Gaming the War: An overview of the debate

A detailed analysis of the potential of historical games to effectively represent and teach history is not new to academia. Metzger and Paxton highlighted the unmatched ability of video games to represent history with different goals, interests or player response strategies in mind. Games (both educationally-oriented and commercial ones) are also constantly investigated in academia as tools for immersive learning in and outside classrooms (Turkay and Adinolf; Boyle et al.), as well as cultural tools that broaden players' general worldview, for instance by exposing and countering historically established hegemonies (Hammar). In addition to Hammar, others, such as Pötzsch and Šisler, have tapped into the question of how games can portray common (cultural) memory.

Given the vast number of video games using the Second World War (henceforth abbreviated as WWII) as their background, the amount of scholarly work investigating them is considerably larger. However, following the analysis, it became evident that WWII games put more emphasis on exhilarating action and historical accuracy of tech and weaponry, highlighting the "fun" part of the war. "For Homo Ludens [...], war is the great game and World War II was the greatest game of them all" (Fergusson par. 1), which leads to backgrounding the commemorative purpose. At the same time, video games surrounding WWI (especially outside the most commonly used genres of strategy and flight simulators) stood out by consciously foregrounding an articulate message of commemoration more often (Chapman, "Privileging Form"; "It's Hard to Play"; Hern). Therefore, specifically for this paper, the main interest is in the scholarly work on WWI and its memory in the social-constructivist meaning of the word, which, according to Rigney, signifies the conception of memory as a fluid notion which is constantly updated by, among other things, shared narratives, rather than memory as a given from the past.

The commemorative way of framing the Great War has many reasons. First of all, the prominence of WWII, as opposed to WWI, is evident not only in games but in the European commemoration "routine" and shared memory. Similar reasons that make WWI difficult for all Europe to accept as common shared memory (Leggewie), also make it a difficult topic for a video game. Among such reasons is the absence of clear-cut distinction between the "good guys" and the "bad guys", meaning no defined enemy to fight against and no victory to celebrate. Gamifying WWI is particularly difficult due to fear of trivialization of complicated politically-sensitive subjects (Hern), and due to the specific nature of ground combat, in general, which almost completely nullified the importance of combat skill and therefore does not provide "fun" game material the way WWII does (Chapman, "It's Hard to Play"; Wackerfuss). At the same time, the limitations in the process of making WWI into a thrill-inducing shooter make it perfect for conveying deeper cultural meaning, while also shaping and transforming the shared European memory of the war.

It is, therefore, clear that historical video games are a trove of knowledge, but it is also evident that there is a gap in academia when it comes to a close reading of historical games. Partly, it is due to the fact that the game development industry is relatively young, and most techniques are not categorised

yet, although attempts were made (Björk and Holopainen). Therefore, this paper contributes to the existing scholarship, such as the work of Arjoranta, that attempts a close reading of WWI games with regard to the portrayal and update of shared European cultural memory.

3. Three case studies

While selecting case studies, certain WWI games were excluded from the analysis, such as the following: 1) Strategies, offering a rather detached and dehumanised view of the war (Uricchio); 2) Games that feature WWI only episodically, e.g., *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* (Ubisoft Quebec) or *Darkest of Days* (8monkey Labs); 3) Games that offer a fictional view of the war or offer a "what if" scenario; 4) Multiplayer or team-based competition games like *Verdun* (M2H & Blackmill Games) or *Tannenberg* (M2H & Blackmill Games), which were not taken into consideration for purposes of feasibility, in order to make the selection of case-studies more narratively unified. For that same reason, the multiplayer mode of *Battlefield 1* (EA DICE) is not taken into consideration in this paper. The downside of such an approach is that only a very narrow, artificially selected sample of games is discussed. However the present analysis can be further tested and expanded in its scope in further research by including more examples of commemorative historical games.

Looking at the paratext surrounding the selected games, there is a clear attempt to foreground their commemorative purpose. First of all, the games were released within a short timeframe, with *Valiant Hearts: The Great War* coming out on the centenary of the war's outbreak, and *11-11: Memories Retold* on the centenary of the war's end, with *Battlefield 1* in the middle. Secondly, the goal of commemoration was clearly articulated by the media and the developers of *Valiant Hearts*[1] and *11-11*[2] in marketing campaigns as well as interviews and other promotional activities (Gonzalez; Europeana; Kent). While the developers of *Battlefield 1* were cautious about claiming the memorial purpose of their game,[3] the pre-release criticism of the game was

1 "Ubisoft and Apocalypse join together to commemorate World War I in their new game *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*" (Gonzalez par. 1).

2 "[*11-11: Memories Retold*] combines a specific art style, two crossing paths, storytelling without the use of gun combat, and the inclusion of historical context, into a beautiful form of gaming as remembrance" (Europeana par. 3).

3 "We're not making a documentary on The Great War" (Hern par. 8).

primarily focused on the fact it puts WWI history into first-person shooter genre, which is unconventional for commemoration purposes (Hern; Muncy).[4]

The three chosen games were examined by means of watching complete playthrough videos with or without the player's commentary (Jesse Cox; MKIceAndFire; wolftooth), *Battlefield 1* and *Valiant Hearts* were additionally played by me, however not in their entirety.

Described shortly, *Battlefield 1* is an FPS (first-person shooter) game—one of the instalments of a long-standing *Battlefield* franchise that is mostly known for its multiplayer mode but also features a single-player campaign. While its single-player mode has not been particularly special in previous instalments, the story mode of *Battlefield 1* was hailed as one of the most unique and most successful representations of WWI in the FPS genre (Chapman, "It's Hard to Play"; White).

Very different from *Battlefield 1*, another selected game is *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*. It is a narrative-driven side-scrolling adventure game with puzzle elements and a distinct art-style similar to that of a graphic novel (Gonzalez). Although the action spans the whole frontline in France and Belgium and features many well-known historical locations, the main focus in the game is on its playable characters and the way they survive (or not) the war, how it influences them and their relationships, and how they deal with loss (Gonzalez par. 3; Sawula par. 9–10).

The third video game chosen for the purposes of this paper is *11-11: Memories Retold*. It differs from the previous two in that it is a comparatively low-budget independently developed game, as opposed to the other two games. The game fits the genre of puzzle and exploration. It offers a more pacifist perspective to war since none of the characters picks up a gun or kills during the game story. The game has a unique art style—inspired by Impressionist artists such as Monet, which in itself already delivers a powerful message of overwhelming uncertainty and fluidity of war (Kent par. 17).

4 "[The] announcement of Battlefield's [WWI] setting was met with a certain amount of unease" (Hern par. 7). "This [WWI] might sound like an exciting new frontier for the genre, but there's a reason WW1 has long been no-man's land for developers: It was a quagmire of death and disease that turned strategy into slaughter, with no handy narrative of heroism to layer gameplay atop" (Muncy par. 2).

3.1. Characters

When taking a closer look at the games, the single-player mode in *Battlefield 1* serves as a means of delivering awareness of WWI. The focus of each episode is always on a single playable character gradually revealing their stories to the audience with occasional snippets of their inner emotions—which enhances empathy in the player by way of giving 'access' to the character (Smith). Furthermore, it touches the subjects of camaraderie, fear and sacrifice during a conflict, which players can easily identify with, thus becoming able to enact the world within the game.[5] The introduction sequence of *Battlefield 1*, however, stands out among the other missions in that it introduces the player to every playable character through a short sequence shown after each character perishes in battle—as the camera view "escapes" the body of a soldier, the name and dates of birth and death are shown, after which the camera moves the player into a body of the next soldier, who inevitably dies too. This device had not been applied in wargames before, aside from a similar mechanic in *Battlefield 2* (EA Digital Illusions CE).

It is common within the genre for the "one man army" main character to tackle all the objectives of the game from start to finish, dealing with hordes of enemies in the process, (often) without a scratch, growing and gaining new skills and new powerful weapons throughout the process. Such portrayal is especially evident in early WWII games, such as *Medal of Honor* (DreamWorks Interactive). Opposing that, the opening sequence of *Battlefield 1* sets a tone of disempowerment—since it is impossible to survive[6]—and detachment, since death comes for all no matter the skill or effort a player puts into controlling the character.

The intro mission is a perfect example of what Arjoranta described with regard to the transition of focalisation from the first-person to third-person view as a way of demonstrating disengagement—and it is the first instance of the 'zooming in and out' techniques that this paper focuses on. Such a

5 Proponents of enactivism believe that narrative artefacts, such as video games, literature and film, not only convey emotions, but also form and reform the cultural context of shared beliefs and morals within society (Caracciolo, *Narrative* 371). Since the narratives are never created in the void free of societal norms, they repeatedly retain the qualities that are affirmed within the context and the time of their creation, which in turn makes the consumers of narrative use them in order to "make sense of the world around [them]" (Caracciolo, *Narrative* 371).

6 If a player-controlled character does not die because of loss of hitpoints, the game will automatically kill them after a certain amount of time anyway.

technique is not only strong from a narrative point of view, but also perfectly represents the tragic collective image and popular memory of WWI as a mindless slaughter, even though in order to achieve it, the game breaks the core feeling of immersion and thus brings the message of loss of control to a player who is used to always being in charge (Chapman, "It's Hard to Play" 2). Even though later missions zoom into more personal stories, the introduction sets the tone to the whole game: the feeling that a player might lose the character at any moment remains strong. All in all, unlike most FPS video games, *Battlefield 1* does not focus on immersion and sole character development, but rather alternates between the state of zooming into the narrative (immersion) and zooming out, during moments of player disengagement (as in the introduction mission) in order to provoke a powerful emotional response. At the same time, the later chapters of the single-player additionally zoom out from the national to the transnational dimensions of WWI, allowing the player to engage with the stories of representatives of various nationalities.

Zooming out from a national perspective while at the same time highlighting civilian tragedy is what the second game (*Valiant Hearts*) does well in its introduction. From the very first minutes, the player is thrown into the heartbreaking realities of war—the German immigrant Karl is sent away from France, and his father-in-law Emile is mobilised into the army as the war begins, making them fight on the opposite sides. Marie—Karl's wife and Emile's daughter—is left alone in the village, caring for her infant son. These very first few minutes are already emotionally engaging to the player in that they provoke sympathy, since one of the most basic bricks that build up the society—the family—is immediately threatened. Additionally, the historical bond between the French and German nations at war is shown through the in-game family bonds.

Overall, the tendency in each of the games is to make every character belong to a different nation. In *Battlefield 1*, for instance, only the introduction features multiple soldiers of the same nationality, followed by the five war stories with protagonists from the UK, the USA, Italy, Australia and the Ottoman Empire. The same applies to *Valiant Hearts,* where despite the majority of action happening in France or Belgium, only one of the playable protagonists—Emile—is French, while other characters include a Belgian nurse, a German soldier, a German dog, and an American. In the case of *11-11*, protagonists also belong to two different nationalities—Canadian and

German. Additionally, in the story background all three games extensively feature Indian regiments that fought for the British army. By not centring the narrative around a single nationality and choosing to zoom out to the transnational dimensions, the worldwide nature of WWI is emphasised. Being able to play as Australian and Canadian, as well as German or French, shows that the war had a far-reaching impact. In *Battlefield 1*, specifically, the action is spread not only among different nationalities but also different battlefields. As a result of such a wide reach, the player engages with different national perspectives on WWI. Being thrown into the harsh realities of death and separation of characters from different nations right from the very beginning, the player is put into a similar state of loss and disorientation as experienced by the soldiers (or civilians) that they are observing or are in control of, which can be described as "sitting in the ashes" with them (Bartelson par. 7)—and thus feeling and empathising with the same pain as they suffered, through the experientiality of a digital narrative that the player is consuming a hundred years later.

3.2. Space

When it comes to the representation of space, one tendency is shared by all three games—they all at some point put the characters into recognizable, historically significant battles and circumstances: Verdun (*Valiant Hearts*), Somme (*Valiant Hearts*), Ypres (*Valiant Hearts*), Gallipoli (*Battlefield 1*) and around the Western Front overall (*Valiant Hearts, Battlefield 1, 11-11*) etc. The importance of Verdun within European collective memory was highlighted by François Hollande and Angela Merkel during the commemoration ceremony marking 100 years since the battle, when they stressed the dangers of nationalist sentiments and promoted European unity (Müller). Müller claims, however, that while an event like the battle of Verdun is an important *lieu de mémoire* with commemorative rituals centred around it, the European cultural memory cannot be limited to it since Verdun "[symbolises] the old axis of Franco-German partnership and cannot represent ways of commemoration in a new Europe nor any kind of European memory" (Müller par.10). Following this thought, the games tend to zoom out beyond the Franco-German relationship and put the characters (and through them, the players) into other worldwide recognized turning points of WWI. In general, if we consider *lieux de mémoire* as "a maximum amount of meaning

in a minimum number of signs" (Nora qtd. in Rigney 18)—both *Battlefield 1* and *Valiant Hearts* are attempting the opposite—to cover as much ground as possible through variety in terms of characters and locations.

One of the most prominent spatial zooming out moments in *Battlefield 1* happens when the game shifts control from the soldier character to a message-carrying pigeon, as it flies above the battlefield, above the dying people surrounded by war action. This moment is very different from the rest of the missions partly due to the calm flight of the bird as opposed to the frantic fighting, and partly because of the element of surprise in the gameplay change. In this instance, the game zooms out and breaks the immersion in favour of the memory narrative. It makes a player look at the game space differently and it creates a feeling that the player is not the only one in the narrative who is struggling at that moment—the war is everywhere. In this situation, a pigeon acts as the deputy focalizer. Since focalisation determines how the player perceives the world (Allison 2), the role of deputy focalizer in this situation would be to bring the player's fictional consciousness into a new body to radically change the perception and by doing so increase believability and immersion into the game world rather than the game narrative as such (Caracciolo122). "People read [and play] for the plot and not for the map" (Ryan, "Cognitive Maps" 138), which means that the spatiality of certain games might be left out from the player's attention, who is preoccupied with the story. The pigeon sequence, in turn, brings volume to the world at war, that is otherwise zoomed in on the player character only. Interestingly enough, a very similar sequence of controlling a pigeon in its relaxing, almost peaceful flight appears in *11-11: Memories Retold* as well.

While *Battlefield 1* chooses to show the horrors of war from the pigeon's view, the bird sequences in *11-11*, hence the lack of details in its Impressionism-inspired art style, does the opposite and makes the player forget for a moment that there is an ongoing war down there at all, even as the bird flies above the battlefield, passes the group of planes or a zeppelin. In both games, but especially in the case of *11-11,* the pigeon sequence could be said to invoke impartiality—since the bird flies back and forth between the German and the Canadian soldiers (moreover, the first time it flies away of its own volition), it knows no sides of war, it overcomes the nationalistic divide in what appears to be a reminder and a bridge between the sides at war, since, in the end, they are equally trapped inside a conflict they did not want and that they do not understand.

The pigeon sequences in both games invoke a moment of peace among the chaos. The change of pace, a changing point of view—zoomed-out flight—induces the state of calmness and reflection (Rughiniş and Matei 629) as well as expands on the perception of the game world by the player, reminding them about the "map" behind the plot (Caracciolo). Notably, both games that feature pigeon sequences do not feature an in-game full-screen map that a player could look at. *11-11* also uses a cat as a deputy focalizer. The bird's view, arguably, achieves its goal more effectively exactly because it is a look from afar, radically different from what a human character would be able to observe.

When it comes to particularities within the scenes shown to a player, *Battlefield 1* is the most realistic in terms of technical graphics quality and considering that it is largely open and fully 3D, players get a chance to become mesmerised with the breathtaking, photorealistic views. In the course of the game, however, aside from the pigeon flight sequence, the moments of calmness and quiet that allow the player to just appreciate or explore the surroundings are very scarce, which is characteristic of the circumstances playable characters find themselves in. Nevertheless, this impacts the potential for commemoration in-game, since in most cases the player is not given enough time to take a moment and observe the circumstances they are in (Rughiniş and Matei 633). This also impacts the way in which the player perceives space, which I will discuss within the framework of space conceptions suggested by Ryan ("Emotional and Strategic"). The emotional conception of space implies affectionate and feelings-based response from a player, like awe or emotional connection to it, while the strategic conception means that space is seen as "a way to reach goals" (Ryan, "Emotional and Strategic" 106) and tackle objectives, whereas the author compares it to a chessboard. Looked at from this perspective, the landscapes of *Battlefield 1* are largely strategic. The opportunities for cover from enemy fire, hiding spots, fully destructible surroundings and loot often come before the potential emotional influence the locations might carry.[7] Contrary to *Battlefield 1*, *11-11* puts less emphasis on the realistic appearance of the surroundings and more on the circumstances of the characters, which is also reflected, as was mentioned, in its fluid graphic style. The overall details are smudged and blurred, so the narration and story development of the characters play a bigger part in provoking an emotional response from a player than the geography of the game.

7 Although sneaking through the piles of bodies in the trenches, during one of the missions, does bring the emotional image of "soldiers in the trenches" across very vividly.

Valiant Hearts takes a completely different approach to space. With its distinct art-style, it cannot claim authenticity and photorealism the way *Battlefield 1* does, but it is more vivid and recognizable than the world of *11-11: Memories Retold*. Since it is a side-scrolling adventure puzzle, all the visited locations are meticulously planned as labyrinths of possibilities, where a player has to figure out the sequence and order of actions to perform in order to move further. Although the space within the game is strategically planned and thus the first conclusion might be that it is more strategic than emotional, there are frequent moments in the story that would contradict this. For example, moving through the map, the players encounter NPCs (non-player characters) who are fulfilling their role at the front, talking, cooking, sleeping, guarding or, in some cases, being wounded or dying, attacking or fleeing. In addition to people populating it, the world of the game itself is filled with details and particularities. The game, in most cases, does not rush a player to solve the puzzle at hand and move ahead, so there is a possibility to just stand in the game and observe the surroundings—be it a prisoner camp, a city or a battlefield. Furthermore, there are instances when the camera zooms further away from the characters, while in movement, and reduces the urgency of having to control the characters to just moving forward, it draws attention to the background—which can be a burning battlefield, piles of dead bodies or a view of a beautiful city untouched by war. Similarly to the flight sequences in *11-11* and *Battlefield 1*, such zooming out technique breaks the immediate immersion in order to show the context in which the specific character stories take place. In this way, *Valiant Hearts* combines the strategic approach to space when it comes to closed mission-related locations, and a beautiful, emotionally charged backdrop that is further emphasised by the camera angle change in crucial moments and by the lack of urgency for player input.

As already pointed out regarding the pigeon sequence, such zooming out (or use of a deputy focalizer in the case of pigeons) lets the player see the "map" beyond the story (Caracciolo). The same is accomplished in the intro mission of *Battlefield 1* especially and also in the following five missions of the game, when the camera zooms out as the character dies, distancing the player. Such an approach effectively reminds about the context of war, the immediate realities or consequences that are not normally thought of during the uninterrupted walkthrough.

4. Conclusion

Unlike many WWII-themed games, the three selected games do not try to valorize the war, make it fun or heroic. They approach WWI as a special period in history that requires portrayal strategies different from those used for WWII. The key zooming in and out strategies include:

- Highlighting transnational dimensions of the war by putting the player in control of war participants of different nationalities as opposed to one sole protagonist.
- Using European *lieux de mémoire* as reference points for the player to enhance the emotional impact of in-game space, but also expanding the scope to less-known battlefields.
- Combining immersion with an intermittent change of focalisation, where by zooming or fading away from the dead characters, feelings of disengagement, disassociation and disempowerment are created, while by using deputy focalizors, the perspective is altered either to remind about the specific context of the character or to provide a moment of reflection.

By following the aforementioned strategies, the discussed video games promote the construction of a shared transnational memory of WWI.

It has been established that the paratext surrounding the games emphasized the role of games as narrative artefacts fulfilling a commemorative function. All three games were created in the timeframe when the centenary events commemorating WWI were held, and two out of three games (*Valiant Hearts* and *11-11*) openly positioned themselves as memorial games, while *Battlefield 1* was closely observed and criticised by the media before its release due to the sensitivity of the topic at hand (for example in Hern; Muncy).

The camera work is also used to bring dimension to the landscape, triggering players to enact the world as they know it within the game space through the showcase of *lieux de mémoire,* recognizable architecture or situations that may be familiar to players through history lessons as well as life experience. The same techniques contribute to the perception of space as emotional or strategic. For example, *Valiant Hearts* is mostly a puzzle labyrinth, but there are moments when the background stands out more prominently and the urge for character control is reduced, so that the player can

pay attention to their surroundings. *Battlefield 1*, however, while having vast immersive and realistic landscapes, rarely provides time for a player to admire it since the whole map is filled with foes to eliminate, covers to use for safety and guns to loot. All three case studies go beyond the usually recognized cultural memory to build and expand on it.

Despite the fact that prominent consequences of war, such as civilian casualties, friendly fire or psychological post-war trauma are still largely omitted or underrepresented (with the exception of *Valiant Hearts* that makes a fair attempt at showing how gruesome the war can become), the games do make it clear that there is no room for heroics or foolish bravery at war. The message of war being exhilarating that is so often seen in WWII games is almost completely absent in the case studies.

The overall conclusion is that through zooming in and out on characters and locations, the three selected games contribute to the shared European incentive of "the mutual recognition of all the members' identities and of their shared values" (Speekenbrink 258) by encouraging the player to experience WWI from different angles and from a variety of perspectives, as opposed to the perspective of one single soldier or one single nation.

It was already highlighted that there is a lack in scholarship when it comes to the close reading of games with the aim to identify their role in the renegotiation and update of shared memory and cultural imaginaries. This work contributes to and expands on the scholarship that takes a close look at specific video game narratives of WWI to identify the techniques they use to induce a meaningful player response. Although the selection of case studies for this paper is quite narrow, it did provide meaningful conclusions, and the inclusion of more commemorative games can be the purpose of further work. For instance, further application of the "zooming in and out" template could be attempted on games on WWI that belong to a different genre or games that centre around a different time period such as WWII or the Cold War. Furthermore, the present paper can serve as a starting point to expand the comparison between the commemoration of WWI and WWII in video games. Finally, this paper sets the basis for further in-depth investigation of the shaping and re-shaping of a shared European memory of WWI through video game narratives. All in all, it is evident that video games about WWI have the capacity to influence the perception of historical events, and transpose it to modern realities through the experientiality inherent to interactive narratives.

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6.

Even the Dead Pay their Bills. The Conflict of Externality in Bryan Fuller's Television Series *Dead Like Me*

Christa Lankhaar

1. After Life

"There is no more outside, no space for expansion [...] no 'out' or 'away'," states David Wood in his *Ethics and Politics after Deconstruction*, from 2005, in which he discusses the problem of the loss of externality (172). As Wood's quote introduces, externality entails the idea that there is something external or other than the here and now or the current subject. Commonly identified externalities are the sea, the future or an afterlife. Contemporary environmental critics such as David Wood have taken an interest in discourses of externality, especially in relation to the Anthropocene, that is, the concept that we live in an era in which human activity is the dominant influence on the environment ("Anthropocene"). While (political and environmental) discourse is often constructed around the idea of the future, next generations and options beyond the now, environmental critics such as Wood, and Timothy Clark in his 2008 essay "Towards A Deconstructive Environmental Criticism," investigate the potential loss of externality, meaning that there is nothing outside or external. With this, they question the existing discourses that revolve around the idea that there is an externality

and claim, instead, that nothing exists beyond the now and that there is only the Anthropocene and its present consequences.

A contemporary television series has taken this discussion around externality and its loss as a focus point. *Dead Like Me* is created by Bryan Fuller and ran from 2003 until 2004 on American television. The *International Movie Database* (*IMDB*) introduces *Dead Like Me* as "a new series about life after life" ("Dead Like Me"). The series revolves around Georgia 'George' Lass, who is an unhappy eighteen-year-old college drop-out who achieves nothing in life, to the great frustration of her parents. However, in the first episode, while she has finally obtained a job in filing, she is killed in broad daylight by a toilet seat that inadvertently attached itself from a re-entering space station. George does not find herself in the traditional afterlife but is awakened as a grim reaper with the duty of guiding the souls of recently deceased people to their so-called final destination. The situation she finds herself in is simply the same physical space which she supposedly stepped out from, with the same bureaucratic structures, the same duties and the same people. As *IMDB* summarises the gist of the series: even "grim reapers [...] don't get a free ride in death as they must hold down regular jobs along with their death duties" ("Dead Like Me"). While George rebels against this situation at first, and against the rules that the non-afterlife entails, the series also contains a coming-of-age subplot in which George gradually integrates into her new life. This paper will explore how *Dead Like Me* questions the concept of externality through its Anthropocene setting that challenges the existence of any post-society, and how the series engages in a complex dialogue with adjoining narratives of progress, linear time and the necessity of 'moving on'.

2. The Loss of Externality

The loss of externality is often presented as a consequence of the Anthropocene era. The Anthropocene is not only a scientific term to indicate how humans have become such a powerful geological force that humankind brought about an entire new geological epoch, but has become a far broader cultural concept that has all sorts of implications on our conventional understanding of time, nature, processes and life in general (Trischler 310, 318). As Helmuth Trischler shows, the Anthropocene, for one, involves an end to the differentiation between nature and society (318). In the Anthropocene the progression of life on earth is not affected by a natural force but is the result of human action; life is defined by human society and its enterprises (Trischler 318). The Anthropocene alters existing conceptions of life, the earth and the space we live in and collapses the conventional distinction between nature and society as all has become a single, anthropogenic force. Thus, there is no longer a non-human element such as nature. Not only is there no externality through nature, but researchers such as Donna Haraway have even identified the Anthropocene as a Capitalocene, suggesting that the Anthropocene is connected to and driven by capitalism (Trischler 320; Haraway 159). This entails that there is nothing beyond a capitalist society but that all takes place within this human socio-economic system.

Claire Colebrook dissects what the Anthropocene means to ideas of future, time and nature. She discusses Bruno Latour's claims on the Anthropocene; according to Latour, "awareness of the Anthropocene closes down the modern conception of the infinite universe, drawing us back once again to the parochial, limited, and exhausted earth" (Colebrook 2). Instead of the conception that life entails endless possibilities, futures and alternatives, in the Anthropocene we are earthbound, and life becomes intertwined, like a giant organism that works as one closed circuit (Colebrook 2). In this, states Latour, "the 'universe' is no longer a horizon of infinite possibility where we are morally compelled to act 'as if' the laws of reason might one day yield a fully rational existence, freed from all pathology" (Colebrook 2). Earth has instead become something bounded and limited. These ideas of Latour line up with David Wood's loss of externality, for in the Anthropocene there is no direct externality, no infinite universe or anything outside of the closed earthbound circuit. Donna Haraway equally emphasises this by renaming the Anthropocene "the Chthulucene[1]—past, present, and to come" (161), collapsing all time frames into one, namely the current state of the world which is the Anthropocene.

Even the externality of the future has become contested in the Anthropocene, as Timothy Clark shows. There is no future to come, but many futures catch up with us and "the primary human reality is becoming more

1 Donna Haraway adds: "these real and possible timespaces are not named after SF writer H.P. Lovecraft's misogynist racial-nightmare monster Cthulhu (note spelling difference), but rather after the diverse earth-wide tentacular powers and forces and collected things with names like Naga, Gaia, Tangaroa (burst from water-full Papa), Terra, Haniyasu-hime, Spider Woman, Pachamama, Oya, Gorgo, Raven, A'akuluujjusi, and many many more" (160). Thus, her Chthulucene collapses all into one interconnected organism.

and more a realm of inherited and accumulating accidents, after-effects and long term repercussions" in the present (48). The loss of externality moreover entails that nothing goes away but that everything has internal consequences. Ulrich Beck exemplifies this by arguing how this realisation that all is one geological force and that nature is merely a constructed Other, entails that we now live in a "*fabricated uncertainty* within our civilization [which is full of] risk, danger, side effects, insurability, individualization and globalization" (1). In the Anthropocene there are dangers and risks which human actions itself created as there is only the now and no alternative plan or an 'away.'

Literature has also addressed these ideas of the Anthropocene and the loss of externality. Timothy Clark's research shows how in Will Self's "The North London Book of the Dead," the dead do not disappear but live on in another part of London. Death is no longer an externality but "a meaningless recycling scheme," and this afterlife "merely collapses life and death upon each other as part of the same depthless and insignificant conveyor belt or moving walkway" (Clark 60). Thus, Self suggests that in the Anthropocene even the externality of death comes to an end. As all these studies reveal**,** the loss of externality is essentially a problem of the Anthropocene which entails that we live in a material finite world dominated by our human (capitalist) society and materiality. This material finite is a closed circuit in which there is no Other such as nature, or something outside of this existence. Moreover, this loss of externality appears to have certain side-effects, as nothing can leave the circuit and we now live in a fabricated uncertainty where every action has consequences. The loss of externality can, as Will Self supposes, even deny the externality of death and this is what the plot of Bryan Fuller's *Dead Like Me* essentially centres on.

3. Miscalculations

Dead Like Me touches upon some of these ecological arguments that environmental criticism connects to the loss of externality, specifically the ideas of unpredictability and unintended consequences in the Anthropocene. Timothy Clark extends Beck's argument of a world risk society, showing how the end of externality must be accompanied by an awareness of the unintended consequences that the closed material circuit of the Anthropocene brings about. As there is no outside or away, "the consequences of human action do not go away [but] they build up with destructive effects in the air

and the sea" (Clark 48). This build-up of "waste dumped into the sea and the atmosphere does not conveniently disappear but sets off an unpredictable sequence of consequences" (Clarke 49). Embedded in these unintended consequences are the elements of unpredictability and (mis)calculation. As Jacques Derrida claims, quoted by David Wood, in the present day we cannot regard the future as something that is entirely predictable anymore. Derrida states: we "cannot calculate everything, predict and program all that is coming [...] and this limit to calculability is also, for a finite being, the condition of praxis, decision, action and responsibility" (qtd. in Wood 277). In light of this incalculable element of the future and future consequences of the now, we need to redefine our relation to the future, which essentially means that we on the one hand take responsibility for the calculable future, but, more importantly, cultivate an awareness of the unpredictable "by expecting the unexpected or at least anticipating *that* the unexpected will happen" and that not everything can be calculated (Wood 282, 281).

Dead Like Me features some these arguments through the circumstances of George's death. She is killed by a stray toilet seat from Mir, the Russian space station, which is an inadvertent consequence of the human space endeavour. The moment of her death is described as follows:

> The sun was shining, the sky was blue and the Russian space agency was de-orbiting the Earth. There was a *miscalculation* in the density of the ionosphere or something like that. It was *supposed to* fall in the Pacific but a few pieces got to the West Coast, including the seat of an 0-G [zero gravity] toilet. ("Pilot" 00:13:42–00:14:05, emphasis added)

The circumstances of her death touch base with both the element of miscalculation and that of unintended consequences. Firstly, the scientists of the Mir depend on the calculability of their landing, yet ultimately, not all can be predicted and the effects of this miscalculation are deadly. Moreover, the toilet seat deviating from the calculated route may be an unintended consequence, yet as there is not outside, no externality, it does not merely disappear without a consequence; its presence sets an unintended chain of events into motion and it causes the death of someone who, ironically, was not at all involved in the human space enterprise in the first place.

As a reminder of the material implications of her death, George is repeatedly referred to as "The Toilet Seat Girl" or simply "Toilet Seat" by other

reapers in the series ("Pilot" 00:30:39–00:30:40, 00:38:18–00:35:19). Moreover, her death is not the only death that can be understood in the context of the Anthropocene and the loss of externality. The death of her fellow reaper Mason exemplifies the material finite state of the world. He dies when drilling a hole into his head in pursuit of something beyond his present material state of life, namely a permanent high ("Dead Girl Walking"). Mason quite literally wanted to extend his mind to something outside the current situation, yet only met the material consequences of drilling into his head in this material finite reality. "Dead like me" touches base with environmental critique by highlighting the unintended but highly present consequences of human activity in a materially finite world. Above all, the show critically engages with society's metanarratives about externality, linear time and (post-)society.

4. The Recycled Dead

The most obvious instance of the loss of externality is expressed through the post-death situation of George and the other grim reapers. As David Wood illustrates, the loss of externality entails that "we are living on a Moebius strip[2] in which the symbolic other side is actually the same surface and we will meet it again around the corner" (172). While our entire understanding is founded on the ideas of linear time and progress and that something can move beyond or away, that externality and linearity are no longer available on the Moebius strip (Wood 172–73). Such a closed system is exactly what George finds herself in after death. When George dies, she asks Rube, her guide and future boss: "so what's next? Onward or upward?" with which she means a heaven or other traditional afterlife and he answers: "onward, not upward [...] you, little dead girl, are gonna be a grim reaper!" ("Pilot" 00:24:10–00:25:26). However, this 'onwards' is not a linear progression but ultimately the idea of the Moebius strip, as George remains where she always been instead of progressing to an

2 The Moebius strip is a "topological space attained by starting with a (closed) rectangle, endowed with the 'usual' topology, and identifying two opposite edges point by point with each other, so that each vertex gets identified with the one diagonally across. This 'abstract Moebius strip' serves in topology as the canonical example of a nonorientable manifold" (Schwartz 890). This means that the path on a Moebius strip always ends where it started and there is no direct spatial externality. The Moebius strip can be visualised as follows: "a paper rectangle that is sufficiently long and narrow is bent and twisted so that its two shorter edges can be glued together in the required manner"; this physical Moebius model is equally nonorientable (Schwartz 890).

external space. This new existence has nothing to do with traditional afterlife ideas; Rube tells her to "just say goodbye to this life before saying hello to the next", but when George asks: "what do you mean, 'the next one'? [...] Am I being *reincarnated* or something?", Rube merely replies: "don't be an ass" ("Pilot" 00:19:09–00:19:17, emphasis added). As opposed to the idea of a religious afterlife, George ends up in the same material space that she just left, with the same people, the same duties and without any spiritual notions accompanying this material reincarnation: "swear to God! I was born again. But not in a creepy, religious way. All around me was a bright, shiny new world. And death was everywhere" ("Pilot" 00:27:06–00:27:16). During her death life, she encounters her family and Dolores Herbig, even though they do not recognise George as her looks have changed. Similar to Will Self's dead in "North London Book of the Dead," in the case of the grim reapers in *Dead Like Me*, the dead are 'recycled' and walk the same space as the living and which they are believed to be departed from, on a Moebius strip.

This loss of externality also means that there is no possibility for a post-society. Instead, there is the Capitalocene. As Jason W. Moore shows, while "in the dominant Anthropocene presentation, the human species becomes a mighty, largely homogenous, acting unit [called] the 'human enterprise'", this does not mean that humans are a *biological* geophysical force (496–97). Rather, the Capitalocene entails that the Anthropocene is driven by capitalism and its destructive practices which means that the human enterprise that now is reality is essentially a capitalist enterprise and a capitalist society (Moore 597). This notion of the Capitalocene is exemplified in *Dead Like Me*; when George ends up in the same space she symbolically left, she also ends up in the same society with the same social structures and rules. She soon discovers that death operates the same as the life she had: "they say there are five psychological stages of death. Ironically, this applies even if you're already dead. Number one, denial" ("Pilot" 00:16:18–00:16:23). The grim reapers have the same duties, necessities and rights as the living. As Rube states: "an undead person has certain rights. For instance, I have a physical body. I can enjoy the deliciousness of this tasty Key lime pie. And if I so choose, I can interact with the living" ("Pilot" 00:20:43–00:20:56). Yet, this also means that the same issues George had to deal with in life she has to deal with now. The rules of the game, so to speak, have not changed and grim reapers have to eat, work and pay their bills. On her first day as a reaper, she finds out that they are not paid through proper channels, as "the US

Government doesn't provide food stamps for grim reapers. [They] don't have bus passes or get into movies for free. Most reapers take from the dead. Others get day jobs" ("Pilot" 00:34:00–00:34:09). Eventually, George gets a job at Happy Time and *re*-meets Delores Herbig. Exactly through this setting on the Moebius strip of life, *Dead Like Me* questions the existence of a post-society, as the afterlife that the grim reapers enter is nothing other than the same society they symbolically departed from.

The structure of the grim reaper enterprise especially reflects this loss of a post-society externality, for it is organised as a bureaucratic organisation. Firstly, Grim reapers work on a reward-based system that promises them they will *move on* to some kind of final destination when they have filled their quota. However, none of the grim reapers knows in advance what their quota is. Rube and Betty explain to George (when she is bothered by the 'why me' question after her death) that she is not specially chosen but she simply

> filled someone's quota. Everyone's assigned an unspecified allotment of souls to collect. Now, you don't know how many until you've nabbed till the last one. Remember that weird guy who asked your name before you got torpedoed by the toilet seat? You were his last one. […] [Betty:] So he gets promotion, nice benefits package, and you take his place […] it's like being the millionth customer, except there's no shopping spree. ("Pilot" 00:25:50–00:26:26)

Now it is George's turn to enter the grim reaper enterprise and, as any employee in the organisation, she too receives the prospect of promotion to something beyond when she has collected her designated number of assignments for the organisation. Secondly, there is a certain elusive but present corporate hierarchy to the organisation. Rube, the boss of George's reaper division, is subordinate to a nameless, faceless individual who is clearly in a higher management position and gives him is lists of booked 'appointments' for the week. The hierarchical structure also becomes evident directly after George's death, when she encounters the grim reapers: "[George:] I'm only 18! I haven't done anything! This isn't fair! So what are you? Like angels or something? [Rube:] No, no, ma'am. Angels don't get their hands dirty. You know, *upper-management* types" ("Pilot" 00:16:59–00:17:21, emphasis added), which implies that there is an upper management and hints to the corporate

structure of the reaper enterprise. Furthermore, the enterprise is divided into various operational branches in the field and the reapers are each assigned to divisions of death based on location, such as "Seattle" or "Chicago" and type of death of the souls they reap, such as "External Influences", "Natural Causes," the "Plague Division" and "pet reapers" (*Dead Like Me*).

This corporate structure extends to the fact that the grim reaper enterprise is, like society itself, upheld by assumptions that are not always proven but are taken as true; there is a status quo that is defined by higher rules that the field-workers, in this case the grim reapers, are not necessarily in the know of. When George inquires what happens to souls that do not make their appointment, Mason answers: "how should I know? All I'm saying is don't start moving shit around and talking to people, because you might change the outcome of events' ("Pilot" 00:39:50–00:40:06). No reasons are given for any of the conventional actions and orders have to be followed according to the hierarchical chain. Finally, the system of reaping and death is imbued with corporate terminology. Not only do the reapers all get assigned their own specific "allotment" of souls ("Pilot") but the extraction of the souls and the death itself are referred to as "the appointment" ("Pilot"). Also, the separate appointments the grim reapers have to take care of during their workday are consistently referred to through temporal terminology, for example when Rube orders Mason: "let her [George] tag along to your *2:30*' ("Pilot" 00:30:58–00:31:00), which is his next reaping job. Mason also tells George that "some reapers believe [a person's] *appointment* with death is *on the books* before you're born" ("Pilot" 00:39:50–00:39:54, emphasis added). The corporate structure becomes especially evident in "Vacation", where the death bringers have an official day off from causing death and consequently the grim reapers are stuck doing their annual paperwork. Such terminology and bureaucratic systems exemplify how George has by no means progressed to an externality that is beyond the existing human social structures. Instead, her life after death is like a job in any corporate company, the space she shares is the same physical space she supposedly departed from through her death and it did not provide her with an escape from the social, economical and corporate rules of the Capitalocene. Altogether, through this, *Dead Like Me* appears to contest the idea that something exists beyond our present, anthropogenic status quo and even death is on a corporate schedule. Moreover, it entails quite a bleak understanding of individual agency, as the individuals that are caught up in this system seem to be subjected to it.

5. Moving On

However, the series' engagement with the ideas of externality is more complex than simply discarding it altogether as in Will Self's story "The North London Book of the Dead". While it is true for the grim reapers that their possibility of an externality is, at least initially, taken from them, the souls they reap do appear to move on. This place, which is supposedly beyond the Moebius strip situation of the reapers, is referred to as the final destination, which suggests that it is an end. Yet, there is an element of ambiguity surrounding this final destination. The possibility exists in the series that this idea of helping souls to their final destination is in reality not so definitive. There is already a hint to this ambiguity in the very first episode, just after George dies, in her conversation with Rube and Betty. When they explain to her how they are "bail bondsmen for the disembodied [and] once their souls ditch the fleshy parts, they're in [the reapers'] custody till they reach their final destination" ("Pilot" 00:24:39–00:24:50), George assumes they are talking about heaven when mentioning the final destination. However, instead of confirming, Rube tells her that he does not know and Betty imagines it to be just like the situation they are in now ("Pilot" 00:24:54–00:24:58). Like the grim reapers, Betty appears to think the souls end up in a similar situation, a place "like this," which hints to an equivalent situation on the Moebius strip. George equally emphasises the elusive nature of the final destination, as she states "I don't know exactly what makes people cross over. I mean, souls. I think they see light where others cannot. I think they see *a chance* to become something else. Someone else" ("The Shallow End" 00:41:48–00:42:05, emphasis added). In this, no definite proof of a beyond is expressed, but merely that souls see *the hope of an externality*, something new which makes them, at least symbolically, cross over.

The ambiguity surrounding the final destination is further highlighted through the visual elements of the series. In line with George's remark about how souls themselves see something else they could become, the glimpses of the final destination that the viewers and the grim reapers receive are always reflections of what the soul's themselves expect a final destination to look like. Thus, it always reflects something from their own life and mind, expressed visually through a bright light that takes different forms with each soul. With George's first solo reaping job, a little girl on a crashed train, the final destination appears as a fun fair, towards which the little girl runs ("Pilot"). In the episode "Business Unfinished" George and Daisy reap a woman who refuses to move on. The woman finally acknowledges her true passion, which is sailing, and she regrets losing touch with it. When she finally decides to move on, her final destination appears as her beloved sailing boat). For a painter in "The Bicycle Thief," the final destination is a window to another world, and for a yoga teacher it appears as a lotus flower. Through the visuals of the final destination, it appears to be a constructed location, instead of a fixed one. The final destination is formed largely by the souls' own minds and expectations and what their idea of a final destination is. For some this is a higher reality, for a little girl it is a funfair and for the lady it is the boat from her memories. Overall, this afterlife appears to be a *constructed beyond* rather than an actual physical externality.

6. Reaping Havoc

A similar ambiguity is present around the final destination of the grim reapers. They equally appear to move on to somewhere else when they have fulfilled their quota. This moving on is never visualised but only implied. When George dies a reaper reaps her soul, yet he does not show up when she is dead and instead Rube greets her; he later explains to her how that reaper filled his quota ("Pilot"). Also in episode five of season one, in the flashback of the death of one of the reapers, Betty, when she hints to the grim reaper who touched her at the dinner table and asks where he is, Rube can only tell her that "he's already gone [...] got a *promotion*, I guess" ("Reaping Havoc" 00:0:18–00:09:20, emphasis added). Overall, the conditions around moving on are very elusive. None of the grim reapers know where they will go, nor when, as no reaper knows their personal quota. Even Rube, who is slightly higher up in the grim reaper organisation has no definite information. Moreover, in "Reaping Havoc," something unusual happens to Betty. She jumps after one of the souls into their externality (or perception of what an externality is). While throughout the series the idea is emphasised that "[grim reapers] can't go where [the souls] are going" ("Pilot" 00:11:08–00:11:09), Betty challenges that discourse. She takes her fate in her own hands and follows the soul that she just reaped ("Reaping Havoc"). She tells George that she is "trying to shake things up," with which she means the status quo of the reaper life and takes a "piggyback ride" into the beyond, thus effectively reaping havoc as it causes ripples through the reaper enterprise ("Reaping Havoc" 00:35:24–00:35:26).

Even when Betty appears to succeed in this, Rube still holds on to the idea that they "can't go where she went" ("Reaping Havoc" 00:37:08). Yet, again, he equally does not know where Betty went or what happened to her ("Reaping Havoc" 00:37:24). At the end of the episode, Rube himself leaves the phrase "what happened to her?" on a post-it for the faceless figure, to try and elicit an answer, which the viewers never know if he gets ("Reaping Havoc" 00:39:38–00:39:42). All in all, in the series there is never confirmation that there really is a *beyond*. The possibility remains that it is a narrative and that the souls end up somewhere that could also be on the Moebius strip again. Instead, there are only the existing narratives that the reaper society and the living society adhere to, namely that death means going somewhere 'away' or 'out,' and that reapers cannot follow them. Yet, these very narratives are contested through the visuals of the series and through Betty who shakes up the status quo by breaking what seemed to be a given rule. With this *Dead Like Me* questions the given of an externality and conflicts with the conjoining ideas of linear time and boundaries.

7. Complexities

Though it can be said that the series questions the concept of externality, the coming of age subplot of George conflicts with the challenge that the series poses to the concept of externality. This subplot, that winds its way throughout the series, gradually developing, echoes the objectives of a traditional *Bildungsroman* narrative; meaning that it features "the reconciliation of the problematic individual driven by deeply felt ideas with the concrete realities of society" (Jacobs, Jürgen and Markus Krause qtd. in Hardin xvi). The *Bildungs*-narrative marks the process of how a (young) individual finds their place in society and accepts its reality and norms (Hardin xv–xvi). Initially, George is at odds with the grim reaper society. Its reality appears to be dominated by boundaries and rules which should not be challenged. Rube explains on her first day that life and death "have to exist in perfect harmony and call it what you want, but that balance has to be maintained" ("Pilot" 00:29:50–00:29:52) and often mentions that the rules are there to "keep the riffraff in place" ("Pilot" 00:21:06–00:21:08). George questions these rules, causing the necessary havoc. She has a critical attitude, constantly questioning *why* the rules are as they are. In the episode "Curious George" when she asks Betty: "can you take tree souls?

Do trees have souls?" Betty answers that she does not know. When George asks her "don't you ever wonder about this stuff?" she tells George that she "asked Rube once [and] he says that you just don't do it, so I don't" ("Curious George" 00:19:13–00:19:34).

Not only does she voice her critical ideas, but George starts to actively challenge the rules of the grim reaper enterprise. In "Pilot" she refuses to take the soul of the little girl as she questions why it must be this girl and who gets to choose; according to Rube this causes the soul to rot internally. In "Dead Girl Walking," she tries to find a loophole by not showing up to reap the soul when her appointment dies, with the consequence that the soul sat through its own autopsy and was traumatised. Rube recognises George's rebellious attitude and tries to contain this, either by showing her the consequences or by putting her under surveillance of the more experienced reapers: "saint George here thinks it's her call whether people live or die, so until *she straightens up and flies right*, she's gonna need a *chaperone*" ("Dead Girl Walking" 00:11:46–00:11:51, emphasis added).

Yet, over the course of the series, George gradually comes of age in the reaper life. She starts to accept the rules and discourses of reaper life, often quoting Rube. Especially interesting in the context of this subplot is the post-series film *Dead Like Me: Life After Death*. It came out in 2009 to provide a closure for the series. In this film, George completely integrates into the reaper organisation and the film ends with George being promoted to Rube's replacement as the head of their department (*Dead Like Me: Life After Death*). George eventually finds her place in the grim reaper society and apparently accepts the norms and discourses that drive it, including the belief that they help souls move on to a final destination, something that is external to this world. This coming of age plot exposes exactly these workings of society and how metanarratives of externality are upheld. As the Capitalocene works as a human enterprise in which the human species becomes a homogenous, acting unit (see subsection 'Moving On' of this paper) rather than a space in which individuals can live according to their own beliefs, even the individuals with a rebellious mind, such as George, are subsumed by the narratives and orders on which this system is built. Thus, the narrative of externality appears to remain valid to the characters and, eventually, to George, even though the happenings in the series conflict with this metanarrative of *a beyond* or *an elsewhere*.

8. Conclusion

Overall, *Dead Like Me* engages in a complex and conflicting conversation with the concept of externality and its potential loss in an Anthropocene setting. It challenges the definiteness of moving on and the existence of an external space outside the current social and corporate reality, as the grim reapers end up on a Moebius strip. The series—like the character Betty when she takes her piggyback ride to a soul's externality—shakes things up as it challenges the conventional ideas of externality, afterlife and linear time. In the end, death for George is not a conventional afterlife but she is stuck on the Moebius strip. Death is nothing beyond or different from life and it certainly is not a post-society that moves beyond social structures of adulthood, capitalism and bureaucracy. The dead occupy the same space they supposedly departed from, they have their duties, adhere to metanarratives of how their life works and must pay their bills as the living do. As George eloquently puts it, in Fuller's *Dead Like Me,* "life sucks, and then you die. And then it still sucks" ("Send in the Clown" 00:48:02–00:48:06).

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7.

Borderless humour: *Eurobubble* and the challenges of trans-European satire

Katharina Krüll

1. Introduction

The public legitimacy of a democratic system or polity "is mainly shaped through either the mediation of political contents via the news media or the media-based visibility of the competing arguments" and justifications made by policy actors (Esser; Habermas, Strömbäck and van Aelst). To achieve legitimacy, it is stressed that the communication of political decisions needs to be integrated into everyday channels of recipients (Ketola 213). With entertainment being the fastest growing industry (Chalaby 293), researchers' interest in its role in communicating to the public is a natural follow-up process (Chalaby 306).

This contribution focuses on the role of entertainment in shaping a European public sphere, by looking at the producer's perspective on audience engagement with 'the European.' The term 'the European' is used to refer to the awareness or feeling of an audience, of belonging to a wider sphere than the national, regardless whether this refers to a European political space or a European identity. This investigation aims to tackle the following research question: How can transnational satirical projects contribute to the creation of a European public sphere?

Satirical entertainment was chosen as the medium of investigation because of its growing importance for the audience's perception of political debates as observed in communication studies (Day; Prior, "Any Good News"; Young). Being able to laugh about the same things, as well as addressing a transnational audience by way of depicting a common European context, could indicate a possible emergence of a European public sphere which can serve as a platform for further exchanges about European issues for the citizens.

To answer the research question, the web series *Eurobubble* will be discussed with a view to establishing what picture of Europe is being painted in the series, and what implied audience is being addressed. The analysis will be rounded off with an evaluation of the potential of this project, including the main challenges inherent in the notion of cross-European satire.

2. Conceptual framework: Humour in the public sphere and its growing role in political debates

Humour is an inherently ambiguous tool. Though understanding how humour works and is interpreted by individuals is an ongoing and probably eternal debate, the baseline of what humour consists of, the possibilities and challenges it entails as well as different styles that are used are good indicators of how humour functions in a public sphere.

James Curran defines a public sphere as "the space between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state: formal control through the election of governments and informal control through the pressure of public opinion" (Curran 29). Nancy Fraser challenges Curran's statement on the influence of public spheres with her observation that the overly weak character of some public spheres strips their opinion of practical force (Fraser 59). Researchers observe that parody, irony, and satire have become complexly intertwined with common public dialogue since the 1990s (Baym 262; Day 3). Especially political satire shows have gained popularity (Baum), priming researchers' interest to find explanations for why political humour is so widely popular and provoking engagement with the possible effects of an intensified relationship between satire and the public sphere.

In more recent studies, a European public sphere is recognised as a fragmented, differentiated, and contested space (Ketola 217). Following Habermas' understanding of the public sphere, Michael Brüggemann suggests analysing the European public sphere as a set of interconnected Europeanized public spheres connected by information flows (Brüggemann). He shifts the attention away from the conflict between national and supra-national spheres and allows for an investigation of the European aspect of the public sphere without a connection to the EU being necessary. Markus Ketola argues that, for the concept of a European public sphere to have meaning outside the EU policy process, it needs to be approached in a way that is "sensitive to difference, diversity, and conflict, and to the daily struggles that are played out in the public spheres" (Ketola 213). The way satire builds on current events and its element of transgression makes it a sensitive yet interesting medium to discuss.

In the introduction to *A Companion to Satire* (Quintero), Ruben Quintero reflects on the satirists' role as well as the purpose of satire. According to his analysis, the satirist aspires to set wrongs in society right, which in turn asks the reader to share the same idea of what is right or wrong (Quintero 3). Satirists thus rely on the audience to have a belief system similar to theirs (Quintero 5). Contrary to other modes of entertainment, satirists expect concrete actions of the audience instead of merely making them laugh (Paulson 15). They alert their audience to issues to make them aware of problems, and motivate them to act to set wrongs right (Quintero 4); this can result in gradually changing the pictures and associations that we have of other people or ideologies (Day 21). Remembering that according to Markus Prior humour uncovering the wrongs in society runs the risk of leaving the audience disillusioned about a possible change, it becomes apparent that the call for action and 'ending the joke on a positive note' is instrumental in motivating the audience to participate in the desired change.

Satire is thus not merely a medium to 'speak truth to power'; it also enables change through the audience. While the satirist works as an intermediate actor between the issue and the audience, to uncover the wrongdoings and to eventually show a solution, he or she is driven to motivate the audience to act upon the newly required information. Satire is thus characterised by its ability to unmask and to deconstruct, as well as to point the audience toward the flaws and the pomposity of official policy (Bloom and Bloom 200). As a consequence, humour can be a medium to prepare the audience for self-reflection and possibly critique.

The argument that the satirical effect relies on the audience's interpretation skills is also made by Paul Simpson, who puts an emphasis on satire's

status as a culturally situated discursive mode cutting across genres and media types (Simpson). Satire is made through an interpretative act on the part of the audience. Everyone can and will come to a differing interpretation of it, depending for instance on the receiver's background, predisposition, and interpretive habits. There is thus no such thing as an ordinary reader of satire (Simpson 157).

To investigate the educative element of satire, Mark Boukes carried out a study with which he aims to demonstrate satire's ability to set the agenda, building on the persistent relevance of agenda-setting theory in today's high-choice media environment (Boukes). His investigation aims to assess whether two episodes of a Dutch late-night show about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the European Union and the United States triggered agenda-setting effects in the Dutch public (Boukes 1). His results show that the consumption of the satire show segments positively affected the audiences' knowledge acquisition; it also increased their perceived understanding of the issue at hand, which consequently had a positive impact on the saliency of the issue on the public agenda. This outcome was confirmed through a media study to prove the influence of the satirical episodes on the public and political agenda.

The concern that laughter and thus humour is used with malevolent intent is expressed by Markus Prior's worry that people get more cynical about politics through infotainment (Prior, "News vs. Entertainment") and therefore less interested in it (Boukes 4). Against this stands the argument of the comedic appeal, which says that political satire is in demand because politics are not usually considered to be funny, and satire therefore successfully directs the audience's attention toward a topic they previously disregarded. Jim McGuigan (McGuigan) observes that satire shows regularly seem to be permitted more space in what is expressible and what is not, which makes them an attractive mode for opinion-forming (see also Baym 270), possibly due to humour not being considered on the same level as 'serious' communication at first (McGuigan 439).

As the interpretation of satire lies completely with each individual audience member, researchers have focussed on whether humour creates a dialogue, or by contrast enhances the formation of so-called echo-chambers. In 'The Irony of Satire: Political Ideology and the Motivation to See What You Want to See in The Colbert Report' (LaMarre et al.), Heather L. LaMarre, Kristen D. Landreville and Michael A. Beam have examined message processing of political satire in 'The Colbert Report' and the influence of the viewers' political ideology on perceptions of the show's host, Stephen Colbert. Results show that political ideology impacts the way how ambiguous political messages are interpreted (LaMarre et al. 217). There was no significant difference between the participants in thinking Colbert was funny, but a majority of conservatives reported that Colbert pretended to be joking and genuinely meant what he said while liberals perceived that Colbert's political statements were uttered ironical (LaMarre et al. 212).

Similarly, a study on 'Selective Exposure to Partisan versus Mockery News Online Videos' by Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Simon Lavis has showed that people prefer a message that supports their pre-existing political views (Knobloch-Westerwick and Lavis 69), which reinforces the argument that humour fuels the existence of echo-chambers (Chiaro 123). On the other hand, Amber Day proposes that a "blend of satire and political nonfiction enables and articulates a critique of the inadequacies of contemporary political discourse while demonstrating an engaged commitment to the possibility of a more honest public debate" (Day 43).

Political satire can indeed be an important tool for bottom-up social critique, due to its "desire to challenge the standard formulas and narratives within the mainstream press [and its] choice to do so by highlighting absurdities and inconsistencies" (Baym and Jones). It is the blend of hyperbole and reality in this mode that accounts for its success. It has been increasingly used to draw attention to hypocrisies and ironies in the supposedly serious world of political discourse and to advocate for alternative formulations of the issues of the day.

3. Transnational humour forming a public sphere? The case of *Eurobubble*

This study focuses on the webseries *Eurobubble* as a case study for investigating the potential and challenges of trans-European satire. This latter notion is defined here as a form of satire that has a visible trans-European component in terms of both its production and its implied audience. Considering the level of production implies that the creative staff involved in the selected case does not share one cultural background, or that the creative process is carried by a multinational team. It is assumed that this will give the creative output a wider dimension, which opens the material to a bigger audience beyond national borders.

To receive additional information on the case study, an interview was conducted via email with the co-producer, writer and lead actor of the series, Yacine Kouhen. The questions were aimed at obtaining additional information on the producers' motivation, the implied audience, the challenges faced during the production and the interviewee's perception of the power of humour, as well as the European aspect of the project. This source material was combined with a content analysis of the series.

Eurobubble—the series (Kouhen, *Eurobubble*) is a project developed by young Europeans who were at the time living and working in Brussels. Yacine Kouhen states that the aim of the series is to satirise a work environment which also had the potential for an entertaining sociological study. What originally started as a blog of the same name evolved into a 10-episode mini-series about the life of young Europeans working in an EU-context, produced between 2011 and 2013 and released on YouTube. The series provides insight into the routines of working in Brussels, their particularity often being the source of stereotypes about bureaucracy.

3.1 Production

Knowing how projects are funded or who supports their development is relevant due to its potential influence on the content in any media outlet. The *Eurobubble* series is a bottom-up project, in the sense that most of the core team members were not professionals. French national Yacine Kouhen worked together on the production with the director Charlélie Jourdan who was based in Spain, and Roch Postel from Belgium, director of photography and executive producer. As Yacine Kouhen states in his interview "the only professional was Roch Postel. […] There was the challenge of learning by doing." As stated in the interview they managed to raise money through crowdfunding and donations in kind.

Most of the actors are amateurs who had worked in an EU context or experienced this working context first hand and were therefore drawn to the project idea. They found out about the project and the call for actors through reading the *Eurobubble* blog, as they stated in the making-of videos. The characters are based on features that are presented as essential or even stereotypical when thinking about people working in an EU-context: over-educated, driven, young, underpaid, multi-lingual, and often overworked.

When asked about the challenges encountered in carrying out the project, Yacine Kouhen highlights the lack of experience, money and the resulting need for a huge amount of commitment and motivation in the team. The production of *Eurobubble* relied on the fact that everyone involved worked as a volunteer. When the team tried to take the next step by producing a follow-up series in this international setting, the limitations national production firms would impose upon the project became apparent and ultimately stopped the effort.

3.2 Content description

Each episode is connected to a specific topic and can be watched independently from the others, but the series' overarching story focuses on a young expatriate coming to Brussels to find a job in the EU-environment and having to learn about everything that is specific to said work 'bubble'. Different lines and jokes are repeated throughout multiple episodes, which contributes to the series' interconnectedness.[1]

The episodes are also set up in the same way and structure: The voice-over of the main character portrays his thoughts while he discovers the 'Eurobubble'. He serves as the translator of the situation, explaining the course of conversations or how to behave in a certain situation, by which he helps the viewer navigate this described environment.

The topics that are being explored throughout the series are (E1) how job hunting and interviewing in Brussels works, (E2–4) the conference environment, including the hierarchies in the conference set up, the Q&A session, and the networking part. One episode (E6) focusses on the structure of the team meeting and (E10) on the theory of networking, which indicates that any individual in a business is only separated from other people by two other contacts. Episodes 5, 7, 8 and 9 are not entirely focussed on the immediate working environment in Brussels. Episode (E5) thematises dating in Brussels and the classic date night involving a salsa class (E7). Episode (E8) mentions the Erasmus study abroad semester that everyone working in Brussels seems to have experienced at one point in time. Episode (E9) introduces the viewer to the particularities of a Thursday night at the Place du Luxembourg, a cross-over between a party place and a networking location for the young and upcoming European workforce.

1 Multiple times the policy officers working for the competitor 'the Margarine Federation' are referred to as 'those damn Margarine people'.

The first entry point to the content of the series is the title. The Eurobubble is a standing term to describe the work environment in Brussels connected to the EU, which is not only used by people inside this work environment but also (arguably with a less positive connotations) outside of it. Yacine Kouhen has stated that any work environment can be seen as a bubble and that he himself has worked in many different bubbles (Weilandt). Once the viewer manages to transcend the layers of EU-talk and references to places in Brussels, the topics discussed could apply to any work environment and are not specific to Brussels at all, which can make the material more relatable. What makes Brussels so particular is its social aspect, which is explored in the comparisons that are used throughout the series.

The comparison of the EU-related work being handled "in a city within a city" (S1E0) builds up the picture that the Eurobubble is an estranged part of Brussels separated from it in its function as the capital city of Belgium as much as from its inhabitants. Comparing the Eurobubble to an 'Erasmus for grown-ups' (S1E8) relates back to the target audience and their personal experience, as well as to the fact that not only working but also living in this environment is a part of the experience.

3.3 Implied audience

In the interview, Yacine Kouhen states that "the [series'] themes aim [...] at potentially reaching anyone (like the stress of speaking in public for instance, or to be in an 'adult' relationship), with a taste of Europeanness to it (multicultural, over graduated etc)". The writers take the normal problems of their age group that could occur in any other place and portray them in isolation in the multicultural environment of the EU-bubble.

Looking at the attraction of the project amongst the volunteers working on it, young people already working or looking for an EU job in Brussels are clearly part of the implied audience. They must be able to speak and understand English, as well as relating to the topics explored in the show. According to the writer,

> The series was directly aimed at people working in this bubble; the side idea was to put a name on a community that already existed—and therefore creating it, as something only starts existing once it is named. So, this first circle of target audience, besides its cultural/national diversity was considered as a whole in that sense. (Kouhen, "Eurobubble—Questions")

The challenge the producers of *Eurobubble* were facing is that the chosen topic and set-up of humourizing a specific sociological environment already introduces the need to use inside jokes. While inside jokes hold an exclusive feature, throughout the series, these insider features are being constantly made fun of—granting the viewer to smile at the humour typical to the sociological environment of the people working in Brussels. Even though the inside jokes themselves may remain incomprehensible to a broader audience, this kind of meta-humour invites the public to laugh about the messenger rather than the message (Attardo et al. 16). While the overuse of inside jokes could repel the part of the audience that is made up of viewers that have no immediate relation to the working environment in Brussels, the meta effect of making fun of the Eurobubble's stereotypical sectarianism could also draw them in. By having one of the characters admit in voice-over that he has no idea what the acronyms that are frequently used mean, what seemed to have been inside vocabulary is being ridiculed.

When asked about how to manage the possible differences between national and European humour, Yacine Kouhen stated that "we didn't really think in terms of European or National humour; any situation can be funny to anyone if well treated; the themes aimed at potentially reaching anyone." Besides humour, the genuineness of the topics explored can help tear down the barriers for people that thought they could not relate to the work environment in Brussels.

3.4 Targets of humour

To identify the target of *Eurobubble*'s humour, I used Salvatore Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humour, with particular regard to logical mechanisms, defined as the resolution of the incongruity of a joke (Attardo et al.). This theory is the most systematic categorisation of humour with respect to its various dimensions or 'knowledge resources', including the target, the incongruity or script opposition as well as the underlying logical mechanism of a joke. Throughout the series, excessive bureaucracy (including use of acronyms), discrimination, sexism, exploitation and self-referentiality (including the use of inside jokes) are problems which are repeatedly being targeted.

The overuse of acronyms in Brussels is ridiculed through the logical mechanism of exaggeration (Attardo et al. 14) when the main character attends a conference on 'how to solve international crises using acronyms' (S1E2). The over-regulation and love for petty details in a bureaucracy become apparent in the exaggerated team meeting (S1E6). Planning a conference is also an example of the figure/ground reversal (Attardo et al. 5; Attardo and Raskin 285), since small unimportant details, such as food and the seating chart, are given an overly important role in a team meeting while the content of the planned conference is never mentioned. On the one hand, this stresses the ridiculousness of team meetings in such a form. Another effect is that, by discussing the parts of event organisation which are common knowledge and do not require an in-depth idea of what this team works on, the audience is again invited to expand beyond the inside jokes.

Parallel to that, exaggeration and self-irony come together in several Brussels-specific inside jokes. This self-irony underlying the entire series plays on clichés that exist about the Brussels environment, within as well as outside of it. The vague job titles the protagonist applies for, the randomness of the way he seems to be selecting where to apply and the overall similarity of the associations connected to these jobs (E1) all contribute to the confusion of outsiders trying to understand what exactly is being done in the work-bubble portrayed.

The lobby groups in Brussels are countless, and no title or goal seems too absurd to be represented. The multiplication of institutions is shown in the name of the actual company the protagonist ends up working for, namely 'the Olive Oil Association' and their fiercest competitor, 'the Margarine Federation'. The target of humour is the narrow focus of these lobby organisations. By introducing the two competitors but never their concrete opposing goals, the question for the relevance of both organisations remains open. Heather LaMarre's discussion of ambiguity (LaMarre et al.) suggests that here the EU-defeating humour seems to overpower the EU-enhancing argument. Self-enhancing humour suggests the ability to laugh at oneself, to try to find the humour in everyday situations, and to make one the target of humour in a good-natured way (Martin 510). Self-defeating humour naturally entails the opposite, by putting oneself down in an aggressive manner (Frewen et al. 180; Martin et al. 53f).

Many of the jokes used in the series require the viewer to understand faulty reasoning, which is defined as ironically seconding a way of thinking

that is manifestly flawed (Attardo et al. 5; Attardo and Raskin 204). In the hierarchy presented throughout the series, the interns are always described as least relevant and generally seen as present at events because of the free food and not of the content, when, in fact, they are the driven young workers who despite the low-pay and their own over qualification want to work for the European project. By describing interns in this manner, the show opens a strongpoint for general critique, as many interns are struggling to get by living in expensive cities in different work environments.

Eurobubble was created to make fun of the EU-related working environment in Brussels, a sociological environment unique to itself, yet not too unusual in its general traits. By picking out its particularities and satirising them, the production team creates laughter, an opportunity for identification with the characters, and the possibility of a shift of opinion in viewers. The series does make fun of the work dynamics of the environment in Brussels which forms a part of the political decision-making of the EU. It is repeatedly stated that the jobs there are all the same, have ridiculous names and a workday consists of meetings that are portrayed as pointless rather than productively working towards a goal or dealing with actual content. Though the appeal of working in Brussels is occasionally mentioned, the high-end goal and celebration of this work environment as beneficial for something is missing.

3.5 *Evaluation: conveying a message and needing a positive note*

Especially when looking at the targets of humour, the ambiguity of interpretation of the *Eurobubble* series becomes apparent. It does make fun of the work dynamics in Brussels but it also caters to the human side of the people working in this context. Whether the audience leans towards supporting the EU environment in general or is opposed to it, for either interpretation the series falls short of providing either a clear stance on the relevance of the work being done in Brussels despite all the unnecessary technocracies surrounding it, or a substantial critique of what is wrong with this bubble and what needs to be changed. Due to their background of working in Brussels, the writers have the professional knowledge to provide the viewer with this content. Not tapping into this knowledge does not make the series less funny, but it must be acknowledged that it deprives the series of the

substance and the outlook into future solutions that strong satire is able to provide.

The topics explored in the *Eurobubble* series can apply to other situations as much as they are a part of the working life in Brussels. The actual discussions are not concrete, but rather an exaggeration of the abstract way people working in the EU context talk, which then forms part of the joke. The exaggeration shines a light on the self-irony underlying the entire series—it heavily plays on clichés that exist about the Brussels environment, within as well as outside of it. This is powerful since self-irony can make an audience more receptive to engaging with an unknown topic (Baum).

Nevertheless, the series risks offering mere platitudes about this bubble instead of a substantiated critique that invites the audience to look beyond the humourized facts (see Boukes et al., "At Odds"). In this sense, the series can be seen as a missed opportunity, although the informational aspect was not the deliberate focus of the series.

4. Conclusion: the role of humour and satire in the Europeanisation of the public sphere

The aim of this study is defined in the research question 'How can transnational satirical projects contribute to the creation of a European public sphere?' By sticking to a conceptual framework provided by the discussion around the European public sphere as well as the ambiguity of humour and particularly of satire, the analysis focussed on a transnational satirical project and its representation of the European, as well as its possible effect on the implied audience. Through the analysis, conclusions on the potential of this project were drawn, and some of the main challenges inherent to the notion of cross-European satire were identified.

The present analysis of *Eurobubble* can set the basis for further analysis of other European comedy projects. Viewing the European through humour allows to open it up to a broader public through the power of laughter. Focussing on a multinational instead of a national audience makes nation-specific cultural references less of a focus in constructing a joke. This transnationalization of satire is of course favoured by the online environment; the producers of the case study used its online presence as an easy, inexpensive way to reach a European audience.

On the other hand, the challenges posed by humour and its ambiguity limited the effectiveness of *Eurobubble*. Though a political message could be communicated, this was not the overall aim. Since a better understanding of an issue helps the saliency on the public agenda, producers could have made use of the power of satire to effectively contribute to the development of a European public sphere by making use of the full spectrum between Horatian (affiliative and inclusive) and Juvenalian (aggressive but possibly more effective) satire.

Despite the limitations of our specific case study, communicating European issues through everyday channels is necessary in order to increase the formation of a European public sphere; therefore, more support is needed for translational bottom-up projects such as *Eurobubble*. They are generated by citizens interested in bringing the idea of common European solutions forward, rather than a specific agenda or policy. Without necessarily having a direct impact on policy making, these projects add a valuable aspect of information and accountability to the societal debate. There is no such thing as 'only joking' (Chiaro 157). Humour can be an invaluable tool to create debate, which is what successful democracies need.

The prospect of a European public sphere has impacted and will probably further change satire productions. As the audience outreach grows, the producer is required to see issues in a broader context. The incentive to produce projects such as *Eurobubble* stems from the observation of having an audience in development that demands content which is not defined by national borders. This increases the need for solid research when producing satire segments and tracing issues in a global context, possibly decreasing the importance of national traits as elements of humour and thus as a defining element of the public sphere.

Transnational humour projects have the potential to focus the attention of a transnational audience on aspects of what the producers see as uniting aspects or problems relevant in Europe. Based on a humour strategy and joke structure that is not bound to a national sphere, humour manages to make the European relatable across different public spheres, and builds a platform to connect people beyond national borders. Since the very legitimacy of a European policy level is still part of the public debate, forms of entertainment that foreground uniting aspects amongst the citizens ultimately hold more potential to create a European public, which will then be more willing and able to discuss the policy-making of the EU.

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8.

Coming Full Circle: Narrating the Experience of Temporality in "Story of Your Life" and its Film Adaptation *Arrival*

Lisa Smit

1. Introduction

The act of reading a novel or watching a film allows us to undergo an evaluative and transformational experience, as we are invited to enact characters' emotions and their worldview. Consequently, this can change our perception, shape our minds and make us reassess our own behaviour and experience. Novels and films can for instance create a defamiliarizing effect with their ability to portray experience in thought-provoking ways. Viktor Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarization demonstrates that art can make things to which we have become habituated seem unfamiliar, which can lead to a prolonged and attentive perception of the thing under consideration (21–22). I argue that the short story "Story of Your Life" by Ted Chiang and its film adaptation *Arrival* generate such a defamiliarizing effect through their narration and narrative configuration. They additionally offer readers and spectators the possibility to undergo an evaluative experience by stimulating them to enact the protagonist's emotions and worldview. The main research question that I answer in this chapter is: how do the short story "Story of Your Life" and its adaptation *Arrival* encompass the experience of temporality by

the main character in their narration and narrative construction? Secondly, this chapter discusses how the narratives' construction and the focus on the principal character's experience likely affect readers and spectators. Lastly, I demonstrate how the two media present the narrative and specifically the defamiliarizing portrayal of experience in a medium-specific way. This contribution aims to add to existing research by showing that a study of experientiality from a verbal to an audio-visual medium can be conducted by employing a mixed research methodology.

Combining a qualitative and a quantitative approach, I used coding or manual topic modelling within the software Atlas.ti to analyse salient features within the narratives. Moreover, this research employs a cognitive narratological approach which enhances a focus on how narratives contain and evoke experiences. The notion of experientiality is especially important, and I predominantly adopt Caracciolo's problematization of it. This scholar argues that experientiality is constituted by the interaction between a narrative's configuration and interpreters' "experiential background" or past experiences (Caracciolo 47). A common critique of cognitive narratology is that certain textual features are linked to a set reader response, and that no clear distinction is thus made between textual features and responses they might provoke (Bortolussi and Dixon 12–13). In order to counter this problem and create an in-depth understanding of the narratives, I employ a digital humanities approach. In addition, my research adopts a transmedial narratological perspective to analyse the short story and film, and the medium-specific ways in which they depict experience. The concepts of the narrator and focalisation are thereby applied across different media.

In order to achieve a comprehensive answer to the research questions, I firstly provide a review of significant literature. This literature review focuses on cognitive narratology, the concept of experientiality, and the transmediality of narratology. The methodology section then explains my digital humanities approach in more depth. The analysis appears thereafter and focuses on the short story and film's narrative structure, narration, and focalisation. Subsequently, the discussion section addresses how the two media present experience in their narratives, through an examination of their narration, narrative structure, and focalisation. Interpreters' responses are discussed thereafter and I will assert that the narratives evoke empathy in readers and spectators and prompt them to experience temporality differently like the protagonist. This chapter subsequently explores

the medium-specific strategies that are employed to achieve this. The conclusion asserts the fruitfulness of studying experience and experientiality from literature to film, especially by employing a digital humanities method.

"Story of Your Life" and *Arrival* have been chosen as a case study because these narratives present experience in an especially engrossing and complex manner. Consequently, they lend themselves well to insights into both the presentation of experience and reader and spectator experiences. Both narratives focus on linguist Louise Banks, who is asked to establish communication with aliens. In the process, she learns their non-linear language and this causes her experience of temporality to become non-linear. The narratives' focus on language and communication has compelling implications in regards to the medium-specific presentations of the narratives. The short story's author, Ted Chiang, has noted that he wanted to write a story about the step that is often skipped over in science-fiction—how humans learn to communicate with creatures whose language has no link to human language ("Xenolinguistics" 06:19–06:43). The short story and film are thus largely about creating communication, even though differences are seemingly irreconcilable. This relates well to the distinction between the medium of literature and the medium of film. Where the aliens have a different language and vocal tract than humans, each respective medium has its affordances to tell a story—one which does not necessarily have grounds in the other medium's 'language'. I suggest that the strategies the media take to communicate their narrative can be led back to medium-specificity in a way that relates to the narratives' content. I argue that the short story is bound by the sequentiality of human language, whereas the film can show matters simultaneously like the alien language can.

2. Literature Review: Cognitive Narratology, Experience, and Experientiality

Cognitive narratology concerning experience and experientiality first of all holds particular importance. Cognitive narratology, as Herman defines it, is fitting as it focuses on "the mental states, capacities, and dispositions that provide grounds for—or, conversely, are grounded in—narrative experiences" ("Cognitive Narratology" 46).[1] Herman thus distinguishes between

1 Herman uses the term 'interpretation' in his definition, even though it historically belongs to reader response theory. Although the usage of the term is controversial within cognitive

two principal inquiries of cognitive narratology. One deals with experiences that are elicited by narratives in readers. The other with how narratives portray experience and how this provides cues to evoke reader experiences (46). A cognitive narratological approach hence allows for analysing the way the short story and film depict experience, as well as how this portrayal may give rise to reader and spectator experiences.

A pivotal work that focuses on reader experiences is Jahn 1997, illuminating how readers process third-person narrative situations (*Frames* 441). Jahn achieves this by creating a cognitive model that combines approaches from several theorists. He for instance builds upon conceptual frames that have come from Minsky's research in artificial intelligence (Jahn, "Frames" 442). Jahn asserts in his essay that the field of narratology is "preoccupied" with bottom-up approaches (464). With his model, Jahn instead focuses on the "hermeneutic interplay" between bottom-up and top-down "cognitive strategies" (464). The former entails that what readers perceive in the text directs their cognition. The top-down approach is "frame-determined," and implies that readers' personal experiences and knowledge direct their cognition, and help them to make sense of the text. Fludernik's influential work in which she focuses on experientiality deals with readers' experiences as well. In her book, she defines experientiality as "the quasi-mimetic evocation of real-life experience" (12). Fludernik's notion of experientiality entails that narratives can call upon readers' familiarity with experience by activating "cognitive parameters" (12). Jahn's combination of a bottom-up and a top-down approach and Fludernik's notion of experientiality are applicable to this chapter. Both relate to how narratives encompass experience and how interpreters' experiences can be called upon to make sense of a narrative.

A recent approach that focuses on the role of readers' personal experiences in interacting with narratives is Caracciolo's enactivist theory of experientiality. What sets Caracciolo's conception of experientiality apart, is his argument that readers' experience of narratives arises as a result of the tension between the "linguistic structures they engage with and their own past experiences" (47). This tension Caracciolo calls experientiality. It further entails that readers draw from their experiential background when reading and that a narrative resultantly can influence this background. An-

poetics, I follow Herman's definition and therefore use the terms 'interpreter' and 'interpretation'.

other fundamental way in which readers interact with narratives is through their relation to fictional characters; Caracciolo distinguishes in this regard between "consciousness-attribution" and "consciousness-enactment" (110). If the former occurs, a reader attributes part of their own experience to a character, which means that they sympathise with this character. The latter entails that a reader's experiential background overlaps in part with their story-driven experience. Here the reader situates themselves in the shoes of a character and empathises with them (110). In short, Caracciolo argues that narratives can utilise strategies to make readers draw from their experiential background (65). This can then make people respond to the narrative and even lead them to enact aspects of it. This is relevant as "Story of Your Life" and *Arrival* likely cue readers and spectators to draw from their own experiences and empathise with the principal character. They particularly do this by means of their narration, focalisation, and narrative construction. Moreover, the narratives in both media probably make interpreters enact the protagonist's experience of temporality since the latter is reflected in the non-linear narrative configuration.

3. Criticism of Cognitive Narratology and Theoretical Improvements

Although a cognitive narratological approach is suitable for the aims of this research, the field has been subject to criticism. Bortolussi and Dixon for instance insist that the approaches taken in the field are too speculative and that an "objective method of validation" is missing (5). Mildorf similarly asserts that the field's approaches are too disparate (33). Moreover, Mildorf underlines that cognitive narratology has moved away from actually looking at the text and artistic language (37). Bortolussi and Dixon offer a solution to the problem of speculation and a way to return to the text. They attempt to avoid subjectivity by clearly distinguishing between textual features and reader responses. Bortolussi and Dixon emphasise that approaches should be more precise, to create unambiguous, testable hypotheses that can be followed up with empirical research on actual reader responses (13). Although there is no room in this chapter to conduct such empirical research, the digital humanities offer a way to demonstrate clearly how interpretations and conclusions have emerged. As Romele et al. state, utilising a digital hermeneutics approach can reduce bias in research while still leaving room for interpretation (4). The usage of topic modelling makes it possible

to carefully discern significant features in the short story and the film without yet assigning meaning to them.

4. What about Film? The Transmediality of Narratology

As this contribution looks at a short story and a film, the issue of whether narratology is applicable to film needs to be addressed.[2] In general, much interest has existed recently for the transmediality of narratology, with works like Ryan and Thon's *Storyworlds Across Media* and Thon's *Transmedial Narratology and Contemporary Media Culture.* In these books, the applicability of narratology to different media is addressed, including comics, radio, and also film (Ryan and Thon 193). Thon for example analyses how the narratological concept of the narrator occurs in different media (125). Branigan's *Narrative Comprehension in Film* includes a discussion of the concept of focalisation and its manifestation in film (100). He states that external focalisation is when we see what a character does and sees from an outside perspective (103). Branigan then divides internal focalisation into "simple perceptions" (e.g., point-of-view shot), "impressions" (e.g., point-of-view shot that is out of focus to depict a mental state), and "deeper thoughts" (e.g., memories, dreams and hallucinations) (103). A recent work that also focuses on film is Verstraten's *Film Narratology.* Verstraten provides insight into how narratological concepts such as the narrator and focalisation are translated from the novel *The Comfort of Strangers* to its film adaptation (96). Similarly to the aforementioned works, the present contribution sees narratological concepts such as the narrator and focalisation as being transmedially applicable concepts.

5. Cognitive Narratology and Film: Complex Narratives

Film scholars have shown the fruitfulness of studying film through the usage of a cognitive approach, especially in relation to complex narratives.

2 The question of narrative and its mediality has existed from very early on. Among the French structuralists, Deleuze and Metz were for instance already studying cinema and from the beginning key theorists like Bremond and Barthes recognised "the medium-transcending nature of narrative" (Ryan 471). However, due to the focus on linguistics, media that for a large part included the mimetic mode of narration were pushed aside and sometimes not even seen as narratives (471). Luckily this has changed and in *Narration in the Fiction Film*, Bordwell for example shows how film tells stories in its own unique way, focusing for instance on the dimensions of the story-world, plot structure, and narration.

Elsaesser for instance includes *Arrival* in his list of "mind-game" films (3). Among the characteristics of such films is "non-linearity in the narrative trajectory and the introduction of multiple temporalities" (4). This is central to the narrative configuration of *Arrival*. In addition, in Buckland's *Puzzle Films: Complex Storytelling in Contemporary Cinema,* several scholars study how complex films like *Lost Highway* and *Memento* tell their story and how viewers make sense of them. Multiple scholars in the book utilise Bordwell's cognitive theory that focuses on how spectators make inferences by employing schemata that are "activated by cues in the data" (Buckland 7). More recently, Kiss and Willemsen have drawn on narratology and cognitive narratology to look at several complex films, to see what such "puzzling and enigmatic stories do" and how spectators deal with them (4–5). Such works support Herman's claim that cognitive approaches and specifically cognitive narratology are "transmedial in scope" ("Storytelling" 307).

6. Methodology

The methodological approach taken up in this contribution draws on digital humanities by way of combining a qualitative and quantitative approach. Within the program Atlas.ti, I coded salient features of the short story and film. This entails that I assigned labels and categories to parts of the narratives in order to gather quantitative data and to clearly show how features occur. While conducting the analysis, I used narratological concepts as defined by Mieke Bal to map how the narratives are told. These concepts are those of the narrator and focalisation and specific manifestations of them. These include, external narrator, character-bound narrator, external focalisation, and internal focalisation. Focalisation was for instance studied by coding verbs that relate to perception, to discover which verbs were used and how frequently they occurred.

Additionally, regarding the film, I employed Branigan's theory on film focalisation and for example his division of internal focalisation into "simple perceptions", "impressions", and "deeper thoughts" (103). While analysing the film the approach differed because visuals and sound had to be analysed besides verbal language. In order to account for focalisation, I coded the amount of shots, the number of shots in which Louise appears, and from what distance and angle she is shown. The approach taken up in this research is thus also a transmedial narratological approach. It is similar to

Verstraten's method, since he takes Bal's narratological concepts and conveys how they are manifested from a novel to its film adaptation.

Another concept that is important in this contribution is "anachrony," which Bal defines as the differences between "the arrangement in the story and the chronology of the fabula" (70). This concept includes references in the narrative to past and future events, which are named retroversions and anticipations, respectively (71). An important step was then to analyse how the narratives are structured overall. The aforementioned concepts are relevant because they can give insight into how the narratives are ordered and how they present temporality. The concepts of the narrator and focalisation shape how the experience of temporality of the main character is portrayed.

Lastly, this contribution uses a cognitive narratological approach because it can help to elucidate how experience is depicted in the narrative and how interpreters experience the narrative. The main ideas that were utilised are derived from Caracciolo. Like Caracciolo, I understand narrative experience as being created by a tension between the design of the narrative and the experiential background of the interpreter. In addition, I looked at cues and expressive devices that can be "especially effective in eliciting experiential responses" (40). These for example include evaluative statements expressed by the narrator, "creative or unusual linguistic forms," and narrative structure (43–44). How the story is ordered can for instance create "suspense, curiosity, and surprise" (44). In addition, I applied Caracciolo's notions of consciousness-attribution and consciousness-enactment to see if readers and spectators are made to enact and partly share the main character's experience. It is important to note that Caracciolo mainly focuses on literature, but he states that his theoretical framework can be applied to different media (6).

7. Short Story Analysis: Temporality and Narrative Structure in the Short Story

The short story consists of three main temporalities, the DISCOURSE-NOW-TEMPORALITY, the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY, and the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY, which will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

7.1 Discourse-now temporality

There is firstly the temporality which was coded as DISCOURSE-NOW. The "discourse-now" in Jahn's definition, is the current point in time for the narrator (*Narratology* N5.1). Thus, the sections coded as DISCOURSE-NOW belong to the temporality from which the narrator tells the narrative. The sections of this temporality are told in the present tense. The most salient segments of the DISCOURSE-NOW-TEMPORALITY occur at the beginning and end of the short story. The narrative opens with the following sentence: "Your father is about to ask me the question" (Chiang 111). The question is whether Louise wants to make a baby. In the end, we clearly return to the DISCOURSE-NOW-TEMPORALITY, when Louise states, "These questions are in my mind when your father asks me, 'Do you want to make a baby?' And I smile and answer, 'Yes…'" (172). At this point, the narrative has come full circle and it becomes clear that Louise chooses to have her baby despite knowing that her daughter will die young. The DISCOURSE-NOW-TEMPORALITY thus mainly frames the narrative. This temporality has been coded 11 times and makes up 9.8% of the narrative.

7.2 Memory-temporality

The second temporality that appears in the short story is the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY. This temporality is not merely told in the past tense as would be conventional when recounting a memory. Sections from this temporality are rather introduced as a memory and afterward primarily told in the future tense. Within the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY, supposed memories of Louise's daughter are described that give insight into their relationship and how Louise's daughter will eventually die. The MEMORY-TEMPORALITY is coded 12 times and makes up 14.1% of the narrative. It occurs in brief sections and alternates predominantly with the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY in which Louise meets the aliens. Besides succeeding each other, these two temporalities also interact. Louise for instance uses knowledge that she gains in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY, in the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY. An example is when Louise's daughter asks her about a term and Louise does not know the answer. A section belonging to the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY follows, in which Louise hears the term "non-zero-sum game" during a meeting (Chiang 153). This was the word Louise's daughter was looking for.

A MEMORY-TEMPORALITY section starts immediately after this moment and Louise now uses the term to answer her daughter. Afterward, someone calls Louise's name during the meeting and the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY continues again (153). The temporalities thus are interwoven, which shows that Louise experiences multiple temporalities simultaneously. This becomes especially apparent when looking at the sentences that appear at the start of the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY sections. Examples of such sentences are: "I remember once when we'll be driving to the mall to buy some new clothes for you" (138), and "I remember a conversation we'll have when you're in your junior year of high school" (129). The sentences begin with the verb *remember*, which indicates that what will come is a memory. However, the sentences then employ the future or present tense and the rest of the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY section continues in the future tense. Within one sentence, a reference is made to multiple tenses and hence to multiple temporalities. Such sentences occur 10 times throughout the narrative, starting from the first page. They bring about a fragmented sense of temporality within one sentence, but also for the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY as a whole.[3]

7.3 Alien encounter-temporality

The third main temporality is the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY in which Louise establishes contact with the aliens and learns their language. This temporality is told in the past tense. It has been coded 23 times and makes up 69.8% of the narrative. As mentioned earlier, the sections of the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY and ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY interact. This means that information that occurs in one temporality later figures in the other temporality. This happens from the time that Louise begins to understand the alien language. After approximately three-quarters of the narrative, she states, "Heptapod B was changing the way I thought" (Chiang 151). Louise explains that she sees semagrams in her mind—the symbols that the aliens use to communicate—instead of hearing an internal voice (151). The interaction between temporalities during which Louise hears

3 There are additional sections that are similar in content to, or even a continuation of the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY sections. However, these sections are not marked as a memory. They have been coded 9 times as FUTURE and make up around 6.3% of the narrative. I did not mark them as a main temporality, as they can be seen as part of the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY. They generate a greater interchange between past and future and create an even more shattered and disjointed sense of temporality.

the term "non-zero-sum game" then occurs (153). Somewhat later, in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY, Louise talks about the aliens' worldview. She ponders whether free will can exist if someone can see the future like the aliens do. According to Louise, the future should not be altered and her actions consequently are determined by what will happen in the future (157). She then sees a salad bowl in a shop in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY (158). A very brief MEMORY-TEMPORALITY section starts in that instant, which makes clear that Louise's daughter is wounded by that exact salad bowl falling on her (158). The ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY section recommences instantly after this moment and Louise still buys the salad bowl even though she knows it will cause an accident (158). A thing or event that happens in one temporality can thus trigger another temporality to start. This section then revolves around something that relates to that event or thing. The most important aspect of the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY is that Louise expresses her progress in learning the alien language. As her proficiency increases, the alternation of temporalities becomes quicker. Near the end of the narrative, Louise says that she is proficient in the written alien language and that she sometimes experiences past and future at once (167). In short, the experience of temporality is expressed through the narrative structure, and Louise's statements about the alien language and her experience.

8. Narration and focalisation

The narrative situation—which refers to what type of narrator and focalisation is used in a narrative (Bal 12)—is very personal in the short story. From the beginning, Louise is established as the narrator, and it becomes clear that she is telling the narrative to her daughter. Louise is also the protagonist, and the narrative thus has what Bal would call a "character-bound narrator" (13). Moreover, Louise is an overt narrator who expresses her opinion, and she is also the focalizer—the character who perceives—during the vast majority of the short story. More specifically, the majority of the narrative is internally focalized. Readers therefore do not only learn what Louise does and sees but also what she feels and thinks. This becomes evident when looking at the verbs that occur throughout the narrative. Table 1 and 2 contain the verbs which Louise employs in relation to herself when conveying her story. Table 1 shows the verbs that denote that Louise is looking at something, hence indicating to the reader that she is the perceiving character.

Table 1

Focalisation verb	Frequency
To look	12
To see	15
To watch	5
To spot	1
To glance at	1
To glimpse	1
	35

The verbs in table 2 are clear markers of internal focalisation as they relate to a more inward and subjective type of perception. These verbs give insight into Louise's mind and what she is feeling and experiencing. There are even more of such verbs that are indicators of internal focalisation, but I chose the clearest and most common ones. In total, there are 32 different verbs that occur 116 times in the narrative.

Table 2

Focalisation verb	Frequency
To remember	18
To know	15
To understand	6
To feel	14
To experience	4
To recognize	6
To want	6
To think	12
	81

9. Evaluative Statements and Sensory Perceptions

That the narrative is internally focalized particularly emanates from the fact that Louise constantly offers evaluations on what happens to her. She thereby often uses vivid language to express how she feels and to refer to sensory perceptions. The following sentence illustrates this: "You'll be incessantly running off somewhere, and each time you walk into a door frame or scrape your knee, the pain feels like it's my own. It'll be like growing an errant limb…" (Chiang 143). Louise explicitly relates her daughter's pain to herself. She additionally likens what she senses with another sensation to clarify her experience further. Louise also does this when she describes her experience of the alien language and temporality: "my consciousness becomes a half-century-long ember burning outside time. I perceive—during those glimpses—that entire epoch as a simultaneity" (167). Vivid language and devices like similes and metaphors are employed frequently in the short story to explain experience in great depth. This is key to understanding how the internal focalisation and overall interiority of the narrative are generated in the short story.

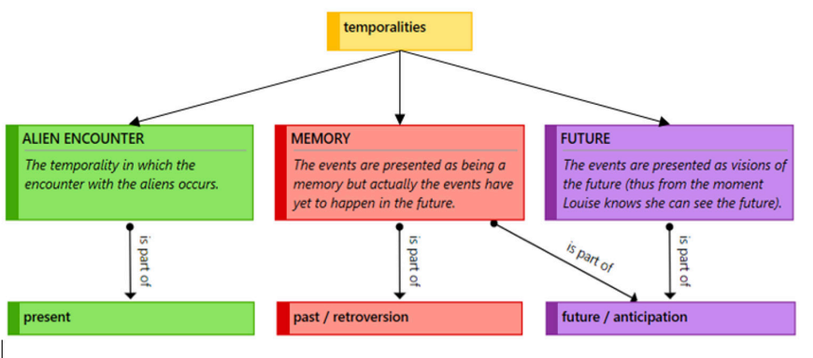
9.1 Film Analysis

The author of the short story, Ted Chiang, has stated that he did not expect "Story of Your Life" to become adapted because it was such an "interior" story ("Xenolinguistics" 02:28–02:35). To see how the film accomplishes to show this interiority, the temporalities, narrative structure, narration, and focalisation have to be analysed here too.

9.2 Temporalities and Narrative Structure

The film, like the short story, contains various temporalities that alternate. Figure 1 illustrates how they are connected.

Figure 1



9.3 Memory temporality

The MEMORY TEMPORALITY occurs in 66 shots and accounts for a total duration of 4 minutes and 52 seconds of the film. This temporality mainly occurs at the film's beginning. Louise is shown with her baby and later with her daughter when she is older. The memory is accompanied by very emotional music, which is often the case for shots belonging to this temporality. This particular memory shows that Louise's daughter passed away, and after this emotional reveal, the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY starts. For quite a while, there is no shot shown that belongs to the MEMORY TEMPORALITY. The supposed memories start occurring increasingly again when Louise begins to form a connection with the aliens. Moreover, they become clearer when she starts to understand their language. This first happens after the third meeting with the aliens, which is more personal than the previous ones. Louise takes off her protective suit, puts her hand on the screen, and manages to converse with the aliens (*Arrival* 44:28–46:33). Moments later, when she is back on the ground, she starts to experience flashbacks, which are still vague due to them being out of focus. Hereafter, memories become clearer and occur frequently, and the temporalities become interconnected like in the short story. In the MEMORY TEMPORALITY, Hannah for instance asks Louise about a scientific term that describes a win-win situation (*Arrival* 01:17:18–01:17:39). When Louise hears the word "non-zero-sum game" in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY she can give Hannah the answer (*Arrival* 01:20:45–01:21:08). In a similar way to the short story, multiple temporalities are thus experienced simultaneously by Louise. The memories happen quite consistently in short intervals after the first occurrence, and it becomes clear that Louise is affected by them. Once Louise learns the language, she is shown before and after the memories, which indicates that she is actually experiencing them. The sounds from the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY reinforce this, since they are sometimes already or still audible when the visuals show Louise in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY.

9.4 Future temporality

At a certain point in the narrative, the FUTURE TEMPORALITY is introduced. Although the MEMORY and FUTURE TEMPORALITY both take place in the future, I have coded the shots that occur after Louise learns that she can see

the future as FUTURE. The FUTURE TEMPORALITY takes up 70 shots of the film and lasts a total duration of 8 minutes and 42 seconds. In this temporality, one of the aliens tells Louise that they have come to save humanity and that Louise, like them, can see the future (*Arrival* 01:26:46–01:27:54). The alien makes her see images of her daughter, but then Louise says, "who is this child?" (*Arrival* 01:27:27–01:27:30). This discloses that the memories were in reality anticipations or flashforwards, and it is the major explicit reveal of how Louise experiences temporality. The FUTURE TEMPORALITY has an important function as it is interconnected with the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY. In the film, there is pressure from other countries to use violence against the aliens. Louise manages to mitigate the tension by calling the Chinese general, which she is able to do because she has an encounter with him in the future (01:36:00–01:39:12). In this future vision, the general gives Louise his phone number and tells her something that only he knows, namely his wife's "dying words" (*Arrival* 01:38:13–01:38:16). This allows Louise to call him in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY to convince him that she can see the future and that the aliens are harmless. The FUTURE TEMPORALITY features prominently at the end of the film with emotional music. Comparable to the MEMORY TEMPORALITY, sounds of the FUTURE TEMPORALITY are often already or still audible when the visuals show the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY.

9.5 Alien encounter temporality

The ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY makes up the most substantial part of the narrative. It is shown in 946 shots that together last 1 hour, 31 minutes, and 12 seconds. This temporality is interconnected with the other temporalities and alternates with them. In the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY, it becomes clear how the alien language works and how they perceive temporality. This clarifies how the alien language affects Louise's thoughts and experience. In the film, this is made clear through dialogue, visual imagery of the written language, and through a voice-over that explains it further. Near the end of the film, Louise explicitly states that the aliens perceive time non-linearly and that people can too if they learn their language (*Arrival* 01:33:58–01:34:08). The ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY ends the narrative by revealing that Louise makes the choice to have a baby in spite of knowing that her daughter will die early in life.

9.6 Narration

In *Arrival* verbal narration occurs through voice-overs. The verbal narration offers a clear perspective on temporality from the beginning when Louise says:

> I used to think this was the beginning of your story. Memory is a strange thing, it doesn't work like I thought it did. We are so bound by time, by its order. I remember moments in the middle but now I am not so sure if I believe in beginnings and endings… (*Arrival* 01:19–01:55).

Louise thus already denotes the ambiguous nature of the memories and hints at how she experiences temporality differently than before. One other voice-over narrated by Louise occurs at the end of the film, where she states: "So Hannah, this is where your story begins, the day they departed. Despite knowing the journey and where it leads, I embrace it and I welcome every moment of it" (*Arrival* 01:41:49–01:42:21). This voice-over lets spectators know that Louise chooses to have her daughter. The film additionally uses verbal narration to explain the alien language with more clarity. A secondary character, Ian, describes in a voice-over where the aliens landed, why they are called Heptapods, and he most importantly clarifies how the alien language differs from human language (*Arrival* 50:29–53:29). He explains that the alien language is non-linear and not bound by time, and he thereby states, "this raises the question, is this how they think?" (*Arrival* 53:02–53:12). Verbal narration thus functions as an emotional set-up and closure of the narrative and to clarify important information.

9.7 Focalisation

Focalisation in a film is a different matter than in a verbal medium. Unless verbal narration specifically states so, it is less explicit if insight into a character's perception is given. From the beginning of Arrival, we predominantly follow Louise, and the verbal narration strengthens this focus. More specifically, Louise appears in 675 out of 1082 of the film's shots, and she is shown through most of the duration of the film. To ascertain who the focalizer is and if external focalisation or internal focalisation is used, it is helpful

to look at how a character is framed. This involves from what distance and angle they are shown. Moreover, it is essential to establish how the content of the shot relates to the character's perception—if it is subjective for instance, as in the case of "deeper thoughts" (Branigan 103). In table 3, the shot types which are used to frame Louise are listed. They are listed from smallest to largest distance. In table 4, the angles from which Louise is shown can be found.

Table 3

Shot distance	**Frequency**
Extreme close-up	2
Close-up	125
Medium close-up	218
Medium shot	106
Cowboy shot	20
Medium long shot	37
Full shot	21
Long shot	50
Very long shot	25
Extreme long shot	20

Table 4

Shot angle	**Frequency**
Back	111
Back diagonal	108
Front	134
Front diagonal	203
Profile	68

Louise is most frequently framed in a close-up (from the neck up), medium close-up (from the upper arms up), and medium shot (from the waist up). In most shots, spectators can thus either see Louise's expression well when it is a shot from the front or along with her when she is shown from behind. Especially in longer takes the camera thereby has the tendency to move towards or along with Louise. In addition to the shots that frame her,

several shots show her point of view directly and are thus internally focalized. These shots occur 25 times. The ones that reveal Louise's experience in a particularly subjective manner occur when she meets the aliens. In these shots, Louise's view is less clear through the protective suit, and the spectator hears exactly what Louise hears.

Besides the shots being internal in this sense, certain shots fit into Branigan's "deeper thoughts" category (103). This is for example the case for a shot in which Louise suddenly sees an alien in her bedroom, which turns out to be a dream (*Arrival* 01:00:11–01:00:15). Such shots do not necessarily align exactly with Louise's field of vision but do show what Louise sees in her mind. This also applies to the MEMORY TEMPORALITY and the FUTURE TEMPORALITY shots, since they are mediated by Louise's mind as well. The shots of Louise that appear before and after MEMORY TEMPORALITY shots or FUTURE TEMPORALITY shots underline this.

In these shots, Louise is mostly shown in a medium close-up or close-up and visibly affected by what she sees. Moreover, sometimes sounds that belong to the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY or FUTURE-TEMPORALITY can already or still be heard, when the visuals still show the ALIEN ENCOUNTER-TEMPORALITY. In such moments, two temporalities co-occur. In addition, music and sounds that emphasise the emotion Louise portrays often accompany the MEMORY-TEMPORALITY and FUTURE-TEMPORALITY shots. The film is thus predominantly internally focalised by Louise, which mainly arises from the framing, sounds, and the subjective contents of the shots.

10. Discussion

To reiterate, the main question that underlies this chapter is: how do the short story and the film encompass the experience of temporality by the main character in their narration and narrative construction? In order to create a comprehensive answer, I first discuss how the short story and film portray the main character's experience through their narration, focalisation, and narrative structure. Thereafter, I cover reader and spectator experiences, and the medium-specific strategies that are employed to configure the narratives.

10.1 Experience in the Short Story

The main character's overall experience and her changing experience of temporality are firstly evoked by means of her functioning as both the narrator and the focalizer in the narrative. More specifically, the narrative is internally focalised by her. This becomes clear from the presence of verbs that indicate that Louise perceives (e.g., see and look) and especially from those which denote that her thoughts and feelings are portrayed (e.g., remember and think). Louise thereby is a character-bound narrator, which entails that she participates in the story she is telling. While doing so, she constantly makes evaluative statements and describes sensory perceptions using vivid language (e.g., "It'll be like growing an errant limb"). In this way, the reader gets a clear insight into how Louise feels, how she increasingly understands the alien language, and how this affects her experience of temporality. Louise states this overtly, but it is also expressed through the narrative structure. The narrative consists of different temporalities that overlap and interact. The DISCOURSE-NOW TEMPORALITY, MEMORY TEMPORALITY, and ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY are the main ones. The blending and synthesis of these temporalities from the beginning of the narrative reflects Louise's simultaneous experience of multiple temporalities. The MEMORY TEMPORALITY creates a particularly interesting effect through the sentences that occur at the start of its sections (e.g., I remember you will). The MEMORY TEMPORALITY sections start as a memory but thereafter continue in the future tense. This makes the MEMORY TEMPORALITY both a retroversion and anticipation, which defamiliarizes our conventional notion of temporality as being sequential and clearly demarcated by verb tenses. It signals to the reader how temporality is disjointed rather than consecutive. This is exemplified too by moments in which Louise uses knowledge or information from one temporality to act in another. This essentially creates a more profound interweaving of temporalities. As Louise becomes more proficient in the alien language, there is a quicker alternation between temporalities and interconnections between them occur more often. Thus, Louise's changing experience of temporality is reflected in the narrative construction in a way that likely creates a defamiliarizing effect.

10.2 Transmediality of Narratology, and Experience in the Film

In the film, Louise's experience is firstly presented by her being the narrator and focalizer of the narrative. The concepts of the narrator and focalizer are however manifested differently than in the short story.[4] In *Arrival*, the voice-over narration nevertheless evokes the presence of a narrator. The voice-overs at the film's beginning and end, although brief, give insight into Louise's experience and frame the narrative as being narrated by her.
focalisation is another strategy by which Louise's experience is communicated to the spectator. The concept of focalisation is more readily applicable to film as it relates to who perceives and experiences events. However, the verbs and utterances that are clear indicators of focalisation in the short story do not appear in the film. The spectator is rather shown what Louise does and presumably feels and rarely told explicitly. As Verstraten says, "A character who often appears in close-up tends to build up narrative 'credit': there is a good chance that his or her vision will become known to the viewer" (71). Louise is shown during the majority of the film and predominantly framed in such a way that she is clearly visible. Spectators can either clearly see the emotions she expresses, they can look along with her when she is shot more from behind or even see her exact point of view. Pure internal focalisation is present in point of view shots. Since the MEMORY TEMPORALITY and FUTURE TEMPORALITY shots occur in Louise's mind, these are also internally focalized and what Branigan calls "deeper thoughts" (103). The focus on Louise's emotions and the sounds that start playing before the visuals shift to the corresponding temporality further create internal focalisation.

The narrative structure lastly plays with convention and presents Louise's experience of temporality in a defamiliarizing way. Three different temporalities can be discerned: the MEMORY TEMPORALITY, the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY, and the FUTURE TEMPORALITY. These temporalities alternate and interact with each other. The film commences with the

4 The notion of narrator is contested in regards to film, and different ideas exist about its manifestation in cinema. There is a general consensus in regards to verbal narration which can occur by a narrating character or through a voice-over, but it is more ambiguous whether a film overall can be seen to have a narrator. Chatman would for example argue for a cinematic narrator who is responsible for what is presented audio visually in film (Thon 142). Verstraten as well reckons the existence of an overall "visual narrator" (103). Kuhn and Schmidt on the other hand state it would be unfruitful to apply the concept of narrator to all films even when no clear cues are given that the narrative is actually narrated. This namely creates the risk of equating film too much with literature (Kuhn and Schmidt 20).

MEMORY TEMPORALITY, after which the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY starts. The MEMORY TEMPORALITY shots are first shown independently from Louise in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY. When Louise establishes a connection with the aliens and gains knowledge about their language, shots that belong to the MEMORY TEMPORALITY start to occur again. From then on, shots of Louise appear before and after the MEMORY TEMPORALITY shots, which establishes that Louise is indeed experiencing the memories. The moment that exposes the disjointed nature of temporality occurs when an alien tells Louise that she can see the future, to which Louise responds that she does not know the girl in her visions (*Arrival* 01:27:28). In contrast to the short story, the various temporalities are not indicated by verb tenses but rather through editing and the ordering of shots. Similar to the short story, the different temporalities interact with each other increasingly as Louise progressively comprehends the alien language. This reflects Louise's simultaneous experience of temporality and defamiliarizes conventional conceptions of temporality.

10.3 Reader Experience

How might the complex and defamiliarizing presentation of the main character's experience affect interpreters? Readers of the short story are immediately confronted with a presentation of temporality that diverges from regular presentations. This happens through the presence of the peculiar sentences (e.g., I remember you will). From the beginning, it is therefore likely that readers pay attention to the meaning of these sentences. The defamiliarizing construction likely leads to a prolonged and attentive perception of them. The knowledge that Louise and thus readers obtain about the alien language, allows readers to make sense of these sentences and the narrative construction gradually. Readers may realise that the narrative construction and peculiar sentences illustrate how Louise experiences temporality when it is stated that the aliens have a "simultaneous mode of awareness" (Chiang 159). Especially when the temporalities start to interact this becomes apparent. A reader can also realise the function of the narrative construction and peculiar sentences earlier on when Louise explicitly states that she is becoming proficient in the alien language and that this affects her thoughts (151). Regardless of the point in the narrative where the reader figures it out, it will come about through

insight that they gain into the alien language—arising predominantly from Louise's reflections on it.

In any case, the peculiar sentences and narrative construction presumably create effects on readers. Caracciolo mentions "expressive devices" that are especially likely to "elicit experiential responses" (41). This entails that interpreters are prompted to draw from their experiential background while engaging with a narrative. This can for instance be their past experiences, their familiarity with sensations and emotions, and also their beliefs (70). One expressive device mentioned by Caracciolo is the usage of "creative or unusual linguistic forms" (43). The peculiar sentences would belong in this category. As stated before, readers' attention is probably drawn to these sentences as they create a defamiliarizing effect. When encountering these sentences, readers will likely try to make sense of them, which they can do by drawing from their experiential background. In this case, the defamiliarizing presentation likely taps into readers' familiarity with temporality. This would let them evaluate how this strange construction compares to temporality as they perceive it in their daily lives. Readers could thereby draw from their familiarity with previous experiences of non-linear presentations of temporality to see if the current construction can be made sense of through that logic.

Another expressive device that may create a defamiliarizing effect and that would consequently prolong and challenge readers' perception is the narrative structure. The narrative structure mirrors Louise's simultaneous experience of temporality. The structure does this through the alternation and interplay of the different temporalities. Caracciolo mentions the structure of the film *Memento*, which is shown non-linearly and even in reversed order (67). He states that this puzzles spectators, and makes it challenging for them to comprehend what is happening. This aligns spectators with the main character's perspective, who is disoriented because he cannot remember new things (67). This being in the same boat as the character encourages empathy or, as Caracciolo calls it, "consciousness-enactment" (41). This entails that the interpreter's "story-driven experience" overlaps with the character's consciousness (41). The short story's narrative structure likewise imitates how Louise experiences temporality. Similarly then, readers' story-driven experience likely overlaps with Louise's consciousness. Readers are therefore encouraged to empathise and identify with Louise and her experience of temporality.

In addition, throughout the narrative, insight is given into Louise's thoughts and feelings. This is achieved by means of Louise being the character-bound narrator and focalizer in the narrative. Tables 1 and 2 have shown that verbs that relate to internal focalisation are prominent, which demonstrates that readers get access to Louise's mind. Caracciolo states that the more textual features indicate that there is a "figural consciousness," the smaller the distance becomes between "readers' imaginings and the experiences that they attribute to a character" (127). The internal focalisation and the emotional content of the narrative reduce this distance. Instead of taking a third-person stance towards Louise, readers are encouraged to imagine Louise's mental state from an inside, first-person perspective. This means that they likely enact Louise's consciousness (118). The usage of similes and metaphors further stimulates this. Caracciolo states that these literary devices can invite readers to enact "the felt qualities of specific experiences," which encourages empathy for a character (109). Louise for instance describes her consciousness as "a half-century-long ember burning outside time" (167). This gives insight into what it must be like for her to experience temporality. The comparison of two different phenomena can create an "experiential 'feel'" because it increases "the strain on readers' experiential background" (112). Much like the concept of defamiliarization contends, deciphering what is said becomes more challenging and requires more effort. Readers are then prompted to evaluate how the two compared ideas relate to each other by drawing from their own experiences and familiarity with the two notions. The narrative structure, peculiar sentences, character-bound narrator, internal focalisation, and vivid language, thus cooperate to encourage readers to empathise with Louise and identify with her experience of temporality.[5] This then also stimulates them to evaluate what they would do if they were in Louise's shoes and could see the future.

10.4 Spectator Experience

The experience of spectators will presumably be very different from readers' experiences, predominantly regarding how they become aware of the logic of the different temporalities. Spectators likely interpret the MEMO-

5 Although no device can certainly be said to evoke a certain reaction, the evocation of a reaction like empathy is likely when there is an accumulation of expressive devices (Caracciolo 128).

RY TEMPORALITY shots as being memories, mainly due to the ordering of shots. They are made to infer that Louise's inward behaviour and sad look in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY are a consequence of her daughter's death that occurs in the MEMORY TEMPORALITY at the film's beginning. This inference is further reinforced by Louise's emotional reactions to the visions, which are shown before and after most MEMORY TEMPORALITY shots. The major plot twist in the film occurs when Louise says to an alien that she does not know who the child in her visions is (*Arrival* 01:27:28–01:27:49). From this moment, spectators likely reassess what they have seen and realise that all MEMORY TEMPORALITY shots were visions of the future. In general, the activity of making sense of temporality in the film is probably much less gradual than in the short story. Spectators are left in the dark longer about how the various temporalities fit together, and that temporality is disjointed at all. Up until the plot twist, the film has been in line with the cinematic convention of showing flashbacks. The disjointed nature of temporality is then suddenly revealed and needs to be re-evaluated by the spectator. This probably happens at the same moment at which Louise has to re-evaluate her experience. The narrative structure thus contributes to creating an immersive experience and evaluative stance, by aligning the spectator's experience with Louise's experience. Comparable again to *Memento,* the narrative structure imitates the condition of the main character. The story-driven experience of the spectator and the consciousness of the character thus likely overlap (Caracciolo 68). This encourages spectators to empathise with Louise and re-evaluate the notion of temporality like she has to do.

In addition, empathy and immersion are facilitated by the overall focus on Louise's experience. This happens through the narration and focalisation. However, these concepts are more challenging to ascertain unambiguously in the film. This is the case because the film does not solely rely on language but also on medium-specific devices like editing, framing, and sound to tell the story. Nevertheless, the voice-overs may indeed cause empathy because they elucidate what Louise feels and thinks. Moreover, they appear at emotional points in the film, together with sentimental music. The internal focalisation in the film is thereby important, as the spectator follows Louise and gets access to her mind. Although fewer verbal utterances make Louise's feelings and thoughts perceptible to spectators, they are communicated by the subjective visions and Louise's expressions. Even though language is

a "tell-tale sign of consciousness," people are also likely to attribute consciousness to real and fictional people based on gestures and for instance facial expressions (Caracciolo 114–16). Unlike in literature, where readers construct an idea of a character through what is present in the text, a film can show a clear manifestation of a person. The combination of such a concrete manifestation and the focus on Louise's experience makes it probable that spectators not only attribute consciousness to Louise but also enact her consciousness. This is especially likely because Louise is visible through most of the film and mostly framed from her waist up or closer. In several point-of-view shots, her perspective is even shown directly. Literally speaking, spectators predominantly see Louise from a third-person perspective. However, they likely experience Louise's journey from a more inward standpoint. This happens as a result of the subjective visions of the future, the focus on strong feelings such as familial love and loss, and the music that supports these feelings. Spectators are encouraged to draw from their experiential background, which entails for instance their familiarity with the "feel" of the portrayed emotions and feelings, and what familial relations mean to them (Caracciolo 117). This can create consciousness-enactment and consequently empathy (117). Spectators, like readers, are also prompted to reflect upon how they would act if they were in Louise's position and had her ability to know the future.

10.5 Literature and Film: Medium-Specificity

An important difference that comes forth from comparing the narratives and how they are experienced, is that the short story makes use of the explicitness of language to create a defamiliarizing effect, whereas the film plays with ambiguity. Denis Villeneuve has stated that he did not know "how to crack the short story because it's very intellectual" but that screenwriter Eric Heisserer achieved to create "a sense of tension and drama inside that process of translation" ("Xenolinguistics" 00:05:07–00:06:07). Since the short story is a verbal medium, it is possible to describe the alien language explicitly and extensively. The short story revolves largely around the exploration of the language, whereas the film does not explore it as thoroughly and includes an additional focus on conflict. It would be easy to regard this as a mere strategy to create a sensational, more conventional film—which *Arrival* is not by any means. In fact, both the short story and the film work

creatively within the science-fiction genre. The difference rather says something about the affordances of the media.

Language firstly has the ability to make relationships explicit and present matters unambiguously. Ryan states that although film can effectively show events "that succeed each other in time," only language can render causal relations explicit (476). Ryan thereby argues that a verbal medium can present intents and emotions unambiguously, and that language can thoroughly explore a character's mind (476). This is true in a sense, as language can assert matters with a level of precision that is difficult to attain through purely visual and maybe musical aspects. In the short story, Louise is for instance distinctly presented as the narrator and focalizer and her experience is conveyed precisely. However, *Arrival* shows that emotion and causality can be depicted with clarity in film too. The death of Louise's daughter in the MEMORY TEMPORALITY and Louise's emotional reactions are not explained explicitly by a language track, but the causal link and emotion are comprehensible nevertheless. On the other hand, *Arrival* also demonstrates the power of film's more ambiguous nature. This is the case because spectators are likely to falsely infer a causal link between Louise's daughter's death and Louise's behaviour in the ALIEN ENCOUNTER TEMPORALITY. Chatman states that film can easily present characters without expressing their mind's contents, which is more difficult to accomplish in literature (30). *Arrival* plays with this ambiguity and misleads spectators.

In the short story, the change in temporalities is indicated explicitly through the usage of verbs. This for instance happens in the sentences that use the verb remember but continue in the future or present tense. This usage of verbs and the short story's overall creative and complex configuration creates the impression that multiple temporalities occur simultaneously. Bal states that "deviations in sequential ordering" are "narrative's way of achieving a density that is akin to the simultaneity often claimed for visual images as distinct from literature" (69). However, it is still necessary in the short story to present verbs and events sequentially or at least successively. Even when the usage of verbs and the interplay between temporalities create the idea that the temporalities co-occur, matters still have to be stated one after the other. In contrast, the film uses a combination of voice-over narration, editing, framing, music, and acting to create a simultaneity regarding temporality and to convey the focus on Louise's inner life. Chatman

states that, while literature "cannot avoid a linear detailing through time," in film things can be shown at once (107). In the short story, the alien vessels, alien writing, and the aliens are for example described through linear detailing. In the film, spectators are immediately presented with a clear and simultaneous manifestation of them. Moreover, the overlap of sounds from one temporality and visuals from another creates a simultaneity of temporality that is difficult, or arguably even impossible to achieve in a verbal medium.

Film can therefore be compared to the alien language, which is non-linear and allows the aliens to present and experience all events at once. In addition, the aliens' written language consists of semagrams—visualised as circles—which "convey meaning without reference to speech" (Chiang 131). In film, similarly to the alien language, the relationship of the visuals to language is not explicit. This for instance creates the possibility to render causal relations equivocal. The human language on the other hand, is described as being sequential in the short story (31). It requires words to be stated consecutively and relies on cause and effect relationships. Moreover, in human language the relation between spoken and written language is more fixed and unambiguous. This relates to the short story, as it can explain things thoroughly and make causal relations explicit. However, the short story is also more bound to sequentiality like the human language. In short, both media contain experience and create a defamiliarizing effect on interpreters in a medium-specific manner. The short story and film demonstrate in this way that experientiality is an interesting notion to study transmedially, as it can elucidate how evaluative experiences are prompted through medium-specific strategies.

11. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have conducted a digital humanities analysis of the short story "Story of Your Life" and its film adaptation *Arrival.* Topic modelling was used to gain insight into experientiality—the interaction between the portrayal of experience and interpreters' experiences—in the narratives of the two different media. At the beginning of the chapter, I posed three questions. The main question was: How is the main character's experience of temporality encompassed in the narration and narrative construction of "Story of Your Life" and *Arrival*? I thereby asked: 1) What is the effect of

this presentation on interpreters? And 2) how are the presentations medium-specific, and what medium-specific strategies are thus used to create a desired effect on interpreters?

In answer to the main question, I can say that both media present the experience of temporality in a defamiliarizing way, as they both evoke a simultaneity of temporalities through their narrative configuration. Both media firstly create a focus on the main character's overall experience and her experience of temporality. The short story achieves this through the usage of a character-bound narrator, internal focalisation, and by using vivid language, which includes metaphors and similes. The film does so by means of brief voice-overs, close framing, and the insertion of the misleading subjective visions. Most important is that both narratives offer unconventional ways of portraying the protagonist's experience of temporality since her experience is reflected in the narrative structure. The narratives in both media contain different temporalities that alternate and interact increasingly as Louise learns the alien language. The short story defamiliarizes the notion of temporality particularly by using sentences that introduce sections as a memory but continue in the future or present tense (e.g., I remember you will). The film does it predominantly by cutting to supposed memories of the main character, which in the plot twist turn out to be visions of the future. Both narratives create a simultaneity akin to Louise's experience of temporality and interpreters are encouraged to experience past, present, and future concurrently like her.

This then offers part of the answer to the second question, as the way the narratives are constructed encourages readers and spectators to enact the main character's consciousness. Throughout both narratives, empathy is evoked in general by the narration and internal focalisation. Moreover, the short story stimulates empathy by using metaphors and similes (e.g., Louise describing her consciousness as, "a half-century-long ember burning outside time"). This overall empathetic stance will probably immerse interpreters in the narrative and prime them for the effect of the defamiliarizing narrative structure. Narrative structure is one of the expressive devices that Caracciolo mentions as being able to evoke "experiential responses" (41). This means that an interaction is encouraged between the text and interpreters' experiential backgrounds. This entails their past experiences, their familiarity with sensations and emotions, and for instance their knowledge and beliefs. Caracciolo mentions *Memento* as an example and comparable

to this film, the protagonist's internal experience is reflected in the narrative structure of the short story and film. This encourages interpreters to take a first-person stance towards her. To use Caracciolo's term, "consciousness-enactment" is likely to occur (41). Interpreters are stimulated to experience temporality the same way as the protagonist does. This motivates them to draw from their experiential background in order to re-evaluate the notion of temporality, and to assess what they would do if they could see the future. Readers will probably experience a defamiliarizing effect from the disjointed temporality early on as a result of the peculiar sentences and mixing of temporalities. Spectators are likely to experience the defamiliarizing effect at a specific moment and not gradually like the reader. They probably put the different temporalities in perspective after the film's plot twist. Up until that point, spectators are namely made to falsely infer that Louise's behaviour is caused by her daughter's death, while in reality this has not happened yet.

This brings me to the third question that can be answered through an analogy between the media and the alien and human language. The short story makes use of the explicitness of language to portray Louise's experience of temporality. The striking use of sentences that evoke the idea of both a memory and a future vision, and the various temporality sections that alternate can immediately indicate to readers that temporality is presented in an unconventional way. Louise's feelings and thoughts can thereby be expressed precisely and the alien language can be explained clearly. In addition, even though the short story creates the idea of simultaneity, it is still bound to present words and events sequentially like the human language. In contrast, the film makes use of ambiguity to tell the story. It lets spectators falsely infer causal relations which provides the basis for the plot twist. This is possible in the film because the relation between the visuals and language is equivocal, like the relation between the aliens' written language and speech. The film, like the alien language, can thereby show multiple aspects concurrently through its usage of various devices like framing, editing, and sound. This is for instance done by combining the sound from one temporality with the visuals from another.

Having answered my research questions I would lastly like to discuss the digital humanities approach employed in this chapter. What I attempted to do was to offer a partial solution to Mildorf's as well as Bortolussi and Dixon's critique of cognitive narratology. They argue that methods are too

speculative and that insufficient distinction is made between textual features and interpreter responses. By employing a digital humanities approach, I tried to create this distinction and a level of precision. More specifically, I made use of topic modelling within the program Atlas.ti. This entails that parts of the text and film were coded to discern themes and important features. As discussed in the literature review, Romele et al. state that a digital humanities method can create a degree of objectivity in research, while still allowing for interpretation by the researcher (4). It can thereby quantify data, which helps in generating clear results. Moreover, it can reveal connections, patterns, and features with a precision that would be difficult to accomplish with just a qualitative approach. The coding helped in creating a comprehensive idea of how the narratives are constructed. It additionally allowed me to gather clear quantitative data that I could use to present my findings and thereafter interpret them. For future research, I would therefore recommend a digital humanities approach when working with texts as well as films. With regard to narratology and cognitive narratology it would be a particularly convenient method to employ. It allows researchers to clearly discern textual features and where, in what context, and how often they appear. Although there was no space in this chapter to conduct empirical research to test assumptions, this would certainly be an option for future research since it could be efficiently combined with a digital humanities method.

As I stated at the beginning of the chapter, novels and films allow people to undergo evaluative and even transformational experiences. "Story of Your Life" and *Arrival* provide an enthralling example because they mirror the protagonist's experience of temporality in their narrative structure. More specifically, the narratives defamiliarize the notion of temporality by creating a simultaneity of various temporalities. In this way, they are likely to elicit an evaluative experience in interpreters. Interpreters are encouraged to resignify the concept of temporality and to assess what they would do if they were in the main character's position. This chapter has tried to demonstrate that conducting a study of experientiality across media is a fruitful pursuit and can be done effectively by employing a digital humanities method. Studies using cognitive narratology and the notion of experientiality can, as I have shown, yield insights into unconventional and defamiliarizing narrative constructions. They can investigate how experiences are contained in narratives and

how they are evoked due to the interaction between cues in the narrative and interpreters' own experiences. Moreover, by analysing experientiality in different media, medium-specific strategies of presenting and eliciting experience can be illuminated. A transmedial study of experientiality can thus shed new light on the seemingly magical affordances of narratives to portray and elicit experiences and it can elucidate the role of the medium in this process.

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III. FUTURE

9.

Narrating Climate Change

Julia Schmahl

1. Introduction: Climate change and Europe

When we envision Europe in 2025, one factor essentially defines what life in Europe and the rest of the world will look like. Perhaps the most significant challenge that the world faces right now is climate change, a matter on which Europe must work together to ensure the quality of life for future generations.

There are many possible ways in which the issue of climate change could evolve over the next few years, and there are no definitive guarantees for what will happen if we do or do not implement specific policies. All we can do is imagine possible futures and try to navigate our way towards those that seem the most desirable. In 2025 we could be living in a Europe that is well on the way to functioning sustainably in technology, economics and agriculture, preparing for and living with the effects of climate change. We could also be living in a Europe that sees increasing numbers of climate refugees and severe financial crises. These are only examples of possible futures; how reality in Europe in connection to climate change will look depends on what changes we make now. It is unclear how fast and how detrimental climate

change will be, but what is clear is that the consequences will be influencing life in Europe in the years to come.

However, what if there was a way to limit the most catastrophic consequences of climate change? This Vision Report will approach that scenario from an arts and humanities perspective, focusing on the role of narratives of sustainability. The aforementioned context gives rise to the question investigated in the following pages: How can the employment of narratives of sustainability in the EU contribute to the limitation of climate change?

There are specific trends and possibilities on how to combat climate change coming from technology, economies, politics and so forth, such as a sustainable economy, sustainable energy sources and a carbon emission tax. All these fields will have to work together to have a chance to complete the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit global warming to 1.5 °C. However, this Vision Report argues that the power of narratives has been neglected in discussions on the possibilities of limiting climate change.

2. The value of narratives

In general, narratives function as the basis of understanding and relating to the world; through telling stories, humans can form relationships and work together (Robertson 37). Narratives are stories that have the power to influence the behaviour of people by transmitting cultural values that can change what people believe in (Robertson 37). One can say that "each narrative constrains and enables what is thinkable and sayable about the past, present, and future" (Veland et al. 42). By developing narratives transmitted through, for example, science, journalism or art, people's perception of reality is influenced, shaping what we know about the world. As the values guiding our behaviour are largely determined by culture, the role of culture in implementing narratives about sustainability is significant. Cultural products in the form of literary narratives can help negotiate societal and cultural issues through representation and influencing cultural values (Meireis and Rippl 6). In this case, culture can be seen from both the perspective of a narrow definition, characterising culture as the producing or altering of cultural symbols, while a more comprehensive definition sees culture as "the human activity of symbolising", determining the way of life in society through shared world views and values (Meireis and Rippl 5).

A narrative is a powerful tool that can unite people to achieve specific goals on a political level. At the moment, the EU requires a narrative that will once again give a shared purpose to people in Europe. The importance of a shared goal can be seen in the recent development of movements that show a "current continent-wide drift toward narrow self-interest" (Mesnard). The issue here is that the lack of a shared purpose complicates the reaction of the EU to new challenges. However, not deciding quickly on what to do in those situations could lead to significant problems and further fragmentation in Europe.

Climate change can be identified as a new challenge requiring action, both in society and politics. Narratives of sustainability could provide people in Europe with a sense of a shared purpose that would enable the process of implementing solutions for the limitation and the effects of climate change. Concerning policies, for example, a sense of a shared goal in Europe connected to better education and engagement on climate change could lead to an improved ability to judge whether incremental policy changes are enough to protect the climate and the people. Additionally, policy changes connected to climate change could be more widely accepted in Europe and, as such, be more accessible to implement in real life, facilitating transitions to sustainability.

3. Sustainability communication via narration

While the effects of climate change are not straightforward and easy to understand, narratives of sustainability could make communicating scientific research results concerning climate change to the public much easier (Robertson 6). In this way of employing narratives, the framing of knowledge rather than the development of new ideas is focused on. Therefore, narratives of sustainability could fill a 'narrative deficit' regarding the communication of climate change research, but not an 'information deficit' (Veland et al. 44). For narratives to succeed at filling this 'narrative deficit', they need to adhere to a set of characteristics, assuring that people confronted with the narrative engage with it. Firstly, the narrative must invoke emotion in the reader or audience, which can be done through establishing characters that go through a conflict, moving the storyline along while maintaining an element of mystery (Robertson 38). Additionally, the narrative structure should consist of a beginning, middle and end

and make the reader or audience feel part of the story as if they are experiencing themselves what the characters go through (Robertson 40).

Many people face the issue of knowledge on climate change because they theoretically know about the possible catastrophes. Still, due to 'psychological barriers' between knowledge and action, they don't engage actively in climate protection (Galafassi et al. 73). Furthermore, the current information overload in societies prevents people from responding to information about climate change as they mainly look for information reaffirming their world views (Robertson 6). Regarding narratives, the issue is that people are not acquainted with stories that involve their personal agency on the topic and therefore don't establish a connection to their behaviour. As the effects of climate change are happening very slowly, it is difficult for humans to relate the issue to themselves (Robertson 6). By linking climate change to individuals and their surroundings in narratives of sustainability, more people could start to act on what they know about climate change. Narratives of sustainability, therefore, "may become a force that can help close the gap between what we know and what we actually do about climate change" (Galafassi et al. 73).

4. Which narrative will lead to action?—Features

However, what narratives of sustainability are needed precisely, and how could they reach people in Europe? First and foremost, it must be clarified that no specific sustainability narrative can be deemed correct or universal. In fact, using narratives as a tool in the process of limiting and dealing with climate change opens the possibility of exploring different ways of conceptualising the world without having to pit them against each other to find the best one. Narratives of sustainability can co-exist and may all have different functions at different times (Luederitz et al. 402). By seeing narratives as ever-evolving, they may play an essential role in transitioning towards sustainability, although the solutions proposed by a narrative might not be ideal (Galafassi et al. 77). Different narratives of sustainability can contribute to teaching society how to be more flexible and imagine different scenarios to "learn to deal with complexity and uncertainty rather than learning a predetermined set of 'sustainable' values and behaviours" (Sandri qtd. in Mereis and Rippl 130).

Nevertheless, there are some features of narratives of sustainability that could be beneficial for creating solutions to problems concerning

climate change. Firstly, for societies to be optimistic about the future and look to solutions rather than problems, narratives of sustainability should steer towards hope and not fear (Fazey et al. 35). Even though the issues surrounding climate change should not be neglected in sustainability narratives, as they must be clarified to ensure an understanding of the situation, a clear focus should be set on developing ways of dealing with climate change. Inciting fear as the sole goal of a narrative may effectively show the consequences of our behaviour concerning the climate, but rather than supporting it, it can paralyse the process of protecting the climate and the future of Europe. This means that "moving toward a future that remains below a 1.5 °C global temperature rise requires developing 'narratives of hope'" (Galafassi et al. 77).

Another aspect of narratives of sustainability that could support finding solutions to climate change issues is connecting them to people's daily lives. What is their role in a particular narrative on climate change, what would their life look like? The benefit of sustainability narratives that incorporate this feature is that people better relate to climate change and may start to engage with climate protection in their lives, maybe even contributing to projects in which citizens co-create solutions. At the moment, the issue remains that "most people have not yet heard a story about climate change that sounds like it was written 'for them'" (Veland et al. 43).

For a narrative of sustainability to make sense in the context of someone's life, it should be connected to other narratives relevant to their understanding of the world; otherwise, the person may not accept the narrative of sustainability (Veland et al. 42). Although climate change is a global issue, it may be helpful to develop narratives of sustainability more locally so that people can better understand their role in the matter. This would also mean that cultural differences could be dealt with in constructing narratives of sustainability and, therefore, the development of solutions to the effects of climate change.

An example of a narrative that illustrates the features discussed here is the 'Green Living' narrative. This narrative has been used in the communication of possible futures to the public. It portrays the future of society after having switched to sustainable practices that could work in a particular environment and culture (Bushell et al. 44). The narrative conveys a positive and hopeful vision of the future. It includes people's personal lives and establishes their role in a bigger picture, the society shaped by the culture

they live in. Through these features, the 'Green Living' narrative promotes a better understanding of the future and enables political activation regarding climate change. However, the 'Green Living' narrative alone cannot solve the 'narrative deficit' because, as mentioned above, a single narrative does not suffice for society to deviate from common behaviours.

5. Developing solutions through narration

The exploration of different narratives of sustainability also provides an opportunity to find new solutions to issues of climate change, as narratives expressed through various media can be seen as 'rehearsal spaces' in which different possibilities and reactions to climate change can be experienced (Tyszczuk and Smith 62). Engaging with narratives expressed through literature or films and other works of art allows us to create possible futures in our imagination, allowing us to identify with other people, a trait essential to connect people for a sustainable future (Meireis and Rippl 6). Ultimately, the success of the limitation of climate change to a temperature rise of 1.5 °C, as part of the Paris agreement, comes down to whether societies will adapt to a shift in their beliefs and behaviours fast enough (Galafassi et al. 73). To achieve this goal, the importance of incorporating narratives has become apparent.

Currently, possible sustainable futures and the solutions to climate change inherent to them are often explored in scientific research. The IPCC, for example, proposes different 'pathways' as alternative futures that are thought to be plausible in the current societal conditions (Tyszczuk and Smith 57). The issue that could be seen in those kinds of scenarios is that they don't allow for much room in imagining societal change, which is a role that the explorations of narratives of sustainability could take on. Narratives, therefore, can be used to communicate scientific research on climate change to the public through academic papers or newspapers and explore possible futures and solutions in their own right.

6. Implementing narratives

There are many possibilities for narratives of sustainability to develop and to spread outside of academic circles. The communication of narratives of sustainability to the public could be realised through novels (the genre of Cli-fi has already emerged) and TV series as they reach a large number of

people. Newspapers could also start to dedicate articles to exploring solutions to climate change on a local level, in narrative form. To engage the public in shaping their futures, the EU could incentivise competitions for art projects on sustainable futures and, for example, post those ideas on social media where especially young people are likely to see them. These competitions could also take place on a school level, as education on climate change is very important at a young age when many of our beliefs about the world are formed.

In the end, narratives of sustainability can shape societies' understanding of humans' relationship with the environment. To ensure that the future of Europe in connection to climate change will adapt to the challenges that it will face, narratives of sustainability can guide the development of solutions, as "climate change requires multiple framings and perspectives, and [...] these need to be provisional and evolving" (Tyszczuk and Smith 58).

7. Conclusion

For Europe, the challenge of climate change could provide a new purpose for working together if people start to believe in their own agency in the matter and therefore want to work towards a better future. To engage people in climate protection, the EU should encourage the development of narratives of sustainability. There could, for example, be a focus on the EU level to communicate findings of climate change in the form of narratives. To determine, however, in what ways narratives of sustainability can be the most successful in finding solutions to climate change issues, narratives' effects on peoples' beliefs and behaviour in the form of climate-related art should be further assessed.

Nonetheless, narratives of sustainability provide an alternative way of approaching issues connected to climate change that enables people to be more connected to the topic, which is otherwise very abstract to them. By starting to incorporate the power of narratives in discussions on the limitation of climate change, the foundations for increasing public engagement with climate protection and the development of co-created solutions are being laid.

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10.

Dark Paper on the Future of Europe

Ola Medzińska

1. Introduction

In this era of rapid social, economic and political changes, Europe and the European Union face a crossroads in their history. It is time for the authorities to choose a path to solve existing problems and open up more opportunities for European citizens. In his *White Paper on the Future of Europe*, Jean-Claude Juncker introduces issues that Europe might face in the immediate future and proposes five scenarios for the upcoming actions of the European Union's member states. However, many of these visions do not convey how complex and problematic some of the issues are which Europe is facing or potentially will have to handle soon. According to Weidenfeld and Wessels, in the European Union's terminology, a 'white paper' is "a document containing officially prepared specific proposals related to specific areas of EU politics."[1] Juncker's *White Paper* seems to be lacking these specifics. Instead, some of the issues are only briefly mentioned, but multiple expressions used to describe them appear to create a sense of belittling their seriousness. Furthermore, numerous aspects of possible obstacles are overlooked

1 Author's own translation.

even though they are crucial for understanding the severity of the European situation, evaluating it correctly, and making the right decision regarding the scenario for Europe's future.

Taking the current state of matters into consideration, European state members should reflect on their actions collectively and conclude that although choosing the right path for the future is of the essence, it is equally crucial to act fast. As mentioned by Jean-Claude Juncker in the *White Paper*, incremental changes are presumably the optimal and most effective course of action. However, time is undeniably a significant factor. Consequently, some questions arise: is it possible that the European future will develop into a tragic conflict if the legislators delay making decisions to the point when it is too late to have a privilege to make choices? Will Europe be stuck with an option of only choosing from two substandard alternatives—whereas now there is still time to reform and select from all the best options?

The purpose of this vision report is to address the questions mentioned above. Moreover, I will examine specific aspects of Juncker's *White Paper* (2017) and some elements that I found have been omitted in the text and discuss issues that may arise from the proposed solutions. Some of the topics I would like to review are the environmental crisis, possible privacy issues resulting from popularised use of so-called 'connected cars,' and the overall integration of East and West Europe. I am also going to contemplate the possible outcomes of some of the points raised by Juncker. However, I will attempt to take more of a critical approach towards points made by the author in *White Paper on the Future of Europe* since the attitude presented in the document seems unrealistic.

2. The notion of a tragic conflict and its significance for the future of Europe

In the introduction, it is suggested that the future of Europe and the European Union can potentially develop into a situation of a tragic moral conflict. To make the following section clear, it is essential to answer another question: what is a tragic conflict? In the search for an answer to this problem in *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, Martha Nussbaum discusses tragedy as a literary form that can act as an exercise for ethical concerns faced in real life, and she defines the notion of 'tragic conflict' as "a wrong action committed without any direct physical compulsion and in full knowledge of its nature, by a person whose ethical

character or commitments would otherwise dispose him to reject the act" (Nussbaum).

How does this notion apply to the future of Europe? In *White Paper on the Future of Europe*, Jean-Claude Juncker presents a very positive, almost utopian view on the possible future of Europe. There is little to no information on negative possibilities that European member states might face if the current problems are not addressed. 'Working together' and 'uniting' to achieve a common goal is an admirable approach; nevertheless, one must question whether it is realistic. In the presence of rising nationalist movements and Euroscepticism in multiple member states of the EU, it seems careless to focus exclusively on the positive aspects of the five scenarios presented by Juncker. What is missing in the White *Paper* is a careful and rational analysis of opportunities and obstacles that are likely to appear while aiming for a better and more stable European future.

3. Essence—nowhere to be found

The environmental crisis has become a reality and is becoming one of the most threatening problems that the contemporary world has ever dealt with. Yet, it is only briefly mentioned in the paper by Juncker, and is not even included in the main points of the five scenarios, but in the section of "illustrative snapshots." In one of the points in the previous section, the author states that "air quality differs greatly across Europe with some countries choosing to remove standards and regulations on harmful emissions. Water quality may differ along transnational rivers such as the Danube or the Rhine". This is the only relatively concrete example of the results of the environmental crisis. However, Juncker only lists popularly known information that can be summarised by saying colloquially that 'the environment is not in a very good state at the moment.' No real and solid ideas about solutions to the problem are mentioned in the paper. The climate crisis is an issue that, if allowed to worsen, might have fatal consequences for the state of the Earth and its inhabitants, including humankind. It demands immediate action. Understandably, Juncker's paper cannot cover every minor concern that Europe is facing, but avoiding addressing a large-scale issue affecting the lives of millions of European citizens, which the environmental crisis undeniably is, is a significant flaw of this document. This kind of approach might lead to the aforementioned situation of tragic conflict. Europe will

find itself being stuck with a range of choices that will not bring a beneficial future for everyone. It might be that legislators will have to choose an option that is good for the majority of the population but not for the whole population. Consequently, this might lead to large-scale protests and further conflicts. The target readership of the *White Paper on the Future of Europe* is every European citizen. Thus, this document must address the environmental crisis as it should concern every European citizen.

Another issue that is also not further explored is technological progress in terms of sharing information. Throughout the paper, one can find multiple mentions of an idea of "connected cars". However, it is not discussed in terms of what this might mean for Europe and its citizens. The author does not include a definition of this type of technological novelty in the paper. *White Paper* does not explain the expression nor its possible ramifications for the future of Europe. In *Connected Car: Technologies, Issues, Future Trends*, R. Coppola and M. Morisio explain that a connected car is "a vehicle capable of accessing to the Internet, of communicating with smart devices as well as other cars and road infrastructures, and of collecting real-time data from multiple sources". In *White Paper on the European Future*, this idea seems to be presented solely as a positive phenomenon. It enables easier communication and is supposed to be user-friendly and accessible. Despite that, one also needs to consider the harmful implications that using connected cars might signify. In this era of rapid technological progress, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep personal information safe. This poses multiple questions about the safety of one's personal data. For instance, what kind of information would connected cars be using? How would they be obtaining and using this information? On what premises would the exchange of the data take place? Hacker attacks in the past have proven that hackers target areas where they are most likely to obtain a large amount of personal data. Would European citizens' personal information remain safe if connected cars become popularly used? These are only some of the elements that seem to be ignored by Jean-Claude Juncker in *White Paper*. Overlooking them might result in a situation in which sharing information through connected cars is not appropriately controlled. It can lead to confidential data leaks and possibly a situation of a tragic conflict for the institutions in power in which the legislators would have to decide between allowing a free, virtually unsupervised use of connected cars and developing such technologies further, risking major data leaks, and restricting the use of connected cars for the

sake of data safety but at the same time decreasing users' freedom in this aspect which may be considered to be the authorities' negative interference within the private lives of the citizens.

It is also important to mention that there are specific differences between various parts of Europe that could potentially perturb applying some elements of the five scenarios to reality. This includes, for example, the economic contrast between the East and the West of Europe. It implies those scenarios that might work in Western European countries might not work in Eastern European countries, and vice versa. It would be ideal to minimise these differences as a first step and only focus on applying changes on a supranational level. However, *White Paper* does not address this concern.

Hence, this type of attitude might open up an opportunity for a negative future in which Europe and the European Union find themselves without a choice. It might be possible that the situation will take a turn for the worst, and legislators will have to choose from substandard options instead of having a broader range of more positive choices. What they must realise is that there is an absolute need to act steadily and possibly fast. The future of Europe cannot be ideal, but it also does not have to be tragic. To maintain peace and ensure a sustainable future for all European states and their citizens, some middle ground has to be discovered.

4. Conclusion and final thoughts

With all respect to Jean-Claude Juncker's hopes and expectations for Europe, the *White Paper on the Future of Europe* seems insignificant, in part consisting of prattle about achievements that were possible thanks to forming the European Union. The above discussion is by no means an attempt to discredit these accomplishments. Nonetheless, it is difficult, if not impossible, to ignore Juncker's significant miscalculations in terms of how realistic are the strategies that the paper contains, such as its lack of substance and concrete details regarding applying any of the five scenarios to reality.

Another element worth mentioning addresses the doubts and questions listed at the end of the introductory part of the vision report. Unlike the *White Paper on the Future of Europe*, this report attempts to find more of a central stance in the ongoing discussion of the potential future of Europe and the European Union, rather than a highly populist and vague one presented in this paper. Undoubtedly, it is understandable that a document such as the one

written by Jean-Claude Juncker is supposed to present the possibilities and hopes that Europe and the European Union create in a favourable manner. However, one should investigate these prospects, focus on the positives, and take a closer look at the darker possibilities. The most significant task for the legislators of the state members of Europe and the European Union is to find a centralised point that can be a solid foundation for making future decisions.

To achieve this, the European community should urge institutions in charge to take immediate and thought-through actions. European citizens have a right to demand conducting a more careful analysis of possible gains and losses and strengths and weaknesses of each of the five scenarios demonstrated in the *White Paper on the Future of Europe*. It is in our best interest to better understand the essence of the problems that Europe is currently facing to solve them more effectively and choose the best possible path for Europe's future.

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11.

Only Us: The Future of Citizenship

Loura Kruger

1. Introduction

As we have it now, citizenship is a fundamental part of life for most people in Europe and the modern world. A person is usually born with legal citizenship, defined by Bauböck (ch. vii) in Athenian and Roman terms as membership to a political community, whether it be through the principle of *ius soli*—the (birth)right of soil relating to the location of the child's birth—or more commonly through *ius sanguinis*, the (birth)right of blood, relating to the citizenship status of one or both of the child's parents; some nations also use a combination of both principles to establish the legal citizenship of the newborn (Dumbrava). Every child is born with the human right to nationality, and establishing citizenship promptly is critical to avoid violating this right by rendering a person stateless (OHCHR). While nationality and citizenship are not perfectly synonymous, they are connected enough in the sense that both can be obtained and exchanged in similar ways. In most cases, a child will grow up in a nation in which they have citizenship, among family and peers that share that citizenship, possibly creating strong cultural and national bonds with that national

community. In time, the person becomes an adult that, through this national citizenship, has rights and obligations to the state: voting, paying taxes and respecting the law, in addition to being eligible for benefits such as social welfare, government subsidies and consular protection abroad (Kirsch; Carabain et al.; S.W.L.).

While these factors encompass the formal aspect of citizenship, the social dimension of citizenship plays a crucial role in realising what it means to be a citizen. The notion of social citizenship refers primarily to the participatory aspects of being a member of a national community, rather than, for instance, simply fulfilling obligations: it entails engaging in political debate, voting consciously and deliberately, and being an active part in the politics, society, and governing of one's community (Carabain et al.). The concept of citizenship has evolved to meet the needs of communities for centuries: once cities and city-states became a common living arrangement, the need became apparent for a distinction between city freemen on the one hand, and women, slaves, and foreigners on the other, thus citizens—deriving from Latin' civitas' (associated with *city*), and related to 'denizen', meaning inhabitant (Golash-Boza)—were established. When borders were drawn between one place and the next, and loyalty to the immediate community was most important, national citizenship was developed (Heater). As we move deeper into the 21st century, into a world where the aforementioned borders become blurrier, where one corner of the globe can be connected to another faster than ever before, where nations and communities are more diverse than at any point in history, we may wonder: what comes next? In an unstoppably globalising world, where we are linked to the other through the internet and social media, something new is needed to combat growing problems that simply do not heed national borders.

2. An imaginative exercise

What would happen if, overnight, each one of us became a global citizen? Would there be chaos or calm? Would it change the way people see themselves or see each other? Perhaps there would be an outcry about the perceived loss of national identity related to replacing national citizenship—what then? These are often the first thoughts that arise at the mention of global citizenship: dystopian fears about the eradication of one's individuality or parts of one's identity (see Orwell); the standardisation of norms and

values that may not be one's own, but instead in accordance with some far away from global government, that now, suddenly, requires people to fulfil more or different obligations than those they are accustomed to (see Huxley). These are risks that would come with an attempt to implement Global Citizenship on a strictly formal level: the legal, political, and economic obstacles posed by enforcing Global Citizenship on a juridical scale. The possible *cultural* barriers, are insurmountable in a world where uninhibited nationalism, rising populism, outright xenophobia and covert inequalities still exist. So, how do we move forward into an increasingly globalising future where progressive equality is the norm and in which people from across the globe can confront global problems and create change? I propose that realising the notion of Global Citizenship on the *social* level is the key to equality and an effective solution to the issues that accompany globalisation and the inequalities resulting from it. While posing significant challenges on personal and societal levels, initiating a wide, connective system is a worthwhile and pertinent exercise that will pave the way to tackling global issues and establishing global equality.

3. Nationalism & Citizenship

In 1983, Benedict Anderson developed the concept of 'imagined communities' as a way to explore the notion and impacts of nationalism. In his book of the same title, Anderson defines a nation as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign… It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 6). The implications of the concept of imagined communities are powerful. They can be seen in modern politics: right-wing, nationalist populism in Europe and across the globe essentially exploits an 'us' versus 'them' narrative, where the former refers to the "pure people" (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser), and the latter refers to the "corrupt elite" [Ibid] in what Rensmann terms a vertical dichotomy. However, populist rhetoric also generates a horizontal dichotomy—that is, an internal barrier within an (imagined national) community, between the aforementioned "pure people" and those who are immigrants or part of a religious minority (Oudenampsen). Identities and bonds are created between certain people in certain groups through populist politi-

cal voices telling them who and what they *are* and who and what they are *not*. The political spills into the social when hate speech towards the 'other' becomes more acceptable and when those that don't match the *in-group* criteria are marginalised and discriminated against. Nationalism, as explained by Anderson's 'imagined communities' theory, allows for this dichotomy. Suppose national communities are socially constructed and have effectively created a sense of solidarity, as demonstrated by populist successes. What holds us back from creating global communities and solidarity on a much larger scale? Having a global identity under a system of Global Citizenship removes the 'them' from the dichotomy and leaves the '*us*'. We, as one group, all living on the same earth, under the same sky, connected in a universal imagined community where no one is left behind, and everyone is equally human—how do we get there?

4. European Citizenship: A Model?

As mentioned earlier, there are two dimensions of citizenship—the formal and the social dimension. Both entail rights and obligations, and within Europe, there is yet another level: European Citizenship, as held by all citizens of states that are members of the European Union (European Union 57). Citizens of and within the EU have rights and obligations to the European Union, such as being eligible and encouraged to vote beyond national borders. They are urged to participate in political life on a supranational level. As a benefit, European citizens are permitted in any fellow member state for travel, work or study, without discrimination based on nationality (European Union). In its 2010 treaty, the EU makes very clear that European citizenship is in no way intended to "replace national citizenship," but rather "be additional to" each individual's existing situation (European Union 57). On the social level of citizenship, the EU provides a framework in which common values are shared, human rights and freedoms are upheld, equality is respected, and diversity is celebrated (European Union 12). Furthermore, the EU aims to promote equality and non-discrimination for its citizens not only by endorsing these common values but by investigating the weaknesses and shortcomings in the community and coming to conclusions and solutions on how to tackle the issues that arise (European Union 34). The future of Europe's global neighbours holds that same cooperative potential. At this stage in history, to implement a new form of citizenship on the *formal* level

would prove exceedingly tricky—trying to organise as such a large number of actors under one leadership, and even trying to assemble such a leadership democratically, sounds near impossible, without mentioning any attempt to create a judicial structure under which to operate. Fortunately, however, it is already possible to envision a Global Citizenship that takes on a role akin to the social level of European citizenship. Not as a replacement to national or European citizenship, a Global one would complement and contribute to that which already exists. It would provide a further-reaching framework to uphold universal values and human rights while investigating global problems, finding the weaknesses and shortcomings on an international scale, and using the unprecedented size of its membership to source solutions and create progress.

5. Steps to a successful global citizenship

First, we must address the importance of establishing a community such as this instead of a collective. While a collective is a group of people that indeed share a common goal, in our social media—and online network-driven society—it tends to be based on a "one-way conversation… with strict operating guidelines, a hierarchy, and an entity that "leads," ensuring all users have the same goal" (Kolsky; see also Thomas). Furthermore, a collective may attempt to mould its members into "similarly styled" participants (Kolsky) for the purpose of that goal, something quite clearly demonstrated in popular dystopian novels such as George Orwell's *1984*: citizens of this world are under the strict leadership of 'The Party' who employ the services of 'Thought Police' to control the population and discourage individuality. The collective is made up of people who are but cogs in a machine, grinding for a common end. Instead, the effective implementation of Global Citizenship would require a global *community*: like-minded individuals who strive to increase their knowledge and power through two-way communication and celebrating diversity, identity, and individuality (Kolsky).

Establishing this community will require some sort of initial leadership and plan, but without a dominant hierarchy. Rather than waiting for official bodies or governments to make a move, it is also entirely possible for a grassroots movement from a diverse, already-existing, international community to rise and be the change. The Extinction Rebellion, a now transnational movement for climate justice, began as a simple grassroots call to

action in October 2018 and has become a driving force in the political debates surrounding environmental action (Green et al.; Extinction Rebellion; "Arrests As Extinction"). As mentioned above, the aim is not to implement Global Citizenship formally but rather to create a social dimension where like-minded individuals can come together and transcend the limitations of borders and nationality. Just as only a few nations joined together after the Second World War to create what was then the European *Community* and is now the powerful EU (Cini and Pérez-Solórzano Borragán 3), only a few are needed to establish a universal union. Just as the EU grew and grew as other states joined the initiative for a united future, so a global community and its Global Citizens will grow; this is necessary, for, in our globalised world, there are problems that no single individual, group, nation, or union can face alone: climate change, for example, requires drastic, collective action. Those bound together beyond national borders, not fighting for *the* environment but *OUR* environment, are able to make changes that would take immensely more effort and time to create laws for. Human rights violations will no longer be happening to faceless people in faraway places. They will be happening to members of our global community.

As the Netherlands' NCDO authors so clearly express it, "The global dimension of citizenship is manifested in behaviour that does justice to the principles of mutual dependency in the world, the equality of human beings and the shared responsibility for solving global issues" (Carabain et al. 30). In essence, to be a Global Citizen is to recognise the world as an undivided entity, and consequently behave in a manner that benefits our fellow citizens and the globe that we find ourselves on together; being an active member of the population and participating in social and political life for the betterment of the undivided community because there is no *them*—only us.

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12.

Sustainable Technological Development and Cross-Disciplinary Integration in Education: STEM and the Humanities

Marina Griško

> 1st December, 186-;10 p.m.: "*Murchison immediately pressed his finger upon the electric knob and hurled the electric spark into the depths of the Columbiad. […] An immense spout of fire sprang up from the bowels of the earth as if from a crater. The soil heaved and very few persons caught a glimpse of the projectile victoriously cleaving the air amidst the flaming smoke*" (Verne.104).
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> 16th July, 1969; 9:32 a.m.: "*When a Saturn V rocket launched Apollo 11 into Earth orbit from Cape Kennedy. After one and a half orbits of the Earth, the third stage of the Saturn V refired to send Apollo on its outward journey to the Moon. […] With Eagle attached to its nose, Columbia drew away from the third stage and continued toward the Moon*" (NASA EP-73).

1. Introduction: What if fiction became reality

If the dates and the sources were removed from the above quotations, would readers be able to identify which part was fiction and which part was real? Today, space exploration has become normal. However, before the technological boom, people might have considered space exploration and the role of technologies in their lives as fictional narratives. We are constantly confronted with ideas and possibilities about what the future holds through the media of literature and television, and this raises the question of whether

we believe these outcomes could become our reality. For instance, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley describes a society of passive consumers who only care about "new clothes" (3), while George Orwell's *1984* offers a scenario in which technology facilitates the totalitarian regime. The most current TV narratives appear to be a reaction to the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and biotechnology, and envision a future in which the most advanced innovations are fully integrated in daily life. For instance, the TV series *Better Than Us* illustrates the significant advantages of new technologies and, at the same time, opens up the topic of the robotic black market and political lobbying of robotic trade (Kessel and Dagan). In another series, *Battlestar Galactica*, a world is created in which robots learn how to self-reproduce, delude their creators (humans) and capture the world (Larson and Moore). AI in *Battlestar Galactica* considers humanity as low-level creatures who do not deserve to exist.

When we read or watch these fictional scenarios, we might be surprised by similarities with reality, therefore, the negative aspects of these stories evoke an anxiety that gives us reasons for thinking and acting. Humanity might write an alternative narrative about technological growth which will not "mess up the place we live" (Hedstrom 22). The narrative of sustainable technology implies the comprehension and prevention of the existing and potential risks for society. It also implies that technology is not being used in favour of a limited number of people. And last but not least, it entails unity, knowledge exchange and cooperation among the different actors.

The abovementioned novels and TV series seem to be very futuristic at first glance. However, one may suggest that, like a famous Disney song says, "the future has arrived". According to Olga Uskova, Head of the Department of Engineering Cybernetics of Skolkovo in Moscow, the latest developments in AI are dealing with neural networks in order to supply robots with human-like intuition, emotional intelligence, and "self-awareness" (Koetsier). At the same time, according to some theories of institutional change, despite the fact that social institutions are static, they are often not able to get along with a "constantly changing world" (qtd. in Kingstone and Caballero 166). The inability to adjust to the rapid technological changes on time might have serious consequences for people, countries, and social institutions. It is therefore crucial that the advanced technologies are being controlled by experts who want to use them for the betterment of society (Harari). Imagine a world in which super-intelligent and perceptive machines decide that

we, humans, are not ethical enough because our morality is corrupted and, therefore, we deserve to die. If humanity wants to avoid that bleak future envisioned in fictional stories, it should not disregard the potential technological threat. If people do not desire to become inert consumers of everything they are offered by technologies and to leave questions of ethics and morality to flow with the market demand, we should educate future decision-makers, engineers as well as civil society about these complex issues. Thus, this contribution aims to review some of the existing and potential threats that technological expansion poses and argues that cross-disciplinary integration in education would facilitate sustainable technological developments; specifically, the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and the Humanities.

2. Reality: technological challenges and cooperation

Many of the abovementioned developments in the field of technology undoubtedly have numerous advantages. AI is able to process data more effectively than humans, which significantly improves health and social services, elevates business, and contributes to safety in various transport systems (Harari; Akerkar). Besides, unlike a human being, in critical situations computer algorithms "could follow ethical guidelines much better than humans" (Harari 58) because people are often impacted by their feelings and emotions.

However, humanity should not underestimate the negative sides of technological development. The drawbacks of the aforementioned incorporation of ethical standards into the complex AI systems has become a widely discussed topic (Etzioni and Etzioni; Harari; Koetsier; Yampolskiy). For instance, blind applications and decisions based strictly on a program might (unintendingly) produce discrimination (Harari; Bostrom and Yudkowsky). Banks might constantly refuse to give a loan to persons who belong to a minority because the algorithms decide to do so. According to Nick Bostrom and Eliezer Yudkowsky, it might not be possible to trace the cause of such a rejection if the system is based on the "complicated neural network or genetic algorithm produced by direct evolution" (57).

Furthermore, scholars and scientists also discuss the distribution of technological benefits. Yampolskiy argues that only basic AI developments will serve the ordinary population because the more advanced technology

will be controlled by the elite. Harari is concerned with the "natural stupidity and cruelty of [the robots'] human masters" (62), as amply exemplified throughout human history. Some of the AI systems have already produced discriminatory, racist, pro-totalitarian, "pro-abuse" and "pro-suicide" (Yampolskiy xii–xiii) speeches. Likewise, Uskova explains that when scientists equip robots with emotional intelligence without limitations, they might include some elements of aggression, which could result in unpredictable consequences (Koetzer). Thus, what if the most progressive innovations fall into the hands of the wrong people?

Furthermore, technological developments might indirectly facilitate populism, and create more tension within society (Harari). Technologies create an atmosphere of uncertainty among ordinary citizens. People whose occupation is not connected to the current engineering developments "may not understand artificial intelligence and biotechnology, but they can sense that the future is passing them by" (Harari 8). The inability to retrain and/or to adopt to a new life narrative might create a "useless class" (Harari 32). Populists might take advantage of this uncertainty and instigate revolution "not against the economic elite that exploits people, but against an economic elite that does not need them any more" (Harari 9). According to Harari, "irrelevance" is much worse than "exploitation" (72) because a class which does not have an "economic worth" (9) is less likely to force an elite to reconsider its politics. Considering the inability of social institutions to keep up with the rapid change, this scenario does seem to be rather realistic.

Besides, technological competition between countries might lead to new conflicts. The current political situation illustrates that solidarity and cooperation between different nations is not a main priority on many political agendas. The European Union faces political conflicts not only with other countries but also within its own formations and institutions (Klose). Russia is preoccupied with creating its own "alternative" (Noutcheva 19) democratic model. The USA is building walls instead of destroying them. British society is divided by Brexit. These seem like perfect *divide et impera* settings for a potential internal or external threat. Therefore, political powers should look past their own selfish pursuits and work together to create a solid ground for cooperation and exchange.

A core question is thus: Who will dictate the ethical and moral standards of the machines? The market, politicians, engineers, lawyers, or philosophers? Should humanity create a universal approach, a common set of rules

and regulations, or do we need a variety of these? The future is uncertain, however, it is clear that today's cooperation between academic disciplines and international solidarity are key elements of future sustainability.

Technological development provides humanity with many privileges. Nevertheless, safety, ethics, morality, and ownership of innovations evoke many concerns. The most advanced technologies might damage liberal democracy, boost competition (in a negative sense of this notion) and, consequently, might lead to tensions on local and global levels. Therefore, innovations need to include certain rules and regulations, moral obligations, and must develop based on the knowledge and involvement of various players.

3. Future: Towards an Integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) with Humanities

It can clearly be inferred that one of the major steps to creating a sustainable technological narrative is to provide a solid platform for knowledge based on national and international cooperation. Education is a key element in order to equip current and future decision-makers with the necessary knowledge and tools. David Skorton recommends implementing the "branches from the same tree"–approach to education, which means that science, arts, and humanities would become "mutually reinforcing" (1865). He argues that STEM should be integrated with the arts and humanities in order to supply learners with "broad, holistic educational experiences", and to prepare "the next generation for the future work, life, and citizenship" (1865). The positive outcome of such an integration has been proven by research conducted by the National Academy of Science of the US. Their research shows that holistically trained students evince "higher order thinking, creative problem solving, content mastery of complex concepts, enhanced communication and teamwork skills, and increased motivation and enjoyment of learning" (Skorton 1866). For today, the major drawback of such integrated educational programmes is employment. Only about 30% of employees feel that students have gained the required knowledge and skills, while more than 80% think that cross-disciplinary programmes need to be improved (Skorton). Also in this regard, one of the ways to move towards technological sustainability is to train and teach students of STEM and students in the humanities to work together on a national and international level.

4. Outlook

Some might argue that diagnoses about technological challenges are exaggerated. Humanity survived and benefited from the industrial revolution, so technological development is just another significant step of evolutionary development. However, we should not forget that the industrial revolution facilitated violence against European colonial lands and there was enormous suffering and death during the First and Second World Wars. Hence, today's decision-makers have the opportunity to organise and prepare the world for change through knowledge and cooperation.

While engineers focus on innovation and technological advancement, the humanities contribute to maintaining and updating common human values such as ethics, morality, respect, compassion, mutual aid and indulgence. Integrating the humanities into STEM would help scientists understand and evaluate the contexts in which they are working. One of the examples is literature and its significant role in evoking sensual perceptions in humans. Bal and Veltkamp's theory of psychic numbing illustrates that personal life stories provoke more empathy and compassion than statistical information from the news. As any other cultural art, literature is immensely sensitive to societal flows as it reacts, reflects, predicts, and warns. Thus, introducing engineers to literary narratives in an approachable way would encourage them to create innovations that work *for* humans and not against them. In addition, this integration would make technologies more accessible and provide the humanities with new educational and professional tools. All in all, the integration of STEM and the humanities is mutually beneficial.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the humanities are often underestimated and there is a lack of representation of the humanities on the political agenda. Jürgen Mittelstrass points out problems with "visibility both in the public sphere and in the academic system itself", as well as "organisational" and "funding problems" (80). Thus, like national and international cooperation, education experiences a number of substantial challenges.

5. Conclusion

This contribution focused on the existing and potential dangers posed by technology and the integration of STEM with the humanities as an approach to

establish sustainable technological development. It has illustrated that the border between fiction and reality is very fragile and that cultural narratives provide us with a base for serious thought. Past and current technological developments illustrate that fiction might become reality—also in a negative sense. Current technological uncertainty poses challenges which are crucial for human existence in the future. Therefore, it is important to create the grounds for sustainable technological development.

One of the requirements for this is the integration of disciplines and cooperation within and between states. If national and international STEM professionals and humanity experts work together, they will be able to not only face but also combat the complex challenges of technology in dialogue. This integration will create courses, programmes and projects which involve more people, resulting in the wider spread and better networking of knowledge.

Thus, perhaps it is time to admit that technological progress does not provide humanity with sufficient time to face ambitious political challenges and will not forgive the decision-makers' short-term thinking. Therefore, a key strategy to cope with the challenges ahead is cooperation between people, countries, political institutions, and educational disciplines.

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13.

Space: The Final Frontier. A Vision of a Possible Future Among the Stars

Iris Bakker

How will future scholars and policymakers look back at our times? What challenges will they face? Here is a vision of what might await mankind…

United Beyond Horizons
European Commission for Safeguarding the Future
Brussels, March 2084

1. A New Society

Mass extinction. As the public has likely heard from Professor Daniel Rothman of MIT, the possibility of such an event occurring is nearing as the years pass. He has predicted that Earth will charter into unknown environmental territory by the year 2100, constantly at risk of catastrophic change that will result in mass planetary extinction (Rothman). Considering this tipping point is a mere sixteen years away at the time of writing this report, the pressure for humans to take action is too great to sit still. The need for a plan B—or, rather, planet B—has become incredibly pertinent, and the European Union has thus concluded it must start considering solutions to safeguard the future of human life before it is too late.

Currently, the most popular concept that has been proposed is that of planetary colonisation. Indeed, SpaceX owner Elon Musk already formed such plans in the first half of this century (Mosher). Though many found his intentions to colonise Mars to be unrealistically optimistic, he and his successors are keeping to his

promise. In accordance with his timeline, which details the steps in which SpaceX planned to establish settlements on Mars (Mosher), the first extraterrestrial city was built on Mars between 2032 and 2040, an action that sparked hope and optimism amongst Earth's inhabitants. Musk's ultimate goal of terraforming Mars into a habitable planet (Mosher) is still far down the road. However, as there has been ever-increasing awareness of the risk of planetary extinction within the next century, the European Union is convinced of the importance of finding alternative living environments for the human race. As such, it has appointed the European Commission for Safeguarding the Future (ECSF) to consider the available options. The Commission has concluded that, as proposed, planetary colonisation is currently the most feasible option. It is thus launching a five-year pilot of its own, aiming to start building its first Mars colony in 2085.

While the focus of this pilot primarily lies on developing and transporting the necessary technology, citizens, and nutrition to the planet so that the colony can be sustained, it is also important to look beyond this first step. Indeed, building a colony beyond Earth's frontiers is no small feat, nor one that should be taken lightly. Thus, it is vital to look to the future of such a civilisation and realise it will need a comprehensive political and social system to accommodate the predicted increasing numbers of both humans and colonies. This report aims to formulate advice on this issue by exploring several different political systems, looking at both the past and humanity's imagined future. In doing so, this report will attempt to answer the following question: what political system is the best fit for implementation in extra-terrestrial colonies?

2. A Glimpse Into the Past

As these extra-terrestrial colonies will be the first of their kind, essentially 'starting over', it is only logical to look to the very first Earthly civilisations for inspiration. Of course, the focus immediately falls on the first settlements, as these mirror the setup of the envisioned colonies more accurately than the groups of hunter-gatherers that are known to have roamed the earth before the first villages and cities were established (Diamond 1332). There are many first settlements available for closer study, though one of the first and perhaps most well-known ones is the ancient society of Egypt.

While many know this society for its mystic qualities, its pyramids, and its polytheistic religion, the influence of Egypt on current-day society stretches beyond this. For instance, the world has continued its tradition of administration

and bureaucracy, in addition to Egypt's—admittedly much more rigid—hierarchical system, as Kemp writes. However, he continues, unlike today, there was little to no social mobility for its inhabitants, nor were leaders democratically elected. The kings, ruling as if holding divine power (Kemp), had a comparable position to that of the absolute monarchs in societies like that of 18th-century France (McPhee) and held all three powers of government as defined by Montesquieu (Krause): the legislature, executive, and judiciary. One only needs to look to the bloody French Revolution to know that such forms of unchallenged power can result in grave injustices, inequality, and abuses of power, and will rightfully be met with an incredible amount of resistance (McPhee). As such, these systems will need to be avoided, should these planetary colonies want to last in the long term.

3. Contemporary Solutions, Contemporary Problems

One's gaze only needs to move a few centuries ahead to arrive at the political system that is currently the most widely implemented: democracy. It is generally considered to be the best political system up until today, and not for nothing: wars, poverty, and corruption are less common under democratic regimes than other political systems, and it is a system that actively involves the public in the process of building its future (Tilly 124; "What's Gone Wrong"). In 'The End of History and the Last Man', Fukuyama even argued it is the final, optimal form of government. While Fukuyama's statement might be debatable, it certainly seems that many agree with him. Indeed, the fact that "so many people in so many different parts of the world are prepared to risk so much for this idea is testimony to its enduring appeal" ("What's Gone Wrong").

However, democracy is also able to tear down societies from the inside. Consider some of the many examples in which democratically elected leaders have attempted to implement authoritarian political systems, such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey (Washington Post Editorial Board) and Viktor Orbán in Hungary (Beauchamp and Halmos). Moreover, polarisation has proven to foster easily under a democratic regime: in the United States, for example, the two-party system seems to have split the population in two (Galston and Nivola). This kind of conflict is, of course, highly undesirable, among other reasons because it can foster further polarisation and division within a society (Jacobs). This can have catastrophic consequences for the necessary cohesion within planetary colonies. Thus, other systems will need to be considered.

4. Skills Over Votes?

Those at SpaceX propose that Earth's new colonies need leaders who not merely know how to lead a society or possess the skills needed for interplanetary and intercolonial communication and diplomacy, but who also have a vast knowledge of the workings of such a colony in terms of its technology. This does not seem like a bad proposal, considering these leaders will have to deal with novel and challenging problems that might arise from issues such as faulty technology, nutrition shortages, and the very complex process of terraforming a planet. As such, a technocracy, a system led by those with technical expertise (Kurki), does seem tempting—if one assumes the best in these appointed rulers.

However, there are some glaring disadvantages to this system. While it is advisable to appoint skilled and knowledgeable people to leading positions, there is much that could lead to the failure of such a society: criticisms of this are found as early as ancient Greece, where Plato discussed this system in his texts on various systems of government (DeMichele). The philosopher pointed out the very real risk of a gaping divide between the ruling and non-ruling class, in addition to the dangers of granting almost unchecked power to a few leading individuals (DeMichele), something reminiscent of the aforementioned systems of ancient Egypt and pre-Revolution France. As Plato suggested, the risk of totalitarianism or tyranny is simply too great to fully implement a technocratic system (DeMichele).

5. To Boldly Imagine

As mentioned, the inhabitants of these new colonies will have to adapt to unprecedented environmental and living circumstances. Because of this, the existing or 'tested' political systems will likely never be fully applicable. Thus, this report will also look ahead in one of the only known ways: by looking at the way humans have imagined the future.

Of the many examples of imagined futures to be found, one of the most popular and long-lasting ones is that of the Star Trek universe. The exact ideology or political system of its ruling government, also called the United Federation of Planets, is unfortunately never made entirely clear (Allen). However, it is known that the system is not only set up like no other political system that exists today, but that it is also based on a wholly new and different political ideology (Allen). Moreover, there are indications that the Federation's structure is comparable to a mix between the United Nations and the European Union, with voluntary entry

and equal status between member states (Memory Beta). Each state also has a relatively large amount of freedom to handle internal issues on its own, without interference at the hands of the Federation (RAE M). In this way, inhabitants of each member state are able to build their own version of 'the best society' in their local sphere, with all states uniting under a set of common goals, namely "of universal liberty, justice, equality, trade, exploration, scientific advancement, peace, and mutual protection" (Memory Beta). In the case of planetary colonies, this system will allow colonies to deal with the foreseeable problems and challenges they will face, such as interplanetary communication, trade, and dependency on others. Additionally, a United Federation of Planets seems relatively easy to expand, should the number of extra-terrestrial colonies grow.

Unfortunately, what remains unclear is how local colonies will construct their own political systems. This can be a disadvantage, as it risks confusion and chaos in those colonies that will not immediately be able to implement a fitting political structure. However, it will also grant them the freedom to assess their most pertinent needs and construct the best system to account for them. After all, it is practically impossible to predict what setup would fit these yet-to-be-determined circumstances best. While this Commission will still aim to aid new colonies in the society-building process with think tanks and advisory reports like this one, it ultimately concludes that it could never assess the needs of its inhabitants as well as they themselves can.

6. Where No One Has Gone Before

In this report, the European Commission for Safeguarding the Future has explored some of the most widely known political structures to examine the question as to what system would be best for implementation in planetary colonies. However, no political system is perfect, and this report has certainly shown that what works now or what has worked in the past might not be the best way forward. The new challenges posed by the unprecedented environment of an extra-terrestrial colony leave us uncertain about the best way to accommodate it. For now, the Commission proposes to let the inhabitants of these colonies decide what political system they want to implement, while maintaining interplanetary communication and collaboration through an overarching organisation modelled after the United Federation of Planets as seen in Star Trek.

All in all, the Commission feels that current ideologies and systems should evolve to address the novel challenges and needs that an extra-terrestrial colony will present, just as humans have adjusted their belief systems to fit societal

developments in the past. We now have to imagine how exactly this could be accomplished. Indeed, humans have always moved forward through realising imaginations and visions of the future, and the Commission trusts that future interplanetary colonisers will be no different. In the end, only they can truly imagine the best way forward.

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Este libro fue compuesto por el equipo de
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Para los textos se utilizaron las fuentes Skolar Latin,
diseñada por David Březina, y Axios,
de los tipógrafos Rodrigo López y Sergio Leiva.

The pieces in this volume share the common pursuit of meditating over some space of conflict, particularly, but not limited to, a European context. These conflicts cover spaces as diverse as the modernist struggle between rationality and irrationality; re-interpretations of the old nature-culture dichotomy, now understood between the poles of the Anthropocene and the post-human; and the pursuit of a path between realism and utopianism in political discourse—not to forget that most recognisable of physical conflict spaces, the battlefield, whether on the plain of ancient Troy or in the trenches of the First World War.

The various essays employ an impressive range of different primary materials, including genre fiction such as science fiction, ancient poetry, literary fiction, a low-budget YouTube miniseries, commercial television series, and video games; outside of an interest in the representational arts, several discussions drew on narratological and discourse-analysis approaches in order to interrogate contemporary political manifestos or general vernacular discourse. To match this diversity of materials, a great variety in different academic fields can be recognised, introducing the reader to theoretical backgrounds and the typical tools employed therein, for example humour studies, memory studies, and cognitive narratology.

Hamish Williams