THE TEMPLEMAN REVIEW

Issue Number 1, Autumn Term 2020

Letter from the Editor

We hope the inaugural edition of *The Templeman Review* finds you in good health and enjoying the term so far. Thanks to all those who sent us their work: we were impressed by the volume and quality of submissions. We are acutely aware that it's not easy to trust a group of mediocre hacks at a mediocre university with your carefully written sentences and stanzas. We appreciate your vote of confidence, and hope that we have taken appropriate care of your work. Congratulations to those who are featured, and commiserations to those who aren't.

POETRY

Cherries

For every cherry there is a stone - resting on the tip of
your tongue forever - and longer than that. When it germinates
into shrubs and full-grown trees and orchards you'll wonder
how much strength it takes for the sprout to perforate the
stubborn shell and be reborn into the light. And I'll say
the same amount it takes a single sunbeam to burst through
the nebulous blanket and make us alive again. And that's how
we live - like raindrops ploughing through the summer haze.
And how much strength does it take? All of it.

Veronica Niero, *Woolf*

Transitions I / Amphibious Life Cycles

One February his pond was covered in in frogspawn. It churned up from the edges like river scum and I had to ask my great uncle why there was a net over the pool. To keep the birds off of the eggs, he said and I remember thinking that was counterproductive. Amphibians were new to me then and too slimy to get a proper grasp on. I remember his glasses and his garage which was next to the pond and how it was full of things he'd collected but had no real use for but that maybe he would. I remember every time I'd go around there afterwards I'd poke at the black water with a stick looking for this paradoxical life. Spawn to Tadpole to Froglet to Frog. The tail drops off and legs grow. At some point it starts gasping for air.

Transitions II / Pruning Growths

What I don't remember is his face. I can barely remember yours. Looking straight at the face of a man was too much for me then. I have approximations of them from fractal glances. I remember your moustache, for instance, although periodically I have to force the memory away from the romanticism of a handlebar and back into the reality of mutton chops and whiskers. Groom it into shape with oils and controlled burns. Both are little totems of masculinity but different aspects; Ares to Hephaestus. I find a constant attentiveness is needed in managing the past; It can grow wild if left alone on its separate axis.

Transitions III / Flower Power and its Slow Death in a BP Service Station

From what I'm told you spent time travelling on a motorbike. I don't think it was the Summer of Love but it was there or thereabouts. A brief moment, I imagine, a small flourishing in the landscape. But England is a pen too small and it lacks the requisite space for a nomadic lifestyle. Post industrial travel is too efficient. There's no opportunity for meandering on the M6 and, after an amount of time yo-yoing up and down, it becomes the pacing of a prison yard.

Transitions IV / Upturned Rocks

I feel trapped like you. My body is a pen too small and since the family found you at the bottom of the stairs it has been seeping. You survived, to a point, because your body was used to abuses and I spent years walking around that spot of carpet visiting. Sometimes I feel as though my synapses are held together by scar tissue. I see indignities everywhere. The slow workhouse crippling. Once I woke up to a bowls shed across the road on fire. The flames were higher than the house and the family were gathered at the front window all excited. Arson is a word that tingles the back of the neck. I smelt pride on the air. Look what strength we have.

Transitions V / A Humanist Service

Your sister's partner, the one with the pond, has died now. The funeral is in the new year and I haven't seen the body. I'm not sure if I will. I remember yours and how the rhinophyma had retreated and the tobacco stains on your nails were gone. It wasn't that bad, I told people. Your skin felt like cocktail sausages was my go-to line. Useless macabre. I don't even know if it was true, but I don't eat meat any more. There's no correlation there, but if you fragment things enough you can put the shards together however you like. At your service they were a few pole bearers short. Pains in my lower back make me think of crematoriums. So do open fields. I've never seen frogspawn since the first time.

Issac Stanley, *Eliot*

On This Day We Fall to 89th Place in the Sunday Times University League Table

‘Tis time this university should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I am to be unemployed,
Still let me work!

Our days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of academica are gone;
The mortarboard and the student’s grief
Are mine alone.

But ‘tis not thus- and ‘tis not here -
Such thoughts do not shake Karen Cox’s soul,
Where indifference decks her career,
Framed by gargantuan eyebrows.

The pen, the laptop, and the exam hall,
Mediocrity and Kent, around me see!
The Cantabrian, made out to be a fool,
Was not more free.

Snooze! (not Kent - she is dozing!)
Have a lie in! Think through whom
Your £27,750 tracks through for middle management,
And then return home!

Seek out - flawed not perfect -
A student's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, choose thy subject,
And take thy rest.

Disgusted of Hales Place, *Eliot*

Home Bird

You watch the world from the window in the house you were born in.

The flow of cars circling roundabout drains, dripping through the tunnel.

Where are they going? These anonymous travellers

In the town where people pass through but never stop.

You were born, and you stayed.

Marked semi-permanently on the land like the chalk horse on the hills

That stands out through the glass.

Hills you grew up on, the uncut grass you traipsed though.

You come from muddy boots and the slight stench of sweat.

Rugby fields and packets of crisps to keep you quiet

As life played on.

As soon as the garden of England

Allowed your first breath,

You came, and you never left.

You witnessed the grounds become overgrown,

Sat back as the roses you planted withered in the winter

And were reborn come the spring.

The English rose, pale and pink like the sunset sky.

Little bird, you bother too much with how home bores you.

Yet whenever you leave, there is a salty air of guilt
Trapped in your lungs.
The call of the sea beckons you,
Faintly, like putting your ear to a shell.

Still, you wonder what you might have missed
If you had decided to migrate north.
Could your frame have lasted the colder climate,
When the summer heat here sticks like honey,
And the sun draws out the colours of sand
And all the blues and greens of the channel.

Home bird, as much as you hate to admit
Your heart lies in beds of leaves
On walking trails and camping trips.
In familiar voices and consistent coffee orders.
No matter how far you fly,
Seeing the sparrows spiralling the rooftops
Will always leave a flutter in your chest.

El Kennett, *Turing*

Chaos, Unabashed

I stare above me
chaos and disruption galore
snatch away my time
shameless and unasked.
I can do other things, but here, I stare –
at that I can't perceive clearly.
What's space when there's no space to exist-
to exist in clarity
in tranquillity.
I stare above me –
at chaos snatch away my time
truly unabashed.

Shivapriya Soorianarayanan, *unmatriculated*

The Death March

Two months since lockdown.
In shame, our heads down.

It's not a Dandi March to clap hands,
But –
A Bataan Death March on our lands.

A huge sum of lion's share.
Yet they keep walking.

Shramik trains to take them home,
Stains the tracks with their blood.

'Keep walking', they were told.
And they march on the drought lands
With their drought feet.

And miles to go before they sleep

Siddhu Tekur, *unmatriculated*

ESSAYS

Aesthetics and the Contemporary

The extent to which there is an aesthetic to the contemporary can only be answered with a clear understand of what 'the contemporary' is. The common understanding of 'the contemporary' is that it is a reference to writing grounded in present events concerning the writer. The writer is the nucleus of what we might call 'the contemporary', which introduces a second definition of 'the contemporary': Giorgio Agamben holds that 'the contemporary' refers to a specific figure, not a moment. The figure of 'the poet', who can be understood as one 'who firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light, but rather its darkness'. Thus, questions of a particular contemporary aesthetic can only be answered through the second definition: texts can only denote and re/construct the aesthetic of 'the contemporary' (1st definition) inasmuch as the characteristics and unique abilities of the Agambanesque poet are at the core of these texts, informing their composition.

The aesthetic of 'the contemporary' (1) cannot alternatively be defined through a unanimous use of visual markers, as contemporary texts evade the boundaries of literary periodization; nor would it be enough to condense its aesthetic into an aesthetic of 'hybridity' or of 'the fragment', as these aesthetic markers are not particular to 'contemporary writing'. This means that the aesthetic of the contemporary can only be captured through the unique-to-contemporary-writing figure of the poet. The use of 'aesthetic' here refers to the 'distinctive underlying principles' of contemporary writing and the more 'upward quality' of aesthetics— that which rises out of the text, transcending it and crystallising the aesthetic experience of it into a cohesive aesthetic narrative. Yet, the concept of aesthetics itself carries with it a wealth of significance functioning on different levels: first, style: meaning the way the author views the world and applies their unique style; second, the authors' use of aesthetics as an issue to be combatted and resisted within the text; third, the aesthetic experience felt by the reader; and finally, that aforementioned 'rising' aesthetic through-line that constitutes the general aesthetic of the contemporary.

My thesis is that Nat Raha's [of sirens / body & faultlines] and Claudia Rankine's Citizen: An American Lyric both adopt material aesthetics to draw attention to the material lived realities of bodies who have been 'fractured' by systematic injustice in order to give a sense of immediacy and urgency to these texts, while legitimising their experiences as knowledge. I will also treat these texts as a kind of synecdoche for contemporary aesthetics more generally by way of sifting the Agambanesque poet figure through the texts so as to revise what defines the contemporary artist. Furthermore, the texts will also be treated as revealing the particularity of the aesthetic/reading experience of the contemporary more broadly as one of rituality.

First, I will explore the ground-level of aesthetic significance through an appropriation of Wittgenstein's idea of 'style' and his celebration of aesthetics so as to revise the concept of the Agambanesque poet with aesthetics as a radical and central aspect of contemporary writing itself. Kathrin Stengel explains Wittgenstein's idea of 'style' as 'voice as a radical individual aesthetic aspect of the linguistic act', which configures style as being an individual's unique perspective that turns all their expressions into aesthetics. Wittgenstein's conclusion that 'universal truth about life can only be expressed from a radical individual point of view— the aesthetic I-mode' is deeply resonant to contemporary issues explored in both Raha and Rankine's poetry, whose marginalised 'individual points of view' are often dismissed and excluded from public discourse.

In 'Transfeminine Brokenness, Radical Transfeminism', Raha performs the aesthetic of 'the poet' by exposing the way her knowledge as a transwoman is 'circumscribed' by a dismissal of the experiences of 'antinormative bodies' as 'merely subjective'. If we take on board Wittgenstein's idea of 'style' here, it legitimises her knowledge, as it prizes style—how Raha sees the world as a trans woman—as knowledge itself; her experiences not only reveal the material truth of trans experience but they also have the potential of revealing a 'universal truth' about unjust systems at large (an ability of 'the poet'). Raha's way of seeing the world (her style) affects the aesthetic appearance (style) of '[of sirens / body & faultlines]': the injustices suffered by transwomen are portrayed as part of a larger web of neoliberal capitalist injustice through the technique of using

webs of collage. Raha collages fragmented images of a poll-like fixture that resembles a bedpost, a security camera and grainy houses among fragmented text that reads 'passport or nation sta [sic]'. This collage explores Raha's concern with 'increased policing at the level of one's citizenship', as the positioning of the visual and textual aspects imply the extreme extent to which queer people's private lives are being policed. The security camera pointed at the bed=post implies surveillance, while the 'passport' and the house images poignantly communicate Raha's unique view that 'the means of accessing those [trans] rights become predicated on our status as UK passport holders with access to wealth'.

Claudia Rankine also fits Agamben's concept of the contemporary writer in that she uncovers the darkness that is the embeddedness of racism in the everyday lives of black Americans. The experiences of racism by POC are also denied legitimacy and dismissed as mere subjective experience, as white people often don't believe in microaggressions or that they are in fact racist. Rankine fits the Agambanesque mould of the poet in her 'distancing and nearness' to her contemporary moment as it is only when she is able to distance herself, as a true contemporary, that she is able to see the racism present in the darkness of everyday interactions. Through this contemporary style/worldview, she, too, employs the aesthetic of collage by putting together a collection of her friends' anecdotes of moments when 'racism came in and changed the dynamics of [an] interaction so that the encounter was filled up by our history', solidifying racist encounters into knowledge of what racism itself is . In one anecdote, the speaker is told by a woman that 'because of affirmative action or minority something… her son wasn't accepted. You are not sure if you are meant to apologize for this failure', describing a situation in which racism was experienced in the form of a micro-aggression. She writes these anecdotes with intimate and detailed imagery so that all stories feel as though they are being told by the same person: she filters her friends' stories through her style (way of seeing the world) and standardizes them into one whole shared experience of racism. This standardization invites the reader to occupy the space of the open-ended 'you'—the vague pronoun

standing in as the protagonist— of the stories, thus implicating the reader in the material reality of racist encounters.

Contemporary writings tend to draw attention to their materiality. Contemporary authors purposefully include material elements into their texts to the effect of grounding them in real, material realities to communicate a sense of 'urgency'. Wittgenstein finds 'style' to be a key conveyor of meaning because of the 'nonsensicality' of words and their inability to be fully expressive; an idea which is a key concern of contemporary writers that motivates them to turn to visual expression. Raha uses material aesthetic elements to create an ugly, nitty-gritty aesthetic experience to reject the abstraction and aestheticization of transwomen. The text is not afraid to show its inner workings with visible holepunches on every page and struck-through text drawing attention to the material process of its creation. Raha purposefully adds 'noise' to the page by filling white space with intentionally blurry, noisy black-and-white fragments of paper and images, some of which call to mind the 'CAPTCHA image tests' Internet users have to answer correctly to prove they are human. Littered on the page are fragmented images of pill packets next to clinical-sounding writing about the trans body: 'chemical soak &&/ harsh rest skin… sick[est as the doctor acts…', and in the middle of the broken pill packet the word 'systemic' is barely legible. There is an aesthetic unity to this page, as the figurative clinical imagery bounces off the literal image of a CAPTCHA pill packet, which in turn reverberates off the blurred text 'systemic' to create a collage of meaning: trans identity is pathologized in the healthcare system leading to the dehumanization of trans people. This is implied by the aesthetic use of 'CAPTCHA' imagery, calling into question the way trans people must often prove they are human.

Furthermore, by making the text ugly Raha is herself engaging with and problematising the idea of the abstraction of the trans body as something that only acquires validity when thought of in abstract or aesthetic terms. In her video essay 'The Aesthetic', Youtuber Natalie Wynn (Contrapoints) satirically argues that society only accepts trans women in as much as they have 'verisimilitude' and look 'appealing, smooth and perfect', something Raha rejects by making an aesthetically unpleasant and viscerally material work that rejects

the ‘borders’ within which trans identity is accepted in contemporary society. Raha wants an understanding of the transness that is grounded in the real, material ‘affectivities of transfeminine brokenness’.

Where Raha makes the work ugly with blunt collaging and a noisy background, Rankine’s Citizen douses itself in white space. Rankine chooses to make the work beautiful, leaving room for moments of aesthetic pleasure to be gained from the visual-art pieces portraying the beauty of the black body. First, it is important to consider the white space of the work in view of the artwork by Glenn Ligon Four Etchings. The art piece is composed of Zora Neale Hurston’s famous expression, ‘I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background’ repeatedly etched on the canvas until it almost fades into black at the bottom. The artwork, as Rankine herself puts it, ‘fades out into the abstraction… becomes a metaphor for the ways in which that understanding becomes invisible to the eye’. The message here is that black Americans internalise racist notions imbedded in society to the extent that they are unable to identify themselves as operating within racist systems; the result of this is that black Americans cannot break free of these racist systems. The use of this artwork helps to uncover the ‘darkness’ of internalised racism in the text, which informs her aesthetic choice of using white space in a way that calls attention to itself so as to call attention to this unseen material reality. Rankine thus embodies the Agambanesque poet, turning to the past to see the ongoing embeddedness of systematic racism in America; ‘the darkness of the present cast its shadow on the past, so that the past… acquired the ability to respond to the darkness of the now’ (Agamben). The contemporary aesthetic is a celebration of the knowledge particularly ‘clairvoyant’ artists can offer and their ability to see things from a distant yet intimately reflective perspective, which is achieved through their style (in the Wittgensteinian sense) and their use of aesthetics. The contemporary aesthetic has a legitimising quality to it, the aesthetic is centred on a validation and up-holding of the disqualified knowledge of the transwoman or of the black woman.

The two contemporary texts focus on the material body, revealing that the definition of ‘the poet’ can be revised to include a

preoccupation with material realities as one of the defining factors of the contemporary aesthetic. The body is portrayed as 'fractured' and drained within the texts and this fracture seeps into their poetics, in turn shaping the reading/aesthetic experience of the reader to be one of endurance; of enduring the tiredness the poetics to understand the tiredness produced by systems of oppression onto the fractured body. Raha sees the trans body as disembodied, the graphic lines '/musculature below / ribcage on both / sides, thorax trialled' and '&& the cut if you: relational/& mind & curls & action/ & the A.M before the worked day here south of the city' explore the causal relationship of the system of capitalism to systems of the body like the system of muscles, the ribcage and the thorax when written amidst labour imagery of the 'worked day'. When Raha reads her poetry aloud, she takes sharp inhales to mark the sporadic punctuation, which grounds the reading experience in the materiality of the reader's body; a very ritualistic process. This passage also complicates Agamben's idea that 'it is the contemporary who has broken the vertebrae of his time', as she did not just 'perceive' this fracture, she could not help but perceive it as it constituted her lived reality.

Rankine similarly portrays the black American body as tired and drained. The speaker finds themselves eating 'a bowl of cereal…and would a third if you didn't interrupt yourself', which depicts the body on autopilot as a result of the draining experience of 'the residuals of all yesterdays': referring both to black American history and the accumulation of internalised racism against the body. The 'body can't hold the content of its living' and will 'ache for the rest of life' and this image reverberates off the collage art Sleeping heads by Wangechi Mutu which depicts the black upper body viscerally. The skin has the appearance of internal bleeding but also calls to mind an embryo; hands clasp at the neck, communicating the strain of having to 'hold the content' of racism within the body and how, in looking away instead of fighting racism, the speaker sacrifices their identity: 'The worst injury is feeling you don't belong so much to you'. Significantly, the material subject matter demands 'endurance' of the reader who drudges through the litany of the poetry, 'Who said that? She said what? What did he just do?'; enduring the hardships felt by the speaker. This exigent reading experience is also felt in [of sirens /

body & faultlines] and reveals the ritualistic aesthetic of the contemporary reading experience. If we take Michael Dumanis' view that that litany is a 'move' particular to contemporary writing, used, as within religious traditions, to 'enact spiritual transformation' in the reader as something producing and working alongside the exigent aesthetic experience, we can conclude that the contemporary aesthetic experience is a ritualistic one. Writers want to counteract the brokenness of their bodies with a unification, a collectivity, that is brought about through the connection to the work the reader feels when they are forced to be as tired as its speakers.

In conclusion, the aesthetic of contemporary writing is defined through and by the figure of Agamben's poet, yet this aesthetic figure at the centre of contemporary literature need not remain a fixed aesthetic category, as it can be revised to include qualities specific to contemporary writers that Agamben failed to see. Most importantly, the aesthetic of the contemporary is a material one that takes art from its usually high place in the firmament and grounds it in the specific, lived realities of those fractured in time. The aesthetic experience of the contemporary is ritualistic as a result of an exigent reading; a plea for solidarity and identification rom contemporary writer to contemporary reader. 'The contemporary' stands out in its unabashed willingness to be experimental and to turn to visual forms like collaged images and artworks where words won't suffice to uncover the 'darkness' of the contemporary moment.

Claudia Benedito, *Keynes*

Violence and performative masculinity in Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* and Kassovitz's *La Haine*

Violence is an inextricable component of human character. It has consistently aroused great literary and artistic interest: *Macbeth*, the Old Testament, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. The nineteenth century saw violence become the subject of a philosophical discourse that attempted to classify it according to its nature. This essay will explore the significance of violence in Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* (1935) and Mathieu Kassovitz's *La Haine* (1995). The former is a novelised account of a safari Hemingway took in East Africa and the latter is a black and white film depicting life in the *banlieues* of Paris in the aftermath of a riot. In both works, violence is gendered and used as a performative act to conform to societal standards of masculinity.

As suggested by the title, violence is more than a recurring theme in Kassovitz's *La Haine* – it is the cornerstone. Through the opening sequence, Kassovitz briefly but meticulously depicts the backdrop against which the three protagonists' lives take place – street-fighting, police brutality, and overbearing media portrayals. In 'Narrative, Style and Ideology in La Haine', Ginette Vincedeau argues that *La Haine* is not as concerned with violence as one might think, as the images of the political struggle at the beginning are 'coded as historical', and the ending is merely a 'suggestion' of violence, since 'it leaves most of it off screen.' I disagree with such a reading. Just because the viewer is not confronted with flowing blood throughout the whole length of the film does not mean violence is not still a key component of it. Precisely because it is implicit (as in the ending, when we hear a gunshot but only see Saïd squeezing his eyes shut) it has a more powerful impact on the viewers, as they will need to actively use their imagination rather than passively have violent images wash over them. Moreover, the violence Kassovitz does portray is of different kinds, more or less overt. Two contrasting instances being Saïd and Hubert being tortured in the police offices, and a TV reporter shouting questions at the trio without getting out

of the car. Not merely physical but also psychological, violence is shown to be an integral part of life in the *banlieue*.

As Joe Hardwick argues in 'Reframing the Periphery', two narratives coexist in *La Haine* – one is the 'teleological, the drive towards a tragic finale, represented by a ticking clock which we hear intermittently throughout the film', while the other is a 'loiterly', digressive one. For the most part, the film shows Vinz, Saïd and Hubert simply 'talking, joking and wandering the streets.' The contrast between this side of their lives, that is them behaving as regular teenagers, and their involvement in the riots, is striking. This does not mean Kassovitz is relying on the innocence versus violence trope, 'cosily portraying… teenagers with hearts of gold' as scapegoats to make a case for them – Kevin Elstob praises him for avoiding this pitfall in his *Film Quarterly* review, as the three protagonists are not naïve, or helpless. Of particular significance in this regard is the scene where Vinz goes food shopping for his grandmother. Because he is one franc short, he ends up buying red peppers instead of green ones and complains that his grandma will 'kill [him]', as she 'hates them.' The mundanity of the task and Vinz's worry create a powerful juxtaposition when one considers that he is in possession of a loaded gun and plans on shooting a policeman to avenge his friend Abdel. Kassovitz depicts the extent to which violence has been inextricably incorporated into these youth's lives, so that nothing they do will ever be separate from it. The contrast between the naivety and immaturity that characterises the viewers' mental image of a typical Western teenager and this portrayal of life in the banlieues, violent and adult, is impactful, and humanises this minority, marginalised group in the eyes of the viewers.

It is precisely because *banlieue* communities are a marginalised minority that conflict is generated between them and authorities. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon writes about the struggle for freedom of the colonised, which, he argues, unavoidably turns into violence. While I do not intend to compare a complex, historically rooted phenomenon such as colonialism to life in the banlieues, the discrimination that characterises the two instances operates in a similar way. In both cases, a social group is othered – on the basis of ethnicity, class, or religion, the individuals' opportunities restricted,

their identities erased in favour of a single, alienating narrative. In *La Haine*, the three protagonists all belong to different minority groups and, Kassovitz emphasises the commonality of their experience as young men growing up in the *banlieues* of Paris, regardless of ethnicity – the three are a diverse group, aware of their differences, but able to see beyond them. The media, however, does no such thing. As Meredith Doran writes in 'Alternative French, Alternative Identities', 'the larger recognition of multiple minority cultures and languages within city communities is either absent from media reports or… treated as a source of tension and conflict.' The gaze of the media views the *banlieues* as one big 'them', juxtaposed to their 'us'. Throughout the film, we become aware of how reality is framed and deformed by the media – when the reporter in the car approaches the trio, the camera rolls only once Vinz starts shouting and throwing rocks, depicting him as a stereotype and ignoring Hubert's remark ('This isn't a Safari park'). Mainstream media deliberately chooses to one-sidedly portray the *banlieue* community as aggressive and violent, constructing identity through ambivalence – as Stuart Hall argues in his article 'Old and New Identities', 'identity is always in part a narrative', and is constructed through splitting 'between that which one is, and that which is the other'. *Banlieue* communities, stigmatised and othered by mainstream media, therefore become victim to a structural violence, which, in turn, leads to outbursts of physical violence, such as the riots – as Fanon argues, what prompts the oppressed to resort to violence is the alluring ideas of turning the tables, summarised by the words 'the last shall be the first, and the first last.'

It is not merely socially that the process of othering operates, but also spatially. The *banlieues*, as Theodore Dalrymple writes in 'The Barbarians at the Gates of Paris', are 'marginalisation made concrete'. By definition, they are peripheral areas, several miles away from the city. Historically, they were the areas outside the city walls, inhabited by exiles and others who were not welcome in the city centres. A lot could be said about how that has remained unchanged, and on the desire of the French upper classes to keep the 'undesirables' as far away as possible. In *La Haine*, Kassovitz makes such spatial marginalisation clear by placing emphasis on physical

distance. One instance worth commenting upon is Kassovitz's use of the dolly zoom. Viewers are confronted with a bird's eye view of central Paris, which, as the camera gradually tracks back and zooms in at the same time, exposing the three protagonists overlooking the city, gets closer and closer, turning into a backdrop, almost a wall photo. Not only does this create a disorientating effect, but as Timotheus Vermeulen argues in 'Flat Film', 'it explicates that the social gap between city and *banlieue* is unbridgeable.' If, on one hand, the dolly zoom creates the illusion of depthlessness, and therefore of the lack of distance, then on the other 'our sense of distance collapses only as it is articulated'. Through his use of the dolly zoom, Kassovitz comments on spatial marginalisation as 'the joys of central Paris are increasingly shown to be inaccessible to these boys from the suburbs'. Just like the colonial world is divided into compartments, so is French society, as portrayed in *La Haine*. Violence, on the other hand, is a unifying force, since, Fanon argues, 'each individual forms a violent link in the great chain.' This, along with the oppressive architecture of the *banlieues*, built as housing projects in the 1960s and inspired by totalitarian French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier, creates a recipe for violence. Kassovitz portrays this, not to justify the use of violence but to show a side of the riots that the mainstream media does not care to depict, humanising a minority that has been dehumanised for too long.

Hemmingway depicts a different kind of violence in *Green Hills of Africa*. The book is an account of Hemingway hunting during a Safari in East Africa – it is divided into four sections, 'Pursuit and Conversation', 'Pursuit Remembered', 'Pursuit as Failure' and 'Pursuit as Happiness'. The narrative alternates poetic descriptions of the African landscape, to literary conversations and to detailed accounts of the killings. He describes cutting open a bull, 'his heart still beating strongly', taking out its internal organs, blood '[coming] hot against [his] fingers'. Jeremiah Kitunda argues in 'Hemingway's Reading' that Hemingway was interested in 'not merely the experience of hunting, but the genre of writing about exploration and hunting. Just as the protagonist of *Green Hills of Africa* is a competitive hunter, so the author of that book is a competitive writer.' As he has hunting guide Pop state, 'we have very primitive emotions,

it's impossible not to be competitive'. One could argue that the violent hunting in *Green Hills of Africa* is a metaphor for writing – Hemingway was extremely sensitive to criticism and had recently received several negative reviews on his last two books, *Death in the Afternoon* and *Winner Take Nothing*. In *Green Hills of Africa*, he directly addresses such criticism in his literary debates with Kandinsky, and at the same time presents himself as an expert, ruthless hunter. As Robert Trogdon argues in 'Forms of Combat', 'Hemingway the hunter not only kills animals … he hunts the critics of Hemingway the writer through the African landscapes, and, after a long pursuit, he ultimately succeeds'.

It is impossible to ignore the narrator's troubling relationship with animals. Key is his obsession with killing 'cleanly' – 'I resolved that I would only shoot as long as I could kill cleanly,' he writes, and, in another instance, 'I did not mind killing anything, any animal, if I killed it cleanly… I had no guilty feeling at all.' As in *Death in The Afternoon*, which glorifies bullfighting, in *Green Hills of Africa* Hemingway expresses respect and admiration towards the animals he intends to kill, viewing them as sacrificial victims dying what Daniel Newman in his article 'Flaubertian Aesthetics' calls the 'hero's necessary death', 'scarcely [questioning] his right to deploy such a fatal brand of respect'. This is a clear expression of speciesism – trophy hunting prioritises not only human interests, but human leisure over the very life of animals. Speciesism therefore operates in a similar way to other forms of discrimination. Just like a hierarchy exists within the human species, all life forms are hierarchised, humans having placed themselves on the highest step of the ladder. As the *banlieue* community is othered and stigmatised because not conforming to society's standards, as shown by *La Haine*, animals are considered inferior, their lives less valuable, justifying any violence against them. Within such hierarchy, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in A Thousand Plateaus distinguish between 'Oedipal animals', that is family pets, cats and dogs that humans consider their own, and 'State animals', that is wild, grand animals such as lions, elephants, and in Hemingway's case, kudus. Man seeks to assert his superiority over both categories, although in different ways – he

belittles Oedipal animals, and attempts to overpower State animals through hunting.

The violent practice of trophy hunting is therefore a means for Man – and specifically men, as will be argued later – to showcase his prowess, his heroic triumph over nature. The connection between such practice and imperialism is undeniable. As Matthew Whittle remarks in 'Lost Trophies', in which he reads the work of contemporary artist Walton Ford in relation to Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* and other narratives of hunting expeditions, 'taking possession of the animal as a trophy… signifies hunting for sport as the performance of colonial dominance over a fetishized non-European landscape. The possession and subsequent display of the trophy animal is integral to the imperial narrative of Western superiority, whereby the animal acts as a synecdoche of the colonised landscape.' In *Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway is obsessed with taking away with him a 'beautiful pair or horns' as the one he 'had seen in the Game Warden's office in Arusha'. His desires are influenced by having been exposed to someone else's trophy, which is indicative not only of Hemingway's competitivity, but also of the effectiveness of such displays in spreading ideologies of imperialism. Hemingway's wish to obtain the kudu's horns can therefore be read as an extension of an underlying desire to possess the African landscape, establishing his – and therefore Western – superiority. Early in the book, he writes: 'I loved the country so that I was happy as you are after you have been with a woman you really love… what there is, now, you can have, and you want more and more, to have, to be, and live in, to possess now again for always.' In this assertion, what Newman defines 'Hemingway's paternalistic misogyny' merges with a clearly imperialistic, Western-centric world view. *Green Hills of Africa* unquestionably adheres to the imperialistic narrative which sees white men as conquerors – though Hemingway cannot physically possess Africa like he can a woman, he will take what he can of it away with him, making a display of his stoicism and ability to violently but cold-heartedly kill his prey.

It is not, however, merely over nature that the trophy hunter intends to assert his dominance – it is over other men as well. As previously mentioned, competitivity plays a key role in *Green Hills*

of Africa, and, while it certainly can be read as standing for Hemingway's competitivity against other writers, there is no denying that is does have a strong significance in itself. In 'Pursuit as Happiness', Hemingway feels that his trophy is 'one no one could beat.' However, once Karl shows him his, he remarks that 'they were the biggest, widest, darkest, longest-curling, heaviest, most unbelievable pair of kudu horns in the world. Suddenly, poisoned with envy, I did not want to see mine again; never, never.' Later, as he discusses his disappointment with Pop, he reassures him that 'inches don't mean anything'. The kudu horns in this specific instance, and trophies in general, clearly function as phallic symbol. As Joseph Armengol-Carrera argues in 'Race-ing Hemingway', trophy hunting is 'not only an individual test of manhood but also, and above all, a performance of phallic power before other hunters'.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was devised by sociologist Raewyin Connell from Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, which explores class dynamics. In *Masculinities*, Connell argues that, in gender relations, a culturally exalted model of masculinity occupies the hegemonic position, that is the leading and dominant position, its most important characteristics being whiteness and heterosexuality. Because, as previously stated, identity is always constructed through ambivalence, hegemonic masculinity is therefore defined through its opposition and supposed superiority to femininity, homosexuality, and non-whiteness – all those who do not conform to such standards are marked as Other. However, even within the 'white-and-heterosexual' box, other ideals must be adhered to, including characteristics such as courage, physical strength, violence, and stoicism. As Jackson Katz puts it in *Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity*, 'we can't show any emotion except anger. We can't think too much or seem too intelligent. We can't back down when someone disrespects us. We have to show we're tough enough to inflict physical pain and take it in turn. We're supposed to be sexually aggressive with women. And then we're taught that if we step out of this box, we risk being seen as soft, weak, feminine, or gay'. This stereotypical ideal of manhood is constructed through a performance which requires what Butler calls a 'stylised repetition of acts' – few men naturally conform to the

hegemonic model, but most still create that gender reality through 'sustained social performances', controlling their behaviour in order to fit inside the restrictive frame of hegemonic masculinity.

The violence and aggressiveness involved in trophy hunting in *Green Hills of Africa* can therefore be seen as a social performance to construct manhood and assert dominance over potential competitors. Hemingway celebrates himself as a white male hunter – his wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, deprived of her identity by being referred to as P.O.M. (Poor Old Mama), is a mere spectator to the hunts, and is once even asked to 'be a good girl' and stay behind, for the hunt is a 'one-man show'. Hunting, to Hemingway, is therefore a masculine activity, the end goal of the pursuit displaying trophies as symbols of phallic power before other men. Once more, it is essential to remind ourselves that the account of this safari in East Africa is narrativised. In his review of the book, John Chamberlain suggests a conscious effort on the part of Hemingway the author to carefully craft his own public image, depicting himself as a macho, dominant man of action – he dismisses the book as 'all attitude, all Byronic posturing'. The extent to which this claim is true is debatable. While there is no denying that Hemingway, who, assumedly, '[does] not mind killing any animal', is putting up a performance of power and stoicism for his readers, he also does not shy from admitting to having been beaten 'bloody badly' by Karl. Precisely because the account is narrativized, the issue could have easily not been addressed, or the tables turned to favour Hemingway. Instead, the author's acknowledgement of his own defeat, and his final conclusion that 'when you put them side by side [the trophies] looked alright', as 'they were all big', suggests a more confident and relaxed approach to masculinity, almost a prefiguration of his attitude in following books, specifically in *Under Kilimanjaro*. Only published in its entirety in 2005, *Under Kilimanjaro* is a chronicle of Hemingway's second safari in East Africa, this time accompanied by his fourth wife, Mary. Armengol-Carrera argues that the book 'radically questions the conventional view of the heroic male pitting himself against nature, redefining Hemingway as a thoughtful and mature man who is … past the bravado stage'. Thus, though *Green Hills of Africa* still reads as an effort on Hemingway's part to assert his manhood through

performing violence, the seed for change is already there, a less constructed version of masculinity just around the corner.

Reading violence in terms of masculinity and performativity is also crucial to gain a deeper understanding of Kassovitz's *La Haine*. While *Green Hills of Africa* depicts hunting as a masculine activity, *La Haine* portrays the *banlieue* as typically masculine space – there is a resounding absence of female characters in the film, and when women do appear on screen, they are usually involved in domestic, peaceful activities, as opposed to the men fighting in the riots. This directorial choice of Kassovitz's part implies not only a genderisation of spaces in the *banlieue*, but of violence itself. Clearly associated with masculinity, violence and aggression become part of a performance that is put up to compensate for the social alienation and disempowerment the banlieue community is victim to. Vinz's characterisation exemplifies this – he is shown mimicking Robert De Niro in *Taxi Driver* in front of the mirror, making explicit what Sanjay Sharma and Ashwani Sharma in 'So Far So Good' call the 'performative and contingent nature of a marginalised masculinity.' Moreover, Vinz's obsession with the found gun, a clear phallocentric symbol of male power, signifies his struggle to mask his social vulnerability and reclaim agency. According to Lacan, phallic symbols are used as a reaction to the threat of castration, as they cover the lack of the signifier – in *La Haine*, this threat is constituted by the police. Physically invading spaces, as they patrol the streets and break up the meeting on the rooftop, the police are a threat to the boys' masculinity. Through the gun and the promise of violence it constitutes, Vinz tries to win back the power and agency he has been deprived of – as Carrie Tar argues in 'Masculinity and Exclusion in Post-1995 *Beur* and *Banlieue* Films', he '[seeks] to protest at [his] emasculation through an over-aggressive but ultimately self-defeating performance of phallic masculinity'. The performance is self-defeating as Vinz cannot bring himself to shoot, his body and mind betraying him and rejecting the construction of masculinity he sought to conform to and is ultimately killed by a police officer. Kassovitz is therefore pessimistic in conveying the message that attempts at subverting power relations between the *banlieue* community and authorities through violence will always be

ineffective – as Hubert states in the film, 'hate breeds hate'. Through its tragically violent ending, *La Haine* denounces police brutality and social inequalities in the *banlieues*, aware of the fact that the input for lasting change must come from higher up the political hierarchy.

Both texts feature violence as a performative act to conform to societal standards of masculinity. While in *La Haine* this is done purposefully in order to comment on and denounce power imbalances, inequalities and discrimination against the French *banlieue* communities, the violent account of trophy hunting in *Green Hills of Africa* is a way for Hemingway to construct his public image as both a skilled, competitive writer and as a dominant man of action. The two texts prove that othering is often, if not always, the root cause of violence, whether it be on the basis of race, social class or species. Both explore power relations, and while *Green Hills of Africa* illustrates the connection between the societal construction of masculinity and whiteness, *La Haine* comments on the ineffectiveness of violence as a method for the disempowered to gain back agency, recognising the magnitude of the *banlieue* 'issue', as well as its urgency.

Benedetta Fabris, *Darwin*