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'Unheard'

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(Untitled) excerpt from 'Manifestations of Caledonian Road' 2018

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FOREWORD

The heard and the unheard. The shout and the whisper.

When considering a theme for this journal, the idea of 'unheard' came to the surface almost instantly. In a world where anyone who owns a computer and has a connection to the internet can voice their thoughts and opinions online to the rest of the world via any number of social media platforms, it seems as though there are more opportunities than ever to have your voice heard and to hear the voices of others. But the cacophonous noise of the 500 million daily tweets and the 2.32 billion monthly active users of Facebook often crowd out the voice of the individual or the smaller organisation. And what of those without the fortune to have access to computers or the internet? How do we hear their whispers? It appears those who traditionally have the loudest shout still have the loudest voices. Who is the most famous tweeter, for example?

While those with the loudest voices gain the most attention individually; the whispers can still be heard. One whisper made louder by another and another, until those who shout become aware that everything is not perfect even if the individual complaints are inaudible; society which was (is) traditionally perfectly organised for the comfort of the few is no longer taken as 'the way things should be'.

Each of our contributors has been inspired by our theme of 'unheard'. Whether the submerged literary voices of the working classes in the 1930s; the unheard whisper of a fictional character's refusal to speak of the horrors of World War II; or the mute voice of an autistic child let down by the education system, our article contributors have provided varied interpretations on the theme of 'unheard'. The voice of domestic conduct shines through from the under-studied eighteenth century in our note, and the latest Haruki Murakami is reviewed not uncritically by the voice of a superfan. Our artist explores the subjective experience of place from the perspective of

an architect. The short story gives voice to a child in times of political and military upheaval. Our poetry explores voices from all different perspectives: behaviour, silence, and even punctuation.

Ad Alta aims to give opportunity for students and graduates to have their voice heard and their research into the wider world, and by exploring the topic of 'unheard' from multiple perspectives, by people with a variety of interests, we hope to have presented you, the reader, with differing perspectives on the intentionally broad topic of 'unheard'.

Rebekah Andrew

General Editor

WAR IS NO CARNIVAL: DORA'S UNHEARD WHISPER IN ANGELA CARTER'S *WISE CHILDREN*

ARTICLE

YUTAKA OKUHATA

1.

Like the protagonists of *Nights at the Circus* (1984) witnessing the end of the nineteenth century, Angela Carter was at the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century when she published her ninth novel, *Wise Children*, in 1991, the year before her sudden death from lung cancer. In contrast to her previous novel portraying the *fin de siècle*, *Wise Children* is a story about the history of the twentieth century itself. As a matter of fact, Grandma Chance, foster mother of Dora and Nora, arrived at "49 Bard Road [in London] on New Year's Day, 1900" (Carter, 26), and the twin sisters were born during World War I. Then, as chorus girls, they lived through the hardships of the Great Depression, World War II, the Blitz, and the economic stagnation of the post-war period.

Along with *Nights at the Circus*, this historical novel has been regularly described as a comic and "carnivalesque" text by a number of critics. Sarah Gamble, for instance, explains that "*Wise Children,* for all its ever-present humour, is imbued with a fatalistic defiance, its characters persisting in laughing in the very face of adversity". Saying that, Carter aligns herself with Mikhail Bakhtin here, she goes on to claim that the novel represents "carnival very specifically as arising from repressive conditions, and as only ever constituting a temporary escape from them" (Gamble, 182). Moreover, in her article on *Wise Children*, Kate Webb likewise argues that "Carter plays out ideas about sexuality's relationship to the carnivalesque transgression of order — a transgression that is […] at once both sanctioned and illegitimate" (Webb, 308). Thus, both Gamble and Webb seek to interpret Carter's engagement with carnival in relation to her feminist critique of patriarchy or the repression of women in androcentric society.

Nevertheless, Dora Chance, the seventy-five-year-old protagonist/narrator, remarks suddenly, in the middle of the story, that she does not want to talk about World War II, asserting that it was not a "carnival" at all (Carter, 163). Then, in the later scene of her father's party, celebrating his hundredth birthday, in which she has sex with old Uncle Peregrine, the former whispers to the latter while remembering his younger days and projecting her own memory onto his body:

> I [Dora] lay in the arms of that russet-mopped young flyer in the weathered leather jacket who'd knocked at the door of 49 Bard Road, and saved us all from gloom the day the war to end all wars ended, just twenty years before the next one started. And wars are facts we cannot fuck away, Perry; nor laugh away, either.
>
> Do you hear me, Perry?
>
> No. (221)

Whereas Dora regards her wartime experiences as unlaughable trauma that remind her of the memories of tragic deaths, Peregrine Hazard optimistically declares that life is just a "carnival" without hearing her whisper (222). Although Dora tells him that the "carnival's got to stop" and that the news of the world will remove the smile from his face, Peregrine does not seem to understand what she means (222). According to Aidan Day, this scene of miscommunication explicitly indicates that Carter represents Peregrine, who is an "adventurer, magician, seducer, explorer, scriptwriter, rich man, [and] poor man" (Carter, 18–9), as "an allegory of the non-real" or "of the principle of carnival" (Day, 202). This explanation clarifies the author's ambivalent attitude toward Bakhtin. While strategically utilizing his notion of the carnivalesque for her feminist critique of modern society, Carter was also sceptical of its utopian aspect.

Even though war, which often destroys existing order and creates chaos, may be seen as a kind of carnival in itself, Dora implies in the novel that her painful war memories have nothing to do with the carnivalesque. In this respect, the fact that Peregrine does not hear Dora's statement covertly reveals the existence of her repressed past, which is inseparably linked to her contradictory, critical attitude toward what Bakhtin referred to as carnival, hidden behind her generally carnivalesque narrative tone. This means that Carter's reworking of carnival in this novel

does not blindly adhere to Bakhtin's original discussion. While previous studies have frequently shed light on Peregrine's (both Bakhtinian and Shakespearean) definition of life as a carnival, Dora's unheard whisper, which can be viewed as key in clarifying the "anti-Bakhtinian" element concealed in the novel, has been ignored by readers. Most critics, in other words, tend to pay so much attention to the comic aspect of this text that they overlook both the essential meaning of Dora's whisper and the significance of her repressed memories of death especially during World War II that lie outside its carnivalesque world. From this perspective, the present essay will seek to reinterpret this seemingly comic work as a novel in which Carter, at the end of the twentieth century, critically overviewed its history by focusing on the protagonist's memories of some great tragedies. By closely analysing Dora's narrative, and investigating both Bakhtinian and anti-Bakhtinian aspects of this novel, I will also explore how Carter critically makes use of his ideas of death and rebirth for her portrayal of war memories.

2.

According to her conversation with Lorna Sage, it was only after the completion of *Nights at the Circus* that Carter read Bakhtin for the first time (Sage, 188). Therefore, Carter's references to carnival — as well as her parody of William Shakespeare — in *Wise Children* are undoubtedly influenced by his works. Explaining that carnival "does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators", Bakhtin points out in *Rabelais and His World* (1965) that "[w]hile carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it" because "its very idea embraces all the people" (*Rabelais*, 7). In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929; revised in 1968), moreover, Bakhtin also writes about the "primary carnivalistic act" of crowning/decrowning, suggesting that "*the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal*" is the "core of the carnival sense of the world" (italics in original; *Dostoevsky*, 124). He goes on to explain:

> From the very beginning, a decrowning glimmers through the crowning. And all carnivalistic symbols are of such a sort: they always include within themselves a perspective of negation (death) or vice versa. Birth is fraught with death, and death with new birth (125).

Thus, while birth entails death, death always leads to rebirth. In Bakhtin's view, therefore, carnival is "the festival of all-annihilating and all-renewing" that celebrates the shift itself (124, 125). In the act of carnival laughter, which is a universal laughter that "contains a whole outlook on the world", both death and rebirth are perfectly combined (127).

Although Carter critically reworks Bakhtin and Dora's "unheard whisper" in the novel negates his argument that carnival has no outside, she and this Russian literary theorist are at least similar in that both generally regard death and rebirth as two sides of the same coin. In fact, *Wise Children* not only stresses images of death but also represents the Bakhtinean notion of rebirth, especially in the climax scene of Melchior Hazard's birthday party where Tiffany, who has been believed to have committed suicide, abruptly steps out of Peregrine's trunk (Carter, 210). Furthermore, in the final scene where Dora and Nora push a pram for Gareth Hazard's twin babies, Carter humorously depicts these "wise children" as symbols of regeneration and optimistic hope for the future (230). On the other hand, what is also emphasized throughout this novel is the "sense of an ending", which seems to be connected to the author's own consciousness of mortality. Indeed, as various critics have already argued (Simon, 189, 225; Webb, 296; King, 172–83; Gordon, 375; Oró-Piqueras, 146–55), Carter seeks to visualise the problems of ageing and death in this last novel. Edmund Gordon, for example, sees it as a story "about what happens to women's identities as they grow older and the culture ceases to treat them as sexual beings" (Gordon, 375). Moreover, whereas Julia Simon points out that "[b]eneath the comic surface of the text lies the fear of loneliness, dependency, old age and mortality" (Simon, 225), Kate Webb asserts that "[d]eath has a strong presence in this book — not just the end of empire or the death of the patriarch, which Dora is happy to let go, but a sense of the presence of death in the midst of life" (Webb, 296). As they argue, Dora sometimes wonders why she goes on living (Carter, 112), and Lady Atalanta (called Wheelchair) sadly says that she lives "mostly in the past" (193).

In this way, it is at least clear that Carter's *Wise Children*, which was, to a certain degree, influenced by Bakhtin's writings, portrays the fear of death as well as the comic "rebirth" of Tiffany and the optimistic hope for the next generation. Hence, before examining the way in which Dora's anti-Bakhtinian (or anti-carnivalesque) view of her own war memories is linked to the actual historical tragedies of the twentieth century, we should pay more attention to Carter's own representations of mortal bodies, the possibility of death, and the "sense of an ending". In this context, it can be said that her literary attitudes toward them remind us of Terry Eagleton's discussion in *After Theory* (2003), in which he claims that our inability to possess our own bodies reveals our mortality. Because the body belongs to the species before it belongs to a single person, "there are some aspects of the species-body — death, vulnerability, sickness and the like — that we may well prefer to thrust into oblivion" (Eagleton, 165–66). Based on this argument, Eagleton states that "nothing is at once more intimate and more alien to us than death". He continues: "My death is *my* death, already secreted in my bones, stealthily at work in my body; yet it leaps upon my life and extinguishes it as though from some other dimension. It is always untimely" (167). Like Eagleton, who writes about both the intimacy and strangeness of death, Carter seeks to express these contrary aspects in her own last novel. In fact, while the protagonists frequently think about their own mortality, they are seriously afraid of the very moment of death. For example, in the scene of Melchior's party where Dora finds Gorgeous George — a once-popular comedian with whom she had become acquainted when the Chance sisters were still working in a filthy music hall in London — she suddenly gets depressed: "I found I had reminded myself of untimely death and the festive mood that I was striving bravely to achieve evaporated" (Carter, 196).

Nevertheless, whereas Eagleton's *After Theory* mainly problematizes mortal human bodies, the "sense of an ending" expressed in Carter's *Wise Children* is connected not only to one's life and death but also to the twentieth century itself. In this respect, we can even claim that Carter attempts to reconsider Bakhtin's notion of carnival in the political or historical context of her contemporary world. In the scene of Melchior's party, for instance, what makes Dora aware of the horrible

possibility of her own death is the old body of Gorgeous George, which symbolically visualises the historical transformation of Britain over the last hundred years, in addition to implying the very sense of an "ending" of his own life. When he was younger, according to the author, this extreme patriot "was not a comic at all but an enormous statement" (66) because he himself was a kind of walking metaphor: "Displayed across his torso there was, if you took the top of his head as the North Pole and the soles of his feet as the South, a complete map of the entire world" (66). Carter also writes:

> He flexed his muscles and that funny little three-cornered island with appendages on the right bicep sprang out, the Irish Free State giving a little quiver. […]
>
> […] Amply though the garment concealed his privates, now you could see the Cape of Good Hope situated in his navel and observe the Falkland Islands disappear down the crack of his bum when he did his grand patriotic ninety-degree rotation, to the reawakened applause that never quite died down during the entire display but sometimes rose in greater peaks than at other times.
>
> We gazed enraptured on the flexing pecs. 'Rule of Britannia' accompanied his final turn, which revealed how most of his global tattoo was filled in a brilliant pink […] (67).

In the paragraph quoted above, Carter describes Gorgeous George's "global tattoo" that recalls the "golden age" of the British Empire in the nineteenth century as well as satirising the Falklands War and Margaret Thatcher's anachronistic nostalgia for imperialism in the early 1980s. However, in the later scene where Dora meets him again at Melchior's mansion, Carter sarcastically makes her readers conscious of the "sense of an ending" or the global status of Britain in decline after decolonization. Here, when old Gorgeous George miserably begs Dora for money without even recognizing her, she feels that it is a wonder that he has "hung on for another half century" since the 1930s (196). In this way, the body of this character enables to visualise both his own mortality and the ending of the twentieth century. Besides, we can also find Carter's feminist critique of imperialism and nationalism in the ironical fact that, while Dora and Nora — who embody British working-class women — are still physically healthy, Gorgeous George's male body, which is associated with the image of the "great" Empire in the past, is totally decrepit.

Although Carter thus emphasizes the "sense of an ending" in her portrayal of this old comedian, like Bakhtin's works on carnival that analyse "the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal", her novel often contrasts the image of death with that of regeneration, or the "sense of an ending" with the positive hope for the future that evokes a sense of "new beginning". Of course, unlike Fevvers in *Nights at the Circus*, who is young enough to have innocent wishes for the upcoming twentieth century, Dora does not seem to have enough time to witness the next — the twenty-first — century. Nonetheless, instead of creating a future herself, this female protagonist believes that she has a responsibility to leave her own historical record by writing her autobiography. In a word, by narrating "Her-story" about the century she has lived through with her twin sister Nora and handing it down to the next generation, symbolized by young Tiffany and Gareth Hazard's twin babies, Dora attempts to leave her last message to her "wise children", who would be living in the twenty-first century.

3.

Although Carter critically reconsiders the carnivalesque in the context of the twentieth century, it is at least certain that her representations of death and renewal are grounded on Bakhtin's original discussion. But at the same time, despite the fact that war itself can be viewed as a kind of carnival that destroys existing order and social boundaries, Dora, unlike Bakhtin, regards it as an event lying outside the carnivalesque "celebration" of the shift from death to rebirth. Hence, so as to figure out Dora's anti-Bakhtinian attitude toward her own memories of World War II, which is implied in her unheard whisper to Peregrine, we must pay attention to Carter's portrayals of sudden and tragic death in wartime. However, except for Webb, who notes that "[o]ne of *Wise Children*'s characteristic inversions of the supposed order of life is that no one dies of old age" (Webb, 297), previous studies have ignored the fact that Carter explores the issue of violent death, or the contingency and unpredictability of death, as well as that of natural death.

For the Chance sisters, as clearly expressed by Dora's statement — "Chance by name, Chance by nature. We were not planned" (Carter, 24) — both life and death are contingent events. What is more, Carter's depiction of this kind of violent, contingent death is often related to two of the most catastrophic events in the history of the twentieth century: World Wars I and II. For example, the very day when the Chance sisters were born "by chance" as Melchior's illegitimate children, according to Dora, "there was a war on" and "the Zeppelins were falling" (28, 25). During World War I, violent, unexpected death was everywhere, since "the neighbours' sons went marching off, sent to their deaths" and "[t]hen the husbands, the brothers, the cousins, until, in the end, all the men went except the ones with one foot in the grave and those still in the cradle" (28). In addition, Grandma "would go outside and shake her fist at the old men in the sky" when the bombardments began, believing that a war is always caused by the older generations who attempt to sacrifice not themselves but innocent young boys (28–9). In the scene where she welcomes Peregrine who had been in the American army during the war, "Grandma was pleased to see that such a handsome young man had got out of the clutches of the old men with only a flesh wound to show for it, i.e. shrapnel in the upper arm" (32).

However, even though both Grandma and Peregrine survived World War I, the former was abruptly hit by a flying bomb and killed without any notice during World War II. In this context, it is necessary for us to focus on Carter's representation of Grandma's tragic death during the Blitz:

> Then she [Grandma] reached for the stout and found the bottle empty. Oh, Grandma! Talk about the 'fatal glass of beer'! If you'd been able to curb your thirst that night, you'd have lived to see VE-day. […] The siren blared but she wasn't going to let Hitler inconvenience her drinking habits, was she?
>
> She was taken out by a flying bomb on her way to the off-licence.
>
> When we go home after the all-clear, we found the scrapbook where she left it, beside the scissors and the pot of Gloy. And the empty glass, with the lacy remnants of the foam gone hard inside it.
>
> And that was how we lost Grandma. (79)

What is highlighted in this scene of the Blitz, which mirrors the death of Morris's mother in Carter's first novel *Shadow Dance* (1966), is the very contingency of life and death. While Dora and

Nora were literally born by chance and could live through the twentieth century, it was totally unpredictable for them that an empty bottle of beer could lead their Grandma to a violent death. Thus, Carter stresses the absurdity of life and death by depicting the ruthless scene where Grandma — a true pacifist — was hit by a bomb, or the situation where even mortality depends upon contingency. During the Blitz, Dora finally realizes the mystery of the world that would continue moving around as if nothing had happened, even after her contingent death. In the flashback scene, she found "the purple flowers that would pop up on the bomb-sites almost before the ruins stopped smoking, as if to say, life goes on, even if you don't" (163).

4.

In this way, even though *Wise Children* is a comic and carnivalesque novel for the most part, the author's allusions to wars — especially World War II — sometimes cast the dark shadow of unrecoverable death on Dora's portrayal of twentieth-century history. Of course, in addition to Grandma's tragic death and the air raids on South London, the lives of Dora and Nora were affected by World War II both directly and indirectly. For instance, the husband of Cyn, a poor girl who had been raised with them by Grandma, was killed in North Africa (Carter, 163), and the Chance sisters had to participate in the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), singing and dancing "[f]or some bloody silly charity matinée, drumming-up cash to replace lost lovers, lost sons, boys dead on the Burma Road, the irreplaceable" (78). For such reasons, Dora has a number of painful war memories that she would not like to speak of to others. She even says in the middle of the story: "[A] broken heart is never a tragedy. Only ultimate death is a tragedy. And war, which, before we knew it, would be upon us" (153).

"[T]he moment of death", as Eagleton points out in *After Theory*, "is the moment when meaning haemorrhages from us" (Eagleton, 164). If so, what Dora calls "ultimate death" in wartime may be one of the most extreme cases exemplifying this notion, since a bomb can turn one's existence into an unliving material both instantly and contingently. Having some painful

memories of war, Dora, at the beginning of the fourth chapter, quotes Jane Austen's famous line from *Mansfield Park* (1814): "Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery" (Carter, 163). Thus, unlike Bakhtin, who believes that carnival has no outside, Dora regards the actual tragedies in the World Wars of the twentieth century as "unlaughable" memories lying outside of carnivalesque "celebration", since these huge traumatic events could have permanently destroyed such a chain of death and rebirth.

While reconsidering the carnivalesque in the context of her contemporary world, Carter is also aware that Bakhtin's utopian view becomes meaningless when one is compelled to confront the painful moment of "ultimate death". Hence, even though humanity could reconstruct societies after the catastrophic wars, both ethically and psychologically, it is difficult for Dora to call them carnivals because she knows that there is no possibility of rebirth after the cruel and contingent deaths of innocent people, including her Grandma. In this sense, as we have observed, the fact that Peregrine does not hear Dora's whisper implies not only the dominance of the carnivalesque narrative tone of this text over her anti-Bakhtinian — or even anti-carnivalesque — attitude, but also the concealment of the protagonist's unspeakable war memories. Dora's unheard whisper, or the miscommunication between Peregrine and herself, therefore, functions to help us figure out Carter's critique of the Bakhtinian notion of carnival hidden in this comic and generally carnivalesque novel.

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BALANCING AND BARNACLED

SUZANNAH V. EVANS

A form of INSPIRED CORRECTION
a DISPLACEMENT of the BANAL
by the FERTILE INTERVENTION
of CHANCE or COINCIDENCE.

You might think I'm speaking through a megaphone
a microphone a phone (a telephone)

but I am speaking through an amphora
amplifying the coincidences of circumstance and crustacean

using my lips as if they are moist sea lips
as if they are the twin halves of a soft razor shell
as if they are other lips and as if those other lips are shouting

I am displacing the banal, replacing the banal with crustacean

and you might think that is strange but
carve my words in terracotta
this can only be a correction

a salty, amplifying, ampersanding, two-handing, loud-standing
brittly-slipping

correction
(CORRECTION)

MARIA EDGEWORTH'S CONCEPT OF KINDNESS IN *PRACTICAL EDUCATION*

NOTE

SAMANTHA ARMSTRONG

Published in 1798 by Maria Edgeworth in collaboration with her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education* is an instructive tome on child-rearing that combined philosophy and educational theories. *Practical Education*'s theory of education argued that children's early experiences were formative and early associations were life-lasting. Thus, the parental method of raising children with kindness. Kindness in the eighteenth century is defined as an emotional practice that enabled users to maintain and retain positive intimate everyday relationships.

Throughout *Practical Education*, Edgeworth employs the concept of kindness regarding the raising of wise, happy adults. This method of parenting is associated and even visualized as being employed alongside with other methods like 'tender' parenting, as both methods produced wise, happy adults as discussed by Joanne Bailey. Wise, happy adults were desirable because these were the adults that became solid, respectable and contributing citizens of society. Parents wanted their children to become honourable and orderly citizens instead of citizens who helped destroy society through their sullenness, insolence, and laziness to name a few.

Thus, Edgeworth succinctly argues that parents should remember that 'benevolence and affectionate kindness from parents to children first inspire the pleasing emotions of love and gratitude' (Edgeworth, 719). Parents were given power to incite these pleasing emotions through displaying sentimental parenthood of 'warm' emotions: benevolence, affection, and, kindness. Aside from kindness creating desired and acceptable emotions in their children, Edgeworth also argues that parental kindness formed a warm, affectionate atmosphere in their households. Households in this period were viewed as microcosmic examples of society, and thusly, behaviour inside of the household became important indicators of social behaviour (Harvey; Tadmor). This

atmosphere creates children who, Edgeworth argued, have 'the desire to return kindness by kindness and the hope of conciliating the good will of the powerful[…]' (291). Edgeworth cautions that parents who use this method must remember that 'first steps require rather caution and gentle kindness, than any difficult or laborious exertions' (713). Using kindness as parents promised adults who are beneficial to society. Additionally, kindness promised affectionate, 'warm' household atmosphere that helped mediate relationships of familial members.

Edgeworth also argued that parental kindness did not only involve the children themselves, but also the children's teachers. As Edgeworth argued, 'it is surely the interest of parents to treat the person who educates their children with that perfect equality and kindness, which will conciliate her affection, and which will at the same time preserve her influence and authority over her pupils,' (546) and '[…] that parents and preceptors should treat their pupils with as much equality and kindness as the improving reason of children justifies' (718). Parents who had different priorities when it came to educating boys and girls came together with the same priority regarding kindness as a method of raising and teaching (Fletcher, chaps.11–14). Governesses, teachers and parents were in a co-dependent relationship according to Edgeworth because all parties were an important participant in educating and raising of acceptable adults.

However, parental kindness, in Edgeworth's view, was a complex theory fraught with snares that could destroy the plethora of benefits from this method. One of the ironic snares of this method is that *too much* kindness could result in, 'children who habitually meet with kindness, habitually feel complacency; that species of instinctive, or rather of associated affection, which always rises in the mind from recollection of past pleasures, is immediately excited in such children by the fight of their parents' (Edgeworth, 270). However, *inconsistent* parental kindness could hurt a child equally, 'instead of lavishing our smiles and our attention upon young children for a short period just at that age when they are amusing playthings, should not we do more wisely if we reserved some portion of our kindness a few years longer?' (272) or '[…] not to lavish caresses upon their infancy, and cruelly to withdraw their kindness when their children have learned to

expect the daily stimulus of affection' (720). Another way that parental kindness could go awry is if the parents did not *accept* the kindness of their children correctly, '[…] nothing hurts the temper of a generous child more than this species of injustice. Receive his expressions of kindness and gratitude with cold reserve, or a look that implies a doubt of his truth, and you give him so much pain, that you not only repress, but destroy his affectionate feelings' (295). These snares surrounding parental kindness are harmful to children because these actions undermine the potentiality of the method in creating productive, socially acceptable adults.

Edgeworth also cautions that parents have to be *aware* of their children's acquaintances and friends, 'it is impossible, we repeat it in the strongest terms, it is impossible that parents can be successful in the education of their children at home, unless they have steadiness enough to resist all interference from visitor and acquaintance, who from thoughtless kindness, or a busy desire to administer advice, are apt to counteract the views of a preceptor […]' (715). As parents were responsible for the proper raising and care of children to adults, Edgeworth argued that parents were responsible for maintaining their children's associations. Parents had to maintain those associations to those that would benefit their children instead of distracting and harming their children life-long.

Maria Edgeworth wrote eruditely about the kindness method of parenting, which promised both great rewards but also great hazards. The great rewards, Edgeworth promised parental kindness delivered were beneficial to both the child but also for the larger society: parental method of kindness raised wise, and, happy, adults. Attentive parental kindness additionally ensured that children made good and proper friendships, associations and childhood learning that would benefit the children throughout their entire lives. However, if a parent fell into one of the hazardous snares of parental kindness, the child would become the opposite, a danger to society; a child who would become a disastrous adult. For Maria Edgeworth and her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, parental kindness was a complex issue that needed to be carefully traversed by parents.

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SUBMERGED VOICES: A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONDESCENSION

ARTICLE

ROBIN HARRIOTT

> Take away all that the working class has given to English Literature and that literature would scarcely suffer; take away all that the educated class has given, and English Literature would scarcely exist. Education must then play a very important part in a writer's work. (Virginia Woolf 'The Leaning Tower', cited in Rainey, 914).

This passage is taken from a paper Virginia Woolf originally gave at the Workers' Educational Association at Brighton in May 1940. Notwithstanding Woolf's swipe at the working-class' (diminutive) contribution to English literature, in yoking together the issues of class and education, her observations nevertheless provide a useful entrée to the following discussion.

The 'Submerged Voices' to which I refer are those of the 1930s working-class writers who, as Andy Croft affirms, by the end of the decade and following an obstacle-strewn journey finally 'emerged from the ghetto of unreadable prose and revolutionary rhetoric, into the wide open streets of mainstream British literary life, readable and read, enjoyed and taken seriously' (Croft, 50). However, behind the fetishisation of working-class culture by members of the intellectual elite, a whiff of condescension still attended critical assessments of its literary offering. Possibly deriving from a defensiveness based upon notions of class status, it was manifest in snobbery, a resentment that a member of the working class might aspire to what had hitherto been considered a middle-class preserve. For its recipients it proved a discouraging trait and something of the prevailing attitude may be garnered from the following comments. The first relates to what Valentine Cunningham describes as T.S. Eliot's 'cheap magisterial sneer' at the very 'possibility' of a proletarian literature (Cunningham, 306). In a 1932 *Criterion* article discussing Harold Heslop's Kharkov Conference Speech (1931), Eliot, in characteristically imperious fashion, asked: 'Just who were these proletarian authors that Heslop discussed, James C. Welsh, John S. Clark, Joe Corrie?' George Orwell adopted a similarly dismissive tone in his review of Philip Henderson's *The Novel*

Today, observing: '[the writer] is careful to explain, "proletarian literature" does not mean literature written by proletarians,' before concluding: '[it] is just as well, because there isn't any' (Cunningham, 306). Then we have Samuel Hynes echoing Woolf's assertion to justify the focus of his *The Auden Generation* by stating: 'virtually no writing of literary importance came out of the working class during the decade'. Though he does graciously deign to prefix this assertion with that qualifying adverb 'virtually' – thus leaving the door slightly open for rebuttal (11).

What I refer to here as the 'Content Provider' trope – the process whereby working-class writing became valued more for its subject matter and descriptive detail rather than its formal innovation – is apparent in the following remarks of arguably the most politically self-aware member of the Auden circle: Louis MacNeice. While seemingly lauding the Birmingham writers' 'insider' perspective on the working classes, his praise might equally be construed as a backhanded compliment, for as he observed: 'Their version of the novel as social history had grown naturally out of their background, instead of being, *as in London, an apostasy from the view that the novel is primarily art* […] I found these Birmingham writers very refreshing; *they at least were not hybrids*; they were writing and writing efficiently – on subjects they really knew' (MacNeice, 154 my emphasis).

In mitigation, MacNeice's use of the term 'hybrids' possibly registered his disquiet at the attitudinising of his own intellectual caste. Taken together however, the above assertions did not augur well for a working-class literature in an era many hoped would provide the long-awaited and decisive stage in the class struggle foreseen by Marx and Engels in which:

> Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie *goes over* to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole (Marx & Engels, 13 my emphasis).

Despite the overuse of what Julian Bell referred to as this 'hackneyed passage from Marx' (Cunningham, 211), the concept of 'going over' captured the collective imagination of Left-leaning intellectuals whose incipient social conscience determined they make common cause with their proletarian comrades. Following innumerable critical explorations of Auden's 'low dishonest

decade', one is inevitably prompted to interrogate the extent to which writers and intellectual affiliates of the Auden set were reluctant, possibly unable, to divest themselves of the bourgeois culture in which they had been schooled. In many cases it was evident that the rationale informing their class-cultural diaspora – what Ronald Blythe referred to as 'a kind of moral deed poll' (107) was tarnished with a residue of doubt, especially regarding the requirement these 'cultural tourists' unlearn their class-conditioning to immerse themselves more fully in the proletarian experience. Addressing this issue, Samuel Hynes cites the following passage from MacNeice's *I Crossed the Minch,* which finds the author in dialogue with his 'Guardian Angel', an Angel described by Hynes as 'a severe censorious spirit who doubts his political seriousness', to whom MacNeice replies:

> My sympathies are Left. On paper and in the soul. But not in my heart or guts. On paper – yes. I would vote Left any day, sign manifestoes, answer questionnaires. Ditto, my soul. My soul is all for moving towards the classless society. But unlike Plato, what my soul says does not seem to go. […] With my heart and guts I lament the passing of class. (Hynes, 123, 127).

MacNeice's confession bespeaks the predicament of many middle-class intellectuals faced with the prospect of 'losing the[ir] "I" in the workers' "We"' and 'abandoning the concept of the ego' they believed the 'veriest orthodoxy of the Communist Party' (Cunningham, 219).

In '"The Condescension of Posterity": The Recent Historiography of the English Working Class', Harold Perkin acknowledges that middle-class intellectuals who engage in 'labour history' are to be given credit for their attempt to escape 'the Marxist shackles of class determinism' and for 'sympathizing with the class from which, in their own terms, their unearned incomes are extracted' (Perkin, 87). While clearly damning with faint praise, Perkin's cynicism targets the 'condescension' he considers the hallmark of middle-class intellectuals engaged in the documentation of a working class they ultimately attempt to 'control and manipulate'. He argues that although Marx clearly envisaged a role for a portion (vanguard) of the dominant class to 'comprehend theoretically' the historical movement of the proletariat, neither he nor Lenin expected they would seek to dictate to, or assume power over it (Perkin, 89).

It was no surprise, conducted as it was by members of the same social stratum, that the condescension and presumption perceived by Perkin could also be seen to have contaminated the discussion of working-class literary productions. The impulse to 'control and manipulate' is evident in Jack Hilton's irritation at 'silver-spoon, progressive editors' such as John Lehmann with whom he dealt in the late 1930s: 'these pups of University boys with a flairy flare [sic.] for LIT, in the worst form are too *dictatorially* important' (Hilliard, 23-24 my emphasis). Hilton's compensatory gaucherie doubtlessly derived from his intimidation before the altar of academe. Nevertheless, a view prevailed that whilst working-class writers might usefully function as 'content providers', the prospects of any formal experimentation in their narratives were bleak, owing to what Roy Johnson considered '[the worker-writer's] probable lack of an aesthetic education', a situation in which:

> The sheer lack of time and leisure to read – will militate against his [sic.] developing the skills necessary to transcend bourgeois aesthetic values, and in the short time he does have to study, he will be confronted with the intimidating strength of the traditional middle-class novel and be inclined to accept its dominance and imitate it. (Johnson, 93).

While claiming here that working-class writers were 'caught between the jaws of form and content' and condemned to the lumpen emulation of bourgeois models, Johnson also considered they portrayed their class counterparts as a passive, inert mass, and believed the veracity of experiential ('truth to life') detail was in itself sufficient justification for their literary project. These remarks, whether in whole or in part, were essentially manifestations of the vulgar Marxist critique that has by turns informed and dogged the discussion of working-class writing. Anticipating Johnson by some forty years, the *Time & Tide* reviewer of Harold Heslop's *Last Cage Down* (1935), was 'forced to wonder why it is that so many people who would think twice about practising medicine or accountancy or even music without training, believe they can turn novelist overnight', and registered, albeit obliquely, the necessity for some measure of formal (aesthetic) instruction (Croft, 49-50). Prompted by the burgeoning, though in her view ill-judged, interest in working-class narrative, *Sunday Times* reviewer Dilys Powell complained that Walter Allen's *Innocence is Drowned* (1938), 'was the kind of book which, because of its proletarian background, is apt to get more

attention at the present time than it deserves' (Croft, 49). More cynical than receptive, Powell's comments represent the nadir of critical evaluation whereby a work is dismissed simply because it is deemed generic or representative, an assessment that not only denies the author's autonomy but also undermines the integrity of the critical process itself.

Owing to its focus on the Birmingham group, this 'brief history' is restricted to the pre-war decade, although the tendency to condescension was by no means unique to it. In the eighteenth century, Pope cautioned readers 'A little learning is a dangerous thing' and in his exploration of the Romantic period Jonathan Rose found that 'Plebeian poets of both sexes were confined by their betters to the ghetto of folk poetry', and he remarked how 'Lord Byron would deliver withering ridicule to the pretensions of shoemaker poet Joseph Blacket' (Rose, 19, 20). As Rose suggests, such attitudes were representative of a continuing element in the British class struggle whereby the educated classes often (though not always) found the efforts of working people to educate and express themselves in writing – a pursuit hitherto seen as their own intellectual preserve – deeply discomfiting.

Worker-writers were not oblivious or insensitive to the condescension they perceived in the comments of their supposed mentors. In *Class Fictions,* Pamela Fox cites the autobiographical extract produced by Scottish Miner James C. Welsh for his collection of poetry *Songs of a Miner* (Fox, 1). George Bernard Shaw had requested Welsh supply 'a bit of autobiography' for his collection and, while duly providing an account of his life and career to date, Welsh expressed the strong desire his poems be received as *bona fide* literary productions:

> I do not ask the world to judge them because a miner penned them – there is no credit in that - in fact, I rather dislike the fact that there is a tendency already in some quarters to dub one a 'miner poet.' Miner I am, poet I may be; but let the world not think there is a virtue in the combination. 'Ploughmen Poets,' 'navvy poets,' 'miner poets,' appeal only to the superficialities of life. The poet aims at its elementals. These I have tried to touch, and let the world say whether I have succeeded or no; I want to stand on my own legs (Fox, 1).

Reluctant to be patronised by 'the dominant literary world's categorization of his work as "miner poetry"' (Fox, 1), Welsh believed his poetry dealt in the 'elementals' and, rather than being

acclaimed as the proficient expression of a 'miner', hence 'minor' poet, demanded instead his work be judged legitimately, solely on its merits as literature.

As the economic and political climates wavered between depression and long-term unemployment, from Communist suspicion to Fascist threat, it became increasingly evident that world events exerted a powerful influence upon the critical reception of a literary work. As though in response to these real-world fluctuations, the critical criteria used to evaluate working-class narrative began to urge a more radically politicised content. In *Red Letter Days*, Andy Croft devotes a chapter to analysing how changes in Comintern political policy during the inter-war period impacted upon the critical evaluation of working-class letters. He tracked the transition from the policy of the third 'Class against Class' period where 'criticism had been doubly prescriptive', to the softening of approach required to ensure 'the accommodations and rapprochement necessary for the party's alliance with the more centrist views of the popular front (84). Indeed, as 'Popular Front' policy began to pervade the political consciousness, a parallel development was apparent in less prescriptive forms *of* criticism. The critical reception of Walter Brierley's *Sandwichman* (1937) is illustrative here. Reviewing the Derby writer's second novel for the *Daily Worker*, miner novelist B.L. Coombes described it as 'a worthy successor to *Means Test Man'* and 'prais[ed] it for just the qualities that paper had found so lacking in that novel two years previously' (Croft, 85). Rather than prescribing what ought to have been written, Leftist literary criticism became more concerned to evaluate what 'had' been written – in short, it began to seek more appropriate ways of valuing the formal qualities of working-class literary productions. Birmingham group writer, literary critic and alumnus of Birmingham University Walter Allen recollected guiltily how during the 1930s his literary tastes oscillated between the opposing poles of the art/politics debate: 'We believed we were interested in politics and in saving the world, fighting for the working class against unemployment, fascism, and the threat of war. And we were quite serious and sincere. But in fact, though we didn't know it, we were as much swayed by aesthetic considerations' (Allen, 246).

The critical criteria employed to evaluate working-class narratives in the wider literary world were echoed in periodicals and magazines such as *Left Review,* (hereafter referred to as *LR*) which offered working-class writers 'a tilting ground in which to find their strength' (Croft, 47) and, in order to encourage members of the working-class to write and submit work for publication, *LR* devised a series of literary competitions. In "A Culture of the People": Politics and Working Class Literature in *LR* 1934-38', Ronald Paul examined the critical criteria underpinning these and found that from the journal's inception until its closure 'the debate about the supposed dichotomy between innovative form and revolutionary content continued to surface […] and it was on this central issue that much of the criticism of the journal was to be focused' (Paul, 64, 65). It is in the pages of *LR* that we find Amabel Williams-Ellis imparting her 'schoolmarmly' aperçus and soft skills to inform readers that:

> [Although] Julius Lipton's 'pictorial effects' are not as good as those of other competitors […] his way of letting the tale speak for itself is excellent. He does not *tell* his readers that poor Danny died of bad working conditions, long hours, and poverty. He does something much more effective. He lets the reader see for himself that this is so (Left Review, 217).

Seemingly oblivious to the content of Lipton's story, Williams-Ellis labours an aesthetic point (showing vs. telling) in a manner not merely crass, but ill-informed: 'showing' being a stylistic convention to which most WEA/NCLC[1] litterateurs had long since subscribed. As H. Gustav Klaus remarks:

> Encouraging as the result[s] [were], with up to fifty entries being received per competition, the whole enterprise (with Amabel Williams-Ellis telling the workers to avoid the use of jargon) had something patronising about it, and was, as Alick West later pointed out, based on a critical standard 'which was indistinguishable from the aesthetics current at the end of the nineteenth century' (Klaus, 19).

While Williams-Ellis may have laid it on a bit thick, more surprising was the response of working-class guest editor James Hanley who admitted to 'having been rather surprised at finding such manifest qualities in the contributions he read' (Paul, 68). As Ronald Paul points out: 'Hanley's

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[1] The principal providers of Further Education were respectively the WEA: The Workers Educational Association and the NCLC: The National Council of Labour Colleges.

own critical underestimation of the creative potential of the journal's readership is in itself somewhat remarkable, given his own background as a Liverpool ex-seaman and later celebration as a writer of the vibrant oral tradition of the working class' (68).

Although he found *LR's* aesthetic criticism 'smacked of Victorian patronage', Alick West's scepticism regarding the journal's use as a forum for creative writing began to abate in subsequent issues as political tensions mounted once more in the outside world (Paul, 67). Again, Paul believed it was:

> [I]ndicative of the direction of the aesthetic debate within the journal that in the last two competitions […] the prescriptive element of propaganda became more prominent and the sensuous use of language, celebrated by Williams-Ellis and James Hanley is not held in such high regard (70).

With the onset of the Spanish Civil War, the critical criteria swung back in favour of a more politically prescriptive content. However, by this time 'the journal had more or less given up on its earlier efforts to encourage working-class readers to write creatively of their daily experiences. Instead the editors turned their attention to what they saw as the more pressing ideological exigencies of the day' (Paul, 70). According to Barbara Foley, '[following] the 1934 Soviet Writers Congress, the emphasis of the art/propaganda debate was upon Social Realism:

> There was no necessity for the authors of socialist realist texts to come from the ranks of the proletariat. Professional middle-class writers who were sympathetic fellow travellers were as well-equipped – indeed, in technical terms, usually better equipped – to represent emergent national reality (Paul, 72)

That working-class writers might be required to endure the further condescension of a dominant elite on the grounds of political expediency is clear in D. J. Taylor's gloomy conviction that 'so much literary Marxism grew out of what was largely a social hierarchy [that] tended to keep working-class writers at bay. Such genuinely working-class writing that appeared in mainstream periodicals of the 1930s was largely there on sufferance, and most of the attention it received was careful to stress its representative qualities rather than its individual distinction' (Taylor, 105, 106). His last point echoes the observation made above in respect of Dilys Powell's review of Walter

Allen's novel. However, Taylor's identification of a Marxist 'social hierarchy' not only resonates with Perkin's comments but also underlines the assertions of Jonathan Rose's autodidacts who, as Rose 'put [it] bluntly', expressed the consensus that 'the trouble with Marx was Marxists' (Rose, 298). Nevertheless, beyond such perceived failings, *LR* had for a time provided a safe space in which the hitherto muted voice of the working-class writer might find an outlet for its literary expression.

The Birmingham group's irascible Leslie Halward provided some timely and necessary pushback against the invasion of working-class letters by members of the educated middle-class elite. Halward was not reticent in voicing his intense dislike of 'the casual contact and occasional eavesdropping' (Halward Papers, 6), in which certain individuals engaged so as to appropriate impressions of working-class experience. His bottom-up condescension was not reserved solely for these he considered middle-class slummers however; he could be equally coruscating on an intra-class level, especially towards those embarked upon the voyage of educational self-improvement. In a talk given at Birmingham's Firbank Working Men's College, Halward (whose idiom predates notions of male reconstruction), expressed his view that: 'The worst thing that could happen to a *young working-class man* [sic] with a desire to write about *his* people […] is that *he* be sent to a College or University. Once such a *young man* gets "education" into *his* system, becomes a student and has a taste of culture all is lost' (Halward Papers, 8, my emphasis). In the London Mercury's (May 1936) symposium on working-class literature, Halward patronised the efforts of his working-class contemporaries (Frederick C. Boden, Walter Greenwood, Walter Brierley and James Hanley) in terms not dissimilar to those expressed by members of the educated elite he so despised. Naturally, he censured Boden and Brierley for their studies at Nottingham University and, in a reversal of the 'miner/minor' dilemma described earlier, Halward argued Boden was not in fact a miner, but a 'poet who, by force of circumstance, was once obliged to go down a mine and get coal for a living' (*London Mercury*). And Walter Brierley's subtle psychological exploration of the Cook's inanition in *Means Test Man* (1935), was dismissed, here in decidedly vulgar Marxist

terms, because Halward considered Brierley depicted his working-class characters to be 'entirely without guts' (Halward, *London Mercury,* 12). In the same article Halward considered James Hanley to be nearest 'the mark' (i.e. best placed to provide an authentic account of working-class experience), although he found the Liverpudlian's depictions 'too bitter for words. He would have you know that the proletarians are being crucified' (Halward, *London Mercury,* 12).

Whilst the concept of 'going over' presented Left-leaning intellectuals with a veritable sea of troubles, working-class writers were not immune to perturbations. Here literary ambition often intertwined with a sense of shame regarding their lowly academic status and this often presented as a leitmotif in their writing. As one who had negotiated the education system himself and inspired many a working-class writer to follow in his footsteps, D.H. Lawrence recalled how 'in the early days they were always telling me I had got genius, as if to console me for not having their incomparable advantages' (Williams, 18, 19). The 'incomparable advantages' of which Lawrence spoke being primarily those of class-cultural privilege derived from and enshrined in their public school education.

The example of Lawrence exerted a powerful influence over working-class writers and is discussed by Carole Snee in her chapter 'Working-Class Literature or Proletarian Writing?' (Clark et al, 180) in which she ponders the authorial ambitions of 'worker-writers'. As with Halward, she is censorious of *embourgeoisement,* believing education, more specifically the study of traditional academic subjects, leads to contempt for one's class and precipitates a process of alienation. Yet her opprobrium differs from Halward's in that she sees education as promoting an aesthetic sensibility at the expense of political consciousness. Indeed, her critical perspective is informed by a preference for 'proletarian' writing which exhibits 'a greater awareness of class as its primary determinant' as distinct from the artistic pretensions of a working-class 'literature'. This political stance aside, the dismissal of Walter Brierley's *Sandwichman* (1937), on the grounds that it was 'self-consciously literary' (Clark, 180) and that Brierley was overly concerned with aesthetics at the expense of content remains incongruous. It is tantamount to saying a Member of Parliament might

be too 'self-consciously political,' for surely 'to be literary' is the imaginative writer's *raison d'être*. In the introduction to the Merlin Press reprint of Brierley's novel, editor Philip Gorski considers Snee's attempt 'to replace traditional academic assumptions about what constitutes literature' with an 'alternative Marxist model' (Gorski, xiv), is too dogmatic, serving only to precipitate a race to the bottom in which whole swathes of literature are consigned to obscurity. Springing from the same decade (1970s) as Roy Johnson's rancorous 'The Proletarian Novel', mentioned above, Snee's oft-cited remarks survive as a relic of the resurgent Marxist critique that was cultural materialism. It was ironic that while those espousing the free enterprise rhetoric of the Thatcher premiership sought moral support in reading the austerity narrative of the hungry thirties as worthier of praise than recrimination, cultural critics were desperately trawling the working-class writing of the 1930s in the hope of discovering a radically politicised content that might function as its ideological antidote. It would seem, to use Snee's phraseology, that where issues of 'class' became the 'primary determinant' the emphasis of the critical criteria used to evaluate working-class narratives had swung back in favour of a politicised content over art.

In the interests of acknowledging the counter-argument, it is fair to state the condescension of working-class writers was not all-pervasive, Ford Madox Ford's encouragement of D. H. Lawrence being a case in point. Henry Green championed the Liverpool writer James Hanley; The Birmingham group's John Hampson was published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press; E. M. Forster believed Leslie Halward's short-stories brought the working classes alive for him and I.A. Richards was particularly enthused by the formal innovation he found in Peter Chamberlain's *What the Sweet Hell?* (1935). The American Edward O'Brien published each of the Birmingham group writers in his *Short-Stories* anthologies and had written the introduction to Leslie Halward's first collected edition where, according to Croft, O'Brien's 'enthusiasm for Halward appears to have been entirely without political motivation […] it was the literary significance of Halward's success that moved him' (163). Such loyal patronage was reciprocated and extended in turn to Walter Brierley by the

Birmingham group's John Hampson and Walter Allen, who between them had selflessly nursed the Derbyshire writer's *Means Test Man* to parturition.

Returning to the question asked at the outset, it would appear that a degree of condescension had on occasions attended the production of working-class writing, although as we have seen, it was not 'ever thus'. The current revival of interest in working-class literature attests not only to the extent to which research trends engage with and become progressively sophisticated in their focus but also to the resilience of the working-class writers who surmounted the obstacles strewn in their path. To this end we ought to consider ourselves fortunate that not all 'patrons' of working-class literature 'patronised' their protégées. Had this been the case it seems highly probable that the voice of the writer from the Nottinghamshire coalfields who inspired many a would-be working-class litterateur to take up the pen, may have forever remained unheard.

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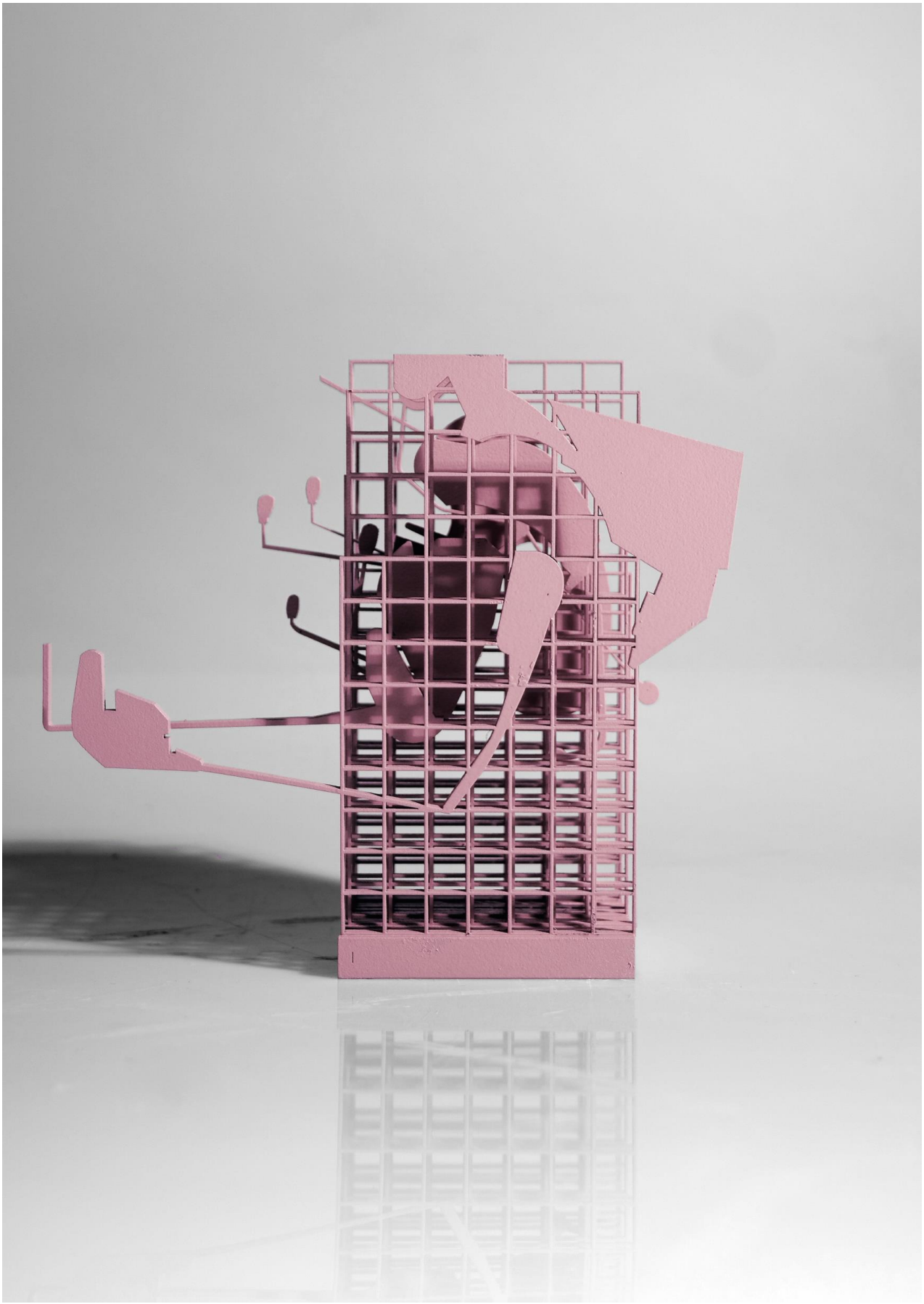

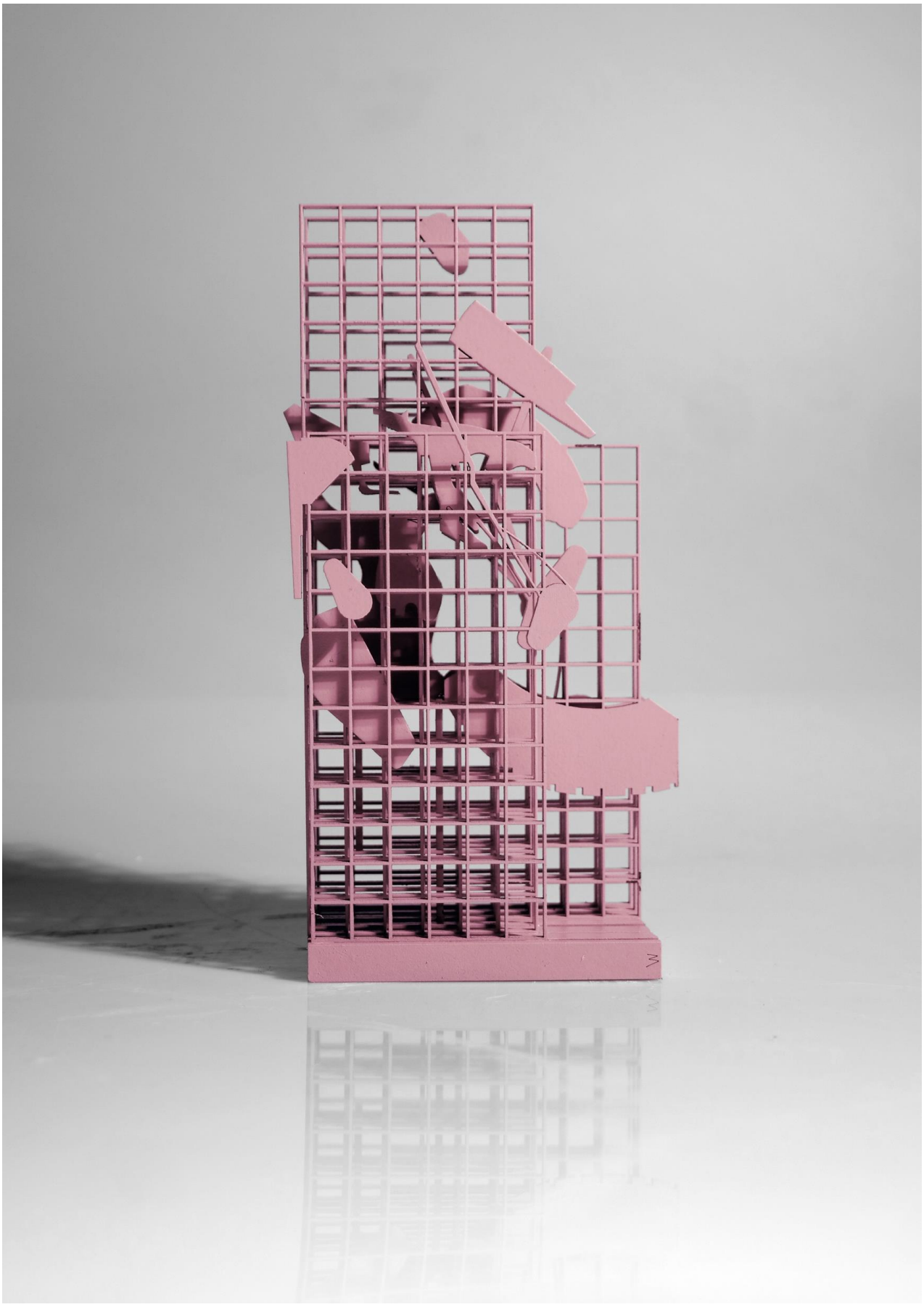

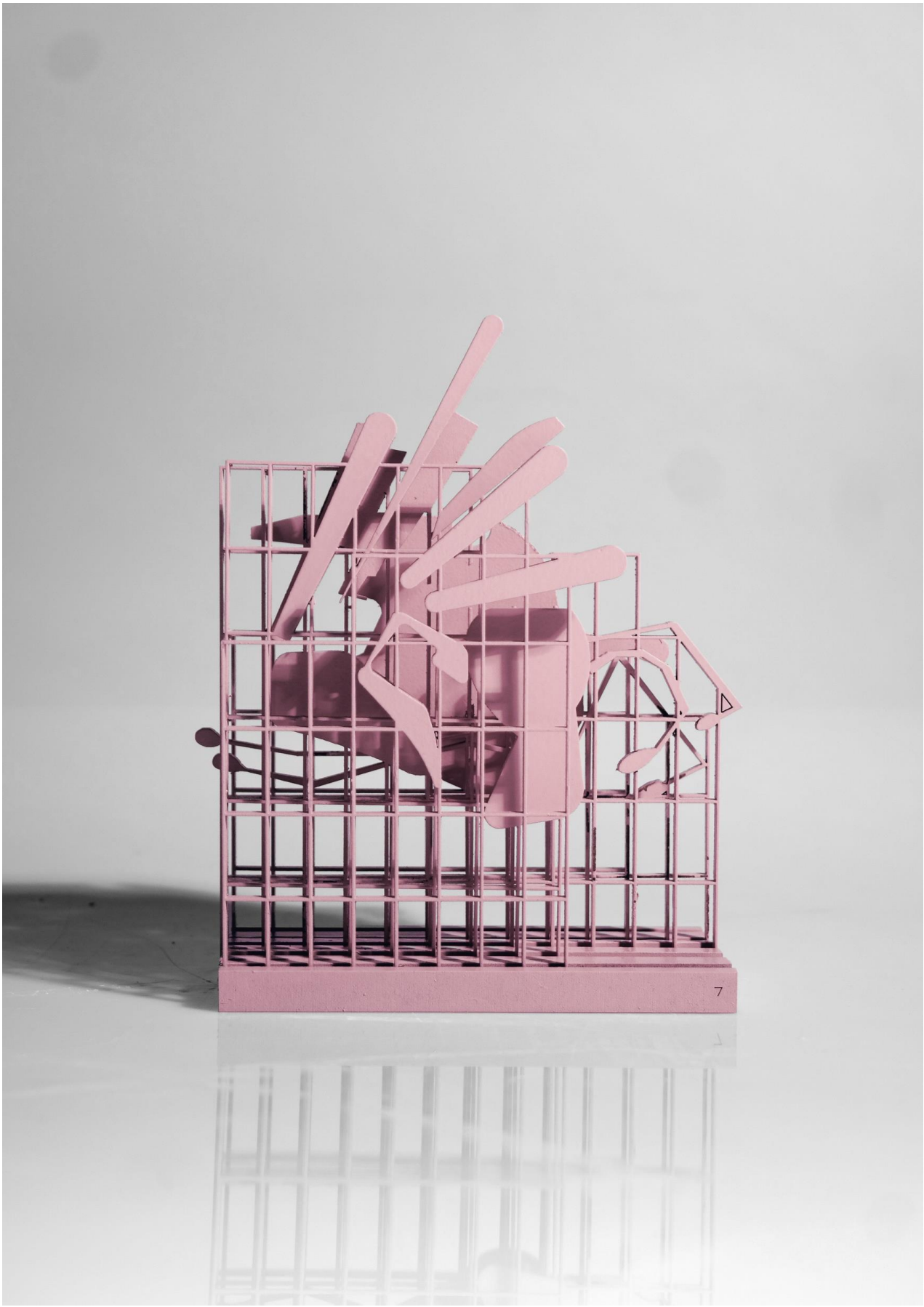

ARTWORK, DAVID BALDOCK

(Untitled) excerpt from 'Spatial Generators of Nyhavn', 2018 (acrylic and MDF)
(Untitled) excerpt from 'Spatial Generators of Nyhavn', 2018 (acrylic and MDF)
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Spatial Generators of Nyhavn, 2018 (acrylic and MDF),

COVER ARTIST'S STATEMENT

DAVID BALDOCK

Forming urban environments through subconscious process.

Traditionally, when a client approaches an architect, they usually present them with a brief. This may be for a house extension, a new museum, or the redesign of a public space, for example. It is the architect's challenge to design a proposal that responds to this brief – whilst juggling the issues of site constraints, regulations, and personal style.

While this process is one way of getting buildings built, it is not necessarily the only way. Although it has some benefits, the success of such a process, and the client-designer relationship, relies on the client being acutely aware of any issues with the 'suitability' of the existing context, and the designer's ability to predict the future uses of the context – even if they have not encountered the given site beforehand.

In my experience, for projects of a domestic nature, the client usually has a deep understanding of the use of the site, being the person who lives there. However, larger, more complex projects often concern several different stakeholders, actors, and participants, whose different experiences are sometimes incredibly distant from or incompatible with the developer or investor's brief. The resultant buildings, interventions, or spaces often reflect this disconnect of ideals.

We all build our own experiences of a place as we traverse it, whether we have personal or secondary interactions with a space. However, each of our experiences of a place are different; they are nuanced, complicated, and *personal.* In this series of work, I therefore ask if it is possible to design a space using the collection of data from the often unheard, subjective experience of a place. By extension, this attempts to question the role of the architect and the traditional structure of the brief-proposal relationship. Is it possible, in other words, to put the knowledge of those who experience an environment first simply by altering the process?

By concentrating investigation on two different urban stages in London and Copenhagen, this series pays homage to the Situationists' psycho-geographic lens, via surrealist automation. In order to understand the sites, these drawings began their lives as a collection of over 80 automatic drawings. Workshops were set up on each of these sites, and a number of participants attempted to record their experiences in real-time by 'giving up' conscious control of the pen on the page. Once the dataset was gathered, and each participant talked through their abstract markings, I was able to overlay areas of interest. The initial information was put through a methodological framework, and the resultant work is shown here in a way that attempts to translate and manifest the embodied thoughts and experiences of place that were teased from each participant's subconscious. The drawings archive these experiences in a parallel world of surrealism and embodied narrative.

By changing the traditional relationship between architect and client, and by changing the design process to be more intensely phenomenological, I ask if it is possible to learn more about the environment and an individual's day-to-day experiences of a place, and in turn, strengthen the perceived relationship between city and subject. Essentially, these drawings are manifestations of translation in which we ask, what does an 'experienced' city look like? Can these frozen manifestations be preserved and re-experienced by the viewer-participant? What happens when the city 'isn't there' for its inhabitants?

RITUAL

GREG WOODIN

Supergluing my hair shut,
so the wind don't
blow it
away.

Squeezing on
drainpipes,
so my legs don't
escape.

Plastic-bagging
my mouth,
so it don't get
dry.

Wrapping my wrist
in steel,
so my veins don't
cry.

Covering my back
in camo,
so the sun don't
see.

Fabricating my soul,
so the ground don't
feel my
feet.

Scanning the circle
to see what
the future
brings.

Twisting the keyhole,
so brahman
don't steal my
things.

SOUVENIRS

SHORT STORY

YANA SHABANA

Five in the morning. I woke up to my mother screaming, "Who keeps bringing this rotten slimy rubbish here? Do you want cockroaches to infest the house?" I closed my eyes and drifted back to sleep.

* * * *

"You will never find those beautiful mushrooms here. They do not grow in this part of the world, Naya", explained my science teacher, pointing at a globe on her desk. "Sadly, only the ugly ash-brown ones grow here. It seems as if only ugly brown things can survive in this god-forsaken place." Packing her books and leaving the classroom, her final instruction spoken over her shoulder, "Try not to bring that rotten waste to school again."

So *Amanita muscaria* is what they're called. Spotting their picture in a botanical encyclopaedia, I squealed in delight when I realized this cartoon-like, red-cap, spotty mushroom was real. Living in a divided, grey city with barely any patches of green meant that any mushrooms when found were an invaluable treasure. I started carefully stashing away my mushroom collection in my metal pencil case. My collection was comprised of three mushrooms: one half rotten, another missing a stem, and a third one with a splitting cap.

* * * *

"Finally they are going to school."

I opened my eyes to my father grumbling to my mother. "It's outrageous. This curfew disrupted their study for two weeks! The national exams will start soon, and look at how much they've missed out on! It's beyond belief."

"It is just seven o'clock, Nadir," was my mother's typical response to my father's usual morning over-alertness. Buttoning up my vertically striped blue-and-white school uniform, half asleep, I listened to him.

"And have you seen those tank track marks? It took us years of petitioning to get it paved. After finally tasting what it was like to live as civilized people, they come and completely destroy it."

"It is just too early to have such a serious conversation," my mother said, irritated, at the same time signalling to me to sit in front of her so that she could brush my hair.

"But I want it tied in a ponytail at the bottom, like my friend Aziza!" I protested.

She patiently presented her rationale: "You have such a lovely long neck. Long necks have been long sung in our poetry and literature as a sign of unbreakable dignity. Look at swans and peacocks: their necks are what make them majestic. Long necks look up high to the sky. Tying your ponytail at the top highlights your neck and character better."

I was not convinced. "I want to be like my friends."

"The only thing you are getting today is a high pony. My daughter is not leaving the house with a rat tail growing out of her scalp." By the time I realized all my hopes had been terminated, the brushing action had already started.

"They did it deliberately", continued my father after a moment of silence. The pulling got more intense. I tried to object, but when I was about to, he went on, as if lecturing, "And this is how, my dear child, they want to humiliate us." My mother tugged harder and my eyes filled with tears.

"First, they gave us a week to enjoy the new road, then just when we were about to get used to living like other human beings, they took it away and turned our neighbourhood into a battlefield. They took it away to teach us two things, Naya: that we are fully under their mercy, and most importantly, that this is what we deserve. This is where we belong, in dusty filth, destruction, and…"

"Stop it!" snapped my mother. "Stop it with the depressing talk for heaven's sake. You make it sound as if it's just been revealed to you from above! Everyone else already knows it. Fixing his cap and flipping up his coat collar, my father cleared his throat.

"We petitioned for seven years to get it paved. We will petition for seven more to get it fixed." He winked at me and left.

* * * *

As I descended the stairs, I undid my high ponytail, and tied it at the bottom of my head. Feeling the wind cutting through my knees I wondered *what was all that about?* What could these 'track marks' be? Suddenly, someone called my name, interrupting my thoughts.

"Naya! Come get your souvenir!" Sami waved with an inviting gesture. He was standing next to a trail of holes in the ground. "Amjad found a bullet cartridge case," Sami informed me authoritatively. "Try your luck, you might also find something interesting. I have been looking for twenty minutes now, but, so far, nothing! Apparently I came too late; the children of the ally have taken everything."

So this is what a 'track mark' is.

"If you recite verses from the *Duha* chapter of the Quran," he instructed, "you are more likely to find something to show your friends at school." Unsure, I asked, "Isn't that the one which is supposed to help with finding lost items? But I haven't lost anything in these holes." "Technically, you are still searching for something, aren't you?" he questioned me.

I carefully inspected one hole. It looked unbelievably deep. I stuck my fingers inside to measure how deep it was, and they all disappeared, completely out of view! I was astonished: How could chains dig so deeply into the ground? Sami and I walked together in the same direction to school, chatting and keeping an eye on the holes.

"I cannot wait to get to school. I am telling my friends that the tanks passed through our neighbourhood. We are one of the few lucky ones to witness it." He continued bragging, "We stood our ground like real men."

"But I thought you said your family hid in the basement?"

"It does not matter where we hid, as long as we stayed at home."

I noticed a dented piece of metal and stopped to pick it up. Sami immediately devised a theory. "This was probably a cog. I think the tank collapsed soon after this piece detached."

I asked how he knew that. He said he heard the tank stop after it reached the other side of the city.

"What if soldiers just switched it off?" I argued.

"It is very unlikely. They have to drive it all the way back to the capital. It must have broken down. Take the cog. Show it to your friends."

* * * *

I continued my walk to school unaccompanied, thinking about the enormous force that had pierced those holes in the ground. At school, I showed off my rare, smashed finding, supporting it with Sami's theory that it was a cog in a previous life. I presented it to my science teacher. She scolded me for bringing rubbish to school. I explained that I found it in one of the track mark holes.

"You should have seen the holes. They are perfectly aligned and dug in the ground as if with a cookie cutter." In my head, I was not convinced that chain pieces could dig up such huge holes. I had seen Sami's bike chains.

"But where did they come from?" The teacher shook her head dismissively and pointed at my desk. "Go back to your seat, Naya. Let's not talk politics."

I walked back to my desk wondering what 'politics' had to do with holes.

Realizing I had spent much more time than I was supposed to showing off my unique souvenir to the other children, I decided to take the shorter route home. Regardless of the many times I had done it, walking through the cemetery never grew any less eerie. As I was hurrying along the footpath, my eyes fell on something strange, something I had not seen before. A small, white, round thing. I thought it was a partridge's egg. We had learnt at school that partridges build

their nests on the ground, but I had never seen their eggs in person before. I approached it carefully, *here is the egg, but where is the nest?*

The white round thing morphed in front of my eyes, taking on that familiar, chubby form of the thing that had long preoccupied my girlhood thoughts. My fingers reached out to confirm what my senses had just perceived: it was a mushroom! Its stem was so short that its cap looked like it was glued to the ground. I considered myself to be an expert in brown mushrooms, but this was a first for me.

It would definitely enrich my collection. Gently, I removed it along with the bits of soil surrounding its roots, and tenderly laid it in my metal pencil case.

* * * *

On the way home, I walked through the light drizzle and studied the track marks. I placed each foot beside, but not on top of, these open sores in the ground which were only slightly shorter than my boot. The neighbourhood children seemed to have put them to good use, taking turns riding their bikes over them. The game was simple: you ride over the holes yelling *aaah!* This was the sound their shaking bodies made and it sounded like speaking in front of a fan. Other children were playing marbles. The holes, of course, came in very handy. As I was ascending the stairs leading to our house, I overheard my cousin, convincing his younger brother to plant a coin in one of these mysterious holes. If properly planted and watered, he carefully explained, three days later the coin would grow into a tree and bear cash fruit. I hoped the little one would not believe him.

Before I entered the house, I tied my hair in a high ponytail. Fearful of being exposed for once again bringing rubbish to the house, I hid my precious metal trophy behind a sewage pipe. "No one would look there." As for the mushroom, I stood no chance of smuggling it under the display cabinet. Before entering the house, I quickly but carefully placed my mushroom on the outer sill of my room's window, adding an extra handful of soil to cushion its roots.

* * * *

The moment my mother entered the house, my father left to fetch more gas for heating. Soaking wet and shivering, she complained about the arduous thirty-minute walk she had to take in the pouring rain. No bus drivers were willing to take the usual route through our neighbourhood.

"Too many sharp objects," she elaborated. "No one wants to change a punctured tyre in this weather."

"So you have seen them too? Do you know where they came from?"

"Where else?" she answered. "They always come from the eastern side." Her faced pursed up as if she sucked on a sour green almond. My mother shook her head and walked into her room. "Damn it", I heard moments later, just after she finished taking off her wet clothes. "I forgot to buy bread. You stay at home; I'll be back in ten minutes."

I seized the opportunity to check up on my precious mushroom. I do not remember how long it had been when a far-off, menacing rumble disturbed the quietude of my study. The murmurs spoke in a guttural language which was strangely familiar to my ears. Soon that foreign tongue was accompanied by a steady, violent shake that ushered in a feeling of weighty dread. My knees went soft. I kneeled down, pressing my palms against my ears as the sound grew unbearably loud. The only thing that was louder than the thundering was my heart. I felt it rising to my throat, choking me.

I heard screams from outside. *Is it an earthquake?* The thought soon retreated back into darkness as another thought wrestled through my jammed mind: *Where is mama?* While all other thoughts collapsed and faded away, this one persisted. *Where is mama?* I opened the window and grabbed my mushroom, shielding it in my palms. I ran to my parent's bedroom, and slid under the bed.

I could barely fit into the narrow, dark space. When did I grow so big? Struggling to breathe, I cried, "Mama! Baba! Where are you?" The thunder grew louder, dispelling all rational thoughts. *I will never ask for a rat tail*, squeezing my eyelids shut as if to strengthen my oath. Objects vibrated around me. The floor lamp had fallen to the stone floor. Fear flooded my body. I folded

my hands together, promising not to bring mushrooms to the house again. Involuntarily, I started reciting the *Duha* chapter. "Dear God, I lost my mama..." My head thudded against the shaking ground. I could no longer hear my own crying.

* * * *

I woke up to my mother, shaking my loose bones. Her smile shone through her tears as she hugged me and apologised for taking so long to return home. Her heart beat so loud. She was stuck at the shop, she explained, with many other people. I started to make sense of what just happened. Tremendous energy began to rush through my body, hitting every limb.

"They passed through our neighbourhood!" I quickly slipped on my shoes and rushed for the door. I stopped for a moment, my hand reaching up to remove my elastic hair band. As I was about to slip it off, my other hand rose up, pulling my ponytail higher and securing it tightly.

I ran to the sewage pipe, picked up the metal deformity and quickly examined it. Throwing it away, I hurried to the track marks to scavenge for a more valuable souvenir.

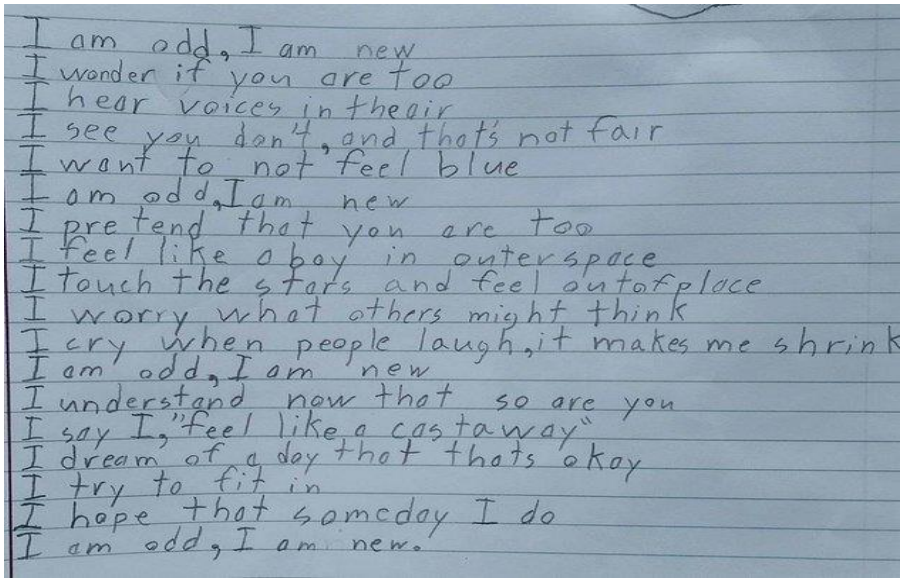
Under my parent's bed lay a rotting, mushy, crushed-up substance awaiting my mother.

SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE AND THE AUTISTIC MIND: CAN WE IMPROVE OUR LITERACY CURRICULUM FOR CHILDREN ON THE AUTISTIC SPECTRUM TO BETTER TARGET THEIR LANGUAGE IMBALANCES, BY EMPLOYING THE IMAGINATIVE AND INVENTIVE WORDS OF SHAKESPEARE?

ARTICLE

ELIZABETH BONAPACE

Despite a measurable increase in awareness and funding, children with Autism Spectrum Condition continue to face a bleak academic prospect, with language barriers being one major obstacle to achievement. It has often been stated that children with autism learn in a different way to their peers, but current literacy timetables in our curriculum offer no specific or targeted exercises for this difference. Instead, adaptations are made, most often in the form of simplifications, to what their classmates are working on. Often these are repetitive, mundane and elementary. This essay aims to summarise the foundations and specific challenges of language acquisition in children on the spectrum, before proposing that the complex and malleable nature of Shakespeare's language provides a potential solution. I consider this from the perspective of a mother, whose minimally verbal son was excluded from primary school aged 4, and of a teacher, who then home-educated for four years. Through Shakespeare, we explored rhyme and metrical patterns, metaphor and simile, humour and tragedy, human relationships and dialogue – and above all acquired a fascinating insight into the formation and art of conversation. This exposure to such a rich and multi-faceted form of language at a young age has had a remarkable outcome, which I will explore later through creative writing.


I am odd, I am new
I wonder if you are too
I hear voices in the air
I see you don't, and that's not fair
I want to not feel blue
I am odd, I am new
I pretend that you are too
I feel like a boy in outerspace
I touch the stars and feel outofplace
I worry what others might think
I cry when people laugh, it makes me shrink
I am odd, I am new
I understand now that so are you
I say I, "feel like a castaway"
I dream of a day that that's okay
I try to fit in
I hope that someday I do
I am odd, I am new.

(Benjamin Giroux, a 10-year-old boy with autism, NAA, 2016)

Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/ASC) is considered, 'the most severe of the childhood psychiatric conditions', and is defined by Professor Simon Baron-Cohen as the 'abnormal development of social behaviours, communication and imagination' (Baron-Cohen, 182). It is a lifelong disability, one in which the acquisition of language is pervasively restricted and used 'instrumentally but not communicatively' (182), thus impairing the social dexterity necessary to interact emotionally with others. It is unsurprising therefore, to discover that 90% of children with an autism diagnosis in mainstream schools will fail to achieve the minimum 5 GCSE exam passes at grade C or above (DofE online, 2018). They are also 63% more likely to be bullied (IAN, 2012). As a result, only 16% of adults with autism are in full time employment (NAS, 2018). Adults with autism are also four times more likely to live alone and are almost 50% more likely to suffer from a mental illness than the general populace (NAS, 2018).

As a mother of a child with autism, it is my opinion that the inadequacy in the educational provision for children on the spectrum in our mainstream schools is quite simply indefensible. Furthermore, there is a worrying rise in the number of children with autism being excluded or suspended from schools, many of whom are sent home unlawfully (Independent, 2017). The Department of Education recorded in its 2017 annual review that between 2012 and 2016, there

had been a steady rise in the number of expulsions. This is particularly alarming since the rate between 2008 and 2012 was, in-fact, steadily declining (DofE, 2018). Thus, even with the increase in awareness, the campaigns, the fundraising, the television coverage and the escalation in diagnosis, educational provision is getting progressively worse. The major reason for this failing is not awareness or funding, but *research and implementation of effective intervention*.

Blythe Corbett observed that 'children with autism fared much better when they were allowed access to mainstream setting', indicating the value in learning social rules through mimicking peers (Corbett, 658), and observation which reflects the 0% pass rate of the 9344 children entered for 5 GCSEs that attended 'special schools' in the UK during 2017 (DofE, 2018). I consider mimicking of peers in a mainstream setting to be an indispensable practice in education for those on the spectrum.

> It is well known that the quantity and quality of the language young children are exposed to early in life predicts their later linguistic and cognitive skills (Romeo et al, 7875).

A seminal American study in 1995 estimated that by the time children reached school age, those growing up in a household with higher socio-economic status, on average, were exposed to thirty million more words than those children growing up in lower socio-economic status homes. It is known as the 'Early Catastrophe' (Hart and Risley, 256).

Today, there are a profusion of therapies available to 'treat' the symptoms of autism: from speech and language treatments, behavioural therapies, fidget spinners, sensory rooms and ear defenders, to dietary interventions, vaccination-avoidance and homeopathy, as well as psychiatric medications. Some are aimed towards avoiding, removing and diluting the symptoms. Others simply help the child and carers to cope with who they are.

This article will argue that Shakespeare's language could provide an answer to the lexical challenges that autistic children face, particularly the prosody and noun-bias deficits, with an aim towards developing a more effective and natural use of pragmatic language and conversation skills. This, in turn, could potentially transform the child's experience both at home and in school,

allowing them to experience and develop friendships, to participate in classroom discourse and, above all, to feel wholly included.

Studies of language acquisition show that the development of language starts with phonology and morphology: the structure of words and their patterns of sounds (Szczegielniak, 31). Many minimally verbal children with autism tend to struggle in this realm of language acquisition, as Ralby (2015) considers in his Cambridge University-funded Speech Builder online course, whereby minimally verbal children and their parents follow weekly online modules consisting of language-building phonetic stimuli and exercises that are aimed to encourage the formation of words. Ralby suggests in his introduction that minimally-verbal children might respond well to exercises aimed to establish motor skills, pointedly the lips, tongue and throat mechanisms used for speech. It is my hypothesis however, that focusing entirely on phonetic exercises to improve language delay in children with autism is flawed. In my experience, children with autism learn language, in part, systematically 'top-down', and I favour Romeo's approach of using complex grammar orally in the home as a pre-requisite to the learning of phonetics. Therefore, by teaching the *second stages of language first,* children with autism can better process its dynamic and flexible nature. In my experience, the rigid structure of current phonetic lessons at school and home are not effective as a base in which to learn later the fluidity of pragmatism. The idea that language acquisition is changeable and uneven is also confirmed in Lois Bloom's 1974 study on the acquisition of language. She discovered that understanding and speaking do not develop separately, and that the relationship between the two is, 'never a static one, but rather shifts and varies', according to experience (Bloom, 286). To consider this further, an excavation of the prosodic, or the rhythm, meter and intonation in words and sentences, is necessary.

Expressive language influences almost every aspect of our lives, from social integration, play and education, to the formation of meaningful relationships. Language distinguishes us from other species, with reciprocal dialogue being the vehicle in which we transport our complexities, our vast spectrum of thoughts, feelings and experiences, to another. There are many facets to how

we acquire speech and language, with its structural etiologic beginnings in phonology and morphology — the sounds and formation of letters and words — to the more complex grammatical arrangements of syntax, to the meaning behind words in semantics and pragmatism. It is widely recognised that, 'autistic children's primary area of dysfunction lies in the domain of pragmatics', (Tager-Flusberg, 1123). Simultaneous to the pragmatic language problem is the fact that autistic children exhibit, 'significant impairments in prosody production', (Diehl et al, 144) and a tendency towards developing 'noun biased' language (Tek et al, 209). This rigidity in the pragmatical understanding of language makes things very difficult for the child with autism to participate in any conversation. Pragmatics and prosody involve the understanding of figurative speech, of humour, irony, and sarcasm, as well as being able to use language subtly, to adapt tone or indentation, and being sensitive to the other person's contribution to the conversation.

Subsequent research has discovered more precisely that is not so much the simple quantity of words heard but the *quality* of language exposure, 'including linguistic features such as vocabulary diversity and sophistication, grammatical complexity, and narrative', (Romeo, 7876). In her study, Romeo discovered a link between the amount of adult speech the children were exposed to was related to, 'stronger, more coherent white matter connectivity in the left arcuate and superior longitudinal fasciculi' (7871), parts of the brain which governs conversational and language skill. The study concluded that early dialogic interaction bolstered development of these language areas of the brain. The study considered typically developing children, but those with autism would equally benefit from this exposure, arguably to an even greater degree. In my experience, complex grammatical dialogue, such as Shakespeare, could feasibly be used as part of an early intervention language-building exercise for children with autism and potentially improve outlook both socially and academically by encouraging the use of pragmatic and conversational skill.

The subject of prosody processing and development is at the heart of Diehl's 2008 research into individuals with autism. His team looked specifically at the comprehension of prosody and

'atypical pitch, rhythm, or stress patterns', and the possibility that prosody could be used in a singular linguistic capacity that, 'indicates the meaning of a sentence without necessarily reflecting that person's affective or mental state' (Diehl et al, 1-2). The study points to the difficulties in prosody utilization and comprehension, which could have, 'a stigmatizing barrier to social acceptance' (2). Tone can switch from being flat or monotonous, to variable or pedantic without any regular appropriate indentation (1-2). Diehl also cites an earlier study by Demuth and Morgan (1996) which discovered that prosody processing and production has been shown to 'facilitate early language acquisition', and therefore impairments here may lead to later pragmatic deficits (2). The findings of these two studies make it clear that prosody production and interpretation should be a dominant region of study. The variables of timing, phrasing and emphasis are indispensable to help convey meaning and expression, which concurs with the ability to build authentic relationships. Therefore, the study of Shakespeare can offer overwhelming benefit in teaching prosody; being that his words contain unrivalled employment of rhythm, intonation, meter and emphasis. The melody of his words is stylistically designed to be read aloud and listened to.

Further aspects in the uneven nature of language acquisition in children with autism can be perceived in the struggle to acquire and interpret words with relational meanings, such as verbs and modifiers. Saime Tek (2008) observed that, like typically developing children, those with ASD have 'early vocabularies dominated by nouns' (Tek et al, 209). Tek's results conclude that although children with autism begin with a noun-bias, they did not progress towards 'mapping a novel word onto a novel action' (214), as typically developing children did. They preferred to 'map the novel words onto novel objects' (214). The tendency toward verb avoidance is reiterated in Marchena's study of three children on the spectrum, which uncovered a 'poorer production of past-tense verb forms' (Marchena et al, 8). This also echoes a variety of past studies (Prior and Hall, 1979; Kazak et al, 1997), which found that children with autism struggled to comprehend 'transitive verb phrases' (Prior and Hall, 103) and had 'difficulty understanding the meanings of verbs that indicate someone's internal mental state' (Kazak, 1001). Understanding the use of verbs and using them

freely in language, then, is prerequisite to expressing a statement of being and predicts future literacy success.

There has been no other writer, poet or dramatist that has had such an enduring and comprehensive influence on our language in Britain than Shakespeare. Crystal believes that, 'about 1,700 [words] are plausible Shakespearean inventions' and that 'no other writer of the time – or indeed since – comes anywhere near it' (Crystal, 9). Shakespeare also lived in an age where language was formatively mobile and dynamic; as Crystal notes, '[Early Modern English] was one of the most lexically inventive periods in the history of the language' (9). Shakespeare's 'grammatical parsing' (9) and creation of words to fit meaning and meter, makes reading and experiencing his works both exciting and challenging.

Professor Philip Davis explores the benefits of learning Shakespeare's language by measuring brain activity while Shakespeare's words are being read aloud. His study employs the use of EEG (electroencephalogram), MEG (magnetoencephalography) and fMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging), specifically looking at the ERP (Event-Related Potentials), and the voltage fluctuations in the parts of the cerebellum associated with language comprehension. The teams at Liverpool and Bangor Universities considered Shakespeare's prolific use of functional shift or word-class conversion, such as the shift from noun to verb, and the successive change in semantic interpretation, for example, 'He childed as I fathered' (*King Lear,* III, iv, 108), where the nouns 'child' and 'father' have been 'verbed-up' to formulate new, active words. This creates a sense that the character's behaviours are living and changing rather than static. Coincidentally, this changing and dynamic use of words which creates movement within characters, also appears to have the same enterprising effect on the brain. Davis measured the 'event-related brain potential waves' as traditionally reported in neurophysiolinguistics, the N400 and P600 networks particularly, on twenty-one University students. The results were impressive. They discovered that Shakespeare took advantage of the possibility to change the syntactic status of words without

changing pragmatic content of the discourse and that this has a 'multi-dimensional effect (automatic and controlled), on the brain' (Davis, 929). In effect, it is *exciting* the language centres of the brain, which naturally steers towards logical semantic interpretation of a sentence and forces it to navigate a diversion without altered destination. This is to encourage an *ownership and flexibility* of language use through word-creations, through verb creations from nouns, and through encouraging a semantic understanding out of nonce words. The rigid use of language so commonplace in autism potentially becomes formatively mobile.

When nouns are converted to verbs in a sentence and read aloud, the semantic and pragmatic processing is disrupted momentarily, while the brain reaches for cognizance. I propose that this stretching for comprehension has potential as a language-boosting aid for children with autism, since it, 'shifts and new-creates pathways' (Davis, 2), possibly igniting the same language centres of the brain that are so untapped and irregular in those with ASD. If the concomitant benefits of complex grammar, vocabulary and conversation, as well as Shakespeare's functional shift have such extensive measurable benefits for neural-development, I propose that they can also be used in comprehensive classroom-based language-building tools for children with autism. The disruption created in changing a noun into a verb, for example 'Lip' into 'Lipped' ('a hand that kings have lipped', *Antony & Cleopatra*, II, v, 30) can be systemized by creating a workshop with a choice of suffixes that can be added to nouns to create new words through trial and error. It's also fun to create nonsense words, and something that I have found very helpful in working with my son, building a sense of ownership of words and resultant confidence in experimenting with language.

Kelly Hunter's ground-breaking workshops using Shakespeare for children on the autistic spectrum are based on the instructive art of playing. Hunter describes her workshops as, 'sensory, physical and fun', although steers away from claiming that they are educational (Hunter, 1). Instead, this power of playfulness is the basis for the 'Hunter Heartbeat' (1) method, a range of group exercises set within a theatre or rehearsal room, games to encourage eye contact, facial expression

and connection, as well as an encouragement to explore emotions and self-awareness. Essentially, the workshops, 'wake the children up to their own lives' (1), rather than address educational obstacles. Hunter's workshops draw on both imitative art and play and are designed to be accessed by verbal and minimally verbal children alike. She channels Shakespeare, primarily through a heartbeat rhythm (iambic pentameter) in the opening exercise where each child feels for the rhythmicality of their own heartbeat and simultaneously speaks aloud 'he-llo', while encouraged to make eye-contact with other members of the group. The aim is to inspire a connection with oneself and with the group. Although her program is proven successful for those children on the spectrum who respond positively to active teaching methods, there are many children who would struggle with the direct physicality of this approach.

Atypical response to direct gaze is one of the most familiar indications that autism is present and for many children and adults with autism, making eye-contact can be an intensely uncomfortable experience. It is a powerful way to establish an unspoken bond between people as Teresa Farroni discovered, 'interpretation of eye-gaze signals as referential communicative acts is probably a human-specific adaption that is essential for developing a rich understanding of others' mental states' (Farroni et al, 9604). I believe that the problem with encouraging and trying to 'teach' something as psychologically multi-layered as eye-contact to those who naturally avoid sharing this part of themselves by choice, is that children with autism can be left feeling exposed or vulnerable. The choice to share eye-contact with another must be just that: a volition. In my experience, people with autism often feel that their deepest thoughts and feelings are highly visible to others when they make direct eye-contact, and this information can be too much to share or even to acknowledge. Ironically, if there is minimal language skill, eye-contact becomes the only way to express these feelings, heightening it further. It can take many weeks, months, even years for those on the spectrum to feel safe enough to share eye-contact with others. Therefore, Hunter's opening methods might not be suitable for some as a rudimentary exercise, if at all. Adding to this the 'group work' approach and considering how ill-fitting this could be for the many with autism who

find being amongst groups of people very distressing, I suggest that it is important to think carefully about how and when to apply theatre-based methods of teaching Shakespeare, even if, as in Hunter's case, it is predominantly a therapeutic effect that is sought. I believe that we must approach the subject of eye-contact *indirectly*. Puppetry, for example, is an effective tool to introduce eye contact. Interacting with a puppet is much less intimidating than interacting with a group of people or an adult for most children on the spectrum and exploring Shakespeare's plays and language through puppetry offers an engaging yet powerful route towards socialization. The puppet is a third party in the exchange and gives the teacher a chance to model conversational language and social interaction in an indirect way. I believe that this *indirectness* of approach in teaching those on the autistic spectrum is central in providing a less invasive environment and therefore learning-rich environment.

There is an urgent need to develop new targeted language-based interventions and through being exposed further to the malleable and experimental language of Shakespeare's work, children with autism can develop an understanding of pragmatic language as well as the rhythm, pitch and timing in conversational skills that are so essential in building relationships. An avenue of research that also unequivocally deserves further attention in future is Shakespeare's use of asides and soliloquies, which contain in them the complex nature of Theory of Mind - what others might be thinking and feeling, as well as an ability to read social cues, which people with autism often do not develop intuitively. There could be no other writer that could offer more of these features, than our greatest ever dramatist, Shakespeare.

Our Walk with Shakespeare

There are plastic bags scattered around everywhere in our house. Waitrose bags, Co-op bags, Tesco bags…

Each bag is packed to the brim with Leo's treasures. Bits of broken camera, the insides of an iPad, pictures of pigeons and Neil Armstrong, as well as 3 well-thumbed Haynes manuals on historic NASA missions – the much-coveted Apollo 11 one always at the top.

The bags accompany us everywhere. They are a permanent presence on car trips and days out, always on the back seat like familiar friends. They contain within them the products of hours of research and careful thought, a study of our magnificent world and the courage of those who have journeyed beyond it.

Leo chats every day about what he's discovered. He regularly tests me, and anyone who takes an interest, in how much we know about the Space missions. Because of Leo, I am now an expert on Alan Shepard and Gene Kranz, and I know all about Laika the Soviet space dog, Valentina Tereshkova and that Apollo 4 was unmanned.

This is the same Leo who was diagnosed with classic autism aged 4 and was told by the psychologist and speech therapist that he would 'always struggle to communicate'. He's the same boy who was excluded from primary school just months after starting.

On the first day of school the headteacher asked me to stay for an hour, to sit in the classroom corner, my presence encouraging Leo to feel settled. One day turned into two, until eventually I was there every day, each day hoping that the next one would be better, and that Leo would find his place and be happy there as the other children were. I had to fight the drive inside me to make friends for him, to interact and learn for him, such was the wish to see him included.

With each passing day I began to recognise a distinctive and encompassing failure by the school to adapt their early years curriculum or their teaching method to include Leo. Each morning after register, we were carted off to the music room where the small group of special needs pupils were taught by the teaching assistant. There simply had to be a better way of teaching that would enable Leo and the others to absorb and access the basics. I then considered the possibility that the

phonetic structure of learning literacy might not be enough for children like my son. I also recognised that the noisy reception classroom was never going to transpire into a learning-rich environment for him.

After the fourth month of school, the headteacher summoned me into her office and suggested that I home educate Leo or try a special school. She conceded that they simply did not have the resources or staff to be able to help him. They didn't understand him because he was so overwhelmed by the noise and the other children that he couldn't stop moving and spinning and clasping his hands to his ears. He would often find solace in watching the repetitive motions of the class desk fan, rotating and oscillating, curious to know which parts created that kinetic flow.

Home-educating began with dissections and re-constructions, wires, taping and gluing, wondering and hoping.

Leo wasn't happy until we had taken apart every single mechanical toy we owned, to find its 'heart'; the motor. I recall prising open for the third time Tesco's giant yellow twin-propellered helicopter, promising myself that I would not buy another one, that this was the last! Because inevitably, they never worked quite the same again. Once they had been 'Leo'd', toys and electrical items always worked unpredictably, sound effects and lights malfunctioned, propellers would turn lethargically.

I sat countless times on the perimeters of village hall playgroups watching Leo running back and forth repetitively across the room, completely oblivious to the other children who were happily playing. He was like a lone soldier on guard duty; a Marcellus determined to complete his shift. He was focused intently on his movements, on the moment and the way his feet touched the floor, on how many steps he used to reach the wall. It was a physics experiment. I noticed the beat of the repetition, there was a rhythm to it, a mathematical musicality.

I then purchased the whole set of phonics and reading systems that the primary school had been using and would sit with Leo, painstakingly attempting to help him to understand it. When he did try to mouth the phonetic exercises, he seemed to struggle to form the shapes of the letters. Even the very basic exercises seemed to be challenging for him.

I decided to educate myself and undertook an English degree which I worked on each evening. It was then that I was re-introduced to Shakespeare. As I worked on my Shakespearean essays, I

began to appreciate and further explore rhythm in language. I related this meter to the natural awareness of beat and timing within Leo as he marched his way around the room, and I wondered whether this could somehow be harnessed and applied to aid his learning. Our household use of language began to perceptibly shift towards the more complex, imaginative and musical.

The more I studied, the more Leo became interested in these unusual, rhythmical words. I would often speak aloud the soliloquies and speeches. I memorized them. They became as comforting for me as the fans were for Leo. It felt natural that these words must be read aloud, the beauty of them too striking to be left page-bound. We also had two mini-theatres for puppets and a larger stand-up one for us to use. Rogalski's excellent Shakespeare finger puppet theatre became a mainstay in our play, where we could create the backdrop, the scene and the stage.

I began to devise Shakespearean word games, formulating new, humorous-sounding words, even reading words in reverse, in different accents and using these in well-known nursery rhymes, carols and songs in place of the original words. There was much laughter, and I believe it was this initial light-hearted and flexible approach to language discovery that set the precedent for what was to come. I donated the phonics set to a friend and focused instead on using language more inventively.

We explored further and discovered a Shakespearean insults app for the (working) iPad, as well as the British Council app featuring a selection of plays as stories. Leo loved the Shakespearean insults and to hear him giggle and laugh at 'barnacle' and 'maggot-pie' and then say them backwards, 'paggot-mie', was priceless. There was never any set agenda nor structure to how we both discovered the bard. We negotiated his works unsystematically, in brief bursts, and when the day and time seemed right. I didn't know where this might lead, but just knew instinctively that making learning fun, inventive and challenging was making everything much easier.

Leo's first fully formed, unaided word was 'oscillating' when he was 5 years old.

From 'oscillating' sprang forth a multitude of electronic and kinetic specific words which led onwards to a magnificently rich understanding and comprehensive use of our language, a thirst to know more and with it, a new-found way of interacting with others. Through listening to Shakespeare, Leo recognises the rhythm and flexible nature of language, he appreciates the past,

the present and future in such a profoundly deep way, and he can describe how he feels about the sunset and the pigeons and the stars.

When Leo turned 8, he started (mainstream) primary school for the second time. Today, I was invited into school to watch him receive the 'Merit' award for Mathematics, as well as a certificate of commendation to acknowledge Leo's kindness in helping another child, who was upset, to feel better.

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HARUKI MURAKAMI'S *KILLING COMMENDATORE*

BOOK REVIEW

ELENA HULME-CLARKE

"When people try to use a method other than the truth to follow along the path of understanding, it is like trying to use a sieve to hold water."

There are a number of expectations one has before embarking on a new Murakami novel. Stories of love, loneliness and magical realism are themes the author reliably revisits with a renewed sense of vigour. However, among his fans the somewhat running joke is that his subject matter could easily be applied to a game of Bingo. Don't believe me? Just punch Murakami Bingo Books into Google. Some might say *Killing Commendatore* is a full house: mysterious woman (check); cats (check); scotch (check); depressed protagonist (and check).

Killing Commendatore does not stray far from Murakami's legacy of the surreal. We follow the course of an unnamed portrait artist fleeing from his crumbling marriage into the Japanese countryside to live in the secluded mountain abode of the once famous artist Tomohiko Amada. In typical Murakami style, we follow the monotonous life of a lonely thirty-something man boiling vegetables in hyper-realistic detail, oblivious to the weird and wonderful antics around him.

He uncovers a hidden painting in the attic depicting the death of the Commendatore from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, thus setting off a series of peculiar events. A liminal space between worlds opens and a mysterious bell starts ringing from a pit behind his house. He eventually meets a chatty, gnome-like creature who professes to be the metaphysical manifestation of the murdered Commendatore. Meanwhile, he very soon becomes entangled in the life of his wealthy and charismatic neighbour, Wataru Menshiki - a man with an enigmatic past who buys a big mansion purely to spy on the girl he believes to be his daughter: "I couldn't help but sense, deep within his smile, a solitude that comes from a certain sort of secret." Intrigued by this man's obscure past,

and guided by the Commendatore, the reader maps the spiritual journey the narrator makes toward his own creative rebirth. This could be read as Murakami's attempt to resurrect his own creative genius after the messy *1Q84*. He largely succeeds in this endeavour.

The text is a loving twist on the plot of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, a novel which has always fascinated Murakami to the point where he spent many years attempting to translate it into his native Japanese. Alongside, the pictorial reinterpretation of *Don Giovanni,* an iconic Western work, into a classical Japanese style undoubtedly parallels Murakami's own fascination with Western literature.

The Great Gatsby and *Don Giovanni*, all mashed up with *Alice in* Wonderland gives you the essence of *Killing Commendatore*; these three works bleed through the narrative.

What the reader is treated to is a rich, meandering tale of metaphors and intrigue that tug at various narrative strings without ever tying them too tightly together. As our narrator explains: "It all seemed like a short dream. But I knew very well that it wasn't. If this was a dream, then the world I'm living in itself must all be a dream." It reads like a casual stroll in the park with many Kafkaesque shaped rabbit holes to fall down into along the way, which is very cosy and endearing. But Murakami does himself a disservice with a confused net of intermingled references and symbols hoping one will stick; a far cry from the exquisitely crafted worlds introduced in the likes of *Hard Boiled Wonderland*. Towards the end of the story, the narrator summarises his experiences of the novels main plot points in just a few pages. I couldn't help but think that if I'd simply skipped straight to this chapter, I could have filled in any of the missing exposition myself. It unnecessarily slows down the pace of the story and didn't fit in with the protagonist's behaviour.

I know what sort of ride I'm getting on when I pick up Murakami's work, but I still want him to challenge my expectations. Alternating chapters of *Killing Commendatore* would captivate and reignite the action but I'd often find him repeating himself or alluding to a vague sense of completion, chiefly where the story ends in a cyclical narrative loop (the book ends where it began,

so to speak). As much as I hate to admit it, some of these aspects have become tiresome and cliché, and I found myself desperately trying to relive the nostalgic feeling of *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. I kept hoping to find new and unpredictable twists and turns but would often leave a chapter deflated and unsatisfied, especially by the shallowness of his female characters. For instance, there are too many mentions of breasts, particularly that of the precocious teenage character. How Murakami tries to get into the mind of a teenage girl is, frankly, outrageous. The women in *Killing Commendatore* are two dimensional compared to those in his previous works. Their lives revolve entirely around that of the protagonist - which was even more unfortunate because the female characters had otherwise such potential to grow.

Comfortably familiar enough to entice existing fans but not something I would recommend to new Murakami reader. In the protagonist's own words reality is, "built upon the conjunction of phenomena and expression," something that Murakami has always deftly reconciled in his previous works but sadly misses the mark this time around.

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WHAT'S WITH THE *

MARIE ALLÈGRE

…It all starts with a hatred for the full stop at the end of messages or emails to people I like. I just can't stand finishing off a conversation with this dry, abrupt and shrunken little shape at the end of a line – and, most importantly, in the bottom right-hand corner. I need something which launches everything off the line, page or screen. I need something soft and well-wishing. I need something that opens up possibilities rather than closes what has been said / written before. A blank would be shoddy. Three dots would be leaving space for too much (and think of all the times you put three dots at the end of a sext…you might not want to go there). If the sentence, whatever it is, was written on a wall in a corridor, all these would be located at the very bottom of the wall. Near the floor, near where the feet are – not the heart, not the brain, the hands. I want the whole thing to rise up and stay up. I want it to close in on nothing. This humble little spark of love, this playful transcription of a see-you-in-a-bit kind of winking. Or simply some way to end the conversation on a light tone, to leave things at that without actually having to say I'm leaving. Of course, in certain contexts, it can also stand for everything that hasn't been said, that cannot be said, but which I may be thinking very loudly *

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