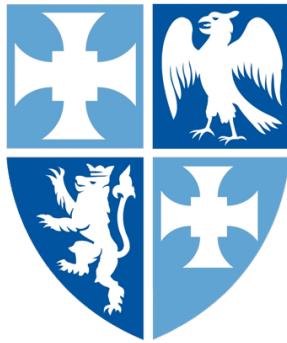




***IN LUCEM - INTO THE LIGHT***

**ST JOHN'S COLLEGE ACADEMIC JOURNAL 2021-22**



Dear Johnian,

Welcome to this year's edition of the St John's College Academic Journal – a platform to showcase some of the outstanding work produced by members of our college over the last year. The theme, *In Lucem*, encapsulates the emergence of our close-knit community from the challenges of social isolation, disruption to annual traditions, and uncertainty brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, the eagle, a symbol of our college patron saint, St John the Evangelist, also represents the spirit of our committed cohort of students and staff to succeed and perpetuate in the face of adversity. In the Middle Ages, eagles were believed to be able to stare unflinchingly into the sun and fly higher than all other birds and, hence, come the closest to heaven. Many church lecterns were, and are still, fashioned into the shape of gilt wings and golden beaks, representing the flight of the Gospel to all four corners of the globe.

With an inclusive Christian ethos at its heart, St John's hosts a diverse range of students from different disciplinary backgrounds. Conversations between students reading different subjects, often over good grub in the Haughton Orangery, is essential for innovation, broadening perspectives, and challenging frontiers of knowledge. Our first section, entitled **Christian Conversations**, sees theologians Michael Baldwin, Jennifer Knox, and Michael Simants explore different tenets of Christianity. In the second section, **Learning from the Past**, Shuying Wang, Tommaso Quaglia, John Wallace, and Abraham Leonard Keefe bring together expertise from English Literature, Classics, Theology, and Modern Languages and Culture. **Lived Experiences** forms the third section, with Olivia Kemp, Nick Searle-Donoso, and Chang Shen representing English and Education Studies. Finally, Shengyu Chen, Kaiye Yang, and Zhimin Wu share their work from Data Science in **The Data Revolution**.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition. Thank you to the editorial team, Toby Pitchers, Natalie Lam, Harriet Summers, and Joe Tolhurst.

Alex Hibberts

*Editor, 2021-22*

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# Christian Conversations

## **1. What Might Those in Christian Ministry Learn from Jordan Peterson's Biblical Series About Engaging and Teaching the Bible?**

Michael Baldwin, Undergraduate - BA in **Theology, Ministry and Mission** (Cranmer Hall)

In this piece I want to explore the phenomenon of the Jordan Peterson Biblical lecture series. The Dr Peterson lectures are 2.5 hours long and consist of him working through the Biblical stories and text at a slow rate. Yet each lecture has millions of views, inspiring many to reconnect with their faith or approach the Bible with intellectual seriousness for the first time. Jordan Peterson himself is not a confessing Christian yet has managed to inspire millions to engage with the Bible while many churches in contemporary society will struggle to hit three figures in their attendance. This indicates that the ideas of Christianity still spark the interest and imagination of many and indicate a longing for meaning and God. I want to draw out some of the key content focusing especially on the story of Adam and Eve which he covers mostly in Biblical series II.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, I want to explore how Jordan Peterson approaches the biblical texts and from there examine the benefits and pitfalls of his work for those engaged in Christian ministry.

### **Content of the Biblical Lectures**

In lectures I and II Peterson has looked at the idea of God as a metaphor for consciousness. He links this to how God brings order out of chaos in Genesis 1 and links it to the first chapter of John's gospel. He says consciousness is the inbuilt structure given to us that allows us to experience the world and order it. By doing this we imitate the action of God by grappling with potentiality (chaos); and trying to give it form (order).<sup>2</sup> We will now look at how Dr. Peterson's commentary on the Garden of Eden and how it represents a lesson about order and chaos. We will then see how he interprets Adam and Eve's dialogue with God as a practical lesson in speaking the truth and taking responsibility.

The image of the Garden of Eden as a walled garden<sup>3</sup> is used to represent the structure of half nature (chaos) and half order. To have the right conditions in our life and society we need a certain amount of order and stability to operate. Fyodor Dostoevsky points out however, if all we

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<sup>1</sup> Jordan Peterson, *Biblical Series II: Genesis 1: Chaos and Order*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdrLQ7DpiWs>. Last accessed 19-02-2022.

<sup>2</sup> Peterson, *Lecture II*, 6:19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 32:20.

had was order and safety, we would go crazy after a month!<sup>4</sup> We also need a small amount of chaos in order to challenge and inform ourselves of the things we don't yet understand. By facing and overcoming these challenges we update ourselves and become more than we were. The unknown comes with danger, but it also comes with promise. This is deeply embedded in the human spirit which wants to go out on an adventure and conquer the unknown (chaos).

If, however, there is too much chaos it can overwhelm the well-built walls around our garden. Peterson uses the example of betrayal by somebody close to us. Such close relationships are based on certain assumptions about the past and present and about that person we thought we knew. One moment we are secure in our narrative assumptions then the next we are in a different place. Moments after discovering this betrayal, the projection of our present and future will be radically different.<sup>5</sup> This narrative you were certain about, the walled garden you created out of the chaos collapses back into the potential chaos from which it emerged.<sup>6</sup> This represents a journey into the underworld. In life no matter how certain we are of something there is always something we did not consider. A serpent that can pop its head up and damage us; that can bring an end to our living in Eden just like Adam and Eve.<sup>7</sup> This allegorical reading of the garden of Eden is an archetype precisely because it is dealing with the human condition that is universal to us all.<sup>8</sup>

Peterson links this scientifically to the function of the right and left hemispheres of our brain. The right hemisphere deals with what we don't know while the left side is adapted to the world we know.<sup>9</sup> By showing how Genesis reflects in narrative form what science tells us about the function of our brains gives credibility to Genesis to an audience that holds science as the most valuable discipline. It is capturing human action in narrative form what science tells us in theory.

Peterson's interpretation of the walled garden as representing order and chaos would not be a traditional interpretation as man is placed in the garden pre fall (Genesis 2:8-10). Even if we accept that there was some form of chaos before creation - Genesis 1 indicates that chaos retreats as God forms order and all that he makes is good. After creating humanity God declares creation to be very good as Gordon J. Wenham notes, '... the finished whole is said to be "very good," ... The harmony and perfection of the completed heavens and earth express more adequately the character

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<sup>4</sup>Fyodor Dostoevsky, 'Chapter 8' in *Notes from the Underground, and The Gambler*: (2008; online edn, Oxford World's Classics, Dec. 2020), <http://dx.doi.org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1093/owc/9780199536382.003.0010>. Last accessed 26 Nov. 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson, *Lecture II*, 28:30.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 31:52.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 31:22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 31:48.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, 58:26.

of their creator than any of the separate components can.<sup>10</sup> John Calvin makes a similar point when he writes, "... after the fabrication of the world was complete in all its parts, and had received, so to speak, the final and finishing touch, he declares it to be perfectly good, so that we may know that there is symmetry of God's work to the highest perfection, to which nothing can be added."<sup>11</sup>

Since Adam is in a pre-fall state he is living in harmony with the rest of creation. However, I would like to suggest Peterson's reading is not necessarily contrary to a detailed reading of the Genesis accounts. Adam is put in the garden to tend and care for it (Genesis 2:15). This suggests the garden needs to be updated and attended to. Also, Genesis 2:18 says it is not good for man to be alone. God makes Eve to help Adam. Again, there is an assumption that while things are good and orderly, there is potentiality for things to be better. Perhaps even a hint that chaos could occur if things are not given their proper attention. Augustine acknowledges that even though this work pre fall was happy and joyful humanity still needed to attend to what was here.<sup>12</sup> This would fit with Peterson's reading as he is calling us to pay attention and the need for a small amount of chaos to help us grow and flourish.

Peterson then examines the temptation of Adam and Eve. After eating the fruit, they become self-conscious and aware of their own mortality. Unlike other living forms human beings can project their own mortality into the future. They also become capable of being malevolent.<sup>13</sup> God asks them why they are hiding to which they respond that they hid because they were naked and afraid. This questioning from God is not seen as a lack of knowledge but rather an invitation for Adam and Eve to acknowledge their wrongdoing; and by so doing enter into an honest relationship with God. However, the response of Adam is to blame Eve and Eve blames the serpent. For Peterson this story represents the human tendency to rationalize our wrongdoing<sup>14</sup> by not taking responsibility and putting the blame onto somebody else. For Peterson, a better response would be something like, "To stand up straight with your shoulders back is to accept the terrible responsibility of life, with eyes wide open. It means deciding to voluntarily transform the chaos of potential into the realities of habitable order."<sup>15</sup> To neither address or accept responsibility is to deny the one possible solution we have of dealing with the problem. Peterson thinks, like Adam and Eve, we are

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<sup>10</sup> Gordan J. Wenham, *World Biblical Commentary Volume 1: Genesis 1-15* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher 1987), 34.

<sup>11</sup> John Calvin. In *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Genesis 1-11* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 63.

<sup>12</sup> Saint Augustine, In *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Genesis 1-11* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 60.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Kaczor and Matthew R. Petrusik, *Jordan Peterson, God, and Christianity* (Park Ridge, Illinois: Word on Fire Institute, 2021), 38.

<sup>14</sup> Kaczor, JP, 40.

<sup>15</sup> Jordan Peterson, *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 2018), 27.

all guilty of blaming someone else for our expulsion out of Eden and that the antidote to this is to take responsibility and be self-fixers.

### **Jordan Peterson Approach**

The approach Jordan Peterson takes to the Bible covers various disciplines. He states numerous times in the lectures that he is looking to approach the biblical stories from an evolutionary, phenomenological, moral, practical and psychological point of view.<sup>16</sup> Peterson specializes in psychology and is well learned in many other sciences and therefore his opinion carries weight in the public sphere where science sits at the top of the hierarchy. Most of the time Peterson is not looking to read them historically but psychologically as narrative dramas that articulate universal patterns of human behavior.<sup>17</sup> “And the psychological meaning of the text is found in interpretations that help us to live well...In this focus on action, what Peterson means by the psychological reading of the Bible is what someone like Augustine would call the moral reading of the Bible.”<sup>18</sup> Peterson does allow for much mystery to be present in these stories acknowledging numerous times there are things we don’t understand. They have layers of meaning and wisdom as Peterson has said, “I was trying to investigate these stories that I knew were beyond my comprehension...”<sup>19</sup> He also declares the Biblical stories to be “...the birthplace of sophisticated philosophical ideas and wisdom.”<sup>20</sup>

By using an interdisciplinary approach Peterson is trying to help highlight truths about these texts that have been lost in the previous centuries when historical criticism became the dominant form of viewing the Bible. It is important to be clear, this is not a criticism of the historical critical approach. This is only to say that in using different methods Peterson is helping to illuminate different truths that might be lost using only one form of interpretation. Calvinist Paul VanderKlay has praised Peterson for reminding Christians of the need to approach the texts using a range of disciplines as the modernist approach to the Bible has become focused only upon finding a ‘literal meaning’.<sup>21</sup> Bishop Robert Barron made a similar point when speaking on Peterson’s popularity and the churches struggle to translate the message to people. He argues the church has made an unconscious concession to materialism which was not the worldview of the Biblical authors,

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<sup>16</sup> Peterson, *Lecture II*, 1:32.

<sup>17</sup> Kaczor, *JP*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid 12.

<sup>19</sup> *The 4 Horsemen of Meaning: Bishop Barron, John Vervaeke, and Jonathan Pageau – JBP Podcast S4: E60.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCvQsqSCWjA> 1:27. Last accessed 14-12-2021.

<sup>20</sup> Peterson, *Lecture II*, 1:32.

<sup>21</sup> Paul VanderKlay, *Why Jordan Peterson may become important for Biblical Interpretation*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC3H0ctgWE8>. 18:30. Last accessed 19/02/2022.

We forgot a lot of our own tradition and underplayed it... we were instructed in the Bible... in pure historical criticism. It was a method of Biblical approach that emphasized... a very rationalistic method to break the scriptures down... the whole idea of meaning, of what the scriptures were telling us about God, our relationship to God, the mystical dimension to life, that was all very muted...<sup>22</sup>

The results of this meant that the church and Christians lost the ability to wrestle with the deep mystical dimension of the scriptures that is found in the church fathers.<sup>23</sup> Petersons is in fact bringing to light a practice found in some of the earliest Christian thinkers such as Ambrose, Augustine and Origen,<sup>24</sup> "Peterson, as it were, reinvents the interpretive wheel that these earlier thinkers had crafted before him, but does so in a way that incorporates contemporary science, literature and philosophy."<sup>25</sup>

This section has shown Dr Peterson exhibits an approach that draws on insights from a range of different disciplines. This way of approaching the text is not new but can be found in the early church. Christians from different denominations such as VanderKlay and Bishop Barron have praised Peterson's approach to the Bible that can speak deeply into the universal conditions and patterns of human behavior.

### **Application to Ministry**

Having examined Peterson's approach and a portion of his content I want to pick out a few key points I think his Biblical Series can offer those in Christian ministry. Firstly, his application of the Genesis stories is highly practical emphasizing the importance of personal responsibility, the call to adventure, and the need for putting our lives in order. His call to be attentive and put ourselves together means when chaos arrives, we are able to deal with it more effectively. Jonathan Pageau comments that Peterson forces, "a lot of Christians to reconsider what this has to do with my life. How it binds it together."<sup>26</sup> This is because of his approach as well as his content. As Bishop Barron has argued Christians are guilty of forgetting their best traditions and have been too influenced by a materialistic framework.<sup>27</sup> Kaczor writes, "... his rich and appealing approach to scripture – one rooted in scientific, literary, and tropological interpretation – has many points of contact with the Christian tradition."<sup>28</sup> I believe this has helped in building bridges and giving credibility to the Bible in

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<sup>22</sup> Barron, *4 horsemen*, 1:25- 26.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 1:26.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 1:29.

<sup>25</sup> Kaczor, *JP*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Pageau, *4 Horsemen*, 1:24.

<sup>27</sup> Barron, *4 Horsemen*, 1:26.

<sup>28</sup> Kaczor, *JP*, 64.

contemporary culture in which the Bible is often viewed as anti-scientific or a collection of old stories that are no longer relevant.

Peterson approaches the Bible as something he doesn't understand and says he left room and mystery in the hope that the text would reveal something to him. He didn't want to come to the text with a preconceived theology then tell people what it meant. In his approach Peterson takes the listener on a journey with him. He is not just telling people what to think. Bishop Barron asks, when we go to church, do we feel like we are being led into a structure of deep meaning? Not usually.<sup>29</sup> The church fathers like Peterson, are thinking through the texts trying to draw people closer to God and grapple with the great mysteries. Bishop Barron argues Peterson has stumbled upon something old that can still empower people.<sup>30</sup>

Despite there being many positives there are also some pitfalls that those in Christian ministry should be careful of emulating. First is the lack of Grace in Peterson's message. Giles Frazer<sup>31</sup> draws parallels between Peterson and Pelagius in that both emphasize the ability of individuals to be self-fixers. This contrasts with traditional Christian orthodoxy influenced by Augustinian who argues we are tainted by sin and by our own efforts cannot attain salvation or consistently follow the guidance of our consciences. This is where grace comes in and God assists us.

Another criticism of Peterson's interpretation is that his application can often be quite individualistic. Ironically, despite his approach reconnecting with the riches of the church fathers, he neglects grace and community which were very important to them. This is a point Jonathan Pageau makes saying Peterson doesn't make the final step in understanding that his reading of scripture should result in community, liturgy, and participation.<sup>32</sup> The need for the individual to find expression in shared narrative and ritual is key to Christian identity. This is not surprising given the Biblical texts have been understood as covenantal documents. God's grace and God's gift of the church (communal participation) are just two reasons why we can't turn Christianity into a philosophy of self-help.

Christianity at its core recognizes our own inability, because of sin, to fix ourselves. Megan Dent thinks his conflation of Christianity with secular ideas produces a negative result, "Professor Peterson had secularised the idea of taking up one's own cross, 'which is pick up your own heavy

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<sup>29</sup> Barron, *4 Horsemen*, 1:27-32.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 1:29.

<sup>31</sup> Giles Frazer, *What Peterson Shares with Pelagius* <https://unherd.com/2018/05/jordan-peterson-shares-pelagius/> last accessed 19-02-2022.

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Pageau, *Jordan Peterson and the Stories We Live In*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTsRnW6baO0>. Last Accessed 19-02-2022.

cross, the heaviest load, and carry that, and it will make you strong.' He is dealing with a kind of Christian ethic, but he's channelling it into self-responsibility, self-actualisation message."<sup>33</sup> Dent is right to highlight the role that God plays and to point out that, Christianity isn't just about morality, but is in fact a story of God's salvation for us. As Augustine taught without God there is no salvation, and without salvation Christianity doesn't add up to much.<sup>34</sup> In Peterson's defence I do think his call to action and attentiveness is something those in ministry could learn from. I think there are common patterns found in some churches that because we have grace, we become neglectful around our spiritual growth and sanctification. Perhaps Peterson's approach could be a helpful reminder to be more attentive to walking with God as individuals and as a church.

## Conclusion

In conclusion I think those in Christian ministry can learn much from Jordan Peterson's approach and content of his Biblical Series on Genesis. I think there are also points which we should challenge and reject. First of all the strengths. His ability to be amazed by the mystery of these texts as a non-confessing Christian should cause us reflection. His ability to use a multidisciplinary approach and draw out such practical application that millions have connected with should at the very least cause us to reflect on how we are communicating the gospel. Peterson is reminding us to reconnect with some of our best traditions found in the world views and methodologies of the early church fathers. However, and perhaps ironically, the church fathers stressed the importance of grace, and the church, two things Peterson omits in his Biblical Series. I think Pageau is right in pointing out that Peterson does not take that final step in seeing how the Christian faith finds its identity in participation with a personal God through the ritual and celebration of the community of the church. The lack of room for grace puts Peterson in danger of Pelagianism and turning Christianity into another self-help philosophy which takes away from grace which is central and most beautiful to the Christian message.

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<sup>33</sup> Megan Dent, *Jordan Peterson Describes his Difficulties with Christianity* <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/1-april/news/world/jordan-peterson-describes-his-difficulties-with-christianity>. Last accessed 19-02-2022.

<sup>34</sup> Giles, *Peterson and Pelagius*, <https://unherd.com/2018/05/jordan-peterson-shares-pelagius/> Last accessed 19-02-2022.

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## **2. Kierkegaardian Communication and Its Impact on Female Voices in Theology and Religion**

Jennifer R. Knox, Postgraduate – PhD in **Theology** and Religion (Modern Theology and Ecclesial History)

An important element of the discussion surrounding “Women and God” is how female voices are received within theology and religion. I contend that Kierkegaard’s style of communication provides a useful lens through which to examine how women’s voices are treated in academic settings. Kierkegaard is (in)famous for employing indirect communication throughout his authorship, using pseudonyms, humour, irony, and parables, to force the reader to encounter and wrestle with the ideas he presents on an existential level. Kierkegaard’s indirect approach to subjective communication, i.e., how his writing conveys a rigorous intellectual challenge while personally impacting his readers, produces a gendered response. In this paper, I examine the reception of Kierkegaard (tracing the differing trends in responses amongst men and women to Kierkegaard and his writings) in conjunction with recent studies on gender in religion and theology. I begin by observing how these responses throughout the reception history show that regardless of the reader’s true familiarity with or understanding of Kierkegaard, his two-faceted methodology (intellectualism with existential commitment) perpetuates the patriarchal trend/confirms male bias in an academic context. Kierkegaard’s reception provides a case study of how men assume they have something to say that is worth hearing, while women are often inclined to defer to the other. This gendered propensity in discourse is a trend observed in various countries and disciplines; it is often discussed using terms such as “self-silencing,” “mansplaining,” and “hepeating”. I will summarize some of this research later on to support my analysis of the gendered response people have to reading Kierkegaard. I then demonstrate the realities of gender in Theology departments and academic discussions. Afterwards, I discuss the particular contributions Kierkegaard’s style makes to his gendered reception, especially the role played by his focus on the “single individual.” While I argue that Kierkegaard’s style maintains, rather than challenges, personal patriarchal bias in academic contexts, I will conclude by suggesting how a fuller understanding of Kierkegaard might begin to address this disparity.

Much has been written on Kierkegaard’s theory of gender and attitudes towards women. Very little has been written on the effect gender has on the reception of Kierkegaard’s work, particularly the gendered reception of Kierkegaard’s writing and the impact it makes on his readers both intellectually and personally. Readers often first encounter Kierkegaard as undergraduates in general introductory courses, only to be captivated by his thought, prompting individuals to continue think and write about him, even if he is outside of their subject area. This attention is not negative, in

fact Kierkegaard himself would likely have approved. However, the sense of kinship readers have with him opens the door to their gendered responses. I will discuss this at greater length later in the paper. Kierkegaard's style, his focus on the single individual, and his psychological bent engender a particular response that weds deep thought with personal challenge. There are many academic journal articles and other recent publishing, with titles such as "Why Kierkegaard in Particular?"<sup>1</sup> or "Personally Speaking ... Kierkegaardian Postmodernism and the Messiness of Religious Existence."<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, the majority of these articles are written by men. What is clear from the presence of these articles which relate the author's personal interactions with Kierkegaard's thought, is that one cannot truly read and interact with Kierkegaard on a purely academic plane but must wrestle with the existential questions he raises in the life of each reader and scholar. This reaction sets the stage for a gendered response that can be seen throughout the reception history.

In examining Kierkegaard's reception history, I focus on how each gender is or is not motivated to speak (or write) about Kierkegaard.<sup>3</sup> From the days of his early publishing, Kierkegaard has always been of interest to both male and female readers.<sup>4</sup> Kierkegaard's writing is concerned with the single individual and when readers encounter him and his indirect approach to subjective communication, they are simultaneously intellectually challenged and personally impacted resulting in an experience of kinship with him. When these readers are men, they are more inclined to speak authoritatively about Kierkegaard's thought (even if they only have limited exposure to it). Women also experience this dual impact and feeling of kinship, but rather than fostering confidence to speak, they are more likely to downplay their comprehension. This trend is pervasive, beginning with his earliest readers. Men, even when pushed to their intellectual limits by Kierkegaard still confidently wrote about him and his work. For example, in his memoirs Meir Aron Goldschmidt writes about *Either/Or*, "...I have difficulty remembering my own understanding of it... this was something I really couldn't understand, and I left it for the genuine and proper masters to decide. I myself wrote a rather foggy and stilted but also enthusiastic encomium on the book in *The Corsair* of March 10, 1843."<sup>5</sup> Goldschmidt confesses the limits of his understanding and yet was still confident enough to publish his own thoughts on Kierkegaard's writing in a popular newspaper. Signe Læssøe,

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<sup>1</sup> Alastair Hannay, 'Why Kierkegaard in Particular?', *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, 2010 (2010) <<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110223026.33>>.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Simmons, 'Personally Speaking ... Kierkegaardian Postmodernism and the Messiness of Religious Existence', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 24.5 (2016), 685–703 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2016.1247186>>.

<sup>3</sup> *Encounters with Kierkegaard: A Life as Seen by His Contemporaries*, ed. by Bruce H. Kirmmse (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996); Habib C. Malik, *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard: The Early Impact and Transmission of His Thought* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Kirmmse, p. 94.

<sup>5</sup> Kirmmse, p. 69.

on the other hand, wrote in a letter, “After one has read [*Either/Or*] one feels disgust for the author, but one profoundly recognizes his intelligence and his talent... In fact, I only understand a small fraction of the book; it is altogether too philosophical... I expect a critique to appear in [Heiberg’s] newspaper....”<sup>6</sup> Læssøe expresses a similar amount of understanding as Goldschmidt, records her own critique of Kierkegaard privately, and then waits for someone else to start the public discussion. I recognize that this may in part be the result of the opportunities available to women in nineteenth-century Denmark, but I maintain that these quotes encapsulate a larger and more pervasive trend. From his earliest years as a published author, Kierkegaard’s style confirmed both male bias, the belief men hold that they have something to contribute to the conversation, and female bias, the inclination towards “self-silencing” and non-participation in public debate. More generally, Kierkegaard’s early readers note his significant popularity among a female audience.<sup>7</sup> Malik Habib’s work surveys the early reception history of Kierkegaard, from his own era through the end of the 1920s. By the second decade of the twentieth century, women were beginning to contribute to a greater degree in wider scholarly discourse. However, in Habib’s thorough record of Kierkegaard’s early reception the reflections of women amount to a very small percentage; only a handful of women are part of his detailed index. Though women were participating in academia to a greater degree, there does not seem to have been an increase in their remarks on Kierkegaard. This lack further demonstrates that female responses to Kierkegaard were not verbalized in public arenas.

This gendered response is not unique to Kierkegaard. The tendency of women to minimize their understanding or to not engage in various dialogues has been termed “self-silencing” or “self-censuring” by scholars of discourse and gender.<sup>8</sup> Often this “self-silencing” is done as a protective measure or in anticipation of external silencing.<sup>9</sup> This is furthered by two male trends. The first trend, the tendency to over-explain concepts, especially to women (even if the women are experts in the area), has been termed “mansplaining.”<sup>10</sup> The second, the restating, by a man, of an idea a woman first suggested, often the idea was dismissed when she said it but accepted when he did, is

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<sup>6</sup> Kirmmse, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Kirmmse, p. 202.

<sup>8</sup> Bonita London and others, ‘Gender-Based Rejection Sensitivity and Academic Self-Silencing in Women’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102.5 (2012), 961–79 <<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026615>>; John Horton, ‘Self-Censorship’, *Res Publica: A Journal of Moral, Legal and Social Philosophy*, 17.1 (2011), 91–106.

<sup>9</sup> Sarah Jane Aiston and Chee Kent Fo, ‘The Silence/Ing of Academic Women’, *Gender and Education*, 33.2 (2021), 138–55 (p. 139) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2020.1716955>>.

<sup>10</sup> Natalia Imperatori-Lee, ‘Father Knows Best: Theological “Mansplaining” and the Ecclesial War on Women’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 31.2 (2015), 89–107. This term is often seen as arising from an essay by Rebecca Solnit in 2008 titled “Men explain things to me”.

often termed “hepeating.”<sup>11</sup> These terms have been applied to a variety of disciplines and their prevalence in academic contexts in particular is undisputed.

In addition to silencing, “mansplaning,” “hepeating” and other micro-inequities women experience in their daily life in academia, scholars in a variety of fields acknowledge the presence of the “leaky pipeline.” The “leaky pipeline” refers to the increased loss of female talent the higher up in academia one goes.<sup>12</sup> The phenomenon of the “leaky pipeline” can be found in the humanities and natural sciences alike. Most pertinent to the discussion at hand is a 2013 report published out of Durham University regarding the prevalence of the leaky pipeline within Theology and Religion departments across the UK. While women outnumber men at the undergraduate level, they represent only 29% of academic staff and only 16% of full professors.<sup>13</sup> “As the gender ratio becomes more skewed in favour of men over the course of the student experience, it is interesting to ask at which point most women drop out. Between the undergraduate and the MA level, there is a drop in the proportion of women that amounts to 18.4 percentage points; the drop between MA and PhD level is 8.5 percentage points.”<sup>14</sup> The report compared this drop to that in Philosophy, English, Maths, Chemistry, and Anthropology. While each discipline did see a decline in female students as the academic level increased the “drop off rate for female [Theology and Religious Studies] students is more than twice that of any of these other subjects”.<sup>15</sup> This indicates that the field has a unique and profound struggle with gender equality.

While the issue of gender differences in dialogue and academic contexts is ubiquitous, it is clear that the issue is pronounced in Theology and Religion. This, in turn, brings me back to discussions of Kierkegaard. He provides an interesting filter through which to view this question of gendered response because his thought is rooted, apart from the content of his arguments, in his style and his focus on the “single individual,” i.e., his methodology. The percentage of female scholars of Kierkegaard (and philosophy/theology in general) is still a minority which is furthered by the patriarchal nature of the academic discourse itself. The reception of Kierkegaard as seen through societal and academic gender bias shines light on how the patriarchal tendencies are present within the style and corpus of one of the giants of intellectual history himself. While there is a gender

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<sup>11</sup> Alina Preda, ‘A Defense of the Cross-Cultural Approach to Male-Female (Mis)Communication’, *Philobiblon*, 22.2 (2017), 187–99 (p. 194) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.26424/philobib.2017.22.2.15>>.

<sup>12</sup> Alecia J. Carter and others, ‘Women’s Visibility in Academic Seminars: Women Ask Fewer Questions than Men’, *PLOS ONE*, 13.9 (2018), 1–22 (p. 19) <<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202743>>.

<sup>13</sup> Mathew Guest, Sonya Sharma, and Robert Song, *Gender and Career Progression in Theology and Religious Studies*. (Durham: Durham University, 15 November 2013), pp. 1–25 (p. 10) <<http://trs.ac.uk/news/gender-andcareer-progression-in-theology-and-religious-studies/>> [accessed 29 March 2021].

<sup>14</sup> Guest, Sharma, and Song, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Guest, Sharma, and Song, p. 11.

disparity in responses to many thinkers within the standard “canon” valued in academia, the disparity in Kierkegaardian scholarship is an issue exacerbated by Kierkegaard. As Kierkegaard seeks to highlight the “single individual” and writes in such a way that the individual must personally respond to his thought, he perpetuates patriarchalism. In focusing extensively on the individual, his readers are not challenged to think about their place within the group or the impact their gender has on their wider interactions. Each reader is “the individual” Kierkegaard is addressing, and his writing encourages them to think through their own responses, perspectives, and opinions, rather than fostering an awareness of the other. Patriarchalism is the dominant approach to gender with which most of Kierkegaard’s readers are familiar. The myopic focus on their own realities that results from Kierkegaard’s style causes readers to retain their ingrained patriarchal biases. The challenging of social inequalities is beyond the scope of what the “single individual” is being pushed to contemplate. Rather than forcing men to think through the consequences of their tendency to “mansplain” or “hepeat” or forcing women to challenge their propensity to self-silence, Kierkegaard encourages the reader to fixate on their own internal response. Because of his style and focus on existential engagement, readers of Kierkegaard can easily allow their reading of him to affirm their presumption that if male, they have something to say worth saying, while female readers are more likely to dismiss their own ideas or sublimate their desire to express their thoughts in conformance with social norms. To summarize briefly: the focus on the internal wrestling of the “single individual” lends towards confirmation bias of prevalent gendered interactions and assumptions.

Yet, attention must be given to a potential antinomy: does Kierkegaard’s method perpetuate a patriarchalism in the reception thereof or does the patriarchal reception of Kierkegaard miss those moments when he critiques the patriarchy? While discussions of Kierkegaard’s critique of the patriarchy are found elsewhere,<sup>16</sup> the above antimony with respect to patriarchal reception is relatively undiscussed. My assertion is that as with Kantian antinomies, both aspects are valid and can be affirmed simultaneously. As has been demonstrated, the first portion of this antinomy is clearly present. Brigit Bertung, contributor to *Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard*, summarizes Kierkegaard’s methodology and the role style plays in gendered reception nicely, saying “But that does not of course mean that he was an opponent of women’s personal liberation, or that he did not consider they *could* obtain existence; in that case it would not make much sense to write in the way he does. Kierkegaard was not a descriptive writer of history, but an indirect

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<sup>16</sup> *Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. by Céline León and Sylvia Walsh, Re-Reading the Canon (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

communicator of religious questions.”<sup>17</sup> Bertung releases Kierkegaard from intentional patriarchy, while leaving room for an unintentional consequence of his communication style to be a fostering of a patriarchal response. As discussed above, I would go further and argue that his style, regardless of his intentions, results in gendered reception. The latter half of the antinomy requires further discussion. Mark Lloyd Taylor, another contributor to *Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard*, argues that the presentation of women by Johannes Climacus, one of the pseudonymous author Kierkegaard utilizes, in his book *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is a microcosm of Kierkegaard’s views throughout his authorship.<sup>18</sup> Taylor continues, “... Climacus hints that the difference between men and women is relativized by their common human relationship to God. [...] in religious contexts he understands typical female qualities to represent the norm for all human beings, men as well as women. A similar pattern of critique, relativization, and commendation of women appears throughout Kierkegaard’s writings.”<sup>19</sup> This suggests that at the core, Kierkegaard believed that women, more than men, embody his vision of proper relating to God. Though this point of Kierkegaard’s may be partially rooted in gender stereotypes, this does not sound like a misogynistic or patriarchal position but is evidence to the contrary.

In conclusion, Kierkegaard wrote to the single individual and expected an intellectual and existential encounter from his readers. Though, he opposed the patriarchy in clear ways throughout his writings, he elicited a gendered reception as male and female individuals responded to his indirect communication in predictably patriarchal ways. Kierkegaard’s reception provides a case study of how men assume they have something to say that is worth hearing, while women are often inclined to defer to the other (as discussed, terms such as “mansplaining,” “self-silencing” and “self-censoring” are pertinent). Academia and particularly Theology and Religion departments are not immune to this inequality, in fact it can be argued that they perpetuate it, as demonstrated by various recent studies. Yet, in Kierkegaard there is a potential “way out”— as Kierkegaard scholar Sylvia Walsh says of his thought, “The idea of a relation to God coupling a high level of self-consciousness with devotion or self-giving establishes an ultimate matrix within which to affirm both individuality and relatedness in woman and man.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Brigit Bertung, ‘Yes, A Women Can Exist’, in *Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. by Céline León and Sylvia Walsh, Re-Reading the Canon (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pp. 51–67 (p. 65).

<sup>18</sup> Mark Lloyd Taylor, ‘Almost Earnestness? Autobiographical Reading, Feminist Re-Reading, and Kierkegaard’s Concluding Unscientific Postscript’, in *Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. by Céline León and Sylvia Walsh, Re-Reading the Canon (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pp. 175–203 (p. 192). <sup>19</sup> Taylor, p. 194.

<sup>19</sup> Sylvia Walsh, ‘On “Feminine” and “Masculine” Forms of Despair’, in *Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. by Céline León and Sylvia Walsh, Re-Reading the Canon (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pp. 203–15 (p. 212).

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### **3. Praying for Power: Prayer, Presidents, Prosperity, Prophets, and “God-Given” Political Power**

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On 3 February 2017, Ben Peters, a self-proclaimed American prophet and preacher, published a prophecy titled ‘Unexpected Benefits of a Trump Presidency’ on Elijah List (Peters 2017). Peters claimed people voted for Donald Trump because of their concerns regarding ‘border security, [the] war on terror, [the] economy, and jobs’ and added that the ‘Supreme Court [was] a supreme reason.’ Peters concluded that people supported Trump because he would protect ‘Christian rights, which have been under fire.’ In the remainder of the prophecy, Peters prophesied that a Trump Presidency would bring several other unexpected benefits, some of which would include: a rejection of evolution, conservative court rulings on abortion, a return to traditional family values, and a widespread ‘harvest of souls.’

Peters believed God would use the ‘Kingdom-friendly’ Trump administration to ensure ‘God’s involvement in every sphere of society.’ This involvement would reset America’s moral values. Peters was careful to say that his listed blessings would spur Satanic attacks that could only be overcome by the ‘intercession of God’s people,’ which would ‘release the hosts of Heaven’ to ‘assist us in building God’s Kingdom on the earth.’

When Peters issued his prophecy, Trump had only been President fourteen days, and the media was still seeking explanations for how the Trump Presidency had come about. With the analysis ongoing, one certainty was that the election of Donald Trump had ‘exposed a shocking blind spot’ among even the most astute political experts (Martí 2019a: 1). Even though ‘some Christian leaders’ felt ‘that Trump was a poor choice’ (Berry 2020: 70) for President, 81 percent of ‘white, born-again/evangelical Christians’ and 58 percent of protestants voted for him (Martínez and Smith 2016). By March 2019, more than three years after Peters’ prophecy, ‘seven-in-ten white Evangelical Protestants’ (Schwadel and Smith 2019) continued to approve of Trump’s job performance.

In the month before the 2020 election, even though Peters’ predictions remained unfulfilled, Trump still carried the support of 78 percent of white evangelical Protestant registered voters (Smith 2020). Even though Peters’ prophetic words and theological beliefs are not universally representative of white evangelical Protestants, the narrative illustrates how support for Trump remained strong despite not achieving the goals of the Christian Right.

Part of Trump’s white evangelical Protestant support consisted of a group of prophets, like Peters, and their followers. Leading up to and throughout the Trump Presidency, several of these individuals shared prophetic “words from God” regarding the Trump Presidency. By sharing these

words with their followers, they rallied the support of ‘many Pentecostal and charismatic Christians’ for Donald Trump, whom they billed as ‘the divine choice for president’ (Beverley and Willard 2020: 17). One of the goals of this paper is to explore some of the key themes of those prophetic words. One such theme is the near-universal adherence these prophets hold to a dominionist theological belief called the “Seven-Mountains Mandate.” This work will provide brief overviews of dominionism and the Seven-Mountains Mandate and illustrate how it helped reinforce support for Donald Trump.

On 15 August 2017, Johnny Enlow, founder of Restore7 Ministries in Franklin, Tennessee, was the first to prophesy that based on what he had ‘been shown,’ he ‘believed’ that Trump would win a second term (Beverley and Willard 2020: 194). Several other prophets would follow Enlow’s lead and issue their own prophecies of a second Trump term. However, after a lost election, many court battles, and an attempted insurrection, Trump failed to secure a second term and fulfil the prophecies. This work will conclude by surveying the responses to these failed prophecies.

### Dominionism and the Seven Mountains

Like many of his fellow prophets who supported Donald Trump, Peters adheres to a dominionist subset of fundamentalist Christianity that believes it is ‘God’s plan’ for Christians to ‘establish God’s dominion over every aspect of social life’ (Berry 2020: 72). It is ultimately the creation of a theocracy in which ‘Christians are called by God to exercise dominion over every aspect of society by taking control of political and cultural institutions’ (Clarkson 2016: 14). It is rooted in the belief that America is a Christian nation that must be guided by ‘fundamentalist Christian ideals’ (Martí 2019a: 127). Dominionism is not unique to any one specific subset of Christians but exists throughout American Christianity and conservative Protestantism (Clarkson 2016: 12). It is a fluid idea running along a spectrum ranging between a “hard dominionism” that calls for a literal theocracy and “soft dominionism” that leans toward active but acceptable forms of political engagement (Clarkson 2016: 14; McVicar 2013: 129). Underlying and unifying this spectrum are three consistently held ideas of adherence to ‘Christian Nationalism,’ the promotion of ‘religious supremacy,’ and the endorsement of ‘theocratic visions’ (Clarkson 2016: 14).

### Christian Nationalism as Foundation for Dominionism

Christian Nationalism is ‘a dynamic ideology’ built upon the presupposition that ‘America has been and should always be distinctively “Christian”’ (Whitehead and Perry 2020: 7, 10). In their book, *Taking America Back for God*, Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry measure Americans’ level of agreement with six statements that summarize various aspects of Christian Nationalist belief. After compiling survey results, they scored responses using a Likert-type scale where higher scores

reflected a stronger affinity with Christian Nationalism. They then divided the scores into four groupings (from strongest to weakest affinity): Ambassadors, Accommodators, Resistors, and Rejecters (2020: 9).

Their overall findings showed that nearly 20 percent of Americans, whom they call Ambassadors, identified as ‘wholly supportive of Christian Nationalism,’ with another 32 percent of Americans serving as Accommodators (Whitehead and Perry 2020: 9, 35). Of the Ambassadors, 70 percent are white, 55 percent ‘identify as evangelical Protestant,’ they ‘overwhelmingly believe in God,’ attend Church, pray, and read Scripture ‘more frequently,’ are ‘politically conservative,’ and the majority (56%) are Republican (2020: 37–38). For those Americans who fit the definition of Christian Nationalist, ‘political interests’ hold a higher place than their ‘religious interests (2020: 58–59).’ Whitehead and Perry’s work illustrates the significant influence that Christian Nationalism holds over ‘Americans’ political attitudes and activity (2020: 59).’

One significant element of Christian nationalism is how it equates ‘cultural purity with racial or ethnic exclusion’ (Whitehead and others 2018: 150). These racialist sentiments find expression in the elevation of ‘native-born, white, Christians’ as the ‘*real...or... the good kind*’ of Americans’ (Whitehead and Perry 2020: 91). A 2017 Pew Research report found that 57 percent of white evangelical Protestants view Christianity as ‘very important for being truly American’ (Stokes 2017). One example of how these racialist sentiments and Christianity work together is that even though Barack Obama was both ‘a US citizen and a Christian,’ enough doubt was cast on these facts that due to his perceived ‘ties to the Muslim faith<sup>1</sup>’ that he was ‘not only unsuitable but disqualified’ from being President (Martí 2019a: 241).

Further, ‘conservative white evangelicals’ strongly oppose ‘immigration, nontraditional gender roles, and same-sex marriage,’ which they view ‘as tainting the purity of American identity’ (Martí 2019b: 4–5). In *American Blindspot*, Gerardo Martí explores the historical and sociological elements of this ideal American identity. One of Martí’s clear conclusions is that part of the support Christian Nationalists had for Donald Trump was due to ‘Trump’s views on terrorism and immigration’ (Martí 2019a: 241). White Christian Evangelicals felt that the Obama Administration had ignored their interests and, in so doing, directly attacked their beliefs on these issues (Martí 2019b: 3). Consequently, 80 percent of evangelicals viewed Trump’s anti-immigration and anti-Muslim rhetoric as key factors in their support for him (Martí 2019a: 241). Given that the majority of those who come to the United States as immigrants are ‘overwhelmingly Christian,’ the real issue

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<sup>1</sup> Some of which include his name, his father’s Kenyan heritage, and his having lived in Indonesia as a child.

that Christian Nationalism has with immigration seems to be a racialist sentiment revolving around the idea that ‘nonwhite immigrants’ are ‘a cultural threat to the dominance of White Christians’ (Sherkat and Lehman 2018: 1792, 1801).

The religious trends that contributed to Trump’s 2016 victory are not new in American Politics. These same arguments are found in the defeat of Jimmy Carter in 1980. Responding to the unhappiness with Carter’s representation of ‘their interests,’ Conservative Christians supported Ronald Reagan, a former movie star turned Governor (Ingersoll 2015: 3), over the Southern Baptist Carter. Despite Carter sharing their core evangelical beliefs (a ‘radical conversion experience’ and the authority of Scripture as a ‘timeless guide for virtuous Christian life’), the religious right felt that their declining’ influence in the public sphere’ was putting the nation at risk (Martí 2019a: 9; Ingersoll 2015: 4; Johnson and Tamney 1982: 123). The ‘availability of legal abortion,’ the rising global influence of communism, the ‘gender and sexual revolutions,’ and perceived government intrusion into ‘churches and private schools’ was their proof of this declining influence (Ingersoll 2015: 4). Reagan’s proposed ‘conservative social and economic reforms’ found support in ‘two-thirds of white evangelical voters’ (Martí 2019a: 12; Haberman 2018). While it is not entirely convincing that white evangelicals swung the election in Reagan’s favour, the 1980 election marked a change in the ‘loyalty’ of evangelicals in that ‘from Reagan on, no Democrat would again win the majority’ of their support (Du Mez 2020: 106; an argument also made in Johnson and Tamney 1982).

### Theocratic Visions and America as the New Israel

In a 1967 piece, Robert Bellah drew on Rousseau’s work<sup>2</sup> to outline what he termed ‘American Civil Religion’ (Bellah 1967: 5). The heart of his argument says that the Founding Fathers were motivated by the belief that God had taken an active interest in history and in so doing maintained a ‘special concern for America’ who, consequently, has ‘the obligation...to carry out God’s will on earth’ (1967: 5, 7). In this way, America is seen as a new Israel, chosen by God to be ‘the last hope of earth’ (1967: 18).

For white evangelicals, seeing America as a new Israel implies that God’s ‘commands to Old Testament Israel’ are, by default, God’s expectations for America (Whitehead and Perry 2020: 11). Religion Professor Joseph Williams roots this idea in an attitude of ‘Anglo-Saxon racial superiority’ that he calls ‘Anglo-Saxon Israelism<sup>3</sup>,’ in which God’s promises’ ancient Israelites extended

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<sup>2</sup> See Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book 4, Chapter 8.;

<sup>3</sup> Williams initially refers to this as “British Israelism.” Later in his paper, when he begins to illustrate how the idea is adopted in America, he changes the term to “Anglo-Saxon Israelism.”

to...modern-day...Britain and the United States' (Williams 2020: 432). Influential Pastor Derek Prince, a part of the Church Growth Ministries movement, eventually embraced this idea and brought it to America.

Prince taught that 'the church' would extend 'God's authority' throughout the world, which 'resonated with key elements' of dominionistic 'prophetic politics' (Williams 2020: 448). Prince viewed 'the present-day church...as a spiritual stand-in' for an Israel that was waiting to be 'fully restored' to 'fulfil its role as God's political agent' (2020: 448). Meanwhile, Prince's colleague, Ern Baxter, viewed the Church's role as taking dominion of and ruling over the world (2020: 446). Consequently, Baxter changed his position on the end times to postmillennialism—the belief that the 'Kingdom of God is a present, earthly reality,'—which was central to the beliefs of Rousas John Rushdoony (Williams 2020: 446; Ingersoll 2015: 27).

### Rushdoony and "Hard Dominionism"

As mentioned earlier, it is helpful to view dominionism on a spectrum, ranging from 'soft to hard' (Clarkson 2016: 14). On the hard end of the spectrum is Rushdoony's Christian Reconstructionism. Rushdoony read Genesis 1.28 to say that God gave mankind<sup>4</sup> a 'dominion mandate' to 'institute and enforce Old Testament biblical law,' thereby 'rooting ethics in God's divine plan' (Ingersoll 2015: 11, 28; Clarkson 2016: 13). In other words, Christians are 'dominion men' tasked with taking 'dominion over the planet and' reconstructing 'all of life according to Old Testament law' (McVicar 2013: 122).

In *Building God's Kingdom*, Julie Ingersoll posits that the key to understanding Rushdoony lies in the connections between 'presuppositionalism (leading to theonomy) and postmillennialism' (Ingersoll 2015: 16). Rushdoony used Cornelius Van Til's idea that 'all knowledge is based on inescapably religious presuppositions' as a lens through which to read Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of 'sphere sovereignty' (Ingersoll 2015: 19–20).

'Sphere sovereignty' is a framework for understanding 'the relationship of...social structures' (Keene 2016: 67). The sovereignty of God is the foundation for this doctrine, in which each societal sphere has authority only within its own sphere of influence (Worthen 2008: 414). Each sphere is to 'exist in harmonious relationship' with other spheres, and when all spheres are acting appropriately, 'creation is perfected' (Keene 2016: 67–68). Herman Dooyeweerd built upon Kuyper's idea through

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<sup>4</sup> The usage of gendered language in this instance is deliberate as patriarchal hierarchy is a hallmark of Christian Reconstructionism.

the ‘Adam Mandate,’ which says that mankind is God’s agent tasked with maturing and fulfilling ‘God’s purposes for creation’ (2016: 70).

Rushdoony interpreted Kuyper’s sphere sovereignty<sup>5</sup> to mean that applying biblical principles to the unique and limited spheres of ‘family, church, and civil government’ was the ideal ‘method through which faith should shape all of life’ (Ingersoll 2015: 20). Spheres could not be ‘religiously neutral’ because all law originated either from ‘God or man,’ and those laws formulated by man ultimately came out of a ‘desire to be gods unto themselves’ (Ingersoll 2015: 21).

Rushdoony called his system’ Theonomy,’ meaning ‘God’s Law’ (McVicar 2013: 122; Ingersoll 2015: 23). Theonomy places the ‘God of the Bible’ as ‘the ultimate source of authority,’ consequently, it is sinful for humans to make autonomous authority claims or laws that run contradictory to God’s Law (Ingersoll 2015: 23). Theonomist and Rushdoony-influencer Greg Bahnsen argues that ‘even pagans who do not love God’ are cognizant of ‘God’s law’ because it is revealed in creation and is ‘written upon their hearts’ (Bahnsen 1988: 29). Through the work of Christians, the dominion of God’s Kingdom would eventually fully transform the world (1988: 25). In the meantime, Christians are at work in the already-present Kingdom of God restoring ‘the damage done by the Fall’ and bringing ‘the blessings of the Gospel to the whole earth,’ the completion of which will be marked by Jesus’ Second Coming (Ingersoll 2015: 27).

The ‘dominion mandate’ from Genesis 1.28 is restated by Jesus’ Great Commission in Matthew 28.18-20, from which Bahnsen argues that Jesus is clear that even though he has laid claim to ‘all authority upon earth,’ the nations still need to be discipled into the Kingdom of God (Ingersoll 2015: 28; Bahnsen 1988: 25). Postmillennialism is then reframed as ‘dominion theology’ in which Christ’s resurrection has restored creation and ‘the whole earth’ has become the Garden of Eden over which ‘Christians should exercise dominion’ (Ingersoll 2015: 32).

For fundamentalists, who traditionally held the opposite end-times belief of dispensational premillennialism, adopting the postmillennialism inherent within dominionism meant they needed to ‘stop focusing on what would happen’ in the end times and focus instead on Jesus command to disciple the nations and the mandate to occupy the land (Ammerman 1987: 6; Ingersoll 2015: 33). Fundamentalists, therefore, became concerned with the perceived drifting of America from its founding ‘as a Christian nation,’ marked by the way the government sphere was infringing on the spheres of family and Church (Ingersoll 2015: 33). Whether they hold to postmillennial or

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<sup>5</sup> Worthen (2008: 416) argues that ‘Kuyper would have been appalled’ by the ‘distortion’ of his sphere sovereignty by Rushdoony (and his followers).

premillennial beliefs, reconstructionism has served to pull ‘evangelicals from the political sidelines into the fray’ (Clarkson 2016: 15).

### **Soft Dominionism of the Latter Rain and the Seven Mountains**

On the other end of the dominionist spectrum is the soft dominionism embraced by the Latter Rain Movement, which taught that there would be an ‘outpouring of supernatural power’ that would restore the ‘neglected offices’ of ‘apostles and prophets’ and enable ‘a coming generation’ to ‘take dominion over nations’ (Clarkson 2016: 14). Dominionism came to the Latter Rain Movement via Bishop Earl Paulk, who, ten years after Rushdoony’s work, was told by God in a vision that Christians should ‘use the church to “take rightful dominion” over the earth’ (McVicar 2013: 122). Paulk drew on the same Genesis passage as Rushdoony to provide a Biblical basis for his ‘Kingdom Now’ teaching and insisted that Christians become politically involved by pointing to Christ’s authority ‘as the solution to all issues’ (2013: 123). While both Paulk and Rushdoony were interested in Christians assuming dominion over the world, Paulk’s approach was ‘less aggressive,’ calling for Christians to ‘vote and write letters’ as well as ‘sign petitions’ aimed at spurring the government to take the Kingdom positions on critical issues (2013: 123).

Several years after Paulk and Rushdoony, C. Peter Wagner revived this Latter Rain theology and formed the New Apostolic Reformation—a group of apostles and prophets dedicated to being an ‘army of God’ focused on ‘infiltrating’ and reviving the ‘Seven Mountains of modern society’ (Clarkson 2016: 14; Aho 2013: 548). This particular form of dominionism draws on Isaiah 2.2 to call Christians to position ‘kingdom-minded people’ who can ‘exercise their influence’ in each ‘of the Seven Mountains’ of society: ‘family, religion, education, media, entertainment, business, and government (Tanksley and Schaich 2018: 7; Clarkson 2016: 13).’ The New Apostolic Reformation uses the Seven Mountains ‘to promote its version of social and political activism (Tanksley and Schaich 2018: 7).’

Since the 1990s, the Seven Mountains adhering prophets and apostles of the New Apostolic Reformation have increased influence in ‘religious and civic life’ and politics (Clarkson 2016: 14). Among their ranks are Senators Ted Cruz and James Inhofe, Representative Michelle Bachmann, former Vice Presidential Candidate Sara Palin, Governor Mike Huckabee, and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (2016: 13).

### **The Trump Prophets and their prophecies**

On 21 June 2016, 1,000 conservative evangelicals and Catholics gathered in New York for Donald Trump to reassure them that he was on their side (McCammon 2016). Several individuals

responsible for the meeting were apostles and prophets from the New Apostolic Reformation (Clarkson 2016: 14).

The meeting was not without its critics. Writing for the *Christian Post*, Michael Farris called the meeting a ‘parade of elephants’ rather than a ‘phalanx of prophets’ and said it would mark ‘the end of the Christian Right’ (Farris 2016). *National Review* columnist, David French, warned the ‘evangelicals...desperate for power and influence’ that they would have to live the rest of their days knowing that they were responsible for helping to fracture the nation (French 2016).

Even with the knowledge of Trump’s mocking of opponents, incitements of violence, and his rumoured sexual indiscretions, by the time of his meeting with leaders from the Christian Right, prophetic words regarding a Trump Presidency were already swirling (Du Mez 2020: 2). The first of these words came from a prophet named Kim Clement on 4 April 2007. Clement said that ‘Trump shall become a trumpet’ whom God will fill with the Holy Spirit ‘when he goes into office’ (Clement 2007). Clement again prophesied on 20 April 2013 and 22 February 2014 regarding a coming President that many believed to be Donald Trump. In the February 2014 prophecy, Clement said that ‘a man of prayer,’ ‘choice words,’ and ‘who speaks too much’ will become a President about whom people ‘will shout, “Impeach, impeach”’ but that those impeachment attempts would fail (Beverley and Willard 2020: 28–30).

On 28 April 2011, Mark Taylor, a firefighter-turned-prophet, prophesied that God had ‘chosen...Donald Trump, for such a time as this’ and Trump would ‘bring honour, respect, and restoration to America’ (Beverley and Willard 2020: 24–25). With Trump in power, America would ‘once again’ protect Israel and would become ‘the most powerful and prosperous nation on earth,’ with the measure of that prosperity being historic highs for the dollar making it ‘once again’ the standard ‘by which all others are judged’ (2020: 24). Even though Taylor’s prophecy speaks of Trump being elected President in the 2012 election, Trump chose not to run in 2012, prompting Taylor to claim that God told him that Christians ‘were not ready for change in 2012’ and the ‘prophecy was shifted to 2016 (2020: 24).’

In his book, *God’s Man in the White House*, James Beverley chronicles the prophecies about Donald Trump. Several key themes appear throughout these prophecies. One of these is that God will cause America to prosper. These prophecies are echoed by the Christian Nationalist ‘pseudo-historian’ David Barton, who claims that because America was founded upon Christian principles, it is ‘God’s plan...to make it prosperous’ (Barrett-Fox 2018: 506). This idea is further strengthened by the prosperity gospel movement, which says that as Christians work hard and steward their gifts well, God will bless them with prosperity (Martí 2012: 137–41, 2020: 21). Prosperity and wealth are

a ‘direct result of piety’ and ‘a solid work ethic’ (Martí 2019a: 118). A Trump Presidency would ensure America’s prosperity, resulting in the Church having great favour ‘to accomplish God’s mandate’ (Beverley and Willard 2020: 160).

A second core theme was a relentless attack on the news media. One example is Johnny Enlow’s claim that the media was ‘overrun by the demonic’ (Beverley and Willard 2020: 225). The most pointed of these media prophecies is Mark Taylor’s 7 July 2017 prophecy called ‘Satan’s Frequency.’ Taylor prophesied that the media, by their ‘doom and gloom messages,’ had robbed people ‘of hope to the point of suicide’ (Beverley and Willard 2020: 187). He told the ‘billionaires and millionaires’ that God had given them money to advance God’s Kingdom ‘in all areas of influence,’ so they should use that money to take control of the corrupt news outlets (2020: 187). Anti-media prophecies echo Trump’s claim that the media is the ‘enemy of the people’ and the importance of Christians ‘to become power brokers’ who could restore the nation (Samuels 2019; Barrett-Fox 2018: 509–10).

The most prominent theme is that Donald Trump is a modern-day King Cyrus. Rebecca Barrett-Fox argues that to make Trump more palatable to the religious right, various Christian leaders tried several comparisons between Trump and various Biblical characters. No other story seemed to fit quite right until the Cyrus narrative gave them an explanation of ‘how God could call...a man like Trump’ (Barrett-Fox 2018: 511–12). What Cyrus had done for restoring Israel, only Trump could do for American Christians by restoring their ‘lost power’ and ‘easing their fears about the future of’ their nation (2018: 512).

The King Cyrus metaphor allowed conservative evangelicals to embrace Trump even though he did not ‘share their religious beliefs’ or morality (Barrett-Fox 2018: 505). In exchange, the ‘religious right,’ through Trump, could have their nation restored both politically and socially to a point in time when they believed that God had protected, fostered, and blessed it (2018: 505). For the religious right and the New Apostolic prophets, Trump was the miraculous intervention for which they had been waiting and praying that could ‘bring the nation back’ to God and its Christian roots (Stewart 2019). In other words, it was time to “Make America Great Again.”

Jeremiah Johnson was the first to make the King Cyrus reference on 15 July 2015, followed four months later by Lance Wallnau (Beverley and Willard 2020: 35, 49). In Beverley’s chronicle of the Trump Prophecies, the Cyrus motif occurs twenty-three times over four years, and while several prophets make the comparison, none are more committed to it than Wallnau. Wallnau said that following a meeting with Trump, he was urged by the Holy Spirit to ‘read Isaiah 45,’ which opens by introducing Cyrus, the King of Persia, Israel’s enemy, as someone whom God had anointed (Wallnau

2016a). By connecting this with the 2016 election being that of the Forty-fifth President, Wallnau interpreted it to mean that Trump would be to America what Cyrus had been to Israel. He viewed Trump as a ‘wrecking ball’ who would bring about the ‘restoration of society,’ reign in its ‘out of control’ fiscal state, and build both a symbolic and physical wall of protection around the nation (Wallnau 2016a). While Wallnau believed that Trump would ‘restore the crumbling walls’ that separate America from ‘cultural collapse,’ Katherine Stewart of the *New York Times* was concerned that, through Trump, Christians were not simply ‘fighting a culture war,’ but were attacking democracy itself (Wallnau 2016b; Stewart 2019).

The final and perhaps most important theme in the chronicle of prophecies was those prophecies related to Trump being a two-term President. While many of these prophecies, including the Johnny Enlow prophecy previously discussed, were predictive of a Trump second term, two were cautionary. In a 13 August 2019 prophecy published on Elijah List, Lance Wallnau said that ‘at best’ a second-Trump term was a ‘50-50 proposition’ that would require Christians to stop worrying about growing their own house and begin to focus on building ‘God’s project, the nation,’ and ‘[God’s] House’ (Wallnau 2019). More than a year-and-a-half earlier, Jeremiah Johnson warned that Trump’s bid for a second term would be fraught with ‘trouble and danger’ and that if Americans re-elected Trump, there was a ‘potential great danger...ahead for America’ which required Christians to stay vigilant in their prayers for Trump (Beverley and Willard 2020: 207–8).

### Failed Prophecy and Hanging On

After giving several more prophetic warnings regarding a second Trump term, Jeremiah Johnson concluded that the 26 October 2020 confirmation of Amy Comey Barrett to the Supreme Court combined with the 28 October 2020 Los Angeles Dodgers World Series win were signs that Trump would ‘win re-election’ and he began to ‘prophesy that without conditions’ (Johnson 2021). Many prophets, Johnson included, were sent soul-searching for answers after Joe Biden defeated Trump in November 2020.

The day after the 6 January 2021 Capitol Insurrection, Johnson published an open letter titled, ‘My Public Apology and Process.’ In it, he issued a step-by-step self-analysis of how he concluded that Trump would win. Johnson wrote that he refused ‘to declare that Donald Trump had actually won,’ but ‘the election was rigged.’ According to Johnson, God, who had chosen Trump in 2016, had removed Trump from office in 2020 due to Trump’s ‘pride and arrogance.’ He ended his letter by calling God’s people to move ‘to the frontlines of the battle’ in ‘humility and repentance.’

Johnson was met with precisely the opposite response to what he was asking and received ‘death threats’ and ‘thousands and thousands’ of nasty and vulgar emails (Duin 2021). This response is not surprising when one considers Johnson’s fellow prophet Lance Wallnau took to Facebook Live to blame Trump’s loss on voter fraud and called for Christians to rise and fight the coup (Wallnau 2020). Even after the inauguration, Johnny Enlow claimed that ‘more than 100 other “credible” prophets’ had declared that Trump ‘would be restored to power soon’ (Duin 2021).

The disconnect between the reality of Trump’s loss and the claims of fraud and coup is a fantastic illustration of Festinger and colleagues’ work on cognitive dissonance. Because they believed they had heard from God, the prophets and their followers had made ‘irrevocable commitments’ to the prophesied Trump win. They had ‘taken...important action’ upon that ‘deep conviction’ by praying, campaigning, and voting (Goethals 2021: 243; Festinger and others 2009: 4). However, multiple events—election results, certification of the results by the House of Representatives, and the Inauguration of Joe Biden—provided ‘disconfirming evidence’ of their belief (Festinger and others 2009: 4). Despite this evidence, their belief was further strengthened by prophets, Q-Anon, and Trump himself, prompting them to work to convince others that the ‘Deep State’ rigged the election (Martin 2021: 3:22-3:34).

Ben Peters’ son, Pastor Ken Peters, staunchly believes the election was rigged. On 10 January 2021, the Sunday following the Capitol Insurrection, the younger Peters, wearing a ‘Rigged 2020’ t-shirt, stood in front of his congregation at Patriot Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, and claimed that those who committed the crime of insurrection ‘were not even half as bad’ as the Members of Congress and Vice President Mike Pence—who had committed the ‘way more evil’ crime of confirming Biden as the new President (Peters 2021: 24:15-24:30). Later in the same service, Peter’s associate, Sharam Hadian, called the election the ‘greatest coup in modern history’ (Martin 2021: 1:37-1:42).

## Fighting for Power

While Ken Peters rejects the term Christian Nationalist, he claims that to stay true to its heritage, ‘Christian principles and Christian laws and Christian ways’ should be the foundation upon which America is built (Mooney 2021). His church services illustrate this by seamlessly weaving together Scripture, morality, and the Constitution, which allowed ‘Make America Great Again to be received as a religious sentiment’ (Martí 2019a: 240). Making America great again would mean ‘taking America back for God’ by gaining power ‘in the public sphere’ (Whitehead and Perry 2020: 153). Gaining this power and authority would position the adherents of the Seven Mountain Mandate to ‘defend against shifts in culture’ that would allow power to be shared with ‘women,

sexual, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities' (2020: 154). By Making America Great Again, the 'United States would continue to receive God's favour' (Durbin 2020: 124). Above all, it would mean that 'prophetic voices' would be 'raised up...to the palace,' filling 'seats of great authority' with spiritually gifted people (Elaine Tavolacci in Beverley and Willard 2020: 123).

The prophets and Christians who adhere to dominionist ideas of influencing the spheres of society for the Kingdom of God worked to elect Donald Trump in 2016. Even though they dreamt of all the mountain ground that could be taken in a second Trump term, that was not meant to be. However, many of these individuals, most of whom are Ambassadors or Accommodators of Christian Nationalism, continue to pray for the power to take America back for God.

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# Learning from the Past

## **4. Universal Expression or Individual Speaking? A Distinction Study on Classical Epic and Medieval Romance**

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The trickiest point of defining epics and romances as two different literary genres is that it is easy to be “swallowed” by an ocean of genre theories developed by various philology scholars. The history of the genre study can be dated back to the era when ancient Greek scholars, such as Aristotle, attempting to make comparisons on the writing style of ancient epics to judge if they were conforming to the ‘universal expression of epic’ (see ‘II. Epic and Romance’, p. 26). In the classical days of the literature, there was a trend of distinguishing literature into various types. Many philologists dedicated to classifying literary works into different genres: epics, ballads, odes, sonnets, tragedies, and comedies (see ‘The Origin of Genres’, p. 194). As time lapses, literary critics have been blurring the boundary of literature genre, tending to question the validity of genre classification. Maurice Blanchot eloquently argues that books should no longer belong to a genre – every book were naturally asserting themselves (see *The Space of Literature*, p. 220). For Blanchot, the significance of the genre is not supposed to survive, as every work will be given the reality of the book directly by literature alone, instead of by artificial formulas.

Both rigidly dogmatic belief in genre and the overemphasizing on the individuality of particular literature work are not reaching a conclusion drawn from the fair-minded thinking. It is not intelligible to neglect the common expressive habits of literature in the same genre just to highlight the individuality of each piece of literature work, and the principle will be applied in this article. A noteworthy point from Todorov’s summary of the genre (see ‘The Origin of Genres’, p. 194) is that ‘romance’ is not on the list. Romance seems to be stamped a stereotype that it’s hard to classify romance into any literature kind, and the status of romance is always embarrassing. But is the conclusion really true enough, that there is unreachable distance between epic and romance? Is it possible that they may have ‘interacted’ with each other in the long history of literature?

We must admit that study on the relationship between epic and other literary genre seems to be more popular among modern critics. Mikhail Bakhtin focuses on the distinctions between epic and novel in his ‘Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel’; Rosalie Colie brings into highlights on the impressively new classification of Renaissance literature. It seems that not much effort could be discovered in exploring the stratum of romance in literature, but the

methodology that is available to study the relation of epic and romance is still approachable in some critics. Early in 1896, W. P. Ker in his *Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature* has indicated one of the most essential differences between an ‘epic’ and a ‘romance’ – an epic is a kind of poem, implying ‘some weight and solidity’, while a romance is a sort of ‘light’ literature (see p. 16). One of the most important reasons offered by Ker is the rich literary styles which epic is able to carry. Supporting evidence, summarized briefly, which pillars Ker’s judgment on the texture variation between epic and romance, are two: epic usually carries tragical sense, while romance only conveys notion of mystery and fantasy, without which romance is meaningless; epic is basically ‘heroic poem’ – though that they are not stuffed by pedantic realism tagged by ‘vicious’ critics – while romance are merely tales concentrating on romantic love. An interesting fact is that this essay do object to these two views, that is to say, this essay has observed some exceptions contradicting to the two conclusions. But the essay agrees that epic differentiates romance in spatiality (space design), which indeed lead to different textures of epic and romance. This essay will approach all these three arguments, making effort in arguing the validity of each reason before moving to the conclusion.

## I. Spatiality

In literature, there must be a space set up to surround characters. Spatiality is an essential dimension of narrative skills. Spaces trigger psychological activities of characters, augmenting the expression of emotions. Spaces of classical epics are usually comprised of seas, plains, and palaces, where there are scarcely barriers and walls to confine a small area from a large one. For example, the scenery descriptions at the beginning of Book III of *The Odyssey* is the rising sun out of the beautiful sea; and in the Book I of *The Aeneid*, the destroying forces on the sea has also been depicted.

Although scenery in Homer has never been described systematically, ‘the sea’ is an effective trigger for the connection to a plain, large and wide space. In *The Aeneid*, the author indirectly triggers readers’ imagination of the broadness of the sea via writings about Aeolus’s miserable voyage on the sea:

He said, and hurl’d against the mountain side  
His quiv’ring spear, and all the god applied.  
The raging winds rush thro’ the hollow wound,  
And dance aloft in air, and skim along the ground;  
Then, settling on the sea, the surges sweep,  
Raise liquid mountains, and disclose the deep. (*The Aeneid*, Book I, p. 5)

If readers insert an axis in minds and try to image the written texts, they will discover that Virgil’s sea scenes show both the width and depth of a space. Winds are hurling against the

mountain side, rushing through the hollow wound, and skimming along the ground. The description is not only a reflection of Aeolus's power, but also a dynamic 'measurement' of width of the space. And the swirls raised by the God of Wind, on the other hand, straightforwardly demonstrate the depth of the sea. *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid* indicate one of the most significant spatial feature of epic composition in classical ages: plainness and broadness.

In *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid*, scenery concerning inhabited spaces has rarely been brought to readers. Even if they emerge from the texts, they are presented through simple sketch. In *The Odyssey*, the palace that amazes Telemachos and Peisistratos impresses readers with only one line: 'There was a gleam of a sun or moon over the high-roofed house | of glorious Menelaos.' (see Book IV, p. 83, 40) The simple sketch increases the difficulty for readers to image, in their minds, the specific architectural design of the palace and decorations inside them, and in this way it impedes readers from dividing a large, whole and grand space into too many small spaces using pillars and walls written by the author. There will be no limits for their imagination, and the 'high roof' will reach a maximum height of readers' imagination. The author's deliberate overlooking of details highlights the magnificence, splendour and glory of the palace in Sparta, and they gradually become a typical sign for inhabited space in classical epics.

In Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Spaces*, the author underlines that natural elements in literary texts often carry metaphorical significance (see p. 217). They are also like psychological 'road signs', leading readers to the corresponding psychological and sensual domains at particular moments. Wide seas, plain lands, and glorious palaces, all these objects tint spaces with grandeur. If someone endows literary works physical entities, epics, which embrace more open space and more grandness, will undoubtedly be loaded with more gravity, and are therefore 'more solid'.

Compared to classical epics, spatiality in medieval romance scarcely focuses on grand spaces. Scenery of seas is usually not the emphasis in medieval romance, where dense forests, remote valleys, little brooks, mysterious castles and strange creatures vividly exist. These natural objects are usually delicate, but at the same time lacking broadness. Landscapes in medieval romances are often organized assemblies of various geographical landscapes, arranged by layers within the whole space. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, before Gawain was accepted as a noble guest in the Lord's castle, the desperate knight surprisingly discovered a comliest castle:

NADE he sayned hymself, segge, bot þrye,  
Er he watz war in þe wod of a won in a mote,

A bof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder boȝez  
Of mony borelych bole aboute bi þe ditches:

A castel þe comlokest þat euer knyȝt aȝte,  
Pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,  
With a pyked palays pyned ful þik,  
Þat vmbeteȝe mony tre mo þen two myle. ('Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Book II, p. 22)

Components of the landscape surrounding the castle in the verse clearly present a scenery where different natural objects – seemingly scattered randomly, but actually arranged carefully – have been put in an appropriate location in the space. If readers place the whole scenery in a geometry system, it is not hard to find that Gawain, ditches, trees, and the castle are at the different 'altitudes'. Gawain is at a geographically low point, while the castle is set on a higher point. When readers view the whole scenery through Gawain's eyes, the two locations creates an evident power contrast between Gawain and the castle, implanting some psychological pressure. In addition, the author attempts to overlap some of the natural objects even if they are on the same altitudes. The castle, though built on a prairie, is surrounded and sheltered by boughs and huge trees. Shadings and shelters remind readers of a remote and mysterious kingdom. Compared to classical epics, the natural layout in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is a result of breaking the continuity of the parallel space into small units and of laying the units on vertical direction.

Spaces cut into small pieces can hardly produce an atmosphere of splendour. Barriers, walls and hindrances, based on the theory of poetic spaces, all contribute to the establishment of limitedness. Shelters and coverings, such as trees or ditches in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' defer the truth discovering moment on protagonists' journey. Thus when characters in classical epics are living with clear targets (going back home or taking revenge on enemies), medieval knights or lords tend to enjoy their adventures in mysterious lands (such as indulging himself in the quest for grails). In this way, medieval romances are indeed filled with more lightness, just as what Ker has claimed.

## II. 'Tragical' and 'Romantic'

In addition to spatiality variation, Ker reveals another difference between epic and romance in their nature. Ker proposes that epics are such an inclusive genre that an important literary style can be contained: tragedy, an indispensable factor contributing to the 'weight' of epics. Romance, on the contrary, are 'light' because of its exclusion from other literary elements except for 'romance'.

An interesting fact is that despite the clear distinction on spatiality, gaps between epic and romance seem to have been filled a little with regard to tragical style. It is undeniable that romance barely aims at narrating historical stories or recording history. It is the personal adventures of

knights or marvelous stories of ladies that attract romance authors. Romance are also scarcely rendered as a kind of literature in the pastoral style. As most stories in romance refer to adultery and cuckoldry, scenes in romance are mainly inhabited space bearing the notion of home – a place with privacy, individuality, and coziness. Clearly, inhabited spaces lack pastoral ingredients. However, when Ker comments that romance are not in tragical styles, he obviously fails to take 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' into consideration. 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' is a typical 'traitor' of medieval romance. Unlike the knight in Marie de France's 'Guigemar' or Sir Orfeo in *Sir Orfeo*, the ending of Gawain is a complete pity, and the whole poem has the air of a tragedy. At the end of the tale, when Gawain returned to Camelot, where the whole court welcomed him back, Gawain confessed all the trials, adventures, and the origin of the lace:

'Lo! lorde,' quoþ þe leude, and þe lace hondede,  
'þis is þe bende of þis blame I bere in my nek,  
Þis is þe labe and þe losse þat I laȝt haue  
Of couardise and couetyse þat I haf caȝt þare;  
Þis is þe token of vntrawþe þat I am tan inne,  
And I mot nedeþ hit were wyle I may last;  
For mon may hyden his harme, bot vnþap ne may hit,  
For þer hit onez is tachched twynne wil hit neuer.' ('Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', Book IV, p. 69)

The lace is a symbol of shame for Gawain. Despite that he stays alive in the final duel with the Green Knight, the shame binds him. If the undefeatable fate in epic works characters ill, which is an essential source of tragedy, for Gawain the lace is a badge for his eternal shame and his self-blaming. 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' has already 'invaded' into the field of tragedy, pioneering an absorbing of tragical style in medieval romance.

### III. 'Heroic' and 'Love – oriented'

Undoubtedly Odysseus and Aeneas are legendary heroes who overcome huge difficulties on their way home. Their stories denote their perseverance in struggling against enemies and fate. Canonized rules believe that heroism is necessary for an epic, but some epic, such as Milton's Christian epic *Paradise Lost*, don't include heroes. The main character in *Paradise Lost* is Lucifer, who is not characterized with heroism. In first two books Milton provides readers with some monologues from Satan, announcing his resentment towards God. He protests against God's 'dictatorship', which is only a reflection of Satan's jealousy of God's overwhelming power, of Satan's arrogance and vanity:

Yet not for those,  
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage  
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,  
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,

And high disdain from sense of injured merit,  
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,  
[...] (*Paradise Lost*, Book I, p. 7-8)

The most direct reason for the raging of war against God – the ‘injured merit’ he receives from God – is problematic. Lucifer was redeemed the morning star in heaven, an identity with great honour. The words ‘injured merit’ reveal that his confrontation against God is out of his unjustified desire. If what motivate heroes in ancient Greek epics to struggle are suffers inflicted upon them by deficient, human-like gods for their own benefits, Satan’s ‘courage’ for not yielding to God bears no notion of righteousness. On that account, Satan’s behaviour lacks convincing evidence for being linked to the ‘heroism’. His later misguiding on Eve in the Eden also proves that nothing in his quality deserves praise.

When *Paradise Lost* stands as a possible challenge against the heroism in classical epics, ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight’ (which has been discussed frequently) is in resonance with it – it is not a love-oriented story. Gawain encountered a lady with extreme beauty in the castle of Lord Bertilak. The lady slipped in Gawain’s bedroom, talking with him in a tongue of alluring. However, the lady was ordered by her husband to seduce Gawain and all her tenderness and loveliness was actually a test. Unlike some of Marie de France’s stories, there is no true romantic love between Gawain and Lady Bertilak, who is more like a manifesting of Gawain’s persistence on chivalry. What Gawain values most is not the romantic relationship with the lady in the castle, but the allegiance to chivalric spirit. So if medieval romance, in essence, lay stress upon the countenance of male characters, the chief target of SGGK is to praise the loyalty, courage and courtesy of Gawain.

#### IV. Conclusion

Explorations on the validity of distinctions between epic and romance seem to be dragging out a conclusion which used to be underwater. There are collective differences between epic and romance, but some distinctions approved by traditional genre study may not seem as valid as they should be. Epics have incorporated more topics in the long history – from heroism to the reflection on human nature and theological spirit; while romance starts to probe into the moral values in the society. It is reasonable to claim that epics and romances have crossed certain borders drawn by traditional critics, and that both genre has started to integrate with characteristics used to be considered incompatible with them.

When such a conclusion has been obtained, it becomes easy to produce the most impartial genre statement that accommodates the relation between epic and romance. Epic in early modern period has invited in new topics distinguished from those in classical age; romance was also

engaged in absorbing new stylistic elements and in broadening themes from the twelfth century to the fourteenth century. Fowler, in his *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*, lists the different kinds of transformation genres may experience, which include the genre changes led by topical innovation and the changes of literature function responding to the evolution of epic and romance (see p.92). Therefore when epic and romance were seeking a resourcefulness in its narrative ways, a history of the correlation between epic and romance has been spotted – a history of a mild assimilation among literary genres.

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## 5. In what ways does Ovid in Book 13 of the *Metamorphoses* present a different view of the Trojan War from Homer?

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In the opening lines of the *Metamorphoses*,<sup>1</sup> Ovid declares that he will speak of *mutatas...formas* from *origine mundi* to *mea...tempora*, establishing the poem as both chronicling the world's history, and also providing new perspectives on well-known events. In Book 13, this translates into the *armorum iudicium*, in which two rivals offer their biased and contradictory speeches. Their distortions of Homer's objective accounts reflect their rhetorical strategies, and consequently Ovid brings his own contribution to the Epic cycle and gives it a contemporary Roman significance.<sup>2</sup>

Book 13 forms part of a wider sequence in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, wedged between the poet's own alternatives to the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, ending with an *apotheosis* to Augustus Caesar.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence scholars have grouped the poem into thematic divisions: Brooks Otis defines it as the final of four narrative sections, entitled *Rome and the Deified Ruler*,<sup>4</sup> whereas Edgar Martini splits it in three, with Book 13 falling under *Troy and Rome*.<sup>5</sup> Whilst these disputes indicate that any attempt to distinguish the poem's themes is difficult and artificial, both scholars' choices to link Book 13 to Rome reveals that Ovid's Trojan War has a distinctively contemporary presentation. Much like the *Aeneid*, it reflects Golden-Age literature's intention to link contemporary Rome to Greek epic, as seen in the language of the speakers, who despite being Greek soldiers speak like Romans: in reference to his expedition to Rhesus' camp, Ulysses describes himself returning with the stolen chariot *imitante triumphos* (252). The inclusion of a *triumph*, itself a distinctively Roman ceremony, suggests that Ovid has modernised the narrative to provide a new perspective on Homer's original text. The whole book, for example, is constructed as a Roman oratorial debate, most notably in the speech of Ulysses, who uses language unique to a Roman court: he addresses the audience as *cives* (234), rather than friends,<sup>6</sup> and uses senatorial language such as *suassisce* (315) and *sententia* (318), a word signifying a Senator's official opinion.<sup>7</sup> Ovid has Romanised the Trojan War by recasting it as a *suasoria* that reflects contemporary interests in rhetoric, a discipline forming part of aristocratic education for most of antiquity.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Wheeler 1999, 204.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.871-9

<sup>4</sup> Otis 1970, 83.

<sup>5</sup> Due 1974, 135.

<sup>6</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 2.211-69.

<sup>7</sup> Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 8.5.1.

<sup>8</sup> Hopkinson 2000, 15.

Book 13's concept of a debate, however, is not original to Ovid: though not recounted in Homer's poems, Ulysses, in his visit to the underworld, apologises to Ajax for defeating him in the *armorum iudicium*.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Greek plays dealing with the debate and its consequences, such as Aeschylus' *Judgement of Arms*, Sophocles' *Ajax* as well as two Roman equivalents entitled *Armorium iudicium* by Pacuvius and Accius, had already been in circulation for centuries.<sup>10</sup> These plays drew from the *Epic Cycle* rather than the Homeric works,<sup>11</sup> indicating that the educated class, including Ovid's audience, was aware of its events and outcomes.<sup>12</sup> In fact, Book 13 does not only reference Homeric events: Ajax's stories of Ulysses' fictitious madness (34-42) and his betrayal of Diomedes (38) come from the *Cypria* and *Little Iliad* respectively.<sup>13</sup> Ovid, therefore, amalgamates various literary sources, indicating an attempt not to imitate Homer, but rather to provide *variatio*<sup>14</sup> by avoiding events already dealt with by the Greek poet. For example, Hector's death, the climax of the *Iliad*, is only mentioned in one parenthesis in Book 12.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, Sophia Papaioannou is right to call the book a *non-Iliad*,<sup>16</sup> since Ovid principally deals with events either preceding or following the *Iliad*'s own narrative. Despite this circumvention of the Homeric original and inclusion of other sources, *non-Iliad* is still a justifiable term for Book 13, because the speeches display a constant awareness of the Epic: they rely on the reader's familiarity with the texts, such as when Ulysses tells of his embassy mission to Troy. Though superficially a demonstration of his bravery (*audax orator*, 196), this reference would remind the audience of the famous *Teichoscopia* in the *Iliad*, in which Antenor tells of Ulysses' unmatched eloquence when he was sent as an ambassador to Troy.<sup>17</sup> As this passage shows, Ovid's account, as well as Ulysses' argument, relies on the unspoken, in the sense that he simply references events, without having to repeat any details from Homer. This technique reveals that Homer and Ovid use the Trojan War very differently: whilst the former provides a descriptive narration of it, the latter has repurposed it to be used as content for *controversiae* and *progymnasmata*.

Because the nature of *suasoria* was to explore conflicting views from mythological and historical events, Ovid is not concerned about impartiality. Book 13 is a metadiegetic narrative,<sup>18</sup> in which the Trojan War is told indirectly, by two Greek soldiers intending to prove their suitability as Achilles' heir. Homer, in contrast, provides an objective account of the war, and explores the

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<sup>9</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 11.543-62.

<sup>10</sup> Hopkinson 2000, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Hopkinson 2000, 14.

<sup>12</sup> Wheeler 1999, 204.

<sup>13</sup> Hopkinson 2000, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Ellsworth 1980, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12.76-7.

<sup>16</sup> Papaioannou 2007, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Homer, 3.121-244.

<sup>18</sup> Barchiesi 1989, 56.

perspectives of both sides as well as the Gods. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* both begin by invoking a Muse to tell the story,<sup>19</sup> and consequently the narrative is seen as the objective reality, provided by a divine source removed from any human prejudice.<sup>20</sup> In light of this contrast, Joseph Solodow maintains that Ovid purposefully portrays the stories as unreliable,<sup>21</sup> and instead believes that he is the *single voice*<sup>22</sup> throughout the poem. This would suggest that Book 13 provides Ovid's own perspective of the war, with the changes in speaker being *more formal than consequential*.<sup>23</sup> Whilst it is evident that Ovid is not attempting to provide a reliable account of the Trojan war, to say that this indicates that Book 13 exists as a criticism of storytelling reflects neither its intention nor its effect. Historical accuracy is of little concern, given the book's construction as two contradictory speeches. Rather, each speech intends to explore different methods of rhetoric. The book's opening describes *duces* and *vulgi* (1) taking their seats, and portrays Ajax as *impatiens irae* (3) before the debate begins. The introduction of an audience establishes a courtroom-type setting in which a speaker intends to persuade. Moreover, his inclusion of two different groups, the aristocratic *duces* and the common *vulgi*, indicate that the speeches will differ depending on whom they appeal to. Ovid, moreover, emphasises the *mis-en-abyme* placed within Ajax's interpretation of the Trojan War. *Impatiens irae* establishes it to be emotionally driven by a pre-existent belief.

Ovid's mention of *irae* has been interpreted by many critics, such as L.P. Wilkinson,<sup>24</sup> as an indication of Ajax's speech exemplifying poor rhetoric. Indeed, the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD rhetorician Quintilian, states that an angry tone connotes recklessness, and ought to be avoided.<sup>25</sup> Yet, his speech arouses an applause from the *vulgique* (123), revealing that it strongly appealed to the common Greek soldiers, though not the aristocratic judges (*duces*, 1). As argued by Quintilian<sup>26</sup> the untrained audience prefers a straightforward speech, as exemplified by Ajax's *epiphonema* (122) in which he ends the speech by challenging Ulysses to retrieve the arms in battle. Ulysses, in contrast, tailors to the trained orator: he pauses before speaking to allow the judges time to settle,<sup>27</sup> and shows his battle scars to gain their sympathy.<sup>28</sup> Their presentations of events are impacted by their *delivery*, which Cicero lists as one of the five canons of rhetoric.<sup>29</sup> Naturally, their presentations of the Trojan War differ on

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<sup>19</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 1.1; Homer, *Odyssey*, 1.1.

<sup>20</sup> Wheeler 2002, 34.

<sup>21</sup> Solodow 1988, 36

<sup>22</sup> Solodow 1988, 38.

<sup>23</sup> Solodow 1988, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Wilkinson 2005, 230.

<sup>25</sup> Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 11.1.29.

<sup>26</sup> Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 2.12.1-2.

<sup>27</sup> Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* 11.3.57.

<sup>28</sup> Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator* 2.124.

<sup>29</sup> Cicero, *On Invention* 1.9.

account of their different interpretations of rhetorical principles: both approach the events' arrangement differently: Ajax disregards chronology,<sup>30</sup> whereas Ulysses proclaims to list his deeds in *ordine* (161). Therefore, his speech roughly follows the *Iliad's* narrative sequence, whereas Ajax portrays the Trojan War as a series of loosely connected events. Its presentation is also affected by the speakers' use of *invention*, generally defined as the speaker's core argument:<sup>31</sup> For Ulysses, his case rests on proving that he is the *auctor*<sup>32</sup> of Achilles, and therefore presents events demonstrating his influence over the hero's upbringing. Ajax, on the other hand, perceives this to be a case between words (*dicere*, 10) and deeds (*facere*, 11), and consequently tells a Trojan War which exhibits Ulysses' craftiness in contrast to his own success in battle. This tactic is evident in his distortion of the *Iliad's* flight to the Greek ships, in which Ulysses is unable to hear Nestor's cry for help over the clamour of battle.<sup>33</sup> Yet, according to Ajax, Ulysses intentionally abandoned Nestor (*proditus*, 67) out of fear (*trepidoque*, 69). Moreover, he claims there were multiple cries for help (*saepe vocatum*, 68) as if to counteract Ulysses' claim to have not heard the singular shout. Ajax has twisted the Homeric reality in order to promote the idea of his opponent's disloyalty and faintheartedness. Even Homeric extracts that promote Ulysses' bravery are distorted: in Book 11 of the *Iliad*, he is forced to fend off five Trojans whilst isolated from the rest of the Greek troops.<sup>34</sup> Despite killing several attackers in Homer, Ajax insists that he was unable to defend himself: he *conclamat* (73), a verb Ovid uses to describe distressed and vulnerable women.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, he maintains to have seen him *trepidantem morte futura* (74), echoing a Virgilian phrase used to describe Dido and Cleopatra.<sup>36</sup> The purpose of this feminisation becomes clear, once Ajax reveals that this was all an act by Ulysses to attract attention (80-1), therefore eliciting his stereotype for deception. His inconsistency with the *Iliad* extends much further than its content: in an attempt to mimic Achilles, he combines three different Homeric stories to inflate his rivalry with Hector: first, he references Hector's rampage against the Greek ships, which Homer attributes to the provocation of Apollo.<sup>37</sup> However, Ajax instead claims that the Trojan *deos in proelia dicit* (82) to suggest that his opponent was the instigator of the attack. By making his opponent appear as a leader of the gods, he aggrandises his own success in knocking him down (86), a reference to an event in the *Iliad* preceding Hector's attack.<sup>38</sup> The story succeeding this, that of the discussion over who would face Hector in a duel, in the *Iliad* occurs seven books earlier

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<sup>30</sup> Due 1974, 153.

<sup>31</sup> Cicero, *On Invention* 1.9.

<sup>32</sup> Papaioannou 2007, 177.

<sup>33</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 8.66-129.

<sup>34</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 11.411-80.

<sup>35</sup> Papaioannou 2007, 175.

<sup>36</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.644; 8.709.

<sup>37</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 15.306-27.

<sup>38</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 14.409-32.

than the former action,<sup>39</sup> showing that chronology bares no significance in the telling of the Trojan war. Rather, his own story insinuates his prominence over other Greek warriors (*hunc ego poscentem...unus sustinui*, 86-7). As shown by his substantial use of the first person, Ajax implies that he was exceptional in his readiness to volunteer, when originally eight other men, including Ulysses, did so too.<sup>40</sup> In Ajax's rhetorical strategy to appear as Achilles' successor, therefore, he exaggerates his rivalry with Hector and consequently fairly neutral Homeric accounts become biased for his own benefit.

Still, this passage reveals that Ovid's manipulation of Homeric reality explores rhetorical flaws as well as successes: both Quintilian and Cicero insist on the importance of being aware of one's audience,<sup>41</sup> yet Ajax unknowingly insults Agamemnon, the judges' king: in Homer, the Greeks prayed for either Ajax, Agamemnon or Diomedes<sup>42</sup> to be chosen by lot to fight Hector. But here, Ajax insists that he was the only fighter to be favoured (*meam vovistis*, 88). In another instance, he uses Ulysses' supposed abandonment of Philoctetes (45-54) as a sign of treachery. In the *Epic Cycle*,<sup>43</sup> it was Agamemnon who gave the order, and so Ajax becomes a victim of his attempt to appeal to the audience's emotions. In contrast, Ulysses is well aware of his audience, and his distortion of the Homeric truth exhibits this: alluding to the Greek flight to the ships, he suggests that Agamemnon gave the order because he was deceived by Jupiter (216), relieving the king of all responsibility in a disaster which, in Homer, he instigated himself as a test of loyalty.<sup>44</sup> Later on, he praises Agamemnon for having called back those fleeing (*convocat Atrides*, 230), even though this was his own doing.<sup>45</sup> In these examples, Ulysses has altered his language to gain the judges' favour, a strategy that Quintilian considers an absolute necessity for a successful speech.<sup>46</sup>

His presentation of the Trojan War is influenced by similar strategies: his opening words (*si...valuissent vota...heres*, 128-9), are a direct response to his opponent's arguments. According to Quintilian, this is a *most attractive form of exordium*<sup>47</sup>, as it showcases the orator's ability to improvise his speech. He counteracts Ajax's claim that the Greeks voted for him by saying that the outcome would have been different if his and the audience's votes had prevailed. As a continuation of this tactic, Ulysses rebukes many of Ajax's points by providing his own perspective of his opponent's

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<sup>39</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 7.67-205.

<sup>40</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 7.161-8.

<sup>41</sup> Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator* 3.55.210; Quintilian, *On the Orator's Education* 11.1.1

<sup>42</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 7.179-180

<sup>43</sup> Papaioannou 2007, 174.

<sup>44</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 2.70-80.

<sup>45</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 2.207.

<sup>46</sup> Quintilian, *On the Orator's Education* 12.10.56.

<sup>47</sup> Quintilian, *On the Orator's Education* 5.1.54.

stories. As a consequence, Book 13 presents contesting views of the same events, such as with Homer's story of Rhesus and Dolon, in which Ulysses and Diomedes loot a Trojan camp after a successful reconnaissance mission.<sup>48</sup> Because Ajax broadly argues that the audience witnessed his deeds, unlike those of his opponent (*vidistis enim; sua narret Ulixes*, 14), he uses the story as evidence that Ulysses acts at night (*luce nihil gestum*, 100), and therefore his claims to successes are *sine teste* (15), and therefore unreliable. Ulysses, however, uses the same story to promote his own bravery and intelligence: he portrays the night as dangerous (*spreto noctisque...periclo*, 243), to counteract Ajax's previous argument, and then claims to have skilfully elicited information (247) as well as killed both Rhesus and Dolon (244; 249). In actual fact, Diomedes killed both of them.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, whereas Ajax calls Dolon *inbellemque* (98) to imply that he was an easy target, Ulysses instead promotes him as an equal (*eadem quae nos*, 244), claiming that both sides risked their lives by attempting to spy on the enemy at night. For Barbara Boyd, the debate over Diomedes indicates an attempt to *question Homer's authority as narrator of the truth*.<sup>50</sup> However, Ovid's Trojan War is not challenging that of Homer. Rather, the poem's fresh, Roman perspective serves to contribute to the *Epic Cycle*, which by its very nature accommodates for variations of Homeric reality. Rather than *reshaping tradition*,<sup>51</sup> therefore, Ovid's Trojan war adds to a broad literary culture.

Overall, the reader of the *Metamorphoses'* familiarity with Greek literature is what distinguishes its Trojan War from Homer's. He is not concerned with historicity, but rather he diverges from the Homeric narrative, to provide both a reflection of rhetorical strategies, and an attempt at originality.

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<sup>48</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 10.218-579.

<sup>49</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 10.455-494.

<sup>50</sup> Boyd 2017, 66.

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## **6. Two Remarkable Victorian Anglo-Catholics**

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In this article I want to introduce readers to two very different individuals, Fr. Richard Temple West, who built St Mary Magdalene, Paddington and the banker and philanthropist, Richard Foster who made very significant donations in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to establish churches in Walthamstow and other parts of London. These two Victorian Anglo-Catholics, one a priest and the other a layman, are not among the famous heroes of the Oxford Movement, like Newman, Pusey, Faber or Hurrell Froude, nor do they come in the list of later more well-known names like Fr Dolling, Fr McConnachie or Fr Tooth. Yet in their own way they each made a significant contribution to the spread of Anglo-Catholic worship in London in the second half of the nineteenth century.

We are fortunate also that for each of them, a biography exists. For Temple West it was written by the redoubtable Fr Carter of Clewer and is perhaps more in the vein of a hagiography, so keen is Carter to praise the ministry of Temple West. Carter's aim was not to describe a life but rather to portray the 'attractive and influential personality of one who seemed to keep with true consistency a high religious aim'. He locates this in the context of the difficulties faced by clergy who had enthusiastically embraced the Oxford Movement. He further quotes the Bishop of Nassau as saying that West encouraged 'a spirit of hopefulness' which was part of the mission of the Church of England. For Foster, his son wrote a biography which was published for private circulation by Eyre and Spottiswode. It also contains reminiscences from his son's tutor and also his daughter. It is from these primary sources that most of this paper is derived.

West was born on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1827 to John West, a barrister who was also a Commissioner in Bankruptcy and to Lady Maria West, daughter of the Earl of Orford and also distantly related to the Earl of Delaware. He was admitted to Eton when he was twelve and won an exhibition to Christ Church Oxford. Christ Church was not involved in The Oxford Movement, which had its academic base at Oriel College. In contrast, it had arranged for its compulsory services to take place at the same time as those of churches which were supporting the Oxford movement in order to prevent its students and fellows attending and being influenced by the teachings of Newman and his followers.

At Oxford besides his academic achievements, West won the silver racquet for the best tennis player and also was in the Boat Race crew. After graduating, he was elected as a Student (the Christ Church term for Fellow) and moved to London where he became a pupil barrister at Lincoln's Inn from 1850-1853. He was much in demand at society events as a skilful dancer, but his religious

devotion was obvious as he started visiting the poor – an activity which he continued all through his life. This religious devotion was the spur which took him away from the law to prepare for ordination. In 1853, West went to Cuddesdon Theological College, recently established by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, and was subsequently ordained.



Figure 1: Photograph of Richard Temple West: National Portrait Gallery by Camille Silvy, 20th October 1860. Downloaded from website.

His initial curacy was at Leeds, where the rector of the church was Walter Hook, a formidable high-churchman. It would seem that West's curacy was not a happy one as he only stayed in Leeds for a year, although Carter skates over the reasons for his departure. It can be surmised that Hook and West had a difficult relationship as West was a stickler for the rigid adherence to the Prayer Book rubrics whereas Hook wanted to ensure that his services were accessible and so 'bent the rules' to make this happen. In 1854 he became curate in charge at Hemel Hempstead, where the incumbent, Henry Mountain was very frail. He immediately upset a number of the congregation by making a slight change in the Ante-Communion liturgy. He also introduced bookmarks with crosses embroidered on. He invited Fr E Munro, a very high churchman to preach. This resulted in him being burnt in effigy on November 5<sup>th</sup> at a demonstration with 'No Popery' placards.

However, the crisis which ended West's curacy in 1857 was a result of his intransigence in respect of what many would now consider to be a matter of secondary importance. Queen Victoria had given birth to a daughter, Beatrice, on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1857. The Privy Council issued a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Queen's safe delivery of the baby and Temple West refused to use it as it had not been issued by the Bishop of Rochester, George Murray. The Bishop would not re-issue it in his name as he believed it already had been lawfully issued. He was unable to persuade West to accept its authority as West had declared that he would not use the prayer unless it were personally authorised by Murray. Stalemate ensued and Murray felt that in face of such disobedience, he had

no option but to inhibit West's ministry. In spite of his poor relationship with the Bishop, West made a great impression on his people and was much loved. He was a faithful visitor of the sick and was always looking for babies to baptise; in one week he baptised thirty-five and twelve the following week. He organised the building of new schools and abolished the box pews. He also restored the west door of the church.

West next moved as curate to William Gresley who was rector of the newly-built church of All Saints, Boyne Hill, on the outskirts of Maidenhead. The church, designed by George Street, had been paid for by three wealthy women to provide a church for Anglo-Catholic worship. Gresley had in 1851 written *The Ordinance of Confession* which had caused great controversy. Many in the Oxford Movement were encouraging individual confession to a priest as a laudable spiritual practice which had a rightful place in the Church of England. This was condemned as Popery by evangelicals and others. It was this alleged use of confession that led to West's eventual departure from Boyne Hill.

West had visited a sick woman who had led a profligate life and he encouraged her to confess as laid down in the rubric of The Order of the Visitation of the Sick, which says '*Here shall the sick person be moved to make special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the priest shall absolve him, if he desire it.*' The neighbouring incumbent complained to Bishop Wilberforce that West had forced confession on this woman. Bishop Wilberforce was reluctant to act against West but, under pressure from *The Times* (which at that time was taking a close interest in church affairs, especially when there seemed to be a challenge to the Protestant nature of the Church of England), he eventually set up a commission to hear the accusations against West. It is worth noting that, on hearing of this, Walter Hook of Leeds asked to appear 'to give evidence against Mr West.' This perhaps sheds some light on the reason that West's curacy in Leeds only lasted for a year. The hearing lasted for eleven hours at the end of which West was cleared of the charge of forcing a confession. However, West felt unable any longer to remain at Boyne Hill as he was sure his opponents would always be looking to find reasons to make further complaints against him.

He then went to Frome to work with an equally controversial priest, William Bennett, who had been forced to leave St. Barnabas, Pimlico as a result of riots occasioned by his Anglo-Catholic practices. West was very popular and Bennett asked him to stay at Frome to take charge of the Choir School. Much as West might have been tempted, another opportunity was offered to him, which was to prove to be the most significant part of his ministry.

In 1860 he moved to London as curate to Upton Richards at the newly opened All Saints, Margaret Street. After a few years, he was asked to start a mission church in Paddington by some worshippers who lived in that area. The only piece of land that he could find was an inconvenient plot squeezed in between what is now the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal and a notorious area of slum housing. Today on the canal towpath, the information board reads as follows: '*The parish was founded in 1865 as a 'church plant' from All Saints, Margaret Street in a densely-packed slum district by Fr Richard Temple West.*'

A 'tin tabernacle' was erected in February 1864 called the Chapel of St Ambrose and six services were held on a Sunday; a daily celebration of the Eucharist was commenced in 1866. West was busy raising funds via donations and the Offertory for a permanent building and George Street, who was a friend of West was commissioned as architect.



Figure 2: St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington

On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1868, West celebrated the first mass in the partially completed building. It was not until 1878 that the building was consecrated, and that seemed to have been a very low-key event, but it was in use from 1872, when a fire destroyed the roof. Worship soon continued under a tarpaulin! The church was very well-attended, by all ages and classes. At Easter 1872 across six Eucharists, there were 1122 communicants and the offertory amounted to £1180 so it was no surprise that the church and neighbouring school were without debt by July 1874. It was said that if West wanted money, he would always get it. He related well to the poor of his congregation, as a very frugal man who did not socialise with the wealthy. His biographer records that at the 5pm Good Friday Children's Service there were 4000 children and teachers present 'a reverent congregation, due to the example of a reverent Parish Priest.'

His outreach and social welfare activities were immense: a choir school, a penitentiary home, a working men's club, a nurses' institute, private schools for different classes of children, a daughter church, St Martha's with simpler, non-choral worship. Additionally outside the parish there was what we would now call a probation hostel for female prisoners at Spelthorne, as well as a Sanatorium for Inebriates. West looked after all these. From 1882-1893 he was also on the Governing Council of Keble College, Oxford. The Bishop of Nassau, a friend and supporter of West who had been a priest in London, prior to his consecration, commented that it was one of the most notable home missionary efforts in any English parish. With all these responsibilities, West still aimed to undertake five hours visiting a day.

He was supported by a number of curates; the service books lodged in The London Metropolitan Archive show a considerable number of names and also the infrequency with which West himself conducted services, seemingly limiting himself to a regular Thursday Mass and Festivals. Publicly, he used to write letters to the press, particularly when he could see a threat of parliamentary interference in the running of the church. He also supported St Andrew's, Holborn at the time of the ritualist prosecutions, but he was fiercely anti-Roman.

The other important aspect was his involvement with the wider church. He took a prominent role both in the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, as well as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. He saw his involvement in these as a way of countering the influence of the Evangelical wing over the missionary activity of the Church of England. From 1882, he was also on the Governing Council of Keble College, Oxford which had been founded in 1870.

His workload over 28 years took a toll on his health especially in the last 10 years of his ministry and he spent some winters as a Chaplain at Cannes in an effort to improve this. Ill health eventually overcame him, and he died in Bournemouth on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1893, twenty-eight years to the day of his arrival in Paddington.

West was a truly remarkable priest. In his obituary in *The Times* he was referred to as 'one of the most prominent and respected High Church clergy of the metropolis.' His energy for his parish work and his care for his parishioners and all who came to him for spiritual support were exemplary. The social and educational work which he established at a time and in an area where few such resources were provided, shows a man who put the social implications of the Gospel into practical effect. By doing this, he foreshadowed the words of Bishop Weston to the Anglo-Catholic Congress of 1923:

*Go out and look for Jesus in the ragged, in the naked, in the oppressed and sweated, in those who have lost hope, in those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus.*

His legacy continues today. St Mary Magdalene's is still open. Although it had fallen into some disrepair, it is now being restored to something like its former glory, for the worship of God and as a place to support the wider community and the arts. Richard Temple West would be proud of that.



Figure 3: Portrait of Richard Foster, taken from his biography.

By way of contrast, I now consider Richard Foster 'a merchant of London'. Foster's family came from Stainforth, near Settle in North Yorkshire, where they had lived for many generations. His grandfather was a blacksmith and ran a smallholding, but although the family had once been prosperous by the time of his great-grandfather Thomas, 'the family had fallen on bad times'. So Thomas, the eldest son, was sent to London, where his uncle, a clergyman lived. His brother John later joined him as did the other brother William (Foster's grandfather). William gained employment in the Bank of England. The brothers prospered in business, as Commission Merchants (Importers) trading with Portugal and Brazil. This was the family into which Richard Foster was born on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1822 in Finsbury. His father was forty seven years old and his mother thirty seven. He was an only child and his parents had despaired of having children. He was baptised on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1822. His schooling was of a private nature and at one stage he boarded with a clergyman.

His uncles were traders with Portugal and Brazil and it was their business that Foster joined at the age of thirteen, as an alternative to studying for ordination as he hated Latin and Greek. He remained as Clerk for sixteen years until he and his cousin took over the business at the beginning of 1853. He married Jane Footner in Romsey on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1858 and had six children, four girls and two boys. Foster's own diary account of these things is very basic and matter of fact as is the way he described his daily routine after marriage: breakfast at 730am, Morning Prayer at 8am at West Hackney Church, then walking to his office in the City to arrive by 9am. He stayed until 6pm except for the day before the arrival of the South American Mail when he did not get home before midnight – very much a man of habit and routine.

As we know, the first part of the nineteenth century was a time of rapid change, in transport, communication and society. Many saw the need for reform and this view was extended to the church. Foster's biographer writes:

*'The bulk of the clergy had become apathetic and dull, performing with an easy-going acquiescence the perfunctory discharge of formal duties. The Church as it had been in the eighteenth century was scarcely adapted to the needs of more stirring times.'*

Into this context came the Oxford Movement which William Foster says, 'deeply affected my father, and from it his work received its inspiration.' As a result, it became very clear to many that the structures of the church no longer met the missional and pastoral needs of the nation. Foster saw that the clergy lacked enthusiasm for mission and because of the lack of churches in newly built areas, people were slipping out of religion. Even before 1848, he had begun to take an interest in church extension but was unable to interest the parish of West Hackney, where he worshipped, in extending its buildings as there were not enough free seats for the poor. (As an aside his mother had given him £2 as a present for his twenty-first birthday in 1843, but he donated it anonymously to the National Society for the extension of its work).

The first new church he was involved with was St Mathias, Stoke Newington. He was a member of a committee which worked towards the building of this church, which was consecrated on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1853 – the first involvement of many. In his own self-effacing style, he wrote in his diary 'From the year 1858 my book, which I call my Charitable Gifts Book gives an account of the chief amounts of what I have given away under the name of Charity.' This book records that between 1858 and his death in 1910, he gave away about £380,000, sometimes in small but often repeated amounts. It contains nearly ten thousand entries. He was also open to appeals for support but objected on principle to bazaars and raffles as ways of funding church building. To such requests he would send a pamphlet that he had written giving his reasons. Sadly there do not seem to be any copies of this pamphlet still in existence. His secretary, Mr. Townsend, kept the record and oversaw

the distribution of the donations which covered a wide range of recipients. The main ones were either individual building funds or centrally organised schemes such as the Bishop of St. Albans' Fund which was to support churches in the eastern part of London, which at that time were in that diocese. In 1872, he set aside £100,000 for charitable giving but gave away far more. He seemed on occasions almost to be embarrassed by his business success. He ensured that funds were paid through the right channels because as a businessman he saw that '[f]inance is a matter over which the average clergyman is not infrequently a sad bungler'.

Foster was concerned about the state of many London churches and the alienating effect of the style of worship. He wrote at length about how Morning and Evening Prayer, which, with their repetition of seemingly incomprehensible scriptural sentences and the recitation of 'Dearly beloved brethren', were alien to the masses and almost in an unknown language. He wanted something to stir the imagination, energetic sermons that would be relevant to the thoughts and feelings of the poor. Churches should contain what is stirring and beautiful as a witness to the honour due to God. He concluded a letter on this subject by writing:

*The highest form of worship on earth should be a reflection of that which is rendered in heaven, and the great end of all the subordinate ministries of the church should be to prepare souls to this end in their measure and degree.*

This view was enhanced when on a visit back to Yorkshire he attended a service in Leeds Parish Church, conducted by Dr Walter Hook. He found the worship bright and accessible. As his biographer writes

*[This] taught him also that there could be no fixed rule as to what type of service was right, and that in different times and with different congregations a different degree of ritual might be desirable.'*

Isn't that what the Church of England is still trying to grapple with today, more than 150 years later? Foster believed that churches should provide what was honouring to God both in ambience and worship. It was to those churches that were providing worship in line with this view or to new churches that would follow this example, that he gave his support. He was proud to call himself a Merchant of London and firmly believed that as his money was made in London, he should use it for the physical and spiritual benefit of Londoners.

To describe in detail the many churches to which he contributed, would make this paper excessively long. He was particularly concerned about the growing area of Walthamstow. It had been a small Essex village with a population of 3006 in 1801 but just over a century later it had become an urban part of London with a population in excess of 120,000. In 1840, there was one Anglican church, the historic parish church of St. Mary, by 1911 there were eighteen. Of these

Foster, with his cousin John Knowles, paid entirely for the construction of St. Saviour's Church in 1874. He also contributed to the funding of the building of other churches in Walthamstow. His uncle James had lived there and in his legacy he had asked Richard Foster to remember Walthamstow. This he did and his passion for church building is seen in a pamphlet that he wrote in 1881 entitled *Some Wants of the Church at Home Abroad with Suggestions How to Supply Them*.

A great and terrible fact meets our eyes at every turn, and it is this, that, in all our dense centres of population, by far the greatest portion of our people are as yet unreached by the working machinery of the Church, and for want of it, are, in too many cases, living a life of utter ungodliness.

He was involved in the building of St. Michael's but his *piece de resistance* was the Church of St Barnabas. He had already purchased a site and had erected a 'tin tabernacle' in 1899 but intended later to provide a permanent building. He laid the foundation stone for this building in 1902 and on it were inscribed these words, carved by Eric Gill:

This church of St. Barnabas Walthamstow is to be built at the cost of Richard Foster a merchant of London as a thanksgiving to Almighty God for numberless mercies during a long life. This stone was laid by the aforesaid Richard Foster on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1902, being the day on which he completed his 80<sup>th</sup> year.

The building was completed and consecrated on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1903 and is still in use.

In 1862, Foster had moved from his family house in Stoke Newington to a house on Clapton Common; his mother also moved. By 1879 he was finding London too polluted and crowded; so he bought a house in Chislehurst, called Homewood, where he lived until his death. The house in Clapton was loaned to the London Diocese to house the newly appointed Suffragan Bishop of Bedford, William Walsham How, who had responsibility for churches in North East London. Foster had also offered £12,000 towards the stipend costs of Bishop How. This offer was never taken up as the vacant living of St Andrew Undershaft was given to the Bishop, the endowment of which was more than sufficient to support his ministry.

As can be seen by his activities in Walthamstow, the move to Chislehurst did not lessen his support for the North London churches and he was involved in a plan to establish five District Parishes in Tottenham. In addition, as he travelled by train each morning into the City, he also saw the crowded districts in South London with few churches. He therefore became a firm supporter in 1883 of the plan by the Bishop of Rochester to build ten new churches and he offered funding for two clergy for two years in two Mission Districts in the hope that these districts would eventually become new parishes. He also was keen on the idea of 'associated parishes', that is the linking of a rich parish to support a poor parish both in workers and finance. Thus he supported the linking of the parish of Chislehurst, where he was by now worshipping, with the deprived parish of St. Katherine's, Rotherhithe.

But Foster was not only concerned with church building and expansion. He was a founding member of the Candidates Ordination Fund, which aimed to support young men who had little financial backing of their own, to train for ordination. He saw this as important in order to widen access to the ordained ministry. He also actively promoted and supported, as one of the Founder Members, The Sustentation Fund for Parochial Clergy (later renamed The Queen Victoria Clergy Fund) which sought to raise all stipends to £300 a year. He said that:

... the time had now come when we must think of the incomes of the Clergy. It is no use building Churches and having no Clergy to minister in them. ... ... The living voice would make itself heard, but the building without the voice would not.

The condition of the clergy continued to cause him significant anxiety until his death. His oft-repeated phrase was, 'Living voice rather than buildings of brick and stone.'

He died on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1910. His body was taken into Chislehurst Church on 27<sup>th</sup> December and he was buried in Chislehurst Churchyard.



Figure 4: My thanks to Peter Appleby for this photograph of his grave.

The *Te Deum*, his favourite devotion, was sung instead of a closing hymn at his funeral. He saw the needs of the church and used his wealth to meet some of them. But he was a visionary; he saw beyond bricks and stone to the needs of those to whom the Church seemed irrelevant. He wanted to plant a Christian presence where there was none; so the presence of a priest was, in the immediate term, more important than the existence of a church building. He was pleased to use his influence as well as his wealth as a way of ensuring that this would happen. Although describing himself as a 'Prayer-Book Churchman' he could clearly see that there was need of other ways in which the Church should engage with the growing population with a more accessible form of worship. Above all, he saw that faith needed to be put into practice rather than being imprisoned in buildings, important as these might be. In a letter to Foster's widow, the Bishop of St Albans wrote to Foster's widow: 'We shall honour his memory and treasure it among the heirlooms of our church.'

What then can we learn from these two very different Victorian churchmen? Richard Temple West shows us how a faithful pastoral ministry led to a growing and thriving church. The challenge today is how to replicate that in today's very different societal setting, where many of the levers that

he had at his disposal have been taken over by the state. Perhaps we should see his pastoral concern in terms of presence and visibility in his parish – the embodiment of that incarnational ministry which is so important in Anglo-Catholic ecclesiology.

Sadly today, there are few, if any, philanthropists of the stature of Richard Foster, but besides his generosity, what stands out for me is his vision and willingness to change for the sake of the church's mission. His comments about the style of worship which is necessary to engage with those outside the church would not be out of place in a 'Fresh Expressions' publication, nor would his comment on the need for the 'Living Voice'. His over-riding concern that the church should be accessible, both physically and liturgically is a lesson that needs to be taken to heart today.

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## **7. Identifying Lyotard's Postmodern Condition, within the Political Platform and Electoral Campaign of Emmanuel Macron**

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### **I - Introduction**

It is perhaps without doubt that one can tell a lot about the specificities of a nation's culture, at any given time, by examining the political state of that country. The platform most prevalently chosen by the electorate to put into action can tell us a lot about the topical and dominant priorities of the time, the vision and hope that the people have for their collective future, and the manner in which they position themselves to those around them and the greater trajectory of their nation's history. However, politics also reflects certain details about cultural trends and movements in a different manner; it shines a light upon questions of narrative cohesion, and its significance or lack thereof. It shows us how a populace collectively perceive what "truth" really is, and what forms it can take - be it perceived (perhaps reductively) as something binary, or as something more nuanced and complex. All this in mind, an analysis of prevailing political trends within the context of a certain culture gives us an important window into cultural analysis, alongside the analyses of the academic and artistic tendencies there and then.

One philosopher who aimed to chart and explain what he saw to be rapidly emerging cultural developments across the Western world, was Jean-Francois Lyotard, and in Lyotard's famous 1979 text, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, he attempted to explain and describe how the changing conditions of the world would ever more significantly impact the way that we perceive information and knowledge. This included, but was not limited to, the concept of computerisation, in which new technologies vastly alter the way knowledge is pursued: knowledge is now to be decoded and translated as opposed to the more traditionally linear process of seeking out universal truths (3-6). Computerised knowledge, Lyotard believed, would turn knowledge into a commodity that is increasingly accumulated and owned by major corporations for profit-seeking purposes, "mercantilised" onto an emerging knowledge market, and therefore judged more and more by its profitability than by how it fits into any pertained objective narrative (5). Lyotard strongly linked this changing role of knowledge to the ever more strongly prevailing tendency of "postmodernism" within academia, which his analysis sought to explain, including rejection of the viability of attaining objectivity (71-84). The era of those conditions that brought about academic and cultural shifts towards postmodernism, could be referred to as postmodernity, and its effect termed as the postmodern condition which his title references.

Lyotard's ultimate conclusion from his analysis is of particular pertinence. With knowledge increasingly becoming subject to commodification and private ownership, becoming uncovered and even somewhat subject to a process of marketisation in abundance, the traditional means of fitting knowledge into a more cohesive, complete framework as to how elements of our world work, was becoming less and less feasible to sustain. Lyotard referred to this as a "meta-narrative": a grand story presenting a (supposedly) objective, scientific portrayal of the world, weaving together all of the universal truths sought after by modernist art, philosophy, science and so forth. Therefore regarding the *postmodern*, Lyotard proclaimed that "simplifying to the extreme, I define [it] as incredulity towards metanarratives." (xxiv) With the objective behind the acquisition of knowledge fundamentally shifting towards private interest or "performativity" (11), and the subsequent formulation of directly paradoxical conclusions that cannot fit within a set metanarrative, Lyotard posits that the notion of a "grand narrative" and its appeal, are being ultimately replaced by a plethora of smaller narratives from which one must pick and mix (60).

The aim of this particular project is to look at certain elements of the current French political scene, and what it can tell us as to whether the predictions envisioned by Lyotard retain merit in the present day, forty years on. More specifically, the focus will be placed upon the economic and cultural platform of France's incumbent President, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, and the narratives informing the positions he has taken. The phenomenon of Macron clearly took France by storm in his election of 2017 - not only did he place first in first-round voting and easily beat his opponent, Marine Le Pen, in the run-off, but the party that he brought into existence from scratch won a staggering 60% of the legislature, indicating quite the impression that Macron and his platform made on the population. This suggests very strongly that the prevailing popular perspective on questions of truth, purpose and cohesion in how France should be run, was deemed to be reflected in the platform of Macron and La Republique En Marche (his party). Economic policy and cultural rhetoric, two essential parts to a political platform, shall be the case studies we use primarily throughout the following text, although his campaign more broadly and the manner in which it manifested is also of interest.

## **II - Economic Policy**

The discipline of economics, in France and across the wider world, is a discipline in which specific metanarratives (in the form of economic philosophies) are particularly noticeable. It is therefore no surprise that the period in which modernist approaches to truth and knowledge (i.e. the search for a scientific, objective assessment of the existing universal truth and the formula at the root of all truths) most dominated politics, coincided with perhaps the period of starker ideological

division in the global community. The Soviet bloc and its supporters within the international left boiled down their own economic and social analysis to the philosophy of Karl Marx and his dialectical model, and it was from this dialectical framework that notions of historical materialism, for instance, could be extrapolated, in itself begetting insight into the fundamental contradictions and irrationalities of the capitalist system (Marx, 1845: B). Whereas, in the West, the more orthodox economic perspective put to practice tended to buy into a different narrative, that it was the self-regulating nature of the market economy and its utilisation of price mechanics to demonstrate what the most efficient allocation of resources would be (Mises, 1920). A third narrative, that of the need for intervention and stimulus for a working economy, also notably posits its own truths as to how to drive prosperity within a mixed economy, deriving from the Keynesian tradition (Keynes, 1936).

Therefore historically, the underlying rationale from which politicians and heads of state have derived their economic policy throughout the modern era, has generally related and referred back to the narrative to which they adhere. Culturally speaking, notions of taking aspects from both narratives would have seemed somewhat absurd and illogical. Where Emmanuel Macron however shows himself to be very interesting is that his rationale for economic policy has shown itself fundamentally more incohesive - and yet such a platform within the current time period appeared to have won him the French presidency in 2017. Macron has never really thrown himself behind the full, complete social democratic narrative for instance, or a market fundamentalist one. Rather, he has accepted and rejected different aspects of these narratives pragmatically, much echoing Lyotard's prediction of the adoption of mixing smaller narratives than ascertaining one all-encompassing metanarrative.

The economic stance taken by Emmanuel Macron, both in campaign and in practice, calls heavily upon traditionally free market narratives for its various policy prescriptions. Central to such narratives is a belief that government intervention can actually infringe upon economic efficiency and (by extension) public wellbeing. Macron's support for the El Khomri law is perhaps a clear example of a law derived from such a narrative: the law aims to reduce government protections against corporations from laying off workers, or reducing severance packages and overtime payments at will. Speaking to the economically liberal French financial paper, *Les Echos*, Macron even stated he would wish to, "go further than the El Khomri law," as a means of limiting any distortions of government intervention, and hence boosting "productive investment." During the campaign, Macron even flirted with the possibility of removing the government regulation limiting the work week to 35 hours (*l'Obs*, 2016), in place to prevent overexploitation. We see similar sentiments in Macron's intentions to cut corporate taxes from a third to a quarter, as a means of stimulating investment as per the free market narrative (Tax-News, 2017).

That said, it is also evident that not all of Macron's economic positions are informed from this free market narrative. Macron's identification with certain aspects of what could be labelled as part of a social democratic narrative is perhaps most evident in his campaign rhetoric surrounding essential services such as healthcare and education, in which his policy appears to evoke a certain lack of trust for the unregulated free market option, and a preference instead for government intervention. For example, within Macron's campaign, a central part of his manifesto was on the promise of national health insurance, covering optical, hearing, and dental care (Slate, 2017). *Les Echos* estimated this policy at around 4.4 billion euros a year to reimburse French citizens for such services. Even despite his specific focus on the deficit and his evident opposition to socially provided measures on other issues, Macron appears to reference an entirely different angle when it comes to spending on healthcare. Again, we see this approach continue in Macron's position towards funding for medical investment and innovation, for which he advocates a multi-year strategy in spite of the national health expenditure target (ONDAM), which Macron claimed prior to his election, "needs reformation" (Le Parisien, 2016). Under Macron's presidency, health spending has remained at a consistently high rate of over 11% of the GDP (World Bank), above the international average.

The belief that instead of bringing down deficit, the economy can only truly be stimulated through spending on things people need to keep the economy flowing, appears to show a more Keynesian approach to be the economic framework that most aligns with healthcare policy as advocated by Macron. This being from the same man, who in the lead-up to his election outlined the issues of the preceding financial policy pejoratively to be, "generally more public deficits," when questioned by journalists (Mediapart, 2016). A similar deference to the narrative of economic interventionism can be seen with Macron's spending on artificial intelligence, announced in 2018 to be 1.5 billion euros (Bloomberg, 2018), and his initial intentions to renationalise l'Unédic, the agency responsible for unemployment benefits. In 2019 however, Macron's government had decreased compensation expenditure by almost 3.5 billion, perhaps moreso in line with his anti-deficit narrative.

Perhaps the most interesting element of Macron's position, in which the appeal to two narratives simultaneously is clear, concerns education policy. According to former *directeur de l'enseignement scolaire*, Jean-Paul Delahaye, Macron's education propositions were based upon "speaking to both the left and the right." For instance, tapping into the free market narrative, Macron has been clear to favour increased autonomy for schools and educational institutions, within an altogether more decentralised education system - a proposal that allows for the market mechanics of competition, identifying this competition to be the source of self-regulation. Yet at the same time, Macron clearly indicates doubt over this narrative, given his simultaneous advocacy of

central intervention in the dictation of teachers' wages, and the wealth and resources of working-class schools (l'Obs, 2016). From issue to issue regarding the situation of the French education system, it would seem that the policy of Emmanuel Macron is prepared to take the narrative from either side of the political debate on a pragmatic basis. This appears to parallel a "radical centrism" that has largely increased its presence on the political stage with the decline of ideological dogma through the 1990s particularly.

Change in economic policy, economic redirection, or even ideological epiphany, would be by no means unprecedented, nor distinctly postmodern. However, with the position adopted by Macron even prior to his election on the campaign trail, it was the coexistence of opposing narratives utilised to inform his policy that is of particular interest. The French population of 2017 knowingly elected and, by proxy, endorsed, one manifestation of this mix of narratives, without deeming it to be absurd, contradictory, or even particularly controversial. Clearly, the lack of necessity for such platforms to require a centrally coherent narrative had become at least somewhat culturally normalised. This would hence align very closely with Lyotard's analysis that the mass extent of conflicting knowledge and truth within our current era of postmodernity, would make such narratives more difficult to sustain, and therefore deemed less of a necessity to the population in such matters as voting or endorsing a political position or candidate.

### **III - Sociocultural Rhetoric**

When evaluating the range of narratives entertained by Macron in deriving his political policy positions, and its possible reflection of a cultural acceptance of the postmodern scepticism of metanarratives, economic dogma (or lack of a coherent economic dogma, perhaps), it solely one facet of the discussion. To expand on an exploration of the cultural significance of the metanarrative, or inversely, postmodernity, within the Macron era, we can also look at the rhetoric used by the current French president on social and cultural issues. Unlike economic policy however, where perhaps campaign promises were most relevant in indicating the sympathies and popular acceptance of the population, the rhetoric used is of interest not only from before his election, but during Macron's presidency in a continued attempt to stress convergence between his own position and the priorities of the electorate.

Consequently, we can see Macron adopt a broadly socially liberal appeal, but also occasionally straying from this narrative in certain areas, to his advantage. The essence of the culturally progressive narrative could be described as a continuous process of self-criticism and improvement on cultural and social issues, as a means of moving forward towards a more fair and equal future. The opposing conservative narrative advocates the reverse, to be more tentative and

reluctant towards major change, in fear of discarding the good in the systems which we already have (this is for instance a major part of the definition put forth by figurehead of Western conservatism Russell Kirk (1993)). While these narratives are often balanced out by politicians both prior to the rise of the postmodern and now, certain metanarratives do indeed emerge from these sentiments, such as ideas of subversion or of attempts to hold onto oppressive institutions for personal benefit, both of which would proclaim progressive or conservative sentiment to be fundamentally disingenuous, respectively.

In the run up to his election, one of Macron's most controversial moments was one of firm progressivism, in condemning the French occupation and colonisation of Algeria as, "a crime against humanity," continuing by stating, "It's truly barbarous and it's part of a past that we need to confront by apologising to those against whom we committed these acts." France has never officially apologised for the colonisation of Algeria, and the issue was and is evidently still a controversial subject for many French people, as shown in the reactions of conservative an nationalist politicians (France 24, 2017). This exercise in self-criticism even where it may be deemed at the expense of national pride was also repeated in Macron's clear acknowledgement of French complicity in carrying out the genocide of Jewish people during the Holocaust, stating for one incident, "It was indeed France that organised this <...> Not a single German took part" (The Guardian, 2017). Again, these sentiments point towards Macron's capacity for progressive criticism of the nation in defiance of patriotic loyalties. Even concerning ongoing issues within France, in acknowledgement of systemic racism and its effects (AP, 2020), and in a call for faster transition towards sustainability, Macron has been seemingly somewhat unafraid to think in a progressive manner. As he stated to an American crowd on a visit to Washington, "We will disrupt the system together!"

However, in particular since coming to power, Macron appears to have latched onto other narratives that specifically decry this very process of progressive self-criticism to be an American import with destructive intent. Discussing this in an interview with *Elle* magazine, Macron expressed alarm at a growing "racialisation" that the Western world was falling back into, as a result of critical analysis through the lens of race and other identity groups (Independent, 2021). Moreover, even Macron's position on Algeria was called into question after a refusal to issue the long-awaited formal apology (France 24, 2021). This apparent shift, perhaps partially to chase public opinion, appears to indicate a certain lack of narrative consistency in Macron's position of how and how not to criticise one's country, which seems somewhat sporadic. Macron insists himself to be a patriot, not a nationalist, but the line he demonstrates between the two is certainly somewhat unclear.

Further narrative inconsistencies can be identified in Macron's perspective on cultural and religious tolerance. Despite being strongly in favour throughout his campaign of tolerance for Islam and the ability to practice it without needing to be discreet (Marianne, 2016), and speaking of the acceptance of refugees as "a duty," (le Parisien, 2017) both of these have again been later contradicted by his positions in the approach to the next election, in an appeal to reinvent himself in line with a more politically lucrative position. On immigration, he reverted to the proposition of fixed quotas and has called for more investment into guarding the sea border on the Mediterranean by Frontex. Expressing deep concern over "Islamic radicalism," and describing the religion as "in crisis," sentiments he had in the past expressed concern over when espoused by Manuel Valls (Figaro, 2016), Macron's rhetoric has shifted dramatically from that of cultural inclusivity to a need to defend "Western civilisation," and a more religiously secular position for the state. Where the former sentiment calls upon the narrative that strength comes from diversity and inclusion, the latter instead promotes the notion that a concept of Western civilisation must itself be protected and defended from such diversity and inclusion.

While in social policy it is clear that Macron does, similarly to with economic policy, borrow from multiple narratives, his shifting and inconsistency on many subjects such as Algeria or the values of multiculturalism ultimately demonstrates his lack of a singular metanarrative around such subjects, or the need to assert one upon changing his position.

#### **IV - Neoliberalism and Postmodernity**

In addition, it is also worth noting the significance of social and cultural policy within the political scene of our current era, and its own relationship to the postmodern condition of knowledge, and the decline of the metanarrative. While naturally metanarratives do exist surrounding social and cultural issues, such issues tend to be pragmatically adaptable and do not necessarily require the setting of long-term ideological direction in the same way as might be expected in the age of competing economic narratives. The shift in political discourse away from the necessity for lasting, coherent dogma to the flexibility of pragmatism, with the capacity to pick from a multitude of narratives at political convenience, is perhaps also a defining feature of the postmodern political scene, and one with particular relevance to Macron himself. Evidently this shift has been acknowledged and somewhat embraced by the French president, who asserted that, "As I see it, the real divide in our country <...> is between progressives and conservatives, it's this divide that I now want to overcome," (Le Monde, 2016) in itself exemplifying the further divergence from narrative, dogma, and long-term direction with the Macron era.

One can easily draw a connection here from this form of postmodern politics to the broad adoption of a consensus around neoliberal economic philosophy following the end of the Cold War. While neoliberalism could in itself be thought of as a metanarrative of its own, the concept places heavy emphasis on the free market as a positive feedback loop, which supposedly could from here on out essentially pose a solution to economic policy. For some theorists, such as Francis Fukuyama, the liberalisation of markets within liberal democracies, to constantly de- and reterritorialise aspects of society towards their most efficient and profitable forms, could be seen in part as an end to history, with neoliberal capitalism not being itself a modernistic attempt to carry out a certain economic narrative, rather said narrative's completed, resolved form (1992: xii). The neoliberal and the postmodern therefore can be seen as closely interwoven, with the neoliberal order on both national and international levels existing in the aftermath of modernity and the completion of the historical narrative. Macron's policy, in focusing predominantly on social questions and leaving much of the long-term economic policy debates to the liberalisation of the market, could consequently be described and perceived as neoliberal (Jacobin 2021).

The question of a narrative's completion or of the satisfaction of historical finality is not discussed primarily within Lyotard's analysis of postmodernity, however it is touched upon somewhat by the American Marxist literary critic, Fredric Jameson, in his own text: *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991). Unlike Lyotard, who fundamentally expresses preference for the usage of a plethora of smaller narratives in place of a metanarrative and sees such a condition as a liberation from dogma, Jameson is far more pessimistic about the effects of the postmodern condition and "the end of ideology". With the incompatibility of the postmodern state of knowledge with narratives, he identifies a weakening of historicity; with all history being clouded by the lack of objectivity, postmodernity distances us as individuals from the past and leaves us with an infatuation with the present - a tendency also very noticeable within neoliberalism, in which the pragmatism of doing politics for the present replaces the grander narratives of continuity with the past and future (5). Jameson's call to "always historicise!" (1981: 9) can in this way be interpreted as a pushback against this condition, which in the lack of direction arisen from the rejection of the metanarrative, aims to reintroduce objective and meaning to a population increasingly disaffected with the postmodern condition.

Dissatisfaction with neoliberalism and this perceived lack of the objective, both in goals and in notions of meaning and purpose, can be seen to be growing across the West, not excluding France. It would be irresponsible, when considering Macron as an indicator of French cultural tendency, to overlook opposition to the current government, both at the time of his election in 2017, and increasingly throughout his presidency. In the wake of the Yellow Vest Protests, we can

see clear discontent and alienation with neoliberal politics and the lack of a meaningful economic agenda resulting in open protest. Macron's approval rating has since been very low even by standards of French presidents, and the positions of those who were right behind Macron since his election in 2017 have continued to grow in popularity at Macron's expense. Prior to 2017, the main political forces within French politics have been the Socialist Party on the left, and the Republicans on the right. However, 2017 saw the demise of both to a large extent. On the left, the populist candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon outperformed the socialists; from the right, Marine Le Pen emerged in second place overall. The rise of these two politicians and their platform is therefore also of note for any comprehensive cultural analysis of the current French political scene.

This emergence of a seemingly post-postmodern tendency is still very much subject to intellectual debate, however by far the most prolific analysis can be attributed to cultural theorists Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen, and their concept of "metamodernism" as a means of describing the cultural movement beyond postmodernism. *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect and Depth after Postmodernism* (2017), which they co-edited with Alison Gibbons, details analyses of various cultural phenomena beyond or in reaction to the postmodern. The distinctive characteristic outlined in the text could be perhaps best described as an oscillation between modern and postmodern; between the insincerity and self-awareness of postmodernism in acknowledging the unobtainable nature of a universally objective narrative, and the hope and sincerity of the modernist search for said truth, providing direction and meaning in place of nihilism. In Vermeulen's words, "grand narratives are as necessary as they are problematic, hope is not simply something to distrust, love not necessarily something to be ridiculed." (Tank 2012: 215)

In *Metamodernism*, Sam Browne gives an analysis of the difference in appeal between the postmodern campaign of Third Way neoliberal Tony Blair, and the perhaps more metamodern campaign of left populist Jeremy Corbyn, within the context of politics within the United Kingdom (167-182). This analysis, however, very closely reflects the appeal of the campaigns in the French 2017 election from differing cultural tendencies. The perception of Macron, and his appeal, could be closely likened to Blair, in its emphasis on performativity. Macron's appeal, in large part, was derived from his personality and identity, as a young, well-spoken statesman with an appeal to moderation and compromise. This shows striking similarities to Lyotard's analysis: with the computerisation of knowledge making pursuit of objective narratives near impossible, emphasis shifts from the modernist goal of uncovering universal truth, to performativity, to *where* such knowledge comes from as opposed to what it is, and if it fundamentally appears authentic. Meanwhile, the populist campaigns of Melenchon and Le Pen clearly sought a more metamodern appeal, by oscillating

between the tentative vagueness of populism from postmodern anti-dogma, and its hopeful directedness from modern dogma.

Ultimately, as aforementioned in prior sections, Macron's appeal largely was not based upon his proposition of a coherent metanarrative in the way one might expect from a modernistically appealing campaign. French political magazine *Le Point* even compared Macron to a product being sold - with his campaign emphasising his impressive personal CV, his relative moderation in comparison to the more dogmatic candidates, and without relying on the traditional means of structuring a campaign around a written programme (2017). Again, these are phenomena that can be linked back to Jameson's analysis, of the gradual commodification of everything into mere "pastiche." (22-28)

## V - Conclusion

Given that Macron was elected on a platform evidently informed, not by a singular, cohesive metanarrative, but upon a mixed bag of smaller narratives, we can see many similarities with the conclusions that Lyotard had made roughly 40 years prior. The 2017 election not only proved the lack of necessity in public perception, for their chosen representative of their collective to have a set, coherent metanarrative, such as in economic philosophy, but it also showed the growing importance of more disparate, localised, and topical issues to that electorate, by electing a campaign that broadly emphasised pragmatism and social policy in the present, as opposed to more long-term questions. The importance of the metanarrative, and with it of historicity, showed itself to be in decline as both Lyotard and later Jameson had predicted it would. Instead, the winning campaign based itself upon performativity and the *feeling* of authenticity, instead of the actual policy advocated itself, which bears much resemblance to the concept of post-truth politics, with the postmodern condition of knowledge seemingly responsible for cultivating it.

It appears therefore valid to perceive the Macron era as perhaps the height of postmodernity on the French political scene, the culmination of a gradual transition from the dogmas of political modernism paved through such other important events such as the decline of the French Communist Party, European integration and France's ongoing transition into 21st century neoliberalism. Emmanuel Macron's victory and presidency, as a centrist, neoliberal, pragmatist candidate, relying on performative appeal, is the ultimate reflection of Lyotard's conclusion coming to fruition. The rationale behind which the French population chose Macron was not from a metanarrative, nor from perceived objectivity, but from his appeal to moderation, authenticity, and anti-dogmatism, and as such the way in which the information used to inform this choice was processed by the electorate shows more striking similarities to the mercantilised knowledge of

Lyotard, than of traditional means of choosing the position closest to what one believes to be the truth.

Nonetheless, we can also clearly see alongside the Macron government, a growing dissatisfaction with this very phenomenon, in favour of yet a new approach to politics that appears to reflect a “metamodern” character as identified by van den Akker and Vermeulen. Le Pen remains an imposing political figure within French politics, as does the anti-establishment left of the Gilets Jaunes. Their own appeal was by no means devoid of performativity in 2017, yet however they managed to oscillate between both modern and postmodern appeal. As more and more people across the Western world grow more and more alienated and disillusioned with the neoliberal consensus, and the seemingly directionless politics without the metanarrative or any strong sense of historicity, political movements will have to find ways to reconcile self-awareness of the lack of objectivity, with the hope derived from directed objective. The rise of populism, which in Le Pen and Mélenchon’s campaigns have appealed to this sense of oscillation, hints to us that there may be a new cultural movement on the political scene taking stage, and that the postmodern tendencies that elected Macron may from here on out be in gradual decline: postmodern politics may soon no longer satisfy the populace, who long for any trace of their narratives back.

Overall, the Macron presidency and its uncanny echo of the postmodern condition theorised by Lyotard, gives us an insightful window into the progression of recent cultural movements in France, and in much else of the Western world. We can identify the culmination of postmodernity, and the postmodern state of knowledge, truth and narrative - how each of these profound concepts are culturally perceived or accepted by the electorate. Yet, it also demonstrates the continual movement of culture towards new approaches and tendencies, giving us a clue as to what lies beyond postmodernity, and what it may have in store for our future. The case study of Emmanuel Macron, and his election to the French presidency in 2017, has undoubtedly proven to be a fascinating and telling one in answering this question, through which we can view the continual movement of the age-old French culture in microcosm.

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# Lived Experiences

## **8. Can formal features in literature exist independently of the reader's experience?**

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The philosophy of criticism proposed by Stanley Fish is startling in its nature; this is evident from his opening statement that ‘the proper object of analysis is not the work but the reader’.<sup>1</sup> Through unreservedly denying the concept of fixed meaning, Fish asserts that formal features do not exist independently of the reader’s experience and that texts are constituted by interpretation.<sup>2</sup> This essay seeks to discuss and contrast the aforementioned concept with the wider Formalist and Marxist views. Through focusing on meaning as embedded in the text itself, and meaning as intertwined with cultural theory, such perspectives oppose the argument of Fish and assert the central importance and independence of formal features in literary study.

The crux of Fish’s argument is that language itself should be viewed ‘as an experience rather than a repository of extractable meaning’; what a sentence does, is essentially what it means.<sup>3</sup> This assertion explicitly denies the concept of fixed meaning and implies that the impact of the reader’s involvement is most essential to a sincere study of literature. The concept that meanings are forged through human engagement beats through Fish’s work with obsessive insistence; the idea that meaning is not something ‘embedded or encoded in the text’ is essential to this.<sup>4</sup> As he notes that words do not ‘possess meaning’, rather they ‘acquire it’ through the experience of the reader, his argument becomes clear: literary texts must be perceived as an ongoing and perpetual process of interpretation.<sup>5</sup> One may deduce, then, that any objectivity or independence with regard to formal features is a mere illusion.

The concept of ‘objectivity’ is essential here, as Fish looks to resist the argument that formal features can exist independently. To consider such formal features alone, according to Fish, would

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Fish, ‘Interpreting the *Variorum*’, in *Critical Inquiry*, 2 (1976), pp. 465–485 (p. 476) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1342862?seq=1>> [accessed 10 March 2021].

<sup>3</sup> Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, p. 393.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley Fish, ‘Interpreting the *Variorum*’, p. 473.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley Fish, ‘What Is Stylistics and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things About It?’ in *Approaches to Poetics*, ed. Seymour Chatman, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 109-52 (p. 143).

ultimately 'prevent us from seeing its essential nature' and grant a 'spurious' objectivity to the text.<sup>6</sup> It could, therefore, be said that the meaning of a text is not contained within the bounds of the objective word. The argument that 'what a sentence does is what it means' could be applied here, as the independent existence of formal features is sternly denied.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the argument of Fish, then, even signals the need for a shift from textual analysis to the analysis of the impact a text may have on a reader. Yet whilst the formal features of a text must remain a crucial element of the overall interpretive process, such features are perceived to be rendered meaningless in the absence of the reader's experience. This proposed argument leads one to deduce that formal features may not exist separately from the reader's experience and still produce a meaningful analysis of a text.

The phenomenological stance is well accepted within the scholarly community, as Chris Lang affirms that 'the text itself does not contain meaning: despite being written upon, it is a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate onto which the reader, in reading, actually writes the text'.<sup>8</sup> This, once again, places the experience of the reader at the very core of the text. One may infer from such claims that the experience of the reader fundamentally defines a literary text, and that an analysis of this experience should be favoured over the analysis of any structure or combination of formal features visible on the page. Lang, like Fish, thus appears explicit in his denial of fixed meaning and the consequential existence of meaning as rooted within formal features alone.

The argument that formal features do not exist independently of the reader's experience is propelled by Fish with zeal, yet it may also be perceived as somewhat problematic. In centralising the role of the reader and defining textual meaning as an 'experience' with the capabilities of a 'regulating and organizing mechanism' with regard to the construction and deconstruction of meaning, it could be argued that Fish diminishes all significance of the author and written word itself.<sup>9</sup> In the words of William Cain: "If one grants that the reader 'writes' the text, where does one locate the author's writing?".<sup>10</sup> To accept the aforementioned theory proposed by Fish would be to state that the reader is responsible for establishing meaning; this would be to suggest that the author and choice of words are of no relevance. To suggest that formal features do not exist outside of the interpretive response of the reader is ultimately to reduce the role of the author and overall creator. Kathleen McCormick argues that Fish's approach ensures that 'the text vanishes'; one may

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<sup>6</sup> Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, p. 401.

<sup>7</sup> Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, p. 393.

<sup>8</sup> Chris Lang, 'A Brief History of Literary Theory' (Columbus: Xenos Christian Fellowship, 2011) <<http://www.xenos.org/essays/litthy7.htm>> [accessed 10 March 2021].

<sup>9</sup> Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, p.143.

<sup>10</sup> William Cain, *The Crisis in Criticism: Theory, Literature and Reform in Studies* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 58.

go even further to suggest that the author also disappears.<sup>11</sup> To grant the reader such power would be to suggest that the act of reading constructs the text; the author is exiled as the text itself becomes a mere fragment of the reader's imagination. Formal features, according to Robert Scholes, must retain some independent potential, or there is fundamentally 'no such thing as the text itself'.<sup>12</sup>

The significance of objectivity with regard to a text and its formal features is further emphasised by Peter Barry in his opening assertion that 'the literary text contains its own meaning within itself'.<sup>13</sup> Barry notes that 'the best way to study the text is to study the words on the page' and with an absence of any predefined human agenda.<sup>14</sup> Here one may draw connections to the wider Formalist and Structuralist attempts to herald a new 'scientific positivism' which centres the 'literary fact' at the root of their theories.<sup>15</sup> Such a concept is in direct opposition to that proposed by Fish, as formal features are positioned at the core of the argument. One must infer from this that an unbiased understanding of literature may only be gained through a detailed analysis of formal features; in this sense, they must be permitted to exist independently.

A detailed analysis of formal features appears central to the Formalist and Structuralist discussion of literature. The Russian Formalists, in particular, perceive literature as 'a special form of language' which is defined by its 'literariness', or 'literaturnost'; as Roman Jakobson notes, 'the object of the science of literature is not literature, but literariness'.<sup>16</sup> One must ultimately infer from this theory that such 'literariness' is generated and determined by the formal features of a text itself. This notion is also evident in the work of Viktor Shklovsky, who uses the term 'device' to argue that 'literariness' fundamentally derives from formal features and poetic devices such as metaphor.<sup>17</sup> It is in this sense that formal features are noted to exist independently; though wholly disregarded by the likes of Fish, this theory assumes formal features to be the most essential element with regard to

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<sup>11</sup> Kathleen McCormick, 'Swimming Upstream with Stanley Fish' in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 44 (1985) pp. 67-76 (p. 68).

<sup>12</sup> Robert Scholes, *Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 149.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Barry, *Theory Before Theory. Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Barry, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Boris Eichenbaum, 'The Theory of the "Formal Method"' in *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism*, ed. by Vincent Leitch et al, 2 (London; New York: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2010), p. 935.

<sup>16</sup> Roman Jakobson, *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. by Patricia Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 215.

<sup>17</sup> Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. by Lee Lemon and Marion Reis (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 11.

the analysis and understanding of any given text. Therefore, they must have the capacity to exist alone.

When put into practice, James Machor outlines the argument that words do, in fact, have several literal meanings. He uses the example of the word ‘roof’. Stating that it may mean ‘the covering of a structure’ or ‘upper palate’, he notes that it could never literally mean ‘basement’ or ‘my dead aunt Agnes’.<sup>18</sup> Formal features and components, then, do appear to exist independently of interpretation; to a certain extent, words will always acquire a form of stable meaning. Machor outlines that this ‘stable meaning’, even if interpreted differently, is fundamentally still contained to a specific range and that a similar set of meanings are identifiable.<sup>19</sup> This approach is essentially an assertion of intrinsic meaning and an attempt to verify the inherent importance of objective words. In the words of Steven Mailloux: this is the realist, positivistic and essentialist position on textuality.<sup>20</sup> It is in this sense that Fish’s argument that formal features do not exist independently of the reader’s experience may be refuted, for it appears that language can indeed be meaningful in the absence of interpretative strategies.

Yet the wider Marxist view argues that neither formal features, nor the experience of the reader are most crucial to a meaningful analysis of literature. For example, as representative of the wider Marxist view, Leon Trotsky’s *Literature and Revolution* may be perceived as an attempt to assert the role of the external social environment in the accurate appreciation and determination of a text and its form. Trotsky ultimately respects that ‘the form of art is, to a certain and very large degree, independent’, but also maintains with insistence, that ‘the artist who creates this form, and the spectator who is enjoying it, are not empty machines, one for creating form and the other for appreciating it’.<sup>21</sup> Here a bond between formal features, the reader and the conditions of society is explicitly highlighted, and it is suggested that the unification of all three factors is essential, even if not entirely harmonious. It seems that the forces injected into the author, form and reader are not invisible or worthless; these forces ensure that such vital elements may exist collaboratively within the social context of their environment. Trotsky further argues that ‘no matter how wise the Formalists try to be, their whole conception is simply based upon the fact that they ignore the psychological unity of the social man’, and that this ‘psychology is the result of social conditions’.<sup>22</sup> One must deduce from such assertions that whilst formal features and the experience of the reader

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<sup>18</sup> James Machor, ‘The Object of Interpretation and Interpretive Change’ in *Comparative Literature Issue*, 113 (Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998) pp. 1126-1150 (p. 1134).

<sup>19</sup> Machor, p. 1135.

<sup>20</sup> Steven Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1925), p. 144.

<sup>22</sup> Trotsky, p. 145.

are crucial factors, neither may exist independently, or without the presence of contextual contributions. A thorough understanding of literature, then, perhaps derives from a consideration of social conditions alongside a respect for independent formal features and the experience of the reader. Whether formal features may exist independently of the reader's experience almost becomes an irrelevant consideration, for the exploration of contextual social conditions will consistently provide the most meaningful analysis of a text overall.

Raymond Williams advances this argument as he asserts that 'language is the articulation of an active and changing experience; a dynamic and articulated social presence in the world'.<sup>23</sup> His argument, then, is much akin to that of Trotsky: one may not find meaning in the absence of a thorough consideration of social situations. As Williams asserts that 'literary theory cannot be separated from cultural theory', he implies that the effective analysis of a text may only occur within the conditions of its production.<sup>24</sup> This fundamentally renders both the argument of Fish, and his critics, as meaningless. As Williams explores the notion that the meaning of a text is produced through social experience, the independent existence of formal features and the reader's experience are deemed largely irrelevant. It should be concluded that no such elements may exist independently and hold the capacity to embody the most valuable meaning. In this sense, the wider Marxist approach is essential to the discussion of Fish's concept, for it injects social and cultural influences into the debate and provides a far more fruitful and meaningful assessment.

On a broad level, it would ultimately be difficult to disagree with the statement that formal features do not exist independently of the reader's experience, as it appears that in some capacity, the experience of the reader will always be projected into the written word. Yet Fish's statement also appears too extreme, as the aforementioned argument of Barry affirms that words and formal features do, in fact, hold some fixed and inherent meaning. Overall, the wider Marxist view proposes the most convincing argument: that neither element should be entirely excluded or deemed meaningless, and that all such elements should work together and be considered as a unit alongside cultural factors. Whilst Fish's argument excludes the importance of formal features, the opposing view largely excludes the influence of the reader's experience; both approaches also prove largely problematic through their omission of cultural and contextual contributions. Formal features, the experience of the reader and the social context of their environment should ultimately be intertwined and considered as essential elements of the 'literary machine'.<sup>25</sup> To treat any such element independently with such obsessive insistence would be detrimental to the comprehension

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<sup>23</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.38.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, p. 145.

<sup>25</sup> Trotsky, p. 145.

of literary meaning; in order to achieve a fully meaningful and rewarding understanding of literature, one may fundamentally not exist without the other.

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## **9. Queer Cowboys in a Queer Time and Space: Annie Proulx's 'Brokeback Mountain'**

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In 'Brokeback Mountain', one of the short stories in the collection *Close Range: Wyoming Stories* (1999), Annie Proulx explores a relationship between two contemporary Wyoming 'cowboys', Ennis del Mar and Jack Twist, that does not conform to heteronormative expectations about sexual behaviour. In her portrayal of Ennis and Jack's sexual relationship, Proulx explores and extends the inherent nonconformity and queerness of the cowboy figure, which has been identified by critics such as Chris Packard in his recent book *Queer Cowboys: And Other Erotic Male Friendships in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2016). Throughout 'Brokeback Mountain', which charts the growth of Ennis and Jack from late adolescence into manhood, both men struggle with the pressure to conform to heteronormative behaviours such as marriage, reproduction, and inherited professions. Although their relationship may initially develop in what Jack Halberstam would call a 'queer time and space', normative temporalities (associated with marriage, reproduction, etc.) are continually imposed upon their relationship.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the fear of homophobic violence forces Ennis and Jack to conform to heteronormative expectations, in the form of unwanted heterosexual marriages, families, and inherited professions.

In his book *Queer Cowboys*, Chris Packard suggests that the cowboy is 'queer' because 'he is odd; he doesn't fit in; he resists community; he eschews lasting ties with women but embraces rock-solid bonds with same-sex partners; he practices same-sex desire'.<sup>2</sup> Significantly, Packard's use of the word 'queer' is decidedly ambiguous. This ambiguity is inherent to how the word is often used in academic discourse, partly because historically 'queer' has had two definitions. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'queer' was first defined as an adjective to describe a person who is 'strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric'.<sup>3</sup> More recently, 'queer' has been defined as a noun that refers to a homosexual.<sup>4</sup> For Packard, the cowboy fits both definitions of 'queer': the cowboy is both 'strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric' in that he 'doesn't fit in', and a homosexual who 'practices same-sex desire'.

In Proulx's opening description of Ennis and Jack, it is evident that they are 'queer' in terms of the first definition of the word. Since both are 'high school dropout country boys with no

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: NYU Press, 2005), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Chris Packard, *Queer Cowboys: And Other Erotic Male Friendships in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> 'queer, adj.1', in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/156236?rskey=SxqVP1&result=2#eid>> [accessed 19 November 2021].

<sup>4</sup> 'queer, n.2', in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online], <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/156235?rskey=SxqVP1&result=1#eid>> [accessed 19 November 2021].

prospects [...] both rough-mannered, rough-spoken', Ennis and Jack are clearly 'odd' and don't 'fit in'.<sup>5</sup> This is because being 'high school dropout[s]' implies an inability to 'fit in', a failure to assimilate in normal institutional systems such as education. While the repetition of the adjective 'rough' implies a kind of friction against certain norms of sociability, especially in their manners and speech, which again suggests a failure to conform or 'fit in'. In Proulx's story, Ennis and Jack's initial 'queerness' develops into 'queerness' in terms of the other definition of the word. Although Ennis 'was engaged to Alma Beers' (284), he eschews this heterosexual tie like a traditional cowboy when he decides to try his hand at sheep herding. Resisting 'community' alone together on the mountain, the first stirrings of same-sex desire are apparent when Ennis and Jack look across at each other: 'Ennis looked across a great gulf and sometimes saw Jack [...]; Jack, in his dark camp, saw Ennis as night fire, a red spark on the huge black mass of mountain' (287). This moment exemplifies what Timothy Wray calls the 'queer gaze', which 'looks for a mirroring of the same desires back, [and thus] locates men as both subject and object'.<sup>6</sup> Their reciprocal desire is implied by Proulx's strategic placement of the semi-colon, which allows the clauses to reflect the 'mirroring' of their desire for each other. When Jack looks at Ennis, he is both a subject ('[he] saw Ennis') and an object (he is seen as a smouldering 'night fire', as 'a red spark'). Importantly, whereas Packard's 'queer' cowboy only 'practices same-sex desire', Proulx's queer cowboys engage in a fully-fledged sexual relationship. The period of their unfulfilled desire is brief ('in a little while they deepened their intimacy considerably' (290)) and it is not long before they engage in sexual intercourse. Thus, in depicting the fulfilment of the cowboys' same-sex desire, Proulx extends the inherent queerness and nonconformity of the cowboy figure and in doing so presents a sexual relationship that does not conform to heteronormative expectations.

There is another important way in which Proulx explores the nonconformity and queerness that is inherent to the cowboy figure. Packard writes: 'Without a wife or children, without domestic possessions [...], the cowboy is "free" in the sense that he adheres to no law but his own.'<sup>7</sup> In other words, the cowboy exists in what Jack Halberstam would call a queer time and space. Halberstam suggests that 'Queer uses of time and space develop [...] in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction.'<sup>8</sup> Without a wife or children, without domestic possessions, the cowboy exists in a time and space "free" from the constraints of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction. In 'Brokeback Mountain', the mountain itself, which 'boil[s]' with an erotically-charged

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<sup>5</sup> Annie Proulx, 'Brokeback Mountain', in *Close Range: Wyoming Stories* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), pp. 283-318 (p. 284). All subsequent references included in parentheses.

<sup>6</sup> Timothy Wray, 'The Queer Gaze' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of London, 2001), p. 70.

<sup>7</sup> Packard, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Halberstam, p. 1.

'demonic energy' (292), becomes a queer space. David Peterson notes that 'bucolic and wild spaces have long served the queer imaginary as [...] sites where men could explore their desires with other men [...]. Proulx's description of that first summer links to this tradition, associating the men's queer sexual freedom with wilderness.'<sup>9</sup> Thus, in its vast and untameable wilderness, in its 'huge black mass', the mountain is a space in which Ennis and Jack's sexual relationship can develop 'invisible' from heteronormative expectations.

Ennis and Jack's sexual relationship also develops according to a queer temporality. Halberstam emphasises 'the here, the present, the now [...]. Queer time [...] exploits "The transient, the fleeting, the contingent."'<sup>10</sup> After the intensity of their sexual relationship during that summer on Brokeback Mountain, Ennis and Jack meet only irregularly and infrequently in the following years, and thus their relationship becomes transient, fleeting, contingent. Given that their future together is forever uncertain, their time spent together has an emphasis on 'the here, the present, the now'. After reuniting for the first time in four years, Jack says: "Ennis, take a couple days off. Right now. Get us out a here. Throw your stuff in the back a my truck and let's get up in the mountains. Couple a days" (301). Proulx's syntax, especially her short sentences, inflect an urgency into Jack's tone, which emphasises the here, the present, the 'Right now'. At the same time, there is an awareness that their time together can only ever be fleeting, transient, lasting a brief 'Couple of days'. Thus, Ennis and Jack's relationship does not conform to normative temporalities or spaces but rather develops in a queer time and space.

Although their relationship initially develops in a queer time and space, as they grow older, Ennis and Jack struggle with the pressures to conform to heteronormative behaviours. After their sexual relationship on Brokeback Mountain, both Ennis and Jack become entangled in heterosexual marriages which involve fathering children. Outside of the queer space of the mountain, Proulx's contemporary 'cowboys' are thus decidedly less "free" from the constraints of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction than Packard's traditional cowboy figure. And so, queer time, which involves the 'perverse turn[ing] away from the narrative coherence of adolescence – early adulthood – marriage – reproduction – child rearing', is subsumed into normative temporalities.<sup>11</sup> When Jack suggests that he and Ennis should buy a ranch together, Ennis replies: "I'm stuck with what I got, caught in my own loop. Can't get out of it" (300). Both Ennis and Jack are thus trapped in a 'loop', the (hetero)normative 'loop' of marriage, reproduction, childbearing, and so on. Ennis

<sup>9</sup> David Peterson, "'Everything built on that': Queering western space in Proulx's 'Brokeback Mountain'", *Queering Paradigms* (2010), 281-298 (p. 287).

<sup>10</sup> Halberstam, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Carolyn Dinshaw and others, 'Theorizing queer temporalities: A roundtable discussion', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 13.2 (2007), 177-196 (p. 182).

continues: “I doubt there’s nothin now we can do, [...] What I’m sayin, Jack, I built a life up in them years. Love my little girls. Alma? It ain’t her fault. You got your baby and wife, that place in Texas” (299). After leaving Brokeback Mountain, Ennis and Jack’s lives have become, in Halberstam’s words, ‘[scripted] by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing’.<sup>12</sup>

This ‘script’ is so powerful that neither Ennis nor Jack can now envision a life outside of a normative time or space. While Ennis hopelessly ‘doubt[s] there’s nothin now we can do’, Jack’s vision of their life together (‘you and me [with] a little ranch together’ (300)) is itself scripted by the heteronormative conventions of inheritance. He says: ‘I got it figured, got this plan, Ennis, how we can do it, you and me. Lureen’s old man, you bet he’d give me a bunch if I’d get lost.’ As Hiram Perez notes, Jack’s dream of owning a ‘little ranch’ with Ennis is predicated on ‘patriarchal logic in the form of the [...] potential payoff from Lureen’s father’.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the future that Jack imagines with Ennis is not a ‘subversion of traditional constructions of space and time’ but rather a ‘conventional temporality premised on [...] his assumption of domesticity together with Ennis instead of Lureen’.<sup>14</sup> Perez suggests that Jack mistakenly thinks he can simply replace Lureen with Ennis, but essentially maintain a relationship which conforms to the normative time and space associated with domesticity. Thus, both Ennis and Jack not only conform to heteronormative expectations, but they also cannot envision their lives outside a normative time and space.

Most importantly, however, the threat of homophobic violence in rural Wyoming means that Ennis and Jack must conform to heteronormative expectations. Ennis cannot share Jack’s vision of their life together because he fears that the discovery of their queerness would result in homophobic violence. He says: “I don’t want a be dead. There was these two old guys ranched together down home, Earl and Rich [...] I was what, nine years old and they found Earl dead in a irrigation ditch” (300-1). Recalling Earl and Rich, a queer ranching couple from his youth, Ennis recounts a formative encounter with homophobic violence. This encounter has clearly instilled in Ennis a fear of homophobic violence which means that ultimately he and Jack cannot be together. Instead, Ennis and Jack must endure unwanted heterosexual marriages, families, and inherited professions. Although Ennis is divorced from his wife, he remains committed to the hope that he will be capable of fulfilling his role as a father – he ‘figure[d] they would look him up when they got the sense’ (304). So, although he is “free” from the constraints of marriage, his life is still scripted by the desire to perform a heteronormative behaviour, namely, fatherhood. Meanwhile, after ‘Jack’s

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<sup>12</sup> Halberstam, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Hiram Perez, ‘Gay Cowboys Close to Home: Ennis Del Mar on the Q.T., in *Reading Brokeback Mountain: Essays on the Story and the Film*, ed. by Jim Stacy (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2007), pp. 71-87 (p. 83).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

father-in-law died [...] Jack found himself with a vaguely managerial title, travelling to stock and agricultural machinery shows' (304). This inherited profession scripts Jack's life according to a normative temporality, apparent in his constant 'travelling' between different places. His dissatisfaction with his profession and his life more generally is evident in that, before he dies, he plans to help run his parents' ranch. This idea, however, like his idea about his life with Ennis, "never come[s] to pass" (314) and is perhaps prevented by homophobic violence. Ennis comes to believe that Jack is killed for his queerness – 'now he knew it had been the tire iron' (314). Therefore, the fear of homophobic violence (and perhaps homophobic violence itself) forces Ennis and Jack to conform to heteronormative expectations.

Thus, in '*Brokeback Mountain*', Proulx explores the inherent nonconformity and queerness of the cowboy figure, which she extends through the sexual relationship between Ennis and Jack. In the queer space and time of *Brokeback Mountain*, Ennis and Jack's relationship develops outside of normative temporalities and normative spaces. Yet, after they leave the mountain, both men struggle with the pressures to conform – and finally do conform – to heteronormative behaviours. Proulx's short story suggests that ultimately the fear of homophobic violence means that both men end up in unwanted marriages, families, and inheritance-based professions.

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## **10. Discuss the role and impact of extracurricular activities for learning**

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A growing body of educational research (e.g. Mahoney et al., 2005) has indicated that the time students spend outside the classroom is equally crucial as what happens in it to their learning (Snellman et al., 2015). Participating in extracurricular activities (ECAs), as a way students spend leisure time, has been found to be positively related to learning in various ways (Putnam, 2016), whilst increasing research (e.g. Darling, 2005) has also pointed out such promising findings' limitations. Although learning is conceptually broad and complicated (Sewell & Newman, 2014), this essay will focus on academic learning, i.e. academic achievement, since it directly measures and reflects what students learn at school and is mostly studied in ECA research (Nabizadeh et al., 2019). The essay first gives a precise definition of ECAs and then demonstrates ECAs' benefits on students' academic achievement and several explanations that may account for such positive relationship. Following is the discussion on several moderators that may affect ECAs' positive impacts on school performance. It then addresses the limitations of the current research and provides suggestions for future ECA research on academic achievement. The drawbacks of solely focusing on ECAs' benefits on academic learning in research will also be demonstrated before concluding. Notably, this essay chooses to focus on adolescent students since although adolescence is a developmental phase related to a significant decline in school performance owing to decreased motivation and increased mental health problems and risky behaviours (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008), given that ECA involvement enables adolescents to build meaningful relationships with peers and adults, promotes mental health and encourages pro-social behaviours (Behtoui, 2019), their participation in ECAs may therefore be particularly helpful in making positive academic adjustment and performing better academically, and exploration on this topic may thus be especially valuable.

ECAs can be referred to 'developmental activities performed by students that fall outside of the normal school curriculum and are practised outside of regular class hours' (Forneris et al., 2015, p.48). However, this broad definition does not differentiate activities between settings (Meier et al., 2018). For example, adolescents who spend three hours a day playing video games and adolescents who play basketball in the school sports club may both be seen as involved in ECAs using the aforementioned definition, while the effects of these two activities on academic achievement may be significantly different (Behtoui, 2019). In this sense, scholars (e.g. Mahoney et al., 2005) have separated those spontaneous activities that are loosely structured from the range of ECAs, and ECAs may be defined more precisely as organized activities that involve adult supervision and take place after school but within the school setting (Annu & Sunita, 2015). Noteworthy is that the term

'extracurricular activities' is used interchangeably with 'co-curricular activities' by some scholars (e.g. Emmer, 2010), whilst there is a nuance between the two concepts. Although 'co-curricular activities' are also external to the core curriculum, they may be performed to complement it (Kovalchuk et al., 2017), while ECAs may be completely unrelated to the content of the curriculum (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021). This feature also implies that ECAs are more likely to influence students' academic achievement implicitly than directly.

Indeed, a large body of research (e.g. Broh, 2003) has found that adolescents' participation in ECAs is positively related to their school performance. For instance, Himelfarb et al.'s research (2014) found that adolescents who participate in ECAs have a 33 per cent higher grade point average (GPA) than non-participants. Consistently, Shulruf's literature review (2010) reported that ECA involvement has, on average, a moderate effect size of 0.38 on Maths exam results. Interestingly, several mechanisms may be used to explain such promising findings. Using self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2011), ECAs provide a wider learning context for adolescents to conduct self-assessment other than the more restricted classroom settings (Barber et al., 2001), which may satisfy the need for adolescents' competence and increase their school commitment. Supporting evidence has indicated that students with higher school commitment are less likely to be absent from school (Annu & Sunita, 2015), which may lead to better school performance. Another explanation may be that by involving in ECAs that require adolescents to organize and perform complex and challenging tasks (Stanton-Salazar, 2011), their non-cognitive skills such as self-discipline and persistence are fostered (Putnam, 2016), thereby benefiting them academically. Additionally, social capital theory suggests that ECA involvement allows adolescents to connect with adults who can provide them with helpful advice and support about their studies (Devine, 2009), and youths are also argued to be more likely to build friendships with academically-oriented counterparts who have a more positive attitude towards education from ECAs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002), which may promote adolescents' compliance of school norms and values (Ream & Rumberger, 2008) and eventually lead to higher academic achievement. Notably, this form of social capital acquired from ECAs may be particularly critical for adolescents from low social-economic status (SES) since they may not be able to access it elsewhere owing to stretched resources and stressed living environments (Blomfield & Barber, 2010), which may account for low SES students' stronger association between ECA participation and academic gain (Dawes et al., 2015), implying ECAs' potential to close the achievement gap caused by SES. More importantly, ECA participation not only promotes but plays a protective role for low SES adolescents' school performance. Although low SES youths 'are more likely to grow up in families, schools, and neighbourhoods where violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and early sexual activity are common' (Snellman et al., 2015, p.10), ECA

involvement may reduce the possibility for them to engage in aforementioned negative social activities that may undermine academic achievement thanks to adult supervision provided by ECAs (Mahoney et al., 2005). Despite that Mahoney et al.'s study (2005) was solely conducted in Sweden, given that adult supervision is a uniform characteristic of ECAs (Behtoui, 2019), it is valid to expect consistent findings in future research from other countries.

Moreover, research has found several macro-level factors other than SES that may affect ECAs' benefits on academic achievement, namely the type, breadth and intensity of ECAs. Shulruf's literature review (2010) indicated that the effect size of adolescents' participation in sports on Maths exam results is as negligible as 0.08, while that of participation in journalism is 0.36. This variation may be due to that journalism provides more opportunities for adolescents to practise their logical thinking skills related to Maths. Indeed, given that ECAs 'do not share the same characteristics and can vary considerably in terms of their frequency, length of involvement, contact with adults, and whether there is a competition or not' (Forneris et al., 2015, p.53), the extent to which each type of ECAs improves school performance and benefits which area of academic achievement may thus vary. Therefore, future research taking these differences into consideration may help explore the types of activities that have the most significant positive impacts. Furthermore, the number of activities adolescents involve in may also influence ECAs' benefits. Studies (e.g. Hansen et al., 2003) have found that adolescents who participate in more ECAs exhibit better academic achievement since by immersing in various extracurricular contexts, youths are able to have more learning experiences unique to different activities and obtain a greater amount of social capital (Dworkin et al. 2003), which may have cumulative effects on school performance (Fredricks, 2012). Similarly, research (e.g. Darling, 2005) suggests that the time adolescents spend in an ECA is positively related to academic achievement because with more time spent in the activity, youths may become more accustomed to the setting's specific developmental affordances, thereby refining their skills more efficiently and making deeper connections with peers and adults involved (Bohnert et al. 2010). Notably, however, is that the breadth and intensity's relationships with academic performance are both argued to be curvilinear (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). That is to say, a threshold may present at which wider ranges and higher levels of participation no longer bring favourable outcomes. Supporting evidence has indicated that adolescents' school performance and academic well-being start to decline when they involve in more than five ECAs (Fredricks, 2012) or spend over fourteen hours on activities a week (Rose-Krasnor et al., 2006), which may be due to the stress of balancing multiple activities and confusion in identity exploration or less time available for schoolwork (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010). This overscheduling position is also endorsed by the finding that ECAs' optimal effect on academic achievement occurs when adolescents participate in three

activity domains or spend ten hours a week on ECAs (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Nonetheless, given that several studies conducted in different countries (e.g. Mahoney et al., 2006) have found that adolescents only spend five hours a week on one or two ECAs on average, it is evident to suggest that rather than focusing on the consequences of overscheduling, more effort should be made promoting adolescents' ECA participation in order for ECAs to benefit them the most in practice (Fredricks, 2012).

Despite that studies have consistently reported ECAs' positive impacts on adolescents' academic achievement and a few moderators have been identified, a growing line of critique has also been made regarding current ECA research. Given that the vast majority of studies (e.g. Himelfarb et al., 2014) and literature reviews (e.g. Shulruf, 2010) assessing ECA participation's influence on academic achievement are produced in an American context (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008), the promising findings' generalisability is therefore limited since the same ECA's nature may vary due to social and cultural characteristics and the measurement of academic achievement may also be different across contexts (Forneris et al., 2015). Thus, more research conducted in other countries may be helpful to consolidate the favourable findings. Also, it remains unclear if it is ECA involvement that has a causal impact on academic achievement, despite that one may well argue that a causal relationship may never be proved (Abramson, 1995). Given that ECA participation only takes a fraction of the time adolescents spend after school (Fredricks, 2012), the positive outcomes of ECA involvement might be a result of the activities adolescents participate in other settings, suggesting future research looking at both ECAs and other after-school activities may be able to confirm ECAs' causal effect on school performance (Shulruf, 2010). Another issue is that much of the ECA research uses cross-sectional data that may be affected by self-selection bias (Larson, 2000), which implies that those adolescents who choose to participate in research might have already involved in ECAs and initially have higher academic achievement (Huebner & Mancini, 2003). Additionally, these cross-sectional studies tend to use self-report measures that may be prone to social desirability bias (Himelfarb et al., 2014), which may further lessen the credibility of ECAs' effects on school performance. Therefore, future research using longitudinal data of adolescents who did not participate in ECAs before the research is conducted may be helpful since it may document the positive change in these adolescents' academic achievement after continuously involving in ECAs, and adolescents may thus be more willing to genuinely report the once undesirable school performance, thereby increasing research's validity and solidifying ECA participation's benefits.

Furthermore, given that ECAs provide a context that is less controlled and related to academic matters (Denault et al., 2017), solely focusing on academic learning in research may

neglect ECAs' benefits on adolescents' wider learning that are equally critical to their development, and which they may not be able to acquire from the formal educational settings (Wang & Fredricks, 2014). For example, ECAs may be used to foster positive attitudes toward ethnic minority adolescents (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2017). Supporting evidence has found that white adolescents possessed more positive intergroup attitudes when they participated in ECAs with a diverse set of youths as ECAs tend to require coordination and collaboration between participants in order to succeed (Brown et al., 2003). Also, research has reported that adolescents may develop life-long learning ambitions if they learn through 'intrinsic and identified regulations in a playful and voluntary context' (Denault & Guay, 2017, p.96) since they may obtain higher autonomous motivation towards learning in ECAs. Additionally, scholars (e.g. Bohnert et al. 2008) argue that the overfocus on academic learning might cause ECAs to be more academic-oriented and lose the unique characteristics that differentiate them from classroom settings. Noteworthy, however, is that these findings do not downplay the value of ECA research on academic achievement, rather they suggest that improved school performance should not be ECA participation's exclusive focus but a natural outcome of it.

Studies (Himelfarb et al., 2014) have consistently reported a positive relationship between ECA participation and adolescents' academic learning, which may be because that adolescents are able to have higher school commitment (Barber et al., 2001), obtain better non-cognitive skills (Putnam, 2016) and acquire more social capital (Devine, 2009) through participation. Notably, ECA involvement is particularly beneficial for low SES adolescents since it not only improves their school performance but prevents them from engaging in detrimental social activities (Blomfield & Barber, 2010). Additionally, ECAs' type, breadth and intensity have been found to moderate ECAs' positive impacts on academic achievement (Forneris et al., 2015; Dworkin et al. 2003; Darling, 2005). However, scholars have also criticized different aspects of current ECA research (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; Larson, 2000; Himelfarb et al., 2014), and it is valid to suggest that better academic achievement may be an important outcome of ECA participation, whilst it should not be ECA research's only focus because of ECAs' positive impacts on other aspects of adolescents' learning and the possibility of losing their unique characteristics (Wang & Fredricks, 2014, Bohnert et al. 2008).

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# The Data Revolution

## **11. A Model for Finding Flight Optimal Overbooking Levels based on Binomial Distribution**

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### **Introduction**

Before the widespread pandemic, the airline industry worldwide continued to expand. Historically, the global aviation industry doubled in size every 15 years, developing faster than most other transport sections. Recorded by ATAG (2019), commercial flights universally carried over 4.3 billion passengers to their expected destinations, generating \$704.4 billion of direct revenue from ticket sales and almost \$1.3 trillion benefits from tourism catalytic products. Tremendous populations of international mobility have spurred the service improvements across the airways to satisfy the diversified needs of tourists (such as having more comfortable cabin space, one-day city tour, and discount tickets), in terms of developing diverse levels of cabin classes, feeder schemes, and on-demand pricing strategies (Dalalah et al, 2020). Although airlines have created a variety of service packages and corresponding terms for the massive travel market on the macro perspective, they are still concerned by the passenger boarding rate on the micro-level (like for a certain flight perspective). According to Belobaba's research on boarding rates (2009), only 85%-90% of American tourists will successfully be on board their domestic flights, while only 70% of customers can arrive at the cabin on time during the holiday peak. While several airlines implemented penalties for no-show passengers, most commercial airlines are reluctant to impose fines since internal investigation shows those who have not shown up may be flying for business rather than leisure (Schubmehl et al., 2002), punishing them could deteriorate their long-term brand loyalty. In the absence of effective constraints on passenger's attendance, if airlines invest more money on fleet expansion or cabin upgrade, they will lose more per seat even if the passenger's no-show rate is maintained. Thus, most air companies have applied overbooking to compensate for the anticipated losses by passengers' no-show, which allows them to accept reservations that exceed the seat capacity and compulsorily refuses to board travellers who haven't been allocated enough seats (Rothstein, 1971). The overbooking mechanism seems reasonable to the airlines, but not for overbooked passengers who have no idea whether they are allowed to board until the last minutes since lacking information about the overbooking algorithms behind. For instance, United Express has randomly selected four overbooked passengers on a flight and asked them to leave to make rooms for flight attendants. If its proposal was rejected, passengers would be battered and forcibly dragged off their seats under the empowerment of airport police

(Pizam, 2017). It is disastrous that the consequences of such imprecise overbooking algorithms on United Express: their story was retweeted 6.8 million times on the first day, followed by a 0.2% decrease in the stock price, and more than 23% of customers said they didn't want to travel with its flight forever (Stevens, 2017). Therefore, it is a long-term challenge for airlines on how to measure an accurate overbooking number for maximally their revenue but reducing the risks of forcing their passengers to leave the cabin.

In reference to previous research on this subject, several flight-related variables can be considered in our model: total cost per flight, number of available seats, ticket price per seat, compensation for passengers denied to board, probability of no-show, number of bookings before take-off, profit earned per flight, number of no-show passengers, probability of show-up, and probability of no-show for K people.

### **Assumptions**

Referring to ICAO's report on flight operational costs (2017), 73% of the expenditures were spent on fossil fuels, direct maintenance, aircraft depreciation, and fees for land and group service, which all can be considered as fixed costs as those will be paid when the plane takes off whether passengers have shown up. The maximum proportion of variable cost will belong to labour expenses, including crew wages and bonus, but changes in these ratios will not be dramatic because strikes are not common. Therefore, to make the model easy to understand, a constant C is assumed as the total cost per flight for the airline.

*Assumption 1: the total cost per flight will be considered as a constant C.*

The margin between ticket price and cost per seat is the benefit of the airline. In the view of airlines, the cost of each seat they provided is primarily determined at the time the plane is built since the maximum available seat number in a plane is limited (Ge, et al., 2011). There is no essential difference in the production of seats in business or economy class, as the width difference arranged by the airline makes the difference in class. And because we have assumed that the cost per flight is fixed temporarily, the cost per seat could be considered as even by sharing the same labour cost and maintenance fees. Therefore, we assume there is only one class inside the cabin with limited seat number N, while the ticket price per person equals the cost per seat plus the operating cost shared per seat, as a constant Price T.

Moreover, subline flights among some high-demand cities are common today, connecting small towns with each other through a few transaction hubs. The high-frequency access to transaction hubs will usually make the sum of two connective routes more expensive than the point-to-point plan; the margin within these changes leads airlines to modify their original overbooking algorithms (Wei et al., 2014). To make our model easier to understand, we assume that there is only a point-to-point flight scheme with a constant Price T.

*Assumption 2: the ticket price per person is a constant T and the number of seats is a constant N.*

In the purpose of protecting the rights of customers, the local government under the area of the flight is usually responsible for the compensation policies about passengers who are denied boarding since the overbooking (CAA, 2015). The amount of compensation normally is determined by the length of flight and the time interval of waiting for the next flight to destination, so that passengers can get higher compensation if they meet more requirements of the above two conditions. It means that the compensation policy follows a gradient mechanism, and within each gradient, tourists will receive the same compensation. Therefore, to make our model easy-to-understand, we only assume that there is only one fair gradient for compensation at a constant Price DB.

*Assumption 3: the compensation price per person who is denied to board due to the overbooking is a constant DB.*

*Assumption 4: P(K) complies with binomial distribution as there are only two outcomes of whether a passenger is coming or not, and as whether passenger A is coming is irrelevant from whether another passenger is coming.*

All required quantifiable concepts and their corresponding parameters are in Table 1.

N	Number of seats inside the cabin (Constant)	C	Total cost per flight (Constant)
T	Ticket price per seat (Constant)	P	The profit gained from this flight
DB	Compensation for passengers denied to board	K	Number of no-show passengers
NS	Probability of no-show	A	Probability of arriving at the Airport
M	Number of Booking before take-off	P(K)	Probability of no-show for K person

Table 1

## Model Building

$$P = \begin{cases} (M-K)T - C, M-K \leq N \\ NT - C - (M-K-N)DB, M-K > N \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

The number of passengers arriving before boarding is  $M-K$ . When  $M-K \leq N$ , the seats for passengers are adequate (e.g., 0 denied boarding cases). On this occasion, the profit for this flight is the total revenue minus the cost. However, when  $M-K > N$ , the number of passengers arriving before boarding is larger than the number of seats in the plane (the capacity), which means that some passengers will be denied boarding. In this case, the compensation for passengers denied boarding should be treated as an extra cost when calculating for profits.

The simulation can therefore be written as (1), where there is an upward line followed by a downward line, separated by whether the variance between the number of total tickets sold and no-shows exceeds passenger capacity.

As it is assumed that  $P(K)$  complies with binomial distribution,  $P(K)$  can be written as:

$$P(K) = C_M^K N S^K A^{M-K} \quad (2)$$

where:

$NS$  is the probability of no-show for one passenger.

$A$  is the probability of a passenger arriving at the airport successfully.

$K$  is the number of no-show passengers.

$M$  is the number of bookings before taking off.

As simple as the two functions are, they can be used for predicting by determining the cumulative distribution function of  $P(K)$  and then solving  $P$  for  $M$  accordingly. For example, given the known  $N$  and  $P(K)$ , the probability of  $M-K > N$  can be calculated. One can then decide whether to use the first part or the second part of (1) accordingly. An example is shown below in Figure 1:

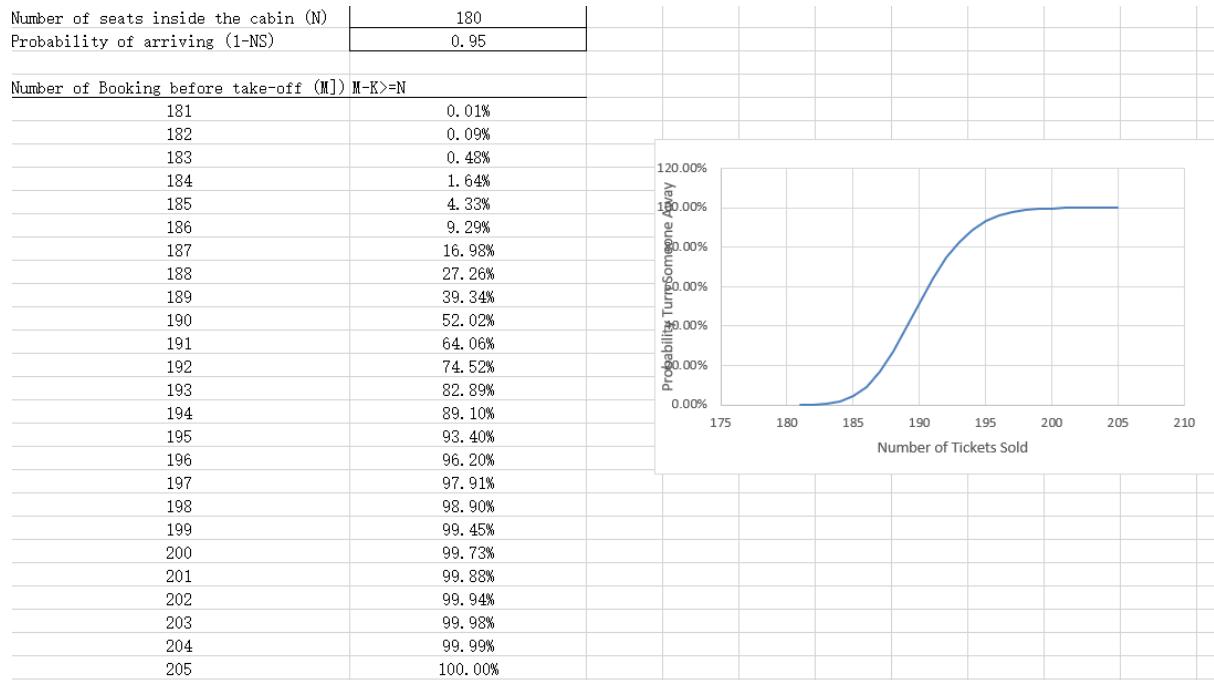


Figure 1

In this case, it is obvious that it is very likely that the second part of P would be applied if M exceeded a certain level (i.e., 194) with given values of capacity & no-show probability per passenger.

However, this approach is very much simplistic. Considering that the actual number of passengers coming varies on a case-by-case basis, the use of mathematical expectation to express the profit of airline is adopted to build a more accurate model:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \bar{P} = & \sum_{K=0}^{M-N-1} P(K)[(NT - C) - (M - K - N)DB] \\
 & + \sum_{K=M-N}^M P(K)[(M - K)T - C] = \\
 & \sum_{K=0}^{M-N-1} P(K)[(N - M + K)T - (M - K - N)DB] + \\
 & (MT - C) \sum_{K=0}^M P(K) - T \sum_{K=0}^M KP(K)
 \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Equation (3) converts equation (1) to an expected value form by adding up the profits in each situation according to different numbers of people coming (i.e., multiplied by P(K)s). (3) thus represents the expected profits.

## Solving the Equation

$$\sum_{K=0}^M P(K) = 1$$

Taking a closer look towards (3), considering that , and that

$$\sum_{K=0}^M K P(K)$$

is the expected K value which can be written as , (3) can be rewritten

as:

$$\bar{P} = (M - \bar{K})T - C - (DB + T) \sum_{K=0}^{M-N-1} P(K)(M - K - N) \quad (4).$$

According to IATA (2021), the break-even load factor for 2020 was 78%. In other words, it was only when 78% or above of the seats were filled that a specific flight was profitable. The figure is adopted so  $C = 0.78 NT$ . (4) can subsequently be rewritten as:

$$\bar{P} = AMT - C - (DB + T) \sum_{K=0}^{M-N-1} P(K)(M - N - K) \quad (5) \quad \text{by replacing } M - \bar{K}$$

with  $A * M$ , and then:

$$\frac{\bar{P}}{C} = \frac{1}{0.78N} [AM - (1 + \frac{DB}{T}) \sum_{K=0}^{M-N-1} P(K)(M - N - K)] - 1 \quad (6).$$

In this equation,  $C$ ,  $T$ ,  $DB$  are parameters that remain constant in the short term;  $N$  is a non-variable parameter;  $K$  is an uncontrollable parameter that the airline company cannot manipulate;  $m$  is a parameter that the company can manipulate. Therefore, in one specific flight route,  $T$ ,  $DB$ ,  $C$ ,  $K$ ,  $N$

are known. In this situation, it can be seen that the expected profit  $\bar{P}$  is dependent on  $M$ .

Visualised by Matplotlib module in Python, there is a line that represents the relationship between  $M$  and its corresponding  $\bar{P}$  when variables  $T$ ,  $DB$ ,  $C$ ,  $K$ ,  $N$  are fixed. A global maximum point

can be observed when  $M$  reaches the maximum value of  $\bar{P}$ , which is also the optimal overselling level of  $M$ .

### Case Analysis

The data of flight No. CA1637 from Beijing to Shenzhen is selected for analysis as it is one of the busiest flights in China and is thus representative.

In this case, passenger capacity  $N=300$ , ticket price  $T=3000$ , and compensation for a denied board passenger  $DB=1000$ . In real-life situations, such an analysis typically requires longitudinal data and observations. However, for the sake of this assignment,  $NS$  is assumed to be 5%, which is derived from the no-show rate of top ten Chinese airports between 3% and 7% (Chinese Economy, 2017). Since  $NS=5\%$ , the probability of a passenger who booked a ticket and turned out arriving at the airport  $A=1-NB=95\%$ .

Taking  $N=300$ ,  $T=1000$ ,  $DB=1000$  and  $A= 0.95$  into equation (6), the optimal number of bookings before taking off,  $M$ , can be calculated, in which case the expected profits  $\bar{P}$  reaches its highest point. The corresponding results are shown below in Figure 2:

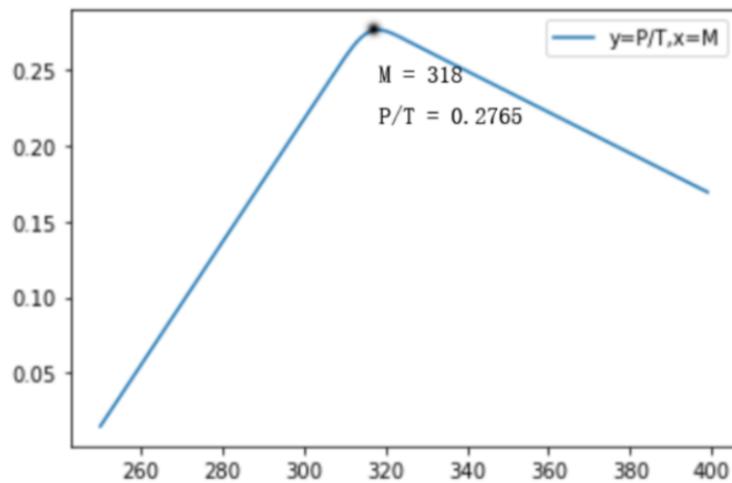


Figure 2

$$m= 318 \quad P/T= 0.2765343680697556$$

As seen from figure 2, the expected return increases and then decreases as the booking number increases. At the booking level of  $M=318$ , the expected profit margin reaches its maximum at 0.2765. Therefore, the optimal booking number for this airline in this route is 318, and the company is recommended to set the overbooking level of this flight at 318.

Although it is not possible to obtain the actual booking data of this plane for comparison, the result calculated from the model still has certain values. While multi-level ticket prices are not taken into consideration, this model potentially increases the passenger load factor and reduces passenger DB (denied boarding) rates by suggesting an optimal overbooking value that maximises profits. In other words, this model provides a quantitative basis for an airline company to set its targets of overbooking.

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