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Foreword

Dear readers,

It has been an exciting year for Groundings. New Editor-in-Chief, new editorial board and new home. As of this year, Groundings is no longer part of the Dialectic Society, instead we moved under the protective wing of the Libraries Committee in the Glasgow University Union itself. Still, many things remain the same: our dedication to give undergraduate students the opportunity to publish their best academic essays.

Now more than ever we want to stress the importance of interdisciplinary approach to humanities, and the texts on the following pages offer you to enter dialogue with multiple disciplines, allowing you to have a new perspective. This year's theme 'Turning points: Frontiers, Modernity and the individual' is reflecting this.

This year's selection of essays are tackling this topic from all possible perspective. You can read about turning points in the political development in France (*Lucia Posterano*) or Armenia (*Nikolas Schuster*), you can explore both physical frontiers (*Miguel Rodriguez Ruiz*) and imagined ones (*Matias Loikala*), you can understand a misrepresented individual experience (*Torunn Sorlie*) and our perception of the world (*L. von Lupke*) or look at the crimes of modernity (*Lilith Charlet*).

I hope you will enjoy reading them as much as we did.

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Turning Point or Media Fantasy? An Analysis of the 2017 French Presidential Election

By Lucia Posteraro

This article explores France's political demographics around the time of the 2017 Presidential election. Through an analysis of political approval ratings and polling this article makes the argument that the supposed realignment in French politics is greatly exaggerated and that traditional political allegiances remain strong.

Introduction

In 2017 France witnessed a shock in its party system. New actors have taken the spotlight in the presidential election from the bipolarism of the PS and the Républicains. The election had already attracted great international awareness for several reasons, the main one being the power transition in a founding member of the European Union at a time of increasing Euroscepticism. Would France lose its recent socialist turn to the far-right's electoral gains in the Northern regions? Would the scandals sparked by historic party representatives trigger a populist response? How would the outcome of such choice shape the economic and ideological direction of the EU, already weakened by Angela Merkel's losses? Would there be alternative candidates to rely on for the future years? Although John Oliver's parodic take on the issue may laugh at these questions, the underlying intricacy of political dilemmas shows how France's condition reflects the state of the Union as much as its domestic ambitions.

In the end, traditional parties have been overtaken by the far-right Front National – led by Marine Le Pen, daughter of the founder Jean-Marie - and La République En Marche - headed by Emmanuel Macron, former government advisor and Minister of the Economy. In the second round, the latter won the race with 66.1% of votes, that is 43.6% of the total population formally registered for voting. The result was followed a few weeks later by LREM's victory of 303 seats in the Assemblée Nationale during the parliamentary elections[1]. The two candidates' performance can only be defined as unordinary for a country historically loyal to its main electoral players.

On one hand, Macron's success came as a surprise, since he had not had the long bureaucratic ascent common among presidential candidates in France. Therefore, his role in François Hollande's government did not pose a direct threat to his predecessor. It was in April 2016, when the Valls cabinet rejected an extensive economic reform, that Macron pushed for the establishment of a new personalised movement in his hometown Amiens[2]: initially described as a party "neither on the right nor on the left", it was soon redefined as "both on the right and on the left"[3], putting Macron on an alleged centrist position vis-à-

[1] Ignazi, 2017, p.195
[2] Le Monde, 2016
[3] Europe 1, 2016

vis the turmoil in other parties. This flexible third way is frequently credited by the press as the reason for his final victory, surpassing the cleavage between left and right and bringing about an "open society" attitude in an otherwise polarised scenario.[4]

On the other hand, the FN has obtained a surprising victory over the centre-right, even though their limited share of parliamentary seats and their loss in the second round may suggest otherwise. In fact, Le Pen still managed to carry her party to the final stage and pose a challenge to more established political forces, which had to concede victory to a relative newcomer. She also seems to have brought in a considerable share of the working class's vote, with 43% of the category expressing an intention to vote for the party at the second round[5]. It is generally assumed in the media that Le Pen's self-determination as a "*fille du peuple*" during the campaign has brought her closer to the idea of defending the weak and the poor ostracised by the laissez-faire economic system, a concept which was traditionally engrained in the left-wing conscience. As a result, some analysts like Pascal Perrineau[6] see this as the birth of a group of "*gaucho-lepénistes*" who realign with the FN. Consequently, Le Pen would have achieved her objective of an alliance between "*le monde de la boutique*" and "*le monde de l'atelier*", relying on both left- and right- wing voters.[7]

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[4] Strudel, 2017, pp.205-207

[5] Fourquet, 2017

[6] Perrineau, 2017, pp.90-93

[7] Ibid., p.94

Both claims imply that voters have suddenly transformed their value set and realigned themselves in spite of the left-right cleavage that has so far characterised France. In other words, we can ask ourselves whether the media assessment accurately reflects an earth-shaking change in the electorate's sociology. Therefore, this essay evaluates the following two hypotheses:

> Hypothesis 1: Support for Macron is both a definite and definitive realignment towards the centre and his voters purposely reject the left-right definition.

> Hypothesis 2: The Front National's far-right beliefs have captured the working class's orientations and erased the left-wing ideology of the latter.

Both statements are found to be false, as they assume that a political mindset can be permanently revolutionised by contingent circumstances, despite the long socialisation process from which it originates. The temporary attachment to a party does not reject the ideological and structural framework that has shaped the psychology of a certain voter: our argument is that both LREM and FN have been chosen as a second-hand option after the failure of the main parties' candidates in the run-up. Since no candidate obtained an adequate majority to prevent the move onto the second round, voters have modified their preferences reluctantly, as the second-round party agendas did not match the original values orientations. This is shown in data drawn from the CEVIPOF's Enquête Electorale, the Terra Nova Report on La République En Marche, the Institut Français d'Opinion Publique, Ipsos Mori's surveys, and Nonna Mayer's

qualitative analysis of the FN electorate. All of them provide evidence for the validity of the Michigan model and its long-term socialisation perspective, hence undermining the idea of disappearing cleavages in France. Therefore, the latest election seems to be one of deviation, not of permanent dealignment (in Macron's case) or realignment (in Le Pen's case).

Theory
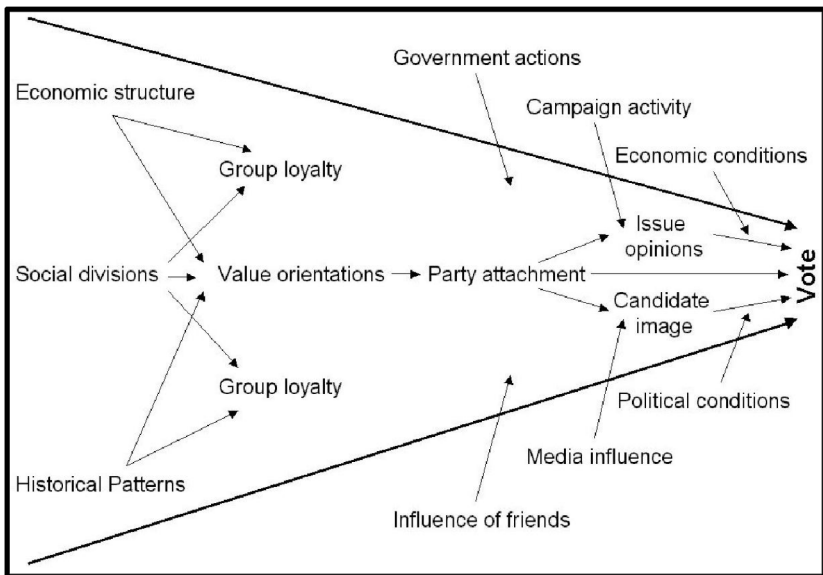
Figure 1 Funnel of Causality. Taken from Dalton, R., Citizen Politics, 7th Edition. SAGE: 2014, p.187.

Following Eisenhower's landslide victory, Campbell *et al.*'s *The American Voter* proposed the Michigan model of voter choice, based on a socio-psychological interpretation of national survey samples. It aimed to explain the coexistence of partisan stability and strong deviations from it, contrary to Lipset and Rokkan's

"freezing hypothesis".[8] In fact, the Michigan group saw political orientations as stable throughout time and only subject to short-term fluctuations in the political offer, which could alter voting decisions without necessarily compromising longstanding adherence to values[9]. The way this process is presented takes the name of "funnel of causality", stressing causal and temporal links between factors towards the final vote.

Initially, socio-economic conditions trigger conflicts of interest among the groups present in a scenario: they include historical patterns like regional alignments, social divisions, and the economic structure. In turn, this brings about an individual's group identity and values orientations, which can be exogenously shaped by government actions and friends' influence, until the person develops attachment to a party as a tool for understanding and simplifying choices. This latest factor shapes issue opinions and the perception of candidates' image, with contributions from broader conditions, campaigns, and the media. The socialisation process begins during upbringing when the family's cues enduringly define the elector's identification, and ends in the final vote.[10]

From this perspective, the lack of political knowledge among most voters is nevertheless translated into electoral outcomes through this perception filter. The reason for believing that such a US-centred model may be translated into the French system is twofold. Firstly, the French and the American political

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[8] Lipset, S., Rokkan, S., 1967
[9] Bartels, 2010, pp. 242-244; Inglehart, Welzel, 2005, pp.98-106
[10] Dalton, 2014, pp.183-194

system share conditions for such a socialisation process to be defined. Those include: a strong centre-periphery and social group cleavage; an intense personalisation of the executive; relevant exposition to political information through mass media (in particular the role of television debates); and a relatively stable party attachment which electoral sociology works such as Nonna Mayer's[11] have highlighted. Secondly, the model has the advantage of taking into account the stratifications of all these 'endogenous' elements while leaving space for external pressures to exert an influence on the final outcome. Considering that in the US and France the presidential election is the most widely debated moment in both countries' political lives, the Michigan model is the one that factors in all these elements and provides more awareness of the pre- and post- campaign features of political allegiance.

The funnel structure presents two consequences. Firstly, contingent circumstances like socio-economic issues and electoral campaigns can affect the final decision, but are not integral to the value-building process; in a way, they impact a pre-established sequence rather than replacing it. Secondly, they enter the picture by the time value orientations are cemented in the voter's psychology, which prevents radical reconversion of ideals by leaving a framework of reference: in Europe and France, such framework assumes the notions of left and right. Using Inglehart and Klinghemann's work[12] (1976: 258, 269-270), we identify these concepts as a push for "change aimed at equality" and "emphasis on hierarchical order" respectively, which have historically been

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[11] Mayer, 2002

[12] Inglehart, Klinghemann, 1976, p.258, pp.269-270

popular. In addition to such values, the globalisation process starting in the 1960s triggered off the appearance of self-expression values which would not normally be given importance in conditions of sheer survival. As wealth spread across society, these have become integral to the more cultural aspect of left-right positioning[13]. Consequently, the socio-economic dimension of left and right is interconnected with a libertarian-communitarian axis, reflecting the ideological orientation of either openness or closure to the international society.[14]

With these principles in mind, statistical models show a clear polarisation of the French parties and the presence of both dimensions in defining party agendas, which has been a constant feature in the country's party system[15]. If the 2017 election were a turning point in the dealignment from this compass, surveys should clearly show such rejection. We shall now proceed with analysing the available data.

Results

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 assumes that LREM's success is due to the rejection of labels and total adherence to this manifesto as a form of dealignment. Macron's rhetoric about overcoming the left-right cleavage differs from the actual composition of his electorate, which is heterogeneous and frequently employs labels for

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[13] Inglehart, 2003, p.51

[14] Cautrès et al., 2018, p.96

[15] König, Waldvogel, 2018, pp.13-14

ideological reference. In principle, LREM's programme outlines the merging of cultural and economic liberalism, reconciling the features of a left-wing social attitude and a right-wing economic conception[16]. Nonetheless, Rouban[17] reports that only 45% of Macron's *marcheurs* supports income inequalities for the sake of competition, and are still attached to the State's welfare measures for weaker strata. Moreover, the Terra Nova Report on LREM[18] finds that 98% of interviewees accept positioning themselves on the left-right spectrum, instead of rejecting it. Interviews based on 14 indicators regarding the open-closed and the left-right cleavages point out that both measures are employed by LREM electors, with the majority of them insisting on pointing out a clear left-right divide[19]. This aspect supports the first value-building phase in the Michigan model, for electors stress a series of socio-economic preconditions and their historical persistence in order to provide a statement on their politics, rather than making up new categories like Macron's statement seemed to indicate.

It is also interesting to notice that 41.3% of Macron's electors position themselves on the left/centre-left, and 29% on the right/centre-right, which contrasts their recognition of LREM as a functioning effort of synthesis[20]: if the dealignment hypothesis were real, they should not recognise their position on such axis and embrace the "et de droit et de gauche" dogma. This anomaly adds up to Rouban (2018: 92-95)'s finding that only 43% adhered to Macron's

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[16] Grunberg, 2017, pp.314-318

[17] Rouban, 2018, pp.34-37, pp.56-57

[18] Cautrès et al., 2018. p.55

[19] Ibid., pp.93-97

[20] Strudel, 2017, pp.213-215; Cautrès et al., 2018, p.68

programme, while remaining voters chose LREM 'by default'. This can be explained by the fact that the two-round electoral system forces voters to pick a new one closer to their original identification. In the context of the funnel of causality, either the candidate image was unsatisfying for a certain orientation, or the first-round's outcome was unfavourable and limits choice by a large margin. An abstention rate over 25%, the lowest since 1969, hints at this discomfort.[21] The external arrows which enter the final layer of the funnel of causality in Figure 1 are a graphical representation of a legitimate, influential factor on voter orientation. Because issue opinions and candidate image are the crucial preconception leading the vote, it is the political structure and the contingent conditions deriving from it that can affect an otherwise consolidated decision process.

Which circumstances went in favour of Macron and Le Pen? Hollande's legacy is a significant factor: among the causes of discontent with his *quinquennat* are a limited budget in the aftermath of the Financial Crisis, and an unpopular 2016 Labour Code reform undermining employee protection. Mobilisation against the perceived betrayal of left-wing values was expressed through street marches and protest acts like Nuit Debout. His successor in the PS leadership, Benoît Hamon, proved to be popular among green-radical fringes, but was not championing the party's line or the now lost centre-left electorate.[22] At the same time, Jean-Luc Mélenchon and his new-born movement *La France Insoumise* (FI) obtained 19.58% in the first round by catching the radical left's attention, with

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[21] Muxel, 2017, pp.158-159

[22] Martigny, 2017, pp.44-57

25.1% of his voters being specialised private workers and 23% working-class. Their perception of individual fragility is high, with 26.8% unemployed, 28% on a temporary contract, 26.9% in precarious jobs, and 24.1% on part-time roles. Continuing with the solidity of party identification, 70% of his supporters identify "very much on the left", 89% are former adherents of the *Parti Communiste*, 55% of the *Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste*, and 32% of *Lutte Ouvrière*.[23] It is clear that the funnel of causality has a point in portraying such choices as more or less constant, due to their progressive maturation in the voter's psychology: Mélenchon's programme being the closest to original communist messages implied that he gained support from longstanding supporters of such values.

With the elimination of Mélenchon and the chaos in the PS, voters who have since their upbringing followed a socialisation process leaning on the left of the spectrum remain without a representative. Similarly, centre-right voters face the erosion of the Républicains' party, which goes against the values of order and hierarchy embedded in their discourse. When secretary François Fillon was involved in Penelopegate – a scandal involving paying family members for fictitious assignments in the party - the rhetoric of individual promotion and conservativeness lost its main defender.[24] Le Pen's hard line, particularly from the point of view of cultural demarcation vis-à-vis migrant inflows, was too extreme to satisfy the longstanding values of the centre-right. In a situation in which either the most suitable party is in disarray or the other groups lean on more inflexible positions than one's identification would appreciate, a formation

[23] Cautrès, 2017a, pp.186-190
[24] Cautrès, 2017b, pp.64-65

like *En Marche!* serves as a balancing element, whose main representative attempts to embody both sides to achieve his electoral targets.[25] That is, Macron was the only alternative available to the left to prevent a faceoff between Fillon and Le Pen, all the while compensating the centre-right electorate for the Républicains' failure[26]. Once again, we see the "political conditions" described in the Michigan theory being upheld in a real-life case and impacting the long-term mindset in a precise point of one's political experience, much closer to the 'pressure point' of the election where temporary events may transform stakes.

Our interpretation is supported by more recent research about Macron's popularity rates among voters. In October, the Institut Français d'Opinion Publique[27] released the results of a survey asking the French public about the President's actions, summarised below in Figure 2.

[25] Tiberj, 2017, p.1100

[26] Martigny, 2017, pp.51-52

[27] Institut Français d'Opinion Publique, 2018, p.7

Ventilations – Emmanuel Macron

	Total Satisfaits		Total Mécontents		Ne se prononcent pas		TOTAL
	10/18 (%)	09/18 (%)	10/18 (%)	09/18 (%)	10/18 (%)	09/18 (%)	(%)
ENSEMBLE	**29**	*29*	**70**	*70*	**1**	*1*	**100**
Sexe							
Hommes..	32	31	67	68	1	1	100
Femmes..	27	26	72	73	1	1	100
Age							
18 à 24 ans	43	33	56	65	1	2	100
25 à 34 ans	32	29	66	70	2	1	100
35 à 49 ans	31	29	68	70	1	1	100
50 à 64 ans	22	23	77	77	1	-	100
65 ans et plus	27	31	71	68	2	1	100
Profession du chef de famille							
Commerçants et artisans, chefs d'entreprise ..	47	36	52	63	1	1	100
Cadres et prof. intellectuelles supérieures	41	40	58	59	1	1	100
Professions intermédiaires	29	27	70	72	1	1	100
Employés..	24	24	75	75	1	1	100
Ouvriers..	22	21	76	78	2	1	100
Retraités..	28	28	71	71	1	1	100
Statut de l'interviewé							
Salariés du secteur privé.................................	29	28	70	71	1	1	100
Salariés du secteur public	27	24	72	75	1	1	100
Sympathisants du...							
La France Insoumise..	13	11	86	89	1	-	100
Parti Socialiste..	17	18	83	82	-	-	100
Europe Ecologie / Les Verts	25	25	74	74	1	1	100
La République En Marche	86	87	14	13	-	-	100
MoDem.	44	49	52	51	4	-	100
UDI	34	49	65	51	1	-	100
Les Républicains...	27	29	73	70	-	1	100
Rassemblement National (ex FN)	8	9	92	91	-	-	100

Figure 2 Emmanuel Macron's popularity rates by cohorts. Taken from IPOF, Les indices de popularité (October 2018), p. 7.

If on the whole 70% of the sample is unsatisfied with his work and there is an obvious prevalence of FN voters criticising it, the section "Sympathisants du…" points out that the second highest rate of dissatisfaction are among those identifying with parties eliminated in the first round, namely FI (86%), PS (83%), and the Républicains (73%). The comparison with rates in September, shown in the column "Total de mécontents", suggests that the negative trend has been quite constant among those groups whose alignment is far from Macronism's "et de droit et de gauche" philosophy. The results echo another anomalous behaviour among the electorate dating back to the election, namely the use of blank voting: 11.5% of the electorate participating in the second round did not express a preference at all, which is coupled with the already high abstention rate. It is another sign that the two finalists were in different ways not accepted, and that long-term socialisation cannot be easily corrected with political offers: if that happens, it translates into underappreciation of the winner in the following months[28].

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 assumes that the working class, usually considered the stronghold of left-wing ideology, has shifted to the Front National's far right in a "gaucho-lepéniste" realignment: the assumption is based on the finding that 43% of workers support Le Pen and allegedly see her as a working-class defender[29]. This correlation, nonetheless, has little substance and does not account for extensive sociological research conducted since the 1990s. Firstly, continuing to conceive the working class in an industrial sense only does not give justice to the evolution

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[28] Muxel, 2017, pp.167-169
[29] Perrineau, 2017; Fourquet, 2017

of the group in the post-materialist reality. Nowadays, we witness an enlargement of the class including low-service workers as much as unskilled manual labourers: as this socio-economic structure has diversified with time, so does the first level of the funnel in the socialisation process[30]. As a result, one's position in the 'new' working class and their perception of social mobility influences their subjective classification[31], which is not that simplistic and does not automatically link with left-wing ideology.

Nonna Mayer[32] remarked that in her interviews with FN voters, all of them felt comfortable with identifying themselves on the left-right spectrum and associated their decision with their family's political education, just as the Michigan model theorises and the previous section has shown. Of the working-class electors who voted for Jean-Marie Le Pen in 1995, only one fifth revealed not having any particular interest in politics – the so-called *marais*. At the time it was this *niniste* group that massively voted for the party, suggesting that it is mainly disappointment with present candidates to make radicalisation appealing to voters, rather than a conscious and heartfelt realignment from the left: this element links back to the contingent political conditions outlined for Macron vis-à-vis Hollande and Fillon's departure. Mayer[33] has framed the phenomenon as a result of "cultural anxiety", fuelled by both downward mobility and political disaffection in the aftermath of economic austerity. Since the traditional parties struggle to provide solutions to a declining quality of life,

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[30] Gougou, 2015, pp.333-337

[31] Rouban, 2017, pp.114-124

[32] Mayer, 2002, pp.43-52

[33] Mayer, 2014, pp.275-282

voters will entrench in a more radical version of their original ideology: and if we consider that the unemployment rate among the youth is 25%[34], the FN's promise to protect the marginalised resonates with those affected who are already keen to self-place on the right's closed-society cultural dimension.

In Mayer's words[35], it is more realistic to speak of *"ouvriéro-lepénisme"* than "gaucho-lepénisme" because the socialisation process through which these voters go does not always result in left-wing tendencies. Even Pascal Perrinau, who coined the term "gaucho-lepénisme"[36] admits that modern working-class members switch between manual labour and small independent business roles at different points of their upbringing. If a sense of inferiority is common to both, the social division and group loyalty aspects will develop in different directions from the classical left-wing one. In fact, many additional factors have an impact[37], for example: the number of working-class people present in a worker's closest personal relationships; these acquaintances' previous self-placement on the left-right spectrum; and the transformation of the left-right spectrum from a simply economic interpretation to a socio-economic and cultural one. In the last case, this means that younger cohorts will align on a point of the political compass through the discuss of more values than the simple class one. No matter how far this expansion of values goes, it still relies on the concept of past settings

[34] Pech, 2017, pp.218-220

[35] Mayer, 2002, pp.228-234

[36] Perrinau, 2017, p.94

[37] Gougou, 2015, pp.338-339; Inglehart, Welzel, 2005, pp.98-106

building the emotional and political structure of a voter's mindset, which is outlined in our favoured socialisation process.

Assuming that class belonging captures all elements of party identification risks ignoring crucial aspects of an individual's formation and does not include intergenerational differences in the structure, which instead the funnel of causality fits well. Finally, if the "gaucho-lepénisme" hypothesis were true, the supporters of eliminated parties whose programme was left-leaning should have chosen Le Pen in the second round: nevertheless, the Ipsos Mori electoral poll[38] shows that only 7% of Mélenchon's voters opted for the FN, and most of them abstained or followed En Marche. Even on the right, Fillon's former supporters preferred Macron to Le Pen, while the only majority for Le Pen comes from voters of Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, who clearly endorsed Marine as a continuity of their far-right socialisation process. Therefore, the realignment hypothesis is rejected and the findings for Hypothesis 1 hold true: conjunctures may be important, but cannot surpass interiorised values. Rightly so, the Michigan model assumes a certain permanency due to human nature and the way learning, even the political one, is a process rather than a change of heart.

Conclusion

This essay has provided a sociological analysis of the 2017 French presidential election to discuss the idea of dramatic change in the country's political system. It has assessed whether the left-right dimension has disappeared with the birth

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[38] Ipsos Mori electoral poll , 2017, p.4

of LREM and its "et de droit et de gauche" approach to party identification. Simultaneously, it has discussed the claim that the move to the FN of a portion of the working class can be seen as its realignment from the left to the right. Both assumptions have been proven false by the investigation of electoral polls and qualitative assessments from the past 25 years: our findings show that the socio-psychological model of the Michigan school continues to be applicable as it includes many variables in its understanding of how ideological and party identification come about. The acquisition of a set of values throughout an individual's upbringing is not erased by temporary changes, though it is undeniable that contingent events in the single election may not match those values and may require adaptation. Despite that, this does not influence the general ideological framework, but follows the initial preferences in the limits of what is available among candidates. In this specific case, personalisation in the party system seems to be an important factor in determining the least undesirable option, and yet the disruption to the socialisation process appears to be only a mere necessity which will be given up as soon as the political offer matches again the ideological identification previously constructed. Macron and Le Pen's performance, in conclusion, is an electoral deviance in an otherwise continuous design.

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Moving towards a world without frontiers: How Rojava and the ideas of Murray Bookchin propose a democratic and sustainable alternative to the Nation-State.

By Miguel Rodriguez Ruiz

Introduction and present context of Rojava within Syria

Rojava is a region in Northern Syria, which, after its abandonment by the Syrian government in 2011 following the outbreak of the Civil War, has undergone a profound social and political transformation carried out by its Kurdish population, who are a majority in the region. The aim of this article is to analyse to what extent these transformations constitute a true social revolution which have shifted the focus towards gender equality, direct democracy, diversity and sustainability. This is done not only by looking at the scholarly work surrounding Rojava, which allows us to understand the project more thoroughly and critically than through media coverage and self-representation; but also, by analysing the works of the two most influential thinkers of the movement: Murray Bookchin and Abdullah Öcalan. Simultaneously. The article also analyses some of the limits of the project in Rojava and some of the negative comments it has received from recent scholarly work.

The project in Rojava is mostly inspired by the ideas of the American anarchist thinker Murray Bookchin. This article analyses the main ideas of two of Bookchin's works, *The Ecology of Freedom* and *Urbanisation without cities*, and explains how these have influenced the revolution in Rojava. The ideas of Murray Bookchin were picked up by Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK. The PKK was a political organisation aimed at the national liberation of the Kurdish people. In the 1980s and the 1990s it waged a war against the Turkish state, which concluded with the defeat of the organisation and the imprisonment of its

leader. While in prison, Abdullah Ocalan encountered Bookchin's ideas. In his own writing Ocalan emphasized the need for women's liberation as well as the need for democratic confederalism as opposed to the creation of a Kurdish nation-state. In 2011, taking advantage of the power vacuum left in Syria with the outbreak of the civil war, the Kurdish population started to implement Ocalan's political program. The four main tenets that Rojava has attempted to implement throughout the civil war are gender equality (1), direct democracy (2), ethnic diversity (3), as well as an economy focused on cooperation and sustainability (4). Rojava however, has not been free of criticism, mainly due to the PKK's Marxist-Leninist past, which, as some scholars argue, still acts with a top-down, authoritarian approach and has imposed a personality cult for its leader Abdullah Ocalan in Rojava. Other criticisms of Rojava have been the militarisation of society, violation of human rights and the suppression of political dissidents.

With the withdrawal of US troops announced by Donald Trump in December of 2018, the Democratic Confederation of Northern Syria, commonly known as Rojava, runs the risk of suffering an attack from Erdogan's increasingly authoritarian Turkey with the collaboration of allied Syrian rebel fighters. This attack not only threatens to frustrate any revolutionary achievements made by the inhabitants of Rojava, but also risks the lives of the millions of people who live there.[1] In consequence, the Kurdish and Arab militias of Rojava have been forced to enter an uneasy alliance with the Al-Assad regime in order to avoid a

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[1] Hall R. (2018) "'We used to trust the US': Syrian Kurds fear Turkish attack after Trump's troop withdrawal" Independent Accessed on the 28th of December 2018

Turkish aggression.[2] Within Western media, the images of Kurdish female fighters have been used to portray the struggle of the Kurds as a struggle to adopt liberal and feminist western values as opposed to oriental backward and sexist values. This discourse thus silences the real discourse of non-statist democracy that goes far beyond western liberal values.[3] A clear example of this can be found in a recent Guardian article on the consequences of withdrawal of US troops from Syria,[4] which describes the Kurdish forces as pro-Western and as the closest allies of the US and Europe, without a single mention to the political project taking place within Syria. The creation of such discourses and the threat of Turkish aggression pose a menace to both Rojava's legacy and existence. This makes it necessary to shed light on the real nature of the project taking place in Northern Syria and its ideological inspirations.

The article is divided into three sections; the first of which gives a general overview of Bookchin's thought and its influence on Abdullah Öcalan following his imprisonment. The second part describes and analyses the revolutionary process in Rojava and its inspiration on Bookchin's and Öcalan's works based on the premises of gender equality, direct democracy, ethnic diversity and an economy shifted towards cooperation and sustainability. Finally, the third section gives a brief outline of some of the criticisms made towards Rojava; and concludes with a summary of the main topics discussed along with a reflection on Rojava's relevance as an alternative to the political, economic and social status quo.

Murray Bookchin's work and influence on Abdullah Öcalan

[2] Ensor J. (2018) 'Syrian Kurds request help from Assad regime after US abandons them' The Telegraph Accessed on the 28th of December 2018

[3] Şimşek B. & Jongerden J. (2018): 'Gender Revolution in Rojava: The Voices beyond Tabloid Geopolitics', Geopolitics pp.1-22

[4] Tisdall S. (2018) 'Trump's Syria move pleases dictators and hands initiative to ISIS' The Guardian Accessed on 2nd of January 2019

Murray Bookchin was an influential scholar whose ideas have contributed to the development of both ecological and revolutionary theory. He also became the main source of inspiration for the transformed Kurdish struggle for independence. In *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982) Bookchin started by highlighting the need for the complete dissolution of any type of hierarchy, including any system of "obedience and command" within interpersonal relations, that has to go along with traditional struggles against political repression and economic exploitation.[5] One of the clearest cases of hierarchy in interpersonal relations, which also reveals how these are inherent to greater political coercive structures, is that of the domination of men over women. Bookchin argued that it is one of the sources of power within the state: the institutionalisation of patriarchy assures the dominance of men over women and place "her ability to reproduce the species" in subordination to man's acquired state power. This constant need for subordinating women's roles causes an "antagonistic relationship [that] generates a hostile ambience in society".[6] Bookchin also claimed that the will to dominate nature and exploit it goes all too often accompanied by the domination and exploitation of human beings by other human beings. He insisted that preliterate societies saw themselves as part of nature and not separate to it, and this in turn caused them to have a "high sense of internal unity" and an "egalitarian outlook" in their social relations.[7] However, the idea that human *logos* (reason) had to dominate over the realm of nature, gradually developed alongside the rise of "the old to supremacy over the young, men to supremacy over women, the shaman and later the priestly corporation to supremacy over lay society, one class to supremacy over another, and State formations to supremacy over society in general".[8] Bookchin in contrast, desired to reconciliate the human and rational world with the natural world, and

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[5] Bookchin M. (1982) The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy 2nd edn, Black Rose Books, Montreal, Quebec, pp.3-4

[6] Ibid pp. 121-123

[7] Ibid p.5

[8] Ibid p. 7

therefore insisted throughout the book that "ecological issues be understood primarily as social issues".[9]

In *Urbanization without Cities* (1992) Bookchin argued that the city must be revendicated as a space that encourages notions of freedom, equality and diversity to "[corrode] the parochial bonds of blood ties, gender distinctions, age status group, and ethnic exclusivity".[10] He highlighted the positive (albeit not ignoring the negative) characteristics of the Ancient Greek concept of citizenship: well-rounded and highly educated people who can be active participants in a directly democratic process. He called for a recovery of these positive aspects of Greek citizenship in modern urban centres, which would lead towards a more democratic, open and cohesive society.[11] Bookchin saw the main source of revolution in the municipality and sets the basis for a municipalist and democratic revolt against the nation-state.[12] Bookchin laid out a variety of historical examples in which citizens' calls for local democracy and greater independence have been in direct confrontation with a highly centralised state power. This can be seen for example in the conflict between the Flemish city dwellers, who aimed at establishing a league of independent towns, and the powerful territorial lords who aimed at a more centralised rule following the lines of the French monarchy.[13] It can be also seen in the desire for direct-democracy of the Parisian *sans-culottes*: they were in conflict with the French Republicans who were pursuing a highly centralised nation-state during the Revolution of 1789.[14] Finally, Bookchin defined Democratic Confederalism as a "democratic and truly communitarian [form] of independence" that must

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[9] Tokar B. (2008) 'On Bookchin's Social Ecology and its Contributions to Social Movements', Capitalism Nature Socialism, 19:1, 51-66, p.53

[10] Bookchin, M. (1992) Urbanisation without cities Black Rose Books Montreal, Quebec, pp. 16-17

[11] Ibid, p.18

[12] Biehl J. (2012) 'Bookchin, Öcalan and the Dialectics of Democracy' New Compass Press 16th of February Accessed 26th December 2018

[13] Bookchin M. 1992, p. 112

[14] Ibid, pp. 115-117

come along with the creation of self-sufficient and decentralised communities.[15] Thus, Democratic Confederalism stands in direct contrast with the bureaucratised and highly specialised capitalist nation-state which leads to great levels of expenditure and exploitation of nature for the profits of multinational corporations.[16]

The Kurdish struggle for national liberation is deeply defined by the struggle of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), which at its inception in the 1970s was a Marxist-Leninist organisation that aimed at the creation of a Kurdish nation-state and the development of class struggle. To accomplish such objectives, the PKK started a guerrilla campaign against Turkey in 1984. This campaign led in the 1990s to popular uprisings in the Kurdish-majority areas in Turkey. These were put down by the end of the decade through repression by the Turkish state forces and concluded in 1999 with the imprisonment of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.[17] In his defence speech, Öcalan admits abandoning Marxist premises and defends a representative democratic approach that can "acknowledge the existence of the Kurdish people and their rights to language and culture".[18]

However, whilst in jail, Öcalan encountered Bookchin's work, which significantly changed his approach and made him believe Bookchin's ideas could offer a new starting point for the Kurdish struggle. It is possible that Öcalan was first attracted by Bookchin's thoughts on the Mesopotamian form of "democratic communal organisation" which preceded political hierarchy and were based on a unity between the individual, the community and nature.[19] In addition, Bookchin recalls that the first known word for freedom, the

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[15] Ibid, p. 296

[16] Ibid, pp. 290-291

[17] Leezenberg M. (2016) The ambiguities of democratic autonomy: the Kurdish movement in Turkey and Rojava, Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, 16:4, 671-690, p.673

[18] Biehl J. 2012

[19] Leezenburg M. 2016, pp. 675-676

Mesopotamian *amargi,* means 'return to the mother'. It can be interpreted as a return to pre-political organic society or "to nature perceived as a bountiful mother" rather than nature being something that must be dominated and controlled.[20] Öcalan reflects these ideas in *Roots of Civilization* (2001), where he compares the Ziggurat temples to precursors of the modern institutions of the state, with their centralised political and economic power. In contrast to centralised power represented in the Ziggurat, Öcalan believes that an opposing idea, an antithesis, can be found in local democratic institutions that can resolve long-lasting political problems such as the Kurdish question.[21] In another work of his, *Democratic Confederalism* (2011), Öcalan makes a devastating critique of the nation-state, which he describes as an all-encompassing institution that enforces a single national culture and identity through assimilation and genocide, and subsequently aims "at the monopolization of all social processes" to mould citizenship to the capitalist market by providing a homogenised and docile labour force.[22] Öcalan claims that the power of the nation-state resides particularly in the repression and exploitation of women, who are treated as sexual objects or as commodities, they are used as a valuable reservoir of cheap and even free labour and as a producer of offspring. Öcalan concludes that the solution to the Kurdish question is not the creation of a nation-state that would further the repression of society and of women, but the promotion of a new form of democratic confederalism based on Bookchin's communalist ideas and the liberation of women. These two premises he argues, provide a solution not only to the Kurdish question but to the Middle-East in general.

The establishment of the Rojava Revolution

Through his lawyers, Öcalan recommended Bookchin's works to PKK militants,[23] who shifted the party's ideology from that of a Marxist-Leninist national liberation perspective towards one of a non-statist democracy, reflected

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[20] Bookchin M. 1982, p.168

[21] Biehl J. 2012

[22] Ocalan A. (2011) Democratic Confederalism 1st edition International Initiative, Cologne, p.12

[23] Biehl J. 2012

in a series of congresses between the 1990s and 2000s. However, it was not the PKK in Turkey, where the Turkish state has a solid grip on all its territories, but the PYD, an affiliate party of the PKK in Syria, that was capable of implementing to their full potential Bookchin's and Öcalan's ideas in Northern Syria following the power vacuum left by the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011.[24] The Rojava revolution started off in three confederated cantons formed in the regions of Cizire, Efrin and Kobane, with a population of almost one million. The four main principles that the Rojava Revolution has attempted to establish are gender equality, direct democracy, ethnic diversity and an economy focused on cooperation and sustainability; as can be observed in Article 2 of the Constitution of Rojava: "The democratic federal system of Northern Syria shall embrace ecology, democracy and the freedom of women."[25]

The strive for gender equality seems to be where the Rojava Revolution has been the most successful. The emancipation of women in Rojava has partly been inspired by Öcalan's discourse on Jinology (the science of women), which, as outlined in *Democratic Confederalism* (2011), argues that the development of the nation-state and the market economy has had its basis in the enslavement of women.[26] However, Öcalan's Jinology has its roots in the success of feminism within the PKK promoted by female members, and by changes in gender discourse in Kurdish society at large.[27] As it has been previously observed, the Rojava Constitution recognises the liberation of women as one of its top priorities. This has been carried out through a varied range of policies and the creation of new democratic institutions which allow women to participate in public life free from traditional patriarchal ties. As a point of departure, "polygamy, female circumsicion and marriage under eighteen years of age have been abolished".[28] In terms of political decision making, at least 40% of

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[24] Cemgil C. and Hoffman C. (2016) 'The 'Rojava Revolution' in Syrian Kurdistan: A Model of Development for the Middle East?' Institute of Development Studies Vol 47, No 3 pp. 53-77, p.55

[25] Syrian Democratic Council (2016) Social Contract of the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria Rojava

[26] Simsek B. and Jongerden S. 2018, p.17

[27] Engel Di Mauro, S. (2015) 'Rojava', Capitalism Nature Socialism, 26:1, 1-15, p.10

[28] Ibid, p.3

participants at every administrative level must be women,[29] and at every one of these administrative levels, parallel all-female institutions have been created to provide women with political organs to administer their own affairs and counter the patriarchal traditions immanent in society.[30] The same dynamics apply to the economy, were cooperatives are either mixed gender or all-women;[31] in the police force, or Ayasis, where an all women division is included [32] and in the military, where the YPJ (Women's Protection Units) has been set up as a separate division to the YPG (People's Protection Units).[33] In addition to this, feminist consciousness is promoted in all-women self-administered academies.[34]

The promotion in Rojava as a non-statist democracy is seen as an essential tool for the recognition of all ethnicities and religions. This stands in direct contrast to the homogenised nation-state which is described and criticised in the works of Bookchin and Öcalan. Proof of this is the recognition within the Constitution of Rojava of the right of all cultural, ethnic and religious groups to appoint their own administrators and form their own democratic organisations.[35] The Commune is the essential political institution, it is based on a process of direct democracy and participates in all stages of decision-making.[36] Local democratic forms of governance that ran parallel to and assumed many of the roles of the Syrian state's administration had existed long before the start of the civil war, but only in 2011 with the outbreak of the latter have these forms of governance become effective.[37] The Communes are followed by councils or 'people's houses' which are established around previous neighbourhood administrations.

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[29] Ibid

[30] Cemgil C. and Hoffman C. 2016, p. 64

[31] Lebsky M. (2016) 'The economy of Rojava' Cooperation in Mesopotamia, accessed on the 27th of December 2018

[32] Di Mauro S. 2015, p.3

[33] Cemgil C. and Hoffman C. 2016, p.66

[34] Di Mauro S. 2015, p.3

[35] Syrian Democratic Council, Article 33

[36] Ibid, Article 48

[37] Lebsky M. 2016

Councils are normally comprised of members who must reflect the social composition of neighbourhoods. They deal with issues such as energy, food distribution and social relations [38] and exist at every level of administration, from the village to the district.[39] The councils at the wider regional level are accountable to councils at the local level, therefore decision making is always maintained bottom-up.[40] Council representatives and military officers rotate as often as possible in order to avoid the formation of any kind of political or military elites.[41] The role of council representatives is only "to convey the policy decisions" made by the communes. They can be recalled by these same communes if they fail in their task.[42] In terms of the judicial system, legal disputes are dealt with and resolved by more traditional courts. The Asayis, or internal security members, respond directly to the communes, and thus as a police force, they are not subject to the decisions of any representative. In each area there is a clear attempt to 'socialise governance', that is, giving responsibility of all forms of administration to society as opposed to a bureaucratised and professionalised nation-state.[43]

The economy is another area where socialised forms of administration have been attempted, along with a focus on sustainability and respect for the environment. However, this is also the area where the least progress has been achieved, both due to the restrictions that war has imposed on Rojava and on the willingness to avoid ethnic and social conflict. The Assad regime had deliberately been maintaining the Kurdish majority regions of Syria impoverished by limiting the number of crops that could be grown and by evicting Kurdish people off their lands to stimulate the settlement of Arabic tribes in these areas.[44] The existence of a wealthier Arab population in the region means that a redistribution of wealth could be a source of ethnic conflict,

[38] Di Mauro S. 2015, p. 2

[39] Syrian Democratic Council, Article 49

[40] Lebsky M. 2016

[41] Cemgil C. and Hoffman C. 2016, p. 64

[42] Biehl J. 2012

[43] Cemgil C. and Hoffman C. 2016, pp. 64-65

[44] Lebsky M. 2016

sparking the pre-existing tensions developed throughout years of Baathist rule. However, there has been considerable progress, particularly in land ownership. Around 50% of Rojava's land is collectively owned, something that was achieved without need of forceful expropriations, as most privatised land was owned by people from Assad's regime who fled the region at the start of the Civil War.[45] Local administration encourages cooperatives, they are being privileged over traditional enterprises.[46] The cooperatives' property is collective and profits are split into three: 30% is spent on planned production and future projects, 50% is split among the workers and 20% on the needs of the community such as healthcare, education, electricity and water. The existence of a private market is accepted and tolerated, but economic production and profit must exist in accordance with the common good of the community.[47] The construction of an ecological society is recognised by the Rojava Constitution as one of the main priorities of the revolution and goes along the lines of Bookchin's views presented in *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982). However, in practice this is probably one of the areas where the Rojava revolution has achieved the least progress. Attempts to rebuild Kobane amongst ecological lines have been made and agricultural cooperatives are promoting the use of organic fertilizers and the diversification of crops in order to achieve sustainability.[48] It is important to have in mind that Rojava is a society at war, and that 70% of its expenditures are on defence and security[49], which makes projects for sustainability very complicated, in addition to the fact that Rojava is also heavily dependent on oil for energy, as the region of Cizire has large reserves of oil.[50]

Criticism of Rojava and Conclusion

[45] System D media (2015) Rojava: An economic system in progress Available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_dchuli8cs Accessed on the 28th of December 2018

[46] Di Mauro S. 2015, p.3

[47] Lebsky M. 2016

[48] Hunt S.E. (2017): Prospects for Kurdish Ecology Initiatives in Syria and Turkey: Democratic Confederalism and Social Ecology, Capitalism Nature Socialism pp. 1-20, pp. 12-13

[49] System D media 2015

[50] Lebsky M. 2016

Despite the many outstanding social and political achievements in Rojava, the revolution has had its limitations and there still is a large space for criticism. One of the main criticisms is based on the PKK's Marxist-Leninist past, and the fact that this has influenced to a great extent the revolutionary process in Rojava. Leezenburg [51] argues that the system of councils and communes had been established by PKK cadres in 2005, rather than being spontaneously set up by the local population. He also thinks that the educational system, rather than providing education and critical thinking, is a propaganda tool aimed at "instilling PKK orthodoxy".[52] There are also accusations of a leadership cult around the image of Öcalan.[53] Another problem with the Rojava Revolution is that the elimination of hierarchies and the preservation of the democratic institutions have come along with a profound militarisation of society.[54] With the imminent threat of ISIS conscription to the YPG and YPJ has become compulsory in 2014.[55]In addition, there have been accusations of human rights violations and suppression of dissident groups on the part of the PYD. These are particularly common in regions with an Arab majority, where the PYD has a more centralised control and local level governance seems to have less influence, and has often attempted to ensure that only loyal representatives are able to govern.[56] This last issue is particularly concerning, as it seems that ethnic conflicts have not been completely resolved and that the PYD and the Rojava project is giving the Kurds greater influence in the region at the expense of the Arab population. These issues must be handled with if the revolution in Rojava is to remain a truly democratic and multi-ethnic project.

The Rojava revolution has been a project based on grassroots democracy, ethnic diversity and ecological sustainability. Its inspiration from the American scholar Murray Bookchin has led a great part of Northern Syria to a radically

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[51] Leezenburg M. 2016

[52] Ibid p. 679

[53] De Jong A. (2016) 'The New-Old PKK' Jacobin Accessed on the 29th of December 2018

[54] Cemgil C. and Hoffman C. 2016 p.70

[55] Ibid

[56] Khalaf R. (2016) Governing Rojava: Layers of legitimacy in Syria Chatham House

democratic experiment diametrically opposed to deeply centralised nation-states such as Syria and Turkey. It has provided the Kurdish liberation struggle with an alternative to national independence. Despite its limitations – particularly in the incapacity of Rojava to follow a truly ecologically sustainable project, accusations of the top-down role of the PKK, the militarisation of society and human rights abuses – Rojava remains an interesting and profoundly democratic alternative to the nation-state.

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Velvet or Roses – Towards a Democratic Armenia? A comparative analysis of post-Soviet Armenia in the context of its 2018 revolution

By Nikolas Schuster

This essay takes a first look at Armenia's 2018 'velvet revolution' by analysing its political system since independence and comparing it to the circumstances of the 2003 Georgian Rose Revolution. By considering parameters such as protection of civil liberties and freedom of elections, it characterises the regimes in Armenia since 1991 as competitive authoritarian according to Levitsky and Way's definition. Low levels of influence from the West and prevailing informal structures made caused this state of affairs to persist. A first look at the events of 2018 reveals that Nikol Pashinyan, the new prime minister, acts more democratically than his predecessors. However, having established that the Rose Revolution happened under similar circumstances with similar goals, its failure to directly advance democratisation shows that systemic reasons for authoritarian structures are prone to persist even if the political leadership has democratising ambitions.

On 14 January 2019 the Armenian parliament elected Nikol Pashinyan prime minister for the second time – upon which he declared, 'power has been returned to the people and democracy has been established in Armenia.'[1] Pashinyan's first election on 7 May 2018 was the culmination of what he called Armenia's 'velvet revolution', which had caused two-term president Serzh Sargsyan to resign.[2] This essay will, in a first step, analyse the regimes formerly ruling Armenia and, in a second step, make a first attempt to classify this change

[1] RFE/RL's Armenian Service, 'Pashinian Reappointed Armenian PM After Securing Parliament Majority'.

[2] Aslanian and Lazarian, 'Pashinian Vows To Keep Up Protests'.

in power and determine to which extent it constitutes a step towards liberal democracy. It will use Georgia's Rose Revolution and the political system in which it occurred as a comparison. Due to the recent nature of these events and a 'gap in the scholarly literature on Armenia's post-Soviet political leadership'[3], this article will employ journalistic sources to complement academic ones.

In a first part, it is necessary to characterise the existing regimes in order to not only understand the origins of the protest movements, but also because the pre-existing system has a large influence on whether protest movements will achieve democratisation. In fact Levitsky and Way posit that the latter is particularly influential in post-Soviet states.[4] This essay will employ Georgia as a comparison to Armenia. Formerly part of the Soviet Union as autonomous republics of a similar population size, both gained their independence in 1991 in a 'Third-Wave revolution'. As this essay will argue, both countries stopped short of full democratisation in a state which Levitsky and Way describe as competitive authoritarianism. As Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution had similar democratising ambitions to Armenia's 2018 'velvet revolution', this essay will use this example to analyse the events of 2018 in Armenia in a second part. While this essay makes no claim to predict a trajectory for Armenia, a comparative analysis is useful to highlight what factors are influential to democratisation.

To judge whether a revolution constitutes a step towards liberal democracy, it is clearly necessary to first analyse the state of democracy in the existing system. The ambiguous situation of post-Soviet Armenia and Georgia somewhere between democracy and authoritarianism requires that one pay close attention to the definition of democracy. Samuel Huntington and Robert Dahl mainly define democracy around the quality of elections.[5] Larry Diamond argues that their criteria may define an electoral democracy, but not a liberal one, which he defines as extending 'freedom, fairness, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law from the electoral process into all other major aspects of governance and interest articulation, competition, and representation'.[6] In the following, this

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[3] Ghaplanyan, Post-Soviet Armenia: The New National Elite and the New National Narrative, 41.

[4] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 235.

[5] Dahl, On Democracy, 85; Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, 7.

[6] Diamond, 'Thinking About Hybrid Regimes', 25.

essay will use 'democratisation' as the process towards this liberal democracy as an operational definition.

How then can we define an intermediate regime? Levitsky and Way introduce a category called competitive authoritarianism: under a competitive authoritarian regime, the contest of power is carried out using democratic institutions, but in such a way that the incumbent is heavily advantaged. Under competitive authoritarianism, 'the state violates at least one of three defining attributes of democracy: (1) free elections, (2) broad protection of civil liberties, and (3) a reasonably level playing field', the latter of which is mainly defined by an opponent's ability to access resources, media and the law.[7] In their democratisation processes, Levitsky and Way emphasise the 'linkage and leverage' of (usually) Western democracies and their institutions. Linkage refers to how densely tied a competitive authoritarian country is to the West, be those ties political, cultural or economical. Leverage refers to how much influence the West is able to wield in those countries, e.g. through economic pressure or the prospect of EU membership.[8] In short, the higher the leverage, the more is the West able to compel democratisation; the higher the linkage, the more is the West likely to.

Henry Hale focuses rather on domestic structures as a systemic reason for a stagnation of democratisation in many post-Soviet states. He identifies the prevalence of patronalism aided by systems of presidentialism. In essence, 'highly patronalistic societies are those in which connections not only matter […], but matter overwhelmingly', featuring characteristics such as 'strong personal friendships and family ties, weak rule of law [and] pervasive corruption.'[9] He explains the persistence of such a social state by pointing out that for politicians, faced with a situation where they believe competitors are likely to use tactics such as nepotism and corruption, abstaining from them not only puts them at a competitive disadvantage, but will also likely make them unpopular in the long run as they can operate less effectively – a dynamic which

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[7] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 7, 10.

[8] Levitsky and Way, 40–44.

[9] Hale, '25 Years After the USSR: What's Gone Wrong?', 28.

extends beyond politics into all parts of society.[10] Presidentialism serves to entrench this dynamic as it makes it easier for one patron – the president – to protect and sustain their network.[11]

In the following, this essay will argue that, before their revolutions, democratisation in Armenia and Georgia stopped short of a liberal democracy and rather gave rise to competitive authoritarian regimes. Let us first consider the freedom of elections. Post-Soviet Armenia has seen three major leadership figures – Levon Ter-Petrosyan (1991-1998), Robert Kocharyan (1998-2008) and Serzh Sargsyan (2008-2018). The freedom of elections has been subject to criticism throughout its history. This is particularly true under the presidencies of Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharyan. The OECD did not observe Ter-Petrosyan's first election in 1992, but his widespread popularity then suggests he did in fact have the support of a majority of the population.[12] This is however much less clear in the 1996 election he won narrowly – the OECD criticises that it did not meet international standards due to serious irregularities and legal breaches.[13] The elections of 1998 and 2003 won by Kocharyan did not fare much better: the allegations of ballot-box stuffing as well as the support of the incumbent by local officials cast serious doubt on the electoral process.[14] While the elections of 2008 and 2013 were 'generally well-administered' with 'respect for fundamental freedoms', but some 'bad' and 'very bad' violations in the voting process nonetheless occurred.[15] One must conclude that, while there is a viable democratic process to change the government, none of Armenia's post-Soviet elections can be considered free and fair – a typical characteristic of competitive authoritarian regimes.

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[10] Hale, 28.

[11] Hale, 31.

[12] Ghaplanyan, Post-Soviet Armenia: The New National Elite and the New National Narrative, 42.

[13] Osborn, 'Armenian Presidential Elections – September 24, 1996, Final Report'.

[14] OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 'Republic of Armenia – Presidential Election, March 16 and 30, 1998, Final Report'; OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 'Republic of Armenia – Presidential Election, 19 February and 5 March 2003, Final Report'.

[15] OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 'Republic of Armenia – Presidential Election, 19 February 2008, Final Report'; OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 'Republic of Armenia – Presidential Election, 18 February 2013, Final Report'.

Limitations on civil liberties manifest themselves prominently in restrictions on the media. Ter-Petrosyan's government took clear steps to limit media freedom by requiring their registration and shutting several major outlets down.[16] Under Kocharyan and Sargsyan, these restrictions were not necessarily of an official nature; rather, many 'journalists practice self-censorship to avoid harassment by government or business figures.'[17] Examples include a fire-bombing targeting Nikol Pashinyan, who would later lead the 'velvet revolution' and was then the editor of an oppositional newspaper, in 2004 and police specifically attacking journalists during protests in 2015.[18] Moreover, while political opposition is usually allowed to exist and express their views, mass protests often triggered clampdowns by police – most prominently after the 2008 election, where during a state of emergency declared by Kocharyan (who was still in power), eight protesters were killed.[19]

An 'uneven playing field' is also easily identified: media access is further limited as most print media and television channels are affiliated to political interests – independent journalism persists, but predominantly online, which limits its outreach.[20] The government is also known to abuse state funding for election campaigns, limiting opponents' access to resources.[21] Freedom House particularly criticise Armenia's judiciary, noting 'extremely low' acquittal rates, political pressure on judges and selective application of the law.[22]

One can observe much the same tendencies in pre-2003 Georgia. In terms of elections, not only did Eduard Shevardnadze, who also appointed the State Chancellery charged with day-to-day governance, not face a significant

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[16] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 209; 'Freedom in the World 1998 – Armenia'.

[17] 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Armenia'.

[18] Khachatrian, 'Newspaper Editor's Car Blown Up'; Synovitz, 'Armenian Riot Police Deployed Near "Electric Yerevan" Protest'.

[19] 'Armenia: Skewed Prosecution Over 2008 Clashes'.

[20] 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Armenia'.

[21] OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 'Republic of Armenia – Presidential Election, 18 February 2013, Final Report'.

[22] 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Armenia'.

challenger in 1995 and 2000, but electoral fraud further assured his victory.[23] In terms of civil liberties, an independent press and political opposition were largely allowed to operate, but faced attacks and destruction of property by police and groups suspected to be related to the government. A 'level playing field' was further impeded by lack of funds for independent media as well as a judiciary which is frequently subjected to pressure by the executive, with reports of corruption, abuse of inmates and planting of evidence.[24] While Levitsky and Way emphasise that, compared to Armenia, Georgia's regime was significantly less stable and disposed of less 'coercive capacity', it is also an example of competitive authoritarianism.[25]

There is no indication that this type of regime is purely transitional. The Freedom House Index has consistently ranked Armenia and pre-2003 Georgia as 'partly free', with slightly fluctuating scores that show no particular trend.[26] Democratisation thus stagnated. The case of Armenia is particularly notable: it did not just develop under one ruler, but the type of regime remained the same despite Kocharyan's takeover of power against Ter-Petrosyan. This suggests a systemic reason, which this essay will seek using the theories of Levitsky and Way and Hale.

Levitsky and Way identify both Armenia and Georgia as cases of high leverage, mainly due to their dependence on US aid in the face of regional isolation (a blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan in the case of Armenia and Russian hostility in the case of Georgia). Linkage however is far lower in the face of weak economic, political and technocratic ties despite a substantial Armenian diaspora in the West.[27] Following their framework, it is this low linkage which causes decreased Western influence and, in consequence, allows a form of authoritarianism to persist.

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[23] Wheatley, Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union, 95, 160.

[24] 'Freedom in the World 2003 – Georgia'.

[25] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 221.

[26] 'Freedom in the World Data and Resources – Past Year's Ratings'.

[27] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 207–8, 221; Masih and Krikorian, Armenia – at the Crossroads, 12–13.

Aside from international influence, there are also domestic reasons for the stagnation of democratisation, which this essay will analyse using Hale's theory of patronalism. Armenia clearly displays features of patronalism. Ter-Petrosyan, despite his history as a democratic dissident during Soviet times, built a strong network with emerging oligarchs using the wave of privatisation of the 1990s, during which he gave significant influence to his two brothers, exemplifying the use of family in these networks.[28] Reforms in 1995 and 1996 changed the Armenian political system such that it can be described as 'super-presidential', thus solidifying Ter-Petrosyan's institutional power.[29] Similarly, Kocharyan's and Sargsyan's influential 'Karabakh clan' included family members and important figures in the oil industry.[30] Paradoxically at first sight, Sargsyan oversaw a referendum in 2015 which turned the presidency into a mostly ceremonial role and Armenia into a parliamentary republic, with most political power vested in the prime minister. This was however in no way a relinquishment of power on Sargsyan's part: he was rather faced with the two-term limit of the presidency, whereas he would be able to stay in power as prime minister.[31] In Georgia, perhaps an even more extreme case of pervasive patronalism, Shevardnadze disposed of such a powerful informal network that he could 'bypass parliament and the courts', turning 'state offices [into] a form of private property'.[32]

It would be an overstatement to declare the political situation in both countries completely alike. Due to the complex and often clandestine power structures in competitive authoritarian regimes, a more detailed comparison is difficult in general and certainly outwith the scope of this essay. Nonetheless, the first part of this essay argues that democratic deficits existed in both countries to a reasonably similar extent. If the two self-declared 'democratic revolutions' occurred in similar circumstances, it is then useful to compare the two, which is what follows in the second part of this essay.

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[28] Hale, Patronal Politics, 136.

[29] Ghaplanyan, Post-Soviet Armenia: The New National Elite and the New National Narrative, 43.

[30] Ghaplanyan, 49.

[31] AFP, 'Armenia Votes to Curb Presidential Powers in Disputed Referendum'.

[32] Jones, Georgia: A Political History Since Independence, 135.

Armenia's 'velvet revolution' certainly constitutes a major disruption, whose direction hitherto seems to be a democratic one. Sargsyan had in principle successfully maintained his power by becoming the new prime minister. Yet the popular protest led by Pashinyan was extraordinarily large – the New York Times reported 250,000 people, constituting 8% of the entire Armenian population, protesting in Yerevan on 23 April.[33] Sargsyan was forced to resign and Pashinyan became prime minister only weeks after. It must however be noted that the label 'velvet revolution' for the events of April/May 2018 is questionable. Pashinyan used it before Sargsyan had even lost power,[34] which indicates that the term is prescriptive rather than descriptive, specifically designed to allude to the success and peaceful nature of Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution. It is however hardly an apt comparison considering the totalitarian nature of the Czechoslovak regime that outlawed opposition and all but destroyed civil society.[35] Moreover, if one uses Hannah Arendt's definition of revolution as 'not just mere changes' but 'the idea of freedom and the experience of a new beginning', it is obvious that the mere election of a prime minister from an oppositional party within an unchanged system does not make this shift an power a revolution.[36]

There are strong similarities between the sequence of events of 2003 in Georgia and of 2018 in Armenia. Like in Armenia, there was a clear personal leader of the protests rather than an institution in Mikhail Saakashvili.[37] The protests had the support of a large part of the population through differing social classes,

[33] MacFarquhar, 'He Was a Protester a Month Ago. Now, Nikol Pashinyan Leads Armenia.'; World Bank Data, 'Armenia Population, Total'.

[34] RFE/RL's Armenian Service, 'Tens Of Thousands Protest In Yerevan, Other Armenian Cities Against Sarkisian As New Prime Minister'.

[35] Shepherd, Czechoslovakia: The Velvet Revolution and Beyond, 2.

[36] Arendt, On Revolution, 13, 21f.

[37] Wheatley, Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union, 185.

resulting in a 'broad social base'.[38] Saakashvili and his party also went on to easily win the following presidential and parliamentary elections.[39]

Ramishvili and Chergoleishvili state that 'the Rose revolutionaries wanted a government of the people, by the people and for the people'.[40] But the Rose Revolution first and foremost constituted a regime change that put Mikhail Saakashvili in power and in many ways reproduced the features of competitive authoritarianism. Despite some improvement in the quality of elections, problems such as voter fraud, intimidation and abuse of state resources persisted, casting doubt on the freedom and fairness of the elections.[41] Civil liberties such as freedom of assembly were not always respected, opponents were arrested and charged with treason, there was a strong influence of the executive on the judiciary and the media were frequently targeted by the government.[42] Problems such as a lack of independence of the judiciary and media persist today.[43]

This continuity typifies the persistence of patronalism in Georgian politics. This is not to say that Saakashvili did nothing to fight it: his transformation of the notoriously corrupt traffic police is widely regarded as a success.[44] But accusations persisted that the government enforced anticorruption laws selectively in favour of their supporters.[45] In general, Jones notes that despite a personnel change throughout Saakashvili's government, '"who you know" remains the key'.[46] Levitsky and Way point out that, with only a remote prospect

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[38] Ramishvili and Chergoleishvili, 'March of the Goblins: Permanent Revolution in Georgie', 189.

[39] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 227.

[40] Ramishvili and Chergoleishvili, 'March of the Goblins: Permanent Revolution in Georgie', 189.

[41] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 226f.; OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 'Georgia – Partial Repeat Parliamentary Elections, 28 March 2004, Report Part 2'; OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, 'Georgia – Extraordinary Presidential Election, 5 January 2008, Final Report'.

[42] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 227.

[43] 'Freedom in the World 2018 – Georgia'.

[44] Hale, 'Caucasian Regime Dynamics in Comparatice Perspective'.

[45] Devdariani, 'Georgia's Rose Revolution Grapples with Dilemma: Do Ends Justify Means'.

[46] Jones, Georgia: A Political History Since Independence, 135–36.

of EU membership, linkage not only remained low, but the West's 'unconditional support' of Saakashvili in the face of the 2008 Russian invasion inhibited criticism of him.[47] The systemic reasons for competitive authoritarianism thus persisted.

Armenia's situation is more advantageous for democratisation than Georgia's was in several ways. The initial outcomes of the transition of power are positive: the parliamentary elections in December 2018, which served both to build a power base for Pashinyan's My Step Alliance and to legitimise his premiership, were received positively by OSCE observers.[48] Pashinyan is widely popular with approval ratings of over 80%.[49] Unlike Saakashvili, who had previously a minister in Shevardnadze's government, Pashinyan was an outsider to the ruling class and longstanding opponent of Kocharyan and later Sargsyan[50] – meaning that formerly influential informal networks are likely to lose power. As Levitsky and Way point out, Armenia's state is more consolidated than Georgia was – while Pashinyan could use his thus increased power to strengthen his own informal network, he might also be better able to reduce corruption.[51] Finally, while Georgia was faced with hostility and outright invasion by Russia, Pashinyan has so far stayed committed to Armenia's alliance with Russia.[52] Way argues that, so long as geopolitical stability is guaranteed, Putin does not care particularly about the style of government and is unlikely to interfere – in which case an alliance with Russia as the major regional power is a significant economic and security benefit.[53] It is however likely to hinder linkage with the West.

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[47] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 228.

[48] International Election Observation Mission, 'Republic of Armenia – Early Parliamentary Elections, 9 December 2018, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions'.

[49] Center for Insight in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey: Residents of Armenia'.

[50] Goncharenko and Gasajan, 'Armeniens Rebell Mit Ausdauerqualitäten'; Khachatrian, 'Newspaper Editor's Car Blown Up'.

[51] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 213; Edwards, 'Armenia's Post-Revolution Party Is Over'.

[52] 'Pashinyan and Putin Meet in Moscow; Promise to Work Towards Greater Bilateral Cooperation'.

[53] Way, 'Why Didn't Putin Interfere in Armenia's Velvet Revolution?'

Yet the limited success of Georgia's 'democratic revolution' must be considered a check on the optimism about Armenia's. Concern has been voiced about the overwhelming majority that Pashinyan now commands, emphasising the importance of opposition for the democratic process.[54] Indeed, the elections were held using electoral law which had previously been alleged of favouring the ruling party.[55] Much will depend on how Pashinyan uses his now extensive power, for Hale notes, 'Disruptions are often temporary while the practice of networking is remarkably resilient. Thus periods of open political and even electoral competition tend to fade once a winner emerges and power networks coordinate themselves around the new patron'.[56] And indeed, there are serious questions to be asked about Pashinyan. His political direction, other than a disdain for the ancien régime, is difficult to make out: described as a 'radical centrist' similar to Emmanuel Macron, Pashinyan himself has refused to align himself with any sort of ideology.[57] His longstanding support of former president Ter-Petrosyan, who as noted above is hardly an example to follow for democratisation, calls into question how principled Pashinyan will be about playing by democratic rules.[58] This issue has already been raised in the context of the arrest of Kocharyan on charges related to quelled protests in 2008. Kocharyan's actions were certainly questionable, but given Pashinyan's personal involvement – he spent two years in prison on charges related to these protests[59] – and a so far unreformed and oft-criticised judiciary, the arrest only months after Pashinyan's taking power has caused a suspicion of victor's justice.[60] None of the outlined factors will necessarily impede democratisation, but they do have the potential to.

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[54] Edwards, 'Armenia's Revolution Will Not Be Monopolized'.

[55] RFE/RL's Armenian Service, 'In Setback For Pashinian, Armenian Parliament Again Fails To Pass Election Bill'.

[56] Hale, '25 Years After the USSR: What's Gone Wrong?', 34.

[57] Kopalyan, 'Aggressive Centrism: Navigating the Contours of Nikol Pashinyan's Political Ideology'.

[58] Al Jazeera, 'Who Is Armenian Opposition Leader Nikol Pashinyan?'

[59] Al Jazeera.

[60] Wesolowsky, 'Kocharian's Arrest: "Velvet" Victory Or Vendetta?'

To conclude, the democratic deficit in Armenia is more than the product of one government, but an ingrained political dynamic with authoritarian features. An absence of incentives by Western democracies as well as extensive informal structures within Armenia support the persistence of this dynamic regardless of who specifically is the person in power. The disruption of Armenian politics constituted by Pashinyan's unexpected accession to power is likely a necessary condition for democratisation to progress: in 2010, Levitsky and Way classified Armenia as a case of 'stable authoritarianism' due to little linkage with the West and a 'coercive apparatus' that was powerful enough to suppress opposition.[61] Pashinyan's accession to power is then by no means a negative development.

Yet the transition of power dubbed 'velvet revolution' is not in itself sufficient for democratisation. The experience of post-2003 Georgia shows that, despite seemingly sincere democratic intentions of the revolutionaries, a regime change does not necessarily change underlying reasons for democratic deficits such as patronalism. Pashinyan now disposes of much the same means to rule as his predecessors. So far, he does appear a more democratic ruler, but as he has never been in power before, it is difficult to predict to what extent he will continue this way. Armenia's democracy is then far from consolidated. Mentioned in the beginning of this essay is a statement by Pashinyan: 'Democracy is now established in Armenia.'[62] His seeming unawareness of the long road to democratisation still ahead is a rather discouraging thought.

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[61] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War, 213.

[62] RFE/RL's Armenian Service, 'Pashinian Reappointed Armenian PM After Securing Parliament Majority'.

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'Such the conditions of our love' – The Surreal and Ethical Lack of a Centre in *Jacob's Room* and *Tender Buttons*

By Matias Loikala

This essay explores Virginia Woolf's novel Jacob's Room and Gertrude Stein's poetry collection Tender Buttons, comparing them through the notion of a lack of a centre. Jacob's Room is concerned with this lack through its ambivalent and evasive descriptions of its protagonist and Tender Buttons through its displacement of conventional descriptive logic. I first draw on André Breton's The First Manifesto of Surrealism and its notion of 'elsewhere'[1] to link the lack of a centre to a constant movement away from a settled sense of itself. Both texts exhibit this kind of surrealist movement 'elsewhere', Jacob's Room through its interest in shifting perspectives and Tender Buttons through its interest in the metaphorical nature of poetic expression. Emmanuel Levinas' theories of radical respect towards complete otherness subsequently bring an ethical light to the question of a lack of a centre and its movement 'elsewhere'. In Jacob's Room the ethics of a lack of a centre are largely tied up with its conceptualisation of love and care, whereas in Tender Buttons they show the ethical importance of linguistic play and joy. The two texts therefore look at the surrealist and ethical aspects of the lack of centrality with equal importance but with different emphases on interpersonal love and linguistic joy respectively.

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[1] Andre Breton, 'From the First Manifesto of Surrealism' in Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents, ed. by V. Kolocotroni, J. Goldman and O. Taxidou, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, [1924] 1998), 311.

Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1922) and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons* (1914) are both elusive and fragmentary texts, the former through its unconventional portrayal of its protagonist and the latter through its focus on free association as the creator of poetic meaning. In this essay, I will argue that the two texts are concerned with the lack of a centre, leading them to continually look 'elsewhere' in the vein of André Breton's *First Manifesto for Surrealism* (1924). Thus, their processes of signification are constantly shifting away from a definable centre in search of something new and refusing to articulate that something in conventionally intelligible ways. This argument has a crucial ethical aspect concerning Emmanuel Levinas's ideas of Otherness: the two texts portray a lack of centre and a movement 'elsewhere' from it as ethical imperatives. Furthermore, *Jacob's Room* focuses on the ethics of the Other from the perspective of interpersonal relationships and love, while *Tender Buttons* approaches it from a view of joyful linguistic play.

Jacob's Room has an obvious lack of a centre concerning its main character Jacob, but due to
the formal qualities of the text, the novel also seems to constantly fragment itself. The reader expects Jacob, as the protagonist of the text, to be its central focus. In his own way, he fulfils this role, but only through his own absence from it. The text attempts to circle around him, but ends up circling around his absence. The narrator's plight in describing him makes this especially clear: 'But something is always impelling one to hum vibrating, like the hawk moth, at the mouth of the cavern of mystery, endowing Jacob Flanders with all sorts of qualities he had not at all' (Woolf [1922] 1992: 97).[2] Here the attempt to define Jacob is compared to a circling moth and Jacob himself to a cavern, alluding to his emptiness. Through this displacement, the text refuses the protagonist to enter his conventional place as the text's centre. This refusal is further heightened by the text's fragmented portrayal of its other characters. The novel has a large number of characters that are present only briefly or fragmentedly,

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[2] Virginia Woolf, Jacob's Room, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1922] 1992), 97.

such as the middle-aged ladies Mrs Pascoe and Mrs Durrant from a seaside village. Their polite but emotionally distant meeting is followed by a sudden shift in focalization of the narration, when the focalization shifts quickly from Mrs Pascoe to Mrs Durrant after the latter has left her house.[3] This shows the cinematic movement of the narration, as the narrator first stays with Mrs Pascoe as she moves back into her cottage and then moves along with Mrs Durrant as she rides away.[4] Through these fluid shifts of the 'eye' of focalization we are presented not only with a fragmented view of Jacob, but also a fragmented view of all other characters, as their entire lives are seen only through the focus on these small, transitory moments. Moreover, these fragmentary views are further reflected in the text's composition. It is largely comprised of individual, scene-like moments, with very little explanatory content connecting them. This makes the text difficult to conjoin into a unified narrative, since the movements from scene to scene happen suddenly and without clear indication of change in narrative. This is evident for example when an argument between Jacob and his best friend Bonamy shifts to a character writing Jacob a letter.[5] The omniscient 'eye' of the narrator moves suddenly from the broken coffee-pot to the letter writer's words of invitation.[6] The effect is intensified by the physical gap on the page between these two scenes, which visually creates the experience of a sudden shift in viewpoint, as if the reader were required to 'leap' from narrative fragment to fragment.

Conversely, *Tender Buttons* takes a different approach to displacing the centre through its refusal of conclusive definitions. The sections 'Objects' and 'Food' are comprised of dictionary-like poems, in which a word (or the title) is followed by a 'definition' (the poem itself). For example, a poem titled 'A new cup and a saucer' reads: 'Enthusiastically hurting a clouded yellow bud and saucer,

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[3] Ibid., 72-73.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 139.

[6] Ibid.

enthusiastically so is the bite in the ribbon.'[7] Rather than literally defining what a cup and a saucer are, the poem compares these everyday objects to a 'clouded yellow bud', a sense of 'enthusiasm' and the violent edge of 'hurting' and 'bite'. The reader can thus sense a feeling of excitement at getting a new possession in an indirect and associative way. As is apparent here, these 'definitions' do not match any conventional and familiar concepts with their subject matter. These 'definition-poems' disturb the conventional idea of signification since they present a pointedly incongruent and unconventional relationship between the signifieds and signifiers of words.[8] Rather, they rely on a sense of metaphorical association – they combine seemingly disparate and unrelated words and then freely decide that these are to be read as being somehow connected. This metaphorical process undoes itself and moves constantly into new combinations, since the nature of free association is to constantly shift elsewhere. This is apparent in the four separate poems titled 'Chicken' that follow each other directly.[9] The definition of 'chickenness' is constantly shifting as the poems constantly recreate fresh viewpoints to juxtapose with the repetition of the title. The 'dictionary-poems' therefore end up highlighting the arbitrary and artificial nature of signification, since they force the reader to connect words with their meanings in wholly metaphorical ways. This shows how the process of signification is not dependent upon stable, 'essential' meanings at all, but rather on a constant movement of connections.

The different ways these texts achieve a 'lack of a centre' resonates strongly with Breton's idea of an 'elsewhere' in his *First Manifesto of Surrealism*. In his manifesto, Breton expounds on his ideas about imagination and the unconscious, and their importance to human freedom. He specifically resists the totalising rationalisation of modern life, arguing that imagination must not be reduced to a 'state of slavery'.[10] Later he writes: 'I believe in the future resolution of these

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[7] Gertrude Stein, Tender Buttons, (New York: Dover, [1914] 1997), 11.

[8] Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction, Anniversary ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 84.

[9] Ibid., 35.

[10] Andre Breton, 'From the First Manifesto of Surrealism' in Modernism: An Anthology of

two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, *a surreality*', highlighting the importance of both imaginative and rationalistic attitudes.[11] However, he immediately continues: 'It is in quest of this surreality that I am going, *certain not to find it*' [emphasis added].[12] This points toward the impossibility to grasp any final, fully 'surreal' thing, because it is unattainable in its shifting strangeness. Breton continues this line of argument later on: 'From childhood memories… there emanates a sentiment of being unintegrated, and then later of *having gone astray*, which I hold to be the most fertile that exists'.[13] Here it is specifically the movement away, a step toward something outside centrality, that is seen as the most important. All of this culminates in the final paragraph of the manifesto:

> 'Surrealism […] asserts our complete nonconformism clearly enough so that there can be no question of translating it, at the trial of the real world, as evidence for the defense. It could, on the contrary, only serve to justify the complete state of distraction […] It is living and ceasing to live that are imaginary solutions. Existence is elsewhere.'[14]

Breton's strange notion seems to posit that the 'quest of surreality' is existence itself, which is fundamentally a movement somewhere outside of itself: a lack of concentration that leads the mind to step 'elsewhere', this 'elsewhere' being left completely undefined. Surrealism for Breton is a force that constantly renews itself through its continuous search for difference.

This elusive, undefined and unstable 'elsewhere' of surrealism is easily found in *Jacob's Room* because it refuses to arrive at a definable centre, constantly turning

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Sources and Documents, ed. by V. Kolocotroni, J. Goldman and O. Taxidou, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, [1924] 1998), 308.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 308-309.

[13] Ibid., 310.

[14] Ibid., 311.

away from it. The resemblance between Woolf's depiction of inner and outer life and Breton's ideas on reality and imagination has been previously noted by Amy Bromley, who writes that 'in the use of strange and fluid perspectives, the juxtaposition of incongruous images, and in moments of vision or reverie, Woolf and the Surrealists alter the texture and appearance of what we usually consider to be realistic.' [15] She identifies the source of this as the dialectical relationship of dream and reality. Rather than synthesising this dialectic into something clearly defined, they retain 'a gap' between each other that enables a continuous combination of subjects and objects.[16] This 'gap' is similar to Breton's 'elsewhere': 'In the gap that always still separates subject and object is the potential space of "elsewhere" […] There is a resonance here with Woolf's search for "the essential thing," which is always "moving off, or on"'.[17] As this comparison with Woolf shows, the 'elsewhere's entire function is movement, a repeated 'going astray' which retains its own newness and strangeness. Indeed, the constant shifting of perspectives and refusal to define characters in *Jacob's Room* is a search for this 'elsewhere', which cannot be conclusively ever found. This is also exemplified in how the narrator compares people of London with pictures in books, which we 'turn over and over' in search of the one we want.[18] The comparison quickly becomes metafictional: 'It is the same with books. What do we seek through millions of pages? Still hopefully turning pages – oh, here is Jacob's room.'[19] Here we seem to suddenly 'find' what we have been looking for in the novel – namely, the novel itself, *Jacob's Room* – only through constantly turning away from it, constantly looking for something else, or for an 'elsewhere' to be.

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[15] Amy Bromley, 'Virginia Woolf's Surrealist Situation of the Object,' Virginia Woolf

Miscellany, No 85, Spring 2014, 21.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Woolf, Jacob's Room, 132.

[19] Ibid.

In comparison, *Tender Buttons* is intimately concerned with 'the elsewhere' through its previously mentioned metaphorical style. The collection has often been compared to cubism and Stein herself has been compared to the painter Pablo Picasso.[20] Jayne L. Walker argues that like Picasso's paintings, Stein's writing changed from 'metonymic' to 'metaphoric' in Roman Jakobson's linguistic terms, 'metonymic' referring to close association of signifiers while 'metaphoric' to their radical combinations.[21] This shift privileged a collage-like attitude to writing, creating 'still-life' poems that depend upon relationships of juxtaposition between otherwise unconnectable words.[22] This is apparent for example in the poem 'A Sound': 'Elephant beaten with candy and little pops and chews all bolts and reckless reckless rats, this is this.'[23] 'A Sound' is here connected to an imaginary sequence of elephants, candies and rats in an attempt to convey a sound through a visual metaphor. I argue that this metaphorical nature is in itself a process of moving 'elsewhere' through the displacement of the centre. Certainly, the juxtaposition of objects with seemingly disparate descriptions echoes Breton's search for surrealism through putting the real and the imaginary together. As Ariane Mildenberg writes:

> 'In each of the prose poems in *Tender Buttons*, Stein challenges us, the readers, to bracket the "outside" names and definitions of things in order to unfold our subjective "inside" perceptions of them… All our habits of speech and thought must primarily be put out of play so that a new conceptual and perceptual logic can show itself in all its "splendour" through the cracks'.[24]

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[20] Jayne L Walker, 'Tender Buttons: The Music of Present Tense' in The Making of a Modernist:

Gertrude Stein from 'Three Lives' to 'Tender Buttons', (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984),

129-131.

[21] Ibid., 131.

[22] Ibid.,134.

[23] Stein, Tender Buttons, 15.

[24] Ariane Mildenberg, 'Seeing Fine Substances Strangely: Phenomenology in Gertrude Stein's

Tender Buttons', Studia Phaenomenologica, 8/2008, 269.

Here the meeting of the 'outside' and 'inside' in by way of metaphor creates a sense of 'splendour' through its resistance to logical, definable discourse. 'The elsewhere' Breton sees as the goal of surrealism can be located in this functioning of the metaphor itself. The chain of associations that starts moving upon the creation of the metaphor leads us to the same 'gap' that Woolf's constant shifting of viewpoints does. *Tender Buttons* could therefore be compared to surrealism as well as cubism, since its search for the 'elsewhere' concurs with Stein's command to 'act so that there is no use in a centre'.[25] Crucially, this does not deny the existence of a centre – it makes it useless and looks away from it to sustain the continuous chain of metaphorical difference. It rather undoes a centre than denies that it has ever existed, for the sake of finding out what is outside of it in the 'elsewhere'.

These concerns with the 'elsewhere' and the lack of a centre can be re-evaluated through the work of Emmanuel Levinas and the ethics of facing the Other. Ethics is for Levinas about the encounter with the Other, meaning something wholly outside and different from oneself.[26] The Other must therefore be fundamentally undefinable, since for it to be definable, it would need to somehow resemble the self, because it is only one's own self that one can define. It would otherwise cease to be entirely Other. This for Levinas is an ethical concern – if the Other is forced to give up its full difference, its being is violated. One's responsibility towards the Other is therefore envisioned through the symbol of the 'face', which 'emerges as the emblem of everything that fundamentally resists categorization, containment or comprehension'.[27] This 'face' must be 'faced' without attempting to reduce it in any way into sameness. We are ethically obliged to view difference with radical respect. In his book *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas moves from these basic concerns to a more comprehensive ethics of alterity. This largely concerns itself with a notion of

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[25] Stein, Tender Buttons, 43.

[26] Seán Hand, Emmanuel Levinas, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 36-37.

[27] Ibid., 42.

'saying', which resembles a pure signifying power before it is reified into a verbal sign or into the 'said'.[28] This signifying 'saying' sustains the difference and alterity of the Other while the established sign that is 'said' reduces it to sameness through 'thematization of being'.[29] Levinas insists that this signifying power is never fully exhausted even if it enters a comprehensible, interpretable sign. Instead it must carry on 'saying' in order to keep itself unresolved and undefined – in other words, to keep itself ethically responsible towards the absolute difference of the Other.[30] Thus, there needs to be a constant movement of undefined 'saying' towards the Other which does not reach the Other, except only through its movement towards it. This resembles Breton's surrealist 'elsewhere', but in a specifically ethical sense. A movement 'elsewhere' that is achieved by 'a lack of a centre' becomes ethically imperative since it is a movement towards facing the undefinable and uncategorizable Other.

Indeed, the ethical facing of the Other is a crucial aspect of how 'Tender Buttons' continually 'looks elsewhere'. As noted previously, *Tender Buttons* argues that we must 'act so that there is no use in a centre' in order to undo the existing centre and find 'the elsewhere'. This is an ethical argument, which gives us responsibility to choose to act for difference rather than against it and to enter the metaphorical association process to truly face alterity as it is. The collection is therefore pointedly difficult to interpret exactly because it resists the reader's impulse to make 'said' what it is constantly in the process of 'saying'. As Jayne L. Walker points out, *Tender Buttons* is in its metaphorical spirit also something 'to play with': 'What it offers is not truth but a joyous transgression of rationality, an imaginative liberation from our habitual sense of 'reality''. [31] When looked at together with Levinas' thinking, the ethical recognition of alterity becomes infused with a sense of play. This is apparent in many of collection's poems, since many of them use the juxtaposition of words to create a sense of humour

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[28] Ibid., 52.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Walker, 'Music of Present Tense', 148.

or lightness while also retaining their sense of ethical appreciation: 'This is no authority for the abuse of cheese. What language can instruct any fellow. A shining breakfast, a breakfast shining, no dispute, no practice, nothing, nothing at all.'[32] Here the glorification of breakfast into a 'shining' event, where cheese cannot be 'abused', is humorous through its bizarre combination of associations. It simultaneously requires the reader to approach breakfast from an entirely new, joyful and respectful viewpoint, allowing 'no dispute' to its brilliance. Ethical responsibility, then, is in *Tender Buttons* not a matter of grave and solemn emotion, but a joyful play of signification, which leads to a sense of wonder at the experience of the 'elsewhere' gained through the play. Ethical responsibility in facing otherness does not need to be a painful, negative experience, but a matter of pleasure: 'The reason that nothing is hidden is that there is no suggestion of silence. No song is sad. A lesson is of consequence.'[33] To claim that 'no song is sad', that there is joy in all saying, is a strong statement. It is however freeing in its celebration of 'singing' itself – or in Levinas' terms, of 'saying' itself.

The same concern with the ethical treatment of the Other is also apparent in *Jacob's Room* although this is achieved through feelings of interpersonal respect and love rather than of joyful play. I argue that the lack of definition of Jacob is in itself an ethical act. It gives Jacob the possibility to stay as the Other to the narrator and, by extension, to the reader, and resists 'explaining away' the loss we feel at his death. This is why during the final scene of the novel, where Bonamy and his mother Betty Flanders are visiting Jacob's rooms after his death, the focus is rather on the physical space and his belongings in it.[34] This again brings the focus on what surrounds him and leaves him undefined, causing Betty Flanders to shout 'such confusion everywhere!'[35] The lack of definition is here an attempt to preserve his life and being as the strange Other. As Rachel

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[32] Stein, Tender Buttons, 26.

[33] Ibid., 45.

[34] Woolf, Jacob's Room, 246-247.

[35] Ibid., 247.

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[32] Stein, Tender Buttons, 26.

[33] Ibid., 45.

[34] Woolf, Jacob's Room, 246-247.

[35] Ibid., 247.

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Hollander argues, Levinas' ethics are central to *Jacob's Room* in its refusal to sympathise with its characters:

> '… by insisting on the impossibility of easy sympathy, by confronting the reader with the limits of knowledge and representation, the novel lays the groundwork for a different kind of receptivity: not an understanding of the other built on knowledge and talk […] but rather the unpredictable and almost indescribable moment of intimacy'.[36]

This kind of 'moment of intimacy' is recognizable on the last page of the novel: 'A harsh and unhappy voice cried something unintelligible. And then suddenly all the leaves seemed to raise themselves. 'Jacob! Jacob!', cried Bonamy, standing by the window. The leaves sank down again.'[37] Bonamy's shouting is set side by side with the 'harsh and unhappy voice', thus juxtaposing his cry for Jacob with the unintelligible cry outside. Emotionally this moment is loaded with love, affection and sadness, but Bonamy leaves the core reason of these feelings unintelligible in order to respect Jacob's position as absolute Other from himself. In *Jacob's Room*, love is therefore seen as the absolute respect for the Other in all its difference and undefinability.

Both *Jacob's Room* and *Tender Buttons* thus show the textual side of Levinas' ethics of the Other. To exemplify this further, I will look at longer quotes from *Jacob's Room* and *Tender Buttons* to illustrate this ethical imperative in action. In her attempt to once again define Jacob, the narrator paints a depressing view of human interaction:

> 'In any case life is but a procession of shadows, and God knows why it is that we embrace them so eagerly, and see them depart with such anguish, being shadows. And why, if this and much more than this is

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[36] Rachel Hollander, 'Novel Ethics: Alterity and Form in Jacob's Room,' Twentieth-Century Literature, volume 53, 1/2007, 62.

[37] Woolf, Jacob's Room, 247.

true, why are we yet surprised in the window corner by a sudden vision that the young man in the chair is of all things in the world the most real, the most solid, the best known to us–why indeed? For the moment after we know nothing about him.

Such is the manner of our seeing. Such the conditions of our love.'[38]

This passage supports the earlier argument concerning *Jacob's Room*, that to love is to face the unknowability of the Other without attempting to alter it. The narrator underlines the impossibility to fully know or possess anyone else by comparing humans to shadows, and also questions how it is possible to feel affection for them. The crucial detail here is the definition of unknowability as 'the conditions of our love' – affection for others is possible exactly because they are unknowable, because that is the only way we can face them as the Other that they are. Love cannot survive the violence of the definition, but rather only through the acceptance of full Otherness, which can only be met in 'sudden visions'. The ending of *Tender Buttons* shows a similar sort of faltering of understanding, only on a more joyful note:

'The care with which the rain is wrong and the green is wrong and the white is wrong, the care with which there is a chair and plenty of breathing. The care with which there is incredible justice and likeness, all this makes a magnificent asparagus, and also a fountain.'[39]

This passage identifies failure of understanding as an aspect of 'caring' – to fail at defining the rain or the green is an act of caring, both in the sense of affection and precision. The focus on the incredibility of 'justice and likeness' brings together the notions of ethical facing of the Other and the metaphorical act of attempting to find a 'likeness' through comparing disparate things. Defining things in a way that is 'wrong', or in unconventional and metaphorical, leads to an ethical understanding of their constantly shifting difference and to a deeper way of understanding them with 'care'. This is highlighted by the ending, which

[38] Woolf, Jacob's Room, 96.

[39] Stein, Tender Buttons, 52.

at first seems to be sure that this leads to 'a magnificent asparagus', but then adds to this static image with 'and also' the moving image of 'a fountain', as if unable to stop from going more and more 'astray'. The movement of signification does not cease, but rather continuously searches for new routes of expression.

Jacob's Room and *Tender Buttons* both interact seriously with a sense of 'a lack of a centre'. They both destabilize their own centres – the former through its characterization and focalization, the latter by questioning the signification-process itself – in order to find a Bretonic 'elsewhere'. This 'elsewhere' is undefinable by default, because it is a constantly shifting sense of difference. Emmanuel Levinas' concept of the Other, and his ethics of absolute respect for its Otherness, illuminate the search of this 'elsewhere' as an ethical process. These concerns are apparent in both texts, in *Jacob's Room* through its discussion of love and in *Tender Buttons* through its notion of linguistic play. Both texts also widen our understanding of what it means to read with respect – the lack of centrality forces the reader to accept this uncertainty as a crucial function in the texts, rather than as their faults. They require the reader to understand that they cannot conclusively know what the texts want to say. Rather, they must stay open to whatever the texts end up 'straying into', trusting that the texts will carry them along.

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'Heritage Wounds' and Ideologies behind Spoliation:

The Importance of Provenance Research for Nazi-looted Art

By Lilith Charlet

Works of art, through their content and style, tell us about our history. Similarly, their ownership story and the places they have travelled through - their provenance - can help historians to understand underlying ideologies of certain periods. During the Second World War, the Nazi regime stole hundreds of thousands of pieces of art and objects all over Europe. Currently, Nazi-looted art is sitting on the walls of our national museums, locked up in Swiss bank vaults or hanging in living rooms. [1] During and after the war, these works travelled all over Europe and the USA, sometimes reappearing on the international market, sometimes hidden from their rightful owners. Warfare has always provided fertile soil for the spoliation of works of art, but the Nazi thefts, because they were driven by a desire to eradicate identities, clearly mark a turning point for art historians. During and after the war, art crossed borders, turning the Nazi-looting issue into an international one. Seventy-three years after the end of the war, I will argue that it is imperative to engage firmly with provenance research. Firstly, because looted art is always linked with deeply emotional symbolism that provenance research needs to address. Secondly, because the relationship Nazis had to art illustrates their ideology. I intend to use the term "ideology" here as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary: 'a systematic scheme of ideas, usually relating to politics, economics, or society and forming the basis of action or

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[1] Aurelien Breeden, "Art Looted by Nazis Gets a New Space at the Louvre. But Is It Really Home?," The New York Times, February 8, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/08/world/europe/louvre-nazi-looted-art.html.

policy.'[2] Theoretical and rhetorical writings such as *Mein Kampf* created a race theory that seemed reasonable and scientific and served the National Socialist regime as the justification for the extermination of millions of people. Hitler drew on the long tradition of supposedly scientific theories of race established by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, as well as on Darwinian theories of evolution to create the leading ideology of the Nazi Party. On this basis what I mean by "Nazi ideology" is the theoretical background of racial hierarchy and the eugenic ambition of improving the Aryan race (through the destruction of "parasites") on which their action relied.

Before the Second World War, patron and publisher of the art magazine *Das Kunstblatt* Paul Westheim was a famous collector of German Expressionism.[3] Due to his radical opinions, he was forced to flee Germany for Paris in 1933. Before leaving, he entrusted his collection to his friend and lover Charlotte Weidler. 'When the German Wehrmacht troops marched into Paris on June 14, 1940, Paul Westheim was forced to flee once again – this time in a mad rush and without even … the list of his art collection with photos and reproductions.'[4] Finally, he managed to enter Mexico in 1941. All through the war and during his exile, he maintained correspondence with Weidler, wherein she expressed her anxieties concerning the fate of his collection. However, as soon as the war was over they lost contact, despite his attempts to reach her. She disappeared with the secret of the collection's fate. He died in 1963, having spent the rest of his life desperately searching for his collection, convinced that it had been destroyed in a bombing. After his death, some paintings started to reappear on the market, revealing the central secret of this case: Weidler had kept the paintings and brought them to New York. Discovering this, Mariana Frenk-Westheim, Westheim's widow, declared that she was 'glad Paul Westheim didn't

[2] "Ideology, n." OED Online, accessed March 8, 2019,

http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/91016?redirectedFrom=ideology

[3] Monika Tatzkow and Melissa Müller, Lost Lives, Lost Art, ed. by Jacqueline Decter, trans. Jennifer Taylor and Tammi Reichel (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2010).

[4] Tatzkow and Müller, Lost Lives, Lost Art, 39.

live to see his vague suspicions [concerning Weidler's honesty] confirmed. That would have been horrible for him.'[5]

In *Lost Lives, Lost Art*, Monica Tatzkow describes in detail Westheim's dramatic story. The title of this book reflects what this specific story demonstrates: the history of Nazi-looted art tells us about human desire and emotions – about individual human lives. Art is deeply linked with questions of identity, religion, love, betrayal, secrecy, flight, death and grief. All these emotions are the 'driving forces'[6] of the quest of the dispossessed to get their looted art back. To Bénédicte Savoy, a historian of art working on heritage spoliations, 'it seems nearly impossible to write the history of heritage movements without taking into account this multiple depth of emotions.'[7] When leading raids on Jewish families' apartments, the Nazis completely emptied the rooms, stealing everything from precious paintings to tables, chairs, carpets or glasses. In a study about identity construction through consumption, Aaron Ahuvia declares that 'things we love have a strong influence on our sense of who we are'[8] and that they 'provide a connected identity from past, to present, and into possible imagined futures.'[9] Therefore, the Nazi spoliations reflect the regime's desire to eradicate a culture, religion and identity for the benefit of another and so acts as an embodiment of the National Socialist regime's racist ideology.[10] Even when these objects were not destroyed but sold or given away, Nazi theft of Jewish collections and properties are synonymous with a symbolic annihilation of these

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[5] Ibid., 43.

[6] Rebecca L. Garrett, "Time for a change? Restoring Nazi-Looted Art to Its Rightful Owners," Pace International Law Review 12 (Fall 2000): 370.

[7] Bénédicte Savoy, "La mémoire restituée des œuvres volées [The restored memory of stolen art], » interview by Cristelle Terroni, La vie des idées.fr, June 26, 2015.

[8] Aaron C. Ahuvia, "Beyond the Extended Self: Loved Objects and Consumers' Identity Narratives," Journal of Consumer Research 32, no. 1 (June 2005): 171.

[9] Ibid., 172.

[10] Stephanie Cuba, "Stop the Clock: The Case to Suspend the Statute of Limitations on Claims for Nazi-Looted Art,' Cardozo Arts & Ent. L.J., vol. 17 (1999): 469-474.

families before 'ultimately [moving] at their physical annihilation.'[11] They 'stole much more than mere assets. … [They] were stealing the soul, meaning and cultural standards of these collectors.'[12]

National collections, as opposed to private collections, can be read as the embodiment of a country's desire for a coherent national identity, aesthetic and history.[13] When it comes to Germany, the notion of "German art" had been very controversial before the war.[14] 'Hitler recognized that art must play a major role in the building of his ideal German nation.'[15] Hitler and Adolf Ziegler, the president of the *Reichskammer der bildenden Künste*, led a war on modern art, stripping German museums of 16,000 works of modern art, including Kirchner, Heckel or Beckmann. [16] The Nazi regime aimed at resolving Germany's internal conflict over the definition of German art by making a clear choice: modern art was a 'disease'[17], a 'threat to German morality;'[18] it was to be confiscated, destroyed or sold away, while neo-classical imagery and architecture was to be promoted.[19] The construction of the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* in 1937 and the failed *Führermuseum* project in Linz are two examples of this attempt to present a consistent definition of German art. The choice of a classical style for this first building was not innocent. By placing collections that were supposed to

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[11] Tatzkow and Müller, Lost Lives, 9.

[12] Hector Feliciano, The Lost Museum, trans. by the author and Tim Bent (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

[13] See for example J.M. Fladmark, Heritage and Museums: Shaping National Identity (Aberdeen: Robert Gordon University, 2000) or Flora E.S. Kaplan, Museum and the making of 'ourselves': the role of objects in national identity (New York: Leicester University Press, 1994)

[14] Hans Belting, "Introduction to the English Edition," in The Germans and their art: a troublesome relationship (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998): 1-32.

[15] Mary-Margaret Goggin, "'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art: The National Socialist Case," Art Journal, vol. 50, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 84.

[16] Ibid., 89.

[17] Adolf Hitler, « Speech Inaugurating the 'Great Exhibition of German Art'" in Art in Theory 1900-1990, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 423.

[18] Ibid., 86.

[19] Peter Jelavich, "National socialism, art and power in the 1930s," Past & Present 164, no. 1 (1999): 256.

represent the essence of German art in a neo-classical building, Hitler clearly displayed his desire to be affiliated with classical imagery. It expressed once more that modernity with its nearly abstract forms was to disappear in favour of, for example, Adolf Wissel's idealised families or Thorak and Breker's classicised muscular masculine bodies.

Surely, the most striking illustrations of using art as a means to convey a new definition of 'German-ness' are the two 1937 exhibitions, *Degenerate Art* and *Great German Art* in Munich. If the pillages of public and private collections of modern art were not enough, the Nazis used these two parallel exhibitions to stigmatise artists even more. Partly because of their geographical proximity, these two exhibitions acted as two sides of the same coin in the propaganda agenda of the Third Reich. They both presented only art from Germany, but in two very different ways. The first one displayed modern art in a chaotic way; it presented these works as emerging from sick minds, as a timeless art that no one was supposed to reproduce. The second one, on the other hand, was full of classical imagery, of families and German people. The two, grouped together, were there to impose on the public a strict uniform aesthetic appreciation of what "healthy" and "pure" German art needed to be. It also served as a way to classify Jewish artists, and hence the Jewish population as non-German, by labelling them in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition as 'Jewish, all too Jewish.'[20] Hence these two exhibitions functioned as a way to stigmatise modern artists as being sick, degenerate, and to define Jewish identity as opposed to and incompatible with German identity. Then the art exhibited in the *Great German Art* offered what *was* compatible with German identity. In brief, these two exhibitions tried to set up imaginary frontiers of what German identity is and should be, as if 'German-ness' could be circumscribed in the same way as Germany was. By doing this, the Nazi regime attempted to artificially construct and redefine what it meant to be German.

The idealised classical bodies and families presented in the *Great German Art* exhibition emphasised the racial theories underlying the Nazi agenda. By

[20] Neil Levi, "'Judge for yourselves !' – The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle," October, vol. 85 (Summer 1998): 44.

creating hegemonic depictions of what being German (and hence Aryan) was, they excluded everything that differed – that is what was "Jewish." These two exhibitions were an embodiment of the Nazi ideology that, using medical and biological language, promoted "healthy" and "pure" art, rather than the so-called "sick" and "corrupted" modern art. It shows how by including and excluding certain styles, art was used as propaganda to create a unique German national identity that corresponded to the Nazi's ideals. The Nazi's use of art, whether it was thefts or exhibition practices, was intrinsically linked with their political agenda and driving ideology.

Art that was looted from German and French National collections provided material to shape this ideal image. Through looting Jewish collectors and families, the regime wanted to erase them from their new definition of German identity, while national 'French culture was for some Nazi officials [and Hitler particularly] not only admirable but desirable; the idea was, then, not to annihilate it but to capture it,'[21] and to include it into this new definition. However, the distinction between the desire to eradicate and the desire to capture is not that easy to draw. Most of the works of art and books stolen in France were owned by private collectors, mostly Jewish, like the Rotschilds or Paul Rosenberg, and not by the state. While stealing the totality of Jewish families' properties was undoubtedly aimed at eradicating their cultural identity, it was also a way for the Nazi leaders to amass a huge amount of works for their own private collection or for financial reasons. In other words, the Nazis were erasing identities to build their own upon it. Erasing, or "cleaning", was at the core of the Third Reich's programme of Nazification, which started by "purging" national museums of any form of Modern art. These works were not to be seen by the public, they were labelled as unhealthy, degenerate, because they did not fit the regime's definition of "decent" art.[22]

Overall, Nazi spoliations were driven by the desire either to erase or to appropriate an identity. The importance of researching art potentially stolen by the National Socialist regime (which must involve directly and indirectly coerced

[21] Feliciano, Lost Museum, 16.

[22] Goggin, "'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art, 84-92.

sales[23]) present in museums is then firstly based on ethical reasons. According to Bénédicte Savoy, 'there is something constant when it comes to forced or violent movements of works of art …, it is that the victims or those who consider themselves as victims do not forget about it.'[24] Ironically, the Nazi party ideologists started to conceive in 1940 a list of everything that, according to them, had been stolen from Germany during the Napoleonic wars: the Kümmel Report.[25] The bitterness of these sometimes real, sometimes fantasised spoliations grew for more than a century. It was one of the arguments used by the Nazis to justify leading raids on European collections. They presented these as 'act[s] of symmetrical reparations.'[26] Identities, whether they are individual or national, very often base themselves on heritage, and so its pillage is never forgotten. The violent loss of heritage is a loss of identity and represents a deep trauma that transmits from one generation to another. To describe these traumas, Savoy uses the powerful term of 'heritage wounds.' In the case of the National Socialist regime, the Kümmel Report, that claimed artefacts stolen in the early 19th century, exemplified the power of transmission of these heritage wounds. It shows how wounds, when they relate to identities, create a resentment that grows with time. Accordingly, if not taken seriously, the Nazi pillages and destruction of collections, particularly Jewish, will very likely result in a growing rancour and a feeling of injustice.[27]

It is then clear that provenance researchers have a crucial role to play in preventing this. The complex web of emotions, taboos and questions of identity

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[23] Andrew Adler, "Expanding the Scope of Museums' Ethical Guidelines With Respect to Nazi-looted Art: Incorporating Restitution Claims Based on Private Sales Made as a Direct Result of Persecution," International Journal of Cultural Property 14 (2007): 57-84.

[24] Bénédicte Savoy, « L'art dégénéré 4/4 : La blessure mémorielle [Degenerate Art 4/4 : the memorial wound], », by Christine Lecerf and Franck Lilin, France Culture, May 24, 2018, audio, 49:05-51:42, https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/lsd-la-serie-documentaire/lart-degenere-44-la-blessure-memorielle-0

[25] Feliciano, Lost Museum, 24.

[26] Ibid., 26.

[27] see Bénédicte Savoy: 'if we do not take this feeling of dispossession and heritage wound seriously, we will produce a hatred … that leads from world wars to world wars' in Savoy, "L'art dégénéré 4/4," 2018.

surrounding the Holocaust-era needs to be confronted and dealt with. However, Nazi-looted art is everywhere; it has no defined borders or country. As a result, the main difficulty of leading such research is that this requires multiple skills, such as extended knowledge in international law, history of art, and the ability to speak multiple languages. In addition, dealers and auction houses are often unwilling to reveal their records and many museums are still reticent to start researching their collections.[28] Seven decades after the war, a huge number of states are concerned with these issues, which makes it even more complex and delicate.

In addition, provenance research is extremely painstaking and time-consuming, often lasting for decades and very rarely ending in restitution. Very few people can afford to hire a full-time specialist lawyer for so long, which drastically reduces the possibility of claiming restitution. Moreover, even when qualified specialists can be hired, the specific conditions of exile and war render the investigation even more difficult. This was the case for Marianna Frenk-Westheim, Paul Westheim's widow, who could never recover documents that proved her ownership rights. Under these circumstances, the ethical responsibility should not and cannot rest only on families that have been looted because this would be a second punishment for them. Therefore it is urgent that governments continue to take legal action, such as the Washington Principles[29], regarding Holocaust-era provenance research, in order to promote international cooperation, more accessible and transparent archives.[30] Heritage

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[28] Jonathan Petropoulos, "Art Dealer Networks in the Third Reich and in the Postwar Period," Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 52 (2016): 546-565.

[29] The Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art were ratified by the 44 countries that participated in the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets in December 1998. They define how museums should be working towards identification and restitution of art looted by the Nazis. https://www.lootedartcommission.com/Washington-principles

[30] see for example Cuba, « Stop the Clock » and Andrew Adler, "Expanding the Scope of Museums' Ethical Guidelines With Respect to Nazi-looted Art: Incorporating Restitution Claims Based on Private Sales Made as a Direct Result of Persecution," International Journal of Cultural Property 14 (2007): 57-84.

wounds cannot be healed, but the current 'historical amnesia'[31] surrounding Nazi-looted art research as well as the financial difficulties to lead this research leave very few possibilities for the victims to at least move on. Institutions, however, can engage with provenance research. When they do finally welcome restitution claims, they symbolically agree to face their past and accept their responsibility. Furthermore, when Jewish individuals now ask for a restitution, they are still very often accused of doing this only for the financial aspect of restitutions.[32] Sadly, this shows how antisemitism is still very much present and linked with these questions. That is why it is crucial to listen seriously to individual restitution claims and do whatever we can to restore works of art when required. By doing so, institutions not only take their responsibility, but also symbolically stand against antisemitism. For all of these reasons, art historians and nations have to use the powerful tool that provenance research is to deal with the complex emotional symbolism linked to Nazi-looted art and the Second World War more broadly.

Besides helping to address heritage wounds, researching the provenance of pieces of art provides us with details about the collecting practices of different periods. In the case of Nazi-looted art, precise records of a paintings' ownership highlight what kind of art was valued by the Nazis and what it says about their definition of being German. As stated previously, the Nazis' raids were unquestionably striving for the destruction of individual identities, mainly Jewish. Moreover, modernity, as well as everything labelled "unhealthy" by Hitler, was associated with Jewishness, even if the artist was not Jewish. Hitler and the Nazi leaders' actions regarding art were not just about aesthetics, they were clearly political. The *Degenerate Art* and *Great German Art* Munich exhibitions were designed as propaganda[33]. Art was propaganda.

Provenance research has allowed art historians to understand these mechanisms. Studying the story of individual pieces of art illuminates the ideologies behind collecting and exhibiting practices. It is one of the most

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[31] Petropoulos, "Art Dealer Networks," 563.

[32] Tatzkow and Müller, Lost Lives, 7.

[33] Neli, « 'Judge for yourselves !' »

important art historical disciplines because tracing the history of collection and individual artwork that travelled from one hand to another and that sometimes crossed many national frontiers is the basis on which every historian of art writes. In the case of Nazi-looted art however, its implications are not only historical, but also address urging ethical and emotional needs. In this sense, the Second World War lootings of art mark a turning point for the practice of art history by exposing the significance of provenance research. Rightful owners of looted art need to be given back the cultural space and existence that was stolen from them during the war and our only way to achieve this is through in-depth provenance research. Even if Nazi thefts are some of the most spectacular examples of violent lootings, this does not only apply to art stolen at that time. Currently, voices are rising up to demand the investigations and eventually restitution of art acquired in colonised countries. In 2018, Bénédicte Savoy and Felwine Sarr tackled these issues in a ground-breaking report asking for the immediate restitution of art stolen by French colonists in Africa.[34] There is still a long way to go in rethinking our museum collection with more consideration for ethics and provenance research will doubtlessly need to be part of this process.

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[34] Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, Rapport sur la restitution du patrimoine culturel africain. Vers une nouvelle éthique relationnelle [Report on the restitution of African cultural heritage. Towards new relational ethics] (Paris : Ministère de la Culture, 2018), pdf, http://restitutionreport2018.com/sarr_savoy_fr.pdf

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⸺   « L'art dégénéré 4/4 : La blessure mémorielle [Degenerate Art 4/4 : the memorial wound]. » Interview by Christine Lecerf and Franck Lilin, *France Culture,* May 24, 2018. Audio, 49:05-51:42. https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/lsd-la-serie-documentaire/lart-degenere-44-la-blessure-memorielle-0.

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Meaning and the Scepticist Worry – Locke's Theory of Perception

By L. von Lupke

This essay gives a response to the scepticist worry that the resemblance between the outside world and our experience of it cannot be proven. Jonathan F. Bennett shows that this worry arises from an interpretation of John Locke as an indirect realist. This interpretation focusses on Locke's distinction between our ideas of objects and these objects' qualities themselves. Bennett shows that if we only ever have indirect access to real objects, there can be no recourse to empirical proof for the claim of the resemblance between the outside world and our experience of it.[1] J.L. Mackie claims that Bennett conflates two problems: that of acquiring a meaning for the term "outside world" and that of the justification for believing in the existence of this outside world beyond our experience. Mackie shows that these problems can be separated and answered.[2] This essay approaches the meaning problem, not by disproving Bennett's scepticist worry, but by showing its triviality. It claims that the search for meaning beyond what our mind creates as meaning is in itself meaningless.

In this essay, I will show how Locke's perceptual theory can give rise to sceptical consequences and subsequently evaluate how severe these sceptical consequences are. For this purpose, I will present a reading of Locke's perceptual theory, which interprets Locke to be an indirect realist and which focuses on his distinction between ideas and qualities. Jonathan F. Bennett shows that this indirect realism gives rise to scepticism since there can be no recourse

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[1] Jonathan F. Bennett, Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 69.

[2] Mackie, Problems from Locke, 55.

to empirical evidence supporting the claim of resemblance between experience and outside world. J.L. Mackie claims that Bennett's challenge conflates the meaning and the justification problem concerning the existence of an outside world and shows that these problems can be separated and answered. Finally, I will present my own approach to the meaning problem and show that while Bennett's sceptical worry is legitimate, it is overall trivial since an attempt to find meaning beyond what our mind creates as meaning is in itself meaningless.

The most common reading of John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) holds that Locke has an indirect realist theory of perception. According to this reading, Locke postulates the existence of a real world outside of our perception, which contains real objects and to which we may indirectly have access. At the heart of this is his distinction between ideas and qualities. Ideas exist in the mind and are what the mind makes of the impulses from outside. Qualities instead are the powers within objects to cause ideas in our minds. Our ideas of objects are not like the objects themselves: "we may not think… that [ideas] are exactly the images and resemblances of something inherent in the subject."[3] For Locke, the process of perception is one of the mind creating ideas from the impulses our senses receive from the outside.[4] We do not have access to anything other than our ideas and are thus permanently separated from the objects that cause them. Locke justifies our belief in the existence of the outside world and our belief that we can have access to knowledge about it by claiming that some of our ideas – our ideas of primary qualities like extension, figure, number, and motion – resemble the qualities as they exist in the objects themselves.

The distinction between ideas and qualities in Locke gives rise to sceptical consequences because of his undetermined notion of resemblance and thus lack of explanation, and subsequently of justification, for holding that primary qualities resemble our ideas of them. Bennett's argument latches onto Locke's

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[3] John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Woolhouse, R. (ed.), (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 134.

[4] Locke, Essay, 142.

distinction between ideas and qualities, Locke's undetermined notion of resemblance, and his simultaneous claim that our ideas of primary qualities resemble the real objects. Bennett claims that the question about the relationship between ideas and qualities as Locke puts it gives rise to sceptical consequences. Locke's notion of resemblance is of empirical nature so that the question of the resemblance between qualities and ideas is one of "setting the entire range of facts about sensory states over against the entire range of facts about the objective realm and then looking for empirical links between them."[5] Bennett argues that this logical divorce between ideas and qualities (or objects) invites scepticism regarding the existence of a real world beyond our experience. Locke has set up the relation between ideas and real objects in such a way that his attempts to reject total scepticism on an empirical basis must fail. It fails because if all we ever have access to are our sensory experiences, or ideas, then we cannot bridge the gap between these ideas and an assumed reality of objects beyond our ideas of them. There is a veil of perception between our sensory experiences and the real world that we are unable to pass through.

Mackie critiques Bennett's representation of Locke's theory of perception and its sceptical consequences. He holds that Bennett conflates two separate problems in his assessment of Locke's theory; the meaning problem and the justification problem. The meaning problem asks this: "if all that we are directly acquainted with is ideas (or experiential content, or percepts, etc.) how can we meaningfully assert or even speculate that there is a further reality which they represent: how can we give meaning to the terms that will express this speculation?"[6] The justification problem, on the other hand, is concerned with this question: "if all that we are directly acquainted with is ideas (etc.), how can they give us any good reason to believe that there is a further reality which they represent, or that such a further reality helps to cause our having of them, or that some of them resemble aspects of that reality while others do not."[7] Mackie claims that Bennett conflates these questions in his veil-of-perception problem.

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[5] Jonathan F. Bennett, Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 69.

[6] J.L Mackie, Problems from Locke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 55.

[7] Mackie, Problems from Locke, 55.

The first one, the meaning problem, is logically prior to the justification problem as it is clearly necessary to have a meaning of the concept "further reality" before attempting to justify a belief in it. However, Mackie argues that unless we adopt a verificationist account of meaning, the two problems are distinct from another.

The verificationist account holds that meaning of a statement is tied to its verification through empirical facts. The meaning of a statement is tied to the conditions under which it is true.[8] This is implausible since, according to this account of meaning, there can be no meaning to sentences that do not concern observable reality. A statement like "God is almighty" is by this account meaningless, because whether God is almighty cannot be observed. Furthermore, meaning does not only derive from a statement's truth-conditions but also from the structure of a sentence. There are therefore good reasons not to have a verificationist account of meaning. If we reject such an account, however, the two problems of meaning and of justification are distinct.

According to Mackie, the meaning problem can be tackled by adopting a constructive theory of meaning. Based on our experiences we can construct meaning. Meaning is not restricted to statements that can be evaluated per truth-conditions, but it flows from the structure of language and experience. Grammatical sentences can have meaning even if they do not express a statement that can be verified. We may first learn to use statements by paying attention to the context in which they are used. Yet, this is not the only way in which meaning can be given to linguistic expressions as we also recognise meaning from the structure and meaningful components of sentences, without considering how the statement made by the sentence as a whole can be verified.[9] For Mackie, the meaning problem is solved if we examine how a constructive theory of meaning works in conjunction with the Lockean claim that our mind perceives only our ideas. He argues that our ideas of the world do not include the feature of self-awareness that they are ideas. Put plainly, when we perceive objects, we perceive them as being real and distinct from us. The fact that we

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[8] Mackie, Problems from Locke, 56.

[9] Mackie, Problems from Locke, 57.

view them through our perception is not something we are aware of when perceiving the objects. From this it follows that our experience can provide us with meaning regarding the concept of a world outside of us. Even if we never directly have access to that world, we perceive the world as if we were directly accessing it and thus can attach meaning to the concept of a world beyond our experience.

Once the meaning problem has been answered, the problem concerning how to justify a belief in the existence of real, independent objects comes to the fore. Mackie uses an abductive argument to refute absolute scepticism. This argument claims that an "outline hypothesis" (so called because the details may vary from theory to theory) of the kind that our appearances of real objects are caused by real objects is the best explanation for our experiences of the appearances of real, independent objects around us. Because this "outline hypothesis" is the best explanation of our experience, we should infer its truth. This then provides us with an initial reason to believe in the existence of a world independent from our ideas and with a basis from which we can then justify a belief in further principles of explanation of our ideas and the world like the cause-and-effect model of explanation.[10]

Mackie answers Bennett's scepticism worry by delineating the two problems it is composed of and answering these in turn. I agree with Mackie's analysis of Bennett's worry as one composed of two separate problems: the meaning and the justification problem. However, I want to give a different response to the meaning problem and on the basis of that response show that the justification problem is insignificant. Bennett's scepticism stems from the worry that we cannot use our experiences as empirical proof for the resemblance between our ideas and the qualities in objects. It is the worry that we cannot be acquainted with the objects in themselves and indeed not even our sensory experiences,[11] and thus cannot have a meaningful account of what real, independent objects are. I want to take a different approach to the meaning problem that takes

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[10] Mackie, Problems from Locke, 65-6.

[11] Locke, Essay, 142.

Bennett's worry that we cannot have access to meaning beyond our experience seriously. As Locke puts it: "*So that wherever there is sense,* or *perception, there some idea is actually produced, and present in the understanding.*"[12] This suggests that the act of perception is already a productive act. By creating an idea of the sensory information, the mind forms an interpretation of the sensory information that enables it to think about and make further use of the information. The mind brings the sensory information into a shape with which it can work. In a sense, this brings about two veils of perception, since not only do we only have access to real, independent objects through our sensory information, but we also only have access to our sensory information through our ideas of them. This seems to increase the sceptical worries. However, the answer to the sceptical worries is to attack the basis of their demands. The sceptic demands that there be a bulletproof justification for believing in the resemblance between our experiences and ideas and the independent world. I argue that it is futile to attempt to have recourse to real objects or even to our raw sensory experience of them in order to justify our belief in a resemblance between the two, because it is exactly through this veil (or these veils) of perception that meaning and understanding become possible. Our brain's interpretation and formation of ideas from sensory information is what enables us to use these in our thoughts and minds. It is senseless to demand meaning and justification that go beyond the very act in which meaning and sense are created. With this approach to the meaning problem, the justification problem loses its significance since it is per definition of meaning meaningless to search for justification in believing in what we cannot have a meaningful understanding of. This answer differs from Mackie's since it does not attempt to refute the sceptic's worry but accepts it and tries to show that the worry is trivial. Bennett's sceptical worry is justified but not of overall significance since its search for meaning beyond what we can understand as meaningful is in itself meaningless.

I presented first Bennett's account of the sceptical consequences arising from Locke's perceptual theory and then Mackie's response to Bennett's sceptical worries. I then presented my own answer to the sceptical challenge raised by

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[12] Locke, Essay, 142-3, italics in original.

Bennett and showed that the sceptical worry is based on a flawed belief in a possibility of meaning beyond our veil of perception. Because it is precisely the veil of perception that creates meaning, the search for a meaning beyond it is meaningless and the sceptical worry thus trivial.

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Women in the Zulu state: *Reviewing Eurocentric interpretations of polygamy and its supposed hyper-masculinity*

By Torunn Sørlie

The cult of personality of Shaka Zulu and the conception of masculinity that characterises it, has today become a symbol of the patriarchal nature of pre-colonial states in Southern Africa. These states were supposedly constructed in a way that enslaved women through the system of polygamous marriage, with a form of reverse-dowry known as Lobola, acting as payment for the bride-to-be. However, this narrative relies on two questionable premises. Firstly, that the concept of marriage as defined by the European Christian church is the comparative through which polygamy should be linguistically and culturally translated. And secondly, that the institution of polygamy only placed men in a position of authority and power. This essay aims to explore these premises through questioning the way in which the narrative of Zulu masculinity has allowed for the construction of a historiography that has ignored the political and economic structures of polygamy. Furthermore, I will explore the idea of all-female polygamous unions, and what their role within the centralised state structure of the Zulu state might tell us about the role of women - even prior to Shaka Zulu's consolidation of power. My aim is to allow for an informed reflection on cause and affect of gender-based inequality and the role of masculinity within post-colonial societies through investigating the pre-colonial past.

Within historical discourse there is a continuous perpetuation of the narrative of the male Zulu brute.[1] This image of the 'Zulu Man', personified by the image of Shaka Zulu as a bloodthirsty and relentless leader, gives little room for the

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[1] J. T Tallie, "Queering Natal: Settler Logics and the Disruptive Challenge of Zulu Polygamy" in GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies (2013), 174.

understanding of women's role within the Zulu state beyond that of submission. Colonisers, missionaries, and scholars today who rely on these sources to make their arguments, place the Zulu male and his practice of polygamy in cultural opposition to that of the monogamous European man.[2] Cultural practices of 'marriage', such as Lobola (also referred to as Ilobolo or Ukulobola) and polygamy were by many European sources described with disdain. [3] This contributed to the establishment of a hierarchy of morality that would later justify European policies of domination, such as the 1891 Natal Law Code,[4] as means to help African peoples through teaching them a more 'civilized' way of life. This included controlling cultural, economic, and political systems. 'Marriage' within the Zulu State embodied all three systems. I write 'marriage' because the use of the word is problematic, as it connotes a mainly European and Christian concept of two people bound together through the 'holy union'. Applying this concept to a non-Christian culture and state structure constructs an inaccurate image of the political and economic significance of the practice of moving a woman from one homestead to another.

This essay aims to contrast the image of the hyper-masculine and oppressive Zulu male, which has mainly been perpetuated through colonial and missionary sources, with theories around the economic functions and political positions of women within the Zulu state. Ultimately, I aim to demonstrate a more nuanced perspective on the place Zulu women held within pre-colonial society. I will firstly look at the narrative of the 'Zulu Man' and the way in which 'marriage' practices, and its prescribed function as a tool of gendered oppression, was used to demonstrate the characteristics of this narrative. Secondly, I will look at the political and economic function of these 'marriage' practices, such as lobola and women marrying women, in order to counter – and by extension complicate – this narrative of oppression. After this I will look at the way sex and sexuality were viewed and practiced within the Zulu State, and what this indicated in relation to the concept of 'marriage'. Finally, I will look at the impact of

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[2] Ibid., 177.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Robert Morell, "Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies" in Journal of Southern African Studies, (1998), 629.

practices, such as the introduction of monogamy through conversion to Christianity, economic reform, and redistribution of wealth, which disrupted systems of 'marriage', arguably leading to a masculine culture that is more toxic than the one which was demonised by colonial narratives.

The Zulu Man

The overtly hyper-masculine traits that have been attributed to the Zulu man, using Shaka Zulu within this narrative as the source of this development, is still a part of the discourse around Zulu identity. It was first asserted by European settlers as a way to characterise the people they wished to undermine as persons outside of socially acceptable practice.[5] In relation to polygamy, missionaries and settlers used the language of abolitionists and equated polygamy to that of female enslavement.[6] An example of this can be found in a letter from the *Natal Witness*, urging people to spread the word of this injustice and "tell the wives already held bondage, that England will have no slaves residing on her soil".[7] As the practice of paying lobola was seen as a purchase, the woman who was getting married was, from the perspective of the white settler, enslaved. Hence, when missionaries such as Hyman Wilder preached the "Divine Institution",[8] that is Christian marriage between two people of the opposite sex, he is not only seen as a saviour of man through spreading the Christian faith, but he is also seen as a liberator of the oppressed. This identity as a liberator aids in the justification of colonial control. As white men in South Africa restricted the political and economic power of African men, their natural conclusion was that this would aid in the liberation of African women.

It is important to note here that the European societies that these missionaries and settlers were trying to emulate were in themselves patriarchal. Carol Christ argues that there is a clear contradiction in the way colonisers claimed that:

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[5] Tallie, "Queering Natal: Settler Logics and the Disruptive Challenge of Zulu Polygamy", 184.

[6] Ibid., 177.

[7] Ibid., 176.

[8] Ibid., 174.

> the signs of the inferiority of conquered peoples was their alleged backwards treatment of women. […] while at the same time reinscribing the domination of masculine over feminine both at home and abroad.[9]

This means that the gendered distinction made by colonial thinkers is not between masculine and feminine, but rather between acceptable and unacceptable masculinity. T.J. Tallie explains this distinction as that of a queer one.[10] The masculinity that characterises the European settlers in Natal is that of a heterosexual monogamous one. When comparing their practice of marriage and sexuality to that of the Zulu, the distinct difference is the blatant sexual fluidity that allows for more than one sexual partner. While still within the parameters of heterosexual relations, this was regarded as something morally abhorrent as it indicated an overindulgent sexual life.[11] This meant that the Zulu male, while still asserting masculine features, was rather seen as expressing the 'wrong' form of masculinity. This 'wrong' form of gendered expression was seen as an indicator of 'barbaric' tendencies that connoted subhuman characteristics.[12] This later allowed for historians such as Robert Morrell to connect violent events in the history of the Zulu state to this inherent aggressive masculinity.[13] Rather than looking to violence-inducing factors, such as the political threat of the British continuously destroying and enslaving African societies throughout the region,[14] historians such as Morrell can use this narrative of hypermasculinity as a way to explain the violent nature of events such as the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879.[15] Due to the high utility that this narrative

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[9] Carol Christ, "Whose History Are We Writing? Reading Feminist Texts With a Hermeneutic of Suspicion" in Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion (2004), 77.

[10] Tallie, "Queering Natal: Settler Logics and the Disruptive Challenge of Zulu Polygamy", 170.

[11] Ibid., 174.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Morell, "Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies", 616.

[14] Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo" in The Journal of African History (1988), 489.

[15] Morell, "Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies", 617.

had for European settlers, and later for Eurocentric scholarship, the cultural concepts that are associated with this queer hyper-masculinity is hence still perpetuated in modern media as morally abhorrent. This can be seen in the way Jacob Zuma was treated during his state visit to the UK in 2010, where one journalist even asked him whether he would recommend polygamy to Mr. Brown[16].[17] This question, which was posed by a Daily Mail reporter, was meant as a way to demonstrate the clear superiority of western institutions of marriage that emphasise equality due to their monogamous nature. This is interesting when considering the fact that, compared to South Africa, the UK are much less progressive in their policies supporting queer people's legal and social rights.[18] There is usually a correlation between the protection and recognition of queer rights and women's rights, as they both are products of a society's conceptualisation of gender. I hence find it interesting that we still characterise countries like South Africa as inherently misogynistic, when this perception is based on a reductive colonial narrative. The refusal to see the functions of polygamy beyond that of the oppression of women to the point of slavery hence prevents us from understanding the role of women within the Zulu state beyond that of a victim. We hence need to reinvestigate the practice of polygamy by looking at the practice beyond the parameters of western morality.

The Political and Economic Function of Marriage

The concept of marriage when applied to the Zulu state, and many other states that are today defined through colonial narratives, is at best inaccurate. The

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[16] James Gordon Brown served as the Prime Minister of the UK between 2007 and 2010

[17] Tallie, "Queering Natal: Settler Logics and the Disruptive Challenge of Zulu Polygamy", 182.

[18] South Africa: Same-sex marriage legal since 2006; Same-sex adoption legal since 2002; Gender transition law in place since 2003; Discrimination in the military based on sexual orientation illegal since 1998.

UK: Same-sex marriage legal since 2013 (with the exception of Norther Ireland, where it is still not recognised); Same-sex adoption legal since 2005-2009 (since 2009, both parties in a female same-sex relationship are allowed to place their name on the birth certificate of a child); Gender transition law in place since 2005; Discrimination in the military based on sexual orientation illegal since 2010.

concept of marriage is seen through the Christian concept of a holy union between two people of the opposite sex, who only engage in sexual activity with one another.[19] While this may not have been the reality of many European marriages of the time, monogamy was the message preached by European missionaries and was hence understood as the moral norm. Thus, when talking about lobola and the movement of a woman from one homestead to another, and by subsequently describing this relationship through the roles of husband and wife,[20] the relationship and the function of this exchange is misunderstood through its European cultural translation.[21] The function of the Zulu 'marriage', as described by Mark Hunter, was rather as a way to achieve an economically strong umuzi homestead.[22] This was done through the accumulation of wealth, which means being able to take on several wives and hence build a successful homestead. While European marriage had previously served a similar economic and political function, the marriage that Christian missionaries were preaching and using in order to oppose polygamous marriage was based on the Christian holy union and the restrictions put on the bodies within this union. This made this form of marriage more individual and spiritual, relying on a specific understanding of the body as an extension of God and was to be kept 'pure'. The Zulu 'marriage' union was, on the other hand, less restricted in its expression through the physical body both in regards to gender and sexuality.

In addition to one person being able to take on many wives, there were also less restrictions on who the person taking wives could be. Zulu women who possessed the wealth to marry were able to take on wives and were hence able to accumulate labour and the children of these women.[23] These 'women-to-women' marriages were not often recorded by European sources as they were

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[19] Tallie, "Queering Natal: Settler Logics and the Disruptive Challenge of Zulu Polygamy", 174.

[20] M.L. Sherman, "Zulu Women" in New York Observer (3 June 1875), 173.

[21] Jennifer Weir, "Chiefly Women and Women's Leadership in Pre-Colonial Southern Africa" In Women in South African History, ed. Nomboniso Gasa, (HSRC Press, 2007), 6

[22] Mark Hunter, "Cultural Politics and Masculinities: Multiple-Partners in Historical Perspective in KwaZulu-Natal" in Culture, Health, and Sexuality (2005), 212.

[23] Weir, "Chiefly Women and Women's Leadership in Pre-Colonial Southern Africa", 6.

either not recognised, misinterpreted, or even outright rejected.[24] At the same time, there is evidence that women in Southern Africa were a natural part of the economic and political power structures. With the reign of Shaka, there was a period of social transformation that placed women in positions of power independent of their relationship to a man.[25] Through the establishment of the isiGodlo, which was an enclosure within the royal kraal that consisted of women of the royal family (amaKosikazi) and women who had been 'given' to the king (umNdlunkulu), a central part of the consolidation of power was purely female.[26] While women of the amaKosikazi were married away in order to cement relationships within and outside of the state, they also functioned as the overheads of the isiGodlo.[27] This meant that they were in charge of the umNdlunkulu in a similar way to a husband ruling over his homestead. In addition, women of the amaKosikazi were used as heads of permanent military settlements (amaKanda).[28] As the Zulu state system used the system of the household as the basis of its wider social structures, an amaKosikazi acting as a leader of an amaKanda entered the role of umNumzana (homestead-head).[29] In European terms this was a 'polygamous marriage' where the role of the husband was filled by a powerful woman. This structure shifted gender relations to a less constricted format and changed the status quo to a distribution of power less dependent on gender. This means that the historical view of the family unit and the significance it has for Zulu state order needs to be defined beyond the heteronormative gender constraints of Eurocentric interpretations made through the concept of marriage. Jennifer Weir argues that theories concerning the division between dominant and subordinate groups should be reconsidered in order to recognise the actual position of women.[30] Weir goes further, using

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[24] Ibid., 7.

[25] Sean Hanretta, "Women, Marginality and the Zulu State: Women's Institutions and Power in Early Nineteenth Century" in The Journal of African History (1998), 397.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 398.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid. 399.

[30] Weir, "Chiefly Women and Women's Leadership in Pre-Colonial Southern Africa", 9.

evidence of leaders such as Mnkabayi[31] to prove that women within the Zulu state held positions of power even prior the rule of Shaka.[32] The system of polygamy, and wider reaching policies of communal living stemming from the tradition of polygamy, should hence be seen as a part of the reason why women were able to independently assert their power within Zulu society. Hence, compared to that of the Christian system of monogamy, polygamy was a system through which women were more likely to access positions of power.

Another way in which the Zulu polygamist union was less restrictive than the Christian union of marriage can be seen in the sexual behaviour of individuals. While the homestead was the centre of reproduction, there were few social restrictions on sexual behaviour beyond this.[33] Within records of court cases, early ethnographies, and the oral testimonies collected by James Stuart, there is evidence of a disregard for any sexual behaviour that did not jeopardize the family unit.[34] Mark Hunter goes so far as to argue:

> before the introduction of Christian notions of "the body as the Temple of God" the essence of *ukangana* (a verb translated sometimes too quickly into "to marry") was childbirth and building an *umuzi* and not sexual fidelity for its own sake.[35]

Forms of non-penetrative sex was beyond the institution of Zulu polygamous unions, as it did not lead to offspring and hence had no further implications beyond its function within courtship.[36] It is hence a very different arrangement from that of the Christian marriage, which emphasised sexual commitment to one person. Christianity dictated that the body and the sexuality that it enabled

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[31] Shaka Zulu's father's sister.

[32] Weir, "Chiefly Women and Women's Leadership in Pre-Colonial Southern Africa", 9.

[33] Julie Parle and Fiona Scorgie, "Bewitching Zulu Women: Umhayizo, Gender, and Witchcraft in KwaZulu-Natal" in South African Historical Journal (2012), 858.

[34] Hunter, "Cultural Politics and Masculinities: Multiple-Partners in Historical Perspective in KwaZulu-Natal" in Culture, Health, and Sexuality, 212.

[35] Ibid., 212-213.

[36] Ibid., 212.

was based in sin, as God was the owner of your physical presence and you should regulate the use of your body as such.[37] Marriage, enabled by God, was hence the only situation in which the sexual nature of the body could be enjoyed. What Europeans described as Zulu 'marriage' was hence not a marriage but a union between different families investing in a sustainable homestead. Lobola was not a way of purchasing women as slaves but, as Keletso Atkins argues, a way to solidify communal living arrangements.[38] Lobola functioned as an investment in the household that would enable economic growth.[39] Women were hence in a position of power, as they were vital for the agricultural production of the household and the birthing of children .[40] Economic prosperity, as well as social prosperity in terms of respect as a leader of a homestead, was impossible to achieve without the labour of women. Sexual freedom can hence be interpreted as an expression of this position of power, as individual women were in their own right to have sexual relationships outside of marriage.

The Erasing of Zulu Women Through Economic Reform

Zulu polygamy, as it has been recorded through linguistic and cultural concepts of European origin, has been misrepresented and demonised by its inability to be the 'marriage' that it never was. The implication of this is two-folded. Firstly, it enabled colonisers to justify their actions of cultural destruction as heroic or humane. Secondly, by removing the economic and political autonomy of these systems, women were placed in a role of submission as they now were placed within a European patriarchal system that did not allow for their consolidation of power without the accompaniment of a man. Through geographical and legal restrictions, the system that upheld female leaders was abandoned for a system of compounds created to serve the economic prosperity of the colonial

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[37] Tallie, "Queering Natal: Settler Logics and the Disruptive Challenge of Zulu Polygamy", 175.

[38] Ibid., 173.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

industry.[41] This also meant that the role of masculinity within society changes drastically. The queer masculinity, which had previously enabled men to act as leaders of a household without the need to dominate women, now had become incompatible with the power structures in place. Without accumulated wealth, men were no longer able to pay lobola and hence were not able to build homesteads. The loss of this institution meant that masculinity was no longer linked to the role of the provider, but rather the role of the individual in relation to the concept of masculinity determined by society as a whole.[42] Demonstrations of masculinity through forms of violence such as stick-fighting became more common as industrial complexes restructured society.[43] This indicates that the concept of masculinity was no longer communal, and there was hence no structure within which women could partake and be empowered by the pursuit of masculinity. Instead, today's image of the 'Zulu Man' is embodied by individual accomplishment, as can be seen in the cult of personality built around Shaka Zulu.

In conclusion, the narrative of the 'Zulu Man' can be broken down as a result of a Eurocentric historiography combined with cultural destruction that was enabled by economic reform, resulting in the deterioration of polygamy as a communal institution. By framing polygamous unions among the Zulu as 'marriage', Europeans created a moral framework within which polygamy was characterised as morally abhorrent. Within the description of Zulu masculinity as inherently immoral there was an assumption that the act of polygamy was created to benefit the man, and that the institution enslaved and oppressed women. In this essay I have shown how this is an uninformed view of Zulu women and their position in society, as they held power both in their position

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[41] Worger William, "Workers as Criminals: The Rule of Law in Early Kimbeley, 1870-1885" in Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa, ed. Frederick Cooper (Sage Publications, 1983), 81.

[42] Mark Hunter, "Fathers Without Amandla: Zulu-speaking Men and Fatherhood." in Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa, ed. Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (HSRC Press, 2006), 103.

[43] Parle and Scorgie, "Bewitching Zulu Women: Umhayizo, Gender, and Witchcraft in KwaZulu-Natal", 858.

within the homestead and within wider society. Polygamy and the practice of lobola should hence be understood and treated as an economic and political institution, rather than a religious or relational one within which moral judgement is inherently applied.

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