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All contributors are members of the MCR of New College at the University of Oxford. Contact details are provided at the beginning of each article.

Guidelines for Submissions to The New Collection

The New Collection is open to all disciplines, and both review and research articles are accepted for submission to the journal. All members of the MCR and those who have recently graduated are encouraged to submit.

Submissions should be sent to new.collection.mcr@gmail.com; no hard copy submissions are accepted. Please use whatever reference style is appropriate for your discipline. Authors will have the choice of whether or not they would like their submissions considered working papers whereby readers are asked not to cite the work without the author’s permission. This is to help ensure that publication in The New Collection does not preclude publication elsewhere.

The New Collection uses a double peer-review process; articles are first reviewed by the editorial team composed of members of the MCR, and subsequently by reviewers from the SCR. The aim of the review process is to ensure that all articles best demonstrate the broad spectrum of the research currently being undertaken at New College, are accessible to a general academic audience, and are academically rigorous.

Questions

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Editorial Welcome

I am delighted to introduce this year’s thirteenth volume of the New Collection, the interdisciplinary peer-reviewed academic journal produced annually by the New College Middle Common Room (MCR).

As a sign of political turbulent times, this year’s issue includes articles on the 2016 ‘Brexit’ Referendum and on the rise of right-wing populism. Such pieces demonstrate how academia can contribute incisive analysis on matters of contemporary salience, engaging in and informing debates within public discourse. At the same time, we also have articles on opera, on Russian theatre, and on the tension between universal policy and local context in education. These articles have been a pleasure to edit, and I hope they will be a pleasure to read.

Unforeseen circumstances prevented the MCR producing an issue last year – a reflection of how impressive it has been for a community of only several hundred students to have produced issues in each of the preceding twelve years. However, we are confident that the MCR will continue to produce issues of the New Collection for many years to come. We are very excited to be revamping the New Collection website. And from next year’s issue, we will be soliciting submissions from New College’s undergraduates and introducing a new feature in which current members review works recently published by New College alumni. These changes reflect how New College offers a community for scholars at every stage of their careers. We also hope to able to include more articles from New College’s natural scientists.

We are very grateful to the SCR review committee, who generously contributed their time to the New Collection. Especial thanks go to the two external reviewers who contributed this year. I would also like to thank our editors and typesetter for the hard work that they have put into the journal this year. I hope that they are proud of the finished product. It has been a joy to serve as the editor-in-chief, and I am delighted to be handing over the journal into safe hands for next year.

On behalf of the editorial team,

Edward Lucas, Editor-in-Chief
The Warden’s Foreword

The New Collection is the longstanding vehicle through which some of the academic output of our MCR is regularly published and memorialised. This edition ranges widely in subject matter, but each contribution touches on the relationship between culture and politics in some way.

We see new insights into 19th Century concepts of power and madness through the operas of Meyerbeer and Verdi; and of late Tsarist attitudes to masculinity in the dramatic writing of the Russian author Gumilev. Then we can observe the impact of globalisation, not necessarily altogether positive, as time and perspective allows us to view it in the round. We are given new insights into the danger of ‘universal prescriptions’ in education; a more holistic view of the recent resurgence of right wing politics across the world; and an analysis of the concept of the nation, based on the discourse in social media around the 2016 UK Referendum.

Each contribution is a stimulating and illuminating angle on its subject matter. Collectively they show once more the breadth and depth of our research capability in the College. I thank all those who have contributed to the publication of the New Collection, not just the authors, but also the academic reviewers and the publishers.

Miles Young, Warden of New College, Oxford
MCR President’s Foreword

Today, complex conflicts and social pressures have risen to the fore in every country around the globe. Information has become a tool leaving many without an anchor of fact. The prevalence of these concerns necessitates their attention by our academic community. This issue of the New Collection provides you with a window onto current research by our students, that is at the cutting edge of the pursuit of knowledge. By delving into these pages, you too are embracing the academic values of clarity of thought and objectivity, which make Oxford and New College the academic centres of excellence, which they are today.

The New Collection acts as a bridge, leading its participants into new and developed skills. It is a unique opportunity for students of the New College Middle Common Room to create research articles, edit papers, and experience the world of peer-review. The work will be preserved at New College and the Bodleian Libraries as part of our rich academic culture and contribution to Oxford scholarship.

In the past, the collection has given to us many well-constructed articles and this year is no different. They tackle some of the key themes facing society today, providing prisms through which we can observe the rising issues of Globalisation, Identity, Populism, Masculinity and Power.

I want to thank all those who contributed to the creation of this collection; the authors of the MCR for producing and sharing such stimulating research papers, the editors whose tireless work ensured the high standard of the papers the readers can enjoy, and the SCR members for providing their insight, expertise, and time to the authors.

I hope you will enjoy reading this issue as much as I have!

Malina Graf, MCR President
Support for right-wing populist political parties and individuals is no new phenomenon (Von Beyme 1985). However, recent years have undoubtedly witnessed a widespread resurgence in support for such parties. This is evidenced by the rise of figures such as Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders and Nigel Farage to positions of public prominence. The effects of such figures and their respective movements on national legislatures and party politics cannot be underestimated; such movements hold seats in the parliaments of many nations, have driven a right-wing surge in continental Europe (Chakelian, 2017) and are active coalition government partners in countries such as Austria, Sweden and Italy. The vote (and parliamentary seat) share of such parties has increased dramatically over the last 60 years, and they have come to represent a considerable force in global politics. Multiple factors seem to be responsible for this increase in right-wing support, including both rising economic inequality and insecurity in the face of globalisation, and cultural-backlash responses to multiculturalism and changing societal makeup. The breakdown of traditional class divides in voting patterns to a more ‘populist/cosmopolitan’ norm seems to be evidence of this. Drawing on these possible explanations, this paper will evaluate and compare different theories in their contemporary context and examine how they may interact in driving right-wing populist support. However, to begin with it is useful to define populism in greater detail.

Populist parties of the left or right tend to stress the value of the ‘working man’ or ‘ordinary citizens’ as being greater than that of the ‘elite’ establishment.
(also referred to in terms of ‘us, the people’ and ‘them, the 1%’), which is often labelled as ‘corrupt’ (Barr, 2009). Historically, many populist movements have been left wing, including populist movements in Russia and America in the 19th century. Such left-wing populism is typically inclusionary in its definition of ‘the people’ such that it embraces immigrants and native citizens alike (Stavrakakis, 2019). Technically speaking, an inclusionary populism could act as a political counterweight to a democracy that fails to serve the popular interest (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). However, the same populist ideals which elevate the status of ‘ordinary citizens’ have in the contemporary Western context encouraged a resurgence of right-wing populism, which has used nativism to fuel an anti-immigrant and nationalistic discourse. In right-wing populism, multi-culturalism is shunned, isolationist policies supplant internationalism (an example being Donald Trump’s ‘America first’ slogan), and the free movement of people is discouraged (Inglehart and Norris, 2017). Latent authoritarianism is also a characteristic trait of these populist movements, and favours charismatic ‘strongmen’ or women who are seen as being above the ‘outdated’ machinations of parliaments and other legislative bodies (Zaslove, 2008). Therefore, right-wing populism can be thought of as a political philosophy in which three core ideals come to the fore: anti-establishment, nativism and authoritarian style of leadership (Mudde, 2007).

In terms of statistics, right-wing populist support has surged over the last half-century, both at the party and individual level. Recent examples include Donald Trump’s populist message of xenophobia (illustrated by his pledge to build a wall at the Mexican border and targeted travel restriction policies) and anti-establishment campaign, which saw him propelled to the White House. Further, the Front National (now National Rally) reached the second round of the French presidential elections in 2017. Across Europe, The Austrian Freedom Party, Swedish Democrats, Golden Dawn (Greece) and Alternative für Deutschland have become household names. In the 2017 Dutch general election, the far-right Party for Freedom of Geert Wilders won the second largest vote share in percentage terms (The Economist, 2017). In the 2018 Hungarian parliamentary election, the far-right populist Jobbik, which has described itself as ‘radically patriotic’ (Barlai, 2012, see also Murer, 2015) became the nation’s second largest party, behind the also right-wing Fidesz. Quantifying the increases in right-wing populist support more broadly, Inglehart and Norris (2016) calculated (based on data from Döring and Mannow, 2016) that, since the 1960s, the vote percentage for right-wing populist parties across Europe in both European and national parliamentary elections has increased from an average of 5.1% to 13.2%, and that the share of
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Seats in parliaments has tripled from an average of 3.8% to 12.8%. Such percentage changes in support can exert significant pressure on legislative systems and impact incumbent government policy, as well as encourage public displays of racism and xenophobia. In the United Kingdom, the role of UKIP in fuelling anti-EU sentiment arguably encouraged a rise in anti-immigrant hate crime around the time of the Brexit referendum (Dennison and Pardijs, 2016).

There are multiple examples of right-wing populist language being employed in recent political campaigns. These include the now well-known examples of Donald Trump’s ‘Crooked Hilary’ campaign, and Marine Le Pen’s allegations of offshore financial dealings by Emmanuel Macron (BBC, 2017). An additional example of this can be seen in the EU referendum in Britain and subsequent Conservative government campaign in the United Kingdom (which is touched on further below). Here, a mainstream right-wing democratic party employed language which might be associated with right-wing populists, in this case around ‘delivering on the will of the British people’ (Gov.uk, 2017). The use of such language can risk infusing populism with nativism in the context of debate around what constitutes ‘the British people’, which itself can be interpreted as possessing exclusionary connotations (Rooduijn, 2016). The use of such language by a mainstream party may act to normalise right-wing populist rhetoric in mainstream discussion (Brookings, 2018), which may in turn boost right-wing populist support further, although additional quantitative research would be required to fully substantiate this.

Given the evidence presented above, what specific drivers increase support for right-wing populism? Two main schools of thought seeking to answer this question are prominent in the literature (Elchardus and Spruyt, 2014), and have become known as the ‘economic inequality’ and ‘cultural backlash’ theories, which are evaluated in turn below.

The economic inequality rationale for increased populist and right-wing support came to prominence in the writings of Lipset (1960) and Bell (1963), who applied it to understanding fascism in Germany and McCarthyism in the USA, among others. These ideologies are seen by Lipset and Bell as a reaction (mostly by the petite bourgeoisie, including small-scale entrepreneurs and independent business owners) against the threat of downward social mobility, exacerbated by the growing presence of ‘big business’ in the marketplace. In this respect, this theory is perhaps better termed the ‘economic insecurity’ rationale. Indeed, rising economic inequality may lead to rising economic insecurity for the low paid if
higher purchasing power of the better paid effects price rises. In modernising the economic inequality theory, Esping-Anderson predicted that the early 21st century, with a rapidly expanding knowledge-based economy, would see low-skilled workers placed at increasing risk of job insecurity (Esping-Anderson, 1990). He argued that this demographic provides the most fertile recruiting ground for modern right-wing populist support. The fact that right-wing populist campaigning both in the 20th and 21st centuries often targets low-skilled, low wage workers who are likely to face job insecurity and be vulnerable to social risks (such as downward mobility) (Ignazi, 2003) serves to reinforce this idea.

There is much evidence for increasing levels of financial inequality and insecurity (especially since the financial crash of 2008) across Western nations, with wage stagnation or real-term decline commonplace among those not in the top 10% of national earners (Piketty, 2014). The growth of automation, relocation of big business (exemplified by the threat of TATA steel’s withdrawal from the UK in 2016) and increase in labour mobility have worsened the economic situation of vulnerable workers (Ingelhart and Norris, 2016). Driving populist support, economic inequality can also lead to the scapegoating of immigrants, isolationism and the search for a protective haven in strong, authoritarian leaders (Inglehart, 2016). The recent European migrant crisis, as well as the reaction to terrorist attacks in Paris, London and Berlin (which also fit with the cultural backlash theory of right-wing populist support, discussed below), undoubtedly play into the narrative of right-wing populist leaders when capitalising on the fears of those facing rising economic inequality and/or insecurity. Key to understanding the effect of this narrative in coalescing support for populist leaders is what Inglehart (2016) refer to as an ‘in-group solidarity’ effect, where groups perceiving themselves as under threat tend to perceive ‘outsiders’ as a danger to, in this case, employment and benefits. Therefore, the anxiety around the migrant crisis (as an example), heavily reported on in the media, can be effectively leveraged by populists to increase their support by blaming such events for worsening economic grievances and the displacement of low-skilled jobs (Inglehart, 2016).

Two further factors seem to be important in enabling right-wing populist parties to capitalise on economic inequalities for increased support: the lack of stability among more centrist political movement’s voter bases and a decline of social class voting traditions. Taking the first factor, an increasing secularization has seen the vote share of centre and centre-right parties (such as the German Christian Democrats) decrease in Europe (Norris and Inglehart, 2011). Traditional left-wing voters have witnessed the decline of organisations which used to play a prominent
role in the mobilisation of working classes, such as trade unions (Keating and McCrone, 2015), whose power and influence have been blunted by the now widespread phenomena of global markets and multinational businesses (able to access a global labour force). Globalisation has influenced not only this, but also a declining level of industrial workers overall, reducing the support base for traditional left-wing groups (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2002). A well-known theory of Betz (1994) states that economically disadvantaged groups are more likely to become hostile to migrants, whom they blame for job losses. Incumbent governments and establishment parties are often also targeted by these groups, who feel that they have lost their previous way of life in which industrial jobs were secure (Betz, 1994). Right-wing populist parties can capitalise on the grievances raised by economic inequality by promising a return to prosperity and a rejection of multiculturalism (see, for example, the 2017 UKIP manifesto). It can be argued that, by offering such a return to prosperity, they may also able to draw support from those who traditionally would have voted for more left-wing parties. One example in support of this can be found in research concluding that, during the EU referendum, ‘leave’ voters were predominantly working class (Crampton, 2016). This group would previously have been expected to align with the Labour party, who were pro-remain. This example ties in well with the second factor: the documented decline of social class voting traditions (although this decline is still debated by researchers). In basic terms, the social class model of voting predicted that the working class traditionally aligned themselves with the left, and the middle to upper classes aligned themselves with the right (Rokkan and Lipset, 1967). This decline may have increased populist support, as right-wing populist parties have gained access to a portion of the electorate more traditionally off-limits to them (Borre, 1984; Inglehart, 1997). The results of the most recent UK general election seem to have highlighted this possible decline in class-based voting, with the right-wing Conservative government’s vote-share increasing most in working class areas, and least in middle class seats (BBC, 2017).

As a modernised concept, therefore, it can be argued that economic inequality (and possible consequent insecurity) provides a focal point for right-wing populists to generate support because they are able to leverage fears over downward social mobility, replacement by a globalised labour force (or cheaper migrant labour), and the changing nature of more traditional political bases and rallying points to bolster their vote share. They achieve this by promising greater prosperity and a rejection of a pro-immigration stance, among other policies. Whilst the economic model seeks to explain the rise in right-wing populist support as a product of the economic environment (which may be linked to shifts in traditional political
support bases), studies have shown that multiple factors independent of this have contributed to the pro-right-wing populist political shift (Norris, 2006). Here, we come to the cultural backlash theory.

The cultural backlash rationale for increased populist and right-wing support describes a more psychological and often nostalgic reaction (usually concentrated among the older generations) to the recent transformations in Western culture (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). These changes include the rise of secularism and multiculturalism, increased support for LGBT rights and gender fluidity, re-definition of the traditional family unit and the breakdown of traditional gender roles in society (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Norris and Inglehart, 2009). Supporters of such cultural shifts are often referred to as ‘post-materialists’, and such movements are most often seen to develop within economically secure and well-educated groups (Inglehart, 1977). The post-materialism (and therefore cultural liberalism) of Western societies has been steadily increasing over the last several decades (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart, 2008; Dalton, 2013). However, it seems that the rise of post-materialism has, to some extent, precipitated the counter-effect of negative backlash from older, more traditional, bases in society who may feel that their (typically more conservative) values have been eroded (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). Support for populist parties has been extensively linked to generational views on multiculturalism and immigration, with right-wing populist parties subsequently able to capitalise on underlying xenophobia (in contrast to typically more inclusive left-wing populist parties) amongst the older generations to increase their vote share (Betz, 1994; Karapin, 2002; DeAngelis, 2003).

In addition to this generational value gap, gender is also thought be an important factor driving cultural backlash. The traditional patriarchal structure of society is slowly being replaced by generations of progressive, feminist and culturally liberal individuals (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). It follows that views most commonly ascribed to by the older generation, and particularly older men, may be losing salience, or be perceived to be losing salience, in the rapidly altering cultural landscape of Western democracies. The perceived sense of downward social mobility and resentment of ‘culture loss’ caused by this has been linked to rising support for right-wing populists, especially amongst men (Givens, 2004). The cultural backlash theory hypothesises that recent wide scale value shifts have produced a ‘counter revolution’, principally among the older generations in Western societies, which has lent support to right-wing populists (Ignazi, 1992; Ignazi, 2003). Membership of the EU has also been linked with hostility
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amongst the elder generation, who fear the cultural consequences of open borders (McLaren, 2002), lending further support to right-wing populist parties. These parties provide a platform for those disenfranchised by changing cultures and communities. Indeed, a comprehensive modelling analysis by Inglehart and Norris concluded that, whilst not denying the importance of economic backlash, ‘cultural values can provide the most useful explanation of European support for populist parties’. Further to this, they stated that, for right-wing populist parties, ‘their greatest support is concentrated among the older generation, men, the religious, majority populations, and the less educated – sectors generally left behind by progressive tides of cultural value change’ (2016:28). Therefore, the solutions proposed by right-wing populist parties to such issues (generally reducing immigration and adopting isolationist economic policies) broadly appeal to voters who fall into these categories.

The linked processes of globalisation and post-materialism have given rise to a wealth of research which indicates that, over the last several decades, Western societies have experienced a revolution. Together, these phenomena help explain the dual factors of economic inequality and cultural backlash which seem largely to have driven the recent rise in support for right-wing populist parties. Financial inequality, wage stagnation and the threat of job losses, as well as a strong reaction against post-materialism in the older generation, have driven voters into the arms of these parties. Such parties may also have capitalised on the breakdown of class-voting structures and subsequent partisan reconfiguration to further their relevance in national and international politics. On balance, the evidence and ideas presented here indicate that the resurgence of right-wing populist support of recent years, particularly across Europe, cannot be attributed exclusively to the economic insecurity or cultural backlash thesis. Although individuals might identify their reasons for supporting such parties as originating in one discrete ‘economic’ or ‘cultural’ category, the paradox of these two theses is that, in certain areas, it seems impossible to separate the economic from the cultural. Thus, the economically disenfranchised and downwardly mobile blue-collar worker who has lost out due to factory automation or outsourcing of labour may rail against freedom of movement and multiculturalism when promised a return to prosperity by a right-wing populist party. By contrast, the cultural backlash thesis seems more often to be a sufficient condition for right-wing populist support on its own, without the explicit requirement for economic inequality/insecurity as a precursor. It can therefore be concluded that the psychological factors driving cultural backlash are extremely important in promoting support for right-wing populists. Whilst the importance of the economic inequality thesis cannot be
ignored, it seems that it is not always sufficient as a standalone concept and is often conflated with psychological issues associated with the cultural backlash thesis in generating concrete support for right-wing populists.

Turning to the future, the generational divide in attitudes toward post-materialism may become more heated in the short-term, increasing right-wing populist support. Additionally, the extent to which this support continues to grow is, at least in part, dependent on not just a growing global economy, but the development of an economy in which technology does not continue to outmode professions before retraining of those affected can take place. As this has yet to happen in many cases, the outlook for the short-term future would seem to be greater uncertainty in global politics, the threat of heightened anti-establishment rhetoric and possible further isolationism. In the short to medium-term, a return to post-materialist values in politics seems a possibility as a younger, more liberal generation in Western societies replace their forebears as the main component of the electorate. Further research projects examining the links between changing cultural values and right-wing populist support, as well as longer term tracking of populist support in the context of changing generational demographics (i.e. as older generations are replaced by younger voters), may help to reinforce these conclusions, and would be of benefit in building a more holistic understanding of the drivers of right-wing populist support.

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The Resurgence of Right-Wing Populist Politics – Economic and Cultural Perspectives


What does social media discourse around the UK’s 2016 EU Referendum reveal about the interplay between English national identity and globalisation?

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Introduction

Identity politics is increasingly salient in Western discourse. Consequently, traditional political divisions around who gets what are rapidly being overtaken by questions of who we are. Understanding the forces behind this changing fault-line is vital for policy-makers and scholars alike, both of whom had assumptions challenged by political developments in 2016. Most notable were the election of Donald Trump as American President and the United Kingdom’s (UK) decision to leave the European Union (EU) by popular referendum. Much of the analysis thus far has attempted to explain these events in terms of a revolt against ‘the establishment’ – both against the political class itself and the post-materialist values of modernity that they are perceived as symbolising (Paxman, 2016; Sims, 2016). Nor is there any sense that these are isolated revolts. ‘Brexit sets a precedent for disgruntled electorates in other nations to rescind their respective political, legal and economic arrangements and to build walls against the perceived negative forces of globalisation’ (Blockmans 2016:182). The claim that economic globalisation’s inequalities and social correlates are a causal factor in this anti-establishment rebellion is not a new idea (Elliot, 2016; Fournier, 2016).

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What does social media discourse around the UK’s 2016 EU Referendum reveal about the interplay between English national identity and globalisation?

The article will use evidence from social media as the basis for a discourse analysis of English national identity using both the Leave and Remain campaigns. It is my contention that social media provides a unique opportunity to study spontaneously recorded opinion across several demographics, and the sample will be a random snapshot of the national debate. The data will facilitate analysis of public opinion on both sides of the debate, in the hope of bypassing binary rhetoric espoused by politicians and capturing the varied nuances of the referendum discourse. From this, I aim to situate England within existing scholarly debates on the intensifying struggle to define the nation in a globalised world. It is important to note that the article does not analyse the referendum itself or the features of the political information environment on Twitter. Both are worthwhile research questions in themselves, but the focus here is on what the Twitter referendum discourse revealed about the direction of English national identity.

Globalisation is an amorphous concept used in multiple contexts to refer to many different processes, most neatly encapsulated as the ‘increasing cross-border flows of goods, services, money, people, information, and culture’ (Held 2003:467). This is a useful illustration of the totalising nature of the globalisation phenomena, transforming the parameters of social, economic and political life. It has arguably brought unparalleled levels of prosperity to the developed world, but the benefits have not been felt by all. ‘While globalisation has been good to educated, urban elites, the West’s traditional working classes have not shared in the growth in income and opportunities enjoyed by the middle class’ (Matthews 2016:15). As such, it is a process that creates a polarisation between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’, alongside seriously challenging traditional notions of nation-state sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency (McGrew and Lewis, 2013; Doyle, 2003).

Central to globalisation is the deepening of economic interdependence (Ohmae, 1990; Albrow, 1996; Holton, 1998). Production industries are now almost exclusively based in countries able to offer cheaper labour. In most developed nations, the effect of this has been a steady erosion of manufacturing, leaving many former industrial communities feeling ‘left behind’, as globalisation has shifted economic focus to service sectors (Kirkup, 2012; BBC, 2016). Consequently, many such communities hold globalisation and the establishment that supports it as responsible for the destruction of their way of life (Reeves, 2017). This combination of economic hardship and perceived cultural rupture, accompanied by an increase in immigration and multi-culturalism is perceived by some as an attack on ‘national values’ (Brean, 2016). Additionally, since capitalist economies are now inherently dependent on free-trade across borders, the state’s capacity
to directly control economic affairs is severely reduced. However, given the need to attract votes, politicians continue to use rhetoric that exaggerates the influence of government (Johnstone, 2016; Szuplat, 2017). This divergence between rhetoric and reality has caused widespread disaffection with the ‘liberal elite’ among communities for whom globalisation represents an abstract coalition of the powerful (Deakins, 2017). Steadily, this has pushed an anti-globalisation agenda into the political mainstream. Indeed, ‘the architects of the new politics on either side of the Atlantic vow to restore popular sovereignty and national self-determination. In this way, the Brexit motto “Take Back Control” is of a piece with Trump’s pledge to ‘Make America Great Again.” (Pabst 2016: 190). This restoration narrative has resulted in a flourishing of anti-establishment populism that promises a sense of belonging in an increasingly uncertain world (Skey, 2013).

A clear manifestation of this has been a resurgence of nationalistic rhetoric in public discourse. Globalisation is having varied and multiple effects on national attachments, including but extending beyond nationalism. Accordingly, this article will examine the interplay between globalisation and national identity. Specifically, it will consider the links between trends in the global political economy and social identity, with their corresponding implications for representative democracy. To achieve this, it will use England as a case-study, with reference to public opinion surrounding the EU Referendum campaigns. It is important to note that the Referendum took place across Britain, but focus will be on England solely. This is partly because of the analytical complexities around the notion of British identity, given the opposing nationalisms within the United Kingdom. Further, England is of interest to this topic because it was the decisive constituency in the decision to leave the EU (BBC, 2016) and has been the site of a profound reassertion in political nationalism (Jones, 2015), with UKIP attracting over 4 million votes in the 2015 General Election.

The conceptual distinction between nationalism and patriotism is important to define here, for while the above-described nationalists can be characterised as believing in the ‘cultural, linguistic and ethnic homogeneity’ of the English nation, patriotism refers to ‘a love of the political institutions and the way of life that sustain the common liberty of a people’ (Viroli, 1995:1). This distinction is central to my analysis and will be enlarged upon throughout. Despite notable differences in rationale, my research reveals that many of those on both sides of the Twitter referendum discourse were patriotic, believing in a politically strong nation but one that was neither protectionist nor intolerant. As a brief further note
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on terminology, the terms national attachment and national identity will be used interchangeably throughout to refer to the same phenomenon.

The paragraphs below will briefly summarise the research methodology. From there, the Twitter discourse of the Remain and Leave campaigns will then be analysed respectively, before a conclusion situates the research within the context outlined above.

Methodology

It has been contended that many of the divisions that the data below highlights existed before the EU referendum campaigns, but were largely hidden (Ormston, 2015). As a result, the discourse around the referendum is an extremely useful research foundation because it was a rare forum for public debate about national identity (Elliot, 2016).

Using the in-depth searching capacity of Twitter, I collected a qualitative data-set from Tweets that contained the hashtags ‘#VoteRemain’ and ‘#VoteLeave’. This consisted of 25 Tweets connected to each of the campaigns, meaning that the overall sample used was 50 opinions, from people with whom the researcher has no prior connection. The sample was drawn from the results provided by the chronologically-ordered online search, without discrimination based on political content. Each data-set is composed of Tweets from the same day and posted at a similar time. In order to show that public debate was sustained and extensive, the data-sets were collected a day apart from each other in the two days before the referendum. Accordingly, the #VoteLeave sample came from 21 June 2016 and #VoteRemain from 22 June 2016. All sources were Tweets sent in England. I acknowledge this is no guarantee of English citizenship or nationality, but it is likely that that a clear majority live in England.

There are limitations to the scope of this research to be acknowledged. Firstly, a data-set of 50 opinions is not a sufficiently representative base from which to make concrete claims about the direction of national identity. The topic is complex and evolving, and research needs updating regularly. This data merely intends to be a qualitative indication of contemporary opinion, and the implications for globalisation and national identity. I acknowledge opinions are personal, context-specific and motivated by factors impossible to fully understand. Furthermore, despite the unique research opportunities provided by
social media, it is important to exercise caution about its reliability. Firstly, while Twitter is an increasingly used medium, there are limits to its representativity owing to its higher popularity among younger people (Sydnor, 2018). While there is evidence to suggest that this is changing as older people become increasing active online (see Van Aelst et al., 2017), this is nonetheless an important reason to be cautious about over-extrapolation based on the sample. Secondly, the researcher is only provided with a brief snapshot of opinion, owing to the then 140-character limit on Tweets. Research has also shown a divergence between what is published online and what people express if they asked to give their opinion by another person (Gosling and Vazire 2004:125). Notwithstanding the above, I believe the modern relevance of the insights that social media based research can provide outweighs the potential drawbacks, providing the researcher is open about the methodological challenges.

Social Media Discourse Surrounding the Remain Campaign

There were several broad trends evident across the data-set. Over 13.2 million people voted to Remain in England (BBC, 2016), and it is obviously impossible to know precisely what motivated such a diverse cohort. This said, the sample provides a useful indicator of the commonly cited reasons among remain voters. Indeed, the data-set can be deconstructed into distinct categories of reasoning. These will be itemised below, but there are general features of the discourse that are interesting to consider. Firstly, the majority afforded primacy to the vision of the nation; those for whom the choice was clearly an economic matter were fewer in number. Given that the official Remain campaign was heavily based on economics over identity, this perhaps demonstrates the salience of national attachment in contemporary public discourse generally (Behr, 2016). Secondly, very little opinion was focussed around the actual functions of the EU, instead on what membership symbolised for England’s place in the world (Elliot, 2016). This point provides a crucial foundation for the article.

Common Threads in the Data

1. *England is stronger within the EU than outside it*

A key theme was that the major economic and political challenges faced by modern governments are inherently global, and thus England is both ‘stronger
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and safer united’ (@Brookestxrling, 2016) as part of a supranational institution which facilitates co-operation. Phrases that expressed a belief that the nation should ‘look outward and welcome the future’ (@abi_sears, 2016) were common, as well as the fear that leaving the EU would lead to increased vulnerability. This view was neatly encapsulated by the tweet ‘no man is an island, no country by itself’ (@THEaggieholland, 2016). Throughout this thread, there is tacit acknowledgement that globalisation has irreversibly transformed the parameters of international politics (The Economist, 2016). Consequently, the English national community should recognise that instead of threatening national values, the EU protects them, since it had ‘bonded the nations of Europe and replaced war with trade and negotiations’ (@Brookestxrling, 2016) through economic globalisation. In this line of thought, the belief that isolation offers protection from the ills of globalisation is a tempting fallacy that will cause national harm. This recognises that globalisation is a transformative force that leads to common challenges, but that engaging with other countries will better equip England. Interestingly, in this narrative, there is no significant sense of identity attachment with Europe, rather that national values are better protected through co-operation on globalised challenges. This suggests that there is a clear distinction for some between pragmatic co-operation with the institutions of globalisation and a change in national identity. Such a conclusion is supportive of studies that have consistently shown that there is no link between supranational affiliation and an erosion of patriotic allegiance (Antonsich 2009, Jung 2008).

2. The economic benefits of EU membership outweigh perceived political costs

Closely linked were those who stressed that the pure economic benefits made EU membership worthwhile. This logic was common to the official Remain campaign - which largely avoided identity politics - instead framing membership as a matter of economic common sense (May, 2016). One user simply said, ‘vote for the economy’ (@scotty7280, 2016) while another warned against ‘crashing our economy and destabilising markets over unfounded and inhuman ideas about immigration’ (@speed_margot, 2016). However, it is important to note that these arguments were peripheral in the discourse around ‘#VoteRemain’, further illustrating the centrality of identity in the referendum discourse, despite the Remain campaign’s reticence to employ such arguments (Mandelson, 2016).

3. The EU as a symbol of progressive modern values
That the referendum represented opportunities and fears about globalisation and national identity that extended far beyond its actual capacity has been explored above. Indeed, much of the remain data-set portrayed the EU as a symbol for personal and national values. Membership was a pre-requisite for the ‘open-minded, outward-looking’ England that many remain voters identified with. Remaining in the EU would be a ‘rejection of hate and prejudice’ (@ChillySamuel, 2016) and a ‘vote for togetherness, for trust, and for the values that make this country and continent great’ (@davidnio_42, 2016). As above, running throughout was a tacit concern over the growth of insular ‘resistance identities’ (see Jung 2008:580). Ariely’s cross-national observations also reveal a common ‘backlash’ against this nationalism through defence of ‘globalised’ values, perceived as inclusivity, tolerance and compassion (2012:464). Further support for this was evident, with one user proclaiming that ‘I also want my country back’ (@seanjlindley, 2016), alongside a picture of Somali-born British Olympian Mo Farah and a paragraph celebrating the multi-cultural nature of recent national sporting success. This view equates a vote for Remain as a stand against insular nationalism. The referendum was for some a de-facto battle between civic and ethnic conceptions of the nation (see Kohn in Smith and Hutchinson 1994:163), demonstrating that globalisation can polarise public debate around national identity (Hedberg and Kepsu, 2008).

4. Direct identity attachment with Europe

Scholarship following the collapse of the Soviet Union advanced the idea that global capitalism would precipitate the weakening of economic borders and the merging of identities in an increasingly cosmopolitan world (Ohmae, 1990; Fukuyama, 1992; Held, 2010). While these predictions have proven hyperbolic, and the social power of the nation has endured (Antonsich, 2009; Calhoun, 2007; Greenfield, 1993), there is some evidence of growing cosmopolitanism in Western societies. (Ariely 2012:462). The Remain data-set supports this, as a notable minority expressed directly global identity attachments. One user tweeted ‘I might be a citizen of Britain but I am also a citizen of the world’ (@LeeKinnier, 2016), while another expressed solidarity with European culture, voting ‘for croissant, tapas and pizza’ (@MarkjNorbury, 2016). This contingent again vindicates Ariely’s conclusion that while the nation remains the primary social unit, the interplay between identity attachments and globalisation is varied and multi-faceted (2012:462). For a minority, membership of the EU does appear to be eroding national allegiances and promoting global citizenship.
Conclusions

Analysis of the Remain data-set broadly concurs with the conclusions of existing research on globalisation and national attachment. Antonsich’s contention that support for supranational institutions does not erode national attachment found support. Most important was the clear support for Ariely’s hypothesis that ‘different operationalisations of globalisation and national identity yield different results’ (2012:477). This statement summarises the variety of opinion across the Remain data-set.

Overall however, remain voters on social media appeared to embrace modern globalisation, the prosperity it brings, and the need to accept that no country can succeed in isolation. In line with the modernist theory that social organisation is a fluid product of macro-economic forces (Gellner, 1964; Anderson, 2006), the Remain data demonstrates that globalisation is definitely altering, while not necessarily eroding, the nature of English national attachment.

Social Media Discourse Surrounding the Leave Campaign

Like the Remain cohort, a wide variety of factors motivated Leave voters. These can be grouped into four main categories: the EU as undemocratic, the EU as economically constraining and limiting national independence, to protest against a corrupt establishment, and finally that England is culturally threatened by globalised supranationality. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Leave data-set predominantly did not conform with their portrayal in the Remain discourse as closed-minded, antiquated warriors against globalised modernity (Lloyd, 2016; @SteJamesMiller, 2016). Most arguments advanced suggest that the point of departure between Remain and Leave voters was not economic globalisation itself, but rather whether membership of a supranational institution was in the national interest. While the sample indicates that Leave voters were more prone to thinking in purely national terms, most were not sceptics of globalisation. This said, there was a strong element of English nationalism evident, characterised by an anti-establishment populist tone. Although such opinion was prominent, it was in the minority. A breakdown of the core arguments across the Leave data-set follows. The first two arguments broadly conform with the official rhetoric of the Leave campaign, while the final two demonstrate a reassertion of ‘resistance identities’ (Jung, 2008), driven by populist nationalism.
Common Threads in the Data

1. The EU as undemocratic, lacking political accountability and wielding too much power over nations

This has been a long-standing criticism advanced by Eurosceptics across the ideological spectrum, characterised by the sentiment that the EU ‘takes away power from our UK democracy!’ (@LewisBaxter1998, 2016). One tweet challenged the perception that a vote to leave was a rejection of immigration and multi-culturalism, claiming that ‘it’s about democracy. Love Europe, not EU’ (@SpyEast, 2016). Closely allied was the idea that international co-operation should not undermine national sovereignty: ‘One makes ‘Alliances’ with Nations, one does NOT EVER, surrender the Sovereign Right to Self Determination’ (@pablothehat, 2016). Finally, one questioned why other nations were ‘bailed out’ when ‘we should be helping those in need in the UK’ (@char_roxy, 2016). This provides fascinating insight into part of the interplay between globalisation and national identity, demonstrating that a significant part of the Leave demographic is supportive of the economic opportunities brought by globalisation, but resent attempts to homogenise economics and politics. This separation is in line with the traditional conception of the nation-state, seen by many as under threat from globalisation and subsequent supranational institutions like the EU (Wolf 2001, McGrew and Lewis 2013, Holton 1998).

2. The EU as economically constraining for England

A related premise viewed the EU as an economic failure that the nation should leave to rediscover national ‘independence’. The idea that the nation profits more from globalisation when free from supranational commitments is an interesting inversion of the earlier-cited Remain argument that EU membership is a crucial facilitator for national economic prosperity (@scotty7280, 2016). Many saw the EU as aiming to ‘make one size fit all by cutting each one down to the level of the lowest’ (@si5, 2016). This conception of nations as separated economic units in competition is ubiquitous across the data-set, indicating a particular brand of national identity that views international politics as a zero-sum game. Support for this view come from one tweet by a left-wing blogger, which simply said ‘so this is Britain inside the EU?’ (Blogmonsternet, 2016) above a picture of notable commercial chains recently shutdown. The official Leave campaign was most strongly reflected in this part of the discourse, as one tweeted ‘we should stop sending £350 million per week to Brussels, and spend our money on our NHS
What does social media discourse around the UK’s 2016 EU Referendum reveal about the interplay between English national identity and globalisation? Instead’ (@AntoniaEHoward, 2016), while another called for Britain to ‘join the rest of the world’ (@thebobnotes, 2016). Finally, there was a reference to Boris Johnson’s proclamation that leaving would be ‘independence day’. (@BitFredie, 2016). Contrary to the popular portrayal of Brexit as a nationalistic rejection of globalisation (Winlow et al. 2017, O’Toole 2016), these arguments are notable precisely for lack of direct reference to perceived cultural threats. While perhaps revealing a willingness to believe rhetoric, they demonstrate that for some Leave voters, the problem was with the EU itself as opposed to a backlash against globalisation. Thus, the often-assumed connection between low supranational attachment and a greater disposition towards ethnic nationalism is not true in a significant proportion of cases (Kaufmann 2014:1074).

These categories share a specific vision of the rightful dynamics between globalisation and the nation. Central facets are traditional state sovereignty, national economic freedom, and a scepticism of supranational political homogenisation. Though there are differences in emphasis, proponents generally espouse ‘freedom’ and the opportunities for ‘independence’ through leaving the EU. However, there is little evidence that this traditional patriotic sentiment was accompanied by a widespread concern about globalisation or national culture. Indeed, although all Tweets were sent in England, this part of the sample is notable for continued reference to Britain over England, a further reminder to be sceptical of the assumption that a dislike of EU supranationality correlates with support for insular nativism. This said, a significant portion of the data-set focussed on English nationalism, and it is to these arguments that attention now turns.

3. The EU has eroded English national identity

Of particular relevance to this article are those who saw the referendum as an opportunity to reclaim English identity, perceived to be threatened by globalised multi-culturalism (Paxman, 2016). Common was the view that immigration was ‘out of control’. The same user stressed that ‘it is not just EU immigration, it’s ALL immigration’ (@BigBigdil, 2016). While some were keen to emphasise that ‘the rate at which it is happening is the problem’ (@Alexicon83, 2016), others perceived immigration itself to be a threat to English national identity. Although there is no clear link between membership of the EU and Muslim immigrants, one Tweet called for a Leave vote because Islam was a ‘barbaric ideology imported, promoted and supported by your elected representatives’ (@paceless, 2016). Closely aligned were those who spoke in explicitly nationalist terms, bemoaning ‘double standards’ because ‘Scottish nationalists are called ‘patriots,’ but English
nationalists are ‘Little Englanders’ (@GeorgeReeves94, 2016). This threat shows a fear that the English nation is under threat, conceiving of the EU as a symbol of globalised modernity. Such a narrative was epitomised by one tweet of a poem taken from Shakespeare’s ‘King Richard II’. The last line reflected on ‘This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England’, which was captioned ‘Hell Yes! #Believe’ (@outoftweet123, 2016). This discourse lends support to Jung’s finding that globalisation is causing ‘resistance identities’ (2008:581) among sections of the population opposed to central facets of economic and political modernity. The clear existence of this phenomenon within contemporary England vindicates the previously stated conclusion that globalisation is having complex, varied and contradictory effects on national identity, pushing some towards an insular nationalism in defence of an idealised vision of culture (Brean, 2016).

4. Leaving the EU as an opportunity to protest against the political establishment

This argument correlates directly with the resurgence in anti-establishment populism discussed in the introduction. For many, the cause of this development is the uneven and relentless nature of change wrought by globalisation (Matthews 2016:15). The fact that most with this opinion in the sample were drawn towards the Leave campaign is perhaps a reflection on the majority support that the Remain campaign had among MPs, and the way in which the EU came to symbolise the status quo, characterised by this cohort as elite-led globalisation in the economic interests of the political class. This sentiment was neatly encapsulated by one Leave supporter, who commented that it was ‘interesting how all the rich people want us to #VoteRemain but the man on the street wants to #VoteLeave... sums it up I think!’ (@Innkeeper55, 2016). This perception that the Remain campaign was elitist was evident in another tweet which criticised ‘people calling leave voters ignorant or stupid. What a way to insult around 50% of voters’ (@OliverAshy, 2016). That the Remain campaign came to represent an arrogant and complacent elite in the minds of some perhaps explains why the referendum became an attractive opportunity to ‘vote for change!’ (@SGanji, 2016). Indeed, this argument found support from across the political spectrum, one user tweeting a link to an article which proclaimed ‘I’m mixed race, female, left-wing student - & I’m pro-Brexit’ (@GarthGodsman, 2016). As this demonstrates, the relationship between anti-establishment politics and national identity is unclear and indirect (Hartleb 2015:41), but such views underline that a proportion of the English population feel alienated by the globalised consensus. This is in part due to the perception that it benefits an international elite as opposed to the national
community (Buruma, 2016). The link between Brexit and right-wing nationalist populism has been frequently drawn (Pabst 2016:190, Champion, 2016), and although one is not a direct product of the other, it is reasonable to expect that a populist brand of English nationalism is to some degree behind the above-described connection between anti-establishment politics and the Leave discourse (Hayton 2016:414).

Conclusions

As with the Remain social media discourse, the Leave data-set is striking for its diversity. The sample strongly affirmed an emotional commitment to the future prosperity of the nation, although there were many different visions of who should be included and what this prosperity should be based on. In line with the scholarship, the data-set revealed a division between patriotic Leave voters who conceived of a prosperous nation as outward looking and globalised, but ‘independent’ and in complete control of its political affairs, and those of a nationalistic disposition, who perceived globalisation as a threat to national culture led by a compliantly corrupt elite. On the whole, the data-set was split between those who were sceptical of the supranationality at the heart of the EU but broadly supportive of economic reality, and those who espoused a brand of anti-globalisation nationalist populism. The fact that opinion was divided in this way serves to demonstrate the complex, evolving and divisive effect of globalisation on English national identity, polarising even among those with a shared scepticism of supranationality. These summations will be drawn together in the conclusion which follows.

Conclusion

This article has sought to add to the scholarship around the complex and often contradictory effects of globalisation on national identity, using contemporary England as a case-study. To do this, a qualitative analysis was conducted based on the Twitter discourses of both Remain and Leave campaigns in the immediate build-up to the UK’s referendum on membership of the EU on 23 June 2016. The utilisation of social media is central to the research, since Twitter has become an accessible medium for the recorded expression of opinion across an increasing variety of topics and demographics (Park and Kaye 2017:174). Although there are limits to the reliability of views expressed in a maximum of 140 characters, it provides researchers with a tool for accessing a previously unquantifiable body of
public opinion. This helps to broaden understanding of public discussion around complex social phenomena in a way that analysis of conventional policy and media discourse cannot.

It is clear from this research that national identity represents an increasingly sharp social divide in England. Identity politics has become pervasive in modern English socio-political culture, and debate over the future of the nation occupies a prominent position in this discourse (Reeves, 2016). The Referendum provided an unusually clear case for observation of this phenomenon. Although the two campaigns represent a logical dividing line in this debate, there was a surprising degree of similarity between aspects of both groups, as well as significant tensions within each cohort.

First among these observations was the prevalence of patriotism (see Viroli 1995 in Introduction) within the two discourses. Though opposed on the question of EU membership, the majority in both data-sets espoused a strong commitment to the future of the nation, marked by a desire for economic prosperity and political strength. The existence of such views among the Remain cohort demonstrates a comfortable co-existence between national pride and an endorsement of supranationality, vindicating the conclusions of previous cross-national studies (Antonsich, 2009; Jung, 2008). On the Leave side, the distinction made by many between supranational union and globalisation is extremely important. Crucially, this cohort of the data-set seemed as keen for the nation to profit from the economic opportunities of globalisation as the Remain sample, but saw supranational cooperation as inhibiting, rather than facilitating, this. Contrary to some post-referendum analysis, these views do not demonstrate a belief that the nation should retreat from globalisation (Cowell, 2016). This said, there was a significant minority who espoused concerns over the erosion of ‘national culture’, and saw the EU as promoting an internationalism that was responsible for this. In the time since the referendum this split has become ever more apparent among both Leave-supporting politicians and voters, divided between those who see Brexit as a chance to create a ‘Global Britain’ with the freedom to remake its international image and those who prioritise economic protectionism and limiting immigration above all else (Walker, 2018).

Overall, there was a very wide spectrum of views across both data-sets, in places revealing a seismic difference in perception of the English nation. This trend could have significant implications for future discourse, suggesting that
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The intensification of globalisation is having divisive and contradictory effects on elements within English society (see Ariely 2012:462). For some, globalisation appears to be directly weakening national attachment while cultivating global identity, while those at the opposing end of the scale see globalised modernity as threatening the cultural integrity of the English community. Again, this observation vindicates previous analysis of the effects of globalisation on national identity, which has found that it can precipitate both a resurgence in insular nationalism and a growth in cosmopolitanism (Ariely 2012:464).

In the case of England, it looks as if populist nationalism will continue to grow while cosmopolitan attachments remain on the fringe, (Jung 2008: 581), a trend which may have profound implications for future national political discourse (Jones, 2015). While both my research and that of other academics indicate that civic patriotism based on a broad acceptance of globalisation remains the dominant opinion, the growing electoral popularity of nationalist parties in England and across Europe shows no sign of abating (Lucassen and Lubbers 2012:552). If this prediction holds true, the tensions between civic and ethnic conceptions of the English nation evident in the data-sets can only be expected to widen, further evacuating the political centre-ground and dragging political discourse to the ideological extremes, a phenomenon that can already be observed in British politics (Helm, 2016). Since it is almost impossible to conceive of a complete reversal of economic globalisation (Beck 2005:4), these tensions between contradictory visions of the English nation could become irreconcilable, with the potential to seriously disrupt the existing parameters of democratic politics and national discourse.

At the core of these tensions sits the inherent ambiguity of globalisation, and the unequal distribution of benefits and costs across national societies. Consequently, globalisation, and its institutions that become symbolic of it like the EU, represent an immense variety of opportunities and threats, dispersed among different social groups. In Ariely’s words, ‘different operationalisations of globalisation and national identity yield very different results’ (2012:477). This research has vindicated this idea in relation to England, suggesting that without amelioration of the systemic economic and social inequalities that characterise modern globalisation, observers can expect the fundamental tensions between globalisation and English national identity to continue unabated. If the nation remains the primary unit of social and territorial organisation, it will be the logical vessel for the expression of grievances against globalisation, since it remains a tangible cultural entity in an increasingly uncertain world (Calhoun 2007:8). Based on my research, I expect
nationalism to play an ever more prominent role in English political discourse in the coming years.

Further research is required to explore the trends highlighted in this article. The utility of a social media-based discourse analysis has been discussed in detail, but this research model needs to be enlarged upon to comprehensively validate my conclusions. Foremost among this should be a considerable expansion of the sample size and search parameters to facilitate investigation into the large cohort across both data-sets that espoused an acceptance of globalisation alongside a politically powerful, patriotic nation-state. If the current theorisations about the incompatibility of these two beliefs are proved correct and globalisation continues to undermine the formal capacities of the state (McGrew and Lewis 2013, Mann 1997), tracking the changing views of this cohort using tools like social media will be crucial to understanding future political developments. Indeed, if contradictory interpretations of the nation can be explained by the differing formulations of globalisation subscribed to, more research is needed to isolate specific visions of globalisation in detail, and their direct relation to conceptions of the nation.

References

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What does social media discourse around the UK’s 2016 EU Referendum reveal about the interplay between English national identity and globalisation?


Appendix

Twitter Data-Sets (All Tweets were last accessed on 20/03/17).

#VoteRemain

1. @abi_sears (2016). “I believe in, and support, a Britain that welcomes immigration, that looks outward and that welcomes the future. #VoteRemain #StrongerIn”. 22/06/16, 4:37pm. https://twitter.com/abi\_sears/status/745762701121560576

2. @aimeedekoninck (2016). “#EUref is the first time I’ve felt strongly about anything to do with politics and I’m two months off being old enough to vote [crying emoji] #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:47pm. https://twitter.com/aimeedekoninck/status/745765125454454784

3. @brookestxrling (2016). “We are stronger and safer united. Within the EU we are better equipped to fight the problems in the world today. #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:56pm. https://twitter.com/brookestxrling/status/745767451045011456

4. @brookestxrling (2016). “The EU bonded the nations of Europe and replaced war with trade and negotiations. Let’s not be the generation to tear this down. #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:53pm. https://twitter.com/brookestxrling/status/745766717511634945

5. @ChillySamuel (2016). “In the last week I have seen so many open minded, outward looking people. Rejecting hate and prejudice. #VoteRemain #StrongerIn”. 22/06/16, 4:48pm. https://twitter.com/ChillySamuel/status/745765383701929984

6. @clarkbatfan (2016). “Sums up the general #VoteLeave pool’s lack of intelligence. Only one way for me. #VoteRemain” (link to another Tweet). 22/06/16, 4:20pm. https://twitter.com/clarkbatfan/status/745758325959163904

7. @danieljowen (2016). “My MP, a public school and Cambridge-educated barrister, just tweeted about sending a message to "the elites". [embarrassed emoji] #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:41pm. https://twitter.com/danieljowen/status/745763786280308738

8. @davidnio_42 (2016). “Today I will vote for togetherness, for trust, for the values I believe make this country and continent great. #EUref #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:32pm. https://twitter.com/davidnio\_42/status/745761445393084416

9. @davidmuir_ (2016). “immigrants steal all our jobs aka ur angry a foreigner is doing better off than u in ur own country #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16,
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4:27pm.
https://twitter.com/davidmuir_/status/745760118483095553

10. @dougbirrell (2016). “Every reason given to vote leave ultimately comes down to a tinge of racism. #VoteRemain. 22/06/16, 4:18pm.
https://twitter.com/dougbirrell/status/745755836183935261

11. @Garbutt2710 (2016). “Tory Britain. You voted for cuts. We got cuts. That’s why you can’t get a GP appointment, not because of Hungarians. #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:20pm.
https://twitter.com/Garbutt2710/status/745758428434423808

12. @ItsMo1001 (2016). “Don’t let the older generations ruin our future. Get out there and vote tomorrow!!!! #VoteRemain #EUref”. 22/06/16, 4:58pm.
https://twitter.com/ItsMo1001/status/745767919230005248

13. @keswickbro (2016). “If you’re still unsure about whether to vote leave or remain - then it should be a ‘better the devil you know’ scenario #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:56pm.
https://twitter.com/keswickbro/status/745767510876782592

14. @LeeKinnier (2016). “I might be a citizen of Britain, but I am also a citizen of the world. Why isolate ourselves when we can stay united? [3 planet emojis] #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:31pm.
https://twitter.com/LeeKinnier/status/745761110301773828

15. @MarkjNorbury (2016). “Today’s the big day. I’m for prosperity, togetherness, growth, dynamism, rights, freedom, croissant, bier, tapas and pizza #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:34pm.
https://twitter.com/MarkjNorbury/status/745761952299913216

16. @MilssLowe_(2016). “Really wish 16 year olds can vote in the referendum, it’s our generation who will suffer the most if we leave #VoteRemain #StrongerIn”. 22/06/16, 4:21pm.
https://twitter.com/MilssLowe_/status/745758704725798912

17. @NameChangeGirl (2016). “Friend posted this on Facebook, saying here are a few of the reasons he’s decided to #VoteRemain:” (image of text). 22/06/16, 4:32pm.
https://twitter.com/NameChangeGirl/status/745761351310655488

18. @NeilSlinn (2016). “These terrorist events in #Brussels are just playing into the hands of the #Brexit vote & God forbid #DonaldTrump”. 22/03/16, 10:26am.
https://twitter.com/NeilSlinn/status/712329657098629122

19. @Paul_Lautris (2016). “#TakeBackControl of what? The power is in Brussels and we’re a member with a veto and our own rules. #VoteLeave
#VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:46pm.
https://twitter.com/Paul\_Lautris/status/745765032596746240

20. @seanjlindley (2016). “I want my country back - do the right thing and #VoteRemain” (image of text). 22/06/16, 4:39pm.
https://twitter.com/seanjlindley/status/745763089472176128

21. @SteJamesMiller (2016). “Vote for a Great Britain as part of the European Union, not a Little England isolated in the face of challenges. #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:21pm.
https://twitter.com/SteJamesMiller/status/745758709763219457

22. @scotty7280 (2016). Big day tomorrow. Vote for fairness, vote for inclusion, vote for cooperation, vote for the economy, #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:22pm.
https://twitter.com/scotty7280/status/745759006501777408

23. @shahidarahman (2016). “I’m IN. #StrongerIn #StrongerTogether #Remain #EUEUreferendum #VoteRemain #votein #libdem” (image). 22/06/16, 4:24pm.
https://twitter.com/shahidarahman/status/745759387935997952

24. @speed_margot (2016). “DONT CRASH OUR ECONOMY + DESTABILISE MARKETS OVER UNFOUNDED AND INHUMAN IDEAS ABOUT IMMIGRATION. #VoteRemain TODAY.” (image). 22/06/16, 4:19pm.
https://twitter.com/speed\_margot/status/745758085101268993

25. @THEaggieholland (2016). “"No man is an island.. no country by itself." #VoteRemain”. 22/06/16, 4:46pm.
https://twitter.com/THEaggieholland/status/745764826031480832

#VoteLeave

1. @Alexicon83 (2016). “@standardnewsfor thenth time - immigration is not the problem. The rate at which it is happening is the problem. #VoteLeave” (in reply to another Tweet). 21/06/16, 4:37pm.
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Globalisation, the education gospel and a call for local adaptations in the developing world

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Introduction

In an increasingly globalised world, multiple aspects of daily life, such as communication and consumption patterns, seem to be uniformly converging. This phenomenon permeates politics, economics, communication, culture and ideology, leading to what scholars have claimed to be the homogenisation of practices subsuming the nation-state within the broader global polity (Dale, 2000; Lee, 2000; Mok and Welch, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004b). Education is not immune to this effect, as it is closely intertwined with the aforementioned dimensions. Universal prescriptions in education and training couched in a discourse around quality, and applied across various contexts of development through the influence of international agencies such as the World Bank, are evidence of such convergence. In this article, I first elucidate the origins and examples of universal prescriptions in education and training by employing the framework of world culture theory. Following this, I examine the utility of such prescriptions, particularly focusing on countries from the developing world. While some scholars claim that universal prescriptions in education are not meaningful, as they do not account for local context and may exacerbate the challenges faced in many developing countries, I argue that they are not entirely meaningless, and that developing countries can potentially benefit from them. In doing so, I stress the primacy of diverse and unique local contexts against which such universal prescriptions should be evaluated as part of any considerations for adoption.

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Emergence of the education gospel

The clearest example of educational convergence across the world is the concept of mass formal schooling, which is increasingly being taken for granted as the norm across the developed and developing world (Spring, 2015; Townsend and Cheng, 2000). What forces drive such convergence? How do we also make sense of their pervasiveness? World culture theory provides one useful analytical lens. Neo-institutionalist scholars behind this theory contend that internationally, all cultures are slowly coalescing, and that universal models of the state and society inside transnational spaces are influencing the development of education systems, to a greater degree than individual nation-states themselves (Dale, 2000; Spring, 2015; Wiseman, Astiz, and Baker, 2013). What this suggests is the presence of a homogenising force affecting education systems beyond the boundary of countries. In considering the direction of this force, one can argue that dominant Western actors are responsible for imposing universal models onto less privileged nations, and though there is some truth in this claim, it is not the complete story. In summarizing the arguments of proponents of world culture theory, Spring (2008, 2015) contends that nation-states themselves look outwards into the global culture in designing and developing their education systems and curricula. This indicates the presence of agency coupled with a mediating effect, where nation-states attempt to balance their participation in globalisation while at the same time asserting their national identity and priorities. I will return to this point later in the article.

Nevertheless, the sweeping influence of multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on global education cannot be dismissed. Often, the universal prescriptions on quality education and training endorsed by these organisations are reflective of broader trends in globalisation that favour a Western neoliberal approach, human capital theory and the pervasive use of discourse borrowed from economics (Carney, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004a; Tikly, 2011). Scholars such as Rizvi and Lingard (2010) commented that as part of such trends in globalisation, education “is seen as the best economic policy, necessary to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy” (p. 18). This is also consistent with the increasing vocationalism of education and training observed by Grubb and Lazerson (2006), whereby education is progressively geared towards preparation for work in the knowledge economy. They also claim that this occurs against the backdrop of an ‘Education Gospel’ of convergence towards utilitarian aims, which has been
accepted with fervour by many parties concerned with education and training (Grubb and Lazerson, 2006). In contrast to a development approach through education based on the human capital theory that prioritises economic wealth and commodifies students and teachers in the process, the capability approach theorised by Amartya Sen provides a useful counterpoint. Sen (1999) offers a more holistic alternative to development that foregrounds the expansion of a person’s opportunities—what he terms as ‘freedoms’—beyond merely the economic kind, that “allows us to be fuller social persons, exercising our own volitions and interacting with—and influencing—the world in which we live” (p. 15). In this vein, discourses associated with post-development originating from Latin America such as Buen Vivir and Tecnologia Social point to alternative framings for development beyond economic growth (Chassagne, 2018; Pozzebon and Fontenelle, 2018). Nevertheless, as will be evidenced below, the human capital theory coupled with neoliberal influences continue to drive the work of the World Bank and OECD, producing narrow prescriptions in education for developing countries that are largely driven by economic arguments.

The World Bank and OECD adopt different approaches to espousing universal prescriptions for education and training, though they are mutually reinforcing. The World Bank is known to dictate the conditions upon which aid is provided to developing countries, allowing it to ascribe its neoliberal agendas (privatisation of public services, freeing up of markets) and economic prescriptions on education (the use of rate of return analysis and unit cost of education by households) onto its loan packages (Dale, 2000; Jones, 2004; Lauder, Brown, Dillabough, and Halsey, 2006). Meanwhile, the OECD deserves an extensive mention in a discussion about homogenising effects and universal prescriptions of education globally. Progressively, their pervasive influence as a global education policy expert with the authority to ‘govern without government’ and indirectly mould the education policy of nation-states is legitimised through their data driven policy recommendations (Gardinier, 2017; Sellar and Lingard, 2014). Nowhere is this more prevalent than the prescription of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as an indicator of student outcomes worldwide. Convinced by the OECD’s careful and rigorous methodology that feeds into the trend of evidence-based education reforms, many countries all over the world willingly invest money to participate in PISA as part of the broader regime of education performance assessment (Morgan and Shahjahan, 2014; Sellar and Lingard, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004a). Consequently, the World Bank openly declares support for OECD’s policy recommendation, encouraging countries to participate in PISA in order to build a global database on learning achievement (Soudien, 2012). More
recently, in the World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work, the World Bank’s human capital project—“a program of advocacy, measurement, and analytical work to raise awareness and increase demand for interventions to build human capital”—includes PISA scores in the calculation of the human capital index (World Bank, 2019, p. 56). As part of their influencing roles which are motivated by human capital theory, both organisations also endorse the work of Eric Hanushek and Ludger Woessmann that attempts to explain the relationship between education gains (represented by PISA outcomes) and economic development (Klees, 2012; Sander, Ali, and Jalil, 2013). This is an evidence of the ‘economisation of education’, ascribing an economic aim to education as well as the reliance on research and discourse from the field of economics to justify education policy (Spring, 2015).

UNESCO also appears to adopt a human capital approach in their framework for quality education, although Tikly (2011) argues this is tempered by a combination with a human rights approach. As reflected in the Global Monitoring Report framework, their definition of quality follows a linear input-process-output model that simplifies the complex work of defining the meaning of quality across diverse educational contexts (Tikly, 2011). Interestingly, despite their significant influence on education policy, the World Bank and the OECD do not carry the education mandate in their names, nor were they founded primarily with this cause in mind. Hence, it is quite astonishing to note that both organizations have in fact recently eclipsed the role of UNESCO as authoritative voices in influencing international developments in education (Klees, Samoff, and Stromquist, 2012; Sellar and Lingard, 2014).

Furthermore, the World Bank, OECD and UNESCO also champion far-reaching, international agreements on education such as Education for All, the Fast Track Initiative and the Millennium Development Goals (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004b). The amplifying of their individual clout through these mutually reinforcing manoeuvres does not manifest by accident. In alignment with world culture theory, these international organisations come together to collectively define what can be considered quality in education and training all over the world, citing best practices that were formed largely in the Western world (Burde, 2004). Additionally, this phenomenon can be placed within the education policyscape that is “increasingly standardizing the flow of educational ideas internationally and changing fundamentally what education is and can be”, characterised by the ideology of neoliberalism and concerned with value for money and competitive advantage (Carney, 2009, p. 68). In essence, these organisations play a crucial
role in propagating the education gospel imbued with the human capital theory, particularly to developing countries, leveraging their extensive geographical, economic and political networks in a globalised and interconnected world.

**Universal prescriptions for quality education and training**

In order to analyse the usefulness of universal prescriptions that have arisen out of the converging phenomena described in the previous section, it is equally important to explicate examples of these prescriptions. The examples provided here demonstrate the ideological underpinning of the highlighted international organisations, though they are by no means exhaustive. One of the most prevalent universal prescriptions is the utilisation of market forces aimed to encourage competition and increase efficiency in education systems (Lauder et al., 2006; Mok and Welch, 2003). This stems from a neoliberal perspective espoused by the likes of the World Bank, which continues to promote the involvement of private and commercial actors in the form of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), despite mounting evidence that improved learning outcomes as a result of PPP are non-existent or unclear, and that schooling arrangements resulting from PPP exacerbate segregation and systemic inequalities through unfair admission policies tied to market competition (Malouf Bous and Farr, 2019; Nordtveit, 2012). Across the developing world, PPP has manifested in various forms such as low-cost private schools for the poor, which Klees (2012) argues are morally unacceptable, posing this question: “What kind of world is it where we consider it legitimate to charge the poorest people in the world for basic education?” (p. 59). Another universal prescription that has been influenced by the World Bank and the OECD is the concept of accountability and quality assurance in education. These concepts are largely influenced by practices imported from the business sector, drawing on the sector’s prominent audit culture (Cheng and Townsend, 2000; Sellar and Lingard, 2014). The borrowing of private management practice results in “strategies such as internal audits, quality assurance mechanisms, performance pledges, and management- by-objective in the public sector” (Mok and Welch, 2003, p. 7).

Calls for more autonomy, decentralisation and school-based management have also been championed by the OECD and the World Bank, once again advanced via the discourse of effectiveness and efficiency (Robertson and Verger, 2012). Cheng and Townsend (2000) note the prevalence of this trend in the Asia Pacific, reflecting the advancement of knowledge around theories of education management and demands for education to meet the goals of various communities. The increasing scrutiny by the media and policymakers over cross- country com-
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parisons through instruments like PISA (Wagner, 2010) heightens the temptation to distil the measure of quality into numerical terms, comparable across countries in a globalised education policiescape. It is therefore not surprising to witness data-driven policies that are shaped around such large scale assessments become a kind of universal prescription (Gardinier, 2017). More broadly, the prevalence of various forms of international assessments and university rankings corroborates the phenomenon of ‘policy as numbers’ observed by Rizvi and Lingard (2010), which describe policy development that leverages the increasing ubiquity of outcome-related data. In a world that is at once globalised and diverse, are such universal prescriptions meaningless? Can nation-states, particularly developing ones, stand to gain anything from them? The subsequent section of this article attempts to balance a critical and pragmatic stance without entirely abandoning such prescriptions.

No country (economically) left behind

There is no denying that the globalised economy is currently shaped by capitalistic tendencies that privileges the neoliberal ideology and favours its trade and markets (Dale, 2000; Lauder et al., 2006). Against this backdrop, economic arguments at the nation-state level often highlight the need to ensure the citizenry’s competitiveness within the global economy, beyond the traditional boundaries of the nation-state (Spring, 2015; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004b). Mok and Welch (2003) observed that many governments propagate a view of social Darwinism, highlighting the necessity for domestic educational priorities to be aligned with labour market requirements as a condition to fully integrate into, and subsequently survive, in the global economy. Must developing countries surrender to economic globalisation as a matter of survival? It is worth remembering that education indeed serves other needs than merely economic, as is made clear through the lens of Sen’s (1999) capabilities approach to conceive of holistic outcomes for a person, such as acquisition of knowledge through education for individual enlightenment and flourishing. Nonetheless, within the frame of the globalised economy where education is utilised as a common credential and currency for entry into the marketplace (Spring, 2015), I advance the argument that developing countries must be able to speak the dominant (economic) language while balancing their national priorities, in order to ensure that they are not marginalised in the economic sense. Though it might appear problematic to buy into the dominant discourse within which they are systematically disadvantaged, it is worse still for developing countries to deny the pervasive influence of the globalised economy, shut themselves in and wither away in the process. In this regard, I propose
a balanced and pragmatic standpoint for developing countries when it comes
to determining the usefulness of previously described universal prescriptions
for quality education and training. Rather than immediately disregard them as
meaningless, such prescriptions should be viewed as potentially useful insofar
as they can suit a developing country’s “wider historical, economic, political,
cultural and discursive context” (Tikly, 2011, p. 2). This proposed strategy will
be expounded in the next section.

A contextualised and localised reading of the education gospel

Evaluating the literature on policy transfer is useful in assessing the meaning of
universal prescriptions for quality education and training. It is practical to perceive
the movement of such recommendations from a transnational, globalised space
into the ambit of a developing nation-state. Though universal prescriptions derived
in light of globalisation seem to be deterritorialised and decontextualised (Steiner-
Khamsi, 2004b), taking note of the specificity of local context as well as the vibrant
interaction between global and local forces is critical if these prescriptions are to
be useful in practice (Crossley and Jarvis, 2001; Mok and Welch, 2003). Tikly
(2011) argues that the idea of context in relation to the discourse around education
quality in developing countries is rather broad, as it encompasses

the historical legacy of colonialism, the nature of the quality gap and
of educational inequality and disadvantage, the role of education in
relation to national and local development priorities, the impact of
global and regional agendas and the role of the state and of the private
sector in providing access to a good quality education (p. 14).

Subsequently, in the process of understanding the context of developing countries,
it is imperative to realise that there also exists a huge range of diversity when it
comes to the level of their national development, which impacts the dimensions
of education that are prioritised. Newly founded states are inclined to focus on
establishing stable school systems and building curricula, low-income countries
seek to universalise access to primary education, while middle-income countries
emphasise continuation to secondary education and addressing issues of equity (Tikly, 2011). In addition, Johnson (2006) highlights that the level of development
of a country also influences the extent of control they can exert over the trajectory
of their education policy, particular vis-à-vis their relationship with international
donors. In light of this, the agency possessed by low-income developing countries
to determine the meaning and utility of universal prescriptions in education and
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training can be seen as limited, given that they are bound by aid conditionalities. From the perspective of world systems theory, this is a clear example of the imposition of education policy originating from the core countries to periphery countries, thereby preserving the existing power structures (Spring, 2015). However, it is also interesting to note that even in the absence of aid conditionalities, middle-income countries can also wilfully internalise the education gospel without being entirely critical of its influence. Take for example my home country of Malaysia, where the influence of OECD’s PISA is evident in the government’s formulation of the *Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Preschool to Post-Secondary Education)*. In the Blueprint, quality was chiefly demonstrated by being in the “Top third of countries in international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS in 15 years.” (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013, p. E-9). What is more problematic is that the Ministry appears to rely heavily on PISA results as a concrete indicator of the effectiveness of their transformation efforts, despite the fact that the OECD has cautioned against comparisons for Malaysia’s PISA 2015 results due to the country’s sampling limitations (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016; OECD, 2016).

However, there are reasons to be optimistic. The developing world does demonstrate examples that point to the careful mediation and interaction between universal prescriptions of quality education and the regional or national priorities embedded within local contexts. For example, in the African context, Tikly and Barrett (2011) highlight how regional bodies such as African Renaissance, New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) provide the opportunity for bottom up contribution by indigenous leaders alongside the top-down donor agendas for education. In Malaysia, the need to increase the size of a highly educated workforce to support foreign direct investment at the turn of the new millennium led to the liberalisation and marketisation of the higher education sector, which theretofore had been the sole responsibility of the government (Lee, 2000). Nepal also presents an interesting example of the way in which universal prescription of school based management and autonomy is contextualised. The government’s shift towards gradually empowering local communities to take charge of their own schooling—backed by education quality aspirations that target active participation in the global economy—have energised parents and children alike (Carney, 2009).

Given the rich and layered nature of context across countries, Reimers, Cooc and Hashimi (2012) argues for the process of contextualised transfer, which takes into account the relationship between the context itself and the outcome of a policy
within that context, as well as how differences across contexts can constrain the transfer of policy. How do policymakers in a developing country adopt this process of contextualised transfer to their benefit? Perhaps a useful starting point would be to identify an education system within which such universal prescriptions have been proven to be effective. What follows is the process of studying the context of that education system and its relationship with the implementation of a universal prescription, while being cognisant of the differences and similarities with the context of one’s own education system. Escobar (2012), in advancing his theory of postdevelopment, argues that “local models exist not in a pure state but in complex hybrizations with dominant models” (p. 96). What this suggests is that adaptations are not without challenges despite in-depth understanding of contexts. The education gospel must come under consistent and critical reinterpretation to suit local realities, while acknowledging that such realities themselves continue to evolve and become hybridised with forces of globalisation.

Conclusion

Education policy isomorphism represents the process that results in the “remarkable similarities in structures, policies, curriculum, pedagogy and expectations for schooling in education systems worldwide” (Wiseman, Astiz, and Baker, 2014, p. 699). By employing the framework of world culture theory, I have described this isomorphism, paying particular attention to the role and influence of international organisations such as the World Bank, UNESCO and the OECD. By and large, the economisation of education, the espousal of human capital theory to support it, as well as the legitimisation of policy as numbers have led to the birth of an education gospel that significantly influences international developments in education. In this gospel, parables in the form of universal prescriptions for quality education and training systems are exemplified, including marketisation of education, accountability, autonomy and policy responses to international large-scale assessments. Must this gospel be internalised everywhere in the world as a fixed truth, or can its verses be refashioned with dynamic local flavours? In the theatre of globalisation and hybridisation, developing countries must be adept at reading and reinterpreting this gospel. This entails navigating the rules of the global economy while holding firm to their dynamic local contexts, lest they are left behind or left without an identity. Only through this delicate balancing act will nations in the developing world be able to reap the benefits of universal prescriptions in education and training—and by proxy globalisation—without being swept away by the attendant tide of homogeneity.
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References


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The Rehabilitation of Masculinity in Nikolai Gumilev’s play ‘Actaeon’

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In recent years the study of gender in both Russian and Classical literature has moved to the forefront of scholarly research, although some significant lacunas still exist, in particular in comparative analyses of the evolution of gender representations across the two cultures. The present article will contribute to filling this gap by taking as its focus the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana and studying the representation of gender in the only Russian dramatic rendition of the myth: Nikolai Gumilev’s play Actaeon. Despite its poetic excellence and marked innovation in relation to preceding literary tradition, Gumilev’s one act play, composed in 1913, has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention. In most extended studies of Gumilev’s poetry his mythological play is either not addressed or mentioned in passing alongside his other, more famous plays. The aim of this article is to rectify this lack of scholarly interest by conducting a detailed analysis of Actaeon on the levels of its structure, use of scenic detail and physical and psychological representation of its characters, through the prism of masculinity and femininity.

For any comprehensive study of the evolution of gender roles from ancient to modern cultures, the Classical myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana is pivotal in that it represents a rare exception to the canonical distribution of narrative weight. The legend of Actaeon recounts the unhappy fate of Actaeon, who,

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1Gumilev composed eight plays, of which three especially have received a fair amount of scholarly attention: Гондла (1917), ‘Отравленная туника’ (1918), Дитя Аллаха (1918).

2Other exceptions include Orpheus and the Furies, Pentheus and the Bacchae, Artemis and Adonis, Artemis and Orion, all of which function as exempla of mortal male hubris punished by female divinities.
while hunting with his dogs, encounters the goddess Artemis bathing in a spring with her nymphs. The goddess, angered that a mortal man had seen her naked, splashed water on Actaeon and transformed him into a stag, robbing him of the ability to speak. To complete her punishment, Artemis sent the hunter’s dogs after the stag to tear him apart. Traditionally, in Classical literature and mythology the cultural role of a male hero is that of an active ‘hunter-like’ figure, while the female character is his passive object of prey. Numerous examples of women subjected to male violence can be found across all genres of Classical literature: Penelope is beset by scheming suitors (Odyssey); Hecuba is taken captive by the Greeks (Euripides’ Trojan Women); Andromache is raped by Neoptolemus (Trojan Women); Helen is seduced and abducted by Theseus (Plutarch’s Theseus) and later by Paris (Herodotus’ Histories); Daphne is hounded to death by the lustful Apollo (she was turned into a laurel tree cf. Ovid’s Metamorphoses). In contrast to the traditional female role of a victimised sufferer, male characters are traditionally portrayed as developed either in terms of intelligence or physical strength (or often both, e.g. Odysseus). They appear in the hypostasis of a learned sage, e.g., Tiresias (Sophocles’ Oedipus), Phoenix (Iliad), or Nestor (Odyssey); a powerful warrior, e.g., Achilles, Ajax, or Hector (Iliad); or a skilled hunter, e.g., Orion (Ovid’s Fasti) or Hippolytus (Euripides’ Hippolytus). Male and female roles thus form two sides of stable scales, each side of which is and ‘conditioned by [the] other’: female passivity and physical/mental confinement is counterbalanced by male activity and social freedom. In other words, masculinity and femininity are cultural concepts which are ‘inherently relational’.

This conventional balance between masculinity and femininity can be seen in the traditional binary representation of gender relations as ‘the hunter and the hunted’: the motif of hunting is transposed from man versus animal onto man versus woman, with the female figuratively depicted as ‘the hunted’ and the male as ‘the hunter’ (e.g. Daphne and Apollo (Ovid’s Metamorphoses); Ariadne and Bacchus (Catullus’ Poem 64)). In the ancient tradition this canonical distribution of gender roles is almost never reversed: the female remains the ‘hunted’ victim and the male the dynamic ‘hunter’. Even the murderous Clytaemnestra of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon, a woman who notoriously oversteps the boundaries of traditional female passivity and inspires Aegisthus to set a hunter-like trap for her

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3 Burkert, 111.
4 Nielson, 49.
5 Connell, 35.
6 Burkert, 111.
7 Burkert, 111.
husband (a net), is initially given the role of a victim (she loses her daughter by Agamemnon’s hand). However, in the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana a complete gender reversal, pivoted around the traditional motif of the ‘hunter and hunted’, unfolds: Actaeon is denied the male role of active hunter and assumes the role of a ‘hunted’ victim, whilst Artemis/Diana is displaced from a passive female role (represented by her initial vulnerable nudity) and becomes the determining factor of the male character’s fate. This gender reversal is maintained throughout the scarce references to the Actaeon myth in ancient literature: all extant sources (Callimachus’ *Hymn V*, Stesichorus’ lost poem summarised by Pausanias (ix.2.3), Diodorus of Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica*, Euripides’ *Bacchae*, Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*, Hesiod’s *Catalogue of Women* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*) represent Artemis/Diana as the numinous goddess of hunting and Actaeon as the passive victim of her rage.

Traditional gender canons (reversed in the myth of Actaeon and Diana) are reflected in 19th and 20th century European culture: gender-determined behaviour, defined by the balance of the male and female spheres and manifested primarily in male activity and female passivity, is both ‘enduring and remarkably stable’. Traditional masculine aspects such as physical desire for power (‘hegemonic masculinity’), corporal strength (the warrior mentality of defending oneself and one’s lands, as in WWI), wisdom, competence in public speaking and assertiveness (a necessary trait in a male ethos) all find their parallel in later European cultures. The cult of masculinity is especially characteristic of the poetry of Nikolay Gumilev, a man famed for ‘self-fashioning’ in relation to the canonical prerequisites of physical and mental dynamism. Gumilev’s biography reveals his preoccupation with typically masculine activities, in particular travel (cf. epic hero-travellers such as Odysseus and Aeneas): by the age of twenty-four the poet had visited four exotic countries, Africa, Egypt, Sudan and Abyssinia. During his travels Gumilev developed an interest in hunting (another traditional skill of ancient male heroes, cf. Odysseus, Theoclymenus (Euripides’ *Helen*)): in his journals the poet describes his fight with a shark, a leopard and a hyena.

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8 Burkert, 111.
9 Clements, 3.
10 Kaufman, 142.
11 Gilmore, 226.
12 Clements, 4.
13 Greenblatt, 1.
14 Sampson, 29.
15 Petrone, 131.
and his unsuccessful attempt to overcome a lion. In addition to the traditional male activities of travelling and hunting, Gumilev’s masculinity is revealed in his conduct in war: he had an illustrious military career and was decorated with two St George Crosses for outstanding service during WWI. Like the greatest of epic heroes (Achilles, Diomedes, Ajax), Gumilev appears to have regarded military combat as a ‘personal adventure and grandiose spectacle’, an attitude ‘unique among Russian intellectuals’.

Gumilev’s ‘masculinity’ is reflected not only in his biography but also in his impact on the Russian literary arena of the 20th century: in response to the Symbolist tradition, which the poet regarded as weak and, as Basker suggests, ‘feminine’, he introduced a new literary movement, Adamism or Acmeism, which he defined by its masculine, dynamic impetus (‘мужественно-твердый и ясный взгляд на жизнь’, ‘a masculine, firm and clear view of life’). Gumilev characterises his new movement by a certain bestiality or violence, aspects directly derived from canonical, active masculinity (‘Как адамисты, мы немного лесные звери и... не отдадим того, что в нас есть звериного, в обмен на неврастению’, ‘We Adamists are a little bit like wild animals... and we will not surrender this animalistic aspect of our nature in exchange for neurosis’). This inherently masculine approach is put into practice in the personae which Gumilev adopts for his first poetic collection ‘Путь конквистадоров’ (1905) and poem ‘Капитаны’ (1909), both of which are focused on the exotic travels and courageous exploits of superhuman male heroes.

Consequently, it can be suggested that the poet’s interest in the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana could have been sparked by its potential for the masculinisation of the main character and the restoration of canonical, cultural gender roles. The myth’s striking de-masculinisation of the leading male character gives scope for Gumilev to apply his Adamist principles to an ancient hero well-known for his passive, female-like role. Gumilev’s choice of the Actaeon myth as the basis of his play could have also been prompted by the traditional visual representation

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16Petrone, 131.
17Sampson, 30.
18Petrone, 132.
19Гумилёв, 1913.
20Basker, 516.
21Гумилёв, 1913.
22Гумилёв, 1913.
23Sampson, 31.
of Actaeon and Diana, which stresses the passivity and vulnerability of the male character. A painting of Diana and Actaeon by Ercole Graziani, which, in accordance with the mythological and Classical distribution of gender roles, depicted Diana as a powerful goddess (she and her nymphs are in the foreground of the composition) and Actaeon as her passive victim (he is miniscule and located in the distant background) had been exhibited in the Imperial Hermitage since 1859. It can be suggested that the canonical visual depiction of a female-like, passive male could have inspired the Russian poet to choose a plot charged with potential for the rehabilitation of masculinity.

Gumilev’s innovations in his treatment of the myth, striking in comparison with both his visual and literary predecessors, have sometimes been accounted for by his ignorance of ancient literature, rather than by a conscious decision to transform the myth. However, recent studies of Gumilev’s biography have revealed the depth of his education in Classics. Although he studied old French at the Sorbonne, the poet’s schooling in ancient languages and literature began at the age of ten (1896) at the St. Petersburg Gurevich gymnasium, where, according to his biographers, he studied Latin for forty-two hours a week and Ancient Greek for thirty-three hours a week. Gumilev continued his work on Classical languages and literature at the Nikolaevskaya gymnasium in Tsarskoe Selo in 1903-1906, where Innokenty Annensky, a notable Classicist scholar, was Director at the time. Given Gumilev’s specialised education at two of St. Petersburg’s leading schools, it is certain that he was equipped with sufficient knowledge of ancient literature and languages to have a detailed understanding of ‘traditional mythological accounts’. Consequently, his adherence to or departures from earlier renditions of the Actaeon–Artemis/Diana myth must be regarded as purposeful decisions to rework the Classical myth, rather than mistakes or chance digressions. This article will attempt to show, through a detailed evaluation of Gumilev’s echoes with the Classical representation of the legend, that the Russian poet was following the deliberate agenda of

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24 Всеволжская, 66-67.
25 Терапиано, 3.
26 Баскер, 501.
27 Стрakhовский, 13.
28 The most notable is Зорина (2002), who focuses on the poet’s Classical education.
29 Зорина, 37.
30 Николаев, 590.
31 Баскер, 501.
32 Баскер, 502.
transforming the ancient plot by the masculinisation of Actaeon through his psychology. A two-plane approach (the macrocosmic pertaining to the compositional structure of the play, and the microcosmic relating to the central characters of the myth), will be used, in order to determine the nature of psychological variation, and the level of Gumilev’s reallocation of agency between Artemis and Actaeon.

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The extent of Gumilev’s reliance on preceding traditions and the location of his own innovations in the representation of gender can be analysed on the macrocosmic level of the play, which encompasses both its compositional structure and its use of scenic setting. Although Gumilev adopts what has been called the ‘unalterable kernel’ of the myth, pivoting his play around the two schematic markers of the transformation of Actaeon into a deer and his brutal slaughtering by his dogs, he adds a structural element absent from earlier renditions: an opening scene featuring Cadmus, Agave and Echion. The inclusion of this scene disrupts the traditional chronology of the Cadmus cycle: whereas in the Classical tradition Cadmus begot his sons (Pentheus and Actaeon) long after the erection of Thebes, Gumilev synthesises the motif of building the city with the tragedy of an already grown-up Actaeon. The purpose of this dramatic shift in chronology is to juxtapose the spiritual Actaeon and his father, the ‘royal architect’ Cadmus, and so facilitate the revelation of the former’s mental superiority, used by Gumilev to restore his masculinity (as discussed shortly). Although some scholars regard the juxtaposition of Cadmus and Actaeon as contrasting a ‘hardworking’ and a ‘lazy’ individual and propose that the play is in fact centred around the conflict of a noble, ‘visionary’ father and his worthless son, it can be argued that the two characters are contrasted in a different manner: Cadmus is a trivial, mundane man of action, whereas Actaeon is spiritually and intellectually compelling.

In contrast to Cadmus’s building endeavours, which can only be characterised in terms of physical dynamism, Actaeon displays the other necessary male attribute:

33 Heath, 196.  
34 Heath, 196.  
35 Шелогурова, 121-131.  
36 Basker, 502.  
37 Graham, 509.  
38 Комаров, 55-61.  
39 Basker, 503.
spiritual complexity. While Cadmus believes that the gods require tangible evidence of his proximity to them (he is building a temple: ‘Для храма’, ‘for the temple’), Actaeon conceptualises a human relationship with the divine sphere through an understanding of the natural world.\textsuperscript{40} The superiority of Actaeon’s religious beliefs is further revealed by a series of violent images signifying the sacrilegious aggression with which Cadmus and Agave treat the natural world:\textsuperscript{41} the Theban king is directly addressing the mother of all gods, Gaea, with insults and abuse (‘cursed carcass, deaf whale / stubborn hag...’). Cadmus believes that he can create ‘order out of chaos’\textsuperscript{42}, but is at the same time unable to perceive that this ‘chaos’ is nature itself, a medium made up of living divinities (the trees are Dryads and the Earth is the goddess Gaea). His attempt to establish order is thus nothing more than a violent aggression against the gods.\textsuperscript{43} Unable to understand the divine spirit in nature, Cadmus destroys life itself, whereas Actaeon, who perceives and treasures the soul in every natural phenomenon (be it a stream, a well, the woods or even the radiant sun), advocates life. Although remaining alive in his ‘joyless Thebes’, Cadmus signifies darkness and death, whereas Actaeon, who is doomed to physical death, aspires to transcend mortal bounds and attain ‘Блаженство вечное’, ‘eternal bliss’.

Both Cadmus and Actaeon aspire towards a proximity to the gods, but conflict in their understanding of how this can be achieved.\textsuperscript{44} On the one hand, Cadmus believes that Actaeon errs in his veneration of nature and so can never attain a divine status (‘И к богам тебе заперты двери!’, ‘The doors to the gods are barred for you’), whilst Actaeon maintains that his father’s ‘materialistic’ approach to religion is abhorrent to the gods: ‘И бог вовеки не сойдет / В твои безрадостные Фивы’ (‘No god will ever come down / to your unhappy Thebes’).\textsuperscript{45} Although Gumilev offers no explicit answer as to where the truth lies (Actaeon’s philosophy brings him to see the goddess Diana, but results in his death,\textsuperscript{46} whereas Cadmus’ belief precludes him from divine presence, but earns him the praise of Diana: ‘благородн[ый] Кадм’, ‘noble Cadmus’), the psychological complexity which the poet allots to only one of his characters determines the sympathy of the audience: Cadmus remains flat, whilst Actaeon’s mental powers are revealed by his gift of

\textsuperscript{40}Комаров, 55-61.
\textsuperscript{41}Шелогурова, 121-131.
\textsuperscript{42}Бакулина, 52.
\textsuperscript{43}Шелогурова, 121-131.
\textsuperscript{44}Бакулина, 51; Basker 499.
\textsuperscript{45}Шелогурова 121-131.
\textsuperscript{46}Комаров, 55-61.
perceiving the gods’ presence in nature. Actaeon’s sophisticated masculinity must have had a special, personal appeal to the Russian poet since he paralleled himself to the ancient hero (‘И я, новый Актеон’, ‘I am a new Actaeon’).

The second component of the macrocosmic plane (the scenic setting) further serves to illuminate Gumilev’s transformation of gender roles in the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana. Since, as is shown below, Actaeon’s scenic details (the external, visual level), are drawn almost verbatim from his primary source, Ovid’s Metamorphoses 3.138-251, they signal to the audience that Gumilev’s main innovation will most likely be concentrated on another level, not the external, but the internal and psychological. In his treatment of scenic detail, Gumilev subordinates the visual aspect of the myth to its other, deeper psychological dimension. The first stage direction contains seven specific details about the opening setting of Gumilev’s play: ‘Место действия – долина Гаргафии, покрытая тёмным кипарисовым лесом. В глубине – пещера аркой. Направо – светлый источник бежит по зелёной лужайке’, (‘The action takes place in the valley of Gargaphie, which is covered in a dark cypress forest. In the deep part of the forest there is an arched cave. On the right hand side, a bright stream runs along a green meadow.’). Each of these seven details corresponds closely to the poetic setting of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, an almost bucolic ‘locus amoenus’:

Gumilev’s replication of specific details from Ovid’s Metamorphoses can be interpreted as signals which directly lead his contemporary audience, well-versed in Classical mythology and literature (especially Ovid), to his primary source. The poet composed his play for an audience capable of perceiving a work of art on what can provisionally be termed a ‘double stage’: Actaeon could be simultaneously perceived as a text in its own right and in the context of Ovid’s Metamorphoses. Thus it can be concluded that at the macrocosmic level both

\[47\] Переписка Н.Гумилева с Л.Рейснер (8.11.1916).
\[48\] Basker, 501.
\[49\] Basker, 501.
\[50\] Segal, 34.
\[51\] Original Classical texts and translations are taken from LOEB editions. (See Bibliography).
\[52\] Basker, 501.
the specific topical landmarks and the schematic plot-line of the myth (with the exception of the opening scene) are retained, in order to emphasise the psychological complexity of Actaeon as compared to other mortals. In doing so Gumilev indicates that his authorial contribution is not confined to the visual sphere of the myth, and invites his readers to prepare themselves for innovations in another sphere: the psychological.

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The microcosmic level of the play (pertaining to the central characters of the myth) serves to complete the revelation of Gumilev’s agenda, the masculinisation of the canonically passive, feminine-like Actaeon (as represented in antiquity), by dichotomising the physical and spiritual aspects of the two leading characters. On the one hand, as at the macrocosmic level of his play, Gumilev closely adheres to Ovid, his Classical source in the external, physical representation of Diana and Actaeon; on the other hand, in the internal, psychological representation of his characters he departs from the myth’s canonical gender role distribution: Actaeon as a paradigm of female-like passivity and Diana as a manifestation of traditionally masculine mental dynamism.

Gumilev’s adherence to Ovid’s physical representation of Diana and Actaeon can be analysed on the level of type-scenes constructed of phraseological units and concrete lexemes. Gumilev’s type-scene of a goddess’ undressing, potentially known to his educated audience through the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, contains several details which follow Ovid’s treatment of the same scene. Basker lists a series of such similarities (as in ‘Diana’s first speech, with its reference to the bathing of limbs, to sandals, to cloaks, and to the goddess’ attention to her hair before the bath’)\textsuperscript{53}, but does not accompany them by a systematic analysis or suggest their potential implications. In contrast to scholars who pass over such analyses as ‘unnecessary’\textsuperscript{54}, this article will attempt to show that a detailed evaluation of parallels between Ovid and Gumilev serve to reveal the Russian poet’s agenda: the masculinisation of Actaeon through his psychology.

Traditionally the type-scene of Diana’s undressing, present in both Ovid’s and Gumilev’s bathing scenes, contains reference to the nymphs who attend the goddess. In both the Latin and the Russian rendition of the myth, one nymph

\textsuperscript{53}Basker, 501.

\textsuperscript{54}Basker, 502.
The Rehabilitation of Masculinity in Nikolai Gumilev’s play ‘Actaeon’ is shown as more skilful than the rest and so is allowed to arrange the goddess’ hair (Gumilev: ‘Всех ты искусней, Ранис; распусти мне, пожалуйста, косы’, ‘Ranis you are the most skillful of all; undo my plaits please’; Ovid: ‘but Crocale… more skillful than her sisters, gathered up the goddess’ scattered locks’ (capillos’)).

Another characteristic feature of the undressing type-scene, constructed by the enumeration of Diana’s body parts and items of her clothing, is also present in Ovid and Gumilev.55 Ovid includes references to feet (pedes), sandals (vincla), hair (capilli), a garment made of cloth (pallae – ‘mantle’) and arms/shoulders (bracchia) which are employed in the syntactical function of objects to predicates, expressed by finite verbs used in the indicative mood (subiecit, demunt, colligit):

Diana… gave her mantle (3) which she took off her shoulders (5) to another nymph… two others loosed the sandals (2) from her feet (1); but Crocale… gathered up the goddess’ scattered locks (4)…’

(165-170)

In Gumilev’s play the type-scene of the goddess’ disrobing consists of exactly the same details56 used also as objects to predicates and expressed by finite verbs in the indicative and the imperative mood (расстегните, сбросьте, распусти, войду):

‘Время нам ноги (1, in Ovid ‘pedes’) омыть, расстегните ремни у сандалий (2, ‘vincla’), Сбросьте лёгкую ткань (3, ‘pallae’) с ваших измученных плеч (5, ‘bracchia’). Всех ты искусней, Ранис; распусти мне, пожалуйста, косы (4, ‘capilli’).’

‘It is time for us to wash our feet, undo the buckles of your sandals, throw off the flowing fabric from your wearied shoulders. Ranis you are the most skillful of all; undo my plaits please’.

In her body Gumilev’s Diana is no different from her Roman counterpart; her nudity is perceived as a sign of female vulnerability both by Ovid (‘Quickly gathered they to shield Diana with their naked forms,’179-181), and by Gumilev, who, according to Basker, imitates Ovid’s description of the nymphs’ behaviour: ‘Стеною станем вкруг богини / И бедной наготой своей / Прикроем вечные святыни’ (‘Let’s stand around the goddess in a wall / and with our poor naked

55 Basker, 502.
56 Basker, 501.
bodies / conceal her immortal holy form’). Both texts stress the need to protect the virginal nudity of the goddess (‘texere’ in Ovid, ‘прикроем’ in Gumilev) with the naked forms of the nymphs (‘corporibus ‘in Ovid, ‘бедной наготой своей’ in Gumilev). With their beautiful, unclothed bodies the nymphs form a visual tableau worthy of a sculpture or Attic vase, but do not reveal any psychological conflict: they, like their mistress, remain on a purely physical level. The proximity of details in Gumilev’s type-scene of the goddess’ undressing to Ovid’s original thus suggests a further signal to the Russian poet’s audience that, since Gumilev’s creative authorial contribution is not located in the visual plane, it will most likely be concentrated on the psychological representation of the goddess.

Gumilev exhibits a similarly close adherence to Ovid’s Metamorphoses in his physical representation of Actaeon. Both Ovid and Gumilev have the young man enter on stage after a hunt with his friends, introducing a type-scene of a hero’s return. Both Ovid’s and Gumilev’s Actaeons address their comrades with a speech: ‘our nets and steel are stained with slaughtered game, the day has filled its complement of sport…’ (Ovid), ‘Идите, товарищи, в этот вечер / Мне хочется быть одному. / Мы славно охотились…’, ‘Go, my friends, I want to be alone this evening / We had a good hunt…’ (Gumilev). Finally, in both texts the main theme of the hero’s speech is the expression of fulfilment gained through the sport of hunting. The two poets represent Actaeon’s behaviour in a similar fashion: he wishes to remain alone and takes leave of his friends in preparation for his ordeal. Thus, as with Diana, Gumilev maintains the physical aspect of Ovid’s representation of the hero: he is young, he is a hunter, he is first surrounded by a band of friends and then left alone.

Two reasons can be suggested for this stability in the physical representation of Actaeon and Diana, as analysed on the level of type-scenes. Any authorial alteration in the visual representation of the two characters in relation to the original source would focus the interest of Gumilev’s audience on the external level of the play and distract its attention away from psychology, an aspect central to the poet’s interpretation of the myth. In addition to this a less obvious explanation can be suggested: Gumilev, adhering to the ‘unalterable kernel’ of the myth, cannot change its physical manifestation of gender roles (mauled victim/active persecutor), but is able to introduce a psychological aspect to his character’s behaviour, which is not prescribed by the scheme of the myth. While

57 Basker, 502.
58 Heath, 196.
maintaining the traditional balance of Actaeon’s physical passivity and Diana’s physical activity, Gumilev concentrates on endowing the male character with the other canonical masculine attribute: autonomy.

Gumilev’s masculinisation of Actaeon can be seen primarily in his choice of psychological motivation for his hero’s intrusion in the scene of Diana’s bath. In preceding literary traditions several different explanations for Actaeon’s demise were offered: chance, sexual desire and ‘hubris’\(^59\), none of which concern Actaeon’s psychology. The first of these explanations can be found in Callimachus’s *Hymn V*, where Actaeon stumbles upon Diana against his will: ‘when, albeit unwillingly, he shall behold the beauteous bath of the goddess’ (5.111-114).\(^60\)

Actaeon’s male active hypostasis as hunter, indicated in Callimachus by the contextual tautology of ‘the chase’ (‘δρόμος’) and ‘archery’ (‘ἐκαβολίαι’), is subservient to his passivity as a victim of chance. Callimachus’ Actaeon has no will of his own, but rather follows where his fate directs him.

Ovid draws upon the same tradition, suggesting, like Callimachus, that Actaeon’s transgression was chance, represented by fate and the goddess Fortuna: ‘His sorrow was the crime of Fortune and not his guilt – for who can say mistakes are crimes?’ (141-142); ‘Actaeon…with steps uncertain wandered as fate directed,’ (175-176).\(^61\) In Ovid Actaeon is no ‘intruder’\(^62\) with a will of his own, but rather an ‘uncertain wanderer’ (‘non certis… errans’), whose only reason for seeing the female Diana undressed, was a ‘mistake’ (‘error’). Although the motivation of ‘chance’ in ancient sources (Callimachus, Ovid) rehabilitates Actaeon from the role of sacrilegious transgressor, it also robs him of two canonical attributes of a male role: independence of mind/purpose and physical vigour. Thus, Fate or chance as an explanation for Actaeon’s demise locates him firmly within the boundaries of a feminine role.

The second motivation offered by ancient renditions of the myth is sexual desire. Although this motivation retains some form of physical dynamism, it precludes any possibility of Actaeon’s development beyond the limits of the body to which traditional female representation is restricted. The motivation of ‘erotic pursuit’ is directed towards two different women: Semele and Artemis.\(^63\) Stesichorus (6th

\(^{59}\) Schlam, 82.

\(^{60}\) Lacy, 30.

\(^{61}\) Schlam, 95.

\(^{62}\) Schlam, 95.

\(^{63}\) Schlam, 106.
century BC), Hesiod (*The Catalogue of Women*, 7th century BC) and Acesilaus (6th century BC) maintain that Actaeon was punished by Artemis for his desire to seduce Semele, beloved of Zeus. Actaeon’s passion for Artemis appears to have arisen as a later motif, expounded by Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC) and later by Nonnus of Panopolis (5th century AD), the creator of the most detailed ancient account of the Actaeon and Artemis/Diana myth (260 lines). Nonnus regards Actaeon’s passion in wholly physical terms: he desires only the goddess’ body, ‘he had seen the whole body of the Archeress bathing... he surveyed inch by inch the holy body of the unwedded virgin ... he stared with stolen glances on the unclothed shape of the queen.’ (5.303-09). Nonnus conceptualises Actaeon as passive both in body and mind: his physical dynamism amounts to nothing more than sitting in the boughs of a tree (‘for ... he sat up in a tall oak tree amid the spreading branches,’ 302), whilst his psychological development, as in the earlier motif of his passion for Semele, remains limited: he can only lust after the goddess’s body, her mind and divine status have no interest for him. A similarly physical manifestation of Actaeon’s desire is offered by Diodorus Siculus: ‘he proposed to consummate marriage with Artemis at the temple of the goddess’, (4.81.4). Since Actaeon’s motivation for seeing Artemis/Diana remains wholly on the level of physical, sexual desire, there is no scope for psychological development or internal conflict: if Actaeon’s concern is with Artemis’ body, then he also must remain on the same corporeal level.

The final explanation for Actaeon’s demise can be defined as arrogance, or a hubristic desire to surpass the goddess in her hunting powers. This explanation is presented both by Diodorus Siculus as an alternative to sexual desire (‘according to others, it was because he represented himself as superior to Artemis in skill as a hunter’ (4.81.4)) and by Euripides in the *Bacchae*. Both Diodorus and Euripides depart from the traditional scene of Diana’s bath, dispensing with any potential eroticism associated with seeing the unclothed goddess and focusing wholly on Actaeon’s sacrilegious ambition. In both sources Actaeon’s transgression

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64 Schlam, 83.
65 Schlam, 82.
66 Lacy, 42.
67 Schlam, 82.
68 Schlam, 82.
69 Schlam, 82.
manifests itself in his desire to displace Artemis, the goddess of hunting, from her traditional, cultic role and assume the male cultural role of hunter: ‘The wretched fate of Actaeon, who was torn apart… having boasted that he was superior in the hunt to Artemis’ (Bacchae 337-40). In effect, Actaeon attempts to reverse the distribution of gender roles prescribed by the Classical rendition of the myth (male and active to Artemis, female and passive to himself), but fails because ultimately he lacks the necessary attributes of a male role: physically he is a passive victim ‘torn apart… by blood-thirsty hounds’ (Bacchae 339) and psychologically he is limited by his lack of due respect for a divinity and by his desire to overcome the goddess in only one, physical aspect (hunting).

In contrast to ancient renditions of the myth, which limit Actaeon’s transgression to the physical, Gumilev proposes a motivation which is developed further, into the sphere of psychology: Actaeon’s contact with Diana is caused by his spiritual desire to transcend mortality and achieve deification (‘Я буду спать, не закрывая глаз, / И, может быть, проснусь на утро богом’, ‘I will sleep, without shutting my eyes / and in the morning I may wake up a god’). Although Gumilev does not wholly depart from earlier renditions of the myth by referring to chance and sexual desire as potential motivations for Actaeon’s transgression, he makes these factors subservient to a new cause which he introduces himself. Thus, although a number of images in Actaeon’s speech are erotically charged (‘Луна… / Исполнена девической тревоги, / … Серебряные, маленькие ноги. / Я вижу чуть открытый красный рот, / … И розовые груди… А живот / Похож на опрокинутую чашу.’), he does not explicitly direct them at the body of Diana, but rather at the personified moon, whom he regards in abstract terms as a ‘maidens’. The Russian poet was certainly aware of a later cultic tradition in which Diana was associated with the moon (her brother Apollo being linked to the sun), and so by transferring Actaeon’s amorous thoughts from Diana (as in Nonnus and Diodorus) to the moon, which is related to the goddess only by association, Gumilev relegates the sexual aspect of Actaeon’s motivation to the background. It is the moon, rather than Diana herself, who is represented in Gumilev’s play as a virgin, anxious for her maidenhood, and it is the celestial body who simultaneously tortures and delights Actaeon by her nudity.

70Бакулина, 51.
71Зорина, 43; Basker, 504.
Diana’s punishment of Actaeon is thus not motivated by his ‘erotic pursuit’, and his aspirations are not limited by physical lust after a female, but are rather directed towards the realm of the spiritual, i.e. the achievement of deification. Unlike his counterparts in earlier renditions of the myth, Gumilev’s Actaeon is given the power to imagine: his desire is not physical but spiritual and revolves around the conscious desire to become a god. Even the physical description of Diana’s body that Actaeon delivers upon waking up and seeing the goddess is given through a self-reflective prism, expressed in the concentration of repeated personal and possessive pronouns (мне, я): ‘И мне лишь губ этих мёд, / Иного я пить не мог. / И мне снега этих рук, / . . . И мне этот сладкий звук’, ‘The honey of these lips are mine / as are her snowy arms, / and that sweet sound’. Actaeon wants to possess the beautiful goddess only as ‘confirmation of his own divinity’: he, being a god, is entitled to have a goddess for his wife. The conclusion of his speech ‘Я знал, что я тоже бог . . . Я знаю, я стал крылат’ (‘I know, I am a god as well . . . I know, I have wings’) confirms Actaeon’s aspirations: his real desire is to transcend his human status and only then to possess what is rightfully his, not, as in Classical renditions, to sacrilegiously snatch what cannot belong to a mortal.

Fate also plays only a minor role in Actaeon’s discovery of the bathing Diana, since he happens to fall asleep in the place where the goddess washes: ‘Ложится . . . Входит Диана в костюме охотницы; за нею нимфы’, ‘He lies down . . . Diana enters in the costume of a huntress; the nymphs follow behind her’. The motif of chance remains on the periphery since Gumilev, unlike Callimachus and later Ovid, does not insert a verbal confirmation into his text to highlight the error of Actaeon. Instead, the Russian poet makes it explicit that Actaeon’s demise is caused primarily by his own aspiration to transcend the boundaries of humanity. Although Diana kills him physically (albeit indirectly; Gumilev adheres to the schematic plot of the myth which dictates that Actaeon is torn apart by his own dogs), it is Actaeon who destroys himself spiritually: he cannot live among humans because of his sense of superiority, and yet he cannot join the gods because he is mortal. In essence Gumilev’s Actaeon aspires to an ultimate heroic transformation like Hercules or Prometheus and yet cannot attain it contrary to his own fate. The hero is trapped in a world of illusions, created by the power of

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72 Schlam, 106.
73 Комаров, 55-61.
74 Basker, 409.
75 Basker, 505.
76 Бакулина, 52.
77 Комаров, 55-61.
his own imagination and so fragmented by reality: by the physical world around him (his bow, which he believes has turned to gold, is in reality fragile ("Мой лук, он стал золотым." Поднимает свой лук, тот ломается и падает с сухим треском’, "My bow has turned to gold.” He raises his bow, it brakes and falls with a dry crack’)⁷⁸ and by his own physically weak, mortal body, dictated by the schematic plot-line of the myth. A psychological conflict of mind and body,⁷⁹ of physical and spiritual, absent from earlier renditions of the myth, is thus introduced and made responsible for Actaeon’s destruction. Gumilev lifts Actaeon from his traditionally passive, ‘female’ role, determined by a lack of mental and physical vigour, and allots him one attribute of a male role, an independent, assertive mind. Although physically Actaeon must remain a victim and must be killed by Diana because his aspiration to divinity is futile, the psychological element brings on the reversal of his customary role.

In contrast to Actaeon’s highly-developed psychology, Gumilev’s Diana is partially deprived of the mental and physical dynamism traditionally allotted to her in earlier literary renditions of the myth. In ancient literature Artemis/Diana is invariably portrayed as an active, numinous goddess, who avenges any slight to her honour: she punishes Oeneus by sending a ruinous boar to ransack his city (Iliad); she fills the marriage chamber of Admetus with snakes when he neglects to honour one of her rituals (Apollodorus); she kills Orion when he attempts to take possession of her (Aratus’ Phaenomena); she destroys the nymph Callisto, punishing her for her union with Zeus (Apollodorus); she demands the sacrifice of Iphigenia as punishment for Agamemnon’s slaying of her hind (Euripides’ Iphigenia at Aulis). Artemis/Diana is simultaneously the goddess of hunting, which is an active and traditionally masculine pursuit, and of dichotomised femininity: she is the goddess of virginity and childbirth. In the myth of Actaeon and Diana both these spheres of patronage are put into play: her role as huntress (‘ἀγροτέρα’) conditions the manner of Actaeon’s death, and her virginity requires the privacy which Actaeon violates. Consequently, it can be suggested that the two attributes of physical and mental dynamism, prerequisites of a male role, are introduced into the myth through her two functions: her hunting skill confers physical vigour, while her sacred virginity inspires her to devise a suitably cruel punishment for her profaner.

⁷⁸Бакулина, 51.
⁷⁹Комаров, 55-61.
Of all the ancient sources analysed in this article, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* provides the fullest account of the goddess’ masculine power in both body and mind: she is formidable in her physical appearance, she has power and determination of action and she has the mental capacity to devise a fitting punishment for the intruder. Diana’s appearance in Ovid is unmistakably that of a goddess: ‘she stood head and shoulders taller than her guards, as clouds bright-tinted by the slanting sun’ (183-184). Ovid draws specific attention to her size as compared to the nymphs who are lesser deities, signifying her superior strength even at a corporeal level. Her physical power is reaffirmed further by the description of Actaeon’s transformation into a stag: ‘she fixed the horns of a great stag firm on his sprinkled brows; she lengthened out his neck; she made his ears sharp at the top; she changed his hands and feet…and she covered him with dappled hair’ (193-197). In the description of Actaeon’s newly assumed bestial guise, including the parts of his body (brows, neck, ears, hands, feet, legs, arms, hair) and hence mirroring the type-scene of Diana’s undressing (mentioning feet, shoulders, hair etc.), Ovid stresses the agency of Diana. It is explicitly she who changes every part of Actaeon’s body and so, of the two characters, performs the dynamic and consequently male role.

Diana’s dynamism is further expounded in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* by her assumption of the second aspect of a male role, mental autonomy. Upon realising that she is deprived of her armour and so cannot use her physical power to kill Actaeon with her traditional bow and arrow (‘oh, how she wished her arrows were at hand!’, 188), Diana employs her active and vengeful mind to elect a suitable punishment for him: the transformation of ‘the hunter into the hunted’. The ‘harshness of Diana’s divine vengeance’ is further augmented by the taunts which she directs at her victim in affirmation of his passivity: ‘Go tell it, if your tongue can tell the tale, how your bold eyes saw me stripped of all my robes’ (192-193). In describing Diana’s vengeance, Ovid stresses Actaeon’s deprivation of speech, an aspect which in ancient cultures is traditionally associated with a female role. In earlier versions of the myth Diana’s punishment of Actaeon pivots around his inability to speak: she lays a curse on him that he would turn into a stag only if he should utter a single sound,

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80 Schlam, 106.
81 Burkert, 111.
82 Basker, 503.
83 Schlam, 96.
84 Schlam, 98.
emphasising that his physical and mental passivity is directly linked with a lack of verbal ability.

The psychological dynamism of Artemis/Diana is likewise present in the account of Nonnus, where the goddess does not content herself with transforming Actaeon into a stag, but makes sure that he suffers as much as possible: ‘the dogs were to tear Actaeon slowly to pieces with their jaws little by little, while breathing still and in his right mind, that she might torment his mind even more with sharper pains’ (5.332-335).\(^5\) The stress in Nonnus is that Actaeon retains his consciousness but not his body, which is used by Artemis to aggravate both his physical and mental pains. It is not enough for her to prevent Actaeon from profaning her sacred body by making him mute and then destroying him physically; instead Artemis reveals her mental development and physical activity by devising and executing the most effective torture for her victim. Thus, in the portrayal of Artemis/Diana, both Nonnus and Ovid adhere to the mythological tradition in which the goddess is allotted an active, male role: in both her mind and body Artemis/Diana is powerful, while Actaeon is unequivocally passive.

In contrast to the Classical representation of Diana/Artemis as superior to Actaeon both in mind and body, Gumilev, while maintaining the goddess’ divine powers, inverts this traditional balance between the two characters. Although Diana retains her physical vigour, manifested in her ability to transform Actaeon into a stag (‘Актеон откидывается и, когда выпрямляется, видно, что у него голова оления’, ‘Actaeon leans back, and when he stands upright, one can see, he has the head of a deer’), her decision to inflict punishment is no longer autonomous or independent.\(^6\) Gumilev signals this innovation on two separate occasions, first through the words of Cadmus at the start of the play and the second time in Diana’s speech addressed to Actaeon.\(^7\) The first of these instances occurs in the scene of Cadmus’ and Actaeon’s confrontation, when Cadmus curses his son for his laziness: ‘Так будь счастлив, / Как травы, может быть как звери’, (‘So be happy, / like grass, and maybe like animals’). Cadmus gives three factual details concerning Actaeon’s fate, his transformation into an animal (‘как звери’, ‘like animals’), his subsequent interest in grass (‘А какая вкусная трава’ (‘what tasty grass’) in ‘Как травы’ (‘like grass’)) and finally his body parts scattered on the ground/grass by his own hounds. At this stage Gumilev leaves it ambiguous as to

\(^5\)Schlam, 98.
\(^6\)Бакулина, 51.
\(^7\)Бакулина, 52.
whether Cadmus is foretelling Actaeon’s fate as a seer, or is actually prescribing it to him.\textsuperscript{88} This ambiguity is resolved in Diana’s own speech, where she signifies that her action of punishing Actaeon has been predetermined by someone else: ‘Будь, чем ты должен быть!’, ‘Be what you must be!’. Whether Diana is fulfilling the curse of Cadmus\textsuperscript{89} or the decrees of Fate, Gumilev removes the goddess’ traditional free agency, the autonomy of her decision to transform Actaeon into a stag (Ovid) and her desire to extend his suffering (Nonnus) and substitutes them with a new ‘female’ passivity of implementing male behests (be it of Cadmus or of Zeus, the guardian of Fate).

Once Diana’s psychological power is removed, Gumilev continues to ‘lower’ her overall representation\textsuperscript{90}, gradually completing her reversion to a more conventional female role. Unlike the goddess of Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}, Diana does not have a traditionally divine appearance: she arrives on stage dressed as a huntress (‘Входит Диана в костюме охотницы’, ‘Diana enters in the costume of a huntress’). No mention is made of her height, and the nymphs have no explicit difficulty in shielding her from the eyes of Actaeon: ‘Прикроем вечные святыни’, ‘conceal her immortal holy form’. Furthermore, Diana’s retinue is represented as pointedly mundane: the nymphs appear on stage gossiping about their respective suitors (‘Ранис: (недоверчиво) Как, Марс тебя любит? Хиале: В трущобы / За мной он зашёл далеко. Ранис и Крокале: (с интересом) Настиг? Хиале: (скромно) Нет, конечно...’, ‘Ranis: (suspiciously) So, Mars loves you? Chiale: He followed me deep into the thicket. Ranis and Crocale: (with interest) Did he catch you up? Chiale: (modestly) Of course not...’) and attempting to flatter Diana with recollections of her hunting skill: ‘Крокале: Перестань! Открыла, настигла, убила Диана’, ‘Crocale: Stop! Diana noticed it, caught and killed it’.\textsuperscript{91} Both Diana and her band of nymphs are represented as psychologically inferior to the spiritual Actaeon: they are limited by the boundaries of the mundane and the predefined, whereas Actaeon in his thoughts aims to transcend the borders of humanity. Diana is deprived of one of her traditional masculine attributes, psychological dynamism, whereas Actaeon is endowed with it. The goddess’s other masculine attribute, physical vigour, which is prescribed by the schematic plot of the myth, is undermined by her lack of mental autonomy (manifested in her predetermined actions). Although in Gumilev’s play Diana can tear apart

\textsuperscript{88}Basker, 500. \\
\textsuperscript{89}Basker, 500. \\
\textsuperscript{90}Бакулина, 52. \\
\textsuperscript{91}Бакулина, 52.
Actaeon’s body (as in earlier renditions of the myth), she cannot destroy his spirit: Actaeon aspires beyond the fate of a mortal, whereas Diana can act only within her prescribed role of a goddess, who by definition has more power than a mortal.

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The analysis of the representation of gender roles in Gumilev’s Actaeon has shown the poet’s remarkable deviation from the Classical tradition, in his inversion and ultimate rejection of the canonical distribution of gender roles, prescribed by ancient sources of the Actaeon and Artemis/Diana myth. With the help of the two-plane approach (macrocosmic and microcosmic) it has been revealed that Gumilev’s deployment of earlier renditions of the myth points to his primary sphere of interest: the masculinisation of Actaeon through the exploration of his psychology. By maintaining both the scenic details of his literary predecessor Ovid and the ‘unalterable kernel’ of the mythological plot (complementing it with an additional scene, whose function is to characterise Actaeon’s psychological superiority to other mortals), Gumilev employs the ‘visual’ aspects of the myth to attract the attention of his educated audience to the introduction of a psychological motivation for his hero. The Russian poet develops the psychological element of his play, and rehabilitates Actaeon from his passive role as victim by allotting him developed, superhuman aspirations. Simultaneously, by limiting the degree of her autonomy, Gumilev recasts Diana from her customary masculine role, determined by physical and mental dynamism, to a more traditional cultural role of a woman. Gumilev removes the didactic function of the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana with its conventional message of a warning to revere the gods and pay them due respect, and deprives the myth of its exemplary role, which consists in showing the need to sacrifice to a numinous divinity (two aspects which would have been perceived as anachronistic by his audience). Instead the Russian poet converts the traditional dichotomy of mortal (Actaeon) and goddess (Artemis/Diana), into superhuman male and divine female, transforming the ancient myth into a contemporary revelation of human psychological suffering. By drawing attention to the psychological plane of his characters’ representation, the Russian poet restores a traditional distribution of gender roles to the myth of Actaeon and Diana, endowing the prince with the male role of a courageous hero aspiring to

92 Heath, 196.
93 Schlam, 82.
94 Heath, 196.
achieve the impossible, and consigning the goddess to a female role, in which she performs the functions prescribed to her by powerful males (Zeus and the Theban King Cadmus). Even while the myth dictates that Actaeon must remain a physical victim, in his masculinisation of Actaeon, Gumilev endows the hero (within the boundaries of the myth which dictates that he must remain a physical victim) with an attribute of masculinity, mental dynamism, approximating him as closely as possible to the Adamist ideal of a dominant male and consequently rehabilitating the concept of masculinity in the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana.

Reflections of Gumilev’s masculinising agenda, manifested in his treatment of the Classical myth, can be noted in his impact on the Russian literary arena of the 20th century: in response to the Symbolist tradition, which the poet regarded as weak and, as Basker suggests, ‘feminine’, he introduced a new literary movement, Adamism or Acmeism, which he defined by its masculine, dynamic impetus (‘мужественно-твердый и ясный взгляд на жизнь’, ‘a courageously firm and clear outlook on life’). Gumilev characterises his new movement by a certain bestiality or violence, aspects directly derived from canonical, active masculinity (‘Как адамисты, мы немного лесные звери и... не отдадим того, что в нас есть звериного, в обмен на неврастению’, ‘Being Adamists, we are a little like wild animals and... won’t surrender our bestial traits, in exchange for neurosis’). This inherently masculine approach is put into practice in the personae which Gumilev adopts for his first poetic collection ‘Путь конквистадоров’ (1905) and poem ‘Капитаны’ (1909), both of which are focused on the exotic travels and courageous exploits of superhuman male heroes.

Consequently, it can be suggested that the poet’s interest in the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana could have been sparked by its potential for the masculinisation of the main character and the restoration of canonical, cultural gender roles. The myth’s striking de-masculinisation of the leading male character gives scope for Gumilev to apply his Adamist principles to an ancient hero well-known for his passive, female-like role. Gumilev’s choice of the Actaeon myth as the basis of his play could have also been prompted by the traditional visual representation of Actaeon and Diana, which stresses the passivity and vulnerability of the male character.

95 Гумилёв, 1913.
96 Basker, 516.
97 Гумилёв, 1913.
98 Гумилёв, 1913.
99 Sampson, 31.
A painting of Diana and Actaeon by Ercole Graziani, which, in accordance with the mythological and Classical distribution of gender roles, depicted Diana as a powerful goddess (she and her nymphs are in the foreground of the composition) and Actaeon as her passive victim (he is miniscule and located in the distant background) had been exhibited in the Imperial Hermitage since 1859. It can be suggested that the canonical visual depiction of a female-like, passive male could have inspired the Russian poet to choose a plot charged with potential for the rehabilitation of masculinity.

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100 The image reproduced here is courtesy to The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg: http://www.hermitagemuseum.org.

101 Всеволжская, 66-67.


Madness and quests for power in the figures of Jean in Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* and Nabucco in Verdi’s *Nabucco*

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**Introduction**

The link between madness and quests for political and religious power may not be an obvious one, but, as Michel Foucault concludes, our understanding of ‘madness’ is predominantly contextual.¹ One can think of madness as chaos, a striking behaviour, or anything else that contradicts or pushes the boundaries of what is considered the norm. In the nineteenth-century, this term became highly politicised when French alienists – a new kind of physician – attributed an increase in the numbers of the insane, whether in France or abroad, to rapid political changes.² In his analysis of this viewpoint’s historical roots, Francoise Jacob makes an interesting observation that lunatics became ‘an ironic negation of the 1789 principles of liberty, equality and fraternity’: insane people were deprived of freedom, often declared themselves gods or princes and were aggressive towards others.³

This essay will analyse the figures of Jean in Giacomo Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* and Nabucco in Giuseppe Verdi’s *Nabucco* with a focus on their fantasies of

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³Ibid.
political and religious power and how these fantasies relate to contemporary concepts of madness. Having described the context surrounding the production of these operas, I will provide a brief general analysis comparing the characters of Jean and Nabucco within the above-mentioned contextual framework. In the final section, I engage with the previous research into mad scene conventions and offer a musical and dramatic comparison of Nabucco’s mad scene (Act II, scene 2) and Jean’s dream (Act II). All of this allows me to demonstrate that these scenes not only provide operatic evocations of the relationship between madness and power, but also indicate how powerlessness fits into the overall picture and creates a striking cause and effect balance between two opposites (a binary of power/powerlessness) and two different interpretations of madness.

1.

As indicated in the introduction, nineteenth-century alienists attributed madness to political causes. Verdi’s Nabucco and Meyerbeer’s Le Prophète offer effective on-stage depictions of alienists’ theory, as each opera bears an inextricable connection to the events in which it was conceived – the actual events which gave life to this theory. The premiere of Nabucco (1842) coincided with the middle of the Risorgimento, the period of Italy’s political unification and liberation, allowing Italians ruled by Austrians to identify with Hebrews suffering from the Babylonian yoke.⁴ The idea for Nabucco comes, in fact, from France – the country which by that point, according to many scholars, had once already inspired a wave of revolutionary wars in Europe⁵ and which pioneered the above-mentioned alienism. Solera based his libretto on a contemporary French play by Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornu (1836), and an Italian ballet by Antonio Cortesi (1838).⁶ Although Verdi himself praised the libretto for being ‘almost a paraphrase of the Bible’,⁷ the dates show that the wave of works on this subject arguably started in France in 1838. Frequently described as a re-enactment of the 1790s,  

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⁴ Charles Osborne, The Complete Operas of Verdi (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1969), p. 50. Some scholars suggest that the connection between music and politics is often made too quickly and uncritically (see Roger Parker, “‘Va Pensiero’ and the Insidious Mastery of Song” in Leonora’s Last Act. Essays in Verdian Discourse (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 20-41). However, for the purpose of my interpretation, I will assume that there is such a connection.  
the 1840s in France\(^8\) saw the creation of another opera which linked madness and power – *Le Prophète*. Conceived under monarchical rule and first performed in the Second Republic,\(^9\) *Le Prophète* was presented as an opera ‘closing the circle of Revolution’\(^10\). Thus, two, at first sight distinct, operas were born out of similar historical contexts – those of radical political changes – and bore similar underlying metaphors: they attributed madness to political changes and pretensions to power, observed in the real, non-operatic world, by French alienists.

2.

In *Nabucco*, madness is a predictable outcome of aspirations for *absolutum dominium*. The Babylonian King Nabucco, a violent usurper, is described as a madman long before he becomes insane – as early as in Act I, scene 1 (‘Non far che i Tuoi figli divengano preda d’un folle che sprezza l’eterno poter!’ / ‘Do not let thy children fall prey to a madman who scorns Thy everlasting might!’). That later he turns insane is no surprise to the Hebrews (‘Il cielo ha punito il vantator!’ / ‘Heaven has punished the boaster!’; Act II, scene 2). However, another instance indicates that Verdi’s understanding of insanity is not limited to blasphemy and political aggression: Nabucco himself describes Hebrews as madmen (‘Tremin gl’insani del mio furore!’ / ‘Let the madmen tremble at my anger’, Act I, scene 1).\(^11\) This way, the word ‘madman’ is used to express the inferiority of any political and religious beliefs alien to one’s own convictions, while becoming mad serves as a signifier of which set of beliefs is deemed right: the opera identifies with the Hebrews and depicts Nabucco as a villain; his madness and recovery are linked entirely and respectively to his rejection and further acknowledgement of God’s power.

In fact, powerlessness is just as important as power in paving one’s path to insanity for Verdi. From the beginning, the opera renders Nabucco’s claims to power hopeless and foresees his failure, as the Hebrews’ confidence in God’s eventual mercy, although filled with fear, is never truly questioned (e.g. ‘V’affidi d’Iddio

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\(^10\)Hibberd, p. 153.

\(^11\)Although in each case the libretto employs different Italian words (gl’insani, un folle), they both mean crazy/insane/mad person.
l’eterna aita’/‘Place your trust in God’s eternal help’, Act I, scene 1).  

This confirms that labelling one’s opponent mad in this opera has more to do with deeming them powerless and inferior, and their efforts to protect their stance ridiculous, rather than simply denying their beliefs.

The depiction of prophecy in these operas also contributes to one’s understanding of the power/powerlessness binary. While in Nabucco the prophecy of Zechariah is a display of God’s will, in Le Prophète prophecy inspires a social revolution but later becomes an act of naivety, vengeance and mass deception. Jean’s dream in Act II is similar to Nabucco’s depiction as a madman in Act I in such a way that it also presents the individual’s attempt to elevate himself to the status of what is perceived as the ultimate and absolute power. Unlike Nabucco, Jean is never pronounced medically insane. He gets entirely absorbed in his (false) prophecy which results in a tragic outcome claiming the lives of both sides of the political conflict including his own life. Or should one see Jean as a saint, whose life is sacrificed to restore justice? After all, in the final version of the opera, Jean’s prophecy is extremely controversial. In the original version, Eugène Scribe, the librettist, presented Jean’s prophecy as entirely false: Jean was told by the Anabaptists that he had suffered an epileptic seizure, during which he had announced that they had to attack Münster. However, Meyerbeer wanted to see Jean as a true prophet, obliging Scribe to revise the libretto. Meyerbeer turning Jean’s dream into an act of real prophecy somewhat complicates one’s understanding of this scene: on the one hand, he remains a false prophet (a son of a woman), on the other, he still somehow foretells the rest of the story. However, although Meyerbeer transformed lunacy into prophecy, various political conflicts throughout the opera still fit into the more obscure, alienist definition of madness as an outcome of political instability.

12The calmness and reluctance to take military action in ‘Va pensiero’ also supports this interpretation.

13In contrast, Nabucco manages to avoid the fatal outcome for himself and Fenena, his daughter, by acknowledging God’s might and his, Nabucco’s, own powerlessness in the face of it.

14Hibberd, pp. 165-166. The choice of epilepsy would be extremely revealing of the Anabaptists’ intentions both to make Jean their prophet and to betray him eventually, as well as rendering him mad: earlier, in the eighteenth century, epilepsy and insanity were subsumed under the umbrella term of ‘lunacy’, while the nineteenth-century physicians associated epilepsy with religiousness. See Alan B. Ettinger, Andres M. Kanner, eds., Psychiatric Issues in Epilepsy (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2007), p. 287.

15Hibberd, pp. 165-166.

3.

In his mad scene (Act II, scene 2) – the epicentre of madness in this opera – Nabucco is entirely stripped of his power, and this very helplessness transforms the display of his madness: an aggressive, violent and masculine ‘madman’ now helplessly confronts the real, medical madness which bears apparent traces of female hysteria. Feminist musicologists, including Mary Ann Smart and Susan McClary, have focused a lot on female madness in mad scene conventions. McClary describes the necessity of keeping madness within a ‘frame’, which is often granted by the chorus.\(^{17}\) The same happens to Nabucco: immediately before the mad scene the chorus announces that the heaven has punished him.

While in female mad scenes Smart sees madness as the breaking of patriarchal conventions and, therefore, liberation,\(^ {18}\) Nabucco’s mad scene becomes instead a display of fear, alternating, section by section, with absolute powerlessness. The scene starts with a fearful and restless Allegro (“Chi mi toglie”), in which Nabucco, having lost his crown, feels haunted and threatened by an unknown force. The accompaniment – a repeated rhythmic figure in the string section played *pianissimo* – awakens his worries before he starts singing. Nabucco’s monologue is dominated by paranoid questioning in a high register, as he is surrounded, to use McClary’s terminology, by the spectators’ ‘gaze’ serving as a ‘frame’.\(^ {19}\) He repeats ‘Chi m’atterra?’ (‘Who lays me low?’) several times, emphasised by a crescendo in the string section. Here, his loss of power is focal to the extreme state of madness he has entered: from being called a madman he now becomes a madman. One could suggest that, from the Hebrews’ point of view, Nabucco became who he had pretended to be: for them, God’s existence and power are unquestionable, and questioning them is equated to being intentionally irrational – in other words, mad. This explains why madness becomes Nabucco’s punishment. All in all, his madness in this scene is literal and provides a display of powerlessness, unlike earlier in the opera, when breaking the Hebrews’ conventions, and, thereby, acting mad in their eyes, was a means of displaying his power and dominance over them.


\(^{19}\)McClary, pp. 90-99.
Figure 1
The musical language of the scene offers an effective musical evocation of Nabucco’s above-mentioned powerlessness. The two *Adagio* sections of his monologue are strikingly *cantabile* compared to the *Allegro* sections. Verdi uses *Allegro* sections to provide Nabucco’s paranoid description of his mad visions (e.g. ‘Ah, fantasmi ho sol presenti | Hanno acciar di fiamme ardent! ’ / ‘Alas, I am surrounded by phantoms | they have flaming swords of fire!’), while the *Adagio* sections establish Nabucco’s space for self-pity (e.g. ‘Oh, mia figlia! E tu pur anco non soccorri al debile fianco?’ / ‘Oh my daughter! Do you even not help to support me in my weakness?’). The melody in these sections avoids leaps and sudden dynamic changes, further emphasising his weakness and helplessness. Nabucco’s lament is doubled by flutes and clarinets, whose delicate timbres underline his powerlessness, as well as underpinning the weakened man’s cry for help and restraining his expression in this section to one melodic figure and its variations (Figure 1). Among Nabucco’s constraints is also his vocal range: with one small exception, the final repetition of ‘chi m’atterra’, Nabucco’s voice is restricted to an octave, and the melody outlines an almost unbreakable circling motion: as soon as he reaches the high E♭/F, he returns to the lower range. In addition, the alternation of *Allegro* and *Adagio* confines Nabucco to a structural framework, which he tries to escape unsuccessfully with his abrupt *Andante* before the final *Adagio* (Figure 2). Thus, various constraints, described by McClary and Smart as typical of mad scenes, are evident here; the confines of the chorus’s ‘gaze’ mentioned earlier in this section are a visual display of much more solid confines embedded in the musical fabric of this scene.

In contrast, Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* also employs ‘the gaze’, but differently: in Jean’s dream, it becomes a symbol of authority, rather than of powerlessness. In this scene, as the Anabaptists invite Jean to speak, even the orchestra makes space for his monologue: a significant part of it is accompanied by mere sustained chords (Figure 3). Here, frequent note repetitions make his monologue even more static and prayer-like. In a short *Andante sostenuto*, strings set a peaceful atmosphere for his vision – Hibberd even compares these E♭ major arpeggios to a lullaby. The orchestra seems to be scared to interrupt his narrative, and the arpeggios disappear immediately before he starts singing. However, the arpeggios return after the imagery becomes peaceful (‘un temple magnifique’ / ‘a magnificent temple’), as if the strings had to make sure they are in tune with his narrative. His power is, therefore, evident here.

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20 Hibberd, p. 167.
ANDANTE

45

Ah!

ADAGIO

Ah!... perché... perché sul... ci glio u na la grima, una la grima spun.

ADAGIO dolce

Figure 2
This very power – a result of the changes to the libretto requested by Meyerbeer – makes it problematic to see this scene as a conventional mad scene. Jean does not simply predict his future by means of verbal communication of Scribe’s libretto: references to the subsequent events are strongly embedded in the musical fabric. In the introduction to this scene, two clarinets sound the motive of the ‘Marche du sacré’ supported by a low-register flute quoting the double-dotted quaver figure from ‘Chœur de enfants’ – both from the coronation scene (Act IV). This offers one more confirmation that Jean’s prophecy is not false, which contradicts Scribe’s original idea still evident in the plot and discredits any attempt to compare Jean’s state to Nabucco’s mad scene insanity.

However, a further instance of madness is yet to come: as timpani announce an abrupt shift in mood, Jean pronounces the terrifying words on the stone. Very quickly, the texture builds up, and the chaos is further emphasised by scalic semiquaver passages. The kind of madness represented here, if comparable to Nabucco at all, somewhat resembles the aggression and animosity of the two parties in Nabucco’s Act I. Just like in the beginning of Nabucco, the figurative madness of this moment wholly embodies the nineteenth-century alienist theories.

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21 Ibid.
of madness and politics. A comparison of these two operas, however, suggests a fascinating continuum. Jean never becomes truly insane and even foretells God’s mercy at the end of his dream, but, although he arguably commits blasphemy, he never directly discredits God’s power like Nabucco. As a result, he is never presented as entirely powerless. In support of this viewpoint, Nabucco wins back his sanity only once he begs for God’s mercy.

Conclusion

Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* and Verdi’s *Nabucco* contain two famous mad scenes – Jean’s dream (Act II) and Nabucco’s mad scene (Act II, scene 2) respectively. Although both operas (and the two ‘mad’ scenes in particular) seem rather contrasting, from the analysis in this essay a conclusion can be drawn concerning the role of the power-and-madness metaphor in nineteenth-century opera. Both operas depict God as the ultimate power, while power and powerlessness represent a binary linked to two kinds of madness, metaphorical and literal. One’s quest for absolute political power automatically becomes a quest for religious power, as God is the only absolute power in these operas. Therefore, a desire for such power is madness on its own in its figurative sense (chaos, irrationality, political aggression), and ought to result in punishment or even in multiple deaths. A punishment leads to another extreme – powerlessness, a result of insanity in its medical sense. Only accepting God as the only true power allows one to win back one’s good mental health. Revealing and accepting one’s powerlessness, therefore, becomes the highest power available to an ordinary human and the highest instance of sanity.

This outline offers an innovative model for the analysis of the figures of Jean and Nabucco. Unlike Nabucco, Jean never openly discredits God and his prophecy is neither true nor false in the final version of the opera. Therefore, he never truly loses his sanity and even his death gives hope for the future. Nabucco, on the contrary, goes through all stages described above.

But what made madness a suitable topic for operas? Such an interest in the discourse of insanity seems to predate nineteenth-century operas and alienist con-

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22 Although everyone dies at the end of the opera, the final sounding of Eb major (the same key as the beginning of Jean’s dream) turns this sad ending into a moment of hope.

23 Arguably – because we are left to wonder whether he is a true prophet.
Madness and quests for power in the figures of Jean in Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* and Nabucco in Verdi’s *Nabucco*.

83

cepts. Peter Morrall, for example, suggested that the fear factor has always defined people’s attitude towards madness.²⁴ This fear is said to have been accompanied by fascination, since madness echoes the mankind’s primitive history. Thus, instances of madness signal that our primitive side has never been entirely abandoned. A quest for power in these operas, in this case, becomes a primitive, dangerous and instinct-based enterprise that returns humans to their animalistic nature.

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Neves da Silva Marco MSt International Human Rights Law
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Noles Kevin DPhil History
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• New K. A. (2019). Roman comedy on the Russian stage: Alexander N. Ostrovsky’s There was not a Penny, but suddenly Altyn and Plautus’ Aulularia. *Studia Litterarum, 4*(1), 138-159.


• Parsons, J., & MacKay, J. (2019). The theory and applications of CRISPR in plant and tree improvement. *CAB Reviews, 13*(07), 1-12


