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Contemporary Nostalgia

Edited by
Niklas Salmose

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Special Issue Editor

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About the Special Issue Editor

Niklas Salmose, Dr., holds a Ph.D. in English from University of Edinburgh and was a visiting Professor at UCLA autumn 2018. He is currently Vice-Chair of the Department of Languages at Linnaeus University, Sweden and the Program Coordinator for the Master Program in English Language and Literature (MELL). He has published and presented internationally on nostalgia, Nordic noir, Hitchcock, cinematic style in fiction, modernism, the Anthropocene and Hollywood, animal horror, intermediality and sensorial aesthetics in fiction. He edited an issue on the Anthropocene for the journal *Ekfrase* 2016, a special issue on contemporary nostalgia for the journal *Humanities* 2018 and a book on experimental Swedish filmmaker Eric M. Nilsson. He is presently editing the volume *Transmediations. Communication Across Media Borders* for Routledge. At Linnaeus University, he is a member of the *Linnaeus University Center of Intermedial and Multimodal Studies* (IMS). One of his main research fields is the work and life of F. Scott Fitzgerald; he translated and edited Fitzgerald's short story collection *All the Sad Young Men* into Swedish 2014. He is co-editing a composite biography on Fitzgerald together with Dr. David Rennie as well as the new Oxford Classic reissue of Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon. In November 2018 he was the third annual McDermott lecturer at the University Faculty Club in St. Paul for the *Fitzgerald in St. Paul Society*.

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Editorial

Nostalgia Makes Us All Tick: A Special Issue on Contemporary Nostalgia

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Introduction

Nostalgia makes us all tick: It engages. We live in societies oriented towards the now and the tomorrow, in a world obsessed with a complex and protean present seemingly impervious to historical continuity. The many tomorrows inherent in every new technology, product, and digitally mediated event drive us further away from our collective histories. Yet the present seems stubbornly rooted in the past, as Zygmunt Bauman so convincingly argues in his final work *Retrotopia* (Bauman 2017). This occurs both politically, as in the repeated re-ignition of history's buried fires, ranging from the emergence of ISIS as an ultranostalgic force to the re-emergence of a nostalgic hard-right in European politics, and culturally, as in the persistent return of cultural production and consumption to a number of key points in our history in a restless and always unsatisfied attempt to reinterpret, reuse, or replay that which is seemingly vanished. It appears in the most pressing issue of our times, climate change, and the discourse of the Anthropocene. This retrospective orientation is observable in all major contemporary media forms, aesthetic and social practices. Romantic inclination towards the past might seem irrational, but our emotional connections to our own biographies, as well as a collective solidarity with our childhoods, traditions, imaginations, anticipations, and dreams may also be a rational response to modern instability. Nostalgia, then, appears increasingly to be a modality of its own with major potential for understanding how our now is shaped by our then, both individually and collectively.

Whether we are inclined, personally, to be nostalgic or we are somehow bound up in the external and contextual nostalgic webs, nostalgia dictates our lives. Beyond the intimate bittersweet immersions of nostalgia, conjured by aging, remembrance, death, time, childhood, loss, recovery, and melancholia, we are influenced by such things as retro shops, local produce, concepts of national states, xenophobia, communities, technology advancement, migration, and the climate crisis. The world we inhabit is just constantly shaped by private and public nostalgias. One way to make sense of the complex flux of emotions and temporalities on our planet in modern, contemporary times is to investigate and scrutinize the role nostalgia has on our daily lives, in politics, equality, sociology, psychology, history, art, philosophy. These examinations are truly interdisciplinary.

The purpose of this editorial is not to introduce each essay in this collection (the abstracts will do just fine here), neither is it to survey the history of nostalgia. My ambition, albeit limited in scope here, is to frame and problematize the works in this collection within the emerging field of nostalgia studies and reiterate some of my previous views on nostalgia as an emotional experience and an aesthetic modality. Nostalgia studies have the past decade gained interest and importance in a variety of disciplines, often in a complex interaction between different disciplines such as art, history, literary studies, aesthetics, film and media studies, communication studies, intermedial studies, sociology, psychology, neuroscience, history of ideas, and colonial and postcolonial studies. Although nostalgia studies have not yet formulated a theoretical framework for its practice and methods, researchers within this field investigate nostalgia as a complex set of emotions and how these emotions interact with different contexts. A post-colonialist, for example, would be exploring the role of nostalgia in both

the project of colonization, the processes in postcolonial development, and contemporary desire and fascination for colonial times as expressed through film and TV series such as *Poirot* or heritage tourism. In communication and media studies, researchers would be interested in how nostalgia is used in news, fake news, advertisements, and political propaganda. Sociologists and psychologists would be engaged in the importance of nostalgia in identity, belonging, interpretative communities, and ethnical groups. A literary scholar might investigate how a national literature thematically relates to migration and the constructions of home. Finally, a historian would explore how Hitler used nostalgia in his overarching Germanic project. Hence, nostalgia studies are occupied with very diverse topics where nostalgia is sometimes used as an instigator for human, social behavior, or as a method for reading the times. In the latter case, nostalgia studies are really a complex philosophy of time and clearly distinct from more conventional memory studies.

Jean Starobinski (1966), Svetlana Boym (2001), and Karin Johannisson (2001) and André Bolzinger (2007) have all sketched historical overviews of the role nostalgia has played through the history of the Western world within their respective national and ethnical spheres. Boym, the most cited and influential nostalgic critic, is famous for her distinction between restorative (attempts to reconstruct/relive the past) and reflective nostalgia (the melancholic introspection of past) (Boym 2001, p. 41). Notable contemporary works within nostalgia studies and the humanities include Castelnuovo-Frigessi and Risso's *A mezza parete. Emigrazione, nostalgia, malattia mentale* (Castelnuovo-Frigessi and Risso 1982), Doane and Hodges' *Nostalgia and Sexual Difference: The Resistance to Contemporary Feminism* (Doane and Hodges 1987), Chase and Shaw's (eds) *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (Shaw and Chase 1989), Grainge's *Monochrome Memories: Nostalgia and Style in Retro America* (Grainge 2002), Dika's *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film: The Uses of Nostalgia* (Dika 2003), Cook's *Screening the Past. Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema* (2005), Holdsworth's *Television, Memory and Nostalgia* (Holdsworth 2011), Walder's *Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation, and Memory* (Walder 2011), Arnold-de Simine's *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia* (Arnold-de Simine 2013), Cassin's *La nostalgie. Quand est-on chez soi? Ulysee, Enée, Arendt* (Cassin 2013), Dufays's *El niño en el cine argentino de la postdictadura* (1983–2008) (Dufays 2014), Niemeyer's *Media and Nostalgia* (Niemeyer 2014), Ange and Berliner's *Anthropology and Nostalgia* (Angé and Berliner 2015), Lizardi's *Mediated Nostalgia. Individual Memory and Contemporary Mass Media* (Lizardi 2015), Bonnett's *The Geography of Nostalgia: Global and Local Perspectives on Modernity and Loss* (Bonnett 2015), Cross' *Consumed Nostalgia: Memory in the Age of Fast Capitalism* (Cross 2015), Schrey's *Analoge Nostalgie in der digitalen Medienkultur* (Schrey 2017) and Salmose and Sandberg's (eds) *Once Upon a Time: Nostalgic Narratives in Transition* (Salmose and Sandberg 2018), not to mention a vast array of articles and essays on the subject matter. The titles of these books are evidence of the vast scope and interdisciplinary approach of recent nostalgia studies. A majority of them were published within the western world, notably often in English. This is not to state that nostalgia is predominantly a European or US concern, only that within my limited academic horizon, these are works that I am familiar with and can recommend. As stated below, nostalgia is truly a transcultural phenomenon—in that capacity, nostalgia becomes entangled in local and global discourses alike. This collection is testimonial of nostalgia's global potential, investigating nostalgia in such different nations and cultures as Egypt, Nubia, Yugoslavia, the Czech Republic, Korea, Russia, Urdu, and Finland.

Nostalgia is used as a political, commercial, social, and psychological tool in order to either affect, control or alter human behavior as well as a critical, analytical apparatus that provides insights in these very behaviors. Nevertheless, both these strategies operate on the premise that people are inclined toward nostalgic feelings. Hence, all nostalgia studies must imply an individual, passionate, and strong emotion. In its purest sense, nostalgia is clearly personal and intimate. It is a touch of the heart. Nostalgia is a transhistorical, transcultural basic set of human emotions that are described in the earliest human narrative efforts: cave paintings, early creation myths, and in antiquity. Johannes Hofer coined the term nostalgia in 1688, but his nostalgia was medically related to homesickness and therefore curable. The modern definition of nostalgia becomes emphasized in the end of the 18th

Century as a complex emotion of both a revolt against time's progress and a lament of time passed. Nostalgia here is not curable. The essential definition, which separates nostalgia from memory, is how nostalgia involves a recollection or reconstruction of a past time or space that is invested with grief or melancholy. Nostalgia confirms both to the notion that life is short and that we will all vanish.

The alluring power of nostalgia as an emotion is its ambiguity. As Fred Davis states in his monumental *Yearning for Yesterday*: *A Sociology of Nostalgia*, everybody knows what nostalgia feels like but still cannot really explain it (Davis 1979, p. 7). Boym refers in *The Future of Nostalgia* to nostalgia as "superimposition of two images" and how nostalgia "is about the repetition of the unrepeatable" (Boym 2001, pp. xiv, xvii). Nostalgia's obscurity is a result of its complexity. The common and oxymoronic definition of it as bittersweet is an echo of how nostalgia is a combination of two very opposing emotional clusters: happiness and sadness.

The most adequate way to understand nostalgia is as an experience since that allows us to comprehend the complexity of its emotional configuration and see it as a process. First, there is the motivational phase where something triggers our nostalgia. This something can be our own cognitive will or any kind of sensorial stimulus. Nostalgia of the past is blissful and happy, a "yearning for [. . .] the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams" (Boym 2001, p. xv). In most cases, nostalgia is either a fragment of a biographical past or a condensed collection of a series of private and/or collective memories that make up a particular time and mood of our lives. However, nostalgia (place/time for yearning) either can be entirely impersonal and situate itself in a future-directed time/space, an imaginary, fictive world outside our own temporality, or it can be a past time one has not experienced personally. Nostalgia can also be a complicated combination of all these, but the overall emotional content is of happiness and relief that time travelling, in a Bergsonian sense, somehow is possible. The blissful nostalgia is then at some point interrupted by a revelation that this time travel is indeed impossible due to some physical restraints on time and matter. This introspective and reflective phase concurs sadness and melancholia. It results from what Susan Stewart frames as "sadness without an object" (Stewart 1984, p. 14). The result of the nostalgic experience is thus one of a combination of the conflicting emotions happiness and sadness: bittersweet. The above constructed experiential process is of course arbitrary. There can be other structures and chronologies. What I would title *present nostalgia* is when something not yet in the past is still triggering a nostalgic experience in the present. For example, imaging that a child will grow up might trigger a nostalgia for the present moment situated in the future as well as stressing the mortality and progress of life. Hence, nostalgia does not solely operate in the past but, at least hypothetically, involves all temporalities.

There is some dispute whether nostalgia in a private sense is a positive or negative emotion.[1] Along with Boym's discussion of these polarities as highly contextual and political (Boym 2001, p. xvii), I find such evaluative categorizations poor attempts to frame a particular emotion as either positive or negative. Rather, nostalgia fluctuates between the two opposing emotional spheres, creating a dominance of either happiness or sadness. In some cases, the actual nostalgia is in itself so powerful that not even the notion of its 'lostness' is able to withdraw the pleasure of re-experiencing it. In other cases, the dominating aspect is the universal grief of our lives, that time is irrevocable, and dominates the emotional conclusion.

Before I unleash the Special Issue's inventive nostalgic investigations of contemporary culture, I reiterate. Some of the most pressing contemporary issues (ecological crisis, migration and integration, fragmented worldviews, social media, fake news, extremist politics and terrorism) can be understood more profoundly through how they interact with both individual and collective forces of nostalgia. Nostalgia is politics, but these politics are also interwoven with media and culture. The bottom of it all, though, is that notwithstanding how nostalgia is used or contextualized in terms of politics and

[1] Nostalgia's positive qualities are supported by Batcho (1995) and Jackson (1986). There are, however, those who consider nostalgia primarily a negative emotional experience: Best and Nelson (1985), Hertz (1990), Holbrook (1993), and Peters (1985).

social practices, commodification or personal development, its power is primarily situated within its efficacy as a governing, influential human emotion. The vast and luminous contributions to this Special Issue on contemporary nostalgia are all investigating the role different aesthetic media formats (film, music, literature, computer games) play in nostalgic negotiations with style, history, migration, love, nationalism, diaspora, irony, modernity, colonial and postcolonial discourses, and adoption. Some of them have developed out of the international conference "Nostalgia in Contemporary Culture" that I co-organized with Rune Graulund and Eric Sandberg in Odense 4–5 June 2018 as part of our project on contemporary nostalgia financed by the Swedish Research Council. Other contributions have grown out of dialogues with colleagues or critics of nostalgia or just thankfully ended up in my inbox after the call for paper. Mutually, these essays stand out as important, original, critical contributions to the expanding field of nostalgia studies and offer a valued insight on contemporary issues.

Niklas Salmose, Berlin 2019

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Article

'Vision Isolated in Eternity': Nostalgia Catches the Train

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Abstract: Nostalgia for steam trains in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries offers a further example of the varying responses to railways evident ever since their first development in the nineteenth century. Several of these responses contributed to, and illustrate, the changing roles of temporality, memory and nostalgia in the literature of the modern period. In particular, though modernist literature is often critical of the contribution railways and their timetabling made to the mechanisation of the modern age, the writers concerned also develop affirmatively the new possibilities of momentary, memorable vision which rapid travel offered to the imagination. The development of this kind of vision in modernist writing allows certain forms of intense memory to be recognized as historically specific, though also, as always, shaped by nostalgia's idiosyncratic, personal aspects.

Keywords: nostalgia; railways; modernity; modernism

Little groups of bystanders sometimes gather on bridges over the suburban railway line, close to my home in Edinburgh. Older men predominate, often carrying hefty cameras, though there are usually several children, too. They've heard, somehow, that a steam engine is due to pass under the bridge, and have come to watch, photograph and remember. A few years ago, such gatherings used to be more numerous—annually, in mid-December—when the Scottish Railway Preservation Society ran steam-hauled 'Santa Trains' around the suburban circle, compellingly combining memories of Christmas past with nostalgia for a distant steam age.

Gatherings of this kind are of course not unique to Edinburgh, and often much less modest in size. When the famous steam engine, 'The Flying Scotsman', toured the country after its refurbishment in 2016, huge crowds of enthusiasts sometimes spilled over station platforms, dangerously, onto the tracks. Here and there throughout Britain, tourists and locals continue to flock to heritage railway lines, usually steam-operated. Their appeal is not hard to explain. For anyone aged more than around 55—those older men on the bridges in Edinburgh, for example—steam trains naturally evoke memories of childhood. They may well recall some of its best moments, too: holiday journeys, brimming with anticipation at Christmas, or summer departures for the seaside, steaming out of the sooty sunshine of some city station.

Yet steam engines appeal much more widely, offering anyone, of any age, picturesque alternatives to the forms of transport which replaced them—ones cleaner and more efficient, but less congenial in other ways. In comparison to their successors, steam engines are likely to seem more familiar and domestic—like giant kettles on wheels. They can also appear more fallible, or even human: noticeably dependent on regular sustenance—albeit only water and coal—and needing to breathe, or at least snort, gasp, or exhale. Electric power, dominant nowadays across the European railway system, allows trains to glide away from platforms almost silently and apparently effortlessly. Even diesel engines usually manage to depart with a steady, confident roar. Not so the old steam locomotives, struggling back into motion with a huge, laboured gasp—"***CHA!***"—followed by a succession of steamy snorts—"CHA-cha-cha"—as wheels and pistons reluctantly begin to turn over again.

Breathless struggles of this kind shaped the imagination of some of the most celebrated of all railway literature. As a child, the Rev. W. Awdry lived near Box Hill, a long, stiff gradient on the Great Western Railway. Lying awake at night, while listening to the engines emerging from Box Tunnel and panting their way up the incline, Awdry began to construct for them personalities and proclivities for self-exhortatory exclamations, such as "I can, and I must . . . I can, and I must". This imagination later developed into his popular children's stories about Thomas the Tank Engine and his locomotive friends—each accentuating the steam engines' human-seeming qualities through a handy command of language, and at the front of their boilers, a characterful visage with eyes, a nose and a mouth.

For generations of children, Awdry offered a consoling sense that machinery—at least in the form of steam engines—might not be altogether hostile, reifying, or threatening, but endowed instead with a literal human face. First published in the later 1940s, the stories acquired a steady readership in the next decades, and their appeal was greatly extended when they were adapted for television, with a first series appearing in 1984. More than 20 others have followed, continuing more or less to the present day. Thomas the Tank Engine's popularity thus coincides not only with the twentieth century's continuing need to humanise the machine, but also with a period of expanding nostalgia specifically for steam engines—one developing strongly, naturally enough, as the last of them disappeared from regular service in the later 1960s.

This nostalgia—along with the wider impact of railways on imagination—illumines in several ways the role of temporality, memory and the past in modern literature. It confirms how strongly or even inescapably nostalgia has been fostered by the relentless development of modernity. Constant innovations in technology and transport during the last two centuries have repeatedly consigned to the past what were once everyday habits, lifestyles and experiences. This inevitably induces some measure of regret for their loss. Ironically, steam engines—eventually victims of this kind of change—were once among its principal agents and initiators, driving the rapid expansion of the railway system in the 1830s and 1840s. Distressed by the railways' implacable destruction of older ways, many contemporary authors developed, in their turn, a nostalgia for earlier forms of transport. In *Felix Holt* (1866), George Eliot warmly recalls that "five-and-thirty years ago, the glory had not departed from the old coach roads", still unaffected by "the initiation of Railways" (Eliot 1995, pp. 3, 8). She goes on in *Middlemarch* (1872) to describe further "the infant struggles of the railway system", and their impact on a rural community, disturbed by "a projected line . . . run through Lowick parish where the cattle had hitherto grazed in peace" (Eliot 1970, p. 597). Like Eliot in *Middlemarch*, Charles Dickens often set his fiction decades earlier, in a calmer era of travel by coach and horse, before stations and sooty steam engines sullied the countryside and city, as he describes in *Dombey and Son* (1848). In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), looking back like *Middlemarch* on the 1830s, Thomas Hardy emphasises that "the railway had stretched out an arm towards Casterbridge at this time, but not yet reached it". This leaves intact numerous "old-fashioned features" whose "rugged picturesqueness"—but imminent obliteration by "time and progress"—Hardy highlights throughout his novel, even using footnotes to focus readers' attention on the extent of historical change and loss (Hardy 1971, pp. 265, 93, 65).

Historical changes concerned were largely complete by the opening decade of the twentieth century, as the railway network in Britain and much of Western Europe reached its fullest extent in the Edwardian years before the Great War. Authors in the next decade and in the 1920s were often nostalgic for the supposedly-placid years of Edwardian *belle-époque*, but too young to follow their Victorian predecessors in readily recalling an earlier, less hurried, horse-drawn age. Nostalgia for railways themselves, along with the Rev. Awdry's humanising imagination of the machine, lay decades in the future. Early twentieth-century literature—noticeably in its modernist idioms—therefore had to confront directly the transformations wrought by the railways, particularly in imposing exacting new temporalities on daily life. The consequences are summed up by Marcel Proust's narrator in *Remembrance of Things Past* (*À la recherche du temps perdu*, 1913–1927). "Since railways came into existence", Marcel remarks, "the necessity of not missing trains has taught us to take account of minutes, whereas among the ancient Romans . . . the notion not only of minutes but even of

fixed hours barely existed" (Proust 1983, II, p. 853). This necessity, Proust suggests—extending his resistance to "the mighty dimension of Time"—was often difficult or even painful to accommodate (Proust 1983, III, p. 1087). Marcel welcomes opportunities for escaping the city offered by "the fine, generous, 1.22 train", but also records that its

> "hour of departure I could never read without a palpitating heart on the railway company's bills or in advertisements for circular tours: it seemed to me to cut, at a precise moment in every afternoon, a delectable groove, a mysterious mark." (Proust 1983, I, pp. 418–19)

Employing the verb *inciser* to represent that 'cut', Proust's original French suggests a still sharper, almost surgical precision in railway timetabling's dismemberment of the more languid passage of days and hours in previous ages. Among writers in English, Virginia Woolf offers a comparable view of this changed temporality when describing in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) the "shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing" effects of "the clocks of Harley Street" (Woolf 1976, p. 113). She also shares Proust's view of the origins of the change—though in ways sometimes opaque for twenty-first century readers. The name of the Harley Street specialist who treats shell-shocked Septimus Smith—Sir William Bradshaw—would have had inescapable connotations for her original audience. These are summed up by the railway historian Geoffrey Kichenside when he remarks that "Bradshaw's surname was synonymous with railway timetables for over 120 years" (Kichenside 2011, p. 2). First published in 1839, Bradshaw's railway guides feature regularly in literature over the next century—in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897); in Arnold Bennett's *Clayhanger* (1910); in numerous Sherlock Holmes stories, and in Arthur Conan Doyle' s *The Valley of Fear* (1915); as well as in Woolf's earlier *Night and Day* (1919). For early readers of *Mrs Dalloway*, Bradshaw's name would have contributed a particular resonance to his unsympathetic, even inhumane treatment of his patient, strongly associating it with wider rationalisations and mechanical exactitudes introduced by a modern railway age. The name of Septimus' other doctor—Holmes, recalling Conan Doyle's detective—might have consolidated this impression of rigorously ordering, rationalising attitudes dominating the conduct of modern life.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, at any rate, literature may have reached its greatest distance from the kind of human face the Rev. Awdry created for railway machinery two or three decades later—though other writers among Woolf's modernist contemporaries were scarcely less negative. In *Women in Love* (1921), D.H. Lawrence echoes Proust's wariness of the railway's tightened temporalities when Gudrun Brangwen recalls the kind of "great white clock-face" encountered in stations and how the "the mechanical, monotonous clock face of time" makes "her heart palpitate"—much in the manner of Marcel's (Lawrence 1971b, pp. 522–23). Her reflections extend to more general criticisms of an industrialised, mechanical age which appear throughout *The Rainbow* (1915), as well as in *Women in Love.* Lawrence opens the earlier novel with an account—like Eliot's in *Middlemarch*—of how "the Midland Railway came down the valley" in the 1840s, cutting off the Brangwens from land their family had placidly farmed for centuries (Lawrence 1971a, p. 12). Effects of this kind of "mechanical activity" on "organic formation" are highlighted in later chapters and further extended in *Women in Love*, often focused around the figure of Gerald Crich—determined, in modernising his mines, to ensure "the subordination of every organic unit to the great mechanical purpose" (Lawrence 1971a, pp. 345–36).

Conflicts of mechanical and organic figure particularly intensely in Chapter 9, "Coal Dust", which describes the "mechanical relentlessness" Gerald employs in viciously controlling his horse, terrified by a "small locomotive, panting hoarsely . . . clanking sharply" as it hauls a train of wagons through a level-crossing (Lawrence 1971b, pp. 124, 122). Lawrence establishes an emblematic vividness for this scene through narrative tactics which are almost filmic, assembling a composite picture through repeated alternations between the characters' disparate points of view—between ways "Gudrun looked . . . Ursula looked . . . Gerald . . . looked at her" (Lawrence 1971b, pp. 124–25). Though typical of Lawrence's fiction, these tactics figure unusually, even extravagantly, in this scene when it employs what is almost a tracking shot to highlight how, as the train clanks through the crossing

> "the guard's-van came up, and passed slowly, the guard staring out in his transition on the spectacle in the road. And, through the man in the closed wagon, Gudrun could see the whole scene spectacularly, isolated and momentary, like a vision isolated in eternity." (Lawrence 1971b, p. 124)

In one way, this vision merely offers Gudrun—and readers—a further insight into Gerald's character, disturbingly anticipating the unfulfilling, power-oriented sexual relations she will soon find herself sharing with him. In another, though, through that momentary vision of the machine-obsessed man, the terrifying train and the suffering horse—the latter so often a distressing figure in modern writing—Lawrence sums up, vividly and concisely, pressures preying upon society for around a century, perhaps ever since the Industrial Revolution.

The manner of Lawrence's description nevertheless has more affirmative implications, inviting comparison with other modernists' interpretation of the role of vision, memory, and, by extension, nostalgia, in responding to the stresses of the modern age. Lawrence's notion of 'a vision isolated in eternity' particularly recalls Virginia Woolf's reflections at the beginning of *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and to an extent her tactics throughout that novel. Her comments about how "future prospects" shape apprehension of "what is actually at hand . . . even in earliest childhood" might strike a chord, incidentally, with those ageing steam-enthusiasts, for whom long-ago train journeys may have remained memorable on account of the excited holiday anticipation originally involved (Woolf 1973, p. 5). However, Woolf offers a fuller insight into memory when she describes the potential of a particular, passing sensation "to crystallize and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests" (Woolf 1973, p. 5). *To the Lighthouse* regularly demonstrates this "crystallizing", sometimes returning in its third part to "impressions" shown being "laid down" by the intensity of moments experienced in the first (Woolf 1973, p. 192). Such intensities, Woolf suggests, remain indelible though sometimes inexplicable, accruing around moments set apart as if by a "spell", or by the "meaning which for no reason at all descends on people"—for example, when one of the Ramsay children, "darting backward", somehow catches a ball "brilliantly high up in her left hand" (Woolf 1973, pp. 84–85).

Any sports spectator might confirm how readily sudden moments, like that brilliant catch—shaped by exceptional talent, grace or resolve—remain crystallised or transfixed in memory. But Lawrence and Woolf both suggest how readily, even casually, this transfixing could result simply from a new pace of travel: from the kind of "new perception of landscape and motion" which the industrial historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes railways contributing to the modern age (Schivelbusch 1986, p. 24). Each novelist suggests that these new perceptions could even occur independently of the viewer's expectation, volition, or deliberate attention. Views from a train, such as the guard's in the passage quoted, could be transfixed or "isolated in eternity" simply because they instantaneously appeared so vivid and significant, yet vanished utterly again in a flash. Woolf suggests how powerful, though ephemeral—or *because* ephemeral—views of this kind could be when she describes in *To the Lighthouse* a sense of things

> "happening for the first time, perhaps for the last time, as a traveller, even though he is half asleep, knows, looking out of the train window, that he must look now, for he will never see that town, or that mule cart, or that woman at work in the fields, again." (Woolf 1973, p. 220)

She offers a further instance of this momentary, fleeting vision when *To the Lighthouse* compares qualities of solitary "loveliness" to "a pool at evening far distant, seen from a train window, vanishing so quickly that the pool, pale in the evening, is scarcely robbed of its solitude, though once seen" (Woolf 1973, p. 147). Things "seen from a train window", Woolf suggests, may have more potential to engrave themselves on memory than things long-familiar, habitual or quotidian. Nostalgic recall of the "far distant", in other words, may locate itself especially strongly around the "once seen"—around fleeting scenes and visions which the accelerating pace of travel, in the early decades of the twentieth century, scattered more and more copiously across the mind.

"Once seen" views from train windows, at any rate, proved engaging for many authors at the time, both within Britain and beyond—perhaps none more so than Ivan Bunin, the first Russian recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1933. Bunin often found in the pace of modern life and travel—its brief, chance encounters and excruciating partings—ideal material for the condensed form of the short story. Many of Bunin's stories are intensely nostalgic, describing doomed, truncated liaisons, limited to the duration of a journey or a brief phase of life, yet sometimes painfully revisited through recollections evoked by similar journeys or circumstances. 'Rusya' (1940), for example, concerns memories initiated solely because "the Moscow-Sevastopol passenger train stopped at a small station just past Podolsk, where it was not supposed to stop at all, and stood waiting for something" (Bunin 1988, p. 227). A "lady and gentleman" look out of the train window at the surrounding "darkling wooded country"—through which, before long, their journey resumes (Bunin 1988, p. 228). But the unexpected halt recalls for the gentleman an affair experienced nearby—abruptly ended 20 years previously, yet so lyrical, consuming and passionate it still seems to spread over him the seductive light of its remembered evenings: the kind of "sunset glow that lingers for hours in . . . summer skies" (Bunin 1988, p. 28). Chatting the following day with "the lady", his wife, the gentleman's ironies and careful evasions nevertheless return the affair firmly to the dark—to a "once seen", recalled by his train's brief halt almost as vanishingly as Woolf's distant, solitary pool at twilight.

Like Bunin, Edward Thomas develops to poignant effect a moment in a station where a train "was not supposed to stop at all"—in a poem, 'Adlestrop' (1915), which has become the most celebrated exploration in English of connections between railway travel, memory and nostalgia. The remembered, momentary quality of an unscheduled stop at the country station of Adlestrop is communicated as much by the poem's line- and sentence-structures as its descriptions. Abbreviated opening phrases— "Yes. I remember Adlestrop"—reproduce the suddenness of the poet's encounter with an isolated memory springing out of the past. The enjambed third and fourth lines imitate the way "the express-train drew up there/Unwontedly". Short sentences that follow, enigmatic and disconnected in subject-matter, likewise replicate random recollection of the haphazard perceptions provoked by the train's brief standstill. Representing the end of "that minute" of its unwonted halt, Thomas's mimetic tactics extend into a kind of onomatopoeia, with the sound of a steam engine lumbering back into motion—that huge "CHA-cha-cha"—distinctly audible in the closing line's appreciation of the birds "Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire" (Thomas 2008, p. 51).

In form as well as subject, Thomas thus compellingly engages readers with a vision alternative to some of the problems—destruction of organic nature, and constraints within the human sphere—which authors discussed above diagnosed in the modern industrial world, and in the influence of its railways in particular. Whereas Woolf and Proust worried about new temporalities and Bradshaw-oriented requirements to "take account of minutes", in "that minute" of his train's pause at Adlestrop, Thomas celebrates instead a new opportunity to appreciate organic nature and a sunny surrounding landscape. Train travel, 'Adlestrop' indicates—or trains stopping, anyway—could contribute to engagements with nature all the more memorable because they are momentary: eternally preserving "meadowsweet, and haycocks dry", "high cloudlets" and whole shires of birds, through the poet's intense recall of a sunny minute in June. 'Adlestrop' extends and highlights, in this way, a direction followed by much modernist writing, finding in the crystallising powers of memory or vision an alternative to pressures which often seemed irremediable in other ways.

As the editor of Thomas's *Collected Poems*, Edna Longley, remarks, 'Adlestrop' thus offers "a model . . . for the translation of memory into poetic epiphany": one which has proved useful for later generations of writers, inspiring "homages, imitations and parodies"; even a kind of sub-genre of "train-window poems" (Thomas 2008, p. 177). Longley offers Philip Larkin's poem 'I Remember, I Remember' (1955) as an example of this kind of writing. She might have added Larkin's 'The Whitsun Weddings' (1964), which includes many fleeting scenes which "flashed uniquely", fragmentary yet

suggestive, during the holiday train journey the poem records—describing, for example, how "An Odeon went past, a cooling tower,/And someone running up to bowl" (Larkin 1988, p. 114,116).

As the twentieth century went on, such flashing of events and scenes on the mind became less exclusively an experience of rail travel and could well be further analysed in relation to other forms of transport, by road particularly. In later volumes of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Proust shows that the kind of "new perception of landscape and motion" Schivelbusch identifies might be experienced as much through travel by automobile as by train. Virginia Woolf's changing views of the motor-car are also intriguingly exemplary. Initially hostile, her attitude to motoring altered when good early sales of *To the Lighthouse* allowed her to purchase a second-hand car of her own. Thereafter, in her essay 'Evening over Sussex: Reflections in a Motor Car' (1927), she was more than ready to appreciate the access motoring offered to the "beauty and beauty and beauty" of the countryside (Woolf 1986–2011, VI, p. 454). Significantly, though, she remained wary of the fleeting nature of visions rapid road travel offered—scenes flashing vividly on the mind, but in forms fragmented enough, as she also considers in *Orlando* (1928), potentially to fragment the sensibilities of the perceiver.

Further analysis of such effects lies beyond the railway-centred interests of this essay. It concludes instead by suggesting a modification in views of modernity's influence on nostalgia, and with a couple of consequent questions. As noted above, the pace of change in the modern world sweeps away, increasingly regularly, whole lifestyles, habits of communication, and forms of transport, naturally fostering nostalgia for recently-vanished experience. But nostalgia may have been intensified not only by modernity's pace of change, but by the change of pace offered by its advancing technologies: by the ways more rapid travel altered cognitive possibilities and transfixed fleeting scenes and images with new intensity in mind and memory.

Other factors must nevertheless shape and direct this transfixing, otherwise every train journey might crystallise images nearly as numerous as the individual frames a cine-camera would capture in filming the same trip. Nostalgia is in any case too idiosyncratic and personal to be explained more than partially through reference to historical or technological change. Why, for example, has a summer day's railway excursion to the town of Callander, on the edge of the Highlands, endured so vividly yet fragmentarily in my memory for more than half a century? The first surviving fragment might have been retained on account of the kind of anticipation Woolf considers. The earliest remembered moment of that day was its promise of fair holiday weather, signalled by the sun shining onto bedroom window-shutters, as it could only in high summer, in that almost north-facing room, and for no more than a few morning minutes even then. Yet this vividly-recalled opening moment seems not to have been followed by others, most of the rest of that sunny day vanishing from memory almost as completely as Callander station was fated soon to disappear itself. Doomed in any case by Dr Beeching's draconian 1960s economising, the line it served was closed prematurely, by a hefty rock-fall in Glen Ogle, in September 1965. Only a rusting railway bridge, crossing a corner of the car park now occupying the site of the old station, survives to show that trains ever ran through the town.

Yet I remember Callander, that day, if only through one further fragment: an evening moment, when the southbound train hissed tardily into the station, greeted by my father exclaiming "Oh, a double-header!" I couldn't imagine what he meant—surely not some reference to football, in which he had little more interest than his weekly pools coupon required? I understood only when looking again at the train, pulled not by one steam engine, but by two—a regular tactic on that line, in those days, and a prudent one, as there were stiff gradients all the way from Oban, particularly between Crianlarich and Glenoglehead. But what ensured the survival of that remark, and that scene—of two engines clanking hastily into the platform, as if guilty about their delay, whooshing their steamy smell through the sunny evening air, late in June 1959? To borrow a question Virginia Woolf asks about a memory in *To the Lighthouse*, "why, after all these years ha[s] that survived, ringed round, lit up, visible to the last detail, with all before it blank, and all after it blank, for miles and miles?" (Woolf 1973, p. 194). What crystallising "spell", in Woolf's terms, could have been responsible? Those enthusiasts on Edinburgh railway bridges would no doubt attribute the memory's endurance to a

redoubled excitement: the remembered thrill of encountering not just one steam engine, but two. Woolf's views in *To the Lighthouse*, on the other hand, might suggest that any single, chance remark, especially an unusual one, might provide the grain of impression around which a whole remembered scene, radiant or gloomy, finds means to crystallise. Commentators on literary nostalgia might consider instead—a component of *their* enthusiasm for the subject—that what isolates vision in eternity may never be wholly defined, resulting from intersections of thought, memory, circumstance and chance which neither history, literary criticism, nor even neuroscience, may ever entirely explain.

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Article

Nostalgic Nuances in Media in the *Red Book Magazine* Version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Rich Boy"

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Abstract: The present article attempts to contribute to both Fitzgerald scholarship and nostalgia studies by examining how text, illustration, and advertisement enter into dialogue in the original magazine format of F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story "The Rich Boy". As research is still scarce on Fitzgerald's stories as they were first published, this field may hold new, potential research paths for this canonical author, a few of which I endeavor to explore here. This paper suggests that this 1926 magazine version offers a unique nostalgic experience that differs from the reading of Fitzgerald's text in an image-free anthology. It argues that, with some exceptions, these media generally interact in a cohesive way that echoes or reinforces a nostalgic mood. Niklas Salmose's typology of nostalgic strategies will be used to draw out the nostalgia in these media, and an intermedial approach will be employed to investigate how they engage in nostalgic dialogue.

Keywords: F. Scott Fitzgerald; "The Rich Boy"; Niklas Salmose; nostalgia; nostalgic strategies; text-image relations; *Red Book Magazine*; F.R. Gruger; illustrations; advertisements; media; intermediality

1. Introduction

Before "The Rich Boy" was selected by F. Scott Fitzgerald to form part of the short story collection *All the Sad Young Men*, it was first published in two installments in the January and February 1926 issues of the popular *Red Book Magazine*. This article looks back at the way "The Rich Boy" was presented in this magazine format, often sharing page space with illustrations or advertisements. My reading, which focuses on how this interaction transmits the nostalgic aspects of the story, aims to contribute to nostalgia studies on the notably nostalgic Fitzgerald: By exploring Niklas Salmose's classification of strategies that may evoke nostalgia in the reader, I attempt to show how the different media—written narrative, illustration, and advertisement—generally collaborate to express a nostalgic narrative mood that is already thematically and stylistically present in the text. This investigation into text-image relations also invites the employment of an intermedial approach, that is, an approach that pays close attention to these media interactions, which, in fact, create a media product and reader experience that differ from what we may encounter in a recent image-free anthology.

This backward gaze and "return to the original" may be seen as a nostalgic endeavor. However, it is not my intention to endow the original version with less or more authority and value. Rather, I attempt to put forward a vision of how "The Rich Boy" could have been experienced in this magazine version, while also offering the current reader a new understanding of a familiar text. Also, as Jennifer Nolan points out, studying the context of Fitzgerald's stories "reveals how Fitzgerald's work was positioned for contemporary readers, without which no understanding of Fitzgerald's reputation can be complete" (Nolan 2017a, p. 368). Despite this, due to their close connection to commercial culture, among other reasons, Fitzgerald's short stories in their original format are as yet vastly unexplored in scholarship.

2. Approaching Nostalgia in F. Scott Fitzgerald

Eric Sandberg suggests that literature "is an inherently nostalgic art form, frequently if not exclusively retrospective" (Sandberg 2018, p. 116), and Fitzgerald is arguably one of the most notoriously nostalgic authors in the Western canon. Unsurprisingly, much research has already been carried out on nostalgia in Fitzgerald: For instance, Wright Morris, who studies nostalgia in Fitzgerald's professional and personal life, labels him "the aesthete of nostalgia" (Morris 1963, p. 26). D.G. Kehl situates nostalgia in contemporary American literature and culture in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel* (Kehl 2002).

Fitzgerald's nostalgia is manifest in both his non-fiction and fiction: Essays such as "My Lost City" and "Echoes of the Jazz Age" illustrate the author's well-established nostalgia on a personal level. The latter, for instance, vividly describes the frenetic excess, and its consequences, that characterized the "borrowed time" of the Jazz Age, concluding that "it all seems rosy and romantic to us who were young then, because we will never feel quite so intensely about our surroundings anymore" (Fitzgerald 2013a, p. 138). His fictional works tend to feature nostalgic characters, such as, famously, Jay Gatsby, who exclaimed, "Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!" (Fitzgerald 1993, p. 70). This nostalgia often takes the shape of a female character, such as Daisy in *Gatsby*, Judy in "Winter Dreams", Rosemary in *Tender is the Night*,[1] and Paula in "The Rich Boy", the story that the present article focuses on. Sandberg, discussing Niko Kazantzakis' *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* in "The Double Nostalgia of Literature", claims that "[t]he literary tradition associates the *longing* for home with male characters, the *embodiment* of home with female..." (Sandberg 2018, p. 117). There may be an echo of this in "The Rich Boy": For instance, when Anson reencounters his former love Paula and she tells him that she believes that he will never marry, he bitterly answers that "if women didn't spoil you for other women... If I could go to sleep... and wake up into a home that was really mine..." (Fitzgerald 2007, p. 39). There is a hint of Penelope in Paula, too, as she is repeatedly depicted as waiting for Anson to marry her; however, she ultimately gives up. Anson does not idealize Paula during their relationship, refusing to formally solidify it despite Paula already seeing another man. However, after they part ways, she is enshrined in his memory, and he even imagines seeing her photograph with its frame of "thrice-reflected moonlight" (p. 24) during a romantic encounter with another woman, which swiftly ends the affair. While Paula is a symbol of Anson's nostalgia, Fitzgerald's text also describes several other nostalgic factors—the shift of social structures, the loss of friendships, the consciousness of aging—that displace and destabilize him.

Most relevant to the present article are Salmose's works on nostalgia: In "Art About Nostalgia or Nostalgic Art?", as the title suggests, he distinguishes between (1) art about nostalgia, in which the content or characters of a narrative are markedly nostalgic, and (2) nostalgic art, where stylistic devices provoke nostalgia in the reader, whether or not the narrative is thematically nostalgic (Salmose 2018, p. 129). Both types of art, as we will see more clearly later on, commingle in "The Rich Boy". *The Great Gatsby* is also an excellent example of this convergence, and in "Textual Memory in *The Great Gatsby*", Salmose emphasizes that while the novel treats nostalgia thematically, Fitzgerald also employs several formal tools that enhance this (Salmose 2014, p. 67). Salmose construes nostalgia as a two-part experience in which the nostalgic first delights in the happy remembrance, and then, sadly reflects on "the passing status of the idealized image or event..." (Salmose 2014, p. 68). In his analysis of *The Great Gatsby*, the contrast between the two halves of the novel is likened to the two-phase experience of nostalgia: While the first half impresses the "never-ending party" (Salmose 2014, p. 70) of a vivid summer on the reader's memory through diverse devices such as sensorial imagery, iterative frequency, mystery, and verbs that emphasize movement, the second half's

[1] Discussing "youth" as a common trope of nostalgia, Salmose takes Rosemary as an example of Dick's "longing back for his lost youth..." (Salmose 2012, p. 279).

slower tempo and increased literary distance mirror the reflective, bittersweet second stage of the nostalgic experience (p. 76).

While there are a great many studies on nostalgia from diverse perspectives, Salmose's approach is novel in its attempt to understand the formal aspect of how the nostalgic experience is evoked in a reader, and in *Towards a Poetics of Nostalgia: The Nostalgic Experience in Modern Fiction*, he collects a "toolbox" of stylistic devices that help achieve this (Salmose 2012, p. 28). For instance, in terms of stylistics, the employment of proximate and non-proximate word pairs such as "here and there" and "now and then", call attention to "the space between two values" (p. 187) and may, thus, heighten the reader's awareness of the unbridgeable gap between two times. This "in-betweenness", which we may also relate to the irreconcilability of the two stages of the nostalgic experience, characterizes nostalgia and nostalgic stylistics. Other examples of devices that highlight the confrontation between two times and spaces are: the repetition of time markers; the employment of subsequent narration or "the standard nostalgic mode" (p. 183), which is associated with a more distant narrative mood (p. 210); and the recurrence of nostalgic dichotomies (p. 245), such as youth versus age.

Nostalgic tropes, which evolved from such dichotomies (p. 246), are "imagery, symbols, metaphors, and recurring motifs that have the capacity to induce nostalgic sentiments in the reader" (p. 241). The trope of the ruin (p. 253), for example, refers to a long-gone era and the inevitable deterioration that comes with time. Many of the other tropes—such as seasons, voyages, and waves—remind the reader of time's steady progress (p. 246) and, again, intensify the space between now and then, and here and there. Moreover, the tropes engage the reader's "private memories through their very universal[2] and open nature" (p. 247). These strategies, as well as others, will be taken up again in the analysis of "The Rich Boy".

As Salmose's investigation has mainly focused on literature and film, my study of the images in "The Rich Boy" is also an attempt to contribute to the understanding and scope of his method. Through my analysis of the text-image relations in a text that is both art about nostalgia and nostalgic art, I have found this method to fit in—rather effortlessly—with a nostalgic reading of this text.

3. Approaching Text-Image Relations

It is still difficult to find and access Fitzgerald's stories in their magazine format,[3] which as previously mentioned, have been characterized by scholarly neglect. Fitzgerald himself contributed to this, due to his own conflicted attitude towards his stories (Bruccoli 1989, p. xiv), which were published in "'slicks', mass-market, advertising-driven magazines so named because they were printed in high-quality paper..." (Beuka 2013, p. 284). These slicks were widely read and highly influential. Leon Whipple, in 1928, remarked on the *Saturday Evening Post*'s popularity: "Who reads The Post? Who looks in the mirror? Everybody—high-brow, low-brow..." (Whipple 1928, p. 699). Moreover, with regard to its influence on the people, Whipple states that this mirror of a magazine "not only reflects us, it creates us. What the SatEvePost is we are" (p. 699). These magazine stories were Fitzgerald's main source of income and were decisive in giving him exposure as a writer. However, he resented how they took time away from his novel writing (Beuka 2013, p. 285). Moreover, his artistic freedom was curtailed by editorial dictate: Jarrod Waetjen writes that the editor "maintained strict control over every aspect of the *Post*..." (Waetjen 2011, p. 128). Writing to his agent, Harold Ober, Fitzgerald expressed disappointment "that a cheap story like The Popular Girl written in one week... brings $1500.00 + a genuinely imaginative thing into which I put three weeks of enthusiasm like The Diamond in the Sky brings not a thing" (Fitzgerald 1994, p. 54). Robert Beuka takes up this "tension between art and commerce" (p. 287) in Fitzgerald, which may also apply to the short story

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[2] Salmose specifies that he focuses on tropes that are "universal in terms of the Western world" (Salmose 2012, p. 242).

[3] A recent exception to this is the anthology *Gatsby Girls* (Fitzgerald 2013b), which features eight of Fitzgerald's early stories in the way they were originally published in the *Saturday Evening Post* between the years 1920 and 1922.

in general, especially the illustrated short story, which has experienced a long history of academic disregard. Aside from its strong association with commercial magazine culture, this is also due to various forms of contention such as the traditional pitting of the short story against the novel, the competition between writer and illustrator for authorship, and the long, drawn-out battle for cultural dominance between word and image.[4] Thus, it may not be surprising that Fitzgerald's stories are most often found in image-free anthologies. With regard to this, Waetjen claims that "there is an implicit argument that Fitzgerald's texts were elevated when removed from the glossy pages in which they were originally published... and collected in a form that physically resembled a novel" (Waetjen 2011, p. 6).

Nolan and Waetjen, who also remark on the lack of scholarly interest in Fitzgerald's magazine stories, are among the very few authors that have taken into account the images and magazine context in their analyses of these, and I align myself with the view that "these illustrations played an essential role in how they [the readers] experienced the text" (Nolan 2017b, p. 17). Both authors take the bibliographical codes[5] into account in their readings: Thus, in Nolan's study of "Babylon Revisited", she investigates the collaboration between writer, illustrator and editor, underlining how the illustrations undermine Fitzgerald's text to instead support the editor's vision for the magazine (Nolan 2017a, p. 363). She relates this to how the size, placement and proleptic nature of the images constantly emphasize their primacy over text. Conversely, in "Visualizing 'The Rich Boy'", her interpretation shows how the illustrations "mutually reinforce Fitzgerald's narrative and thematic emphasis..." (Nolan 2017b, p. 17), the illustrations tending to take the stance of the biased narrator in the text (p. 23). Nolan does not incorporate the advertisements in her readings, but they are included in Waetjen's conceptualization of the illustrated short story as a "cultural artifact—a text published complete with illustration in either a 'slick' or 'pulp' magazine, filled with advertising images, with an editing board concerned with their own socio-economic agendas..." (Waetjen 2011, p. 16). Discussing text-image relations, Waetjen relates Sergei Eisenstein's conception of the montage to the combination of text and image, concluding that "[w]hile text and image convey their own meaning, combining the two inexorably alters the message" (p. 100). Similarly, I construe the combination of text and image in the original version of "The Rich Boy" as one text, or from a media perspective, one media product in which the interactions of media may alter or add nuances to the reading experience.

In the attempt to understand this confluence of media in the page, I adopt an intermedial or multimodal perspective in my reading. Lars Elleström's conception of a medium is relational: It is comprised of modes and modalities that encounter each other in various ways. According to him, intermediality is mainly "about *studying* all kinds of media with a high level of awareness of the modalities of media and the crucial modal differences and similarities of media" (Elleström 2010, p. 38). These modalities are: The material modality, or a medium's "latent corporeal interface", whose modes are "human bodies,... flat surfaces and three dimensional objects..." (p. 17); the sensorial modality, whose modes are the senses, refers to how a medium is perceived by the senses (p. 15); the spatiotemporal modality makes spatial and temporal sense of what was perceived through the senses (p. 18); and the semiotic modality refers to "the creation of meaning in the spatiotemporally conceived medium by way of different sorts of thinking and sign interpretation" (p. 22). Applying these concepts to the intermedial relations in "The Rich Boy", one could put forward questions like "How do the images work to construct time and space in comparison to the text?" or "What kind of sensorial world do text and image create?" These questions, in this case, also help reveal how a nostalgic mood is generated in these interactions. Interestingly, this perspective has not often been employed in relation to Fitzgerald, despite the fact that the author displayed a keen awareness of the media surrounding him, integrating different narrative styles, and references to popular music and

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[4] These complex issues are addressed extensively in Jarrod Waetjen's 2011 work.

[5] Jerome J. McGann's conception of "bibliographical codes" takes into account that "literary texts and their meanings are collaborative events" (McGann 1991, p. 60).

cinema in his works. Additionally, he was certainly aware of the interaction of media in the magazines, having written slogans for the Barrion Collier advertising agency (Turnbull 1962, p. 92).

Other critics' approaches to text-image relations will also influence my reading: For instance, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen believe that "the visual component of a text is an independently organized... message, connected with the verbal text, but in no way dependent on it" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, p. 18), and attempt to create a "visual 'grammar'" (p. 1) in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. In the chapter "The Meaning of Composition", they develop "three principles of composition", which comprise the "three interrelated systems" of information value, salience, and framing.[6] Information value focuses on placement, on what meanings are associated with, for instance, the left or right side of a page; salience focuses on how certain parts of a composition are more or less prominent; and framing emphasizes how "[t]he absence or presence of framing devices... disconnects or connects elements of the image" (p. 177).

Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (Nikolajeva and Scott 2000) make general sense of text-image relations by classifying them as, for example, symmetrical, enhancing and contradictory interactions. Although these terms were designed to analyze children's picturebooks, they can also be used to approach various types of texts, and they will be used at some points of my analysis.

In terms of advertising, Richard Ohmann writes innovatively on the correlation between advertising and story in "History and Literary History: The Case of Mass Culture" (Ohmann 1988). His study of "two simple texts" (p. 357) considers "the ensemble of historical forces" that influence them, and in his attempt to connect the story "On the Way North" by Juliet Wilbor Tomkins and the Quaker Oats ad that accompanies it,[7] he highlights the intermingling of old and new elements to be found in both. Taking the ad as an example, the well-known, dependable Quaker introduces a safe predictability while promoting oatmeal as a novel breakfast alternative (p. 367). On a larger scale, in his work *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (Ohmann 1996) he relates this "conflation of modernity and tradition that still pervades mass culture" with the fact that while advertisements tended to praise innovations and shifts in lifestyle, they also had to take into account the unease that this progress caused (p. 206). Ohmann describes some key concepts in the language of advertising that are still prevalent.[8] While it is not my intention to simplify this complex work, I have found that, at first glance, some key concepts in the discourse of advertising, like the interplay of past and present (in nostalgia there is more a sense of contrast), and distance and nearness, can be related to the discourse of nostalgia. Some examples of this will be taken up in the following section, which studies the interactions of the text, illustrations and advertisements in "The Rich Boy".

4. Text, Illustrations and Advertisements: A Nostalgic Reading

4.1. The Illustrations

The illustrator for "The Rich Boy", F.R. Gruger, created six illustrations for the story, three for each installment. Gruger was an established figure in the American golden age of illustration, a period in which "illustrations were considered important contributions to literature" (Nolan 2017b, p. 17). Nolan underlines the importance he gave to reading the text closely, as well as his autonomy as an illustrator, in that he had "complete control over which scenes to illustrate" (p. 22). Edward Hodnett, in his 1982 work *Image and Text: Studies in the Illustration of English Literature*, terms the scene that the illustrator selects as the "*moment of choice*", referring to it as "[t]he most important decision an artist

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[6] See p. 177 for a summary of these systems.
[7] While Ohmann informs the reader that both story and advertisement can be found in the October 1895 issue of *Mumsey's Magazine*, he does not mention the ad's placement in relation to the story, an aspect that is relevant to my own reading of the ads in "The Rich Boy".
[8] Ohmann focuses on magazine advertisements from the years 1890 to 1905 (Ohmann 1996, p. 176).

has to make about an illustration" (Hodnett 1982, p. 7). Figure 1, below, is Gruger's second "moment of choice", which depicts a fallen, inebriated Anson, who needs to be carried away from the dining room in the middle of a party.

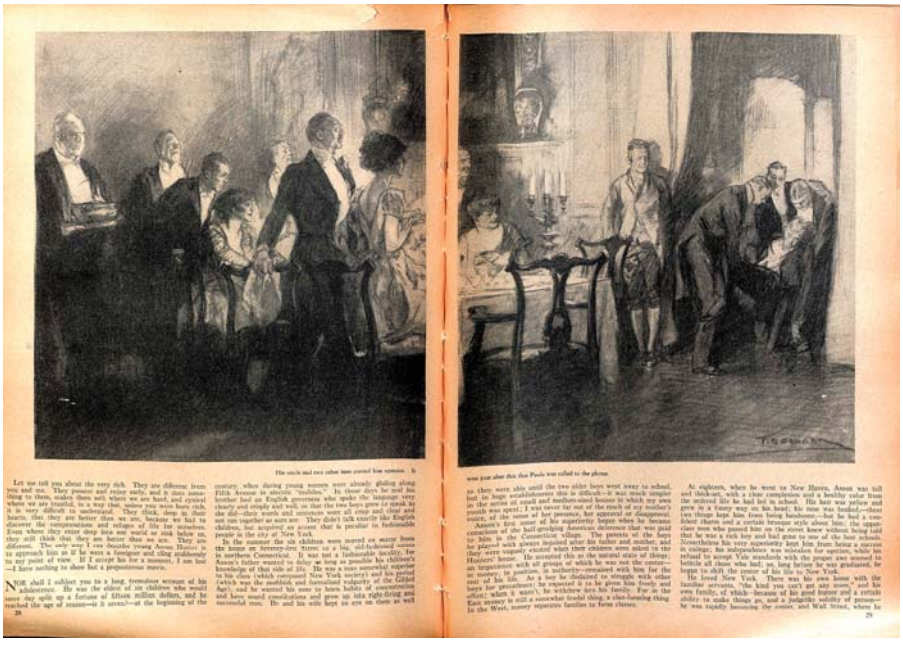

Figure 1. "The Rich Boy" as it first appeared in the January 1926 issue of *Red Book Magazine* (Fitzgerald 1926a), pp. 28–29.

Splayed out over two pages, the illustration conspicuously challenges the text with its placement and size. Moreover, keeping in mind the framing, the clear-cut borders on the image alienate it further from the text, supporting the contradictory dynamic. This dynamic is further enhanced by the prolepsis in the image, which gives the reader a glimpse into a dismal moment in the future while the text looks back into the past. Prolepsis, that is, relating an event before it happens, is a well-established suspense generator. Additionally, it may be interpreted as reinforcing the image's "primacy over the text" (Nolan 2017a, p. 362), as "framing... the narrative" (Nolan 2017b, p. 17), or as giving the reader a feeling of authorial "superior knowledge" (Sillars 2004, p. 74).

I will also argue that this prolepsis may engage the reader more deeply into the text. The placement of this illustration is vital to the meaning making: If the first line of the text[9] beneath the illustration reads "Let me tell you about the very rich... They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than we...", the reader, looking at Gruger's moment of choice, may exclaim "but they're *not* better!" What is more, in countering the temporal structure of the narrative, the proleptic nature of this image intensifies the nostalgia that is already present in the portion of text below the illustration, despite the fact that text and illustration describe differing scenes. In fact, while the text is not explicitly nostalgic in content (recall Salmose's "art about nostalgia"), several devices endow it with a nostalgic mood: After the narrator's direct address in the present tense, he shifts to subsequent narration when he

[9] While in examples such as this one, I specifically refer to the text in Figure 1 from *Red Book Magazine* (Fitzgerald 1926a), I mainly take quotations from the 2007 Cambridge edition of "The Rich Boy" in *All the Sad Young Men*, edited by James L.W. West III (Fitzgerald 2007).

begins to look back at the beginning of the rich boy's life, shortly summarizing Anson's childhood, school and college years, and his move to New York after college. For the most part, the picture of Anson's early years describes a calm stability, where all is right in the world: He "had an English governess who spoke the language very crisply and clearly and well" (p. 6); he lived in "a big estate"; the deference paid to him by other children and their parents was "the natural state of things"; he lived "an ordered life" in school (p. 7); and he had "the kind of servants you don't get anymore". At the same time, the temporal markers call attention to the temporariness of this youthful time: "[i]n those days"; "[i]n the summer"; "at the beginning of the century, when daring young women were already gliding along Fifth Avenue in 'electric mobiles'"; and so forth. Note, too, the use of the past progressive tense in the last example. According to Salmose, this tense (in this case, a combination of "were" and "gliding") creates a sense of being in between past and present (Salmose 2012, p. 185). Moreover, the verb "gliding" suggests a picture of something slipping out of reach.

Even though the illustration tells a story that is not in itself nostalgic, its combination with the text confronts future deterioration with the past promises of youth, a common nostalgic trope (Salmose 2012, p. 278). This spatiotemporal gap is also made manifest in the rupture between the pages, connoting dichotomies such as age versus youth, authority versus powerlessness, and stability versus vulnerability. The style and symbolism of Gruger's work create a grim atmosphere that powerfully contrasts with the one in the written narrative: Dark washes engulf the soft candlelight scene, in which the viewer naturally follows each and every grave, illuminated face, which is turned to the small, sunken figure of Anson. The traditional, Western left to right composition, which Kress and van Leeuwen equate to the "*sequential* information structure in language" (p. 181) supports the suspenseful progression of their gazes, and the values that the authors connect with left (given information) and right (new, and in this case, shocking information) support the abovementioned dichotomies.

The illustrator—and interpreter—seems to have used "silence" as a key word: "He [Anson] slid *silently* under the table... None of the young girls present remarked upon the incident—it seemed to merit only *silence*" (p. 11, italics are mine). Bearing in mind the sensorial modality, Gruger evokes this hushed silence: The shocked stillness is emphasized by small details such as the rustling curtain; the server frozen in media res with a bowl he is about to serve on his hands; the gentleman on the left side of the image who stands abruptly, napkin still in hand. Almost everyone has stood up to witness the scene, further emphasizing Anson's fall. Moreover, there are no "young girls" in this picture; instead, there are eleven "older" men and three women, augmenting the air of authority of those who are watching and perhaps judging Anson.

Despite these details, it is doubtful that the image on its own can be read as especially nostalgic. In this case, in challenging the narrative text's temporal framework, the prolepsis is essential in creating a dichotomy between past promise (text) and future decline (image), which supports the earlier discussed contradictory dynamic between the text and image in the above figure. Ultimately, however, this contradictory interaction may be considered to be an enhancing one in terms of nostalgia: Showing the reader this particularly bleak snapshot of the future while nostalgically narrating a "better" time in the past may magnify the already nostalgic mood that is present in the text below the illustration and in "The Rich Boy" as a whole.

The next image (Figure 2) achieves a similar effect, although it is analeptic, the depicted moment occurring before the text that accompanies it:

Figure 2. "The Rich Boy" as it first appeared in the January 1926 issue of *Red Book Magazine* (Fitzgerald 1926a), pp. 30–31.

The page preceding this illustration covers, notably, Anson's first encounter with the narrator, and later, more importantly, with Paula Legendre, who will come to symbolize his nostalgia. In fact, the "legend" in her name may already foreshadow pastness and idealization. By the end of the description of their flowering romance, they plan to get married, after which Paula announces that she, too, is rich. The text that captions the image and grounds it in the "right time" immediately follows this confession: "It was exactly as if they could say 'Neither of us has anything: we shall be poor together'—just as delightful that they should be rich instead" (p. 9). After this pinnacle of promise, the problems begin almost immediately, and soon after this, Anson slips to the floor twice from drunkenness—the first time in front of Paula's cousin Jo, and then later at the dinner party—much to Paula's disappointment and Mrs. Legendre's concern. The page ends with a description of his fall at the party. In the following, illustrated page, the text directly below the image describes Anson awakening from his drunken stupor. The illustration, which again dwarfs the text in terms of size, once more contradicts the temporal sequence of the text, creating a sense of nostalgia that, this time, is *not* in the text right below it, although it is highly present throughout "The Rich Boy". Thus, in this case, the illustration may be seen as generating an additional nostalgic experience at a point of time in the text that is not nostalgic.

This moment of choice is not actually present in Fitzgerald's narrative: It is a recreation of their romance by the artist. One way to see Gruger's interpretation is to focus on the nostalgia it conveys, both on its own and in contrapuntal relation to the text and the previous illustration. Interestingly, it is the only illustration that is set outdoors. That Gruger chose to recreate their relationship in an idyllic, natural setting calls to mind Svetlana Boym's definition of a nostalgia that she terms as restorative. The nostalgic often generates an "invented tradition" in the attempt to reconstruct what was lost (Boym 2001, p. 41). It appears as if Gruger endeavors to recreate Anson's romanticized picture of their relationship *after* it ends.

Like the word "silent" in the previous picture, Gruger seems to have used the word "blossomed" from "with his love her nature deepened and blossomed... He felt that if he could enter into Paula's warm, safe life he would be happy" (p. 8). Gruger thus chooses to depict the unfolding of their love in an Edenic garden in full bloom. This garden may be an expression of a longing for a natural, paradisiacal place, which relates to the idealization of spaces that is a characteristic of nostalgic discourse (Salmose 2012, p. 285). It also brings to mind the pastoral setting, a common nostalgic trope (p. 285). Turning to the trope of the seasons, Gruger seems to situate the moment in summer or spring, most likely spring, the season that has most been connected to youth, new beginnings and the blossoming of love. Both the garden and the season also open up a sensorial space that is fragrant and tactile (the flowers; the couple embracing). In Fitzgerald's text, Anson meets Paula soon after he meets the narrator for the first time in the late summer. Several meetings, and a description of the solidification of their relationship, take place before the time of the caption. While the season is not described in this part of the text, it is certainly after summer. Thus, Gruger's choice of spring to set this scene is, again, coherent to a nostalgic reading of the text-image relation: Like the above-discussed aspects in the image, it highlights the promise of the start of a romance, a promise that nostalgically counters the events in the text surrounding it.

Also pointing to the transitory nature of this idealized picture are the body language of the couple and the sequentiality of elements in the composition of the illustration, both of which nostalgically foreshadow something that is about to end: Anson's right hand clutches Paula's right arm and his left hand presses her to him as though he is afraid to let go; however, despite their physical closeness, their gazes are distant and not directed towards each other, as if they are already looking past the moment. The way the composition is sequenced echoes this nostalgia: While the general tendency is to read from left to right, this is not always the case. Nikolajeva and Scott claim that "[t]he artist may deliberately or unconsciously place a detail in the picture... that will compel us to start reading the picture from this point" (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006, p. 161). The picture as a whole is characterized by large blocks of dark washes depicting trees and shrubs. Paula, who in the text is described as a "dark, serious beauty" projecting "primness" (p. 8), is aptly portrayed in a long, pristine white dress that is as pale as her skin. The composition thus beckons the eye to first fasten on Paula, as the brightest, most salient point of the picture. The reader's eyes, possibly following this lighter tone, naturally move leftwards instead, to a little part of the garden behind them, and then to the small, disappearing spot of sky. The awareness of transience in this image can be likened to the mood in Baudelaire's *À Une Passante*, where "the chance of happiness is revealed in a flash and the rest of the poem is nostalgia for what could have been" (Boym 2001, p. 21). There is a fleetingness conveyed in this frozen, embellished moment, which again recalls Boym's restorative nostalgia: The illustration portrays a time and space, which as far as the reader of the text knows, has never existed. Similarly, later on in the text, Paula's enshrined figure is in a sense frozen in a photograph, a medium that is associated with pastness.[10] For instance, the earlier mentioned potentially romantic scene with new flame Dolly is disrupted when Anson's memory, not of Paula but of her *photograph*, superimposes itself on another photograph of "a blurred shadow of a face that he did not know" (p. 24). This may fit to the idea of nostalgia as being "the disease of an afflicted imagination", one of the definitions that Boym provides in *The Future of Nostalgia* (p. 4).

Thus, the spatiotemporal modality in the image, or the way that space (a natural paradise) and time (a relationship that is frozen in time before it fades) are conveyed, seems to support a nostalgic reading of the image on its own. However, the highly nostalgic connotations in this image gain strength from its temporal placement in relation to the previous events: Having just witnessed Anson's decline

[10] André Bazin in "The Ontology of the Photographic Image", refers to family albums as "no longer traditional family portraits but rather the disturbing presence of lives halted at a set moment... for photography does not create eternity... it embalms time, rescuing it simply from its proper corruption" (Bazin 1960, p. 8).

in the previous illustration and section of the story, the reader may guess that this idealized picture cannot possibly stand still.

4.2. The Advertisements

This reading does not only take into account the interaction between Fitzgerald's story and Gruger's illustrations: It also considers a third medium, the advertisement,[11] as relevant to the overall meaning making. There are several advertisements that share page space with the text of "The Rich Boy", all of them clustered towards the end of the story, and none of them situated in the pages containing the illustrations. Bearing in mind the disrepute of Fitzgerald's stories in connection with their magazine context, the advertisement is the most commercial element of the media interaction in the page. Its presence can be perceived in different ways: Jade Adams calls its inclusion "an interruptive reading experience" (Adams 2015, p. 42), and this may especially apply to pages that combine advertisement, illustration, the end of a story, and the beginning of a new one; Waetjen highlights how for Ohmann, "short stories served to create a sense of comfort in readers so that they might turn their attention to advertising images to satisfy non-essential needs" (Waetjen 2011, p. 122). Ohmann's main question in his study of story and advertisement, "Is there *any* connection beyond that of physical proximity?" (Ohmann 1988, p. 361), is key to the present article, although he does not choose an illustrated short story. In "The Rich Boy", the advertisements, along with the illustrations, seem to reflect the story's moods, themes, and subjects. The first examples that will be looked at show how the ads mirror the nostalgic mood in the text and run parallel to the voyages undertaken by Anson's friends (and later, by Anson himself), voyages that also relate to this nostalgic mood. Interestingly, these advertisements are placed "in time" with the story: As the reader does not expect the ads to relate to the story in the way she or he might expect an illustration to, their placement seems to make their connection clearer. As with the illustrations, Salmose's method was applicable in helping substantiate how some of these ads may generate nostalgia in unison with Fitzgerald's text and Gruger's illustrations. In contrast to these illustrations, which were deliberately constructed to correspond to the story, the intentionality behind the advertisements—besides their obvious function—is less clear, making their connection to the story far more surprising. In the case of the story-advertisement relation that Ohmann analyzes, he claims that "the ad paid for the story" (Ohmann 1988, p. 365). While I do not own copies of the *Red Book Magazine* issues that featured "The Rich Boy", I own an issue from April 1926 and have noticed that some of the same ads are present in this issue and are situated in similar sections of the magazine. Thus, despite their remarkable placement in story time and thematic resemblance, the possibility exists that it is a coincidence that the ads reflect Fitzgerald's story so closely. Concerning this topic, a study that looks into the diverse agents that were involved in the construction of this media product may of course be of interest. However, while it may be relevant to call attention to the issue of intentionality, the focus of this section of the reading is on *how* the advertisements enter into dialogue with "The Rich Boy", often reflecting its moods and themes. Figure 3 is a good example of how the ad relates to the nostalgia in the story:

[11] I focus on the advertisements in the magazine that share page space with the text of "The Rich Boy".

Page 122 The Red Book Magazine

FRANCE *through the eyes of her Immortals*

The Rhone hurries gaily through Provence, the land of the Troubadours. Through old Avignon, City of the Popes . . . under its Bridge of St. Benaset, famous for the "Jeandelen" danced above it. Past Nimes with its impressive Roman arena and on to Arles built in the time of Caesar.

Then down to the Riviera! Where the Corniche road twists fantastically far above the sea. And above that! Dazzling peak upon peak of snow clad mountains. And little towns frantically clutching the towering rocks.

It's a ride that will become a precious memory. As imperishable as the memory of Paris and its gayety or Brittany and its rustic charm.

But not more precious than the memorable trip to France on one of the de Luxe French Liners, the Paris or *France* . . . or on any One-Class-Cabin boat, the *De Grasse*, Rochambeau, *La Savoie* or *Suffren*. Up "the longest gangplank in the world" . . . and into a miniature Empire of the Sun. With a marvel of good things to pique the jaded appetite. With the inviting restfulness of your own suite or cabin. And the children kept happy by competent governesses.

A de Luxe French Liner means six delightful days to Plymouth, England . . . with a few additional hours for the trip to Havre, the port of Paris. No bobbing to shore in tenders; a special boat-train waiting; Paris in three hours. Or take your car, uncrated, with you. Drive it off the covered dock. Tour in France, and live well for much less than in the United States!

Illustrated Brochure of France on request.

French Line

Compagnie Générale Transatlantique, 19 Rue de la Paix, New York

the inspector. "It would be a shame to have carried it all the way across the ocean and have it smashed at home." And he laughed pleasantly.

"Do you want me to unwrap it?" asked Mr. Peters.

"Never mind. I guess you haven't got any opium in it, have you?" And the man laughed very hard this time, as he stuck the official labels on the trunk and bags. "Here, porter," he said to a man who was standing by, "help chose up these trunks and get them on a truck. You'll be wanting a taxi, I suppose. If you'll take my advice, you'll get one of those taxies over there. They're cheaper. And now if you'll step this way with me, sir—" and he turned to Mr. Peters, "—we'll fix you up in a jiffy and get you O. K'd. It will cost you a quarter for the stamp. . . . No, don't give it to me. Give it in at the window.

People might think you were letting me." And he roared with laughter at this, his final sally.

MR. PETERS returned from the window in silence. The trunks and bags were piled on a rub, and they jounced and jolted over the cobblestones on the way to their hotel. Still he said nothing. Mrs. Peters, relieved of the strain of the last hour, cried quietly to herself. She looked now and again at her husband, sitting huddled down into his overcoat, hands in his pockets, hat over his eyes and feet up on the seat in front of him, a chrome of dejection and frustration. She felt that it would be better not to speak to him for a little while.

Suddenly a muffled report filled the stuffy closeness of the cab. Mr. Peters winced slightly but did not move. He had shot himself in the foot.

THE RICH BOY

(Continued from page 79)

dinner, then four or five raw cocktails in somebody's room, and a pleasant confused evening. He regretted that this afternoon's groom wouldn't be along—they had always been able to count on so much into such a night; they knew how to attach women and how to get rid of them, how much consideration any girl deserved from their intelligence and position. A party was an adjusted thing—you took certain girls to certain places, and spent just so much on their amusement; you drank a little, not much more than you ought to drink, and at a certain time in the morning you stood up firmly and said you were going home. You avoided college boys, sponges, future engagements, fights, sentiment and indiscretion. That was the way it was done. The rest was dissipation.

In the morning you were never violently sorry—you made no resolutions, but if you had overdone it and your heart was slightly out of order, you went on the wagon for a few days without saying anything about it, just waited until an accumulation of nervous boredom projected you into another party.

The lobby of the club was unpopulated. In the bar three very young alumni looked up at him, momentarily and without curiosity.

"Hello there, Oscar," he said to the bartender. "Mr. Cahill been around this afternoon?"

"Mr. Cahill's gone to New Haven."

"Oh—that so?"

"Gone to the ball-game. Lot of men gone up."

ANSON looked once again into the lobby, considered for a moment and then walked out and over to Fifth Avenue. From the broad window of another of his clubs—one that he had scarcely visited in five years—a gray man with watery eyes stared down at him. Anson looked quickly away—something about that figure sitting in vacant resignation, in supercilious solitude, depressed him. He stopped and retracing his steps, started over Forty-seventh Street toward Tuck Warden's apartment. Tuck and his wife had once been his most familiar friends—it was a household whistle he and Dolly Kasper had been used to go in the days of their affair. But Tuck had taken to drink, and his wife had publicly remarked to people that Anson was a bad influence on him. The remark reached Anson in an exaggerated form—when it was finally cleared up, the delicate spell of intimacy was broken, never to be restored.

"Is Mr. Warden in?" he inquired.

"They've gone to the country."

The fact unexpectedly cut at him. They were gone to the country, and he hadn't known. Two years before, he would have known the date, the hour, come up at the last moment for a final drink, and planned his first visit to them. Now they had gone without a word.

Anson looked at his watch and considered a week-end with his family, but the only train was the local, which would jolt through the aggressive heat for four hours. And tomorrow in the country, and Monday—he was in no mood for bridge on the porch with undergraduates, and dancing after dinner at a rural road-house, a diminutive of gayety which his father had judged too well.

"Oh no," he said to himself. "No."

He was a dignified, impressive young man—rather stout now, but otherwise unmarked by dissipation. He could have been cast for a pillar of something,—at times you were sure it was not society, at others nothing else—for the law or for the church. He stood for a few minutes on the sidewalk in front of a Forty-seventh Street apartment-house . . . For almost the first time in his life he had nothing whatever to do.

Then he began to walk briskly up Fifth Avenue, as if he had just been reminded of an important engagement there. The necessity of dissimulation is (despite Jack London's intellectual valets) one of the few characteristics that we share with dogs, and I think of Anson on that day as some well-bred specimen who had been disappointed in a familiar back yard. He was going to see Nick, once a fashionable bartender in demand at all private dances, and now employed in cooling non-alcoholic champagne among the labyrinths of a Broadway hotel.

"Nick," he said, "what's happened to everything?"

"Dead," Nick said.

"Make me a whisky sour." Anson handed a pint bottle over the counter. "Nick, the girls are different. I had a girl in Brooklyn, and she got married last week without letting me know."

"That a fact?" Ha-ha-ha!" said Nick diplomatically. "Slipped it over on you?"

"Callously," said Anson. "Excuse me, since I was out with her the night before."

"Ha-ha-ha," said Nick. "Ha-ha-ha!"

"Do you remember the wedding, Nick, in Hot Springs, where I had the waiters and the musicians singing 'God save the King?'"

"Now, where was that, Mr. Hunter?" Nick scratched his head. "Seems to me that was—"

"Next time they were back for more, and I began to wonder how much I'd paid them."

"Seems to me that was at Mr. Freshaim's wedding."

"Don't know him," said Anson decisively. He was offended that a strange name should

Figure 3. "The Rich Boy" as it first appeared in the February 1926 issue of *Red Book Magazine* (Fitzgerald 1926b), p. 122.

This part of Fitzgerald's text is especially nostalgic—nostalgic art and art about nostalgia—and sees Anson's depression rapidly unraveling. The previous page ended with Anson displaying restlessness after his last close friend's wedding: "'Go where?' he asked himself" (p. 33). This question is followed by a long passage of remembrance of younger days that continues into the next page: "The Yale Club, of course; bridge until dinner, then four or five cocktails in somebody's room and a pleasant confused evening... A party was a well adjusted thing—you took certain girls to certain places and spent just so much on their amusement... and at a certain time in the morning you stood up and said you were going home" (p. 34). Stylistic devices emphasize the nostalgia evoked in this passage: Iterative frequency, which relates an event as if it occurred several times before, is a "summarizing form" that brings out the nostalgic aspect of memory as "it lacks the specificity of memory and embraces the vagueness of nostalgic memory" (Salmose 2012, p. 202). Polysyndetons, which occur when conjunctions such as "and" and "or" are repeated in close succession, are also present in the passage and form part of Salmose's classification of nostalgic strategies in how they rhythmically mark clock time (p. 190).

When Anson arrives at the Yale Club, he talks to the bartender and inquires about old friends and acquaintances. The word "gone" reverberates throughout the conversation: "Mr. Cahill's gone to New Haven" (p. 34); "Gone to the ball game. Lot of men gone up"; "They've gone to the country" (p. 35); "They were gone to the country"; "Now they had gone without a word". The trope of the voyage, in this instance, intensifies Anson's instability, and the news of his friends' departures is paralleled by his own wandering to familiar places looking to contact old friends he was once close to but ending up engaging in superficial conversations with bartenders. With the second bartender, who was "once a fashionable bartender in demand" (p. 35), Anson recalls old times: "Do you remember the wedding...?"

(p. 36). He complains about how things are no longer the same: "Nick, the girls are different..." (p. 35). Temporal markers enhance the sense of time slipping by that is so present in Anson's mind: "Two years before" as opposed to "Now" (p. 35); "And tomorrow"; "and Sunday", and so forth. This awareness takes on a haunting quality when Anson looks up a window and sees how "a grey man with watery eyes stared down at him" (p. 34).

At first glance, the advertisement for French Line, which occupies one third of the page, seems to echo the voyages of Anson's friends, and the sense of loneliness and nostalgia that these evoke in him. However, the overly cheerful headline ("The Rhone hurries gaily") may also be seen as mocking Anson's misery. Moreover, it may foreshadow the voyage, on perhaps a similar passenger ship, that Anson will undertake later in the text. But returning to the first idea of nostalgia, besides mirroring the travel in the text with an advertisement on travel, the way the different elements in the ad enter into dialogue seem to mimic nostalgic discourse in several ways. Firstly, there is a contradicting dynamic between past/stasis and future/motion in the way the illustrations are alienated by their sharp borders from the text. The images chosen are of: Frédéric Mistral, writer of Le Poème du Rhône, who received a Nobel Prize for literature in 1904, and died in 1914; and the bridge Pont Saint-Bénézet. The dead poet and ancient bridge clearly connote a celebrated past. What is more, the medieval bridge appears ruin-like, recalling the trope of the ruin, "a prime symbol of decay and past time" (Salmose 2012, p. 253). Coincidentally or not, nostalgia is implied in the way the images of this man and bridge are framed and set apart from the text: The old-fashioned, ornate borders seem to be a homage, but they also seem to emphasize the images' alienation from the present, as, according to Hodnett, "borders clamped around illustrations are deadening" (Hodnett 1982, p. 21). Mistral's image is quite sharply superimposed over the bridge's, also alienating the images from each other. That they are illustrations and not photographs may also be significant to this idealization. Ohmann claims that advertisements refrained from using photography possibly "because the camera would lessen the abstractness and idealization..." (Ohmann 1996, p. 185).

The top of the images reads "FRANCE through the eyes of her Immortals", and if we consider the sensorial modality, this generates a rather eerie, sensorial world. This line, and the nostalgic images, are immediately contradicted by the lively, forward-moving voice in the headline of the text: "The Rhone hurries gaily". In fact, while the advertisement's text describes travel through ancient landmarks that reflect the "immortal eyes" of the illustration, like "old Avignon, City of Popes", "Nimes with its impressive Roman arena" or "Arles built in the time of Caesar", at the same time, this is countered by the sheer enthusiasm that it transmits. Several prepositions and verbs as well as animated imagery generate a dynamic tempo: "through Provence"; "through old Avignon"; "Then down to the Riviera!"; "the Corniche road twists fantastically", "Paris in three hours"; "little towns frantically clutching the towering rocks"; and "peak upon peak of snow clad mountains". The uninterrupted flux is also implicit in the waves the ship moves through, waves being another nostalgic trope connected to "repetitiveness and the passing of time" (Salmose 2012, p. 256). In fact, this energetic tempo leads to a nostalgic line in the text: "It's a ride that will become a precious memory", which is "[a]s imperishable as the memory of Paris". Not only does this passage nostalgically foreshadow the end of a voyage before it even begins, but it also opposes transience with permanence. Thus, time and space in the spatiotemporal modality are built on oppositions—old, ancient, and enshrined versus young, new, and dynamic—that we can relate to the previously discussed nostalgic dichotomies.

Just as past and present often encounter each other in their respective ways in both the discourses of nostalgia and of advertising, they also both play with distance and nearness in terms of voice. In advertising, as the distance between buyer and seller increased, advertisements took on a more personal voice in order "to preserve the feeling of personal communication" (Ohmann 1996, p. 187), ads often adopting the voice of a "savvy neighbor" that could be trusted for advice (p. 191). Here, the personal, advising voice in "Or take your car, uncrated, with you. Drive it off the covered dock" also projects a nearness that challenges the distance transmitted by the old-fashioned images. I mentioned earlier that perhaps, while nostalgic discourse counters past and present, in advertising there is more a

sense of combination. However, looking at the above relation of text and image in the advertisement, the "combination" does not seem to be particularly harmonious.

The advertisement on its own already evokes nostalgia and the above application of Salmose's approach seems to substantiate this. Its placement in an especially nostalgic section of Fitzgerald's text makes it seem strikingly symmetrical to the story in terms of mood, subject, and theme. Finally, it is also worth making note of the "social meaning" (Ohmann 1996, p. 185) or contemporary, accommodated lifestyle depicted in the ad ("children kept happy by competent governesses", "the inviting restfulness of your own suite"), which blends in with the social scenario of "The Rich Boy".

The next advertisement (Figure 4) exhibits several of the above observations: At this point of Fitzgerald's text, Anson's nostalgia reaches its peak, and he ends up locking himself in a telephone booth of a hotel, unsuccessfully reaching out to everyone he once knew. Again, he hears that his friends are gone: "So-and-so was out, riding, swimming, playing golf, sailed to Europe last week" (p. 36). Just after this moment, there is a "turn", and Anson's nostalgic thoughts are suddenly personified: As he is about to leave the hotel, he sees his former girlfriend Paula by the revolving door. In his reencounter with the now happily married Paula, whom he has idealized for years, he realizes, much to his dismay "that the memory of him had lost poignancy to her" (p. 37). There is, thus, a devastating encounter between old/past and new/present: The Paula of his nostalgia-embellished memory and the Paula he actually meets.

Figure 4. "The Rich Boy" as it first appeared in the February 1926 issue of *Red Book Magazine* (Fitzgerald 1926b), p. 124.

This coming together of old and new is also present in the advertisement, for instance, in the arrangement of elements in time and space in the top illustration: The ruin-like construction, which again calls to mind the trope of ruins, takes precedence with its place in the center, occupying much of the illustration's space. However, what appears to be tropical foliage incongruously grows on each side of the "ruin", and a little boy walks with his mother nearby. The sensorial atmosphere that is

evoked is warm and sunny—there are palm trees in the background, the sky is clear, and the mother even needs a parasol to shield herself from the sun. In the back, there is another, open structure made of pillars. Like the ruin, it is ambiguous, and the reader may wonder: Is it old or new?

The text also beckons to our senses, particularly our sense of sight, as the verb "see" reocurrs four times in the text, including in the headline, "See for Yourself", which emphasizes this call to visualization through its prominent font size. In connection with this, the name of the community, INDRIO, competes with the top image for salience, and is likely an attempt to create a visual imprint on the reader's mind, perhaps inviting her or him to imagine this old-new space.

In relation to the abovementioned encounter of ancient and nascent, change and stasis also commingle in this advertisement, as with the previous one. Despite the ruins, a community is emerging swiftly: it is "is growing to be", it is "in the making". The map and compass below allude to movement and the trope of the voyage, yet its old-fashioned and sharp borders are static and distancing. In the story, Anson resists change—he is attached to the past—yet everything is changing around him: "his quest roved into the country" (p. 36); "So-and-so was out, riding, swimming, playing golf, sailed to Europe last week" (p. 36); "the diversion of a traveling salesman" (p. 37); "the revolving door" (p. 37); "Pete had come East" (p. 37). This movement is echoed in the advertisement, where the voice familiarly advises "you" with several imperatives to "play golf, go surf bathing or fish". More importantly, as mentioned, Paula, who has been embalmed in his memory like a photograph, is transformed: She is described sensorially, as standing "sideways to the light" (p. 37) in a ruffling cape. The movement of her cape, the revolving door, and her pregnancy all allude to transformation. Like the ruin, she is both old and new, and in this way, the ruin in the image may be read alongside Anson's longing to return and start anew.

Like the previous example, the presence of nostalgic dichotomies and tropes found in this advertisement seems to echo the nostalgic mood of Fitzgerald's text. The next advertisements (Figure 5) are not particularly nostalgic, but they also seem to mirror some events in the text.

Figure 5. "The Rich Boy" as it first appeared in the February 1926 issue of *Red Book Magazine* (Fitzgerald 1926b), p. 125.

The quantity and dominant placement of these ads, five of six of which are travel-related, might imply a more distracting or "interruptive" experience than the previous ones; however, like the previous ones, they connect thematically to the story. It seems as though Figures 3 and 4 prepared the reader for this bombardment of travel advertisements, which take place alongside Anson's own voyage, coinciding precisely with the moment he "moved off in the wet space between worlds" (p. 41). The trope of the voyage and the "space between worlds" emphasize the nostalgic space between "now and then" and "here and there", and in fact, while the beginning of the short text on the left side of the page begins with Anson's final interaction with Paula, at the very end of this section his eyes are fixed on a new girl: "'Did you see that girl in the red tam?" (p. 41). In this very small block of text, Anson takes leave of Paula; his superiors at work urge him to travel, as he "was stale and needed a change" (p. 40); he finds out that Paula dies; he sets off on a journey; and he notices a new woman.

On the one hand, the ads seem to distract the reader from the dire recent events (Anson's depression; his reencounter with Paula; her passing). On the other hand, they align themselves with Anson's transition, the spatiotemporal construction projecting constant motion, faraway places, and new possibilities. If the advertisements' placement were deliberate, one could see them as employing their more typical function of offering a "solution" to Anson's woes and a "promise" of more exciting times. Despite Anson's depression and increasing preoccupation with time's passage, after his first drink during his travel "he displayed the first joviality... in months" (p. 41). A new sensorial world opens up with "the girl in the red tam", and in the next page, this fresh burst of color is made clearer with descriptions of her red hat, which "was a bright spot of color against the steel-grey sea", and the "flashing bob of her head". There is a change in Anson, who recovers his "strong, clear" (p. 41) voice and plays "pool with infectious gusto" (p. 41). This illusion of a recreation of youth is mirrored by the possibilities, and sunny, sensorial spaces alluded to by the foreign places promoted by the advertisements, most notably observed in the headlines "A Cruise to Europe and the Mediterranean" of Thos. Cook & Son, or in "Orient Round the World" (introduced with "The Sunshine Belt to the Orient") of Dollar Steamship Line. The first, in terms of size and placement, is perhaps the most eye-catching; however, challenging its dominance in the page is the image of the stereotypical "exotic woman" on the lower right, her sideward glance suitably mysterious, simply captioned "Orient". The following text associates her with many possible destinations: "Honolulu, Japan, China, the Philippines, Malaya, Ceylon, India, Egypt", and so forth. She could also be seen as mirroring the possibilities suggested by the new girl in red that Anson meets. However, apart from this illustration, the advertisements seem to focus on the aesthetic appearance of words, which is likely part of how "[t]he newer visual advertising set out to ambush the readers attention... and lodge in the memory" (Ohmann 1996, p. 180). In fact, the only other image, that of Hotel Syracuse, is not as compelling as the text, which is repeated in large, varying fonts, as if indeed to secure the name in memory. As with many of the salient, travel-related words in the ads, in relation to the story, it seems to support the above-discussed emergence of new prospects that parallel Anson's forward movement.

The advertisements in this page do not echo nostalgia or the nostalgic dichotomies the way the previously discussed ones do; however, they echo some of the subjects, themes, and moods of the story text they accompany, thus creating the impression of a symmetrical relation between ad and story.

5. Conclusions

While Fitzgerald's "The Rich Boy" is rich in nostalgia in both form and content, to study it in its original, magazine version shows how the different media interacting on the page tend to mirror or enhance the nostalgia in the story, adding nuances to the nostalgic experience and ultimately creating an experience that differs from reading the story in a current, image-free anthology. Salmose's approach helped substantiate how and why each studied media can be seen as evocative of nostalgia, and in fact, his classification of nostalgic strategies were easily applicable to text, illustration and advertisement. It was important for this study to investigate how each media could be considered nostalgic, but it was also important to understand how these media interact. Thus, an intermedial analytical frame

was employed in relation to the nostalgic approach, in order to construe how these media affect each other and what kind of experience they may produce together.

In Figure 1, for example, we saw how Gruger's proleptically-placed illustration charges the nostalgia transmitted by the text, despite the fact that the image on its own is not nostalgic. In their contradictory interaction, the spatiotemporal worlds of text and image seem to intensify the already nostalgic mood of the text. In like manner, the analeptic Figure 2, which can be read as nostalgic on its own, creates nostalgia in a section of the text that is not nostalgic, perhaps even altering *when* nostalgia is experienced while reading, as the reader would likely experience this illustration in its relation to the events of the text surrounding it and to the previous illustration. From a broader perspective, the spatiotemporal contrast between image and text in these two examples may also be seen as mirroring the nostalgic gap between times and spaces, as well as the two, contrasting stages of the nostalgic experience.

I also argued that in a more unexpected way, the advertisements also seemed to relate and contribute to the nostalgic mood of the story. In fact, the ads in the three pages featured in this article seem almost uncannily situated "in time" with the text. Figures 3 and 4, which may be seen as nostalgic on their own, happen to be placed in particularly nostalgic points of the story. Moreover, the selected advertisements are all travel-related: Figures 3 and 4 run parallel to Anson's search for once-familiar places and his discovery that all his friends are gone, and the overwhelming cluster of travel ads in Figure 5 seem synchronized with Anson's own journey.

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Article

'As If There Was No Fear': Exploring Nostalgic Narrative in Bo Carpelan's Novel *Berg*

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Abstract: This article addresses nostalgic experience and aims at a definition of nostalgic narrative through textual analysis. The target text is Bo Carpelan's *Berg* (2005). The novel is analysed with narratological methods focusing on the narrative modes and the techniques of narrative mediation that invite a nostalgic experience in the reader. This side of the phenomenon—the textual aesthetics of nostalgia—has been explored by few scholars, whereas the contextual and cultural aspects of nostalgia have received a lot of attention. This article suggests further ways of analysing how a text evokes nostalgic experience, and thus considers the nostalgic experience of the reader as the definitive core of nostalgic narrative. The nostalgic experience in *Berg* is intense, reflective, and ambivalent. These qualities are produced on the level of both the narrative discourse and the story: by changes between the narrative modes and by the nostalgic and non-nostalgic content that builds and breaks the idealised narrative. The article suggests that more attention should be paid to the complexity of nostalgic narratives. Furthermore, it highlights that by creating reflectivity and contradictions, the non-nostalgic content also affects the nostalgic narrative.

Keywords: nostalgia; contemporary nostalgia; nostalgic experience; nostalgic narrative; narrative modes; narrative mediation; reflective nostalgia; idealisation; first-person narrative; Finland-Swedish literature

1. Introduction

In this article, I will demonstrate my own use and understanding of the concept of nostalgic experience, and suggest further ways of examining this concept. I will analyse *Berg* (Carpelan 2005), a novel by the Finland-Swedish author Bo Carpelan (1926–2011), which offers examples of the complexities of nostalgia. My analysis focuses on the narrative techniques that invite a nostalgic experience in the reader and the interaction between the nostalgic and non-nostalgic. Building on this, I suggest a definition of nostalgic narrative in the context of my target text. This leads to the following research questions: How does the narration of the novel *Berg* evoke nostalgic experience? What are the key textual features of nostalgic narrative?

In *Berg*, Mattias, the first-person narrator, is trying to recall his past and reflect on questions of ageing. Mattias has travelled to *Berg*, the house where he used to spend his childhood summers, because of a letter he has received. The letter is from Sonja, his childhood crush; she is dying and begs him to come to talk to her before it is too late (Carpelan 2005, p. 11). The novel is mostly structured around a childhood trauma caused by the Second World War and by a shooting episode in the family. Thus, the relationship with nostalgia is complicated in the novel. However, *Berg* also utilises many tropes that are typically considered nostalgic, such as the trope of the idealised childhood summer

(Salmose 2012, p. 274).[1] The key themes of the novel are memory, remembrance, and the identity processes of the first-person narrator. They create the grounds for the nostalgic experience, although memory as such is not necessarily nostalgic. Nostalgia, in turn, always deals with memory in one way or another (ibid., p. 121). The analeptic structure of the narration distinguishes late adulthood and childhood, building an essential dichotomy for nostalgia (ibid., pp. 287–88). This evident but also problematic relation to nostalgia is the target of my analysis.

Bo Carpelan made his literary début with a poetry collection in 1946. He is best known for his poetry, but his novels have also received many literature prizes.[2] During his long career, Carpelan developed a recognisable style with imagery and themes that recurred in both his poetry and his prose. Most of his late novels have an elderly male first-person narrator who is looking back on his childhood and youth, trying to understand the effect the past has had on his present self as an ageing man.[3] The narration contains changes between different modes; the language is lyrical with many metaphors and wordplays that question different oppositions and categories.[4] In many ways, *Berg* can be seen as representative and typical of this style. In the next section, I will define my approach to the three key concepts at hand: nostalgia, nostalgic experience, and nostalgic narrative. After this, I will analyse my target text.

2. Nostalgia, Nostalgic Experience, and Nostalgic Narrative

To analyse a nostalgic narrative, it is important to map the essential qualities of the phenomenon of nostalgia, which in everyday speech—and also in critical writing—is often defined broadly and loosely. Svetlana Boym (2001, pp. XIII–XIV) defines nostalgia from a cultural perspective as a 'longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed' and as a 'sentiment of loss and displacement'. Longing for something lost is clearly the feature tying the different theories of nostalgia together.[5] Boym's understanding of nostalgia reveals the tension between the yearning to reach back in time and the impossibility of reliving lost moments. From the stylistic point of view, Niklas Salmose (2012, p. 156) defines the crucial features of nostalgia as 'the dichotomy of now and then' and a connection to universal grief.[6] This tension or two-sided nature is what makes nostalgia an interesting phenomenon, albeit one that is generally hard to grasp.

The nostalgia in Carpelan's works has been addressed before in Anna Hollsten's (2004) dissertation, in which she focuses on Carpelan's poetry and the novel *Urwind*. Hollsten (ibid., pp. 271, 274) understands nostalgia as remembering the golden times of the past, as an emotional memory. She writes that the target of nostalgic longing is hard to identify in Carpelan's (lyrical) work because he often describes childhood with rather dark imagery. Although Hollsten has identified some of

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1 Merete Mazzarella (1993, p. 38) states in her essays on the Finland-Swedish memoir and life-writing tradition that the idealisation of the childhood summer is a typical feature in the Finland-Swedish nostalgia. Carpelan seems to utilise this tradition but, as I will show in my analysis, he also rewrites it.

2 For example, Finlandia prizes for *Urwind* (Carpelan 1993) and *Berg* (Carpelan 2005).

3 E.g., *Urwind* (Carpelan 1993), *Benjamins bok* (Carpelan 1997), *Berg* (Carpelan 2005), and *Blad ur höstens arkiv* (Carpelan 2011). The novel *Barndom* (Carpelan 2008) also shares many stylistic qualities with the other late novels, but has a third-person narrator who tells about a boy, Davi, who grows up in Helsinki during the Second World War. *Axel* (Carpelan 1986), on the other hand, can be seen as a precursor, where many of the elements of the author's late prose are developing. Unlike the other novels, it also uses documentary material.

4 See, e.g., Jolma (2018).

5 This can also be seen in two Finnish anthologies on nostalgia: one edited by Riikka Rossi and Katja Seutu (*Nostalgia. Kirjoituksia kaipuusta, ikävästä ja muistista* (Rossi and Seutu 2007)), and the other by Pentti Grönholm and Heli Paalumäki (Kaipaava moderni. Nostalgian ja utopian kohtaamisia Euroopassa 1600-luvulta 2000-luvulle (Grönholm and Paalumäki 2015)): both have the word 'longing' (*kaipuusta/kaipaava*) in their titles.

6 Salmose (2012, p. 382) defines universal grief as the 'nihilistic feeling that the laws of life are grieving and bleak; that our time on earth is very short, and an awareness of the teleological and entropic aspects of life'.

the characteristics of Carpelan's nostalgia, my theoretical perspective of nostalgia differs from her contextual and thematic view.[7]

In my approach, I want to outline nostalgia as a complex experience that includes a wide range of feelings, such as happiness, sadness, and bitterness or even melancholy. Salmose (2012, pp. 93–95) points out that it is more accurate to define nostalgia as an experience rather than a singular emotion or feeling. This perspective indicates that the complexity of nostalgia also stems from different social and cultural meanings.

In this article, I will analyse the nostalgic experience evoked in the reader by the features and strategies of narrative discourse.[8] In this way, the focus is placed on the private and subjective nostalgic experience and its textual representation, in contrast to the public and cultural context of nostalgia (Salmose 2018a, p. 128). This emphasis is also demonstrated by the distinction between art about nostalgia and nostalgic art, which was recently suggested by Salmose (2018a). Art about nostalgia concerns forms of art that represent nostalgic content, such as characters that are feeling nostalgic. The nostalgic nature of this first category is explicit and easy to recognise. Nostalgic art, in turn, is defined by the nostalgic experience that can be evoked through art, e.g., when reading a novel. This means that in this less-explored category, the focus is on the aesthetics of the text and the distinct experience that it potentially produces. When approaching nostalgic art, it is important to note two things: firstly, the narration does not have to be explicitly nostalgic in its content to trigger a nostalgic experience in the reader, and secondly, an explicitly nostalgic work of fiction can even be 'less prone to evoke true nostalgic experience than nostalgic aesthetics' (ibid., pp. 129–30). Although critical writing on the narrative techniques of nostalgia are sparse, Salmose (2012) presents some results that work as tools for my analysis. Different modes of narration can work nostalgically depending on their role and aim in the context of the narrative whole, but some are more likely to intensify nostalgia (ibid., pp. 203–4).

When building my interpretation of the quality of the nostalgic experience in *Berg*, I will reflect on Boym's work on nostalgia. Boym (2007, pp. 13–16; see also 2001) divides nostalgia into restorative and reflective longing. Restorative nostalgia attempts to reconstruct the lost home—be it actual or mental. It does not regard itself as nostalgia, and justifies itself as 'truth and tradition'. Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, reflects on longing itself and recognises 'the ambivalence of human longing and belonging'. Boym's theory gives an insight into the functions and aims of nostalgia. I find that there is a point of connection between these different approaches, namely the stylistic and the cultural perspective. As one looks closely at narrations, it is also worthwhile considering where the use of certain techniques may lead.

Focusing on either the nostalgic content or the textual form also implies a certain stance with respect to the basic concepts of narratology, such as the dichotomy of story and discourse. As Porter H. Abbott (2008, pp. 17–20) summarises it, story and narrative discourse are the parts that construct a narrative. A story is something that one does not have immediate access to because it is always mediated by the narrative discourse. Monika Fludernik (2010, p. 106) points out that in many of the (classical) narratological models, the story is understood as something that exists first and is then turned into discourse by different narrative techniques. This view can also be connected to the restrictive focus on art about nostalgia, which presupposes the content that makes the story nostalgic. Abbott (2008, p. 20) also notes that the pre-existence of a story is only an illusion: the story is what the reader constructs from the narrative discourse that she picks up when reading. In the case of the category of nostalgic art, it is the narrative discourse that offers the ingredients of the story to the

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[7] E.g., Hollsten (2004, p. 274) writes that in Carpelan's poetry, nostalgia is most evident in connection to the theme of homecoming. My analysis shows that this is problematised in Carpelan's late prose. In *Berg*, homecoming is a central motif, but the childhood home is a traumatic space rather than the idealised home.

[8] When analysing the reader's experience, I am not referring to actual readers, but to a construction that can be interpreted from the text itself—the reader that understands the text. On the one hand, this is a structuralist way of approaching the concept of the reader. On the other hand, the reader is understood in both classical and cognitivist narratology, as Maria Mäkelä (2012, p. 140) claims in her article, as a construct and a hypothesis 'of the actual reading process'.

reader as the focus of the textual features. What this story is like depends on the construction of the reader's nostalgic experience.

With the concept of nostalgic narrative, I aim at a comprehensive analysis of the complexities of nostalgia in *Berg*. I understand nostalgic narrative as a broader structure that includes the nostalgic experience and consists of the interplay of the narrative discourse and the story.[9] In a narrative whole, in this case the novel *Berg*, the nostalgic narrative can work in dialogue with other narratives, such as the traumatic. Although my starting point is the analysis of narrative discourse, it is important to emphasise that the nostalgic form and content are in many ways absolutely intertwined. Even if a character's nostalgia does not necessarily cause nostalgia in the reader, the connection between the character's and reader's experience should not be ignored either. My hypothesis is that in highly self-reflexive texts such as *Berg*, the mediation of the characters' experience should be considered a central part of the aesthetics of nostalgia that form the nostalgic narrative.[10] In the next section, I will therefore analyse how (nostalgic) experience is mediated by different narrative modes in *Berg*, and thus invited in the reader.

3. The Retrospective Frame and Leaps into the Past

In *Berg*, Mattias, the first-person narrator, travels back to his childhood both in his mind and by visiting the house called Berg, where he used to spend his summers as a child.[11] The very beginning of the novel creates a retrospective frame of remembrance with the use of the past tense and a sense of past progressiveness: 'For many years, we used to hike every summer from Berg to the cemetery in the village to visit the dead Bergmarks' (Carpelan 2005, p. 9).[12] The narrator looks back to the summer activities of his family and creates a distance between the moment of narration and the past events. The arrow of time is also emphasised by mentioning a specific year, 'the war summer of 1944' (Carpelan 2005, p. 9),[13] when Mattias was eight years old, and later by the narrator's exclamation: 'Fifty-five years ago!' (Carpelan 2005, p. 11).[14] The opening sentence of the novel is followed with details of a 'high sky' and a walk on 'the winding road under friendly clouds' (Carpelan 2005, p. 9),[15] which gives the impression of a happy memory. These details can also be interpreted as working towards the idealisation of a childhood memory. Considering these details, the beginning of the novel can be seen as representing the nostalgic experience of the first-person narrator in a very traditional and romantic way. It uses the nostalgic trope of the childhood summer as well as the retrospective mode and an anachronic structure that typically also invite a nostalgic experience in the reader (Salmose 2012, pp. 274, 288).

The first sentence of the novel presents death as something natural and ambivalent, as hiking to the graveyard is part of an iterative routine. The narrator's description of the excursion to the ancestors' graves, as if it were an ordinary visit to some relative's home, creates an odd and carnivalesque atmosphere.[16] The reference to the war immediately after this also contributes to the theme of death, which is constructed through many different motifs in the novel. According to Salmose (2018b, p. 2)

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[9] Salmose (2012) writes about nostalgic narratives referring to complete novels and the typical features of nostalgic narration. In his glossary (ibid., p. 379), he defines narrative as 'how the plot is narrated'. Although my understanding of narrative differs from this, I still find the features he proposes applicable for my analysis.

[10] From this aspect, my understanding of narrative resonates with Fludernik's (2003, p. 246) definition of experientiality as the core and subject of narrative, which is then mediated through different cognitive frames.

[11] In English "berg" is a mountain or a large rock.

[12] 'Länge hade vi för vana att varje sommar vandra från Berg till kyrkogården i byn för att hälsa på de döda Bergmarkarna'. All the excerpts are translated from the original Swedish text by Nanny Jolma.

[13] 'Krigsommaren 1944'.

[14] 'Femtiofem år sedan!'.

[15] 'hög himmel', 'den slingrande vägen under vänliga moln'.

[16] Later in the novel, the narrator describes a group of dead relatives sitting around a table, smiling and nodding to him (Carpelan 2005, p. 60). The presence of the previous generations is also emphasised by references to family portraits (Carpelan 2005, pp. 42, 167).

the universal grief and the fear of or resistance to death relate to the ways in which nostalgia functions; he therefore describes modern literary nostalgia as death mood. The theme of death can be seen to intertwine with the nostalgic narrative of *Berg*, but not just in terms of universal grief, melancholy, and the modern resistance to death. Already in the second paragraph of the novel, the theme evolves further, representing a traumatic memory, fear, and horror:

> En lätt vind blåste genom mig och förde bort minnen av de tre stora bombardemangen i stan den våren. Där i källaren, hade dammet virvlat upp. De smala bjälkarna i taket rörde sig som rädslans maktlösa armar. Människor satt tysta och lyssnade. Det luktade murbruk, jord, rutten potatis. Något av det mörkret föreföll att följa mig, i nacken, på ryggen, genom doftande ängar och sädesfält med vågor från junivinden. (Carpelan 2005, pp. 9–10)

> A slight wind blew through me and carried away the memories of the three great bombings in the city that spring. There, in the cellar, the dust had whirled around. The narrow beams moved themselves like powerless arms of fear. The people sat silently and listened. It smelled of mortar, soil, rotten potatoes. Something from that darkness seemed to follow me, by the neck, on my back, through the sweet meadows and fields with waves from the July wind.[17]

The narrator's project of idealising the memory of the summer hike does not seem very successful. Although in his memory he is walking with his family through a beautiful summer landscape, the experiences of the horrors of war still inhabit his flow of thought. The narrator describes paradoxically that the wind blows away the traumatic memories, but in the next sentence he is still immersed in them. The traumatic memory is very descriptive and vivid, and the grotesque imagery here contrasts with the nostalgic tropes of the childhood summer. The excerpt can be interpreted as utilising the grave motif already familiar from the very start of the novel. The cellar is represented as a grave-like space, underground and dark, capturing the people with the fear that death will come as the bombs strike. In this way, it presents another aspect of the theme of death contrasted with the familiarity and ambivalence mentioned before. The last sentence summarises the quality of Mattias' experience of the past: there is a traumatic undertone to the nostalgic experience that reminds one of the complexity of life.

Although the retrospective frame of remembrance is partly used to represent the traumatic content, it also opens up possibilities for the reader to experience nostalgia. It indicates a look backwards, and is a convention typically used for representing nostalgia (Salmose 2012, p. 183). In addition, the narration varies between the retrospective mode and sections where childhood experience is mediated with the present tense:

> När hon log mot mig lystes jag upp. Kom hon inte cyklande från Rantala där vi långsamt promenerade fram? Stannade hon inte bredvid mig i sin lottauniform, med den vita kragen lysande mot den brunbrända halsen. Håret flyger för vinden, allt är i rörelse inom mig, fåglar, humlor, moln! Kriget är bara ett skrän från kråkor. (Carpelan 2005, p. 12)

> When she smiled at me, I started to beam. Did she not come biking from Rantala as we slowly walked ahead? Did she not stop right next to me with her Lotta uniform, with the white collar shining next to the suntanned neck. The hair flies in the wind, everything is in movement inside me, birds, bumblebees, clouds! The war is only a cry from the crows.

This excerpt starts with the retrospective mode, picturing Mattias' reaction when his childhood crush, an older girl called Sonja, shows him some attention. This is followed by two questions that thematise

[17] The historical context of the events in the novel is the Finnish war with the Soviet Union in 1944. Civilians tried to lead normal lives despite the distant noises and news from the battlefield. The narrator mentions the Great Bombings of Helsinki in the spring, and the moment of the past is mainly located in the following summer when Finland was still at war. The narrator frequently refers to the war, either explicitly or implicitly.

the vagueness of memory and emphasise memory as interpretation and action in the present (see, e.g., Brockmeier 2015, p. 99). These kinds of questions can also be interpreted as reminders of the presence of the narrating self and typical features of dissonant self-narration, where the narrator draws attention to the distance between the narrating and the experiencing self (Cohn 1978, pp. 143, 151). This notion of time, and comments by the narrating self, add a reflective quality to the nostalgic experience.

In the latter interrogative sentence, one can already see the slide into a different narrative mode: after the reference to the Lotta uniform, the tempo slows, as the narrator lingers over the different details of Sonja's appearance.[18] This is also emphasised grammatically, since there is no question mark at the end of the sentence. This gives the impression that the narration has already changed from the reflective question mode towards something else.

In the next part, the change from the past tense to the present tense creates a vivid and idealised moment that intensively invites a nostalgic experience. The present tense can also be interpreted as slowing down the tempo of the narration and creating a sense of timelessness (Salmose 2012, p. 184). Furthermore, the voice of the narrating self diminishes, creating a mode of consonant self-narration in contrast to the previous dissonant mode (Cohn 1978, p. 143). It creates an illusion of immediate access to the childhood experience.

The last sentence marks yet another slight shift in the narration. The fear of war is made into something small and negligible. The sentence, however, can be interpreted as serving several functions. Firstly, it can be seen as a statement of happiness that is so strong the war is only a murmur in the background, something one does not have to care about. Secondly, it tragically reminds the reader that the war is nevertheless something present in every single moment. Thirdly, one could also read this as a technique of representing the complexity of past experience: the fear creates its own imaginary landscape that the narrator is trying to disregard. In this mental landscape, the crows caw ominously, as in a horror film, increasing the unpleasant feelings also in the reader. In fact, the repetitive attempt to overlook the fear of war emphasises and underlines it, making the reader problematise the nostalgic signals in the narration.

The juxtaposition of the present and the past is thematised in the narrator's comments and questions: the narrator does not have direct access to the past and must narrate the past moment using vague fragments and interpretation. The vagueness of memory contrasts with the illusion of immediate experience. This radical change in the narration, I would argue, emphasises the action of the temporal leap that is the desire and goal of the nostalgee.[19] As can be seen here, the essential features of the nostalgic tension and temporal problematics are established in the different levels of the novel.

A similar leap in time and narrative mode is present in the following excerpt:

> Som om jag ännu hörde hennes röst, hörde pappas harkling och Jonas vilda rop, och såg allt det minsta som rörde sig: myrornas väg, ödlan som snabbt försvinner i gräset, molnskuggorna som lugnt rör sig över fälten och över mig. Var finns den tid som skiljer oss? (Carpelan 2005, p. 11)

> As if I still heard her voice, heard Papa's hawking and Jonas's wild cry, and saw all the smallest things that moved: the trail of ants, the lizard that quickly disappears in the grass, the shadows of the clouds that move themselves, relaxed, over the field and over me. Where is the time that separates us?

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[18] Lotta Svärd was a Finnish voluntary paramilitary organisation for women, originally founded in 1918. During the Second World War, the volunteers, called Lottas, cooperated closely with the army, and helped with different tasks. In *Berg*, Sonja and Elna, another character, work at a hospital caring for wounded soldiers.

[19] Nostalgee, as introduced by Salmose (2012, pp. 94–95), is the term for the person or character who is 'the nostalgic subject', the person experiencing nostalgia.

This passage—as with the previous one—can be interpreted as an attempt to catch lost time. According to Boym (2007, pp. 7–8), nostalgia is, besides a longing for a lost home or a general sense of belonging, also a yearning for a different time, 'the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams'. In the example, the nostalgee is the narrator Mattias, who is longing for a precious moment from his childhood and trying to recall it. For him, this memory is full of details observed with different senses, and he feels 'as if' he could still hear his mother's voice calling to him.

This resembles the phases of a typical nostalgic reaction as defined by Salmose (2012, p. 95): motivation, nostalgia, and reflection. The memorative sign that motivates the nostalgic experience is the landscape of the nostalgee's childhood summers, to which he has just returned after many years. The actual phase of nostalgia is the joyful recalling of the details of the voices and nature around him as a child. The last sentence, then, would be the reflective phase of the nostalgic experience, which includes sadness and the consciousness of the irreversibility of time, and is again anchored to the 'now' moment of the narration.

The narrator's question is used to break the illusion of reliving the past just created in the narration before it. Reminders of the presence of the narrating self and the later moment of narration also interrupt the experiencing of the past, where the narrative mode could be called consonant self-narration, as in the previous excerpt (Cohn 1978, p. 143). In *Berg*, this kind of re-experiencing of the past is often represented in the present tense. Immersive changes from a retrospective representation of the past ('all the smallest things that moved') to the present tense ('disappears' and 'move') can be interpreted as demonstrating the narrating-self sliding down the axis of time closer to the experiencing-self (Cohn 1978, p. 145). In this passage, the memory of the voice from the past is vivid, and it leads the narration to slide to a fleeting moment of re-experiencing the past childhood in the present tense.

Coming back to Boym's theory, the excerpt can be interpreted as an example of reflective nostalgia. However, this does not mean that it is not immersive. On the one hand, it utilises natural tropes that idealise the moment of Mattias observing the ants, lizards, and clouds. On the other hand, the narrator Mattias—who is mediating the experience—shows his awareness of the idealisation and the illusive nature of reaching the past. This structure is already built with the 'as if' at the beginning, which is finally emphasised with the reflective question at the end. The question highlights the intensity of the immersion in the past: the narrator is conscious of the temporal distance but expresses his experience of the illusion of the past and the present merging into each other. Boym (2007, p. 7) refers to this nostalgic illusion as the 'double exposure [. . .] of past and present'.

The irreversibility of time is also emphasised at the very end of the first chapter of the novel: 'Mama calls my name, she has worry in her eyes. Now she does not turn back anymore. I sit down on the car seat. The road, the white sandy road, is gone. The asphalt is glimmering. It aches in the eye.' (Carpelan 2005, p. 13)[20] The shift to the reflective phase is marked by the adverb 'now', which is the signal for the retrospective frame and the moment of narration. At the same time, it thematises the consciousness of time that is essential to nostalgia, especially in the context of modernism (Salmose 2012, p. 101). Carpelan clearly reinforces subjective time in *Berg*.[21] This is also a defining feature of his other prose works and non-fictional essays, in which he defines his poetics of openness.[22]

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[20] ´Mamma ropar på mig, hon har så oroliga ögon.Nu vänder hon sig inte mera om. Jag sätter mig i bilen. Vägen, den vita sandvägen, är borta. Asfalten glänser. Den skär i ögat.´

[21] In my forthcoming article, 'Between now and then: The experience of time in Bo Carpelan's novels *Urwind* and *Berg*' (under peer review), I analyse the structure and the experience of time in more detail.

[22] In my articles, 'Det groteska och öppenhetens poetik i Bo Carpelans roman *Benjamins bok*' (2018) and 'Muistojen arkisto ja muistelun kertomus. Muuntuva arkistometafora Bo Carpelanin romaanissa *Blad ur höstens* arkiv' (to be published in 2018 in the anthology How to Communicate Meaning? Linguistic, Literary, and Translational Perspectives in the series Tampere Studies in Language, Translation and Literature by the Plural Research Centre at the University of Tampere), I analyse and reflect on the connection between Carpelan's poetics of openness and his novels. The poetics of openness has been researched before by Hollsten (2004) and Hellgren (2014).

As Salmose (2012, p. 157) points out, the moment of narration in nostalgic narratives is often a time of decay and the physical absence of childhood dreams. Something similar can be found in the narration of *Berg*, such as in the image of the sandy road. The narrator also refers to the present with images of irreversible change and decay.[23] However, it is crucial to note that the relationship between the past and the present is more complicated in this novel. As I have shown in my analysis, the past is also a time and landscape of war, death, fear, and anxiety—it does not only picture the dreams of childhood. In addition, the present appears rather ambivalent. On the one hand, it is the threatening time of modernity and ageing. On the other hand, it is also a time of relief, wisdom, and some sort of catharsis that takes place in the city, not in the idyllic countryside that represents pre-modern values. In the final chapter of *Berg* (201–204), Mattias returns to the city, and Berg, which he has left behind, is torn down at the same time.

In the next section, I will focus on how the nostalgic narrative is produced with the idealising tropes and the cracks that question and interrupt the idealisation.

4. Cracks in the Idealised Nostalgic Narrative

'Lugnet', the name of a chapter in the fourth and final part of *Berg*, means 'the Calm' or 'the Quiet'. It is also the name of the rowing boat in which Mattias, his father, and a farm worker go on a fishing trip one early summer morning. 'Lugnet' is an analepsis to the narrator's childhood, written only in the present tense. In the context of the whole novel, it has a retrospective frame around it, but the moment of narration and the process of remembering are not mentioned explicitly. I will analyse how the choice of words and imagery work together with the narrative level of the text to create—or try to create—an idealised nostalgic narrative.

> Vassen står hög, grön med guldgul kjol mot vattnet. Det hörs ett svagt dån i luften. Med plötsliga kväkanden störtar ett andpar ut över fjärden och försvinner in i ljuset. Lugnet, vår eka, ligger uppdragen utanför båthuset. Arvi stöter ut, pappa vadar till aktertoften och kliver snabbt i, Arvi sätter sig vid årorna, jag ger Lugnet en liten knuff och klättrar ombord, sitter i fören och ser vattenvirvlar, moln, allt stilla som om ingen rädsla fanns. (Carpelan 2005, p. 187)

> The reeds stand tall, green with the golden yellow skirts towards the water. There is a quiet rumble in the air. With a sudden croaking, a pair of wild ducks land on the open water and disappear into the light. *Lugnet*, our rowboat, is lying on the bank next to the boathouse. Arvi pushes it into the water, papa wades to the back of the boat and steps in, Arvi sits down at the oars, I give *Lugnet* a small push and climb on board, I sit in the front and look at the eddies on the water, the clouds, everything quiet as if there was no fear.

A boat gliding into the lake through the reeds is an image that typically evokes a nostalgic experience in the reader. Descriptive expressions like 'the golden yellow skirt' and the reference to the different parts of the boat make the image even more vivid. Another crucial ingredient in the nostalgic imagery is the triggering of different senses in addition to the visual. This is something that Salmose (2012, p. 248) notes intensifies the temporal leap of the nostalgic experience. In this excerpt, many of the details are visual, but the quiet rumble and the sudden noises of the birds engage the sense of hearing. The text continues after this with descriptions of warmth and the smell of clay.

The great detail and the descriptive choice of words also slows the tempo of the narration. This mode of narrative duration points to Genette's concept of the descriptive pause, which, according to Salmose (2012, pp. 203–4), is the most common mode for creating the nostalgic experience (compared to scene and ellipsis). It is typically used to idealise a moment and to encourage the reader to identify

[23] E.g., 'The time cuts its furrows in the skin' (Carpelan 2005, p. 12) and 'We have all changed. The whole Berg has changed. We decay slowly, and the house with us.' (Carpelan 2005, p. 124)

with the nostalgic experience produced in the text. This idealisation is even more evident in the following excerpt: 'everything has stopped for a blink of an eye as if there was no war, everything is like those summers when *Lugnet* is in the water and we are fishing: the clearest silence, deepest peace' (Carpelan 2005, p. 188).[24]

There are parts in 'Lugnet' that seem to aim not only to idealise a certain moment from the narrator's past, but also to describe childhood as an idea—the phenomenology of the childhood summer. The descriptive pause in the narration is also explicitly emphasised in the choice of words that describe the pause in the flow of time. A moment when 'everything has stopped' creates a feeling of being somewhere outside of time as a dimension always moving forward. As Boym (2001, p. XIII) puts it, nostalgia is the longing for a particular, different time, which is often the mythical or idealised time of childhood. This points to a mythical and culturally shared space, a highly idealised image of childhood that is also constructed momentarily in the text. The generalisation and exaggeration of the memory blurs the frequency of the event: the narrator states that 'everything is like those summers', but he is then describing a specific moment or his ideal of a fishing trip on a summer morning? The non-specific and vague nature of this nostalgic memory differentiates it from pure memory, which has a specific target (Salmose 2012, p. 205).

Although as a chapter 'Lugnet' is mostly highly descriptive, it does also play with the duration of the narration. In the next excerpt, the tempo increases and the focus shifts from the description of nature to the action:

> Nu nappar det! Nu guppar flötet till, försvinner, stiger, går åter under vattenutan, jag drar försiktigt, reven spritter för abborrens knyckar. Den landar i gräset, den kröker rygg, jag slår den mot en sten, den darrar och är stilla. Min egen fångst! (Carpelan 2005, p. 188)

> Now it bites! Now the float bobs, disappears, rises, sinks under the surface again, I pull carefully, the writhing of the perch startles the fishing line. It lands on the grass, arches its back, I fling it towards a stone, it shakes and stops moving. My own catch!

The faster tempo reflects the excitement of the child as one action follows another, as if the narrator was out of breath trying to keep up with the story. This breaks the dreamy feeling of the descriptive narration, but it can still be interpreted as working towards the idealisation. It pulls the reader closer by creating the illusion of narrating and witnessing the events simultaneously.

The analysis shows that the ingredients of an idealised picture are evident. The interesting thing is, however, that their true existence is questioned. It is only 'as if' the fishing trip was a perfect place of nostalgia that one could long for. The conditional structure is repeated in the novel, as one can note from the cited excerpts. In the two previous excerpts ('as if there was no fear' and 'as if there was no war'), this can be interpreted as thematising the fragility and artificiality of the idealised past. The fear of the war is always present. It also works as a slight reminder of the narrating-self adding an upper level of consciousness to the analeptic chapter. In the excerpt analysed in the previous section ('As if I still heard her voice'), it more explicitly reminds one of the retrospective position of the narrator, but also indicates that re-experiencing the moment is only an immersion in interpretations and constructions of time past. Overall, the 'as if' ruptures the idealised nostalgic narrative and transforms it into a more reflective discourse.

There are also other kinds of cracks in the idealised narrative: in the context of the whole novel, the 'quiet rumble' in the description of the fishing trip works as a reminder of the ongoing war and the distant noises of the battlefield. It distracts one from the idealisation and creates an underlining experience of uncertainty, uneasiness, and repressed fear. This rumble is repeated again at the end of the chapter 'Lugnet':

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[24] 'allt har för ett ögonblick stannat upp som om inget krig fans, allt är så som somrar är när Lugnet är ute och vi fiskar: klaraste tystnad, djupaste ro'.

> Där är ett avlägset dån. Det är bara jag, ensam, som ser det, känner det. Det känns nästan som en sorg, att dagen redan har kommit så långt. Berg skymtar mellan träden. Om allt jag ser skulle försvinna, skulle jag då alls finnas kvar? Om jag går med slutna ögon? Om jag dör? (Carpelan 2005, p. 189)

> There is a distant rumble. It is only me, alone, who sees it, feels it. It feels almost like a sorrow that the day has passed already. Berg peeks out between the trees. If everything I see disappeared, would I exist anymore? What if I walk with my eyes closed? If I die?

This time, the 'distant rumble' does not merely create uncertainty about the ideal nature of the source of the nostalgia, the childhood summer. Here, it also starts the reflective ending of the chapter. The character knows that what he has just experienced will be a nostalgic memory in the future, and he already enters a mode similar to the reflective phase of nostalgic reaction.[25] Mattias as a child is aware that the fishing trip is ending, as he can see the house behind the trees. He ponders on existential questions of living and dying as well as the realness of his observations and sensations. His reflections relate to the questions made by the narrator that I have mentioned above. The ending creates an impression of accessing the mind of Mattias as a child, but also the illusion of the character stepping into the narrator's position for a moment.

The cracks and reminders do break the ideal of childhood summer. At the same time, they also break the illusion of direct access to past experience and the exactness of memory. However, my interpretation is that the cracks and reminders do not disturb the leap in time and the immersive quality. On the contrary, they potentially intensify the immersion in the past by arousing the reader's suspicions about the perfect ideal and creating an interest in finding out what is behind it. The cracks thematise the threat that makes the boat ride special. They also question the meaning of the title 'Lugnet'. Rather than being a reference to an ideal calmness that could function as a source of restorative nostalgia, 'Lugnet' resembles the calm before the storm—or the calm despite the distant storm.

The contradictory nature of the nostalgic experience that the chapter 'Lugnet' and also *Berg* as a whole invite in the reader also resonates with Boym's (2007, pp. 13–16) distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia. The nostalgic tropes of childhood, summer, and nature in 'Lugnet' prove reminiscent of restorative nostalgia; they build up the story of a childhood that one is supposed to have had. The repetitive cracks, in turn, can be interpreted as signals of reflective nostalgia. The tradition of restorative nostalgia in the form of the strong idealisation of childhood and the home can be seen as a grand narrative in the canon of Finland-Swedish literature (Mazzarella 1993, p. 38). In *Berg*, the thematisation of the fragility—or even artificiality—of the ideal of childhood can be interpreted as a comment on restorative attitudes towards the past, on their impossibility and disadvantage. The reflective nostalgia is conscious of the non-nostalgic qualities of life. It acknowledges the darker side of the past, the war that was always present, even though the adults did not speak of it. The war and the fear could not be fully forgotten, even when one went on a fishing trip on an apparently perfect summer morning.

The chapter clearly contains several elements that work towards idealising the moments of the childhood summer. The chapter also summarises the problematisation of nostalgia, which is characteristic of the novel as a whole. Salmose (2012, p. 176) compares nostalgia to a dream and a bubble that breaks when something sharp comes too close. With the metaphor of sharp objects, he refers to irony, sarcasm, graphic eroticism, and a high degree of self-reflexivity or experimentality. Nevertheless, a text that contains these disruptive qualities can include 'shorter, episodic moments of nostalgia'. In my analysis, I have pointed out several elements that break the bubble of the dream of restorative nostalgia and the idealised nostalgic narrative. In the context of the whole novel, there are also several parts where the traumatic narrative, with its grotesque imagery, is dominant. This evokes

[25] This is reminiscent of Salmose's (2012, p. 135) category of hypothetical nostalgia.

the question of whether *Berg* is actually a work of art that only includes glimpses and short episodes that evoke nostalgia.

My claim, however, is that *Berg* constructs and utilises a nostalgic narrative. Even though negative feelings and trauma are emphasised in the novel as a whole, the nostalgia still goes much deeper than the episodes separated from the dominant atmosphere of the novel. In fact, the nostalgic narrative can be interpreted as creating the retrospective frame and the reflectivity that tie all the chapters together.

5. Conclusions

In this article, the nostalgic experience of the reader is understood as the definitive core of nostalgic narrative. My focus was on the analysis of the narrative discourse, the aesthetics of nostalgia, as Salmose's (2018a) category of nostalgic art suggests. However, my analysis shows that the nostalgic content—the focus on the category of art about nostalgia—cannot be ignored, especially when it comes texts like Bo Carpelan's *Berg*. The qualities of the character's experience and his/her narrative mediation are the central means of triggering the reader's nostalgic experience in the self-reflexive first-person narration of *Berg*.

The nostalgic experience in the novel is intense, reflective, and ambivalent. These qualities are produced on the level of both the narrative discourse and the story of the nostalgic narrative. On the one hand, the use of the self-reflexive first-person narrator and the play with the different narrative modes problematise the categorial distance between the past experience and the present narration. On the other hand, the idealised narrative is both built and shattered. This is reinforced by the rich use of nostalgic tropes and the repetitively intruding cracks, such as the narrator's reflective comments and the reminders of the ongoing war.

The nostalgic narrative in *Berg* also intertwines with the traumatic narrative that builds on the fear of war and death. Both narratives mediate a strong sense of experientiality by using the different senses, tropes, and narrative techniques that I have pointed out in my analysis. In the case of *Berg*, I argue that the intensity of the nostalgic experience represented in the narrative discourse and invited in the reader is created by the changes in the narrative modes and quality of experience. This narrative structure creates a vividness that challenges the traditional idealised nostalgic narrative. As can be seen in my analysis, the non-nostalgic content can be used to produce reflective nostalgic narration by creating tension, contradictions, and ambivalence. Finally, I claim that more attention should be paid to the narrative techniques that produce the ambivalence and contradictory nature of nostalgia.

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Article

Into the Texan Sunset: Metanostalgia, Retro-, and Introspection in Lars Gustafsson's "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters"

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Abstract: If restorative nostalgia concentrates on national past and future and reflective nostalgia on individual memory (Boym 2001), Lars Gustafsson's "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" does neither. This article argues that Gustafsson's treatment of the past landscape is *metanostalgic*, in the sense that nostalgia is a theme and a means, rather than a sentiment, and that the way his tropic reinvention deals with nostalgia differs from other uses. Though the poem partakes in the pastoral tradition, it is less concerned with this mode and more concerned with the notion of 'effect', of which Gustafsson has written extensively. Gustafsson has also elaborated on the aspects of 'centre' and 'periphery', notions that are used to define and extend the poetic landscape and the speaker's position in, and relation to, it. His poetic landscape encompasses the extremes of continents near and far, but also landscapes temporally removed, which may hold a different status in terms of their impact on 'effect', a status that is then not hinging on the obvious hierarchies of traditional nostalgia.

Keywords: metanostalgia; nostalgia; Lars Gustafsson; poetry; tropic reinvention; landscape; childhood; imagery; expatriation

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"Where the Alphabet has Two Hundred Letters"

American freight trains
possess none of the European trains'
dramatic, nervous need to show they are on their way.
The American ones are on their way anyway.
So long that it sometimes seems to spend half the night
just passing my house,
the American freight train often remains standing on a morning
out in the grass: the crew plays reverse Casino
during loud laughter in their special boxcar
before the last of the brakeman's cabs.
They are not unlike the uncles of my childhood,
on the porch of the summer cottage, forgetting the world.
When the trains at dusk gravitationally
continue into the Texan sunset
it is with an epic patience
that does not give single damn if someone sees them or not,
no children are expected to lift their heads in their yards to
count carriages; they are uncountable, and thoughtfully
these trains, like long stories,
or maybe large philosophical systems, wander
through a continent that is itself a poem

> where the alphabet has two hundred letters. (My translation)[1]

During his 20-year expatriation living in Austin, Texas, Lars Gustafsson wrote prolifically in a range of genres, and on varied subjects and themes. Some of his poems deal explicitly with the juxtaposition, co-existence, and interdependence of landscapes near and far, geographically as well as temporally, and thus they more overtly address the expatriate experience than other texts. Such is the case with "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" (Gustafsson 1992a, pp. 26–27), the poem that is the focus here, which is explicitly set in the American landscape. There is perhaps little debate that the nostalgic is part of the complex fabric of past and present landscapes, selves, and identities that Gustafsson weaves, but arguably, neither the concept of "restorative nostalgia" nor that of "reflective nostalgia" (Boym 2001, p. 49) are quite applicable to what Gustafsson does in the poem. Svetlana Boym states that "[r]estorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance" (Boym 2001, p. 41). Gustafsson does neither in "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters," in which the images of the past instead are used to patch up the present, to fill the gaps of the current narrated space, place, and identity. Neither is there a focus on *algia*, as his childhood images do not function as moments desirable to retrieve in the sense of "rebuild[ing] the lost home" (Boym 2001, p. 41), but moments necessary in the poem for effect—a concept key to Gustafsson's poetics—because of their impact on the present. They change the present in that they extend the poetic landscape, and add another layer of significance to the present image. In tacking between past and present, Gustafsson is able to say something about the present by use of the past, not through idealisation of it. This is also the case in another of his explicitly expatriate poems, "Austin, Texas," in which Gustafsson weaves a complex tapestry of 'befores' and 'afters', which comment on the human predicament in relation to the futility of the dream of an idealised future, rather than the dream of an idealised past[2]. The elements of both longing and pain tied to the past are thus removed, yet the insistence on childhood memory, place, personae, and identity proves a clear interest in nostalgia. By opening up a dialogue between past and present images, which then continually shape each other, and thus shape the identity of the person inhabiting the poetic landscape, Gustafsson in such poems carries out a study in nostalgia, where the nostalgic is not the end but the means. It is a stylistic choice, a theme, a use of nostalgia better described as *metanostalgic* since it is essentially *about* nostalgia rather than itself nostalgic. In a previous article, focusing on "Austin, Texas," I have suggested that

> [w]hereas traditional nostalgia stands for a painful longing to return home, and, by extension, to a past time connected to the home, metanostalgic literary expression lacks the romanticizing element that is arguably necessary to sustain the nostalgic mode. Gustafsson's poem is not nostalgic, but it is *about*, among other themes, nostalgia. His metanostalgia thus requires command of, rather than subjection to, nostalgia, and lacks some of nostalgia's more naïve features, such as abandonment to emotion. It is a mode marked by the consciousness with which it treats the past. (Freij 2018, p. 71)

Crucially, I am not arguing that the metanostalgic lens is appropriate for Gustafsson's poetry in general; many of his poems are more directly engaged with the nostalgic tradition and tropes, and many others not at all, but rather that in some of his poems he takes this metanostalgic approach, one less straightforwardly analysed, with effects calculated in a different manner.

Boym argues that "[r]estorative nostalgics don't acknowledge the uncanny and terrifying aspects of what was once homey [whereas r]eflective nostalgics see everywhere the imperfect mirror images

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1 For the original poem, see Appendix A.

2 "I've searched for something like this since the first day at school. But it wasn't easy to know that something like it actually existed." (lines 4–7) (Gustafsson 2000a, pp. 19–21). Note that Gustafsson suggests an ongoing search ("I've searched" as opposed to "I had searched") rather than a finished one, hinting early in the poem that the dream is, in fact, impossible: the Austin he finds will fall into decay later in the poem, and his arcadia will turn to paradise lost as soon as it is found.

of home, and try to cohabit with doubles and ghosts" (Boym 2001, p. 251). For Gustafsson, the mirror images of home or childhood are not "imperfect"; they are an extension of the poetic landscape, a space upon which he shines a light to expand this landscape. His discussion of 'centre' and 'periphery' is most relevant here: suggesting that in the poem's landscape there exists no "significant discontinuity between 'outside' and 'inside'" (Gustafsson 1969, p. 29); instead, [t]he poetic landscape is dominated by the order between objects *close* and *far*. It holds a center and a periphery and the tension between these key components plays a central part in the poem's construction" (Gustafsson 1969, p. 31). The status of the components changes, and they are allowed to shift places within the poem when the inherent hierarchy of 'centre' and 'periphery' is overthrown; in the classic nostalgic dichotomic structure, the past holds an inherently higher value as it is the object of longing. In Gustafsson's poem, there is no inherently higher value of the American images over the Swedish ones; nor of the past over the present, or vice versa. This, too, resists the placement of the poems in the bracket of reflective nostalgia, for which a different hierarchy applies since the past is what is desirable: 'a longing for' grants the past a superior status, especially since everything else is but an "imperfect mirror image" (Boym 2001, p. 251). Niklas Salmose states that "[i]n a strict sense, there are two crucial definitions of nostalgia: one, the nostalgic emotion, has to do with the dichotomy of *now and then* (and more spatially *here and there*), and the other, nostalgic mood, is concerned with universal grief, the fear of death and progress" (Salmose 2018, p. 112), but he also recognises that there is a "great deal of overlap between emotion and mood" (Salmose 2018, p. 111). Gustafsson, in his dissolving of the dichotomies of now and then and here and there, achieves a different mood, one that is concerned with both emotion and universal grief—the train being a classic symbol of the fear of progress and the corruption of the landscape—eventually, the train becomes part of the landscape. Or, arguably, his mood is concerned with neither: he does not dwell in the emotion; the sense of loss is minor, and the universal grief is understated. Salmose suggests that "[n]ostalgia evoked through the use of childhood is generally achieved by addressing the world of childhood as an alternative to the present" (Salmose 2018, p. 115); for Gustafsson, the childhood image validates the present—gives value to a moment that would arguably otherwise have carried little meaning.

Despite the fact that the mirror is in itself a dominant motif in Gustafsson's work—poems like "The Well, Then and Forever" (Gustafsson 2000c, pp. 42–43) and "The Eel and the Well" (Gustafsson 1992b, pp. 59–60) deal with surfaces of water representing different aspects of the tenuous boundary between self and Other, past and present, knowing and unknowing—his mirrors do not show a lesser version of the 'ideal past', but instead underscore the illusiveness of reality, the tenuous boundary between self and Other. They do not express a wish on behalf of the speaker to return to the past; instead, the speaker is trapped in it[3], part of it[4]; the past and the present are interdependent components of the poetic landscape. Thus, the notion of reflective nostalgia does not adequately describe what is at play in these instances. Some of these poems share traits with the (primarily, contemporary) pastoral mode, but are less concerned with the pastoral mode and disinterested in sentimentality. Instead they are concerned with the notion of "effect," of which Gustafsson has written extensively. In Gustafsson's poetry, metaphor as a tool is avoided and is instead executed at the metalevel. In his view, the focus on imagery creates a more honest text, allowing the reader to interpret in a less steered manner, as it avoids persuasive rhetorical devices, such as he deems the metaphor (in Söderström 2003, pp. 25–26). Gustafsson insists instead on the effect of the image, as a device that allows for clarity in lieu of didactics. The effect, then, of interdependent landscapes past and present is that they allow for the 'whole picture', that is, inasmuch as the poet shines the light on landscapes

[3] I was very afraid of falling into that well. I have been falling for decades into that well" (lines 19–20, "The Well, Then and Forever") (Gustafsson 2000c).

[4] "I often feel like I am not just in the place of the eel but well and eel at the same time. Imprisoned in myself, but this self is already something else." (lines 12–16, "The Eel and the Well") (Gustafsson 1992a). My translation.

to be included in the poetic landscape, not to, as would be the case in a traditionally nostalgic mode, suggest that one space holds more significance than another.

Indeed, the stylistic choices in these poems of Gustafsson's are at first glance supported by Paul Grainge's examination of "nostalgia as a cultural style that has no *necessary*, relation to the experience of longing and loss, but which can nevertheless perform significant memory work" (Grainge 2000, p. 17). Further, Grainge argues that the "nostalgia mood is principally defined in relation to a concept of *loss*, whereas the nostalgia mode has no necessary relation to loss and longing" (Grainge 2000, p. 28). This seems to begin to describe the metanostalgic aspect of Gustafsson's poetics, but since Grainge continues to tie the nostalgia mode to postmodern concepts of amnesia and memory crisis, there is less applicability to the way Gustafsson works with memory and his fusing of times and selves past and present.

The opening lines of "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" paint an expansive poetic landscape, encompassing the new and old countries. Importantly, they set the tone by defining the American freight trains through what they are *not*—the qualities afforded the American trains are positive; they do not possess the nervous, dramatic need of the European ones to show that they are on their way—a quality easily translated to the qualities of a human being, and perhaps especially a poet, whose need to explicitly explain what he is doing ought perhaps to be obsolete. The trains are so long, it is hard almost to imagine them as reaching, or even having, a destination—their main action is being in transition, and as such, even their movement has become a presence, a constant. That is, their movement has become so continual that it is no longer perceived as movement and instead blends into the landscape to become part of it.

When the train does stop, its significance changes dramatically: not until it stops does it become the madeleine triggering the memory, when the, presumably male, crew exit the impersonal machine and bring the landscape to life with their card-playing and laughter. They become the prompt for the introduction to the scene of characters from the poet's childhood, in another summer, in another land[5]. The vortex entered delivers us to men on the porch of the summer cottage, men who, like the train crew, are "forgetting the outside world" and are inhabiting their own. Here, then, Gustafsson's worlds merge, and the possibility for this is given by the act of stopping: the trains must stop and the crew must become visible, or audible, for the trigger to occur. The other requirement is that the poet must be there to witness the stopping and allow for the door to the past to be opened: in brief, the door to the boxcar must open for the men to exit and inhabit the world for the door to the narrator's past to open.

Gustafsson's childhood imagery (see, for example, Helge 2001), is a recurring feature of his poems: in "Austin, Texas" the idea of the narrator as a child is introduced very early in the poem and "a boy" returns in the final lines. Many other of his poems include children as characters or children evoked indirectly through childhood landscape. Aaron Santesso notes the "common nostalgic trope of children at play" (Santesso 2006, p. 165) in 18th-century pastoral, but there is a clear distinction between such tropes and the children of "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters," in which they are distinctly not at play, not even in child-like awe of, or remotely interested in, the trains. They are as passive as the trains whose movement has become non-movement. A wealth of Gustafsson's other work deals with childhood imagery, but in "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" the image evoked is that of the uncles, seen only through the child's eyes—the character of the child himself is never introduced. The other children in the poem remain equally faceless: their heads remain lowered. The sense of loss in the traditionally melancholy sense of nostalgia poetry does not feature here, but instead a larger loneliness linked to the human predicament and passing of time is in play. Though the children have not lost their youth, they have lost some of the idealism of youth (see Salmose 2018). The expanse of the landscape, of the oceans between continents, and that of time coupled with the loss of youth and

[5] This echoes another of Gustafsson's poems, "Four Short Poems" and the line "summers, where did you all disappear to?" (line 2) (Gustafsson 2000b, pp. 58–59).

the loss of awe of youth, evokes an irrevocable loss, but the poem is highly aware of these aspects' irrevocability. It thus does not try to reclaim them, but to comment on them. This comment is served well by both the pastoral and the nostalgic traditions. The key components of longing and idealisation removed, Gustafsson's work moves beyond the reflective into metanostalgia.[6]

It is hard to avoid making reference to Edward Thomas's (1917) "Adlestrop", considering the similarities in subject matter between Thomas's and Gustafsson's poems:

Adlestrop

> Yes. I remember Adlestrop—
> The name, because one afternoon
> Of heat the express-train drew up there
> Unwontedly. It was late June.
>
> The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
> No one left and no one came
> On the bare platform. What I saw
> Was Adlestrop—only the name
>
> And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
> And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
> No whit less still and lonely fair
> Than the high cloudlets in the sky.
>
> And for that minute a blackbird sang
> Close by, and round him, mistier,
> Farther and farther, all the birds
> Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

The poems share many traits: the train stopping, the season, the grass, but also similarities in form; the pastoral features and the focus on silence, eventually disturbed. In both poems, there is a lack of visible life and they both give preference instead to evoking this presence through sound, Thomas's blackbird echoing in the laughter of Gustafsson's train crew. In "Adlestrop," "no one left and no one came," and this is similar in "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters," where the men are merely an extension of the train, not coming to join the surroundings but merely showing their presence through their laughter and voices. In that sense, the train crew are Thomas's blackbird, breaking the silence and bringing life to the scenery[7]. They thus also evoke the poet's inner life and forge the connection to the childhood memory. The image of the childhood uncles is brief, but forms a link to the childhood imagery in other poems of Gustafsson's, in some of which "Uncle Knutte" and "Uncle Einar" feature[8]; these are thus recurring personas whose full significance may be realised only when Gustafsson's poems are seen as fragments of a 'whole' (arguably themselves interconnected islands in the poetic landscape). We get here only a brief invitation to the past and its characters, and the poem as a whole is understated, arguably abandoned, and more unfinished than many of Gustafsson's other poems. In a typically Gustafssonian manner, these men act as triggers, evoking the old men of the narrator's childhood, and open up the interlacing of past and present landscapes. Gustafsson's protest here is against the inevitable passage of time, which, like the American freight

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[6] It is worth noting that Daniel Cross Turner has used the term metanostalgia: "Much of Justice's poetic output is therefore properly read as an expression of *meta*nostalgia: nostalgia for the process of nostalgia itself" (Turner 2008, p. 190) and that his usage of the term differs from the one applied here.

[7] "It [nostalgia] is also evoked by sounds such as those of church bells or the cowherds' tunes played on the horn, which may either soothe or, more often, stimulate nostalgic melancholy" (Marcus 2018, p. 14). See also her discussion of the distinction between imagination and memory, and voluntary and involuntary memory.

[8] See "The Eel and the Well" (Gustafsson 1992a, pp. 59–60).

train passing his house, "does not give a damn" whether anyone notices. But the narrator does notice, which is how such Wordsworthian spots in time come into being, and hence the manner in which the poet/narrator/reader is explicitly able to construe and construct himself. Gustafsson's problematisation of space, place, and time simultaneously creates effects of acceptance and resistance, and the metanostalgic treatment of the image makes for a complex application of traditional and contemporary pastoral tropes.

After the brief encounter with the train crew and their childhood counterparts, a whole day passes without any more description. The trains continue into the Texan sunset, this with an "epic patience," not giving a damn whether or not they go unnoticed. The train is de-romanticised and stripped of the glamorous notion of 'the journey' and even the children's typical awe of and interest in trains are irrelevant and no longer expected: it is not worth trying to count the uncountable. No one will see them, these trains that are such an inherent feature of the quotidian that they have lost their meaning. This ties in well with Gustafsson's "hatred of metaphor," whereby he sees it as too simple a technique (Söderström 2003, p. 25) and one that ought to be part of the poet's cognitive process rather than at the level of execution in the poem. Stripping the train of its traditional metaphorical value is part of the Gustafssonian focus on effect. It is almost frustrating to see a traditional metaphor overturned, and it does require "epic patience" to accept that 'nothing happens' here. The train itself, as a machine, as a constant, travels into the Texan sunset with this "epic patience" and without concern of what it is, or what it does or does not represent. It may be a train, or a story, or a "large philosophical system," yet it is given the more human trait of being a "wanderer" in the landscape, both a physical and a poetic one, if the two are even separable at this point: in the final lines, Gustafsson has fully extended the notion of the poetic landscape and turned the continent itself into a poem. The way Gustafsson extends and contracts the landscape, or rather, how he shifts from centre to periphery without giving those a hierarchical status, is part of the techniques he employs for the purpose of 'effect'. That the alphabet of this continent has 200 letters again suggests its vastness, and its untameability, and is arguably also making a point about the different linguistic parameters of expatriation. Gustafsson continued to write poetry in Swedish during his time in America, and the idea of working within the familiar language to comment on the exoticism and strangeness of the other language via the *Heimlich* of the native tongue is worthy of comment. Gustafsson asks: "is a poem a depiction? And if such is the case, how far away from the original can a translation be before it ceases to be so?"[9] (Gustafsson 2001, p. 70). Meanwhile, Christopher Middleton, the translator of Gustafsson's *Elegies and Other Poems*, in which "Austin, Texas" is published, comments on Gustafsson's response to translated works: "when finally asked about differences in texture, [Gustafsson] replied that the Swedish often has stricter measures; that some poems sound grittier in Swedish" (Middleton 2000, p. 70). Furthermore, Middleton states that "it seems to me that the originals have a rugosity of texture which the English slightly attenuates" (Middleton 2000, p. 70). Beyond this discussion, beyond language, lies the image. Translation of poetry from one language into another becomes the translation of image into image. A writer relocated to another culture and language can discover a thought-system where other emotions and images can develop, and discover a language that transcends both the native and adopted languages and is adequate to the task of conveying the new experience—a language arguably dependent on expatriation. Gustafsson's exotic alphabet, when translated into this very alphabet, bridges another gap of the boundaries of expatriation, in some way closing the circle.

The poems with these explicit expatriate references and that also evoke the childhood landscape and selves, arguably expand the poetic landscape to encompass the 'whole picture'. They are examples of an important element of his poetics: that of the impact of expatriation on Gustafsson's production, and beg the question as to how the expatriation affected and effected his thematic choices, and whether

[9] My translation.

his expatriation—literal as in during his American séjour, or metaphorical as in his time-based removal from childhood—are drivers for his work.

Though expatriation is a predicament, it may also make for fertile ground for creative production: alienation makes for a turning inward and for a development of the internal landscape, a construction and re-construction of space, place, and selves that may be more 'real' than the objective experience. It may allow the poet to inhabit the imaginary homeland more fully and genuinely. Gustafsson says in *A Memory Palace: Vertical Memoirs*[10] that "if you want a child to become a poet, put it in a box for a few years. The child will then, so to speak, begin growing inward" (Gustafsson 1994, p. 19) (my translation). The inevitable temporal displacement of the poet from his childhood and the removal of him from the native landscape may create an extension of such a box, one that is both cause and effect. Such a limbo may be creating the conditions for a poetry of imaginary homecoming. This partly resonates with Boym's statement that

> Reflective nostalgics are aware of the gap between identity and resemblance; the home is in ruins, or, on the contrary, has been just renovated and gentrified beyond recognition. This defamiliarization and sense of distance drives them to tell their story, to narrate the relationship between past, present and future. Through such longing these nostalgics discover that the past is not merely that which doesn't exist anymore, but, to quote Henri Bergson, the past "might act and will act by inserting itself into a present sensation from which it borrows the vitality." The past is not made in the image of the present or seen as foreboding of some present disaster, rather, the past opens up a multitude of potentialities, nonteleological possibilities of historic development. We don't need a computer to get access to the virtual realities of our imagination: reflective nostalgia has a capacity to awaken multiple planes of consciousness. (Boym 2001, p. 50)

While there is in "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" a use of the past to "narrate the relationship between past, present and future," and it "awaken[s] multiple planes of consciousness," what Boym describes here does not account for an important aspect: for Gustafsson there is no simple dichotomy between past and present, no hierarchy between the two. They borrow their vitality from each other, and arguably cannot carry their full meaning without each other. Neither is the poor reflection of the other and, as such, their interplay is different from what would fall under Boym's reflective nostalgia concept.

"Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" is thus arguably partly driven by expatriation, inasmuch as it creates some of the prerequisites for its coming into being. Boym articulates this as "[t]he inability to return home [being] both a personal tragedy and an enabling force" (Boym 2001, p. 252) and that "[n]ostalgia can be both a social disease and a creative emotion, a poison and a cure" (Boym 2001, p. 354). A sense of displacement and homelessness, set up by the vast distances of and between the landscapes, as well as the gulf of time between them, could excuse an interpretation of the poem as more traditionally nostalgic, but that would only be part of the story. Since poetry, or, more concretely, the landscape of the poem, is able to include it all without hierarchically ordering this universe, it does not force selves or places to compete. The path it takes can arguably be one of homecoming within the space of the poem, in that it is the space in which it is all allowed to coexist. Rather than 'trapping' the poet in the past, as a traditionally nostalgic position would state, the metanostalgic view submits that, like Gustafsson's view of metaphor, in which the metaphor is merely a cognitive step in the construction of the poem, not a goal in itself, nostalgia is here merely a tool, and a sharpened one at that, of many in the construction of the poem.

There are many examples of tropic change in the nostalgic tradition, whether it has been used as "simplistic, unthinking nostalgia" (Santesso 2006, p. 166) or as "mock-nostalgic pessimism"

[10] *Ett Minnespalats: Vertikala Memoarer.*

(Santesso 2006, p. 169). Santesso points out that "to use pastoral at all is, to a certain extent, to be complicit with the idealization he [Crabbe] despises: not idealized, not pastoral" (Santesso 2006, p. 175). This statement is arguably only partially applicable to Gustafsson's pastoral, which manages to engage with the pastoral without idealisation. Gustafsson's use of nostalgia here is thus a different kind of application, one that engages with contemporary pastoral tropes and the nostalgia they elicit but without succumbing to the nostalgic: "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" does not strive to regain anything, but comments on the inevitable passing of time with laconic detachment. Nostalgia is used in a way that is a tropic reinvention in which the pastoral and the nostalgic tradition that it represents takes a new step in the nostalgic direction: the longing is rendered weaker or obsolete, and it is in the poem itself that the past landscape is salvaged—a meagre salvation, and one largely left without comment. Time itself is a vast landscape, and its language so large that its alphabet has 200 letters. The trains have neither beginning nor end, and leave little opportunity for reflection or remembering. Gustafsson creates here a feeling of *plus ça change* and, and as the train disappears into the sunset, this resigned mood is what lets him get away with this image, which could be interpreted as a clichéd metaphor. Because Gustafsson strips it of its traditional meaning, it is arguably no longer a metaphor at all (is it even a train)?

The debate about whether nostalgia is good or bad, or indeed about what nostalgia even is, is ongoing, and itself rather worn. Sean Scanlan notes that

> In current criticism, however, nostalgia as warning, as pejorative marker of certain historical changes, has given way to nostalgia as a more ambivalent, more engaged, critical frame. Now, nostalgia may be a style or design or narrative that serves to comment on how memory works. Rather than an end reaction to yearning, it is understood as a technique for provoking a secondary reaction. (Scanlan 2004, p. 4)

In the same vein, Nadia Atia notes the drive to move past the deadlock and to "call attention to nostalgia's critical potential" (Atia 2010, p. 181). Thus, settling for simple dichotomies of nostalgia no longer suffices—instead, it is time to draw attention to the highly complex ways in which nostalgia is at play. Scanlan submits that there is a growing "suspicion of previous conceptualizations of nostalgia" (Scanlan 2004, p. 5) and there are reasons to subscribe to such suspicion: it is time to view nostalgia in light of the complexities of contemporary literature. Gustafsson's work lends itself to such attention as his work can move such conceptualisations forward. Rather than remaining nostalgic for the nostalgic, there is opportunity here to develop the critical discussion of these tropes, for the tropes themselves have already developed.

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Appendix A

Gustafsson's "Where the Alphabet Has Two Hundred Letters" is provided in the original Swedish below.

> Där alfabetet har tvåhundra bokstäver
> Amerikanska godståg
> har ingenting av de europeiska tågens
> dramatiska, nervösa behov av att visa att de är på väg.
> De amerikanska är på väg ändå.
> Så långt att det ibland tycks tillbringa halva natten
> bara med att passera mitt hus,
> blir det amerikanska godståget ofta stående en förmiddag
> ute i gräset: besättningen spelar krypkasino
> under höga skratt i sin särskilda vagn

före den sista bromskuren.
De är inte olika min barndoms farbröder,
på sommarstugans veranda, glömska av världen.
När tågen i kvällningen gravitetiskt
fortsätter in i den texanska solnedgången
är det med ett episkt tålamod
som alldeles ger fan i om man ser dem eller inte,
inga barn väntas lyfta på huvudena i trädgårdarna för att
räkna vagnar; de är ouppräkneliga, och tankfullt
strövar dessa tåg som långa berättelser
eller kanske stora filosofiska system,
genom en kontinent som själv är en dikt
där alfabetet har tvåhundra bokstäver. (Gustafsson 1992a, pp. 26–27)

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Peculiarities of Nostalgia in Ayn Rand's Novel *Atlas Shrugged*

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Abstract: Quite a number of Russian writers could not accept the October Revolution in 1917 and left the country. Their nostalgia for their motherland in emigration is a well-known fact. The Russian-born American writer Ayn Rand (1905–1982) was also driven out of Soviet Russia by a hatred for communism, yet her nostalgia is of a different kind. The purpose of this study is to describe the nature of Ayn Rand's nostalgia. Discovering, on arrival in the U.S., a reality different from the image she bore in her mind, she did not start missing her homeland but continued longing for her ideal—19th century America. This ideal is fully reflected in her self-made philosophy known as "objectivism", which underlies her novel *Atlas Shrugged*. Though philosophically substantiated, the ideal appears to be embodied in trivial myths of the American mass consciousness. The study highlights four of the most popular national myths in her novel. As a result, Rand's literary works represent popular literature that are not within the mainstream of the Russian émigré literature of that period.

Keywords: émigré writers; lost ideal; nostalgia; myths; popular literature

1. Introduction

The theme of nostalgia in literature is most relevant with émigré writers. Owing to great historical cataclysms in the first half of the 20th century, Russia produced a number of prominent émigré writers. The most illustrative names among them are those of I. Bunin, I. Shmelev, A. Tolstoy, B. Zaitsev, D. Merezhkovskyi, and A. Kuprin. The Russian-born American writer Ayn Rand (Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum) (1905–1982) is also part of this illustrious group, despite the fact that her emigration was caused by the same historical events, she differs from the aforementioned émigré writers in that she started her literary career only after emigration and never wrote in Russian. While the nostalgia of Russian émigré writers for their homeland has commonly been mentioned in reference books on Russian literature, Ayn Rand's nostalgia has not been elucidated thus far, and the present study on nostalgia in her literary works, due to its specific nature, can contribute to nostalgia studies. The specificity of Rand's nostalgia is reflected in the fact that she neither missed her homeland, nor felt quite at home in her adoptive country, and the interaction of these features results in nostalgic complexity.

Born in Saint Petersburg to a well-to-do family, after a few years under the construction of socialism in Soviet Russia after the October Socialist Revolution (1917), at the age of 21, Ayn Rand emigrated to the US, hateful of her native land and enthusiastic about the country to which she was heading. There, she became the author of three novels, two of which, *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), were ranked in the top-list of bestsellers. Her first novel, *We the Living* (1936), inspired by her own bitter life experience in Soviet Russia, was also reissued several times.

Her major novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, reflects Rand's assessment of the state of things in the US on her arrival. Although the novel is partly fantastic, some of its details such as geographical names, remarkable sights (like the Statue of Liberty), the national currency (the US dollar), dates in the names of

certain enterprises (like "The Twentieth Century Motor Company"), prompt thoughts of the US of the 20th century. The plot centers around a secret strike of the most efficient businesspeople of the country, representatives of various professional fields—industry, economy, science, culture—who, indignant at the state's encroachment on the results of their work, stealthily abandon the country, which involves the complete destruction of its economy. Meanwhile, in a hidden gulch in the mountains, the strikers build up a thriving community without a government to decide how much of their earnings must be withdrawn as taxes to maintain state officials and meet the social needs of those who do not produce anything. In other words, life in the Gulch is regulated by the ethical and economic rules identical to those which, as Rand sees them, were the norm at the very outset of US history.

With respect to nostalgia, in *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand longed for her cherished vision of the USA from Soviet Russia, which, upon arriving in the country, she found greatly distorted. As a consequence, she fancied that the ideal she bore in mind had been left behind in the 19th century—the "Golden Age" of American history. So, she compensated for that loss by creating in her novel a mythologized world, substantiated by her self-made materialistic philosophy, which she called "objectivism", upon which she later issued seven books. The quintessence of Rand's philosophy is the ethical idea of rational egoism, which, in its economic and political expression, results in the ardent advocacy of unfettered capitalism.

Rand's nostalgia for an idyllic free-market America that never really existed prefigures the historical narrative underlying President Trump's slogan "Make America Great Again", which, according to Steven Conn, played a decisive role in the presidential election in 2016 (Conn 2017). Moreover, as Rand's version of nostalgia chronologically precedes Trump's felicitous political invention, the latter may be reduced to a contemporary manifestation of its predecessor, despite the difference in the dating of the period of glory—if with Rand it was the 19th century, Trump seems to admire the 1950s of the 20th century. In his essay, Conn elaborates on the importance of national myths, stating that while historical scholarship does everything to eliminate myths from history, there is a strong need among people for an inspiring myth about their nationhood (Conn 2017). Rand's version of nostalgia, just like "Make America Great Again"-ism, fills this void, which accounts for the value that Rand's novel still holds for readers today. Thus, the study of Rand's version of nostalgia helps comprehend the state of things in the contemporary US, particularly in its politics, which bespeaks of the importance of the study in a narrower sense.

Two cultural studies, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Boym 2001) and *Retrotopia* (Bauman 2017) serve as the methodological basis for the present study. Svetlana Boym's work, in which she elaborates on different varieties of nostalgia, helps to establish ties between nostalgia and popular literature through the process of myth-making in Rand's novel. Zygmunt Bauman's work, with its deep insight into the specificity of present-day nostalgia, sheds light on the peculiar nature of Rand's nostalgia. Additionally, as Rand's nostalgia for an imaginary 19th century America was fed by myths of the American mass consciousness, the present study resorted to the myths outlined by the Russian literary critics Zverev (1991), Morozova (1982), and Cherchesov (1991) in their work on modern American popular literature. Since the study was built upon the contrast of the Russian and American identities of the author, it seems appropriate to regard the American mass consciousness through the Russian assessment, considering the outside view to be more critical than the inside one.

The aim of the present study was to single out the peculiarities of Rand's nostalgia through the analysis of her novel *Atlas Shrugged*. The aim was achieved by means of tackling the following objectives: tracing how certain events in Rand's biography made her nostalgic for the US 19th century, and showing that the image of the American 19th century in Rand's works was closely related to a number of major myths of the national American consciousness.

The conclusions that the present study arrived at are that Rand's nostalgia has some individual peculiarities, yet, in its core, is typical since it is based on myth-making, therefore, Rand's major novel, resorting to popular myths of the national American consciousness, can be classified as popular literature, thus remaining beyond the mainstream of the Russian émigré literature of that period.

2. Biographical Background

The nostalgia of émigré writers is usually autobiographical in nature. In full accordance with a number of definitions of the phenomenon in Boym's work such as "longing for the homeland", "homesickness", "an expression of patriotism", "a rosy reconstruction of the past", "a romance with the past" (Boym 2001), nostalgia in the work of the previously mentioned Russian émigré writers shaped itself into a yearning for their past life in their motherland, which was seen as a happy one compared with their post-emigration experience.

The source of Rand's peculiar nostalgia is also rooted in her biography, which necessitates a brief biographical detour. The consequences of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 left a considerable imprint on Rand's life, which can be traced throughout her future literary and philosophical works. In 1918, her father's business, one of the biggest pharmacies in Saint Petersburg, was confiscated for the benefit of the people and the family had to face desperate conditions. Rand bitterly resented the ideology approving of the robbery of individuals for the sake of common advantage.

In 1921, Rand began studying social pedagogy at Petrograd State University. According to Rand's biographer Anne Heller, during her university years, her only emotional outlet, due to her unwillingness to resign herself to the post-revolutionary reality, was the cinema. Heller presents some calculations: in 1924 Rand watched 47 films, in 1925 she watched 117 (Heller 2009). She also kept a special journal where she created lists of her favorite films and wrote film reviews. Heller asserts that owing to the cinema, Rand discovered America—an ideal world that was so different from Russia (Heller 2009). Rand's attitude toward her mother country is expressed in her direct confession referring to that period of her life:

> My feeling toward Russia at that time was simply an intensified feeling that I've had from childhood and from before revolutions. I felt that this was so mystical, so depraved, rotten a country that I wasn't surprised that they got a Communist ideology—and I felt that one has to get out and find the civilized world (Peikoff 1995).

A sample of films Rand used to see in Soviet Russia can be drawn from an episode in *We the Living*, which the writer herself called "the autobiography of an idea" (Rand 2011), where the main characters go to the cinema to watch a foreign film. Even though the subtitles to the film are Soviet and speak about the sufferings of American workers under the capitalistic yoke, the image on the screen is American and shows people, who "laughed happily, danced in sparkling halls, ran down sandy beaches, their hair in the wind, the muscles of their young arms taut, glistening, monstrously healthy" (Rand 2011, p. 158). This description fully reflects the views that cinema helped to shape.

However important it was, the cinema could not have been the only source of Rand's enchantment with the US. In her reminiscences, Rand stated that since her early childhood, stories about valor—heroic persons and their heroic deeds—had mostly attracted her attention. Outlining her philosophical premises, she summarized: "My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of a man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute" (Rand 2007, p. 1170). That declaration explains Rand's admiration for the country's past, which, like the cinematographic image of the contemporary country, is based mostly on fantasy.

While studying at university, Rand attended a course in scriptwriting, and in 1926, under the pretext of learning cinematography, Rand managed to emigrate to the country she admired. However, her expectations of the US were disappointed. A considerable part of American society of the 1930s was infatuated with communism. She found that government policy, and namely Roosevelt's New Deal agenda, to also be along the same line. For her, there was little difference between a communist insurrection and how fast the American federal government, supposedly acting in the best interests of the underprivileged, was increasing its power. All these political, economic, and social factors strongly violated the ideal she bore in mind—the ideal that was rooted in the 19th century, the "Golden Age" of

American history, lauded by her as an epoch of "Romanticism in aesthetics, individualism in ethics and capitalism in politics" (Rand 1975), that is to say, a time of prosperity in every sphere of American life.

All of the aforementioned biographical facts related to Rand's nostalgia lead to clarifying its three-part nature:

1. Hating her native land;
2. Being disappointed with her adoptive country; and
3. Dealing with both of these problems by indulging in nostalgia for the imaginary past of her new country.

By way of summarizing, compared to typical nostalgia for a motherland, Rand's feeling is of a reversed nature. Additionally, it is based mostly on the idealized (like cinematographic) image of the object of her nostalgia, which on actual encounter appeared to be far from reality. In this respect, Rand's version of nostalgia fits into the type specified by Boym as "nostalgia for a promised land" (Boym 2001), yet still bears an individual peculiarity. It is not a *future* promised land, it is a promised land from which she is forever cut off, since it is trapped in an unrecoverable past.

3. Myths of the American Mass Consciousness in Rand's Novel *Atlas Shrugged*

Rand's unusual type of "promised land" nostalgia reveals itself most in *Atlas Shrugged*, a novel where a group of powerful twentieth-century Americans decide to recreate nineteenth-century ideals. Therefore, the novel embraces a number of contemporary myths that idealize the 19th century as a time of individualism, daring, work ethic, and achievement; the very myths that were singled out by the Russian literary criticism with reference to American popular literature. The presence of the myths in *Atlas Shrugged* fully exposes the fact that Rand's nostalgia was fed by her fancied-up historical vision. Each of the myths shows one of the facets of Rand's delusion, thus completing the whole image. The myths, and consequently the facets, are interrelated since they were all aimed at the valorization of the orders of life that Rand believed to be established at the dawn of the country's history.

3.1. Myth 1: The Myth of Individualism

The most noticeable among the myths used by Rand in the novel is the one that relates to the social aspect of her delusion "of an active individualist, free of social determinism" (Zverev 1991). In other words, it is the myth of individualism, which dates back to the adoption of the American Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed every American's right to the pursuit of happiness. The leading role of that myth in Rand's novels is conditioned by the writer's philosophical and artistic views. Philosophically supporting individualism in all of her novels, Rand regards romanticism, which she subjectively reduces to the admitting of a person's right to freely choose objectives and actions aimed at achieving them, as the only type of artistic expression capable of adequately expressing individualism. These two major propositions are responsible for the fact that Rand's hero is an individualist arranging their own life circumstances in accordance with their own free choice.

The purest expression of the individualistic myth in *Atlas Shrugged* is embodied in its life descriptions of its heroes' (Dagny and Francisco's) grandfathers: Nathaniel Taggart, whose vast railroad network covered the whole country; and Sebastian d'Anconia, the biggest owner of copper mines on both American continents. Starting as penniless adventurous individuals, they both developed the biggest enterprises in their business fields. The symbolic meaning of these two little plots is demonstrated by the fact that both of the characters are representatives of the 19th century. These characters embody the image of a self-made person, which is typical of American literature on the whole. However, they also bear some traits that are characteristic only of Rand's heroes, which create for each of them an individual image. These traits are most vivid in the sphere of the characters' interaction with the state. For instance, while defending his property rights, Nathaniel Taggart murders a state official and the author's sympathy unmistakably lies with her character.

The plot lines of the contemporary protagonists resemble those of Nathaniel Taggart and Francisco d'Anconia. Like their ancestors, they represent the ethos of the 19th century: the pursuit of material success through hard work. One of them is the oil producer Ellis Wyatt, who gave "a shot of adrenalin to the heart" of the Colorado mountains, which "had brought new towns, new power plants, new factories to a region nobody had ever noticed on any map" (Rand 2007). His story of success, the author specifies, reminds her of stories from history textbooks about people who lived, in the author's metaphor, "in the days of the country's youth" (Rand 1975, p. 9).

The national individualistic myth in Rand's presentation is refreshed by introducing into it a certain amount of new content, which still reinforces its fancied-up nature. Nineteenth-century individualism, in Rand's vision, is inseparable from reason, which she calls "the Aristotelian sense of life" (Rand 2007, p. 103). Such a beautiful combination of individualism and reason is represented in the novel by the philosopher Hugh Akston, who is identified as "one of the last great advocates of reason" (Rand 2007, p. 142). He is the favorite professor of three highly intelligent protagonists: Francisco d'Anconia, John Galt, and Ragnar Danneskjöld. During the pinnacle events of the novel, Professor Akston's name becomes so hallowed that a certain young lady, on hearing at a social event that Francisco studied under him, becomes shocked. She thinks he must have been one of those great names from an earlier century. d'Anconia confirms that, in spirit, Akston's name belongs to the 19th century, while in reality he is still alive. He resigned from his university career and started cooking in a roadside diner. Professor Akston's university position is taken over by Dr. Pritchett, who at the same social event is explaining to the young people that "nothing is anything" (Rand 2007, p. 141). d'Anconia reacts to the latter comment that Professor Akston taught them that "everything is something" (Rand 2007, p. 142). In this episode, Rand resorts to the Aristotelian law of identity that "A is A, everything is the same as itself", which is the basis of objectivism philosophy. According to Rand's own comments in *Atlas Shrugged*, she showed respect for Aristotle by naming all three chapters of her novel after his laws of logic: *Non-Contradiction*, *Either–Or*, and *A is A* (Rand 2007).

3.2. Myth 2: The Myth of American Exclusiveness

Professor Akston's sub-plot also emblematizes the myth of "American exclusiveness and the advantage of the New World over the Old One" (Morozova 1982), since the country of daring individualists equipped with "the Aristotelian sense of life" could not possibly fail to be superior to the rest of the world. This myth manifests Rand's historical delusion. The positive charge Rand attaches to the myth becomes especially striking in contrast with the capitalist relations in their current form, as viewed by the author, thus bringing the idea home to the reader.

In *Atlas Shrugged*, businesspeople who cannot endure absurd and burdensome laws any longer desert the country and build up a new hidden capitalist community in the Gulch, which is based on the philosophy of reason and individualism. In a by-plot, Rand identifies America of the past with legendary Atlantis, and the latter with the Gulch. Using one of her protagonists, Francisco d'Anconia, as a mouthpiece, Rand explains that the US, born as a rational product of the human mind, is currently facing a number of social problems because self-made people of the past accepted a social system which declared that the property they had earned by right was to be theirs not by right, but by permission of a bureaucrat. The Gulch, where businesses do not have to face bureaucracy due to the absence of any government, therefore symbolizes the US with unregulated capitalism. Rand highlights the idea that life in such a society is built on the rational laws of logic. Rand enunciates the theme of the novel as the role of reason in human life through the words of one of the characters, John Galt, who explains the meaning of creating a hidden gulch as a strike of intelligent people. Since these people are natural adherents of the law of identity, only objective values are recognized in the Gulch. For example, only coins made of gold and silver are in circulation there, because only they can serve as a real equivalent of the commodity value. When Dagny asks in surprise in the name of which country the coins are minted in the Gulch, John Galt responds that the name of the country is minted on both sides of each coin. Dagny sees the head of the Statue of Liberty on one side, and the words *United*

States of America—One Dollar on the other. The author's idea is rendered through the feelings of her heroine—Galt's Gulch resembles to Dagny the great country of their ancestors, which is contrasted with the existing state of affairs. Thus, in Rand's presentation, the coin in the Gulch signifies a return to true American values, as they are seen by Rand; values that modern America, much to Rand's disgust, has repudiated. Rand renders both of the opposing positions in the remark of one of the Gulch dwellers:

> It [the dollar sign] stands on the vest of every fat, piglike figure in every cartoon, for the purpose of denoting a crook, a grafter, a scoundrel—as the one sure-fire brand of evil. It stands—as the money of a free country—for achievement, for success, for ability, for man's creative power—and, precisely, for these reasons, it is used as a brand of infamy (Rand 2007, p. 683).

3.3. Myth 3: The Myth of Equal Opportunities

Rand's delusory belief in fair unregulated capitalism, being a manifestation of her economic views, is rendered through the myth of America as a country of equal opportunities. By means of this myth, the exalted past is presented through its opposite, namely the disastrous consequences that the obnoxious deviation from this basic principle of capitalism has produced. Therefore, the myth is also realized in a dystopian way in the plot line of Dan Conway, President of the Phoenix–Durango railroad. Having started with a shaky little railroad in Arizona, whose net revenue could be compared to a successful grocery store, in 10 years, he turns it into the best railroad in the Southwest and starts competing with the largest and oldest railroad company—Taggart Transcontinental. In reply, James Taggart, President of Taggart Transcontinental, scared by his competitor's advance, initiates the acceptance by the National Alliance of Railroads of the "Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule", which eventually drives Conway's business out of Colorado. For Dagny, this is a blow not to Conway, but to the basic principles of capitalism. By offering Conway assistance in challenging the decision of the National Alliance in court, Dagny claims to be acting not "out of pity or charity or any ugly reason like that" (Rand 2007, p. 80), but out of need for a fitting rival. She promises to "squeeze" him to the wall in a fair contest without any bureaucratic tricks and drive him out of the state, if necessary. However, Dan rejects Dagny's support, as he is already contaminated with altruism and has lost his will to fight.

The Dan Conway sub-plot conveys Rand's ethical idea of "rational egoism". Its opposite, altruism, is considered by Rand as a malady of contemporary America, which undermines the basics of capitalist relations such as equal opportunities for everyone to run their own business without the government's interference in order to distribute privileges among competing companies on the pretext of caring about the weak. Thus, Rand's depiction of the consequences of altruism morality sounds like a warning to the country, which was initially planned as a country of equal opportunities.

3.4. Myth 4: The Myth of an Honest Business

In full concord with the myth illustrated by Dan Conway's plight is the myth "A good business is an honest business" (Cherchesov 1991), since both of them originate from the same ethical premise. Within the frame of this myth, honest businessmen in the novel are contrasted with bureaucrats, who are considered as "looters". The most representative example of a businessman who follows the code of honor of the Founding Fathers up to the letter is Hank Rearden. As the last to leave the outside world for the Gulch, he is involved in the main ethical conflict of the novel throughout the whole plot. The history of the interactions between Hank and the state is presented in black-and-white coloring. If Hank is a profound embodiment of morality, the other part is pure immorality. Hank invents super alloy, and the government bureaucrats do everything within their power to hinder its production because they are rightfully scared that he will drive all the iron and steel companies belonging to them out of the market. First, they enact a law against private property that is targeted at Rearden. When the law does not bring the desired effect, Hank is prosecuted in court as a greedy enemy of society, who puts his own interests above those of the public. When this measure also fails, Hank is

blackmailed to sign a Gift Certificate and pass all the copyrights pertaining to his invention to the Unification Board.

In the writer's presentation, a real businessman such as Hank Rearden is always a creator. Rand places her words about creators into the mouth of Francisco d'Anconia in the episode when he talks to Dagny, who is devastated after the shut-down of her railroad line by the efforts of government bureaucrats. He urges her to think of those who were the first to make a steel girder, a bolt, a rivet, a power generator. New York itself is "the frozen shape of human courage" of those who brought the people 'crouched in caves, at the mercy of any pestilence and any storm, out of the cave" (Rand 2007, p. 512). Alongside Francisco d'Anconia and Hank Rearden, there are quite a number of such businessperson-creators in the novel: John Galt, for example, is the inventor of a miraculous engine—Galt's motor—that converts static electricity from the atmosphere into the power for its own work; and Ellis Wyatt is the discoverer of a technological process of extracting oil out of shale, which was thought impossible. Among the other inventions of the Gulch dwellers are a screen of refractor rays or a Gulch mirage that creates the phenomenon of a mirage by obscuring the real view with the image of some distanced locality; and a Gulch power station that is capable of replacing all of the country's power stations, thus saving people's time, effort, and material resources for higher goals. So, by such an introduction of scientific discoveries, which were far ahead of their time, i.e., elements of science fiction, into her novel, Rand demonstrates her advocacy for both technological progress and the high work ethic of honest businessperson-creators. The author's metaphor for them is "the motors of the world"—they are those who enable the next step of humankind's progress. The utopian features of these characters are obvious. In this regard, Dr. Albert Ellis, an American psychologist, writes that the image of a capitalist businessperson created by Rand is so ideal and so far from biological and social reality that it simply does not exist. He further asserts that Rand deludes herself by believing that people are like the images she creates. Not surprisingly, she was often disappointed by real people (Ellis 2006).

4. Peculiarities of Rand's Nostalgia

This review of the national myths in Rand's novel reflects her delusory historical vision, which is furthermore enhanced by her own myth-making. In the US, Rand, dissatisfied with the current state of things, continued longing for her dream of America as she had envisioned it back in Soviet Russia. Boym accentuates this phenomenon as one of the traits of emigrant consciousness that is characteristic of many people who left their homeland (Boym 2001). Under those circumstances, Rand had to create a substitute for what she had been seeking but failed to find, i.e., engage in myth-making.

Rand's myth-making is most evident in *Atlas Shrugged* in the dystopian image of the country, where social relationships are turned upside down and it is not the rich who exploit the poor, but the poor, who with the help of the government, exploit the rich. The altruistic ethics of the government results in a country with a destroyed economy and demoralized population. Alexander Etkind qualifies this depiction of Rand's as her warning against repeating the Soviet experience in the US (Etkind 2007). However, despite the originality of the myth Rand created, in her resorting to myth-making, she does not differ much from a common emigrant.

Therefore, myths, both national and her own, constitute the central part of Rand's nostalgia, thus exposing its typical side. However, in order to visualize the phenomenon in its complexity, it is necessary to specify its individual features.

The most striking one is observed in the fact that, although Rand's nostalgia was for the past, it was not for the past of her own country. Moreover, she appeared to hate her country, not only for its communist ideology, but on a more general basis. In that, she greatly differs from her compatriot émigré writers, some of whom felt nostalgic not only for pre-revolutionary Russia, but also even for what they had so vigorously denounced. This difference is reinforced by the fact that Rand's artistic manner of expressing nostalgia correlates more with the American literary tradition rather than the Russian one. In her study, Boym, regarding nostalgia as a national feature, observed that the

Russian and American nations were similar in their "lack of historical consciousness" ("forgetfulness of the past"), but different in how this forgetfulness was realized in the national consciousness. If with the Russians it shaped itself into "toska" (an untranslatable word that stands for spiritual longing), which became a manifestation of the Russian soul, the Americans created "a quasi-metaphysical entity called the American way of life" ("the American Dream") (Boym 2001). The critic further differentiated between the varieties of literature in which these Russian and American counterparts were realized most fully. She claims that it is classical Russian literature that became a "repository of nostalgic myths", while the American Dream is cultivated by popular American literature (Boym 2001). This statement corroborates the proposition that Rand's novels stay within the domain of popular literature, contrary to classical Russian émigré literature.

Rand's nostalgia is also specific in that it was for something that she had never experienced in reality, but had only imagined. This fact makes it close to both Romanticism, which she claims to be her creative method (Rand 1975), and popular literature, due to its obviously mythological (fancied-up) nature (Zverev 1991).

Additionally, Rand's nostalgia is distinguished by her desire to recreate the imaginary past. This type of nostalgia is classified as "restorative" by Boym. Restorative nostalgia is further characterized as the one that "does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition" (Boym 2001), which is identical to the way in which a myth is perceived by its bearer. As is known, a myth presents the whole and self-sufficient truth for those who accept it, but from the outside is perceived as remaining far from reality. Therefore, restorative nostalgia lies within a mythological framework.

A different peculiarity of Rand's nostalgia reveals itself when it is viewed through the prism of Bauman's definition of the object of nostalgia as *Retrotopia* (Bauman 2017), which suggests a double negation that nostalgia has undergone since Moore's *Utopia* to its present state. The critic's idea is that Moore's *Utopia* closely associates with the future and progress and as such, longing for it involves negation of the past. However, upon reaching the anticipated future and discovering the expectations to be frustrated, a longing for a better life turns in the opposite direction, toward the past and retrogression, which constitutes the second negation (Bauman 2017). Being a great advocate of technological progress, Rand could be expected to look forward to the future, in the traditional direction of progress. Instead, she looks nostalgically into the past, the 19th century US, the period which was, in her opinion, best conditioned for technological progress due to the ethical and economic rules established by the Founding Fathers. This discrepancy, which shows itself in the violation of the traditional dualities of "future and progress" and "past and retrogression" for "future and retrogression", "past and progress", results in the uniqueness of the dystopia her novel presents. Unlike some famous dystopias of the 20th century such as *We* by E. Zamyatin, *Fahrenheit 451* by R. Bradbury, and *Player Piano* by K. Vonnegut, which depict catastrophic consequences of technological progress, and thus correspond with Bauman's theory, Rand's dystopia, in contrast, shows the catastrophic consequences of retrogression.

In conclusion, Rand's nostalgia goes beyond the borders of typical nostalgia in some of its features such as its non-biographical, reversed nature, and association of the past with progress. Yet, at its core, it is the same as any other manifestation of nostalgia since it is based on myth-making. In the context of literature, the process of reproducing or creating myths is a major technique of popular literature. Rand's myth-making is most evident in her magnum opus *Atlas Shrugged* and shows in a number of easily recognizable myths of the American mass consciousness. This factor enables the classification of Rand's novel as popular literature, the study of which is undoubtedly up-to-date.

With regard to the relevance of the argument in a broader sense, understanding Rand's unusual variety of nostalgia as a way of making sense on nostalgia in present-day American culture as a whole also seems quite important.

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Article

"The Past Is Never Dead. It's Not Even Past": The Ambivalent Call of Nostalgic Memory in Richard Ford's Short Story "Calling" (*A Multitude of Sins*, 2001)

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Abstract: This article focuses on Richard Ford's short story "Calling," collected in the volume entitled *A Multitude of Sins* (2001). It consists of the detailed recalling by a first-person narrator, from the vantage point of adulthood, of a duck-hunting outing with his father at a moment of acute family crisis when he was still a teenager. This episode, redolent of America's nostalgic motif of male bonding and father-son transmission in the midst of mythical American nature, is shown to have proved a pathetic failure at the time, and the story stages—to pick up Svetlana Boym's famous distinction between two main types of nostalgia—the enlightening "reflective" effects of recalling this moment of "restorative" longing for the protagonist. However, the highly analytical narrator does not consciously dwell upon the peripheral yet disturbing presence of two grotesque characters that, I contend, are the locus of the implicit meaning of the text. Through precise textual reading and references to Southern Gothic, I indeed argue that the subtext of "Calling" invites the reader to journey back into a region's (the South's) troubled collective past and to question its own relation to nostalgia. "Calling" thus also stages the ambivalence of nostalgic longing on the collective plane as it shows willful nostalgic recollection wavering in the face of the return of the historical repressed, that of America's ineffable original sin.

Keywords: nostalgia; Richard Ford; pastoral; southern gothic; grotesque

1. Introduction

> The first-person narrator of Richard Ford's short story "Calling" confesses at the end of his tale:
>
> My father lived thirty years after that morning in December, [when we went duck-hunting] on the Grand Lake, in 1961. By any accounting he lived a whole life after that. [. . .]
>
> [. . .] I never saw him again [. . .].
>
> Once, in our newspaper, early in the nineteen-seventies, I saw my father pictured in the society section [. . .].
>
> Seeing this picture reminded me that in the days after my father had taken me to the marsh, and events had ended not altogether happily, I had prayed for one of the few times, but also for the last time, in my life. And I prayed quite fervently for a while and in spite of all, that he would come back to us [my mother and me] and that our life would begin to be as it had been. (*A Multitude of Sins*, Ford 2001, pp. 63–64)

This passage shows nostalgia literally, if fleetingly, at work. A teenager achingly longs for (*algia*) the recovery of home (*nostos*) as household: here, it is his father's return home that will bring back the

perfect bygone days of family happiness. But the next sentence reads: "And then I prayed that he would die and die in a way I would never know about, and his memory would cease to be a memory, and all would be erased" (p. 64), which shows the nostalgic temptation being brushed aside, the hope for recovery yielding to the fantasy of erasure. However, the very narrative serves as contradiction to these dismissive words since its focus has precisely been the protagonist-narrator's detailed recalling, from the vantage point of adulthood, of that duck-hunting outing with his father at a moment of acute family crisis. By that time, his father had "gone off with a man," leaving wife and child "behind in New Orleans," and his "mother had let a black man [. . .] move into [their] house and into her bedroom." (p. 35). Furthermore, as the narrator tells us from the outset of his tale, it is precisely because "They're all dead now. My father. My mother. Dr Carter [my father's lover]. The black accompanist, Dubinion [my mother's lover]," (p. 35) that the call of nostalgic memory cannot be repressed and triggers off the need to tell, and therefore to keep a written trace of his parents, and more particularly, his father.

The short story thus hinges on an embedded nostalgic pull: thanks to his writing, the adult narrating-I returns to a childhood scene which the young narrated-I—pining for "how things were done when [his] father was [still] there" (p. 35)—experienced as an attempt to retrieve a lost family harmony.[1] The text, however, with its overwhelmingly bitter and dark tonality, belies any romantic hope in the possibility of recovery and reconstruction, and emphasizes irrecoverable loss. It therefore problematizes the straightforwardness of "restorative nostalgia" and opens up to the more unsettling space of "reflective nostalgia" (Boym 2001, p. 41). My purpose here will be more specifically to show how the highly archetypal episode that lies at the center of the story, a father-son reunion in the midst of idealized American nature, is turned into a counter-nostalgic topos. As defined by Jennifer K. Ladino in her introduction to her book *Reclaiming Nostalgia: Longing for Nature in American Literature*, "[n]ostalgia becomes 'counter-' when it is traditionally deployed to challenge a progressivist ethos. Counter-nostalgia is nostalgia with a critical edge. Counter-nostalgia depends upon a tactical reappropriation of more dominant strands of nostalgia through creative, often literary means; for that reason, its functions are historically contextual." (Ladino 2012, p. 15). Indeed, "Calling" does not only show that the lost home of one's nostalgic longing is often but an unreal place, a fantasy; I will argue that this highly private story requires that we look beneath the surface to see how Ford seeks to expose the morally-dubious mechanism of collective nostalgia that has enabled a region, the South, and a whole nation to obliterate history and rewrite it into myth. The progressivist ethos challenged by this story is that on which the "enlightened and forward-looking American" nation (Savoy 2002, p. 170) built its legitimacy. It originally rested on a number of biblical myths (those of the Promised Land, the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark), themselves predicated on nostalgia, which made Americans God's chosen people and turned a historical moment into a Providential one. Yet, "[s]acred origins leave out the complexity of factors and the dynamics of power that characterize historical events" (Ladino 2012, p. 3). The "all-engrossing power of the Adamic idea" (Rezé and Bowen 1998, p. 24) has always fueled the American collective psyche, and "Calling," as an example of counter-nostalgic literature, acts as a reminder that "the American share[s] with his European forebears the burden of history and an imperfect nature." (Ibid.).

I will first focus on the more private dimension, namely on the way the failed hunting outing is experienced by the teenager, the act of narrating eventually completing the protagonist's bitter realization that his father had always been and would always remain out of his reach. The regressive journey into both romanticized nature and memory thus enables the protagonist-narrator's awakening to a more mature, if bitter, perspective on his past, present and future life. Surprisingly however, the highly analytical narrator does not consciously reflect on the disrupting presence of the somewhat

[1] This is how the narrator retrospectively analyzes the call his father gave him when he invited him to go duck-hunting: "[W]hen we spoke that day, he didn't sound to me like some man who was living with another man in St. Louis. He sounded much as he always had in our normal life when I had gone to Jesuit and he had practiced law in the Hibernia Bank building, and we were a family." (p. 38).

grotesque expert duck caller that had accompanied him and his father on their duck-hunting game. Yet, as I will contend in the second part, this eerie character turned guide into "dark marshy terrain" (p. 51) seems enough to tint the would-be pastoral moment with hues of Southern gothic. Indeed, Susan Castillo remarks on the "abundance, in texts by Southern writers, of references to the distorted, freakish, and absurd elements which seem to be woven into the texture of everyday life," and she notes that in much recent criticism, the terms "the Southern Grotesque" and "the Southern Gothic" "are used interchangeably." (Castillo 2004, p. 486).[2] Considering this aspect of the text will eventually lead me to consider how "Calling," under pretext of picturing a man's individual negotiation of nostalgic remembrance through articulated language, finds its full meaning in its implicit invitation to journey back into a region's troubled collective past, and to reflect on its own questionable relation to nostalgia. As explained by Susan Castillo:

> In many ways, the style which critics call the Southern Grotesque can be described as a reaction to the discrepancy between the vision of the South as antebellum pastoral Arcadia on the one hand and the crude historical realities of a patriarchal, racist society on the other. It is thus instructive to wander through the gallery of freaks and deformities which abound in this genre, since they can offer us telling insights into exactly which unpalatable realities the South has repressed in its own vision of itself. (Ibid., p. 487)

Willful nostalgic recollection does not only fail the narrator; it is also blurred and eventually undone by the haunting return of the historical repressed, slavery. "The past is never dead. It's not even past," Faulkner—one of the most powerful embodiments of Southern Gothic and an author whose spectral presence can tellingly be felt in "Calling"—reminds us (Faulkner 1996, p. 85). Along with Teresa A. Goddu, we can say that "the Gothic becomes the mode through which to speak what often remains unspeakable within the American national narrative—the crime of slavery" (Goddu 2007, p. 63), or rather, considering the title of the collection in which "Calling" is included, the Gothic becomes the mode through which to speak America's ineffable original sin.

2. The Pastoral Impulse

"Calling" obviously plays on the back-to-nature motif, and as such is part of these American nature narratives "often infused with nostalgia—for the western frontier, for unspoiled landscapes, for a pre-industrial golden age, or for pastoral communities with close connections to their environments." (Ladino 2012, p. xiii). Father and son are identified from the start as two city-dwellers,[3] their duck-hunting outing thus showing them to yield to what Leo Marx calls the "pastoral impulse":

> A notable fact about imaginative literature in America [. . .] is the number of our most admired works written in obedience to a pastoral impulse. By 'pastoral impulse' I mean the urge, in the face of society's increasing power and complexity, to retreat in the direction of nature. The most obvious form taken by this withdrawal from the world of established institutions is a movement in space. The writer or narrator describes, or a character enacts, a move away from a relatively sophisticated to a simpler, more 'natural' environment. [. . . Its] significance derives from the plain fact that it is 'closer' to nature: it is a landscape that bears fewer marks of human intervention." (Marx 1989, pp. 151–52)

In *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Roderick Frazier Nash records America's changing attitudes towards Wilderness, and shows the growing appreciation of it on a romantic mode by people who did

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[2] In *Mystery and Manners*, Flannery O'Connor, one of the best-known representatives of Southern Gothic, devotes a whole essay to the importance of the Grotesque in modern Southern fiction. (O'Connor 1969, pp. 36–50)

[3] The first sentence of the short story reads: "A year after my father departed, moved to St. Louis, and left my mother and me behind in New Orleans to look after ourselves in whatever manner we could, he called on the telephone one afternoon and asked to speak to me." (p. 35)

not face it from the pioneer's perspective. In the early nineteenth century, wilderness was felt to pose "an exciting, temporary alternative to civilization" and by the end of the century, "the widespread appeal of the uncivilized" had turned to "a cult" (Nash 2001, pp. 51, 60, 145). After the closing of the frontier in 1890, pioneering "acquired added luster [. . .] and came to be regarded as important not only for spearheading the advance in civilization but also for bringing Americans into contact with the primitive." (Ibid., p. 145).[4] As notably underlined by Frederick Jackson Turner, it was life in the wilderness that shaped the national character, and "by virtue of being wild, the New World was a clean state to which idealists could bring their dreams of a better life." (Ibid., p. 146). Americans' long-lasting attraction to wild spaces indeed cannot be separated from what Robert H. Brinkmeyer Jr. calls "the towering mythology of the West." (Brinkmeyer 2007, p. 1).

In "Calling," the protagonists are thus heirs to a long tradition, and for them nature stands more particularly for the virgin space where a new page of the complex and pressured father-son relationship may be written. The pastoral impulse thus intersects with another archetypal topos: that of male bonding in the midst of American nature, especially in its variation of the coming-of-age tale that features hunting as a rite of passage, the father or father-figure initiating his son into adulthood through the transmission of knowledge about wildlife and hunting. "I had never been to [the camp]," the narrator confesses, "but I knew about it from boys at Jesuit who came here with their fathers [. . .]. It was a famous place to me in the way that hunting camps can be famously mysterious and have a danger about them, and represent the good and the unknown that so rarely combine in life." (p. 47). He also no doubt knows about it from his readings: American literature indeed teems with the recounting of such initiatory episodes, from Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* (1841), to some of Hemingway's "Nick Adams stories," to Faulkner's perhaps best-known short story "The Bear" (1935) (Lamothe 2008, pp. 169–71; Tréguer and Henry 2008, p. 264). Father and son turn to restored tradition or, in Eric Hobsbawn's words, "'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual of symbolic nature which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past." (qtd in Boym 2001, p. 42).

Both father's and son's reactions indeed show that they initially respond to the call of myth:

> "I'm calling up [. . .] to know if you'd care to go hunting in the fabled Grand Lake Marsh. [. . .] My ancient father had a trusted family retainer named Renard Theriot, a disreputable old *yat*. But Renard could unquestionably blow a duck call. So I've arranged for his son, Mr. Renard, Jr., to put us both in a blind and call in several thousand ducks for our pleasure." My father cleared his throat in the stagy way he always did when he talked like this—high-falutin' [. . .]. (p. 37)[5]

> I *wanted* to go duck hunting, to go by boat out into the marsh that makes up the vast, brackish tidal land south and east of our city. I had always imagined I'd go with my father when I was old enough. And I *was* old enough now, and had been taught to fire a rifle—though not a shotgun—in my school. (p. 38)

> [Renard Junior] had yet to blow one of the calls, but I wanted him to, wanted to see a V of ducks turn and veer and come into our decoy-set, the way I felt they were supposed to. (p. 54)

The typographic emphasis on *wanted* and the repetition of the same verb (last two quotes) betray the child's naïve expectations, as reality is bound to fall short of his imaginary projection: "And what I saw, coming low over the decoys, [. . .] was only one duck. [. . .] In my dreams, there'd been hundreds of

[4] Jennifer K. Ladino also insists on the nostalgic dimension of the American nature myths of the frontier and the pastoral (Ladino 2012, p. 11).

[5] The archetypal motif of father-son transmission is reinforced by the suggestion that the narrator's father was taken on the same outings by his own father.

ducks, and my father and I shot them so that they fell out of the sky like rain, and how many there were would not have mattered because we were doing it together." (p. 61). The adult narrator had warned the reader in advance: "And I remember becoming nervous [when my father called], as if by agreeing to go with him [. . .]—as if by doing these altogether natural things (going hunting) I was crossing a line, putting myself at risk. [. . .] Disappointment was what I risked, I know now." (p. 39).

The narrative shows the hunting party precisely not to be a "natural thing" but a construct the child clings to for some time, all evidence to the contrary: "Naturally, I was thrilled to be there—even in my hated military school clothes with my drunk father dressed in tuxedo and the little monkey that Renard was, operating our boat. I believed, though, that this had to be some version of what the real thing felt like—hunting ducks with your father and a guide [. . .]." (p. 51). The child actually reverses the logic that presides over the hunting game: his disappointing dysfunctional experience, the simulacrum of a model scene, is in fact the real version of an imaginary representation that has allured him and his father alike, namely a myth that breeds on the nostalgic longing for sacred rites in the midst of a pristine American environment. Irony thus contributes to laying bare the child's romantic perspective. One also notes the presence of the opening adverb "Naturally" which, in the context, necessarily rings more literally than the weakened sense in which it is used, and ironically introduces a paragraph that depicts the young boy clinging to a fake idea, a nostalgic construct. The adverb is also ironical in that what spoils the scene is the father's out-of-place presence, as embodied by his drunken attitude but also precisely by elements that are linked to tamed nature, urban life, technological society and artifice:

> [My father] was wearing a tuxedo with a pink shirt, a bright-red bow-tie and a pink carnation. He was also wearing white-and-black spectator shoes [. . .]. (p. 49)

> My father had already gotten his black-and-white shoes muddy and scratched, and mud on his tuxedo pants and his pink shirt and even onto his forehead. He was an unusual-looking figure to be where he was. He seemed to have been dropped out of an airplane on the way to a party. (p. 55)

Beyond his inadequate attitude, the father's effeminate dress code weakens his symbolic role as the paternal figure and therefore saps the very core of the ritualistic and nostalgic motif behind the hunting game. The hunting outing unsurprisingly proves a fiasco. After several disappointing moments, the outcome is the child's anti-climactic choice of not killing the one duck that presents itself before him: "So that what I did was not shoot and lowered my gun." (p. 61). The cleft structure ironically foregrounds a non-action, while syntactical imbalance (the sentence is made up of a dangling subordinate clause and it ends on two incompatible verb forms: not shoot and lowered) blows to pieces the harmony supposedly fostered by such an idyllic moment. Furthermore, the refusal to shoot obviously goes counter to the phallic symbolism associated to gun-firing in such scenes.

The father, obviously disappointed, concludes: "'Come on, sonny boy. You've still got some growing up to do, I see.'" (p. 63). However, this authentic act of not-firing, which disrupts a fixed nostalgic myth, can be said to mark the child's real growth to maturity, his turning into a full-fledged person, into a man. A remark of the narrator's in the next paragraph might seem to sanction the father's appraisal: "And I am not interested in [. . .] causing that day to seem life-changing for me, because it surely wasn't." (p. 63). Yet, it is arguable that the absence of change in the boy's life is precisely what has enabled him to progress on the path of life: the regressive journey to idealized nature, by failing to change the boy's life back to his dreamed version of family life, has opened his eyes on the pitfalls of romantic fantasizing. Or, as underlined by Elisabeth Lamothe: "The topos of the hunting camp as a place of initiation to manhood is thus undermined in 'Calling': it is not a place where the narrator can bond with his father but one where he understands his own solitude and learns the value of perceiving reality as it is." (Lamothe 2008, p. 177). In parallel, clear-sighted writing about what remains a nostalgic memory, for all the shortcomings of the episode recounted, also seems to have helped the narrator reach greater maturity, which entails renouncing escapist attitudes: "And so

the memory [of my father] was not erased. Yet because I can tell this now, I believe that I have gone beyond it, and on to a life better than one might've imagined for me. [. . . Since] that time, I have never imagined my life in any way other than as it is." (p. 65). The modal opposition between the assertive "I can tell this [an honest account of the hunting party]" and the conjectural "a better life than one might've imagined" expresses a form of empowerment for the protagonist through clear-sightedness. And yet, throughout the story, the narrator seems strangely blind to two figures who, if truly faced, would bring him back to a more disturbing reality than that of his failed relationship with his father.

3. From Pastoral to Southern Gothic

The pastoral scene is clearly blurred by its taking place in the bayou surrounding New Orleans, "dark marshy terrain" (p. 51) into which an old *Yat*,[6] Renard Junior, serves as a guide. The first description of this character suggests his strangeness: "A small stunted-looking man with a large square head and wavy black hair and wearing coveralls was hauling canvas bags full of duck decoys down to the boat." (p. 48). Later, the duck caller is turned into an almost abnormal figure, as in: "Renard['s lips] were big and sensuous. He was already an odd-looking man, with his star shirt, his head too big for his body—a man who was probably in his forties and had just missed being a dwarf" (p. 55), and "Renard Junior unexpectedly opened his mouth with his cigarette somehow stuck to the top of his big ugly purple tongue." (p. 55). With his anomalous features, Renard seems to fit in the gallery of deformed or disfigured characters to be found in twentieth-century Southern fiction, a representative of the mode of the grotesque so characteristic of Southern Gothic. And his being brought back to the reign of animals or of things completes the process, the grotesque being also born of "the violation of basic categories [. . .], the conflict on the edges of the category system." (Cassuto 1997, pp. 6–7). "'This little *yat* rascal is Mr. Reynard Theriot, Junior,' my father said, motioning at the small, wavy-haired man. 'There's some people, in New Orleans, who know him as Fabrice, or the Fox. Or Fabree-chay. Take your pick'" (p. 48) anticipates the already quoted "the little monkey that Renard was" (p. 51).

The familiar, frozen nostalgic scene of American myth—the very embodiment of "*[r]estoration* (from *re-staure*—re-establishment) [. . .], a return to the original stasis, to the prelapsarian moment" (Boym 2001, p. 49)—is obviously disrupted by the presence of such an uncanny figure. Richard Ford says about the genre of the short story: "Finally I do like best of all stories whose necessity is the implied recognition that someplace *out there* exists an urgency—a chaos, an insanity, a misrule of some dire sort which can end life as we know it [. . .]." (qtd in Tréguer and Henry 2008, p. 149). The would-be haven *out there* in a primeval natural environment precisely turns into the locus of a disturbing encounter with a chaos and a misrule that the protagonist was trying to escape. The pastoral retreat as stasis can be said to give way to a gothic journey (Donaldson 2007).[7] As explained by Leonard Cassuto in *The Inhuman Race: The Racial Grotesque in American Literature and Culture*, "the grotesque is a floating variable in the perceptual field, shifting with the boundaries of what is known and categorized [. . .]. The experience of the grotesque is active and highly volatile" (Cassuto 1997, p. xvi); and he adds: "The grotesque is that which is in constant motion on the edges of fundamental boundaries within [a] shared system." (Ibid., p. 7). The fog that envelops the scene from the very beginning is proleptic of the way the hunting game will not have the well-defined contours of the idealized literary topos: "The morning air felt heavy and velvety, and a light fog had risen off the bayou [. . .]. The mist clung to my hands and face, and made my hair under my cap feel soiled." (p. 48). The teenager longed to make a ritualistic, highly coded experience with his father and fantasized that it would be but the initial step towards a retrieval of the fixed order of his boyhood (normality in his eyes); instead,

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[6] Definition of *The American Heritage Dictionary Online*: "A member of a lower- and middle-class segment of the white population of New Orleans." (https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=yat).

[7] Susan Donaldson in her article "Faulkner's Versions of Pastoral, Gothic, and the Sublime," opposes the two notions of "pastoral retreat" as stasis and "gothic journey" as motion.

the duck-hunting outing projects him into a space of in-betweenness, and strands him onto uncertain ground: "[The grotesque object] generates a moment of hesitation between coding and decoding and recoding, which suspends our judgment. [. . . It] challenges the fixed system of physical harmony and proportion, and reintroduces movement in the perception of reality," Marie Liénard-Yeterian explains (Liénard-Yeterian 2012, p. 98). A literally grotesque character, and thus "a figure for [one's] essential displacement" (O'Connor 1969, p. 45), Renard Junior is what the teenager's nostalgic dreams of recovered home collide head-on with, much more so than the simply ludicrous, out-of-place presence of the father.

Yet the short story goes further, as another man also seems to intrude upon the safe spaces the protagonist tries to take refuge in. This character is Dubinion, the mother's "colored boyfriend" (p. 37), whose presence in the homeplace is felt to be intolerably intrusive by the young boy, as made clear by the initial presentation of him by the narrator: "My mother [let] a tall black man who was her accompanist move into our house and into her bedroom" (p. 35). The zeugma, which plays on an unsettling combination of two elements, efficiently expresses the boy's perception of a disruption of the familiar. The somewhat childish shortcut and the boy's instinctual rejection of Dubinion might obviously appear as elements of psychological verisimilitude, since a child will tend to reject their parent's lover—whoever they may be—in the wake of a separation; however, the physical description of the lover, which emphasizes the massive presence of a black other, immediately situates the issue on a wider scale, that of racial identity. And tellingly, it is once again the uncanniness of the man that the narrator returns to again and again in his descriptions of Dubinion, whose presence in the house seems enough to cast a gothic shadow on the familiar setting:

> He was a tall, skinny, solemnly long yellow-faced Negro with sallow, moist eyes, a soft lisp and enormous, bony, pink-nailed hands he could stretch up and down a piano keyboard. [. . .] He often parked himself in our living room, drinking scotch whisky [. . .]. He usually looked at me only out of the corner of his yellow Oriental-looking eye [. . .]. (p. 42)

> [H]e played a chord in the bass clef, a spooky rumbling chord like the scary part in a movie. (p. 43)

> He was a strange, powerful man who had seen life I would never see. And I am sure I was both afraid of him and equally afraid he would detect it, which probably made me appear superior and insolent and make him dislike me. (Ibid.)

The objectifying process discernible in "[Dubinion] often parked himself in our living-room" is complemented by the suggestion of his animal dimension through the hypallage in the following description: "I could see outside through the glass door to where William Dubinion was on his knees in the monkey grass that bordered my mother's camellias." (p. 37).

The hints at the grotesqueness of the character and the presence of the word monkey lead to a super-imposition of the two peripheral characters, Dubinion and Renard; later on, the evocation of Renard's "big and sensuous [lips]" (p. 55)—a stereotypical attribute given to African Americans—and of his "dark complexion" (p. 48) confirm the matching portrait. It can thus be argued that what seems insistently to unsettle the protagonist is this reminder of the race issue in the South. For all his protestation, tellingly in passing ("It was still the race times then, and colored people were being lynched and trampled on and burnt out all over the [other] southern states. And yet it was just as likely to cause no uproar if a proper white woman appeared in public with a Negro man in our city [. . .], New Orleans" [p. 41]), racial relations are no trivial matter for the protagonist,[8] or for New

[8] As betrayed by the presupposition on which the fragment "it was just as likely to cause no uproar if a proper white woman appeared in public with a Negro man in our city" hinges: "proper white woman" takes for granted the implicit presence of the reverse adjective "improper" before "Negro man", sapping the supposed open-mindedness of New Orleans inhabitants, protagonist included.

Orleans. What the short story stages through the presence of these figures perceived on the mode of grotesque otherness is a return of the American repressed.

4. "The Past Is Never Dead. It's Not Even Past": America's Ineffable Original Sin

With its uncanny characters, its spectral fog and its atmosphere of morbid decline, in other words with its gothic imprint, the story is clearly less about a young American unsuccessfully recapturing a lost idealized past than about America's guilty past coming back to haunt him as a young sensitive Southerner. There is great irony in the fact that nostalgia seeks a return to the idealized side of the familiar, while the uncanny consists in the return of the darker side of the familiar which has been repressed. Freud theorized the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) as "that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar, [. . . something] that ought to have remained hidden and secret, and yet comes to light" (qtd in Savoy 2002, p. 171). The insisting presence of the gothic in American fiction and in Southern Literature in particular through what is known as Southern Gothic has more precisely been interpreted by critics as the expression of a return of the historical repressed, which comes to challenge the complacencies of the enlightened American project and its progressive ideology. As expounded by Eric Savoy in "The Rise of American Gothic," "American gothic narratives [. . .] express a profound anxiety about historical crimes and perverse human desires that cast their shadow over what many would like to be the sunny American Republic" (Savoy 2002, p. 168). Those historical crimes are, first and foremost, the institution of slavery and the spoliation and massacre of the native inhabitants.[9]

And indeed, everything falls into place when, in this story set in the South, the natural setting associated with the topos of the ritualistic hunting party—the same pristine Eden-like setting the early settlers in quest for a lost innocence pined for—actually turns to be the "dark marshy terrain that is the Grand Lake and is in Plaquemines Parish and seems the very end of the earth." (p. 51). The hackneyed simile of sunset as fire takes on added meaning when the sky turns "a dense, warm luminous red at the horizon, as if a fire was burning at the far edge of the marsh" (p. 58). The longed-for paradise regained is nothing but a hell-like place, "a flat black treeless expanse that ended in darkness" (p. 49), "a great surface of gray-brown water broken by low, yellow-grass islands where it smelled like tar and vegetation decomposing, and where the mud was blue-black and adhesive and rank-smelling." (Ibid.). In such a context, the two peripheral figures of Renard Junior and Dubinion, perceived on a freakish or monstrous mode, are central because of their revealing role. Indeed, as is well-known, the grotesque mode is primarily used for its capacity to show hidden truths: the etymology of the adjective "monstrous" goes back to the Latin *monstrum* < *monstrare*—to show. Renard and Dubinion serve as markers of the country's darker historical truths, in total opposition to the Edenic myth on which it laid its foundations. "Gothic images in America [. . .] suggest the attraction and repulsion of a monstrous history," Savoy explains (Savoy 2002, p. 169). Exaggerated distortion is what allows for greater clarity of vision. As famously put by Flannery O'Connor: "to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost blind you draw large and startling figures." (O'Connor 1969, pp. 33–34).[10]

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[9] Leslie Fiedler, in *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1966), writes: "Our literature as a whole at times seems a chamber of horrors disguised as an amusement park 'fun house', where we pay to play at terror and are confronted in the innermost chamber with a series of inter-reflecting mirrors which present us with a thousand versions of our own face [. . .]. Through these gothic images are projected certain obsessive concerns of our national life: the ambiguity of our relationship with Indian and Negro, the ambiguity of the Encounter with the nature, the guilt of the revolutionist who feels himself a parricide . . . " (qtd in Liénard-Yeterian 2012, p. 81).

[10] The full quote, in keeping with Flannery O'Connor's religious perspective on a modern secular world which has lost all sense of evil, reads: "The novelist with Christian concerns will find in modern life distortions which are repugnant to him, and his problem will be to make these appear as distortions to an audience which is used to seeing them as natural; and he may well be forced to take ever more violent means to get his vision across to this hostile audience. When you can assume that your audience holds the same beliefs you do, you can relax a little and use more normal ways of talking to it; when you have to assume that it does not, then you have to make your vision apparent by shock—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost blind you draw large and startling figures."

The half-dozen references to the hunters' blind, that is their hiding place (pp. 53–59), are certainly no coincidence, nor is the fact that it is Renard's eyes that are said to be "penetrating." (p. 48).

"Calling" is the third story in a collection entitled *A Multitude of Sins*. The expression "A multitude of" clearly downplays the gravity of the sins committed, and the book indeed presents mostly commonplace characters engaged in petty transgressions. And if it can be argued that the book first and foremost foregrounds the sin of adultery, the latter is admittedly treated on a casual mode. However, through a subtle and tight network of allusions and symbols which it would be too long to detail here, the capital sins of America are exposed.[11] Moreover, the volume, with its nine short stories and its final novella entitled "Abyss," has been shown by critics to borrow its structure from Dante's *The Inferno*,[12] each of the first nine stories corresponding to one of Dante's circles of hell. It is telling that the first explicit references to this hypotext are precisely to be found in "Calling," in two passages respectively involving the disruptive characters of Dubinion (pp. 42–43) and Renard (p. 49).[13] The first passage is particularly interesting:

> The one thing I remember [Dubinion] saying to me was during the days before I went with my father to the marsh that Christmas [. . .] I came into the great shadowy living-room where [. . .] my mother had established a large Christmas tree with blinking lights and a gold star on top. I had a copy of *The Inferno*, which I had decided to read over the holidays [. . .].
>
> "That's a pretty good book," he said in his soft lisping voice, and stared right at me in a way that felt accusatory.
>
> "It's written in Italian," I said. "It's a poem about going to hell."
>
> "So is that where you expect to go?"
>
> "No," I said. "I don't."
>
> "'*Per me si va nella citta dolente. Per me si va nell'eterno dolore*.'" (pp. 42–43)

Not only does the dialogue betray the teenager's patronizing stance (he obviously takes for granted that Dubinion is unlettered, showing his difficulty shaking off preconceived representations), but the passage interestingly pits Dante's *The Inferno* against the ritualistic celebration of Christmas, all complete with the decorated tree. In Western culture in general, and anglo-saxon culture in particular, Christmas time is arguably a moment imbued with nostalgic longing, with its celebration not only of the birth of Christ but also of family unity shared in the warmth of home; and the protagonist's mother is shown to cling to this chimera even in the face of family dissolution. Christmas is also a celebration predicated on a lie: that of the existence of Santa Claus, who eventually rewards all children, reassured that they are indeed well-behaved and on the side of good.

This element calls for one last argument. What the story also does is question the white South's historical propensity to believe in myth, its collective restorative nostalgic bias, as attested by its capacity to withdraw into fantasies of a glorious past. This the South did after military defeat in 1865 and the humiliating period of Reconstruction, when there surfaced a cult of antebellum splendor; just as the South was deemed the New South, it retreated into a legendary vision of itself, wrote a "comforting collective script" through the creation of "a delusionary homeland" (Boym 2001, pp. 42–43), that of a golden Old South "gone with the wind." This it also did when, in the late 1920s, a group of famous Southern writers known as The Agrarians published a manifesto: *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*, that extolled the South's rural way of life in opposition to the rampant

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[11] See Gay (2007, pp. 59–62). Through a network of allusions woven between the various stories, Ford refers to America's guilt towards the Indians and African Americans, but also alludes to the nation's responsibility in the elaboration of the atomic bomb.

[12] See in particular Tréguer and Henry's book *Lectures de Richard Ford: A Multitude of Sins*, pp. 81, 174 and 181–82.

[13] The only other explicit reference is to be found in the story "Charity" (*A Multitude of Sins*, Ford 2001) on page 188.

industrialization of their region. The very title of this text betrays the potentially arresting power of nostalgia when it becomes a reactionary political tool. Faulkner, for all his ambivalence toward his region and his attachment to the outward signs of past Southern splendor,[14] never shared the Agrarians' romantic vision of a pastoral South, and at that same period, was producing the masterpieces that contributed to the flourishing of Southern Gothic (*Sanctuary*, *Light in August*, or later *Absalom! Absalom!*). Faulkner thus seems to fit Svetlana Boym's definition of the "modern nostalgic" as someone who can be "homesick and sick of home, at once." (Boym 2001, p. 50). Of Renard Junior, the narrator's father says: "'If you drive the streets of Chalmette, Louisiana, sonny, you'll see men and women and children who're all actually blood-related to Mr. Fabrice, standing in their little postage-stamp yards wearing hip boots with unlighted Picayunes in their mouths just like you see now.'" (p. 55). It is telling that it is precisely through this character that Ford seems to pay homage to Faulkner, who famously explained that one day, he had "discovered that [his] own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about," (Faulkner 1956, p. 27) and who spent his tormented career painting it with the most horrid and somber gothic hues, acknowledging in one of his late books, *Requiem for a Nun*: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." (Faulkner 1996, p. 85).

When he saw that his first novel, *A Piece of My Heart* (1976), which borrowed from Southern gothic, led critics to compare him with Faulkner, Mississippi-born Richard Ford decided to shun his Southern legacy: "I always wanted my books to exist outside the limits of so-called Southern writing. [. . . T]he people who wrote about the novel all said that it was a Southern novel, and I just said, Okay, that's it. No more Southern writing for me." (Lee 1996, p. 229). And with a touch of humor, he found himself another excuse: "Fortunately [Eudora Welty and William Faulkner] have written about my birthplace so well, that I don't ever have to worry about it. Mississippi is well on the literary map." (Barton 2003, n.p.). Richard Ford indeed went on mostly to write about the West—*Rock Springs* (1987),[15] *Wildlife* (1990)—and the Northeast (The Franck Bascombe Trilogy—1986–2014), venturing even into Mexico (The Ultimate Good Luck—1981) and Canada (Canada—2012). Similarly, the stories of *A Multitude of Sins* have various settings, all but two of which are not Southern.[16] Yet the short story studied here proves that the call of Southern history is something Ford has not always been able to ignore. In the wake of his illustrious predecessor, Ford returns to a guilty past that is not even past; or, to borrow Philip Weinstein's formulation about Faulkner, Ford hears "the call of a past that refuse[s] to pass." (Weinstein 2010, p. 7).

5. Conclusions

When he starts his retrospective narration, the narrator of "Calling" already knows that his prayer, as a teenager, that his father would come back and that their life "would begin to be as it had been" (p. 64) is the expression of a chimera. The detailed narration of the failed duck-hunting episode never leaves much space to naïve hope, the nostalgic dream of returning to a perfect moment and place in the past being clearly shown to be delusive. From the standpoint of adulthood, the narrator is able to analyze life's inexorable pull away from an ideal reality:

> Life had already changed [before that day]. That morning represented only the first working out of particulars I would evermore observe. Like my father, I am a lawyer. And the law is a calling which teaches you that most of life is about adjustments, the seatings and reseatings

[14] One thinks here of Faulkner's house Rowan Oak, built in the colonial style and redolent of the typical plantation house with its cedar-lined drive and its large white columns, a house he acquired in early 1930 and spent his life working on.

[15] The last story in this collection, "Communist" (*Rock Springs*, Ford 1987, pp. 215–35), already stages a hunting outing, this time between a teenager and his mother's boyfriend, an episode to which the teenager returns as adult narrator twenty-five years later.

[16] "Puppy" (*A Multitude of Sins*, Ford 2001, pp. 77–110), another story whose action is set in New Orleans, tellingly reproduces the motif of the uncanny and the return of the repressed, this time through the figure of a small puppy that intrudes upon the protagonists' sacred homeplace and becomes an eerie presence, a network of allusions here again making of class and race relations a subtext to the story.

> we perform to accommodate events occurring outside our control and over which we might not have sought control in the first place. So that when we are tempted, as I was for an instant in the duck blind, or as I was through all those thirty years, to let myself be preoccupied and angry with my father, [. . .] I try to realize again that it is best just to offer myself release and to realize I am feeling anger all alone, and that there is no redress. We want it. Life can be seen to be almost nothing else sometimes than our wish for redress. As a lawyer who was the son of a lawyer and the grandson of another, I know this. And I also know not to expect it. (pp. 63–64)

However, this observant man does not realize that choosing the same profession as his father and his grandfather is yet another way of desperately clinging to the past. He also seems unable to widen his analysis and to envision the broader meaning of his private story. Although, according to Svetlana Boym, "reflective nostalgia has a capacity to awaken multiple planes of consciousness" (Boym 2001, p. 50), the narrator proves unable to see "the patina of time and history" that this kind of nostalgia lingers on (Ibid., p. 41). He indeed never shows any explicit awareness that the past as idealized homeland to which Americans are irresistibly tempted to return, as in the fabled stories involving a nostalgic relationship to pristine nature or to the Old South as antebellum Arcadia, is the fake past of myth, a myth that erases the darker truth. Surprisingly, the lawyer-narrator also fails to envisage the need for redress of the victims of American history.

In fact, referring to the characters of Renard Junior and Dubinion as little more than elements of the *décor*, and keeping them to the margins of the text, as it were, might well be a self-protecting attitude on the part of the protagonist-narrator, each reference to them betraying their strongly disturbing effect on him. These grotesque figures embody the burden of a guilty past—Southern, American and universal—irresistibly returning to the surface with the haunting force of the uncanny, that strangeness that catches the most innocent unaware, and forever unsettles them as it refers them back to their familiar yet repressed selves:

> I looked at Renard Junior [after not shooting the duck. [. . .] He looked at me and made a strange face, a face I'd never seen but will never forget. He smiled and began to bat his eyelids in fast succession, and then he raised his two hands, palms up to the level of his eyes, as if he expected something to fall down into them. I don't know what that gesture meant, though I have thought of it often—sometimes in the middle of the night when my sleep is disturbed. Derision I think; or possibly it meant he merely didn't know why I hadn't shot the duck and was awaiting my answer. Or possibly it was something else, some sign whose significance I would never know. Fabrice [Renard Junior] was a strange man. No one would have doubted it. (p. 62)

It falls upon the reader to carry on the reflective process, and precisely to see themselves in the mirror that is held out to them; and because "*[r]e-flection* suggests new flexibility, not the reestablishment of stasis" (Boym 2001, p. 49), they too must accept to be displaced from their comfortable landmarks and certainties in the process.

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Article

Atoning for Nostalgia in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*

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Abstract: Many critics have pointed out the ambiguities of *Atonement*, a postmodernist anti-nostalgic novel that brings to the fore all the traditional *topoi* of Englishness in order better to denounce them as sham. In *Atonement*, the nostalgic longing is linked to the desire of Briony (the protagonist/narrator) for a return to a state of innocence which, I will argue through a close analysis of the text and its recurring images, is as much an atoning for her crime as a longing to be at-one in a state of harmony. Literally utopian, this nostalgic longing appears as a fantasy of omnipotence by an immature ego. Yet Briony's being born into a writer entails a facing of the other within the self, an atoning for her nostalgic bias, not by erasing it, but by acknowledging her full responsibility in it, a process the reader is also invited to go through. From a regressive quest, nostalgia thus turns into an opening to otherness and to new potentialities. The unbridgeable gap between nostalgic desire and its fulfilment is what fuels our longing, keeps us alive and allows for creation.

Keywords: nostalgia; Ian McEwan; *Atonement*; ethics; responsibility

1. Introduction

"All day long, she realized, she had been feeling strange, and seeing strangely, as though everything was already long in the past, made more vivid by posthumous ironies she could not quite grasp" (McEwan 2001, p. 50). Cecilia Tallis's words[1] in the first part of *Atonement*, Ian McEwan's famous 2001 novel, seem to encapsulate the novel's ambiguous position as regards nostalgia, and the strange feeling and vision it creates in the reader. Indeed, the novel, which McEwan himself, in an interview with Jeff Giles in *Newsweek*, refers to as his "Jane Austen novel, [his] country-house novel" (Giles 2002, p. 62), at once conjures up the leisurely atmosphere of a traditional English country-house just before the outbreak of the Second World War and forces us to look at it with a postmodernist ironical eye; the memory is made more vivid in order better to dissolve its object and enhance its ghostly presence. *Atonement* may thus be seen as an aporia: a postmodernist anti-nostalgic novel which yet plays with the reader's nostalgic bias. Yet is *Atonement*, properly speaking, a postmodernist novel? McEwan himself said: "I think that I'm always drawn to some kind of balance between a fiction that is self-reflective on its processes, and one that has a forward impetus too, that will completely accept the given terms of the illusion of fiction" (Reynolds and Jonathan 2001, p. 20). Laura Marcus comments: "The achievement of *Atonement* is to bring these two dimensions together so seamlessly, and to integrate the 'forward impetus' with the 'posthumous ironies' of retrospective narration" (Marcus 2013, p. 84). The bringing together of two seemingly antithetical positions does not only bear on the suspension of disbelief necessary to referential illusion and its postmodernist metafictional debunking, but also on the novel's particular stance towards nostalgia.

[1] Or more accurately Briony's since she is the real author of the part, as we learn in the coda.

The disjunction inherent in nostalgia, a being here and now while longing to be there and then, is somehow doubled in the very form of the novel, in which the postmodernist coda makes us look back to the three previous parts and maybe long for lost innocence. As J. Hillis Miller writes: "That doubling required a new reading in the light of dismaying revelation. I needed to superimpose a disillusioned reading on the first innocent one [. . .]. My trauma has turned me into that much-maligned thing, a suspicious reader" (Miller 2013, p. 99).

Atonement creates a disjunctive experience for the reader, one that is shared with Briony Tallis, the protagonist and, as is revealed in the final twist, the narrator of all four parts of the novel: as we learn in the coda, the novel was in fact written by an elderly Briony as an attempt to atone for the crime she committed as a little girl, and published posthumously when all the people involved in that crime are dead.[2] Indeed, the first part tells, from various points of view, the events of the summer, 1935, that led Briony, a young girl with a fertile imagination, to wrongly accuse Robbie Turner, the Tallises' cleaning-lady's son taken under the father's patronage, of rape against Lola, Briony's young cousin. The day culminates with Robbie's arrest, brought about by Briony's former misapprehension of a situation she does not understand: the incipient love between her older sister, Cecilia, and Robbie, which she interprets as the sexual assault of a maniac on her sister. Part 2 takes us to the North of France where a wounded Robbie, discharged after a three-year imprisonment on condition he joins the British army forces, tries, along with two other English soldiers, to reach Dunkirk where soldiers are being evacuated, and eventually closes his eyes on the beach. Part 3, set in a London hospital where Briony has enrolled as a nurse, following in her elder sister's footsteps, overlaps Part 2 as it describes, from Briony's point of view, the arrival of wounded soldiers from the front in the summer of 1940. Briony tries to atone for her crime and attempts reconciliation with Cecilia and Robbie who ask her to write a signed statement retracting her evidence and clearing Robbie's name. The initials at the end of Part 3, BT London 1999, and the coda, Briony's first person narrative, prove the three parts we have just read to be Briony's substitute for this statement, a novel whose final draft we have just read, with previous ones—we learn—having admitted to Robbie's death in Dunkirk and Cecilia's in the bombings of London.

The nostalgic impulse, the looking back into the past is therefore clearly linked to Briony's desire to return to innocence. It illustrates the Kantian interpretation of nostalgia as reworded by Jean Starobinski:

> What a person wishes to recover is not so much the actual *place* where he passed his childhood but his youth itself. He is not straining toward something which he can repossess, but toward an age that is forever beyond his reach. (Starobinski 1966, p. 94)

Starobinski further emphasizes the literally utopian dimension of nostalgia by relating it to the Platonic myth of the celestial home and terrestrial exile: "This painful experience, provoked by the uprooting of the conscience from its familiar surroundings, became the metaphorical expression of a much more profound rupture, the separation of man from the ideal" (Starobinski 1966, p. 95). This seems to make the nostalgia experienced by Briony fall into the scope of "restorative nostalgia" as defined by Svetlana Boym: "*Restoration* (from *re-staure*—re-establishment) signifies a return to the original stasis, to the prelapsarian moment" (Boym 2001, p. 49). Nostalgia is thus to be linked with atonement defined in Catholic theology as "the exemplifying of human oneness with God", and therefore with the ambivalence of a novel in which we may feel manipulated by a narrator wishing to exonerate herself and recover her lost innocence, or in which we may empathize with her sincere, though impossible, attempt to atone for her crime. In other words, is nostalgia in *Atonement* a regressive and dangerous quest for oneness or an honest confrontation with the past and with otherness (that of

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[2] "The posthumous ironies she could not quite grasp" Cecilia mentions may thus be read as a metatextual hint pointing to the ironies the reader will only be able to grasp on a second reading.

others and that of the self) to move into the future? To take up Svetlana Boym's distinction, is it more akin to restorative nostalgia or to reflective nostalgia? According to Boym:

> Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. (Boym 2001, p. 41)

> Nostalgia of the first type gravitates toward collective pictorial symbols and oral culture. Nostalgia of the second type is more oriented toward an individual narrative that savors details and memorial signs, perpetually deferring homecoming itself. If restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space. Restorative nostalgia takes itself dead seriously. Reflective nostalgia on the other hand, can be ironic and humorous. It reveals that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another, as affective memories do not absolve one from compassion, judgement or critical reflection. (Boym 2001, pp. 49–50)

I will contend that *Atonement* manages to preserve a necessary distance and to hold together nostalgic desire and its constant deferring. Atonement, for Briony and the reader, is not the erasing of otherness to restore blissful oneness but at-one-ment[3], the very fragmentation of the word opening up unity to plurality, oneness to otherness. Making the reader, along with Briony, acknowledge their nostalgic longing and its impossible fulfilment opens the path to creation. Atoning for nostalgia is a dynamic process, a maturation that brings Briony and the reader away from the fixed laws of morality to deliver them onto the more complex grounds of ethics.

As an individual work of memory and tentative reconstruction—as revealed in the coda—*Atonement* definitely belongs to "reflective nostalgia" and the temptation to reconstruct an idyllic collective Englishness is at once called up and dismissed. After briefly delineating the postmodernist anti-nostalgic dimension of *Atonement*, I shall point to the disjunction introduced by nostalgia, to eventually suggest that the novel's paradoxical stance towards nostalgia may be read as an invitation to atone for the nostalgic bias and be at-one with the past, however other, so as to turn regression into progression, protectiveness into opening.

2. A Postmodernist Anti-Nostalgic Novel

As Briony remarks on coming back to the Tallises' estate—now turned into a hotel—to celebrate her seventy-seventh birthday with her family: "There was no need to be nostalgic—it was always an ugly place" (p. 363). From the very beginning indeed, the country-house is presented as a vulgar neo-Gothic pastiche of the original Adam-style house which burnt down in the late 1880s and of which only remain an artificial lake and island with "a crumbling stuccoed temple" (p. 19), an architectural folly that testifies to the neo-classical taste fashionable in British late 18th-century gardens. The embedding of artifacts that betray a longing for civilizations long past emphasizes the universal nostalgic impulse better to debunk it. Far from being the hallmark of a long aristocratic English lineage, the house, bought by Briony's grandfather, is the recent acquisition of a nouveau riche, very much like the d'Ubervilles' mansion in Hardy's *Tess*. Appearances, as the novel keeps reminding us, are deceptive. *Atonement* refuses any collusion with the conservative politics of nostalgia considered by Alistair Duckworth as underpinning the country-house genre: "the estate as an ordered physical structure is a metonym for other inherited structures—society as a whole, a code of morality,

[3] Ian McEwan himself plays with the etymological breaking up of the word. In an interview with the author published in *The Guardian*, on 16 September 2001, Kellaway (2001) writes: "Almost as an afterthought, I mention 'atonement' itself, a difficult concept for an atheist such as McEwan. For him, it is about a 'reconciliation with self'. I like the word, I say. He does too. He was looking at it one day when he saw, suddenly, how it came apart: at-one-ment".

a body of manners, a system of language".[4] Such interpretation is carried further by critics like Paul Gilroy who see there a "British postcolonial melancholia", "the shock and anxiety that followed from the loss of any sense that the national collective was bound by a coherent and distinctive culture".[5]

Likewise, Gilroy considers that the fascination for WW2 is a symptom of the "British postcolonial melancholia": "making the anti-Nazi war a privileged point of entry into national identity and self-understanding reveals a desire to find a way back to a point where the national culture was both comprehensible and habitable".[6] The fascination for the so-called "miracle of deliverance" of Dunkirk is part of the myth-making around WW2 which traditionally turns a defeat into victory and an example of national solidarity. However, the representation of the Dunkirk evacuation in *Atonement* is a far cry from this nostalgic return to a moment of national union, as the episode of the RAF pilot lynched by British soldiers testifies to. To the idealized image of a float of civilian and military boats coming from everywhere to rescue British soldiers, McEwan substitutes that of three privates bogged down in the lanes of France and eventually stranded on a Dunkirk beach where no boats are in sight:

> *But there were no boats*, *apart from* one upturned whaler in the distant surf. It was low tide and almost a mile to the water's edge. *There were no boats* by the long jetty. [. . .] They waited, but *there was nothing* in sight, *unless* you counted in those smudges on the horizon—boats burning after an air attack. *There was nothing* that could reach the beach in hours. But the troops stood there, facing the horizon in their tin hats, rifles lifted above the waves. From this distance they looked as placid as cattle. (pp. 247–48)

The repetitions here enhance the vacancy and lost hopes, all the more so as the concessive constructions only point to ruin and destruction. The valiant lions have been turned into placid cattle, action has been turned into petrification. Nostalgia for a national historical British past, be it through the ideal of the country-house or of union in the face of evil, is therefore invalidated by the novel.

The coherent and distinctive culture mentioned by Gilroy is nevertheless part and parcel of the pleasure we experience reading the first part of *Atonement*, which abounds in literary references to English classics, from Shakespeare to James and Woolf, including Richardson, Waugh, and of course Austen. The nostalgic dimension of such pleasure cannot be denied as it feels like moving into a familiar and comforting environment; as Ian McEwan said in a recent interview: "all of us readers have a kind of literary furniture we move around [. . .] Books shape our consciousness and we read and write through them" (Guignery 2018).[7] However, the postmodernist metatextual references, Briony's reflection on her writing and her desire to emulate Woolf, the inclusion in the third part of Cyril Connolly's rejection letter of Briony's manuscript discussing its literary merits and shortcomings, also draw the readers' attention to the constructedness of the literary artefact, thereby making them self-aware of their nostalgic indulgence. Connolly's advice to Briony to let go of the Woolfian influence in order to create "a sense of forward movement" (p. 312) may be seen as an echo of McEwan's remark about "the giants on the writer's shoulder": "imitate, write pastiche, and then free yourself from them" (Guignery 2018).[8] In order to move forward, both writer and reader need to disentangle themselves from a reverential attitude towards the past.

The circular structure of the novel, which opens on the preparation for Briony's play, *The Trials of Arabella*, and ends on its long-postponed performance 64 years later in the very same room where it was initially meant to be performed, is revealing of the novel's staging of nostalgia. Indeed, the frame around the story draws the reader's attention to the fabricated nature of the stories. Briony's first play is indeed a child's sentimental story of love, retribution and atonement with a God-like author

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4 Quoted in (Quarrie 2015, p. 194).
5 Paul Gilroy, *After Empire*, quoted in (Quarrie 2015, p. 193).
6 Ibid, 89, quoted in (Quarrie 2015, p. 201).
7 This was during an unpublished interview with Vanessa Guignery on 21 May 2018 for the "Assises Internationales du Roman" organized by the Villa Gillet in Lyon (France).
8 This is also a personal transcription of that same interview.

who judiciously rewards the meritorious and punishes the wicked. But the play never gets to be performed, its perfectly ordered world being constantly thwarted by the insisting demands of a real world where no such unerring justice and righteousness is possible. What Briony manages to achieve is everything that is peripheral to the performance: the design of the posters, programmes, tickets, i.e., the packaging that allows the selling of the illusion while clearly designating it as illusion. Thus, the very first sentence of the novel works as a metafictional warning to the reader:

> The play—for which Briony had designed the posters, programmes and tickets, constructing the sales booth out of a folding screen tipped on its side, and lined the collection box in red crêpe paper—was written in a two-day tempest of composition, causing her to miss a breakfast and a lunch. (p. 3)

This is apparent in the very syntax since the main information is presented as secondary, contained within a long peripheral cumulative clause which comes to overweigh the main clause with its end-focus on meals rather than creation. When the play is eventually performed, Briony has become a well-known author able to look critically on her first literary attempt, while a part of herself very much remains the little girl she was then: "Suddenly, she was right there before me, that busy, priggish, conceited girl, and she was not dead either, for when people tittered appreciatively at 'evanesce' my feeble heart—ridiculous vanity!—made a little leap" (p. 367).

As suggested in the introduction, the nostalgic impulse indeed very much revolves around the ambivalent character of Briony and her longing for a time of innocence, a time that is not only out of reach but may well never have existed The utopian dimension of nostalgia emphasized by Starobinski is linked to a regressive attitude: "nostalgia no longer designates the loss of one's native land, but the return towards the stages in which desire did not have to take account of external obstacles and was not condemned to defer its realization" (Starobinski 1966, p. 103). Like Briony, the reader is invited to revisit the past, not so as to mythologize it and create fixedness but to be able to cast a critical eye both on the past and the present or, to take up Svetlana Boym's distinction, to experience a "reflective" rather than a "restorative" form of nostalgia. But this creates in both Briony and the reader a disjunctive experience.

3. Nostalgic Disjunction

> Reading these letters at the end of an exhausting day, Briony felt a dreamy nostalgia, a vague yearning for a long-lost life. She could hardly feel sorry for herself. She was the one who had cut herself off from home. In the week's holiday after preliminary training, before the probationer year began, she had stayed with her uncle and aunt in Primrose Hill, and had resisted her mother on the telephone. Why could Briony not visit, even for a day, when everyone would adore to see her and was desperate for stories about her new life? And why did she write so infrequently? It was difficult to give a straight answer. For now it was necessary to stay away. (p. 279)

Briony's need to stay away from the family place of her childhood despite her nostalgic longing appears as an inability to cope with the ruptures that took place there between her innocent and her knowing selves, between her idealized and her guilty selves. Her present is haunted by the past, and she is at once here and there, an experience which, according to Annika Lems, is characteristic of nostalgia:

> Haunted by the somewhat spectral experience of encountering one's former self but from the point of view of the here and now, nostalgia itself could perhaps best be described as a disjointed experience. [. . .] the sense of rupture that causes the pain in nostalgia stands for discontinuity between self and world". (Lems 2016, p. 434)

Briony's nostalgia is for a self before the fall, but the guilty self cannot be dismissed and prevents her being in the world now. Scrubbing the hospital lockers, bedframes and floors cannot wash the

stain off her hands: "Whatever skivvying or humble nursing she did, and however well or hard she did it, whatever illumination in tutorial she had relinquished, or lifetime moment on a college lawn, she would never undo the damage. She was unforgivable" (p. 285). Like Lady Macbeth, Briony is well aware that "what's done cannot be undone" (Vi, 45). There is no reconnecting with the past innocent girl she once was, as her vain attempt to call her father proves:

> The switchboard put her through to a helpful nasal voice, and then the connection was broken and she had to start again. The same happened, and on her third attempt the line went dead as soon as a voice said—Trying to connect you. (p. 286)

But it seems that, more than the father, it is the mother who represents that lost unity Briony longs for. Emily Tallises' complacent overenthusiasm on reading the play Briony has just finished goes together with a nostalgia for the time when Briony was still a part of her mother, depending on her:

> She took her daughter in her arms, onto her lap—ah, that hot smooth little body she remembered from its infancy, and still not gone from her, not quite yet—and said that the play was 'stupendous' [. . .]. (p. 4)

Of course, these are supposedly Emily's thoughts, but as we know, they are actually the thoughts Briony has allocated her; hence they may well betray Briony's own longing for "[. . .] the archetypal image of harmony or oneness; a state of archaic partial identity [. . .]" (Peters 1985, p. 135) which Roderick Peters traces as the origins of nostalgia. As the narrator remarks, pointing at the importance of this moment of fusion with her mother which can only be remembered with nostalgia for the irretrievable: "Briony was hardly to know it then, but this was the project's highest point of fulfilment. Nothing came near it for satisfaction, all else was dreams and frustration" (p. 4). Briony's longing for a state of innocence coalesces with the desire for a lost state of being characterized by the absence of conflict and struggle. The violence of her being thrown into the adult world through her reading Robbie's explicitly sexual note to Cecilia, her witnessing the love-making scene between Cecilia and Robbie and her arriving on the scene of Lola's rape may well result in a traumatic severing from the mother and surface in the image of "a disembodied human leg" (p. 161) as seen by Briony through the window frame and which turns out to be Emily's leg. The fragmentation of the mother's body is a graphic representation of this lost integrity, all the more so as it is echoed by the leg in the tree observed by Robbie at the beginning of Part 3, the leg of an innocent child caught in his sleep and which haunts Robbie, alias Briony, as he is dying on the Dunkirk beach, feeling guilty for not saving that child. The other traumatic image that haunts Robbie is, unsurprisingly, that of the mother and child "vaporised" (p. 239) in a Stuka attack. Thus, the guilt felt by Briony may be compounded with a traumatic and violent separation from the mother/infant union, a paradise myth of perfect harmony where the other is the perfect provider. Emily Tallis, though, hardly qualifies as this perfect provider, for her migraines confine her to her room, and she delegates her motherly role to her eldest daughter, even her Mrs. Ramsay-like dinner proving a failure.

Neumann's analysis of nostalgia as a manifestation of "uroboric phantasy" is revealing for he defines it as "the sort of phantasy taken by an infantile ego threatened by an unacceptable and annihilating feeling of lost omnipotence [. . .]. For the uroboric position involves a hunger for powerfulness so that the blissful state be maintained"[9] (Peters 1985, pp. 136–37). Such a definition cannot but call to mind Briony's desire for control, a control which quickly proves to be an illusion as it constantly runs against the desires of others, the cousins from the North or the adults' own preoccupations. As the young Briony soon learns, others cannot be reduced to the One. However, we may wonder whether the elderly Briony, who writes all the parts and enters her characters' minds, has really outgrown this omnipotent immature ego by being able to consider others' positions or

[9] Neumann, E. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949; quoted in (Peters 1985).

whether she is trying to recapture her lost blissful powerfulness. In other words, is Briony's atonement, her attempt to make her doubly disjointed nostalgic self one, a regressive nostalgic return to the One or a nostalgic quest that can open onto the otherness of others and of the self? What is apparent anyway is that this atonement, this restoration of continuity in the nostalgic disjunction can only be achieved through writing: "And at a time when she was cut off from everything she knew—family, home, friends—writing was the thread of continuity. It was what she had always done" (p. 280).

4. Atoning for Nostalgia

By writing the various drafts of her novel, Briony is trying to atone for her crime, but as she admits at the end, the omnipotent position of the writer makes this a self-defeating attempt:

> The problem these fifty-nine years has been this: how can a novelist achieve atonement when, with her absolute power of deciding outcomes, she is also God? There is no one, no entity or higher form that she can appeal to, or be reconciled with, or that can forgive her. There is nothing outside her. In her imagination she has set the limits and the terms. No atonement for God, or novelists, even if they are atheists. It was always an impossible task, and that was precisely the point. The attempt was all. (p. 371)

If acknowledging the godly power of the novelist makes any permanent and unquestionable forgiveness impossible, it yet places responsibility for forgiveness and reconciliation in the sinner herself. No omnipotent God, as in her play, can conveniently substitute for private responsibility. Briony's rewriting of her past is not a simple erasing of her wrongdoing, a nostalgic return to a state of innocence, but an attempt to come to terms with her crime and with the girl that committed this crime. She needs to look at the other within the self, that part of her which she might have wished to forget but which yet was, and still is, as she admits when watching the play, part of herself. Briony needs to be at-one with all the facets of herself, even the least glorious ones, even the manipulative and conceited selves. She also needs to atone for her nostalgic bias, to reconcile past and present, but this requires "[. . .] a ceaseless re-negotiation of who [she was, is] and will become" (Lems 2016, p. 435).[10] According to Boym, this is what reflective nostalgia implies: "Reflective nostalgia doesn't lead back to the lost homeland but to that sense of anarchic responsibility[11] toward others as well as to the *rendezvous* with oneself" (Boym 2001, p. 342). Writing is not so much akin to confession as to analysis, motivated by "a passion for autonomy, integration, individuation and realization of self" (Peters 1985, p. 145), and nostalgia, together with guilt, is the triggering factor. As Peters writes: "Nostalgia aims towards individuation inasmuch as its pain provides an impulsion to do something, and in some people, that something is the grueling work of individuation" (Peters 1985, p. 145).

If "large quantities of unwillingly suffered nostalgia are a manifestation of problems in the area of oneness/separation and omnipotence/helplessness" (Peters 1985, p. 144), it seems that Briony is in the process of completing this process of individuation as the coda, a first-person narrative, proves that she is eventually speaking in her own voice, acknowledging her power of invention, taking full responsibility for the creation of alternative and contradictory versions of reality that coexist, and for her choice, explicitly asserted, of a happy ending:

> I like to think that it isn't weakness or evasion, but a final act of kindness, a stand against oblivion and despair, to let my lovers live and to unite them at the end. I gave them happiness,

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[10] Annika Lems writes: "[. . .] far from being an attempt at escaping the present, the nostalgic experience is in fact determined by an ambiguous interplay between self, time and place—by a constant switch back and forth in time and place and by a ceaseless re-negotiation of who we were, are and will become".

[11] "Emmanuel Lévinas speaks about ethics as a particular 'attentiveness to what is occasionally human in men'. He calls it 'anarchic responsibility'—that is, responsibility for the other individual in the present moment and 'justified by no prior commitment'. [. . .] Anarchic responsibility foregrounds the distinctions between individual home and collective homeland" (Boym 2001, pp. 337–38).

> but I was not so self-serving as to let them forgive me. Not quite, not yet. If I had the power to conjure them at my birthday celebration . . . Robbie and Cecilia, still alive, still in love, sitting side by side in the library, smiling at *The Trials of Arabella?* It's not impossible.
>
> But now I must sleep. (p. 372)

The proviso made at the end of the first paragraph, and the repetition of the amphibological *still* which signals the lovers' persistence, but also their existing as still images, caught in deathly perfection—*still alive* is somehow an oxymoronic phrase signaling death-in-life or life-in-death—confirm Briony's lucidity about the mechanisms of nostalgic reconstruction and her being able to sustain both belief and non-belief, a position perfectly translated in the last sentence where belief is expressed through a double negation.[12] Like a dream, which might be expected from sleep, the version is at once imaginary and true, true to the psychology of the dreamer but calling, or not, for analysis. Hence, if the ending of the novel may be seen again as regression to a wishful unity (the lovers reunited and present in the family reunion), it is yet a conscious nostalgic longing that is not taken in by its illusory nature. And the ellipsis, signaled by the three dots, leaves a space for the reader's own imaginings, which may prove restorative or not. Along with Briony, the reader is invited to experience reflective nostalgia, to turn regressive into progressive utopia: "Reflective nostalgia has a utopian dimension that consists in the exploration of other potentialities and unfulfilled promises of modern happiness" (Boym 2001, p. 342). This calls for an ethical approach to nostalgia in which each individual's responsibility is involved, preventing a collective thoughtless regressive and conservative mythologizing of the past, and allowing for the contingency of otherness.

5. Conclusions

This is very close to the reader's experience as they take up the novel again after reading the illusion-shattering coda. Indeed, they can indulge in their nostalgic reading all the while knowing that it is self-ingratiating and potentially regressive enjoyment. The bitter-sweet feeling, inherent in nostalgia, is redoubled in the innocence/knowledge dichotomy which needs to be accommodated. *Atonement* thus invites the reader, like Briony, to be at-one with nostalgia, to acknowledge it and take full responsibility for it. The reader is eventually left to decide which version of Briony's story they wish to believe, no authoritative omniscient writer exonerating them from their responsibility, and they need to face their own irrepressible longing as well as the knowledge that the object of this longing is gone or was never there. The disjunction of nostalgia becomes the safe distance that makes it possible to sustain paradox: critical distance and emotional involvement, discontinuous continuity, the otherness of the self and allows for the contingency of multiple and sometimes contradictory interpretations. "The chasm that lay between an idea and its execution" (p. 17) which Briony is forced to acknowledge in the first part, the unbridgeable gap between nostalgic longing and its fulfilment, is what fuels creation. "The attempt is all" Briony says at the end. If no atonement is ever possible, atoning, the constant process of trying to be at-one while acknowledging our essential lack, is what drives us on. As Saint-Exupéry said, no ship would ever have been built if men had not felt a yearning for the (maternal waters of the) sea.

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[12] This double negation somehow echoes the opening sentence of the quotation, denial always implying a form of assertion.

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The Second World War, Imperial, and Colonial Nostalgia: The North Africa Campaign and Battlefields of Memory

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Abstract: The article addresses the function of (post)colonial nostalgia in a context of multidirectional memory (Rothberg 2009) in contemporary Europe. How can different cultural memories of the Second Word War be put into respectful dialogue with each other? The text is based on a contrapuntal reading (Said 1994) of British and Egyptian popular narratives, mainly British documentary films about the North Africa Campaign, but also feature films and novels, and data from qualitative interviews collected during ethnographic fieldwork in Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt, during visits 2013–2015. The study highlights the considerable differences between the British and Egyptian narratives, but also the significant similarities regarding the use and function of nostalgia. In addition, the Egyptian narrative expresses a profound cosmopolitan nostalgia and a longing for what is regarded as Egypt's lost, modern Golden Age, identified as the decades before the nation's fundamental change from western-oriented monarchy to Nasser's Arab nationalist military state. The common elements between the two national narratives indicate a possibly fruitful way to open up for a shared popular memory culture about the war years, including postcolonial aspects.

Keywords: Second World War; North Africa Campaign; Egypt; cosmopolitanism; imperial nostalgia; colonial nostalgia; collective memory

1. Introduction

The Second World War still provides powerful contributions to national identities through monuments, ritual commemorations, the school curriculum, and postmemory work (Finney 2018a). It also continues to resonate in collective memories around the world and remains a source of inspiration for all kinds of new media products, from popular history to digital games. However, there are still numerous untold stories related to the war and stories that tend to disappear in the plethora of western-produced mainstream narratives about it, as they are told by others, with other perspectives than the usual Good Allies vs. Evil Axis scheme. While there is a growing scholarly interest in intercultural memory studies, there are still considerable research gaps regarding some of the geographic areas formerly under imperial domination, in particular the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region under British rule (cf. den Boer 2010, pp. 23–24; Finney 2018a; Fortunati and Lamberti 2010, p. 133; Nicolaidis et al. 2015). This article examines how popular mediations of the war years, in the context of Egypt during the 1940–1943 North Africa Campaign, provide a backdrop to contemporary nostalgia and dreams about identity and community, with a focus on Egypt. The study is situated in an interdisciplinary field where cultural memory studies, media studies, area studies, and postcolonial theory meet.

Material from two main text corpora was collected, analysed and compared in what literary scholar Edward Said (1994) has called a contrapuntal reading of popular British and Egyptian media texts. The British corpus mainly consists of documentary films about the North Africa Campaign, as this

is currently the most common genre where the theme is to be found. I have also included a selection of well-known feature films and novels, such as *The Desert Fox* (Hathaway, 1951) and *The English Patient* (Minghella, 1996), and Lawrence Durrell's famous tetralogy *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957–1960). On the Egyptian side, the sources are interview data collected during ethnographic fieldwork in Egypt, and the media texts referred to by the informants, of which most are available in English. Said, who also wrote extensively about music, proposed contrapuntal reading as a method for interpreting narratives from a postcolonial position: As when two or more harmonies, or melodies, are entwined to form a more complex musical work, we need more than one perspective in a story in order to understand the whole. It is also important to acknowledge the texts' worldliness, as representations of place/space are affiliated with both geography and culture, including the collective memories and myths related to them (Said 1994).

Said's thinking resonates with current scholarship on transnational memory. For example, as historian Patrick Finney writes, "it is fruitful to conceive of the former imperial space as a field in which multiple memories of the war are at play, and often in contestation, as a consequence of the unfolding of decolonisation" (Finney 2018b, p. 73). This article is written at a time when Europe faces major issues related to immigration and integration, which makes its underlying theme particularly up-to-date: How can different cultural memories of the Second Word War, including those outside Europe, be put into respectful dialogue with each other? One suggestion is that considering the fundamental importance of the Second World War in dominant western memory cultures, an inclusion of presently excluded ethnic groups, especially non-European, into the popular narrative might contribute to a positive sense of historical connectedness between Europeans and non-Europeans, especially around the Mediterranean, where there are already millennia of shared cultural heritage. A way to open up for such an inclusive mode of discourse is through acknowledging not only different forms of *nostalgia*, but also the performative, "world-building" aspects of it, as found in popular narratives on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Nostalgia: A Multifaceted Phenomenon

Although official memory culture is authoritative and often exclusive in character, it also needs to take account of the dynamics of collective memory in order to uphold its legitimacy. Here, *nostalgia* has an important function as, in Svetlana Boym's words, "an intermediary between collective and individual memory" (Boym 2001, p. 54). While nostalgia is commonly found in popular history as a more or less playful form for shaping innocent fantasies about the past and a device to channel unspecified emotions of longing, it also carries potentially ideological functions (Brennan 1990; Boym 2001; Noakes and Pattinson 2014; Lowenthal 2015; Samuel 2012; Winter 2010). In her influential work *The Future of Nostalgia*, Boym identifies two main types of nostalgia, *restorative* and *reflective*:

> Restorative nostalgia is at the core of recent national and religious revivals; it knows two main plots—the return to origins and the conspiracy. Reflective nostalgia does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones; it loves details, not symbols. At best, reflective nostalgia can present an ethical and creative challenge, not merely a pretext for midnight melancholias. This typology of nostalgia allows us to distinguish between national memory, that is based on a single plot of national identity, and social memory, which consists of collective frameworks that mark but do not define the individual memory. (Boym 2001, p. XVIII)

Before presenting the more specific forms of colonial and imperial nostalgia, it is useful to follow Boym's line of thought and clarify the relations between different types of memory. As said, nostalgia functions in-between collective and individual memory, which calls for some definitions. There is a close relationship between a nation's official memory culture, collective and cultural memory. When defined as the largely shared, but not necessarily homogenous, remembrances of the past within imagined communities ranging from nation-states to regions, *collective memory*

embodies memories on both an individual and cultural level. While living, informal memory among individuals is said to last for 3–4 interacting generations, *cultural memory* can be much more enduring, especially when supported by powerful institutions, such as the media and the state (Assmann 2010, p. 117). With increasing cultural diversity within a nation state, as in contemporary Europe, the roles of official, collective, and cultural memory in an imagined national community need to be reconsidered (Anderson [1990] 2006). Michael Rothberg has suggested a term for contemporary memory culture's productive intercultural dynamic: Considered as *multidirectional*, "as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative", memories of slavery and colonialism do not have be competing with memories of the Holocaust in multicultural societies (Rothberg 2009, p. 3). Instead,

> [a] model of multidirectional memory allows for the perception of the power differentials that tend to cluster a larger spiral of memory discourse in which even hostile invocations of memory can provide vehicles for further, countervailing commemorative acts. The model of multicultural memory posits collective memory as partially disengaged from exclusive versions of cultural identity and acknowledges how remembrance both cuts across and binds together diverse spatial, temporal, and cultural sites. (ibid., p. 11)

Scholarly discussions dealing with sentimental memory and feelings of loss in a postcolonial context can be divided into two main categories, colonial and imperial, or even imperialist, nostalgia. While these terms may at first glance seem related, we need to examine how they are defined and for what purposes they are used. Moreover, it is crucial to distinguish between the perspectives. Who is being nostalgic, for what, and for what reasons? Patricia Lorcin offers a useful distinction between *imperial* and *colonial* nostalgia: "The former . . . is associated with the loss of empire, that is to say the decline of national grandeur and the international power politics connected to economic and political hegemony. The latter, by contrast, is associated with the loss of sociocultural standing or, to be more precise, the colonial lifestyle" (Lorcin 2013, p. 97). While these definitions are compatible with both the restorative and reflective types of nostalgia, Renato Rosaldo's concept *imperialist* nostalgia seems to primarily belong to the former. Defined as "a particular kind of nostalgia, often found under imperialism, where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed", Rosaldo locates imperialist nostalgia

> alongside a peculiar sense of mission, the white man's burden, where civilized nations duty-bound to uplift so-called savage ones. In this ideologically constructed world of ongoing progressive change, putatively static savage societies become a stable reference for defining (the felicitous progress of) civilized identity. "We" valorize innovation and then yearn for more stable worlds, whether these reside in our own past, in other cultures, or in the conflation of the two. Such forms of longing thus appear closely related to secular notions of progress. When the so-called civilizing process destabilizes forms of life, the agents of change experience transformations of other cultures as if they were personal losses. (Rosaldo 1989, p. 88)

Although the concept is relevant for the present study, particular attention needs to be taken to the power relations in which the "agents of change" are here implicitly identified as the Western empires. However, the alternative perspectives brought forward through a contrapuntal reading also open up for agency on behalf of the Other. There are parallels to anthropologist Johannes Fabian's concept *denial of coevalness* (Fabian [1983] 2014), defined as describing "*a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse*" (Fabian [1983] 2014, p. 31; italics in original). While imperialist nostalgia includes a more or less outspoken cultural essentialism, where imperialism is a supposedly natural result of a priori inequalities between societies regarding civilisation, modernity, and progress, similar ways of thinking about time and the Other also seem to be applicable *within* these "other cultures", as Rosaldo put it in

the citation above. This suggests that although there are good reasons for associating imperial agency with globally dominant geopolitical actors, similar ideological arguments can also be found within power structures on the dominated side.

The methodological idea of the contrapuntal refrains from a one-sided view on the postcolonial and looks for other voices to complete the score. In the present study, expressions of colonial and imperial nostalgia are found both in the British and the Egyptian narratives, and they coexist within a framework of what can perhaps be called *cosmopolitan nostalgia*. *Cosmopolitan*, here, is to be understood as an aspect of an imperial condition, where identification with a place and a collective can, to some degree, be regarded as a voluntary affiliation, rather than governed by legal definitions of nationality, or by commonly held conceptions of national identity (Starr 2009, p. 7). Nevertheless, as an empire's heterogeneity is based on social hierarchies, the options for identification with a cosmopolitan identity are not equally distributed. With some exceptions, such as Artemis Cooper's partly historical, partly anecdotal *Cairo in the War 1939–1945* (Cooper 1989), it is in particular Alexandria that has come to symbolise cosmopolitan Egypt, with a number of mostly European minorities living side by side with the majority population, consisting mainly of indigenous North Africans and Arabs. While in particular Egyptian Copts, Jews, Greeks, and Italians traced their families' roots back to Antiquity or longer, many Europeans settled in Egypt between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth century, especially in the main cities. This multicultural era ended through the forced expatriation of Egyptians with European and Jewish background during president Nasser's 1950's and 1960's Arab Nationalist project (Goldschmidt et al. 2005).

Much of the scholarly discourse on cosmopolitan Egypt has a western perspective, and the dominant account of especially Alexandria as an exemplary cosmopolitan space is essentially Eurocentric (Fahmy 2006a; Halim 2013). In Khaled Fahmy's words, "the openness and cosmopolitanism of Alexandria, much celebrated by novelists, poets and historians alike, is essentially predicated on ignoring and silencing the city's Arabic-speaking population" (Fahmy 2006b, p. 281). Nevertheless, Deborah Starr also has a point in arguing that although postcolonial theory has been very valuable for understanding the East–West relations, its tools are not sufficient in order to understand the interplay between all the various ethnoreligious and ethnolinguistic groups sharing Egypt as their home. The cosmopolitan perspective has often been subordinate in relation to postcolonial narratives of anticolonial resistance, which in this case leads to a reduction of the narrative to a binary where many, if not most, of the minorities more or less disappear (ibid., pp. 7–9). Thus, in order to speak about nostalgia in this context, especially with a contrapuntal ambition, one will need to acknowledge not only East and West, but a multiplicity of coexisting voices, including and simultaneously problematizing those of a European–Egyptian background (cf. Mabro 2006).

Although there are significant sociocultural links between Europe and Egypt during the time of the Second World War, these are very rarely visible in western mainstream memory cultures. Due to the unequal power relations in global media, these are largely influenced by American, but to some extent also British, nationalist myths. As all such myths, these also build on forgetting certain aspects of the past. Benedict Anderson highlights what he calls the characteristic device of *remembering/forgetting* in the construction of national genealogies, especially when referring to pivotal events in national history, such as battles, massacres, and civil wars that the citizens are simultaneously obliged to remember and to 'already have forgotten' the disturbing parts of (Anderson [1990] 2006, pp. 200–1). Both Rosaldo (1989, p. 88) and Robert Fletcher identify a strategy of what the latter calls *imperialist amnesia*,

> a tendency on the part of 'agents of postcolonialism' to either ignore the history of colonial domination in their accounts or to present a sanitised version of colonial domination from which evidence of exploitation, persecution, subjugation and genocide has been effectively effaced. (Fletcher 2012, p. 423)

He also suggests the term *partial amnesia*, "in which colonialism is acknowledged but its distasteful aspects effaced" (ibid., p. 424). While all of these forms of nostalgia are found in the material analysed

in the present study, some of them merge in perhaps surprising ways, a phenomenon that will be discussed in more detail later. For now, it should be noted that similar nostalgic strategies and forms of amnesia seem possible to employ by both sides in a postcolonial context. However, as a result of the dominance of a limited number of influential media actors and the global circulation of media texts, the narratives of the subordinate are often limited to circulation within their own national, or regional, communities. The mnemonic battle suggested in the beginning of this article is not global in scale, nor does it pose any threat to those in power. Still, it does bring important questions to light regarding the nature of collective memory in increasingly heterogeneous societies such as large parts of Europe.

2. Results

2.1. A Hierarchy of Memories?

Representations of the North Africa Campaign during the Second World War look quite different in dominant western media as compared to the texts referred to in the Egyptian data, both regarding the amount and the content. As experiences of war and conflict are generally considered crucial in the formation of collective as well as individual memory, one might expect to find mediated counter-memories of the Second World War in regions usually not visible in Western representations, especially those where this time-period is related to colonial oppression and anticolonial struggle. However, as a six-month field study in Alexandria and Cairo 2013–2015 indicated, this does not seem to be the case in Egypt. Despite the decisive battles at El Alamein in late 1942, bringing the war's first major Allied victory, despite the tragic loss of civilian lives and vast material destruction during the numerous air raids on Egypt's big cities, and despite the country's long tradition as a leading regional producer of popular culture texts, Egyptian media culture does not offer much to challenge their exclusion from a globally shared historical experience. There are basically no regional documentary films on the topic, except for an Al Jazeera production about the current problem with Second World War land mines in the North African desert (*The Curse of the Sands*, 2012). Instead, virtually all of the informants referred to the same limited number of media texts, most notably a handful of novels by Egyptian and Egyptian-Greek authors, and personal recollections published by Egyptian Jews in the diaspora. Those most frequently referred to were Lucette Lagnado's *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit* (2007); Naguib Mahfouz's *Sugar Street* (1957); Ibrahim Abdel Meguid's *No One Sleeps in Alexandria* (2007); and Harry Tzalas' *Farewell to Alexandria* (2003). Another frequently mentioned novel was Alaa Al Aswany's *The Yacoubian Building* (2006), although here the narrative focuses on what happened after the Jewish exodus. The non-Arab authors turned out to be very important, as their voices represent the lost modern, cosmopolitan Egypt. Several informants also included the feature film *Alexandria . . . Why?* (*Iskanderija . . . Lih?*, 1979), and the documentary film *Jews of Egypt* (2013) among their most influential sources, while some also mentioned the popular Syrian TV drama series about the last Egyptian king Farouk, *El-malek Farouk* (2007) as an important source of knowledge. The only regional contribution considered to at least imitate the genre World War Two combat film was the Libyan action drama *Lion of the Desert* (1981), in which legendary resistance leader Omar Al-Mukhtar fights the pre-WWII Italian colonial army. However, featuring an international cast of star actors and financed by the dictator Khaddafi, it was merely mentioned as a curiosity.

From a western perspective, this state of affairs may seem surprising. There is a small museum at El Alamein, and nearby are the British Commonwealth, German, and Italian war cemeteries, but these are mainly sites of interest to foreign visitors, especially war veterans' organisations. However, there are no organised tours to El Alamein and there is hardly any marketing of Alexandria as a destination for potential western tourists. By contrast, a common view among Egyptians in the region seems to be that El Alamein "is a nice place to go swimming", and that nobody except westerners cares about the Second World War. However, there are occasional news reports about people and livestock killed or injured by mines from the war, still hidden in the desert (Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor 2007), which seems to be the only thing connecting contemporary Egyptians to this part of their history.

Thus, the preconditions for Egyptian nostalgia seem quite poor, as focus is entirely set on the present. Here, the historical events seem to serve two main functions: As providing nostalgia for westerners, and as the origin of contemporary casualties. For some, the latter also includes negative emotions directed towards the West: Not only did they colonise, exploit, and cause damage to Egypt in the past; today they turn their backs and refuse to clean the desert from their own lethal waste. A conclusion might be that nostalgia related to the war is too much associated with the West in order to be meaningful to most Egyptians, whose World War Two experiences are only those of the Victim. However, from a western perspective, the main role of the Victim in a Second World War narrative undisputedly belongs to the Jews. While this was not questioned by any of my informants, some of them associated a German victory in North Africa with the Holocaust being extended to include not only the Egyptian Jews, but also Arabs, as both are Semitic peoples. Another narrative suggested that the Nazis would have turned the Egyptians into slaves. Both versions were based on the historical context where many wartime Egyptians were looking forward to the Germans as liberators from the British.

The scarcity in both official Egyptian memory culture and collective memory regarding the war makes it somewhat misleading to use the term *collective* for what is in effect a very limited section of mainly urban, educated, middle-class Egyptians for whom the past at all matters. As several of my informants made clear, "we are not representative for most Egyptians, as we are actually *interested* in the past". However, there is an interesting phenomenon almost entirely overlooked by most scholars: The nostalgic narrative about modern Egypt's lost Golden Age. To grasp this, it is first important to acknowledge the special features of Egyptian historiography. While university and state have been cooperating (despite occasionally strained relations) regarding what national perspectives and concerns should be officially acknowledged and addressed, there is also a third influential party: The non-academic historian. As Anthony Gorman writes,

> Often stigmatized as amateur and second-rate scholars, or simply branded as partisan, they have played a seminal role in pioneering new historical frameworks that have later become influential in academic circles. Less restrained by both the scholarly and political limitations of the academy, non-academic historians have been the source of a vigorous contested and more representative national historiography. (Gorman 2003, p. 79)

The writers in question include journalists, political commentators, and other intellectuals who, from their position outside the academic and political constraints, can express their ideas more freely. This, however, does not imply that they are free to publish anything, as "non-academics have suffered noticeably more from censorship and political harassment than have their academic counterparts" (ibid., p. 80). Still, this form of "history in the street" is very influential, which can (at least partly) explain my informants' choice of references (ibid.)

The nostalgic representations of pre-Nasser Egypt as "a lost paradise" are most explicit in the Egyptian-Jewish diaspora literature, but can also be found in the other texts. Together, they express a multifaceted Egyptian cultural identity where different ethnicities and religious affiliations are simultaneously distinct and mixed into a porous cosmopolitan collective, especially in the big cities of Alexandria and Cairo, where most narratives take place.[1] This imagery of an essentially modern Egyptian Golden Age, full of hopes for the future that were sadly scattered after the war's end, was constantly evoked by the informants, indicating not only the impact of the meta narrative to which the different texts contribute, but also its success as a utopian counter-image to an actual Egypt associated with totalitarianism, intolerance, and general decline. That this Golden Age was also characterised by colonial domination and racist oppression is indeed an important part of the narrative, both in the texts and in the informants' accounts. However, the British presence is not simply regarded as negative, as for several of the informants it also serves as a nostalgic signifier of hope

[1] See also Hanna (1994) for a nonfiction presentation of Egyptian identity.

and utopia, as in the hypothetical, but lost, possibility of Egypt becoming an independent part of the British Commonwealth, thereby belonging to the same political and societal type of nations as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This suggests an almost "self-Orientalist" view of postcolonial Egypt as going backwards, rejecting cosmopolitan modernity and democracy in favour of Arab nationalistic ethnic cleansing and counter-Enlightenment totalitarianism.

This stands in stark contrast to the dominant western narrative, which almost exclusively focuses on military history in a strikingly mythical form: The heroic Duel in the Desert between the legendary commanders Rommel and Montgomery, their armies clad in heavy armour and performing like modern knights, with a mutual agreement of chivalry and fair play (Edwards 2012; Francis 2014; Kingsepp 2018, under publication). Most documentary films about the North Africa Campaign, especially those focusing on the battles of El Alamein, are British productions. As this was *the* great Allied victory where the British, and not the Americans, were the ones in charge, El Alamein in British cultural memory and national identity signifies one of the nation's last, globally significant moments. For others, the rather old-fashioned aura associated with the mainstream narrative opens up for an extraordinary adventure (Kingsepp 2008). Significantly, in mainstream western memory, the North African Campaign also differs from the rest of the Second World War in that it, supposedly, was not morally tainted by the Holocaust. Thus, here it is actually possible to venerate the German Afrika Korps under Rommel, and in some respects, the Naziness otherwise intrinsically connected to the German troops during the war is here diminished and reduced to symbols and insignia (ibid.).

The British version of the narrative shows several dimensions of restorative nostalgia, including elements of especially colonial, but also implicitly imperial nostalgia, as well as imperialist amnesia. A prominent component in the documentaries is the attractiveness of *ethical behaviour* as something intrinsically European, as here the Germans are often represented as an equally civilised enemy. The mythical idea about European ethical behaviour in warfare is here not only present through the tropes of *chivalry* and *fair play*, but especially in the overtly expressed characterisation of the North African Campaign as a "clean" war (Porter 2013, pp. 76–78). Indeed, in several cases, the narrator in the documentary films explicitly says that "this land is made for war" (Finney 2018b; Kingsepp 2018, under publication). With no indigenous population to be considered, and no infrastructure to be potentially harmed, the fantasies about North Africa as the perfect battleground are both nostalgic and utopian, appealing and absurd, especially considering the obvious presence of towns and villages on maps where the armies' movements are indicated by arrows and symbols. Accordingly, the regional population and their traumatic experiences of the Second World War are basically absent from dominant accounts of western popular history. This is also the case regarding nonwhite Allied soldiers, not the least the large number drafted from the colonies to serve in the British (and French) imperial forces (Byfield et al. 2015; Finney 2018b). Notably, this has changed over time, as older documentary films, such as the famous 1970's series *The World At War*, show considerably more archival footage of, for example, street life in cosmopolitan Cairo, where dark-skinned people in traditional garb mingle with more European-looking inhabitants. However, if there are any imagery at all from Egypt in the documentary films, regardless if present-day or wartime, it is almost exclusively reduced to Orientalist stereotypes, with Egyptians as exotic props, together with camels and palm trees (Kingsepp 2018, under publication).

This fits well with the spoken narrative, where Britain's position as a global imperial power is almost never problematised: The British are simply *present* in the region, as a benevolent defender of it against the megalomaniac dictators Hitler and Mussolini. In fact, when the word *empire* is used in the documentary films, it is almost never related to Britain, France, Belgium, or any other "good" nation. On the contrary, it is Mussolini who dreams about "a new Roman Empire", and Hitler who wants "world domination", while the rest of the (supposedly free) world join their forces to stop them. Accordingly, it seems easy to label this as an example of both imperial nostalgia and imperialist amnesia, cooperating in the creation of a nostalgic dream world where everything seems much easier and more enjoyable, and all people "know their places" in a "natural" world

order. Although the experiences of battle are represented as horrific, war is still, in a way, a manly adventure for westerners, and a game. The ludic parallels are especially visible in the documentaries' numerous maps, indicating strategic plans and showing the actual movements of the different military entities. This suggests yet another perspective where the imperial and/or colonial aspects are less important than war as a phenomenon in itself. Is it possible to speak of a war nostalgia? There are several indications of the North African Campaign having become more explicitly mythical in character than many other parts of the Second World War, which affects the way(s) it is remembered. The geographical location is here of major importance, as the settings bring forward a number of specific connotations related to the Orient in general and to the desert in particular. For most westerners, North Africa and Egypt are exotic places full of adventures and the desert backdrop also brings forward religious connotations to the Old Testament, saints, hermits, and other expressions of the otherworldly (Kingsepp 2018, under publication).

Representing war as a game, an adventure, and a profoundly life-changing experience (for those who survive) is certainly not unique, and it is perhaps especially attractive in fiction. While there is a number of mostly British (but also some US) feature films based on events, real or imagined, during the North Africa Campaign, for example *The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel* (1951), *The Desert Rats* (1953), and *Ice Cold in Alex* (1958), almost all were made during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. This part of the Second World War seems to have become less interesting to filmmakers over the decades, except when providing an exotic framework for a drama, or an adventure story such as *The English Patient* (1996) (Escher and Zimmermann 2005; Francis 2014). The adventure formula, which is also characteristic for much traditional war fiction, reduces colonialism and imperialism to a nostalgic framework where the cosmopolitan character of Egypt's big cities can be acknowledged, as it supports the narrative. This is where we find the closest overlappings with the Egyptian corpus of narratives, sharing not only time and space, but also significant elements related to factual past events. In the Egyptian novels and films, we meet British and other European adventurers, Egyptian scandal beauties with various ethnic backgrounds, rumours about spies, an ambivalent regard on the approaching Germans, Egyptian nationalists, and not the least street-smart ordinary people of different ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations, who somehow manage to survive during these days of turmoil, or perish in the destruction brought to their lands.

While it is usually clear which implicit reader the story is directed to, and of what discourse it is a part, with whom we are to identify, and who are considered to be the Others, this is also where the contrapuntal strategy becomes most rewarding. Putting the two perspectives in dialogue, the result shows what is left out from the dominant western narrative, which provides a starting point for further inquiry. It also illustrates that in contrary to the immense importance assigned to the Second World War, especially in the West and in the former Soviet Union, there are other historical conflicts that official Egyptian memory culture values more, especially the wars with Israel. All my informants agreed that official history briefly and superficially dismisses the years before Nasser's revolution as only negative, with a weak, corrupt monarchy and colonial subordination. Accordingly, the handful of novels, read mainly by a middle-class segment of today's Egyptians, present a counternarrative to the dominant Western, as well as to the official Egyptian version. In that respect, it can be argued that for some Egyptian readers, it has filled an important function of both nostalgia for a lost past and (utopian) hope for political and societal change.

2.2. The British Empire and the Dewesternisation of Alexandria

As mentioned, the concept *empire* is obviously to be shunned and condemned as something negative in the documentary films, as the word is most frequently reserved for Mussolini's imperial ambitions. The British Empire is most often not mentioned as such; instead, there is "the British presence" in the Middle East, Egypt, or Cairo. Although avoided verbally, it is sometimes communicated visually through the Union Jack placed on, or even covering, Egypt on the frequently shown maps of North Africa. That the British are in Egypt at all is considered a quite normal state

of affairs, as this is very rarely being reflected upon, even less questioned. As most of the films are mainly concerned with the military aspects of the war, there are only rarely sequences showing civilian life in Egypt, and then mostly in connection with British soldiers off duty. It is not only the narrative accounts of Cairo that express colonial nostalgia, but also the visual imagery in archival, as well as contemporary footage. We see glimpses of (white) Britons enjoying belly dance, camel rides, restaurants, and other tourist activities, mixed with present-day images of minarets, street vendors, and remaining colonial heritage sites, such as the Gezira Sporting Club. The city's liminoid features as both East and West, both near the theatre of war and at a safe distance from it, are familiar from other western popular culture representations of Cairo (Escher and Zimmermann 2005). This function is also present in the documentary films, although there it is extended to the desert as a kind of primordial, sacred space, where the closeness to death adds an aura of the numinous and sublime to the experience (Kingsepp 2018, under publication).

In contrast to the Oriental haven Cairo, Alexandria, Egypt's second largest city, which, during the war, hosted the Allied military headquarters, is almost entirely overlooked in the documentary films. Despite the city's ancient past intimately connecting it to the cultural and scientific history of western Europe, virtually all films reduce it to a British Navy port and a dot on the map, used for measuring the distance to El Alamein and the threatening German forces. This is peculiar, considering the influence of two famous British 20th century authors, E. M. Forster and Lawrence Durrell, who both lived in Alexandria for several years and used the city in their literary works. The iconic status of especially Durrell's four novels in his *Alexandria Quartet* (1960) suggests that it would be careless to neglect the influence of these men on the British—and western—structure of feeling evoked when turning the mind towards the years of the Second World War in Egypt. In fact, Durrell himself appears in the episode of *The World At War* examined in this study, interviewed due to his role as a former British press attaché. However, already a contrapuntal awareness when reading Durrell's celebrated *Alexandria Quartet* suggests that it does not say anything about the "real" Alexandria. The *Quartet* depicts the city as characterised by a decadent European lifestyle, while the glimpses of local Egyptians are rare and highly stereotypical—in fact, much like in the documentaries. Here, as with Cairo, Alexandria serves the role of a liminoid place where western man can seek refuge from the constraints of secular modernity and ultimately find himself (Escher and Zimmermann 2005). Importantly, in Durrell's story, we do meet some of the numerous Copts and Jews who have been minorities within Egyptian society from antiquity, as well as those who used to be a part of it: Italians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and other people from all around Europe. Accordingly, there are good historical reasons for acknowledging especially wartime Alexandria as a Mediterranean city, and a link back to our common European heritage and culture (Hirst and Silk 2004).

2.3. Cosmopolitan Egypt and Colonial Amnesia

As said, cosmopolitanism, openness, multiculturalism, and close connections to the Mediterranean and Europe are prominent tropes in parts of contemporary Egyptian memory culture about the war years. Still, it would not be correct to regard Egyptian cultural memory of WWII as a regional alternative, or response, to corresponding western narratives. Here, there is no 'memory boom' like in the West, as in a widespread interest in the past expressed on multiple levels of society (Winter 2006). On the contrary, many of my informants complained about most people being not only ignorant of, but also profoundly uninterested in their heritage. This is also reflected quantitatively, as the number of popular media texts explicitly dealing with WWII is, as I said, limited. Still, the few that were repeatedly mentioned have obviously been highly influential, as in several cases the informants' accounts of what happened during the war turned out to be more or less literally corresponding to narratives in the books. However, the concept of a Golden Age as such is not present in any of the media texts. Although there are, especially in the Egyptian-Jewish diaspora writings, common references to a "lost paradise", a "lost world", etc., this is a predominantly melancholic nostalgia of loss and mourning. The Golden Age seems to be something like a dream projected onto the past, based on

material from the media texts, but also from physical remnants in Cairo and especially in Alexandria, where there are still old shop signs in Greek and Italian, and old colonial cafés with an abundance of props for a nostalgic game of make-believe.

Thus, despite being under British dominance, the era up until the early 1950s fills a largely positive nostalgic function. Following the concepts imperial nostalgia vs. amnesia, this could perhaps be a case of *colonial amnesia*, highlighting the positive aspects while reducing the negative. As this is not a process in official memory culture, but rather a grassroots movement within a limited segment of the educated, urban middle-class, Anderson's concept remembering/forgetting is not really applicable. In this case, nostalgia can be interpreted as a reaction to 60 years of military rule, during which official historiography propagandistically represented the pre-Nasser time as corrupt and despicable, with a weak king that leaned towards foreign powers and did not care about his people. Notably, this negative image is also reflected in parts of the Egyptian media texts, especially in Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy*, of which the third part, *Sugar Street* (1957), takes place during the war years. However, today the era of the Egyptian kings Fouad (1868–1936) and his son Farouk (1920–1965), who was forced to abdicate and leave Egypt in 1952, seems to be re-evaluated, at least in parts of the "history in the street" discourse. The emergence of this new perspective seems related to the highly popular 2007 TV drama series *El-malek Farouk* (*King Farouk*), a Syrian production broadcasted as a family program during the month of Ramadan. Especially the younger informants (between 20 and 30 years old) mentioned *El-malek Farouk* as influential regarding their knowledge as well as their own thoughts about this part of Egyptian history. The king, they say, was not an evil man. On the contrary: He loved Egypt and the Egyptians, as he did never desert his people. The king was forced to leave, and importantly, he never tried to harm Egypt from his exile. It is not unlikely that in many cases, this can be interpreted primarily as an oppositional reaction to the official, negative narrative, rather than as an objective re-evaluation of the historical events. Another commonly expressed view was that although Britain was a foreign imperial power that in practice ruled Egypt, and most Egyptians wanted to get rid of their hated oppressors, the nation did prosper, and it was wealthy. Accounts about the Egyptian pound having been a hard currency, and the quality and export of Egyptian cotton as a source of national pride, were also frequent, again especially among the younger. All informants, however, referred to a nation where there was also severe poverty and very poor social conditions, especially in the rural regions. Still, it could be proud of the wealth, elegance, and highly cosmopolitan character of its largest cities. The image of the latter, albeit selective and often mythical to its character, nevertheless seems to offer an almost irresistible source for nostalgic projections and, in some cases, a utopian dream of an ideal past that is nowhere to be seen in the future.

In a contrapuntal reading, the juxtaposition of imperial(ist) and colonial nostalgia with what can be called a cosmopolitan nostalgia becomes intriguing. As all these aspects belong to the same whole, and also share several of their main signifiers, or props, this opens up for possible new ways of telling stories about the Second World War. It might also offer insights that are useful in other postcolonial contexts. Is it, indeed, in some contexts more relevant to talk about a *postcolonial* nostalgia (Walder 2011)? Such an interpretation seems more rewarding, as it reduces the usual binaries between dominated and subordinate and offers a higher degree of independent agency to the formerly colonial subjects.

3. Discussion

The study on which this article was based compares two different discourses about the North Africa Campaign of the Second World War. A contrapuntal reading of British and Egyptian narratives indicates that the first tend to maintain a strict "us and them" perspective, where "they" are either entirely absent, or reduced to Oriental props. Almost as an exemplary illustration of imperial and colonial nostalgia, including elements of imperialist amnesia, empire and colonialism carry positive and pleasurable connotations in the vast majority of the texts, while the negative sides are most often overlooked. Taken as a whole, the British corpus is surprisingly conservative

and traditional in character, and quite far from reflecting the current, largely critical discourse (Noakes and Pattinson 2014). Regarded as expressions of cultural memory, this points towards a significant discrepancy between official memory culture, as represented by scholars and other intellectuals, and popular history. Thus, on a collective memory level, the interplay between official memory culture, popular history, and the audience's individual interpretations symbolically becomes a battle between what narrative is most appealing. What is to be remembered, and what is to be forgotten? However, this is not an isolated phenomenon regarding cultural memories of the Second World War, where simplistic, mythically founded narratives, expressing restorative nostalgia, seem to be more commercially—but sometimes also politically—attractive than those that are complex and problematising (Kingsepp 2008).

In the British documentary films, the issue of *empire* is obviously sensitive, as here the preferred use of the word is when relating to Mussolini's imperial dreams. British imperialism is simply not mentioned, or symbolically transferred to a "presence", a benevolent position from which Britannia sets out to "defend" those depending on her for their well-being. While there are indications of *amnesia* in the general remembering/forgetting function connected to narratives of national identity—notably, on both sides—there are also important aspects of colonial nostalgia. The British corpus represents the life of the British in Egypt as both exotic and familiar, and on the whole quite pleasurable. When other (most often undefined) ethnic groups are at all present, it is not in a role as actors, but as props signifying the Orient. Interestingly enough, this also includes those of European descent. Their absence, or very modest presence, suggests that neither the majority population nor the minorities are significant to the British, except for as part of the latter's colonial lifestyle. It should be said that the overall British narrative does show some internal variation, although regarded as a whole it expresses restorative nostalgia and a Golden Age where the British Empire still provides the firm, undisputed foundation of national identity.

The Egyptian voice is, in comparison, much more complex. It can partly be regarded as expressions of restorative nostalgia, as in the remembrance of a nationalistic struggle against the colonial oppressors, and as Egypt's modern Golden Age before the 1952 officers' coup that began 60 years of military rule. However, this Golden Age narrative also includes significant elements of reflective and colonial nostalgia. There are even elements related to imperial nostalgia, albeit from the perspective of the dominated, which indicates the need for a more in-depth exploration. William Cunningham Bissell (2005) highlights this question in an article on nostalgia as a social phenomenon:

> Colonial nostalgia is clearly connected to its imperial counterpart, but it also points to rather more disturbing and difficult forms of the contemporary global landscape. We can certainly comprehend why conservatives or social elites in former metropoles might long for a return to empire. Likewise, we can understand the logic behind the marketing of colonial chic, recycling imperialism as the stuff of customer desire. / . . . / But what does it mean when Africans voice similar views, seemingly harkening back to colonialism as a better age? How exactly do we come to terms with expressions of colonial nostalgia by the descendants of those who struggled long and hard to overcome the effects of the European domination and exploitation? (Bissell 2005, p. 217)

While cosmopolitanism in Africa was by no means restricted to Egypt (Bissell 2005; Lundahl 2014), the phenomenon definitely needs to be taken into consideration when trying to understand the intricate fabrics of nostalgia in this context. Importantly, although the respondents in the present study all expressed very similar views regarding Egypt's modern Golden Age, their social backgrounds were very different, from street vendors without formal education to university students and academics. Further, in this case, the expressions of cosmopolitan nostalgia are open and ethnically inclusive, as an important part of the narrative is that of the lost multicultural community. Also of importance is the fact that some of the ethnic groups constituting this community were of European origin, although several of them had lived in Egypt for generations. Thus, the lost cosmopolitan part of Egyptian cultural identity, as perceived by these informants, also has important geopolitical significations: Nasser's

Pan-Arab nationalist project tore the nation's thousand-year-old cultural ties to Europe and to the western world, to which at least some of them feel emotionally connected (Hirst and Silk 2004).

To a large extent, the Egyptian narrative shares its signifiers with the corresponding British in its expressions of a colonial nostalgia. Thus, both sides share the same trope of a Golden Age in their representations of Egypt during the Second World War. The difference lies especially in detail and agency: On the Egyptian side, the people living there have names, faces, families, and they are actors in their own narratives. A fez is not just a fez, a *tarboosh*, simply signifying the Orient. It is worn by someone, and this wearing of a fez has a meaning both to him, his fictional context, and to the contemporary reader. The fez is also a temporal signifier, as virtually no one today (except for occasional tourists and very old men) wears one. The Golden Age narrative is based on a binary temporality, where the *now* and the *then* are put against each other, *then* largely getting its meaning from being very different from *now*. In the Egyptian context, values such as openness, pluralism, tolerance, cosmopolitanism, hope, and belonging to an essentially Mediterranean regional community are put in contrast to all kinds of negative feelings associated with living in a closed, nationalist, totalitarian military state. Here is where the relative absence and/or suspiciously propagandistic character of official Egyptian memory culture regarding the last years of monarchy becomes important, as its place in (at least parts of) collective memory is overtaken by the artistic narratives of literature and film. Thus, the nostalgic representations are already from the beginning rooted in a palimpsest of fact, fiction, and imagination, which gives them an open and fluid character. Accordingly, the Golden Age narrative also contains elements of *reflective nostalgia*, as its open character invites, even demands, individual reflection on what is a good society.

In conclusion: This study suggests that universal experiences of loss, longing, and desire can be transferred into different forms of nostalgia: Imperial, colonial, and cosmopolitan, and that these forms can fill similar functions on both sides in a postcolonial setting. It also highlights the importance of popular history for collective memory, and indicates how discrepancies between official memory culture and popular history can result in alternative narratives, where nostalgia provides the dynamic. The contrapuntal reading of the British and Egyptian materials suggests fruitful opportunities for a respectful and open dialogue between western/European and non-European popular memory cultures. While this would demand a thorough reconsideration of the current dominant, increasingly ethnocentric, western cultural memory of the Second World War, such an expansion also has considerable potential, especially considering the media industry's continuous search for new, emotionally captivating stories about the war. It would also reconnect parts of North Africa and the Middle East to our shared ancient Mediterranean heritage, thereby opening up yet another possible path to intercultural understanding.

4. Materials and Methods

The article is primarily based on a qualitative content analysis of ten British documentary films, which has been compared to mostly British, but also some American, feature films and novels, and ethnographic fieldwork in Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt, during a number of visits in 2013–2015, including qualitative interviews with anonymous informants.

The documentary film sample is part of a more extended study of documentary films on the topic, which has resulted in a number of conference papers and a book chapter (Kingsepp 2013, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2018, under publication).

Using a common strategy in ethnographic fieldwork, I took every opportunity to talk to people I met in different contexts. The conversations and interviews were based on the questions "What do you know about Egypt during the Second World War?", and "From where have you got your information?" I was also offered the opportunity to hold a public lecture about my research at the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, inviting the audience to contribute with their own memories and stories. This also brought valuable contacts for further interviews. The majority of informants were between their early twenties and forties, while a handful were up to around 80 years of age. Men and women were equally

represented. Their level of education varied, from none to an academic degree, as did their state of employment. Although I did not ask about ethnic or religious affiliation, some of the informants did themselves mention their own background as wholly or partly Copt, Armenian, Greek, or Italian, always together with the prefix "Egyptian-". Considering the politically sensitive situation in Egypt, I have chosen to refrain from offering any more precise data about the informants. However, the topic and result of the study clearly indicate that anyone posing the same questions to a random sample of English-speaking Egyptians in the big cities will get similar results.

All media texts used in the study are listed below, including those referred to by the informants.

Documentary films

Battlefield, Season 5, Episode 2, *El Alamein.* [1995] 2001. USA/UK.
Battlefields, Season 1, Episode 1, *El Alamein.* 2001. UK.
Churchill's Desert War: The Road to El Alamein. 2012. UK.
The Curse of the Sands. 2010. Qatar.
Desert Victory. 1943. UK.
El Alamein: The Soldier's Story. 2011. UK.
Gladiators of World War II: The SAS. 2002. UK.
Jews of Egypt. 2013. Egypt.
Tank battles: El Alamein to the Volga: The story of tank warfare during World War II. 1991. UK.
The Desert War. Year unknown. UK.
The World at War, Episode 8, *The Desert: North Africa—1940–1943.* 1973. UK.
Wawell's 30.000. 1942. UK.

Motion pictures

Alexandria . . . Why? (*Iskanderija . . . Lih?*). 1979. Youssef Chahine.
Foxhole in Cairo. 1960. John Llewelly Moxey.
Ice Cold in Alex. 1958. J. Lee Thompson.
Lion of the Desert. 1981. Moustapha Akkad.
Raid on Rommel. 1971. Henry Hathaway.
Sahara. 1943. Zoltan Korda.
The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel. 1951. Henry Hathaway.
The Desert Rats. 1953. Robert Wise.
The English Patient. 1996. Anthony Minghella.
The Silent Enemy. 1958. William Fairchild.
Tobruk. 1967. Arthur Hiller.

TV series

El-malek Farouk (*King Farouk*). 2007. Syria.

Novels, biographies

Al Aswany, Alaa. 2006. *The Yacoubian Building*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press. ISBN 977 416 027 4.
Durrell, Lawrence. 1991. *The Alexandria Quartet*. London: Penguin. ISBN 978-0140153170. First published 1960.
Lagnado, Lucette. 2007. *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: A Jewish Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World*. New York: Ecco. ISBN 978-0-06-082218-7.
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Article

Nubia Still Exists: On the Utility of the Nostalgic Space

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Abstract: The Egyptian government displaced all Nubian villages to build the High Dam. New generations of Egyptian Nubians still identify as displaced and live in a nostalgic virtual space that carries a rendition of a paradise-like old Nubia. I investigate this spatial phenomenon by surveying Nubian literary and oral tradition, which displays signs of belonging to a geography that is no longer material. This paper lays out a conceptualisation of this space of nostalgia perpetuated in a metanarrative of a utopian lost land, that poses it as a disembodied territory while nostalgia is territoriality. From my position as a Nubian woman and a scholar, I use auto-ethnographic tools to methodically decode and layout this territory. The paper offers empirical evidence of the effect of these virtual territories on materialised spatial production and, therefore, argues that Nubians remain space makers by carving their own virtual territory and that Nubia still exists.

Keywords: Nubia; nostalgic spaces; displacement; territory; disembodied territoriality; spatial production

1. Introduction

Nubia in an ancient land that extends between the first and fifth cataracts of the Nile river, in the area now divided between Egypt and Sudan (Kirwan 1974). The name Nubia has been open to different scholarly interpretations. Hillelson (1930, p. 142) says that the word comes from *Nebed*, an inscription of Egyptian king Thutmose I (ca. 1450 B.C.) referring to the people with curly hair whom he invaded. Arkell (1961, p. 177) states that the word is derived from a Nubian word meaning 'slave'. This research, however, acknowledges the conventionally used meaning among Nubians, which derives the term Nubia from the Nubian word *nubere* meaning 'gold', making Nubia the Land of Gold. Despite contested etymology, Nubians have the right to appropriate or explain the name of their own homeland.

Nubians territorialised the banks of the Nile river for millennia, during which many population movements happened from and to the Nile valley, thus rendering a clear and singular genealogical identification of Nubians very difficult. However, today, the term 'Nubians' usually refers to Nubian groups in Egypt and Sudan, in addition to a sizable community in Kenya, who arrived during the 1890s as soldiers in the British army (Duncan 2013). The area that is now separated between Egypt and Sudan was once united until the British colonisers drew the line separating it in 1899 Likewise, in 1956, the area was divided, separating the Nubian Land, separating the Nubian Land (Abushouk 2010), and the separation split the Nubian village of Adendan between postcolonial Egypt and a Sudan under British rule.

In the 1960s, the Egyptian postcolonial state started building its national megaproject, the Aswan High Dam, with the promise of introducing Egypt to industrialised prosperity. The dam, however, claimed Nubians and their land as victims; its water reservoir submerged the entirety of the Nubian territory within the Egyptian borders and parts of the Nubian land in Sudan (Dafalla 1975). The dam displaced 50,000 Nubian families (Fernea 1963). The Egyptian government built a large housing project

in the Kom-Ombo Valley to resettle the Nubians; the planning was premised as an effort to bring the 'Marginal Nubians' to the mainstream of Egyptian society (Nasser 1960) and, therefore, modernise this African peoplehood.

This paper looks specifically at the case of Nubians in Egypt and the ways in which They reclaim their territory. While Nubians in Sudan and Egypt share their language, dialects, hardship, and blood kinships, the two groups also now share a popular culture, with songs and artists crossing the border, making their popular culture closer to one another than to the rest of Egypt and Sudan. The decades of separation in political economic and geographic circumstances made it impossible for the Nubian communities in Egypt and Sudan to maintain the same characteristics, which makes it difficult for this research and most of the contemporary research on Nubians to bundle Sudanese and Egyptian Nubians as a singular group with a shared experience.

Nubians in Egypt can be categorised into two main groups: Fadidja (pronounced Fadidcha), and Kenouz (or Mattoka in fadidja's language). Another group that could be placed under the category Nubians are 'Aswan Arabs', referring to Arabic-speaking groups, in particular, of the non-Nubian villages displaced by the High Dam, whose inclusion in Nubian culture and networks is now built on political interest, solidarity, and shared struggles. All together, there were forty districts displaced by the High Dam, of which seventeen were Kenouz, five were Arabic-speaking, and eighteen were Fadidja, according to the language spoken (Hopkins and Mehanna 2011, p. 10)

Nubians suffered an affective and material disenfranchisement throughout the process of their displacement, a recurrent effect on those affected by Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR) schemes around the world (Cernea 1996). The state-built resettlement villages, formally named 'New Nubia', did not fulfil the promise of the 'good life'. The housing project was hastily built, and its architecture was 'unimaginative' (Serageldin 1982). Nubians refused to call these settlements New Nubia and instead called it Tahgeer, meaning place of displacement.

The High Dam was not the Nubians' first displacement; the Aswan Low Dam preceded it. The Aswan Low Dam, which was constructed on the Nile's first cataract by British colonialists in 1902, and was subsequently heightened twice—in 1912 and 1933 (Waterbury 1979). The Low Dam was the cause of grave loss and agony for Nubians, as it caused the water levels behind it to rise significantly and devastate Nubian crops and houses. Nubian author 'Ezz-Eldeen Sakoury' documented the stories of his mother and the women of her generation in a Manuscript of an unpublished book.[1] The book contains tragic stories about the water coming to Nubian houses at night, drowning sleeping people and causing a disturbance in the ecosystem.

Predicting that Nubians would join the fabric of the Egyptian culture and assimilate, the Egyptian state expected Nubians to adopt a 'modern Egyptian' identity without their ancestral land. Nubians kept the image of their old land alive in their memory, along with their grief, sorrow, and yearning for a lost paradise. Today, after a half century of displacement, Nubians still identify as Nubians first, while new generations of Egyptian Nubians—like myself—still call their settlements Tahgeer. Moreover, those who never saw their old land—like myself—still identify as displaced and are nostalgic for their old land, even though it was completely submerged when they were born; they became displaced from a place they had never been. To this day, Nubians are actively working towards a return to their homeland (Janmyr 2016), or more accurately, to an offset of this land on the shores of the High Dam reservoir.

After completion of the involuntary resettlement and the submergence of the Nubian land, the international academic consensus, especially among archaeologists who perceived the Nubian land as an incubator of monuments from an ancient civilisation, was that Nubia was no more and was now 'lost' (Fernea 1963; Horton 1964; Emery 1967; Bell 2009; Scudder 2016). To them, the land once called Nubia and the origin of that long history would only be an archived memory and a space of the past.

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[1] I found the Manuscript of this untitled book among the belongings of Ezz-Eldeen Sakoury in his house in Qustul, Aswan.

The difference here between the perception of loss for Nubians and scholars is vivid. To Nubians, the paradise, but not Nubia itself, was lost. Nubians refuse to acknowledge the New Nubia but also refuse to acknowledge the vanishing of Nubia as long as as long as they are alive.

Methodologically, I apply positionality, reflexivity, and relationality. I conduct research from my position both as a Nubian and a scholar. As a Nubian woman, I have insider access to the site of investigation, which is the collective imagination of my people. To say that one is an insider raises the question 'What is it that an insider is inside of?' (Merriam et al. 2001). Most cultures have subcultures, and subcultures have other sub-subcultures, but in the case of the Nubian society, the landless state of Nubia has driven Nubians to draw clear cultural borders between what is Nubian and what is not. The borders contradict the state narrative that the Egyptian population is all 'one'. A Nubian knows precisely the difference between being Egyptian and being Nubian. With this phenomenon in place, I can claim that the research for this article comes from an insider's perspective within this imagined border.

In this research, I situate myself on the Nubian side of the story, as, Donna Haraway argues, one is always on a side of the story, as all knowledge is situated knowledge (Haraway 1988). Also, I cite standpoint theory to argue against the common assumption that political interest damages scientific production (Harding 2004); rather, a standpoint of dispossession can induce the production of new theories due to the pressing need to understand its contemporary phenomena. My position entails many tensions between my desire to understand the happenings of my context and to advance the Nubian cause and my institutional aspirations as a scholar in a European research institution. Therefore, I have committed myself to methodological reflexivity (Pini 2004), by which I mark my bias and sovereignty throughout my research activity.

The research method depends on Boym's (2008) argument regarding nostalgia's spatial nature. She claims 'nostalgia is spatial in its expressions as well as causes' (xviii) and proposes a dual-spatial archaeology as a methodic tool to investigate nostalgic expression: 'Nostalgia should be investigated using "dual archaeology of memory and place, and a dual history of illusions and actual places"'. This research employs Boym's method in investigating the Nubian space in nostalgic expressions of Nubian cultures, for example, images of old Nubia in oral history after displacement and descriptions of the lost land in modern and contemporary literary production. Moreover, the research conducts an analysis of current spaces produced and occupied by Nubians after displacement. This research finds that the nostalgic expression has oozed into materialisation, thus affecting, appropriating, and reforming the spaces of displacement and diaspora.

2. Who Defines Nubia?

To be able to justify the claim that Nubia still exists, it is imperative to venture into the different definitions of 'Nubia' itself; it is also essential to question the mechanisms of production for each of these definitions. The submergence of the historical land's material evidence has moved the narratives about Nubia into a space of remembrance, rendering nostalgia—or different forms of nostalgia—as the main operational tool in reproducing the idea of this lost land. Understanding the definition of Nubia in these different forms of nostalgia requires positioning their initiators in time and space, as space and time from which people evoke nostalgia are as important as the space and time nostalgia evokes (Hui 2013). This renders the act of defining Nubia within nostalgic narratives contingent on what the narrator's political interest requires from 'Nubia', or needs it to be.

For instance, academics in Nubian studies had developed an image of Nubia that stems from nostalgia—a colonial nostalgia about a space they saw from a boat in the Nile (Gregory 2001). A visual centred around ancient stone temples, with Nubian people and their houses often serving as their background, came to be the dominant image of Nubian space and eventually defined Nubia in the literature of the early twentieth century. Those who had the power to publish, document, and disseminate their nostalgic images sailed through Nubia and proposed an image of a Nubia with a

glorious past of kings and queens—a romantic Gloriana (Mazrui 2005)—hence, producing a spatial definition of Nubia only through historicisation.

Such an image extends from Egyptology and the colonial interest in the powerful pharaohs, while Nubians and their peoplehood stood in the periphery of these images. The knowledge production of the nostalgic image translated into materiality during the 1960s in what was known as the Rescue Nubia Campaign (Hassan 2007), an international effort led by the academic community and spearheaded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The campaign raised funds and successfully saved numerous archaeological sites with minimal regard to the Nubian people, their culture, and everyday architecture. This is evident in Walter Emery's book *Lost Land Emerges* (1967), in which he describes the rescue campaign. The lost land, to Emery, was the land of ancient stones, and its emergence was the emergence of stone, as Nubian, to the members of the rescue campaign, had only existed as historiography.

To Nubians, the unspoken differentiation between the lost paradise and the lost Nubia is vivid. Narratives of loss exist simultaneously with a denial that Nubia ceases to exist. The Nubia that exists, in this case, is also produced through nostalgia. Nevertheless, nostalgia here is a form of emotional labour. Nostalgia, to Nubians, is an implicit social duty as well as a common denominator; it is an amalgam of emotional resources, such as pain, sorrow, and yearning for somewhere other than the 'here', juxtaposed over an image coded in their collective conscious. To Nubians, Nubia can be described as collective virtual spatialities fuelled by nostalgia and disembodied from its materiality.

These narratives were incubated and reproduced through Nubian affective resources. Our grandmothers' stories were always present to describe spatialities of the old land. Nubian literature and poetry are exceptionally descriptive in drawing an elaborate image of a land that is now under water. They create not only an abstract image of a place but also a dynamic depiction of everyday life that has been collectively adopted by Nubians to maintain such peoplehood. The cradle of the nostalgia for the old land, however, is in the circles of the elderly Nubian women. Nubian women are trained and conditioned to narrate, as their gender role has included the tasks of storytelling since before the age of television and modern entertainment.

3. Nubian Nostalgic Expressions

Before delving into an exploration of Nubian nostalgic narratives, it is vital to introduce languages, as they mediate these expressions. The Nubian language belongs to the Nilo-Saharan phylum, and it is the only language within this phylum that can be traced back over a thousand years (Bechhaus-Gerst 2011). Reference to the Nubian language throughout this research refers to Nobiin, the most recent variation of the language. The Nubian language spoken in Egypt can be divided into Fadedji and Kenzi, spoken by Fadedja and Kenouz Nubians, respectively. Despite literature arguing for the proximities and similarities among these two dialects, It is challenging for a Fadidja Nubian to understand the flow of a Kenzi conversation and vice-versa.

There is a wealth of material in Nubian; however, it is often orally disseminated, with very little recorded. Nubian was the main medium for the expression of Nubian women, whose isolation in old Nubia exposed them to the Arabic language significantly less than their male counterparts, who often migrated to Arabic-speaking contexts for wage work in the first half of the twentieth century. This delay made Nubian literature, printed and distributed in Arabic, a space for male authors. Both oral and literary production of the Nubian culture after displacement contained vivid depictions of the lost land.

3.1. Oral Narratives of Nubian Places

Stories about the old land are a regular interaction in the life of Nubians growing up. The stories are charged with a pain and longing driven by the feeling of displacement in their village. The mixture of fantasization and complaint are a way to summon power in a situation of disposition. 'Our old village was a piece of paradise by the river [Nile]. There we had everything: vegetables, fruits, fish,

and so many palm trees that you could not count. We did not need the [Egyptian] government to give us anything.' This nostalgic statement was a repeated one that my grandaunt Anna Zolikha said to me as I would stand next to her cracking house[2]. Stories of Nubian women were often spatial; they were often a commentary on the shortcomings of the state-built settlement.

Our palm tree died due to poor soil quality in the settlement. My grandmother, like many others, had tried several times to sustain it in the small courtyard of her dwelling unit. Planting a palm tree in the middle of the courtyard had been a tradition in Nubian architecture before displacement; it was an important mechanism in mitigating the high temperature inside the house. Every time we sat in that courtyard where her palm tree had died, my grandmother would start telling stories about how palm trees were lush and fruitful in the old land and how she had a great palm tree in the middle of the house. The images in everyday stories of Nubian women represent a nostalgic ecosystem in which there are lush trees, prosperous land, happy dogs, and colours. The stories were dynamic and elaborate and developed with the time and spatial needs of their makers.

Sand was the interim canvas for Nubians in the Tahgeer villages. When the story warranted a visualisation, Nubians would sit on the sandy floor of their settlement houses and draw using their index fingers or palm wickers. In the social context of the story, the narrator often drew icons, movement patterns between houses, or shapes of structural elements, all of which were maps that depicted the social space in the old land. Latour (2012) describes this practice as 'Savage Geography'. Latour evokes a story about an old man and a geographer in which the old man draws a map in the sand while the geographer draws the map on paper. When the tide comes, the map on the sand disappears while the one on the paper is preserved. In contrary to Latour's proposition, I believe that knowledge projected on the sand is documented in the collective memory in which these maps and images are deposited and reformed to produce a virtual map that is far from savagery.

3.2. Projection of Nubia in Nubian Literature

While oral narratives in our case are a venue to publish testimonies and descriptions and to assert the ethos of the old land, they are the first place of production. Other artistic venues, such as valorisable literature and visual arts, were available to a handful of Nubians, mostly Nubian men in urban centres, who could obtain a layer of privilege and successfully communicate a literary subject of Nubia through novels or paintings in which the nostalgic space manifests itself in a highly descriptive fashion. Authors who lived in the settlements, predominantly men and those who produced texts of fiction or historiographies about the old land, were too far from the dominant centre or the Egyptian mainstream to be visible, thus rendering their work as a single copy of handwritten notebooks in their houses. We find one or two of those authors in every village, each with a pile of notebooks in an old cupboard.

Idris Ali, Haggag Addoul, and Mohammad Khalil Qassem are some of the few known Nubian voices in Arabic literature. All their work is centred around the Nubian experience while depicting Nubian—and their own—pain, frustration, and longing for a Nubian land as recurrent. Ali (1998), for example, describes the state of the protagonist in his novel Dongola: A Nubian Story as follows: 'He felt a violent nostalgia for the sight of Nubia before its final immersion' (Ali 1998). In this excerpt, we can see the intense depiction of longing within the context of trying and failing to produce Nubian nationalism (DiMeo 2015). In the first Nubian novel in Arabic literature (Gilmore 2015), Al Shamandura, Qassem (1968) portrays a social-realist articulation of a Nubian society before, during, and after the heightening of the Aswan Low Dam.).

Nubian sense of loss is always present in Nubian literature. In these texts, lost and virtualised Nubian spaces find a fertile soil to inhabit. El Shamandora, for instance, contains an elaborate description of old Nubia—the trees, the sky, the vegetation, the atmosphere, and every single detail

[2] Menna Agha's Field notes, Qustul, 29 December 2016.

of a scene. It is as if the author wished for a retroactive audio-visual recorder but only had his pen. Qassem also expresses his feelings toward these landscapes; his words are not a neutral description but rather a confession of his feelings of loss and longing masked in what simply appears to be an author describing the context of his story. Nubians have always revered El Shamandura and basked in the spatialities it offered between its lines. However, the novel was criticised by non-Nubian readers for its excessive description, which they found did not add anything to their reading experience.

There is no material proof that the old land was that paradise in our stories, yet the space that lives in our collective imagination can be seen as the paradise we want as opposed to the one we once had. As no place is real or unreal in its entirety, all places start in reality, but once they enter the text, they settle in spatial illusion, in the unreal, the imaginary, and the virtual (Al Nossair 2015). What I strongly believe is that nostalgic space is 'real' and that the Nubia we imagine is true. This presents the Nubian nostalgic space as a venue for epistemic production, cultural production, and consequently spatial production—a space to promote the Nubia that matters to Nubians.

4. Archaeology of 'the Now' Space

As Nubians in displacement, whether in settlements or diaspora, we are raised to see and hear a lost utopia. If space, as Lukermann (1964) argues, is a way for us to understand the simple fact of reality, then Nubians have a dual-space reality. We live in the space of the imagined and the space of the actual. Between these spaces exists a contestation that keeps us displaced and drives us to materialise the immaterial and embody the disembodied according to an image of a land that is rendered in our imaginations—a layout of a Nubia, presumably the 'old land', that is virtually sculpted according to the detailed descriptions in our grandmothers' stories, a description that tries to territorialise the actual world.

Our nostalgic space, with its social organisations and images, becomes utilised in creating space elsewhere Harkening back to the trees from her mother's stories stories, my mother would describe our house to an incoming visitor, 'We are the house with the five lush palm trees', encouraging me to see a direct link between my grandmother's palm tree stories and the five palm trees my mother has in her garden in a Cairo suburb. My grandmother's story also has defined the behaviours around these palm trees; around them, we are reminded we are Nubian. The main struggle for Nubian nostalgic space, however, is neither about nostalgia or the question of its utility; it is about Affective justice, about having the right to feel pain, loss, and longing and the right to emote a space, make it, and live in it.

4.1. Nubia Reincarnated in Displacement

The image of old Nubia reincarnates in Nubian spatial production in the post-displacement sites. Nubians tended to develop their space in direct relation to that virtual ecosystem that lives in stories, songs, and novels, and they still call that virtual space home even though most Nubians nowadays did not witness the process of displacement nor have they seen their original land. Evidence of this incarnation can be seen in middle school children in art classes when Nubian children, including myself, try to fulfil the art class requirement of drawing rural scenes; we draw an old Nubian village, referenced directly from the landscapes that live in nostalgia. Spatial incarnations in material spaces are deemed to follow Nubians' redirected schemes, elements, and spatial compositions from old Nubian architecture within the process of spatial production in their settlements or elsewhere.

The typical resettlement village in what was named New Nubia had a modern linear grid and a linear orientation for residential buildings, with a concentration of building plots surrounded by agricultural land. The rectilinear grid was often dominated by the main automobile street, with services such as a mosque, commercial centre, school, sports centre, and post office in the heart of this area. The design was often referred to as unimaginative (Serageldin 1982; Ghabbour 1991) due to its pure form and the synthetic spaces that appropriated elements of Nubian architecture but failed to offer the spatial qualities resembling those of the original land. The first trials of reincarnations of

the old land were in the early years of displacement. As Fernea and Kennedy (1966) note, the unique artistic and architectural tradition of Old Nubia is reasserting itself and being superimposed upon the drab uniformity of public housing.

Nubians have been—and still are—summoning elements and spatial compositions from the old land, one of which is the mastaba, a cuboidal bench often attached to the main facade in traditional Nubian architecture. Nubian women started to attach mastabas to their houses in the resettlement village (Hopkins and Mehanna 2011). Nubian mastabas were added to the front, and often only, facade in the settlement dwelling units. These exterior cuboidal benches acted as an extension of the state-built dwelling. The iconographic value of the object and its space-making capacities allowed the mastaba to foster a Nubian agency. Even though the trend of building these benches was initiated by Nubians who actively experienced them, younger generations maintain the reproduction of this element not only for its utility but also for its culture-making abilities (Agha and DeVos 2017). It is worth mentioning that the reincarnated mastaba was not a replica of its old versions but rather a repurposed nostalgic icon reproduced to mend the failures of the existing space, especially the failure of that space to perform a Nubian agency.

Ethnographic surveys, as well as spatial surveys, show the inadequacy of the state-built environment in fostering a Nubian life. Dwelling units especially did not act as houses; their design has caused the housing unit to be divorced from it political capacities'. For that reason, Nubians have developed a community house, a madyafa, that is a new typology replicating a traditional Nubian house, but in this case, the building acts as a community centre. It is a reproduction of Nubian residential architecture used to accommodate the political/social/economic activities and to be shared among a group of people. It is also a tool for the spatial preservation of Nubian social life and a singular agent that resembles the Nubian architecture that lives in nostalgia among a modernistically built environment. The madyafa is an ideal example of the innovation capacities in the imagined territory, as it was not a part of the traditional Nubian architecture, yet it is a rendition produced by the spatial needs and aspirations formulating the nostalgic territory.

4.2. Nubian Reincarnations in the Diaspora

While the state-built settlements lacked the sufficient resources and infrastructure to support the new generations of Nubians, by the 1980s and 1990s, newly formed families, just like my own, moved to Egyptian cities and the Arab Gulf in pursuit of economic resources. In their material geographic diaspora, Nubians maintain their dual spatial existence. They still live in the collectively imagined old land and maintain their belonging to their original villages through a networked system. Nubian networks' main nodes are called associations and clubs in Cairo and Alexandria; they carry names of original villages, and people from that village are paying subscribers. The collective governing body is the General Nubian Club in Cairo, where they rotate power between Nubian groups. Social relations connect associations to settlements in Tahgeer and Nubian associations outside Egypt, especially in the Arab Gulf, which is the major source of Nubians' economic power.

Nubian families in Egyptian urban centres, like mine, for instance, are linked to their villages through an association that carries the name of that Nubian village (in my case, the association of Qustul). These associations in Cairo and Alexandria are permanent hubs for Nubians such as my family to keep traditions and stay linked to their village. The Qustul association in Cairo consists of two residential apartments in a poor neighbourhood of Abdeen. Volunteer members took down the wall between the apartment to make space for meals that include thirty-five to fifty people, but they also made sure the space is able to accommodate projectors for their annual presentation in which students from Qustul, myself included, are celebrated every year for their achievements.

The making of these spaces unveils the emotional basis of their link to a lost village, and these spaces are the main pillars of the Nubians' network. Nubians in diaspora and displacement villages continually attempt to build a piece of Nubia; these spaces do not look like the archived images of the old land but rather like the evolution of the land, had it stayed, and its own people had developed it.

Therefore, I argue that the land remained in the nostalgic space. Moreover, I argue that the landscapes were able to export themselves as a developed version in accordance with or in resistance to external factors. Such phenomena show that Nubian spaces have continued developing to maintain a Nubian peoplehood; they made use of the cracks in the material spatial systems and carved a space with their agency. Along with this process of development functions with a sense of loss as this space's main foundation, an urge to continue making spaces for what is Nubian continues. All the spaces I have detected within the mapping are either a mimic, a representation, or a succession to a feature of the built environment of the old land.

5. Theorising Nubian Territory and Territoriality: Nostalgia as Emotional Labour

In the case of Nubian's and their nostalgia, a clear distinction can be made between nostalgic narrative and nostalgic metanarratives. I find that a nostalgic metanarrative generates a foundation for common virtual space, as it is uncontested and pervasive in the Nubian collective conscious; the metanarrative, thus, is the virtual landscape of the imagined Nubia. Nostalgic Nubian narratives, however, offer spatial projections, dynamic constellations, and fluctuating images stemming from memories. Micronarratives in forms of nostalgic microhistories populate the landscape and morph it. As these stories are altered through time, the space is altered as well, rendering a constant state of fluctuation.

The disembodied Territory of Nubians is constructed due to a Nostalgic metanarrative, a grand totalising cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience (Stephens and McCallum 1998). In my opinion, the existence of a Nubian territory is credited to a pervasive metanarrative, a grand collective perception of a constructed reality. It is the uncontested story of the paradise-like old land. Poststructuralist theorists like Foucault and Lyotard exhibited aversion towards metanarratives, as they are often created to reinforce a power structure (Lyotard 1984). In this case, a metanarrative is used to acquire power for disenfranchised peoplehood; it could be seen as a grand counter-narrative. Although I tend to agree with Foucault's and Lyotard's position, I find a nostalgic metanarrative to be a great asset and space-making apparatus in the case of Nubians.

An objective analysis could certainly challenge such a metanarrative; historical evidence shows that Nubians were in dire circumstances in 1902, when the Egyptian (then) Kingdom started implementing hydraulic projects on the Nile. Nubians lost large areas of their arable land, which drove their society into an institutionalised migration as the male population left to seek wage labour in urban centres (Hale 1989). Nevertheless, older generations—all of whom were born after 1902—who witnessed the old land insist that it was a paradise. Despite the implied notion, the perpetuation of nostalgic images of Nubia is not concerned with historical accuracy, as nostalgia becomes a space of fabrication and selective preservation (Mazrui 2013). In its forging of truth, I find a design process and—as I argue—a space of production.

I find the concept of 'territory' useful in understanding such spatial phenomena, especially when territory is studied according to geographer Claude Raffestin's original paper 'Space, Territory, and Territoriality' (Raffestin 2012). To Raffestin, a territory is derived 'from the activity that humans carry out in the space that is given or provided to them in common' and 'from space . . . qua production by the projection of labour'. According to the Swiss geographer, the difference between a space and a territory is labour, as space becomes a territory through production. Accordingly, I argue that Nubia is a virtual territory to contemporary Nubians. The collective virtual spatiality is transformed through emotional labour into a disembodied territory, using nostalgia as its means of production. This renders the preservation and perpetuation of Nubia as a disembodied territory, be it in a virtual space or a material one, crucial to maintaining the production of a Nubian identity.

'Territory' is often studied in the context of and associated with nationalism, an association that urban sociologist Saskia Sassen aims to dissolve. She understands territory 'as a complex capability with an embedded logic of power/empowerment and of claim-making' (Sassen 2013). Sassen's understanding of territory allows us to see Nubian nostalgic disembodied territories as a resource for

community building. Her understanding also allows for a conceptualisation that avoids falling into a futile nationalist sentiment. Nationalism has proved its inability to serve displaced Nubians, who have failed in their attempts to forge their own nationalist space, as DiMeo (2015) concludes in his remarkable reading of Dongola: A Nubian Novel. Nostalgia, however, has formed a different kind of territory, one that has served Nubians and their community-making efforts.

If what Nubians created in the nostalgic space is a territory, then nostalgia can be seen as a means of territoriality. According to Raffestin (2012), 'The construction of territory is the consequence of territoriality defined as the ensemble of relations that society maintains with exteriority and alterity for the satisfaction of its needs.' The Nubian-imagined territory, as conceptualised in this paper, is the only Nubia that remains, and it is a rare space of Nubian agency. Nubians grow to join this territory through a nostalgic initiation, by learning that there is a territory that is ours—not one we can touch, but a paradise-like old land that is ours, unlike the state-built settlement that is not.

Understanding the relationship between the material space surrounding Nubians and the space of their disembodied territory can benefit from contemporary research on virtual spaces. Castronova (2008) offers an understanding of the relation between virtual spaces and the material world in his book Synthetic Worlds. Castronova investigates the behaviour of players in online virtual worlds, and he finds that these virtual spaces are a 'porous membrane'. He claims that there is a two-way movement of the player between the material and the virtual space, this porousness allows the players to step in and out. Similar to virtual online spaces, contemporary Nubians move between the two spaces and move features from one to the other, especially the noted reincarnations of elements and spatial constitutions from their imaginaries to their material space.

Then, the nostalgic space can be conceptualised as a territory disembodied in its materiality and virtual in its dimension—a territory produced and maintained through emotional labour, in this case, nostalgia. The territory has interesting spatial characteristics. It contains a shared vision as well as a fluctuating layout and their belonging is not contingent on their geographic proximity to the territory'. Besides, it allows its occupants to live simultaneously in multiple spaces; it allows them to move between and acknowledge both the imagined and the material as lived spaces. Through this acknowledgement, the virtual territory is able to inflict change on the material world.

Territorial performance of Nubians, as an example of landless peoplehood, depicts such phenomena of disembodied territories as an opportunity to understand placemaking and territory making in a different light. The disembodied imagination of 'Nubia' allows the concept to transcend the spatial limitation of the displacement site, and its emotional surplus is translated into a territorial performance. Territoriality, in this case, precedes the existence of the territory, one in which Nubians recreate a Nubia that they have never seen. Disembodied territorialities can create a disruptive entity by utilising a networked structure and avoiding conflict over spatial resources, as they become able to reincarnate these spaces regardless of geographical restraints.

6. Conclusions

Nostalgia has been the topic of contestation in academic realms, with researchers suggesting that giving 'ourselves up to longing for a different time or place, no matter how admirable its qualities, is always to run the risk of constricting our ability to act in the present' (Atia and Davies 2010). The tangible added value of nostalgia detected in this research, however, suggests otherwise. Said (2000) teaches us that 'the interplay among memory, place, and invention can do if it is not to be used for the purposes of exclusion, that is if it is to be used for liberation and coexistence between societies whose adjacency requires a tolerable form of sustained reconciliation'. The collective memory of loss is not innate or passive. On the contrary, it is a place of reconstruction, a tool through which displaced and dispossessed peoplehoods can creatively use nostalgia, and it 'forms of temporal belonging to create a sense of a continuous self' (May 2017).

As the Nubian land was submerged in its materiality due to the building of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, the term Nubia now is defined through nostalgic apparatus. Nevertheless, the term

has come to mean different things, as different nostalgic apparatuses have stemmed from different political interests. To post-displacement Nubians, nostalgia is the mechanism of creating a virtual space of Nubian agency. In displacement, Nubians have evoked a nostalgic metanarrative of the 'lost paradise' to create a common space. This metanarrative has been acting as the ground foundation for common space, and this common space has been populated and modelled using stories and images of our old land.

Such nostalgic production can be conceptualised as a territory in the light of Raffestin's (2012) definition of space. Raffestin poses territories as a result of production through labour in a given or acquired space. Correspondingly, on the one hand, I can understand the virtual space generated through a metanarrative in the Nubian collective conscious to be an acquired space, and on the other hand, I find micronarratives and their production through affective resources to be emotional labour. Nostalgia, in this case, is a mode of territoriality, as it fuels the making of a territory. Moreover, the territory becomes a space of production rather than a space of preservation, as it is morphed by the space of the now rather than the space it claims to preserve, making it a tool for space making.

Such phenomena make it possible for this research to argue for the utility of nostalgia in this case, as it is used to procure a dispossessed power—space making. Such spatial production enables me, a third generation displaced Nubian, to argue that Nubia still exists. In conclusion, nostalgia, for the dispossessed, is often put to work. It is never an idle act of remembrance but rather a means of production to those who need to retrieve a value. Nostalgia in its falsification of documented realities about spaces and places is not deceiving; it produces the 'other' space.

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Article

Subverting the Nation-State Through Post-Partition Nostalgia: Joginder Paul's *Sleepwalkers*

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Abstract: With the advent of the Progressive Writers Movement, Urdu Literature was marked with a heightened form of social realism during the Partition of British India in 1947. Joginder Paul, once a part of this movement, breaks away from this realist tradition in his Urdu novella, *Khwabrau* (*Sleepwalkers*), published in 1990. *Sleepwalkers* shifts the dominant realist strain in the form and content of Urdu fiction to open a liminal "third space" that subverts the notion of hegemonic reality. *Sleepwalkers* is based on a time, many years after the Partition in the city of Karachi, and focuses on the "mohajirs" from Lucknow who construct a mnemonic existential space by constructing a simulacrum of pre-Partition Lucknow (now in India). This paper examines the reconceptualization of spaces through the realm of political nostalgia and the figure of the refugee subject "performing" this nostalgia. This nostalgic reconstruction of space, thus, becomes a "heterotopia" in Foucauldian terms, one that causes a rupture in the unities of time and space and the idea of nation-hood. The refugee subjects' subversion of the linearity of time opens a different time in the narration of a nation that necessitates that the wholeness of the "imagined" physical space of a nation be questioned.

Keywords: memory; partition; nation-state; Foucault; heterotopia; India; Pakistan; Partition fiction; refugees

> "Time is a strange chemistry. First we wanted to forget and then we wanted to relive the time that was!"
>
> —Krishna Sobti, "Memory and History of Partition"

This essay focuses on a unique novella, *Sleepwalkers* (1990) by Joginder Paul, who was one of the active members of the Progressive Writers Movement in its heyday, as the Indian subcontinent drew near the catastrophic and bloody Partition of 1947 that also ended the British Raj and split the land between India and Pakistan. Joginder Paul's *Sleepwalkers* forms a significant text in the oeuvre of Partition literature and shifts the dominant realist strain in the form and content of Urdu fiction to open a liminal "third space" that subverts the notion of hegemonic reality and the nationalist imaginary of the two nation-states. To trace the importance of Paul's novella in the trajectory of Partition literature, it is significant to briefly chart the history of the Progressive Writer's Movement.

The Progressive Writers Movement was initially founded in 1935, London, by a group of writers, namely, Mulk Raj Anand, Sajeed Zaheer, and Jyotirmaya Ghosh. This meeting saw the emergence of a manifesto that stated, "Radical changes are taking place in Indian society . . . we believe that the new literature of India must deal with the basic problems of our existence today—the problems of hunger and poverty, social backwardness, and political subjection" (Anand quoted in Progressive Writers' Association (1979)). Later, in April 1936, the official inaugural meeting of the movement took place in Lucknow, India, where the manifesto was modified thus—"Indian literature, since the breakdown of classical literature, has the fatal tendency to escape from the actualities of life. It has tried to find

a refuge from reality in baseless spiritualism and ideality" (Ali and Rashed 1977–1978, p. 94). Thus, it legitimized the need for a movement such as this that had a significant space during the peak of Indian nationalism and freedom struggle in which mainly Urdu writers (and some Hindi writers) wrote with a heavy presence of social realism that reflected the anticolonial and localized struggles of the people.

Joginder Paul, a noted Urdu fiction writer and a renowned figure in the Progressive Writers Movement, was born in Sialkot, Pakistan and moved to India during the Partition of the subcontinent and lived there till his death in 2016. He is a writer who traverses boundaries and his Urdu writings are still widely read in both India and Pakistan.[1] Paul was part of the Progressive Writers Movement at a time when its glory was fading, and he also breaks away from this realist tradition in his Urdu novella, *Khwabrau* (*Sleepwalkers* 1990). *Sleepwalkers* is based on a time, many years after the Partition in the city of Karachi and focuses on the "mohajirs[2]" from Lucknow[3] who construct a mnemonic space by constructing a *simulacrum* of pre-Partition Lucknow. This essay examines the reconceptualization of spaces through the realm of nostalgia and the figure of the refugee subject performing this nostalgia in the text. The argument is divided into two parts—first, the essay explains how nostalgia and memory works in subversive ways to create this simulacrum of a lost home and land against the strict territoriality of nation-states post-Partition, between India and Pakistan. Next, using Michel Foucault's notion of the "heterotopia" it argues how nostalgia enables a deviant heterotopic space, one that causes a rupture in the unities of time and space and the idea of the newly created nation-hood. The refugee subjects' subversion of the linearity of time opens a different time in the narration of a nation that necessitates that the wholeness of the "imagined" physical space of a nation be questioned. The paper also explores the hyperreal city of "Lucknow" within the territorial spaces of Karachi and argues that the act of not forgetting becomes a political one, through which the refugees pose as deviant subjects resisting to be a part of the cartographic domination of nation in post-Partition times.

As aforementioned, the historic setting of the novella is the traumatic and unsettling presence of the Partition of India based on the two-nation theory, dividing the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947. The ending of British colonialism, ironically, also marks the painful memory of Partition, when arbitrary borders were aligned, and millions of people were either deracinated or found themselves subject to physical and sexual violence, or as rootless refugees in derelict camps. The loss of home, identity, and trauma that people underwent during and after the Partition has been recorded in literature across the border in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan in a rich body of texts, loosely termed as Partition literature.

Joginder Paul has noted that the inception *Sleepwalkers* was during one of his visits to the city of Karachi in Pakistan, where he was amazed to see "so many Uttar Pradesh[4] towns there" (Paul 1998, p. 113).[5] Paul felt that he had never left India and that the people of Karachi were in a "deep sleep" and spoke the grand lofty Urdu reminding him of Lucknow in Pre-Partition times. Almost all the characters in Paul's text are migrants and are caught in the liminal state, not only in the in-betweenness of borders of India and Pakistan, and their concomitant national identities, but also in a liminality between reality and dream. Using Gloria Anzaldua's concept of the "third country," *Sleepwalkers*, thus, gives rise to a "third country" (Anzaldua 1980, p. 11) for the refugees, a space which exists in a realm of fluidity. The protagonist of the novella, Deewane Maulvi Sahab, transplants the entire Lucknawi culture, with the houses, localities, and essence of the mnemonic Lucknow in Karachi and feels no sense of loss after the Partition. Interestingly, this imagined reconceptualization of space through memory not only

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1 Almost all Joginder Paul's works are with the Library of Congress in USA.
2 Urdu word for refugees.
3 Lucknow is a significant northern city of India, populated by Urdu speaking Muslims. Lucknow has been historically associated with the grandeur of Muslim culture, linguistic superiority, and tradition.
4 Uttar Pradesh is a state in Northern India.
5 Paul's essay "On Writing Sleepwalkers" provides the context and backdrop of this novella and explains that it was based on his observations in one of his visits to Karachi which reminded him of Lucknow and Uttar Pradesh in India (p. 113).

undermines the Partition narrative, but it also threatens Partition's project of mapping out extremely nationalized spaces.

Sleepwalkers is particularly interesting in its use of magic realism to present the haunting trauma and mnemonic experiences of "mohajirs" trapped in a liminal space, who construct this dream-like mnemonic space of existence against the forced territorial realignment. The text was first published in Lahore, Pakistan in 1990, and the next year saw its Indian publication. Post-partitioned Karachi was mainly a refugee city with its population rising tremendously after the refugee influx from Partition, since it was relatively easier for *mohajirs* to cross the Gujarat border on the Indian side of the Western frontier and enter Pakistan into the city of Karachi. In the novella, Karachi's resemblance with Lucknow, in the spatial and imaginative mapping is such that the gap between the real and the imagined Lucknow is erased; what remains, in Baudrillard's terms, is a "hyperreality" of Lucknow within Karachi. Baudrillard in "Simulacra and Simulation" explains that one lives in a society which represents a simulation of the reality through codes and signs, rather than the reality itself. Everything, from economy to socio-political life are dominated by the simulation, whereby the distinction of the real and the simulation is often lost. In this context, this simulacrum of Lucknow becomes more significant than the "real" city of Lucknow. The reality of Lucknow is, thus, replaced by the refugees' mnemonic experiences which are simulations of the reality. All the inhabitants exist in a realm where they believe that they have never moved out of Lucknow after Partition. Interestingly, it is through the simulacrum of Lucknow, that the characters reconstruct memory constantly through an act of not forgetting.

The very first line of the text starts with the emphatic announcement—"This is Lucknow"—which frames the spatiality, cartographic and "cognitive mapping[6]" associated in the determination that within Karachi there lies a Lucknow. The narrator tells us that people in Karachi walk with their "Lucknawi caps titled to one side" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 12) and the old "chowk[7]" of Ameenabad in Lucknow is present there in all its glory and chaos. As the narrator states:

> They say people come and go, places stay where they are. But, in this case, the mohajirs had transported an entire city within the folds of their hearts. With some came the bricks of their houses, some carried entire homes, intact. Some brought a whole gali, and others transported the bustling main road beyond the gali—whatever they could contain in their hearts! As soon as they recovered their breath after reaching Karachi, the entire city emerged from their hearts, brick by brick. (*Sleepwalkers* p. 13)

In fact, Pakistan, for these *mohajirs* is a distant name of an unknown, othered place; even at night when the sleepwalkers roam the streets of "Lucknow," they shout slogans and create political rallies for Pakistan, a land which they think has not emerged or even been established. The sleepwalkers harken back to a Lucknow they reminisce through nostalgia that helps them reconceptualize their present. The trope of nostalgia is particularly significant for Partition narratives and plays a significant role in the Partition refugee memoirs and testimonies that have been collected and documented. Historian Subhasri Ghosh, whose work has extensively studied such testimonies, underscores the dual reality of Partition refugees on both sides of the border and explains that memory of the Partition had a double impact on the refugees—trauma of Partition on one hand, and an intense nostalgia of the lost homeland on the other. Ghosh's study is primarily based on the testimonies of refugees from the eastern borderland between India and Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) and she explains that although there were economic, class and religious factors at stake for the refugees to find a stable home in the new land again, the lack of "psychological assimilation" was key. The refugees were trapped into their "cage of nostalgia" (Ghosh 2013, p. 19). Albeit, the politics of the eastern border between India and Bangladesh is different from that of the western frontier between India and Pakistan, yet

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6 Phrase coined by Frederic Jameson which refers to the process by which a subject represents the larger ideological totality.
7 *Chowk* means city center in Urdu.

the understanding of trauma and nostalgia and how it impacts the refugees is the same. In fact, what Ghosh highlights in her work is the longing of home that becomes a part of the refugee subject's survival, and yet the nostalgia of the past homeland also leads to a creation of their identities, and marks a distinctiveness from the immediate present of rootlessness. As Ghosh points out, "Thus, they led a dual existence where one part of their being yearned to be a part of the present social fabric while the other part put a check on that desire by constantly engulfing them in the nostalgia of their *bhitamati* (home and hearth)" ("Representation of Forced Migrants", (Ghosh 2013, p. 16)).

In another discussion of nostalgia and its varied types, Sventlana Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia*, explains the genesis of the word nostalgia and states that *nostos* refers to returning home, and *algia*—longing for a home that no longer exists (Boym 2001, p. xiii). Boym distinguishes between two kinds of nostalgia in her work—restorative and reflective nostalgia. According to her, restorative nostalgia creates a "transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home," whereas, "reflective nostalgia thrives in the longing itself" (Boym 2001, p. xviii). Where restorative nostalgia is an attempt to find originary homes, reflective nostalgia "creates ethical and creative challenges" through the longing (Boym 2001, p. xviii). Yet, in *Sleepwalkers*, one does not find a specific kind of nostalgia; rather, a merging of both kinds constructs this surreal space of Lucknow within Karachi. At first it seems that the sleepwalkers only strive towards a return towards an originary home, yet as the text evolves, one notes a wistful longing that creates an understanding of cultural memory and the trauma of Partition. While part of their nostalgia seems to have a restorative aim to create originary, transhistorical homelands, it is also important to note that their reconceptualization of geographical place and the space also becomes a part of "Karachi"—hence, using Homi Bhaba's term, a *third space* is created, where both Karachi and Lucknow are enmeshed together in a liminal zone. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* discusses the "interstitial perspectives" of a nation that creates liminal spaces between borders that recreate new political initiatives, identities, and possibilities (Bhabha 1994, p. 148). I extend Bhabha's idea to analyze this reconfiguring of spaces through nostalgia in the *Sleepwalkers* to show how the imagined space becomes a third space enabling subversive possibilities against the newly created nation-states.

Wazir Agha in his critique on the also novella notes, the story of Deewane Sahab's existence in the reconstructed imaginary space of Lucknow, is not one where everything is static in its reproduction of the past through an exercise of memory—"A constant process of creating and destroying" (Agha 1998, p. 125) takes place in the story that shows how the reconceptualization of space undermines the nationalist project of defining space and territory. Agha's emphasis on the dynamism of the imagined space of Lucknow is also a reminder of how the sleepwalkers create a *third space* that belies the constricted nationalist spaces of the two-nation theory in post-Partition times. This third space enables a dynamic state where Partition's onslaught on people and their conflictual belonging is thwarted in a unique way.

In a further discussion on the distinctions of space and place, Donnan and Wilson explain, "Space is conceptualization of the imagined physical relationships which give meaning to society, where things should be in cultural relation to each other" (Donnan and Wilson 2001, p. 9). They note that place is a more geographically bounded construct, which "encompasses both the idea and the actuality of where things are or live" (Donnan and Wilson 2001, p. 9). Henri Lefebvre in his theory of space also observes, "space is the very fabric of social existence, a medium of the woven relationships between subjects, their actions, and their environment" (qtd. in West-Pavlov 2009, p. 19). In the context of *Sleepwalkers*, Deewane Sahab and other refugees from India, thus carry Lucknow first as a geographically bounded place in the refugees' imagination but more importantly Lucknow also becomes a fabric of their "social existence" through which they imagine their identity and subjectivity. When migrating from India, Deewane Sahab and others, like his brother-in-law, Hakim Jamaluddin, carry "the plans of the

ancestral haveli[8] of Malihabad" which enable them to "continue to live in the same haveli as before" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 29). When Deewane Sahab's cousin visits him from Lucknow, India, he exclaims in wonder, "I am beginning to feel that the real Lucknow is, in fact, here. And it is not you who have migrated from our place to this, but it's we who have moved from here to there" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 18). To which Deewane Sahab emphatically stresses, "we haven't moved anywhere, *Bhai*! ... Our Lucknow is the only Lucknow. We don't recognize any other Lucknow" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 18). Anusua Basu Raychaudhury also focuses on the function of nostalgia in post-Partition subjects and claims that the spatial significance of the originary homelands loses significance, and what remains is the nostalgia for a home, recreated by memory. She quotes Dipesh Chakrabarty that, "a traumatized memory has a narrative structure which works on a principle opposite to that of any historical narrative" ("Nostalgia of *Desh*", (Raychaudhury Basu 2004, p. 5653)). In Paul's text, the traumatized after-effect of Partition acts against history and creates this replica of home to survive the loss. The nostalgia and yearning of the lost home also form collective memories for the refugees to deny the historical reality of divided lands. While Raychaudhury does not differentiate the varied kinds of nostalgia like Boym, her idea of post-Partition memory and nostalgia is useful here to understand how the refugees create a survival coping mechanism through their memory in a unique fusing of spaces and places.

Similarly, Edward Mallot in the article, "A Land Outside Space" observes that all around Maulvi Sahab "are fellow mohajirs, fellow sleepwalkers, fellow men and women, who at some level deny that they ever left home. Indeed, it may be the case that a certain measure of forgetfulness is the only way to psychologically cope with geographical madness" (Mallot 2007, p. 268). The nostalgia of home leads the refugee subject to defy the state and he/she "explores the bizarre liminal mental zones generated by a discrepancy between known orientations of space and cartographically imposed territoriality" (Mallot 2007, p. 267). The refugee subjects' recourse to nostalgia and mnemonic space to reconfigure space and time against the state apparatus then leads to a deterritorialization that constructs the city of Lucknow as a "heterotopia". The concept of deterritorialization, was pioneered by Arjun Appadurai in "Sovereignty without Territoriality: Notes for a Postnational Geography" in which he argues for an alternate spatialization against strict control of statist borders. Appadurai explains that the "principle of sovereign territory" exists as the foundation of nation-states (p. 41). The nostalgic re-conceptualizing of spaces, and even renaming Karachi as Lucknow, then creates a certain de-territorializing that destabilizes the coherence and unity of the nation-state. This deterritorialization of space against statist borders whose menacing presence created havoc in the lives of millions of refugees, thus, creates a unique "counter-site" as opposed to regularized, statist spaces that leads to the creation of a *heterotopia* within the nation-state.

In his posthumously published essay "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," originally published in 1967, Foucault claims that "the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time" (Foucault 2002, p. 229). In this essay, Foucault shifts his concern towards the centrality of space in the production of meaning and knowledge. According to him, against the utopias and "real" spaces there exists "counter sites" or contested spaces which are "outside of all places" (p. 231). He calls these "counter sites" heterotopias which he classifies in two ways—crisis heterotopias and deviant heterotopias. Here, I briefly explain both kinds to show why the latter kind is relevant for my discussion of *Sleepwalkers* in constructing a deviant heterotopic space. Crisis heterotopias denote forbidden or sacred spaces or places, which Foucault argues are rapidly disappearing from most cultures, although some are still present. The example of these crisis hetereotopias are menstruating women, pregnant women or the elderly who inhabit this "othered space" ("Of Other Spaces", (Foucault 2002, p. 232)). The other kind of heterotopia, what Foucault terms "heterotopias of deviation" are spaces where subjects whose "behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed"

[8] Haveli is Urdu word for house, usually mansion.

(p. 232). Foucault gives examples of people in psychiatric hospitals and prisons as inhabiting such deviating heterotopias.

Paul's novella illustrates how the sleepwalkers of Karachi construct a heterotopia of deviation against the national imaginary of rooted spaces and border control, one that not only deterritorializes space, as explained above, but one that also begins a process of re-territorialization by fusing the signifier and signified of Lucknow within the Karachi culture. The heterotopia that *Sleepwalkers* presents is one that is a heterochrony, which in Foucault's vision is a necessary trait for a heterotopia, meaning that it has a break with traditional time. Hence, the sleepwalkers of Karachi create a unique heterotopia that ruptures spatial unity as well as time. In Paul's story, the sleepwalkers break away from "real", linear time with their deviant sleepwalking across the streets of Karachi and open a fluidity of time. In one passage the narrator describes such a break from linear time with "apparitions" walking in an active bazaar in the dead of the night:

> In the dying hours of the night, when the silent lanes of Ameenabad are lit with the eerie glow of colourful lamps, people lying deep in sleep in the pitch dark of their homes roam about the bustling chowk, as if it were day. In the beginning, Manwa Chowkidar would constantly bang his lathi on the road, wide-eyed with fear and astonishment, as he stared at the dazzle around him . . . The entire Chowk is deserted; who on Allah's earth do I keep bumping into, in this dead silence? What was even stranger was that, within a few days, he actually began to see apparitions . . . He could clearly see all the people who had walked to the Chowk through their sleep. (*Sleepwalkers* p. 13)

In such a space that exists beyond the unities and confinements of time and place, Manwa Chowkidar, the city's night guard, views this heterotopic space from outside and to him the people appear as "apparitions." As mentioned earlier, the break with normative time is possible through the sleepwalking in the city chowk as if it were day, which usurps the distinction between night and day. Therefore, the sleepwalkers inherently reside in a liminal space that is against the circadian linearity of time. Manwa even exclaims that if these people were roaming about in the city at night, then he might even consider opening his tea-stall business for them at night in the city. Interestingly, enough, *Quami Awaaz*[9], a popular Urdu literary daily noted in its review of *Sleepwalkers*, "In *Khwabrau*, not only has Time been confounded, but the Unity of Places too has been undone . . . Joginder Paul has set the dream so perfectly in reality that one cannot be distinguished from the other . . . " (Blurb on *Sleepwalkers* book. (Paul 1998)).

The subjects of this heterotopia, primarily represented by Deewane Maulvi Sahab and his followers, are also caught in a double liminality. As refugees, they are already in a liminal space in-between borders, countries, nationalities. As the narrator in *Sleepwalkers* exclaims, "The problem that the mohajirs in Karachi face is that they are compelled to be mohajirs in spite of being permanently settled here" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 20). Thus, they are eternally liminal subjects and their agency to construct their "simultaneous mythic and real contestation of space" through the "heterotopology" also makes them "othered" figures whose human status is negated ("Of Other Spaces", (Foucault 2002, p. 232)). They are trapped in an in-between space between human and non-human, and remain as apparitions or in a ghost-like state. It is particularly telling that in the history of Partition migration and refugees, the Muslim refugees did not find state security and easy acceptance in the newly created Pakistan and after being disappointed many crossed the borders once again to find their home within Indian territory. Vazira Yaccobali Zamindar especially traces this history of Muslim refugees crossing borders post-Partition in the incisive book *The Long Partition and The Making of Modern South Asia*, and explains that since the territorial divide in 1947, the state and bureaucratic discourse on refugees met the thousands of Muslim refugees in Pakistan with "ambiguous reception" (Zamindar 2007, p. 86). Quoting

[9] In Urdu—Community Voice.

a leading editorial named *Jang*, she notes that the Pakistani state did not "like to see Hindustan's Muslim *muhajirs* in Sind" (Zamindar 2007, p. 86).[10] This plight or rejection of the Muslim refugees, especially in the province of Sindh[11] is a significant underlying subtext to the sleepwalkers story in Karachi and highlights the way in which subversive memory functions against the statist discourse.

If Deewane Sahab's heterotopia is one which acts as a "counter-site" to the cartographic imagination of nation-states, Karachi itself, as a border city of refugees, becomes a heterotopia, as the old settlers of the city, who are unlike Deewane Sahab and other sleepwalkers, "find some truth in the utterances of the eccentric Deewane Maulvi Sahab" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 17). The final irony in the text comes from the fact that the entire city of Karachi becomes the city of wandering people who are on the fringes of the city. For instance, Sain Baba, the house cook in Maulvi Sahab's house, claims that he is also a mohajir (*Sleepwalkers* p. 73). When pressed further to prove his refugee status by Deewane Sahab's wife, Achhi Begum, he emphasizes, "nobody in Karachi belongs to Karachi" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 73). Later, he unravels his past and tells them that he belonged to Sakkhar in Karachi, but wandered along to various places and cooked for an Indian doctor in Hyderabad, Pakistan. Post-Partition he loses his job at the doctor's home, flees, and wanders across the land of Sindh until he finally returns to Karachi. He declares that he has "no home, no neighborhood, no bonds with the past or the future" and that he is a "real" mohajir (*Sleepwalkers* p. 75). He finally explains to Achhi Begum, "in truth, we are all mohajirs" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 75). It is an interesting moment in the text when a refugee identity becomes the pronounced claim over self; more significantly this claiming of the refugee self is noteworthy because, refugees threaten the stability of the order of nation-states; due to their in-between status, neither here nor there, their ability towards constant movement defies the rooted territoriality of the nation-state.

Russell West-Pavlov notes that "heterotopias are thus places of epistemological and representational disorder on the margins of a society's order of representation" (West-Pavlov 2009, p. 137)—they illuminate a moment of rupture where the hegemonic epistemological categories become elusive and such spaces defy normative classifications. Yet, it is important to note here that Paul's portrayal of the post-Partition heterotopia through a deviant mnemonic use is not just a chaotic space with "disorder." Foucault certainly does not generalize and construct a theory of essentialized heterotopias, rather he explains that heterotopias in different contexts and histories function differently. Thus, here the heterotopia of "Lucknow" constructed by memory is not apolitical or disorderly. Edward Said, in an essay titled "Invention, Memory and Place" also argues that the invention of a certain memory is not devoid of politics. According to Said, "the representations of memory" enable us to understand the questions of power and authority, and is "far from a neutral exercise" (Said 2000, p. 176). Said's argument is focused on the construction and "invention" of Israel as a space and "home" for Jewish people, which to him negates the possibility of discussion of the Palestinian dispossession. However, I use his idea about memory and its political stance in its nuanced way for the purview of my argument about mnemonic space used by refugee subjects to transcend the territorial onslaught of Partition. If the representations of memory help us to engage with the idea of power and authority, the refugee's mnemonic codes become a subversive political act to construct an alternative imaginary against the nation-state. Of course, it may be argued that against such a construction of imagined "dream" space where the refugee subjects continue to remain is a dubious one. In "reality" they did move from Lucknow to Pakistan, and continue to reproduce the mores and ethos of Lucknow in Karachi, "believing" that they reside in India. However, for these people Pakistan is a distant reality where they have never been. Thus, in a way, the actual territorial sovereignty of the post-partitioned nation-state is given a lie in the imagined space they create.

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[10] Muhajir (same as Mohajir) is an Urdu word meaning refugee.
[11] Karachi is the capital of the province of Sindh in Pakistan.

Said also stresses that "geography can be manipulated, invented, characterized quite apart from a site's merely physical reality" (Said 2000, p. 180). This is what *Sleepwalkers* illustrates, that a physical entity of the place of Pakistan, which is also an "imagined" space created for the Muslims, is 'manipulated' when Karachi is re-invented through a simulacrum of Lucknow. As aforementioned, it may be argued that this imagined space that poses a heterotopic existence against the national hegemony is a yearning for the originary culture of the grandeur of Lucknow. Yet, this heterotopia is not one that is unchanging. As mentioned earlier, Wazir Agha claims that *Khwabrau* is not a fiction about stasis (Agha 1998, p. 125). Agha explains that the migrants from Lucknow carried with them the "entire tree of the culture of Lucknow which they entrusted to the new land" (p. 121); but this tree draws its sustenance from the new soil of Karachi and gradually the mohajir culture merges and fuses with the local culture of the Sindhis[12] and establishes itself (Agha 1998, p. 121). Thus, even this alternative imagined space, initiated by nostalgic yearning, comprises a constantly shifting, fluid space and recreating. A further example is demonstrated by the character Ishaq Mirza who cannot "tolerate" his father's chaste, lofty Urdu dialect but finds comfort and familiarity in talking to his Punjabi neighbor, Babu Fakir Mohammed, a local native of Karachi, whose speech for Ishaq is like "speaking in my own tongue" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 89). The question of language purity keeps recurring in the text, especially with Deewane Sahab's continuous efforts to retain the grandeur of ancient Urdu of Lucknow against his son's desire to "corrupt [his] tongue" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 27). In addition, through this, a mixed hybrid culture appears that has the Urdu and Sindhi[13] adopted in it and reshapes the "real" Lucknow into a site, which is also recreated and not stagnant.

Ishaq Mirza, who never believes in the concocted imagined space of Lucknow and criticizes the sleepwalkers, questioning how long the nostalgia for India would continue for people who had migrated to Pakistan years ago, admits to his cousin Hasim in a letter that he considers his father's insanity "a blessing." He concludes while considering the politically strained relationships and controlled borders between India and Pakistan—"There is but one Lucknow in the whole world and that Lucknow is here in Karachi ... Wait a minute, Hasim, *I am overcome* ... " (italics mine *Sleepwalkers* p. 86). It is particularly interesting that Ishaq leaves the last comment unfinished, which possibly reflects his swaying to his father's side and his acceptance of the "third space" finally, after realizing how crossing over the territorial borders or meeting people between the two nations is almost impossible without getting staunch government attention and vigilance. His last utterance also marks his surprise that even he is finally "overcome" like the sleepwalkers of Karachi. Elsewhere, the narrator reveals that Ishaq would rather "inject a dose of madness" into all mohajirs who possess the yearning for a lost "home" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 86). He concludes that "insane people are so pure, so innocent and carefree that even the harshest governments would feel ashamed once it looks into their eyes" (*Sleepwalkers* p. 86). Ishaq's ultimate move to the other side in becoming a member of this heterotopia happens in his realization that the group of "insane" people were the ones who had actually "liberated" themselves from the constant "official doubts and queries" regarding the refugee status, and had defied the government by constructing this space where they were at home, against any territorial limits.

At one level it may seem slightly problematic to expect that simply "forgetting" or a reinvention of mnemonic codes to recast space and place can belie national and international borders and the power they transmit. Yet, read in Foucauldian vision of a heterotopia, what I have argued is that within this imagined mnemonic construct, the "cognitive mapping" of the liminal refugee subjects "becomes a metaphor for the processes of political unconscious" (Preface, MacCabe 1995, p. xivf) to move beyond cartographic domination towards a re-envisioning of space. The sleepwalkers *choose not to forget* pre-partitioned Lucknow and it is significant to distinguish the political, affective act of

[12] The Sindhi community is predominant in Karachi, speaking a different language (Sindhi).
[13] One of the many languages spoken in Pakistan (and India), mainly by the Sindhi community, apart from Urdu.

choosing not to forget from the act of remembrance. Ontologically, the structures of both coalesce and performatively critique the present, but not forgetting becomes a stronger refutation of the normative reality, whereas remembrance of the pre-Partition time denotes nostalgia and some form of acceptance of the present. Therefore, in choosing not to forget the sleepwalkers transcend the hegemonic reality of Partition. Such moments of alterity presented by the refugees to enact a counter space of Lucknow then leads to the delineation of a new political practice built on their agency and collective solidarity.

Salman Rushdie, in an essay on the resurgence of religious discourse in the narrativity of nations, explains that the modern concept of time is one that "moves forward". "It is a 'homogenous empty time,' in Benjamin's phrase" ("In God We Trust", Rushdie 1991, p. 382). Rushdie quotes Benedict Anderson on his concept of the "imagined community"—"The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation" (Anderson qtd by Rushdie 1991, p. 382). This is especially important since this linearity of time as moving forward shapes the construction of nation, and it is this calendar-bound forward-moving time that is disrupted and rejected by *Sleepwalkers* by invalidating the time-space unity of the progressive idea of a nation. Thus, founded by Deewane Sahab, and accepted in full cognizance by the other characters in the text, Paul presents the idea of "imaginary homelands" in *Sleepwalkers* where the residents of "Lucknow" reside in the Lucknow of their imaginations and, yet, they are not locked in stasis.[14] Their notion of time in the paradigm of the nation's time has diverted from the unity of linear time to a ruptured time that opens up a different temporality, which necessitates that the wholeness of the "imagined" physical space of a nation be questioned. Through the reconceived space of "Lucknow" in Karachi, the arbitrary borders that constrict or forcibly transform the imagination of the nation are not only questioned, but as Edward Casey states, the idea of imagined space enacts a new "placefulness" [that is] "no longer beholden to physical space but starts acting on its own quasi-autonomous psychical terms" (Casey 1997, p. 309).

Interestingly, Deewane Sahab's psychical heterotopia does not end even when the bombing due to the political conflict between local natives and refugees destroys his mansion Nawab Mahal. After losing his wife, elder son, Nawab, and daughter-in-law in the bombing, he is shaken out of the idea that this is "Lucknow" and realizes that he, in fact, exists in Karachi. Yet, as the house is destroyed, he starts waiting for the time when he would leave Karachi and return 'home' to Lucknow. Deewane Sahab refuses to accept the truth and this refusal becomes a reminder that the refugee subjects continue to live against the reality of political strife between India and Pakistan, the civil war between locals and refugees in Pakistan, in their heterotopic existences that defy the national narrative.

The notion of a heterotopia is very unsettling for cartographers because of the complexity in denoting a subject's identity living in a heterotopia. Imperialistic cartography, especially in the context of Partition, attempts to carve out homogenous lines of given spaces, here with religious and communal basis that marks the subjectivity of people in that space. However, that notion of cartographic containment does not exist in a heterotopia. Lucknow as the heterotopia in Karachi is potentially extremely unsettling since the identities of the subjects living in such heterotopias are always shifting. Deewane Sahab may support the clamor for Pakistan in his nocturnal sleepwalking at Karachi's city chowk, but he is also the "Hindustani[15]" from Lucknow. Such subjects living within the heterotopic space constantly reinvent the city and their identities. Read in the context of a heterotopia, this essay has focused on an imagined construct which becomes representational of the resistance to move beyond statist reality towards a re-envisioning of space. The heterotopic space in *Sleepwalkers* shows the constrictions of space and place and enables ways of negotiating memory and nostalgia that can re-imagine space and illustrate different ways and modalities of being.

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[14] Rushdie in his famous essay titled, "Imaginary Homelands" discusses the idea of exiled and migrant writers who construct and yearn for the idea of home that is locked in their memories and is unchanging.

[15] Meaning Indian.

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Article

Yugonostalgia as a Kind of Love: Politics of Emotional Reconciliations through Yugoslav Popular Music

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Abstract: In the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars, listening to Yugoslav popular music has often been seen as a choice charged with political meaning, as a symptom of Yugonostalgia and as a statement against the nationalistic discourses of the post-Yugoslav states. In this article, I will show how the seemingly neutral concept of love is embedded in the music and memory practices in the post-Yugoslav context. In dealing with the issue of love, I draw on the research regarding emotions as social, cultural, and performative categories. The research included the analysis of the interconnectedness of the discourses on love and the discourse on Yugoslavia (promoted by both the performers and the audience). In addition to the striking intertwinement of the two, the actual term love was quite often used when describing the general relation to Yugoslavia, or its music in particular, or the relation of the people from the former country. Pointing to the multifarious meanings and usages of the concept of love as understood in the post-Yugoslav music space, I will argue that Yugonostalgia can be understood as a kind of love. As such, Yugonostalgia can be used for commercial purposes and be a means for the commodification of feelings and memories.

Keywords: Yugonostalgia; post-Yugoslav music; the concept of love; commodification of feelings and memories

1. Introduction

More than two decades after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, remembering the country could still be extremely emotional for former Yugoslavs. Even public events related to Yugoslavia almost regularly become sites of memories. In this article, I will point to the ways in which the relation to Yugoslavia appears to be deeply intertwined with the concept of love. Arguing that Yugonostalgia can be understood as a kind of love, i.e., analyzed as an ideology of love, I want to show that it can be a means for a commodification of feelings and memories and thus can be used for commercial purposes. In that process, it becomes neutralized and naturalized in a similar fashion as the concept of romantic love—the concept is taken for granted and sometimes approached uncritically.

The case studies will be from post-Yugoslav popular music culture, and this choice is not accidental. In fact, popular music was one of the most important products of the cultural politics of socialist Yugoslavia (Vuletic 2011). The breakup of Yugoslavia was violent and it left the former country's music market in utter disarray: not only were the institutions destroyed or non-functional, but also the musical preferences of the public changed due to the rising belligerent nationalisms (Baker 2010). However, the wars did not make the music practices disappear. Less than a decade after the breakup of Yugoslavia, some of the popular music stars from its former republics began giving concerts in new post-Yugoslav spaces, provoking divergent receptions, being, on the one hand, provocative events, whereas, on the other, events that produced nostalgic recollections of the past (Petrov 2016). Given the context, in the aftermath of Yugoslav wars, it can be said that listening to Yugoslav popular music has been often seen as a choice charged with political meaning, as a symptom of nostalgia for the lost homeland, and as a statement against the politics of the post-Yugoslav states.

Whilst Yugoslavia has ceased to exist, and often labelled as "departed" (Perković 2011) and "late" (Velikonja 2015, pp. 366–98), popular culture is often seen as its cultural legacy and something that is still present and rather 'alive'. Furthermore, the experience of being Yugoslav is still felt by many, and Yugoslav popular music especially demonstrates the ongoing currency of the continuity of Yugoslav popular cultures and markets. Hence, certain public figures, groups, even songs, remained powerful Yugoslav symbols even after the country's dissolution. From this perspective, it can be pointed out that one can hardly 'just' enjoy listening to the music from the Yugoslav era, without being aware of the political implications of that act.

This article analyses Yugonostalgia and explains that its ideation in relation to music has an emotional effect and produces an ideology of love. It argues that this is achieved through the market forces that support this music and the modes of identification used by musicians. The analysis begins with an explanation of the historical background, continues with the problematization of the concept of Yugonostalgia and then elaborates on how it is applied to music. In conducting the analysis of Yugonostalgia as an emotional ideology, and an ideology of love specifically, I will point to two separate levels of producing the ideology: the level of the market and media, which is grounded in the discourses and practices of the musicians involved, and the level of the audience, i.e., the reception of the market. I will focus on showing how Yugonostalgia is intertwined with the reconciliation process, the process itself being deeply imbued in the concept of love that is furthermore used in the market. I will deal with two rather different examples: the first one refers to the perception of Yugoslavia and its public figures as an emotional heritage and homeland, and the other with an explicit usage of the ideology of love for positioning in the new post-Yugoslav market.

2. Historical Background

The idea of Yugoslavia emerged and developed as the concept of the movement of Illyrians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) appeared after the peace conference in Versailles after WWI, when the new borders of European countries were drawn, particularly after the fall of defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire. Some of its parts (of contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia) were incorporated in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. FPRY (Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia) appeared immediately after WWII and from this state developed SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

Founded in the aftermath of the World War II, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia encompassed six republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia) and two so-called autonomous provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo). The crucial event in Yugoslav history after the war was its split with the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites in 1948 when the Communist Information Bureau expelled Yugoslavia from its ranks and withdrew all economic and technical aid after Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito refused to submit to Soviet political domination. Soon afterwards, the ruling Yugoslav party abandoned a Soviet-style cultural politics that had condemned popular music as a cultural, political, and social threat from the West, and in so doing opened Yugoslavia to Western cultural influences, as it sought economic and political support from the West. While Yugoslavia was perceived as a solid, modern, and progressive country in the 1950s and the 1960s, the state became more and more decentralized in the 1970s, leading to serious economic and political problems in the following decade. The 1974 constitution, in which the aforementioned autonomous provinces within Serbian borders were defined and by which the Yugoslav republics gained more freedom, marked the progression towards decentralization and the beginning of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. In the 1980s, after Tito's death, a severe economic crisis shattered the socialist system in Yugoslavia and nationalist tendencies became evident. Political tensions escalated and eventually led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia during the wars between 1991 and 1995.[1]

[1] For an overview of the development of the Yugoslav idea, see, for instances Štiks (2016).

After World War II, the ideals upon which the new Yugoslav society rested were the ideology of "brotherhood and unity" (bratstvo i jedinstvo), the cult of labor and the legacy of the Partisan struggle, which were practiced and enacted as daily rituals, connected to the idea of creating a 'new man', a young person who creates, propagates and embodies the ideas of the new socialist state in his daily life (Dobrivojević 2010). There were divergent ways of producing a collective identity that would epitomize the values of the described ideology, among which popular culture (and particularly music) was highly relevant. Yugoslav popular music was thus a result of divergent influences present in the cultural politics in socialist Yugoslavia. Being shaped according to certain Western standards and models, but, at the same time, expected to be a 'typical' Yugoslav product, popular music in this country had different stages in its development and incorporated many influences: the Soviet, the Italian, the American, and the Mexican ones, to mention some of them (Vuletic 2008; Vuletic 2011; Petrov 2015a). After the split with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia was more open to the West than the other socialist countries, which was known as the process of 'Westernisation' and 'Americanisation' (Vučetić 2012).

The search for a kind of music that would be recognized as the 'typical' Yugoslav sound characterized the entire Yugoslav era. Yugoslav music typically changed in accordance with tendencies of the Western music industry. In the 1950s, Yugoslav popular music was characterized by imitations and adaptations of Western popular musical genres (such as Italian canzone, French chanson, and German Schlager); in the 1960s rock and roll dominated; in the 1970s disco influenced many pop musicians' styles and repertoire, while the 1980s brought new wave currents. The umbrella term "Yugoslav popular music" in fact entailed different musical genres and visual styles, depending on current trends in the international pop and rock industry. By the beginning of 1970, the entire Yugoslav music market was divided between pop, rock and roll, and folk music industries, whereas the 1980s brought a new tendency: the folk-influenced hard rock sound and the pop-influenced folk sound (Vidić Rasmussen 1996).

Together with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the whole music market disintegrated as well, thus creating a tension between newly formed national music identities that were being made through the prism of 'otherness'—the prism that has been discursively evident in the division between 'us' and 'them' (Baker 2010, p. 175). During the 1990s, there were numerous politics shaping the musical practices in post-Yugoslav divided territories. For instance, certain genres were connected to the official nationalist politics, whereas others were commonly regarded as supposedly neutral. Furthermore, some of the music activities of performers coming from war-affected areas (Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) to Serbia (and vice versa), were sometimes seen as provocative. However, they eventually led to a blurring of newly made 'borders' between national music practices and markets (Petrov 2015b). Also, due to their ethnical background or places of origin, certain musicians were involved in politics of language that was one of the crucial means of construction of the national identities during and after the dissolution of Yugoslavia (cf. Baker 2012). I will elaborate on these issues later in the text when discussing specific cases.

3. Yugonostalgia

Even though Yugonostalgia share some similarities with other nostalgias worldwide, especially those in former socialist countries (cf. Bach 2002), the specificity of the Yugoslav case of nostalgia is to be found in the political post-war context in which it has appeared. After the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, the situation in former Yugoslav republics was difficult, in some parts due to the international sanctions and isolation, while in others due to the war conflicts. This resulted, in addition to the loss of human lives, in enormous brain drain, which eventually led to a change of profile of former Yugoslavia as well as Yugoslav diaspora. Post-Yugoslav social, political and cultural spaces were firstly characteristic by the avoidance of the socialist past. However, Yugonostalgia, broadly defined as "nostalgia for Yugoslavia" and a sense of loss for the lost "golden age" (Palmberger 2008), has appeared a decade after the dissolution of the country. After a decade of historical revisionism, and especially due

to the emerging age of new technologies and the Internet, numerous discussions on the remembrance of Yugoslavia appeared, both in concrete material spaces (such as, for instance, concert venues), and in virtual spaces (such as those related to certain YouTube links showing videos from the Yugoslav era, as well as many Facebook pages and groups). Reading the situation from the perspective of a post-conflict Yugoslav context, it is relevant to highlight that these spaces, especially the virtual ones, can be seen as the platforms for reconciliation after the wars in a new context in which former Yugoslavs, sometimes immigrants from different parts of former Yugoslavia, communicate with each other in a more relaxed fashion than it has been possible in their countries of origin.

In certain sociological studies, it is argued that the phenomenon seems to be a feature of the less developed post-Yugoslav countries, such as Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e., those that have not yet become members of the European Union (Spasić 2012, p. 142). Hence, Yugonostalgia is sometimes labeled as a passive and regressive phenomenon, characteristic for those who have not yet adapted to the changing times and the transition to the capitalist system, which means that it is opposed to the supposedly progressive post-Yugoslav capitalist societies, and thus often commercialized (Volčič 2007, 2009). However, there is an extensive research debating the emancipatory potentials of Yugonostalgia which are recognized in the opposition towards nationalist paradigms in post-Yugoslav societies (Hofman 2015; Petrov 2016; Petrović 2007, 2012). Furthermore, there is research debating the construal of nostalgia as an emotion and an ideology in the context of retro culture (Velikonja 2012).

Drawing on the concept developed by Svetlana Boym, nostalgia for the Yugoslav past appears to be more often than not of the reflexive kind, not the restorative one. The ways people remember Yugoslavia and discuss it can be inventive and active, sometimes ironic, just as Boym's reflexive nostalgia. Defining it, Boym says: "This de-familiarization and sense of distance drives them to tell their story, to narrate the relationship between the past, present and future" (Boym 2001, pp. 50–51). Yugonostalgia does not necessarily entail a pro or contra socialist or a pro or contra Yugoslav ideology, connected to the experience of living in Yugoslavia, but rather it can be manifested as a reflexive recollection of one's own past, youth, love, etc.

Furthermore, one of the issues I address is how we theorize about supposedly private and genuine emotions and how those emotions intersect the politics of public discourses. Analyzing this issue, I want to contribute to the discussion about nostalgia focused on the question of "why people care about small things, things that do not 'really matter'" (Bonnett 2016, p. 8) and to the discussion about how politics reuses the past and present in current pop culture practices, thus becoming a sort of "nostalgic commodity" (Ibid., p. 26). From that perspective, I pose a question about how come that a seemingly banal repackaging of the past within the post-Yugoslav music market triggers supposedly genuine emotions. In my approach to nostalgia generally, and Yugonostalgia particularly, I aim to develop a more nuanced theoretical profile, critically debating with the positions promoted in the mentioned literature. Rather than discussing if nostalgia is of a passive or emancipatory nature, I will elaborate on numerous implications of the practices that are today possible due to the nostalgic culture.

4. Yugonostalgia, Love, and Music

Drawing on the research that deals with the ideology of love (for instance, see Ben Ze'ev and Goussinsky 2008), I analyzed the interconnectedness of the discourses on love and the discourse on Yugoslavia (promoted by both the performers and the audience) (see also Petrov 2017a). In addition to the striking intertwinement of the two, the actual term love was quite often used when describing the relation to Yugoslavia in general, or its music in particular, or the relation of the people from the former country.

In dealing with the issue of love, I draw on the research of emotions as social, cultural, and performative categories, and especially on Sara Ahmed's theory of cultural politics of emotions. The question that I address here is how can we theorize about supposedly private and genuine emotions? Do our emotions belong to us, or are they also a part of the commercial needs of the

post-Yugoslav music market? Or, more broadly, how is the concept of love (and the actual word) imbued in music practices? As Ahmed puts it, the emotions both generate their objects and repeat past associations. Ahmed explicates how "the loop of the performative works powerfully, since in reading the other as being disgusting, for example, the subject is filled up with disgust, as a sign of the truth of the reading" (Ahmed 2004, p. 13). I am particularly influenced by her concepts of emotional communities and "sociality" of emotions (Ahmed 2010). By asking what emotions can do (and not what they are), I construe emotion as a potential that is realized within the members of a community, as a shared "object" (Ibid., pp. 21–49). From that context, I will point here to the emotional performatives realized through the usage of the concept of love, which is furthermore perpetuated in virtual discursive contexts.

Additionally, addressing love as a political concept can challenge conventional conceptions that separate the logic of political interests from our affective lives and oppose political reason to the passions. As Michale Hardt points out, a political concept of love would have to deploy at once reason and passion. Also, love is a motor of both transformation and duration or continuity. We lose ourselves in love and open the possibility of a new world, but at the same time, love constitutes powerful bonds that last (Hardt 2011, p. 676). From this perspective, I argue that love is a very powerful political force.

It is relevant to point out the fact that the concepts of nostalgia and love have been interconnected from the beginning of the actual phenomenon of nostalgia. In fact, at the time when nostalgia was construed as an illness, other symptomatic terms existed. As Cassin points out, the term 'nostalgia' was almost eclipsed by 'philopatridomania' (the madness of love for one's homeland), which was put forward by Johannes Hofer, (the author of the famous dissertation on nostalgia in which the concept was defined as an illness), and by 'pathopatridalgia' (the suffering from the desire-passion for one's homeland). Going through the etymological genesis of the concept of nostalgia, Cassin states that returning and love have been always connected (Cassin 2016, p. 6). My argument is in line with Cassin's claim about the interconnectedness between love and nostalgia. If nostalgia was seen as a condition in which a person can suffer because of the loss of home—the suffering often being characteristic by the desire to return to one's homeland that was even described as madness of love for the homeland—then Yugonostalgia appears to be a similar kind of contemporary post-socialist condition in which one can be madly in love with their homeland. However, the 'cure' that was prescribed for nostalgia—the return home—cannot be used in the case of Yugonostalgia, since Yugoslavia no longer exists. Hence, the desire to return home is instead realized in loving what has left of Yugoslavia: the culture, the music, the people.

The commercialization of the concept of love is a rather common feature in post-Yugoslav popular culture. To mention some of the examples, there were *I love YU* souvenirs sold in the main shopping district of Belgrade in the 2000s, and the formulation "I love YU" is sometimes used in the Internet spaces created in the diaspora, such as *I love YU* of former Yugoslavs in Italy, or *Yugoslavia, naša domovina* (Yugoslavia, our homeland) in Germany that has a heart with the Yugoslav flag as its cover photo.[2] There are also copious examples of Internet spaces that provide platforms for producing post-Yugoslav collectivities based on spontaneous memories triggered by certain links with Yugoslav songs, films, commercials, and similar. The comments made on these links point to the politics of remembrance of Yugoslav popular culture. Insight into the web communities shows that there could be some political implications of the enjoyment since the actual links are used to engage in the construction of multifarious emotional reactions concerning the sentimental remembrance of the past. Thus, the conceptual framework of the discourse on love (towards the culture, the country, and the people in general) and its role in re-narativisation/embodying of the past as a kind of Yugonostalgic narrative can be used to show the ways in which these collectivities have been made. The Yugonostalgic narrative

[2] Facebook group *I love YU*. Available online: https://www.facebook.com/groups/349675945173606/ (accessed on 10 June 2018). Facebook group *Yugoslavija, naša domovina*. Available online: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=785260771571025&id=540664986030606 (accessed on 10 June 2018).

is often characterized by the promulgation of a love discourse and extremely affective reactions; ignorance about the war; and clearly expressed enjoyment in certain products.

In my analyses the discourses on love and Yugonostalgia intersect in the following contexts:

1. The context of the reconciliation of the peoples in the territory of former Yugoslavia. Loving the music from the past could often imply loving the Yugoslav past itself, or the people who used to be your compatriots and are now your enemies (Petrović 2013). In that context, love is intertwined with the process of reconciliation after the wars. In 2015, Goran Bregović, a famous Yugoslav musician, stated that "We are together because we sing certain songs together, not as Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and Muslims, but as us who sing those songs together [even] after everything [that has happened]" (N. A. 2014). Similar statements were commonly made by members of the audience that I interviewed at the concerts in Belgrade in 2000s and 2010s, and on YouTube links, especially those with Yugoslav popular music. Other copious examples are provided at the concerts of former Yugoslav stars who put more emphasis on the concept of love, some of them even explained that they were bringing a message of peace, love, and forgiveness (Petrov 2015b).
2. Romancing (the concept of) nostalgia, i.e., neutralizing the process of reconciliation and promoting the concept of romantic love. Another way to deal with the Yugoslav past is to romance Yugonostalgia, which means to put it in the context of romantic love or the universal love between people. This was easily done simply with choosing to make a concert on Valentine 's Day or the International Women's Day so that the historical context was thus neutralized and the romantic package helped certain singers come back after the wars smoothly. Those singers also chose to promulgate the discourse about love but without any historical reference (Petrov 2016).
3. The context of neutrality and universality (of the love and connection among people) in the act of listening to music. Certain people in the audience, on different occasions, mentioned the music as a 'universal' category, together with the idea of 'universal' love that transcends meanings attached to the Yugoslav past.

As mentioned in the introduction, in this article I will focus on the first issue, showing how Yugonostalgia is intertwined with the reconciliation process.

4.1. Yugonostalgia and the Emotional Heritage/Homeland

> After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, all of its republics became independent states. That means that some people finally got their own country, while others, on the contrary, lost theirs.[3]

Unlike some other manifestations of nostalgia, which one could argue are utopian imaginaries of a loss of something that has never existed, in the case of Yugonostalgia, the object of nostalgia, the country, did exist, no matter how one remembers it. It is most certainly a place that many people now feel as their own personal loss. Two representative examples regarding the politics of loss (both public and private ones) will be singled out here, namely the reactions of the virtual audience regarding the deaths of two famous Yugoslav musicians: Kemal Monteno and Vlada Divljan, who both passed away in 2015. Even though the thesis that Yugoslav (popular) culture outlived the country in which it had been made (and has had a new post-Yugoslav life) is not new[4], one specific perspective has recently appeared. When famous Yugoslav public figures pass away, they are being transformed into mythic figures, embodying the symbolism for the whole of Yugoslavia. In addition, their music more often

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[3] A comment on a song about Yugoslavia made after the dissolution of the last Yugoslav state, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJmwg0D3iiI&index=3&list=PLPDa5vm7IDncQ68lYTm3wc3PwHn18zbiP (accessed on 2 July 2016).

[4] The existence of a post-Yugoslav space after Yugoslavia is evident due to the same past, same or similar languages, shared popular culture, as well as new small, and thus necessarily connected markets. The idea about the unique post-Yugoslav space drew the attention of many authors. One of the most well-known ideas is the one about the existence of Yugosphere, specific post-Yugoslav cultural and economic connections in the territory of Yugoslavia after the breakup of the country. The term was coined by British journalist Tim Judah (Judah 2009).

provokes memories, as well as discussions on Yugoslavia. The phenomenon itself is again nothing new and unseen (since it regularly happens to stars anywhere in the world), but in a territory that suffered from great losses of lives and had witnessed intense immigration during and after the dissolution of the country, it seems to have an intense emotional potential, since the stars tend to become triggers for dealing with the troubled past (Stevanović 2013). Furthermore, in the cases of the mentioned singers (Monteno and Divljan), it is relevant to mention that they as public figures and the genres they performed were not politically controversial during the war and thus stayed simply symptomatic representatives, even victims, of Yugoslavia and its dissolution.

The reactions on the internet were not only spontaneous but were also provoked by the discourses in media, the discourse that was overwhelmingly nostalgic in all former Yugoslav republics. When Kemal Monteno, a pop singer from Sarajevo, passed away, a Croatian historian wrote an article entitled "Adio Kemo. A singer who sung about suffering and gave us hope and bravery" (Markovina 2015), in which he stressed that the singer helped "us" overcome difficult situations in the past and showed "us" how to survive. In a similar fashion, the death of Vlada Divljan, a representative of the Yugoslav new wave from Belgrade, provoked writing in the press about "our cultural space" and the fact that "we love the same people, the same music, and we speak the same language" (Gligorijević 2015).

Even though obituaries are always written in affirmative tone, the symptomatic moment is to be found in the presentation of those public figures as "Yugoslavs" and their work as Yugoslav "heritage" that is given to "us", the category "us" being blurred, since it is not quite clear which community the label refers to. Are those people (hidden by the name "we") former (or simply) Yugoslavs, are they the people who experienced the war, or just people who listen to the same music and share similar cultural values? As reactions of the virtual audience testify, usually all of the mentioned is possible. Sometimes, "we" just "sing together after all", as stressed by Bregović, but that does not mean that "we" are capable of understanding what that act of singing means to the current post-Yugoslav cultural space. As Martin Pogačar observes, the internet offers conditions for "enhanced immediacy of remembering" (Pogačar 2016, pp. 105–6), where people can quickly and easily share and reconstruct collective memories. Arguably, the internet and social media have proved to be the best platforms for former Yugoslavs, many displaced since the 1990s, to re-connect and communicate in a more relaxed fashion. Thus, this understanding of the collectivity that is labelled as "us" is also one of the most common reactions of the audience—the audience itself is formed due to their cultural belonging to the same past, and, as it seems, the present.

Many texts about Monteno and Divljan passing away address the issue of their music as *heritage*, and, furthermore, provoke abundant discussions in the comments, most of them about Yugoslavia, its popular culture and the consequences of its dissolution. One of them, written after Kemal Monteno's death (Samardžić 2015) provoked comments about the connection between the singer, his music and Yugoslavia, and clearly addresses the regrets about the fact that the country does not exist anymore. Additionally, the music itself is presented as being of crucial importance for (post)Yugoslav culture.[5] It is pointed out that Monteno is "a person whose death made the entire Yugoslavia cry". In a comment entitled "Everything was music" it is stated:

> When people like him leave, people who gave warmth to the whole Balkan region and found values in that region, then we clearly see how the breakup of Yugoslavia was a stupid and criminal act.[6]

An almost identical connection between a musician and the *good old times* is common in the comments concerning the articles about Divljan's passing away:

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[5] However, there are a few examples of opposite discourses. Unlike Monteno, the comments regarding Divljan's death sometimes bring up the question of how good his music was and if he truly was as important as it has been claimed. See, for instance, Vuinac (2016).

[6] Comments available on: http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/spektar/zivot-i-stil/U-amanet-ostavio-divnu-muziku.lt.html (accessed on 1 March 2015).

> We are crying for Vlada, for the country we lost, the city and the youth we lost.
>
> He is a symbol of everything we have loved.[7]

It is important to notice that there are divergent terms used for labelling the territory of socialist Yugoslavia: the Balkans, the region, old Yugoslavia. However, just "Yugoslavia" is also a rather common term, which shows that the virtual discussion among the people somewhat brought Yugoslavia into life again, since the ignorance of the word itself was characteristic of the politics of memory in recent decades. Both Kemal Monteno, as a musician who is unequivocally marked as "a Sarajevo musician" (with all concomitant meanings Sarajevo has had in Yugoslavia, in the war and after it, especially regarding the famous Sarajevo popular music scene from the 1970s and 1980s) and Vlada Divljan, one of the key figures for the Yugoslav new wave scene in the 1980s and a musician who was a part of the diaspora (having lived in Australia from 1991 and Austria from 1999) were adequate for inscription of the transnational and trans-temporal values in the narratives on their lives.[8] In both cases, not only the discourses in the comments but also the ones in media generally, were characterized by a relaxed use of the term Yugoslavia, when marking the space in which the musicians lived and worked, even though there were other labels as well, as mentioned. However, in the virtual space of the comments, there is one symptomatic lamenting regarding the loss of a vague past, marked as "our youth", "our past", and "our love".

However, it would be misleading to generalize and conclude that there are no other discourses apart from the one on the love towards the Yugoslav culture and the regret about the end of Yugoslavia. The discourse on the war, the national separation and even hate, is also possible to locate.[9] Thus, in the world of these virtual post-Yugoslavs, there are also reminders that the divided territory of former Yugoslavia is real and it corresponds to the symbolic boundaries among the people. It is especially relevant in this context to pose the question: how is it possible that there are certain Yugoslav public figures that increasingly become mythic, overcoming their functions as musicians, and growing into the symbols of the whole era? There is one symptomatic comment on the issue:

> Someone from the past life appeared, came from hell, grey, skinny, but alive. To show us that there is worse, but that it can be survived. That was a ray of light and hope that gave us strength.[10]

Drawing on such statements, could we perhaps pose the question: does Yugoslav popular culture appear to be something from our past lives, not to remind us that it could be worse but that it used to be better? Copious statements regarding Monteno and Divljan confirm such a claim. On the occasion of Vlada Divljan's birth anniversary, 10 May 2015, Radio B92 broadcasted a three-hour show called "The Day of Vlada Divljan", which was announced as a "show about the legend of Yugoslav music". Social networks were full of posts expressing in abundance regrets about his death and the times that passed, which led the speakers on the show to stress that this phenomenon can be seen as a "collective mourning over our own destiny". Furthermore, it can be asked whether, in fear that there is no hope

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7 The comment concerning the article "Zbogom, večni dečače. Poslednji dani Vlade Divljana", *Blic Online*. Available online: http://www.blic.rs/Kultura/Vesti/540056/ZBOGOM-VECNI-DECACE-Poslednji-dani-Vlade-Divljana (accessed on 3 May 2015).

8 It is not surprising that Yugoslav artists and popular public figures who emigrated during the 1990s have become symbols of Yugoslavia. By moving to another country, they were marked as being above the current nationalistic tendencies when the country was disintegrating. One of the most extreme cases is Džoni Štulić. Born in Skopje, Macedonia, having the family background in Zadar, Croatia, he lived in Zagreb for the most part of his life, and finally left the country in the 1990s, not accepting the post-Yugoslav situation. Namely, living in exile, he refused to come and perform in Croatia, he did not get the Croatian, Serbian nor Macedonian passport. Thus, this musician has always been "a Yugoslav artist and a symbol of an epoch" (Perica 2012, p. 218).

9 For instance, an article dealing with Momčilo Bajagić Bajaga's shock regarding Divljan's death provoked the reactions about Bajaga's performances during the war. "Kolege šokirane Divljanovom smrću: Bio je moj dobar prijatelj i divan čovjek", *Večernji list* 5.3. 2015.

10 The comment refers to the moment when Monteno came from war-affected Sarajevo to Zagreb (Markovina 2015).

for a better time to come, perhaps listening to music from the past helps to construct a memory of the past that might not be real, therefore representing pure escapism? Are these virtual Yugoslavs pure escapists? Or have they just found each other again in a joined, virtual, possibly imaginary community responding individualistically to dominant narratives? Another example will provide a different perspective on the issue. Namely, there are also members of the virtual audience to whom the promotion of the ideology of love is not so easy.

4.2. Yugonostalgia as a "Love Scam"

Even though republican markets in Yugoslavia functioned independently, inter-republican ties were essential for the success of major artists. This has been a pattern replicated in the post-Yugoslav time in the form of artists returning to the concert stages of their political adversaries (Baker 2006). Furthermore, it seems that the post-Yugoslav market lacks the organization and interconnectedness, so that the musicians have been trying to draw attention to themselves and to make a sense of continuity with the previous Yugoslav market using various strategies, the reference to Yugoslavia being one of them. Thus, one of the currents of Yugonostalgia tends to commercialize the current Yugonostalgic cultures in post-Yugoslav spaces. There are even songs that are named 'Yugoslavia' in which the actual word stands for a metaphor of lost love. It is rather clear that we are here dealing with a specific manifestation of Yugonostalgia and specifically the manipulation of it, the one that is used with the aim to address nostalgic people and to intrigue the audience (Petrov 2017b). This kind of an obvious commercial usage of Yugonostalgia, which has obviously somewhat become a brand that can sell a music product, can also be labeled as a phenomenon that Mitja Velikonja calls neo-nostalgia, a nostalgic practice that plays with stereotypes of socialist Yugoslavia, but does not (necessarily) correlate with actual reactions of the audience (Velikonja 2015).

A crucial indication that the mentioned phenomenon of the commercial usage of Yugoslavia has become a trend can be found in the fact that recently many famous Yugoslav stars, who also have rather developed and important careers in the post-Yugoslav age, chose to make references to Yugoslavia, i.e., to declare themselves (implicitly or explicitly) as Yugoslavs or Yugonostalgics. Some of them comment on the loss of home after the wars[11]; others on the contrary claim to be at home in every part of former Yugoslav territory.[12]

I will here elaborate on a recent example of a singer who is recognized as one of the legends of Yugoslav culture—Lepa Brena. Her political potential was constructed in the after-war public sphere due to her national and social background and her official label as a typical Yugoslav star, even a symbol of the socialist era. She was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, her repertoire is based on so-called newly composed folk music (marked as undesirable in Croatia after the breakdown of Yugoslavia, cf. Baker 2006, 2007, 2010), and she also sang songs related to Yugoslavia (which was commonly done by numerous musicians during the Yugoslav period). In addition to the aforementioned point, Lepa Brena's public figure was compromised during the early stages of the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina, when she appeared dressed in military uniform (which she later claimed to be a 'safari suit') in the company of Bosnian Serb soldiers, supporting the military forces of so-called Republika Srpska, one of the entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus causing strong negative reactions outside Serbia.[13] In addition to the aforementioned point, most of the opposition against her, especially in Croatia, can also be seen as connected with specific politics of genre, i.e., with public disapproval of the act

[11] For instance, Goran Bregović in a documentary movie, see Bijelo Dugme Box Set Deluxe, available on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ldo8mkiVOQw (accessed on 1 June 2018).
[12] For instance, Zdravko Čolić in the 2018 interview in the show *Portrait* on Croatian Music Channel.
[13] For a discussion on the topic in the newspaper discourses, see, for instance, "Lepa Brena u Brčkom 1994. godine", Otisak.ba, http://www.otisak.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9190:lepa-brena-u-brkom-1994godine-foto&catid=31:bih&Itemid=46 (accessed on 10 September 2018).

of listening to (Serbian) folk music, and with the politics of sentiments attached to her music and its association with Yugoslavia.

Lepa Brena's public figure has already been discussed and shown to be a means for an "emotional continuity of the past that derives predominantly from the sentimental attachments to her music" (Hofman 2012, p. 22). I here draw on the research in which Lepa Brena's public appearances were analyzed as "strategies of navigation through intersected discourses of the Yugoslav past, conflict, reconciliation, Europeanization, debates on nationalism, balkanism, multiculturalism, and its perception by her audience and wider public" (Ibid., p. 22). In her analysis of Brena's public figure in the 2000s, in which personal accounts are seen as a part of the strategies of self-positioning the singer used strategically "in accordance with the current social expectations and norms" (Ibid., p. 22), Hofman pointed to the fact that the association of Lepa Brena with Yugoslavia is more than explicit. Brena represented a Yugoslav mainstream culture policy project and was the greatest Yugoslav and the first great Balkan star. However, as the research showed at that point, Brena did not want to refer to Yugoslavia. Hofman shows how during the promotion of the ex-YU 2009 tour and concerts in Ljubljana, Sarajevo, and Zagreb (but also in Sofia, Timisoara, and Tirana), Brena even tried to "escape her image of the Yugoslav star and rarely expressed any kind of longing for the past" (Ibid., p. 24). She tried to avoid conversations about socialism and not use terms such as socialist or Yugoslav. As Hofman explicates, Brena was "particularly careful not to give any reason for her statements to be interpreted as Yugonostalgic and also tried to distance herself from expressing any political or engaged stance, particularly explicit patriotism or nationalism" (Ibid.), which was not an easy task since she had songs with explicit Yugoslav and socialist content. However, she managed to claim in the interviews that even her song entitled *Jugoslovenka* (Yugoslavian woman) was just a "love song", not a patriotic one (Ibid., p. 25).

It is highly intriguing and relevant to point out the singer's recent transformation. In 2017 and 2018, she embarked on a new project—releasing a new album, a documentary movie, and a post-Yugoslav concert tour. All of these would not have been that unusual nor relevant for the topic of Yugonostalgia had she not decided to make the project explicitly pro-Yugoslav. She achieved that through her selection of new songs, her image and the visual solutions for the videos, as well as the discourse that she started to promote, all of which was engaged in the context of retro culture and the reconciliation paradigm after the wars and, moreover, the promotion of nothing less than the core ideology of Yugoslav socialism: the ideology of "brotherhood and unity".

In order to contextualize the strategies the singer has been using, it is necessary to have in mind the core characteristics of socialist Yugoslavia. As already mentioned, this ideology was founded on the presumption that all the nations living in Yugoslavia, including national minorities, are equal groups coexisting in the federation, promoting their similarities, but also their differences, and having the right to declare themselves as Yugoslavs. The official language of Yugoslavia was Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian. It was the language spoken in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, except for the Macedonian language spoken in Macedonia and Slovenian in Slovenia. The language was in fact standardized in the nineteenth century, even before the establishment of so-called first Yugoslavia, i.e., The Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Differences between the Serbian and the Croatian standard always existed and the language also includes several dialects. Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the language issue has become deeply politicized and the former unique language has undergone new standardization processes (based on ethnical and political grounds) including labeling new languages from what used to be simple variations of one language. Thus, nowadays, the official language in Serbia is Serbian, whereas in Croatia it's Croatian; Bosnian is singled out as officially the third language spoken in Bosnia and Herzegovina (in addition to Serbian and Croatian); there is also an ongoing process of creating a Montenegrin standard in Montenegro (cf. Busch and Kelly-Holmes 2004; Bugarski and Hawkesworth 2006).

I will not go into the debate over the question whether there is only one language with different dialects and varieties in different parts of former Yugoslavia, or if there are several languages that used

to be labelled as Serbo-Croatian. However, the dialect issue is relevant in order to understand the language politics that Lepa Brena is playing with here. Namely, a basic distinction among the dialects is in the reflex of the Common Slavic vowel *jat*, usually transcribed as *ě. Depending on the reflex, the dialects are divided into Ikavian, Ekavian, and Ijekavian, which reflects *jat* being /i/, /e/, and /ije/ or /je/, respectively. The long and short *jat* is reflected as a long or short */i/ and /e/ in Ikavian and Ekavian, but Ijekavian dialects introduce an *ije/je* alternation to retain a distinction. Standard Croatian and Bosnian are based on Ijekavian, whereas Serbian uses both Ekavian and Ijekavian forms (Ijekavian for Bosnian Serbs, Ekavian for most of Serbia).

From this perspective, it is clear that, in conflicted post-Yugoslav societies, the fact that a speaker's ethnical background could be identified just by the dialect that they use, can be troublesome. To put it bluntly, it is not unimportant if you say the word 'sing' as 'peva' (Ekavian) or 'pjeva' (Ijekavian). I will now point to the latest Lepa Brena's song entitled Zar je važno da l' se peva ili pjeva? (Does it matter if you (say, comm. A.P.) peva or pjeva?).[14] Indeed, the answer is: yes, it really does matter, because behind the difference in what seems to be a simple language choice or a word-play lie serous politics of national identity in post-Yugoslav spaces. Hence, the singer's cover song (which is also the cover of her ongoing concert tour), is unequivocally a political statement: the statement of a promulgation of the language of the peoples of former Yugoslav republics as being one. In other words, the song's message is: it does not matter which dialect you speak; we understand each other since we speak the same language. Having the historical circumstances in mind, the song can be interpreted as provocative, because the difference in how the words are pronounced could, in fact, be of the highest importance for somebody during and after the war.

In addition, despite having a clear political message, the song is in fact allegedly just a love song. Certain parts could be understood as an emotional message given by a woman to someone she loved. For instance, the song goes: 'don't let people steal you from me; don't let bad people change us'. However, the lyrics further say that 'many years have passed, we should let it go, and let us love each other', which is the title of Brena's greatest hit, as well as the title of her movie series from the 1980s. In this recontextualized sense, it can be seen as a message of reconciliation, of peace and love after the wars. The following refrain can support such claims:

> If we used to be
> The same passion, the same desire
> Is it really difficult to love one another
> At least as friends
> (Ako smo nekad bili
> Isti nemir, ista želja
> Zar je teško da se voli
> Barem kao prijatelja)
>
> If we used to be
> The same love, the same soul
> Does it matter if we say peva or pjeva
> When I am dying without you
> (Ako smo nekad bili
> jedna ljubav, duša jedna
> zar je vazno da l' se peva ili pjeva
> kad umirem što te nema)

[14] Lepa Brena's song *Zar je važno da l se peva ili pjeva*, available on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy2idL0aqFU (accessed on 10 August 2018).

Additionally, the video was filmed in Belgrade (Serbia), Zagreb (Croatia), and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which further highlights Brena's strategies for promoting her new political message—the message of love among the people in the territory of former Yugoslavia.

Another example of using the ideology of love is provided in the three-part documentary series on Lepa Brena, which premiered on the Serbian Prva Tv in January 2018. It opens with a famous video of the mentioned song *Jugoslovenka*, which in fact represents the context of the Yugoslav story: the singer's background from a 'typical Yugoslav' family, the living standard, and the perks of everyday life. Not only does she use the strategies of a typical Yugonostalgic discourse—by sentimentally remembering that every family back then had a car, and her family had a 'Stojadin', just like everyone else, and of course went to the Croatian coast by that car every summer—but she also explicitly claims: 'We were one common Yugoslav family'. The plot is further developed on the soundtrack of the song *Jugoslavijo* (or *Od Vardara pa do Triglava*), the unofficial anthem of socialist Yugoslavia. With that song in the background, the narrator contextualizes the actual message of the song, which is the description of the Yugoslav culture: mentioning the most important institutions, such as the famous Belgrade film festival BITEF, the Non-alignment movement, as well as Josip Broz Tito's death. All of these are set in the context in which the singer begins her career in the early 1980s.

The pro-Yugoslav atmosphere of the movie is also supported by the appearance of Brena's coworkers from different parts of former Yugoslavia. In addition to her closest collaborators (such as the members of the group she performed with, as well as the directors of her movies, and many people from Serbia), her colleagues from Croatia appear as well. Among the most important of them include Vlado Kalember, one of the singers who participated in the song *Jugoslovenka*, as well as those whom Brena did not directly work with, such as Kićo Slabinac and Tereza Kesovija. The actual use of the word Yugoslavia is not rare in the movie, both in Brena's discourse and those who speak about her. Furthermore, the social context is interestingly depicted: in addition to mentioning the most important moments from the history of socialist Yugoslavia, such as Tito's death, there is also a narrative on the social transformation that was happening in the country after World War Two, namely, the migration from the country to cities and the urbanization process. By commenting on the urbanization and Brena's first hit *Čačak, Čačak* the discourse on mixing the pop and folk genres is introduced and it is implied that Brena's music influenced a process of emancipation of the working class. This is further supported by a scene from the movie *Nema problema* (No Problem) in which Brena's appearance is presented as the workers' choice.

The second sequel of the three-part documentary opens with another symptomatic song: *Živela Jugoslavija*. One of Brena's coworkers points out how the song was sung in all parts of Yugoslavia, 'always, in all the concerts', and how it was particularly important. Brena also stresses how this song 'belongs to this country'. The Yugonostalgic atmosphere is again highlighted with both songs about Yugoslavia. In fact, both songs are especially commented upon by numerous speakers. In that context, the singer also concludes that she 'felt good' in Yugoslavia, which was the country that was 'the ancestor of the European Union'. In the final part of the series, in which there were mostly pieces of information from her private life, the concluding lines include a reference to Yugoslavia, namely, it is stated how 'Someone has said that Brena is the last Yugoslav'. Furthermore, Brena's image as the "last Yugoslav" has explicitly been used during the concert tours in the diaspora, where she regularly sings her song *Yugoslav Woman*, while putting the Yugoslav flag on the stage. The "spreading of love and brotherhood and unity" is regularly commented upon in media.[15]

Apart from numerous affirmative comments regarding her new song which in fact clearly promotes Yugoslavism, there is one indicative critical statement precisely about the singer's manipulation of the concept of love. Namely, I will here single out one indicative remark: the song was marked as no less

[15] https://www.blic.rs/zabava/spektakl-u-americi-lepa-brena-zapocela-turneju-a-onda-zapevala-jugoslovenku-video/c475z6e, https://www.kurir.rs/stars/3031301/video-lepa-brena-siri-bratstvo-i-jedinstvo-folk-diva-na-turneji-po-americi-rasirila-zastavu-sfrj-i-zapevala-jugoslovenku?ref=related_box.

than a "love scam". It is stated that the song is "a love scam (podvala o ljubavi) made by those in love with former Yugoslavia". Moreover, not only is it labeled "a scam about love", but that love is also equated with the love among the Yugoslavs. Hence, "the scam about brotherhood and unity" is here seen as a scam about love. Namely, the discussion goes on to point out the context of language politics I previously addressed, by emphasizing the fact that "where you say pjeva you could never say peva, and where you say peva you could never say pjeva" (tamo gdje se pjeva nikada se nije pevalo kao ni tamo gdje se peva nikada se nije pjevalo) (user sinsal, 2.12.2017).

However, such an interpretation is rather isolated. The majority of the comments completely reflect the discourse the singer wanted to promote, namely, the discourse on Yugoslavia and Yugoslav people as the discourse on love. Even though there is no explicit reference to Yugoslavia in this alleged love song, the message of love is clearly understood, since the comments do explicitly refer to it. In other words, what is not said in the actual song (but just implied), is unequivocally verbalized in the comments. The song was in fact rewritten by the virtual audience, revealing its true meaning. Hence, it is said "that the people in Yugoslavia should love each other, at least as old friends"; furthermore, it is pointed out that Yugoslavia "was a country of love", "a country in which we loved each other". Also, using the discourse of nostalgia, it is stated, "Once upon a time, there was a country in which it really did not matter if you say peva or pjeva"; "We used to be one soul, one love, truly"; "Let's love each other, that is the right message"; "Long live Yugoslavia",[16] and similar. The term love is abundantly used and regularly connected to Yugoslavia. It is indicative to notice that the comment about "the love scam" is mostly ignored, and most certainly isolated. Slightly different insight is provided in the comments on the diaspora tours with the Yugoslav flag. It is pointed out that "it is not all right to show the flag with a red star to the descendants of those who left the country because of that symbol" (user neverovatno, 16.4.2018). Also, there were comments referring to "the trend" about "being together after all and being nostalgic and loving towards each other and Yugoslavia" (Breadmaker, 16.4.2018).

In other words, "the love scam" created by Brena's song is completely successful, almost without exceptions. Most of the virtual audience did not find it problematic that the singer is playing with the contested past, trying to reposition herself as a Yugoslav through the usage of the concept of love, utterly ignoring the fact that her song is not in accordance with actual historical context, in which the referred politics of language could, in fact, be of the utmost importance. Based on the presumption that love is neutral and spontaneous, the ideology becomes a vehicle for multiple reuses, in this case, by a singer who tends to reposition herself in the post-Yugoslav market as a genuine Yugoslav star.

5. Conclusions: All We Have Left Is the Music?

Virtual Yugoslavs appear regularly in the comments on links with any Yugoslav related content. They often promote the Yugoslav idea by pointing to the music as the *heritage*, or, as many of my interviewees put it: "All we have left is the music". In addition, (the love towards) the music is further connected with the ideology of Yugoslavism, sometimes the actual core ideology of 'brotherhood and unity', and sometimes the music is generally connected with the relations among the people from former Yugoslavia. Some would also say that "Some people live in nostalgia and others in a non-existing country"[17], which implies the dissatisfaction with the impression that the present is overwhelmingly turned to past experiences, not to future ones.

Keeping in mind the political context, the supposedly simple enjoyment in the music, in fact, brings to the engagement of the production of multifarious emotional reactions concerning the remembrance of the past. The case studies I elaborated on here lead to the conclusion that emotions

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[16] Most of the participants in the discussions used their real names, so I will not mention them here.

[17] A comment concerning Đorđe Balašević's song about Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, in which the breakup of Yugoslavia is addressed in a clearly expressed nostalgic tone, especially the fact that former Yugoslav citizens are now foreigners to each other despite the fact that they speak the same or similar languages and share the same culture. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ams9rG9NGI (accessed on 2 July 2016).

seem to be a part of politics public figures sometimes use, but they also indicate the commercial needs of the post-Yugoslav music market. As I have shown in the first example, the emotional reactions are easily triggered by the media discourses, and also collectively constructed in virtual spaces. Furthermore, those practices are used for repositioning strategies in the post-Yugoslav market, as shown in the second case study.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that Yugonostalgia should not be seen only as a transparent pro or contra socialist or pro or contra Yugoslav ideology, connected to the experience of living in Yugoslavia, but rather it is often an ideology that is not easy to locate—the ideology of supposedly neutral love, transnational universal bonds between people, the ideology of nostalgia, understood as a general "yearning for yesterday", (Davis 1979), or the ideology of enjoyment and music-loving, and so on. Further research should problematize how certain phenomena are Yugoslavia related and just how much it could simply be a symptom of the global cultural trends, such as the love market that is always founded in the processes of commodification of supposedly genuine reactions. Also, it is indicative to notice that the farther the post-Yugoslav space goes from the end of Yugoslavia, the more the Yugoslav culture is being used and repacked for further commercial exploitation. As Raynolds puts it, "Instead of being the threshold to the future, the first ten years of the twenty-first century turned out to be the 'Re' decade" (Raynolds 2011, p. xi) since even new music often draws heavily on the past. If "there has never been a society in human history so obsessed with the cultural artefacts of its own past" (Raynolds 2011, p. xiii), how specific is the post-Yugoslav case? It is indeed specific due to the fact that the end of Yugoslavia included traumatic war experiences and commercial re-use of the past is a phenomenon that one could not easily expect in early post-Yugoslav years. Raynolds also interestingly poses the question of what happens if we run out of the past (Ibid., p. xiv), and how nostalgia has been produced as "one of the great pop emotions" (Ibid., p. xxiii). Being one of those pop emotions, Yugonostalgia appears to be a means for current politics of emotions in post-Yugoslav spaces to further promote the idea that the music and musicians seem to be one of the most important legacies of socialist Yugoslavia.

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Ostalgia in Czech Films about Normalisation Created Post-1989

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Abstract: This piece will introduce Czech ostalgic films set in the normalisation period (1969–1989) and will interpret the basic divide between nostalgic representation of the period and the openly anti-communist stances of the films' creators. The methodological frame of this research comes from Robert Rosenstone's approach of representation of history in film. To interpret ostalgia in Czech film, I use ideas from Daphne Berdhal and Svetlana Boym. I described the nostalgic elements and their functions in the structure of the films, taking into account their story, characters, settings, film style, narration, genre, and audience response (identification, causality of emotional experience). Czech ostalgic films about the normalisation period are interpretively ambivalent. The interpretational tension appears out of a fundamental divide between a clear refusal of communism and an idyllic view of the socialist past. They cannot be simply classified into restorative or reflective nostalgia. The younger generation of spectators perceives ostalgic films in the mode of reflective nostalgia; on the other hand, the older generation perceive the films in terms of restorative nostalgia. A different way of perceiving ostalgia reveals a misunderstanding between generations of the current Czech society. Due to singular anti-communist viewpoints and emphasised liberal values, the films cannot be interpreted in a desire for an idealised home in a communist past, but as a desire for a present home and its security, which cannot be clearly conceptualised. The concept of reflective nostalgia can be linked with the theory of Berdhal. The films cannot be perceived as a desire for an idealised home in a communist past due to specific anti-communist viewpoints and highlighted liberal values, but as a need for a home and security that cannot be directly conceptualised. This appearance of reflective nostalgia can be connected with the theory stated by Berdhal.

Keywords: nostalgia; ostalgia; Czech film; Czech history; normalisation; post-communism

1. Introduction

This text introduces a summary of a side topic in my research of Czech historical film post-1989, which I worked on in 2014–2018 (Ptáček 2018). In the frame of this research, all films shot about normalisation were analysed. Here, I will focus on films with overarching ostalgic elements. The scope of this article does not allow the introduction of complex film analysis; thus, I will concentrate on a summary of results from film analysis and their interpretation in the context of ostalgic art and film. The conclusion should result in an explanation of how the meaning of ostalgia is identic, and how it differs from the interpretations of Daphne Berdhal and Svetlana Boym. The methodological frame of this research comes from Robert Rosenstone's approach to representation of history in film, as formulated in the books *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Rosenstone 1995) and *History on Film/Film on History* (Rosenstone 2012).

Like Rosenstone with his analysis of films about the Holocaust, I ask: How can a group of (in my case ostalgic) films show a greater perspective of historical themes? How can these films relate to a greater historical discourse? How do historical films present current issues? In the first

section is introduced the tradition of Czech nostalgic films from the 1930s to the 1980s and its various ideological functions. In the second section, the findings of the analysis of nostalgic elements in films about normalisation on the level of character motifs, narration, genre, and audience response are summarised. The third section describes valued ideological judgments in relation to history and the contemporary, which mainly represents the behaviour and actions of characters, the interactions between characters, and arises from the narrative or is presented by a film narrator. In the last section, the audience response is interpreted as a stance towards ostalgic films through their experience with post-communism.

To analyse ostalgia in Czech film, I use ideas from German sociologist Daphne Berdhal, mainly from her book *On the Social Life of Postsocialism: Memory, Comsupsion Germany* (Berdahl 2010), in which she also analyses and interprets the film *Goodbye, Lenin!* (2003, d. Wolfgang Becker), and Svetlana Boym, who in the book *The Future of Nostalgia* (Boym 2001) focuses on the analysis and interpretation of nostalgia in the Soviet Union.

The phenomenon of ostalgia in the Czech Republic is also described in Czech academic literature from the area of film studies and other humanities by Martin Franz (2008), Blanka Činátlová (2011), Jan Černík (2016), Matouš Hájek, and Matěj Vlček (2011). For the foreign reader, historical context of the contemporary Czech film is closely analysed in the English-published book of Jan Čulík (2012).

Nostalgia and Ostalgia

According to Svetlana Boym (2011), the word "nostalgia" is based on two Greek linguistic roots: νόστοσ, nóstos ("return home") and άλγοσ, álgos ("desire") and in the contemporary meaning, we interpret it as a desire for a home that no longer exists or has never existed.

Boym furthermore differentiates between two basic types of nostalgia: Restorative nostalgia and reflective nostalgia. Restorative nostalgia focuses on the national past and future, reconstructing the tradition of the home and the nation to define time and space in a unified, objective manner. Because of this, it takes itself seriously (Boym 2001, p. 46).

On the other hand, reflective nostalgia focuses on the perception of history and passage of time through the individual and cultural memory. As such, it can be playful and ironic, combining personal experience with critical thinking, similarly to how memories mix emotion and compassion with logic and critical reflection. Reflective nostalgia is aware of the distance of the past, values the shattered nature of memory, and "has a capacity to awaken multiple planes of consciousness" (Boym 2001, p. 46).

Boym characterises nostalgic films as: "A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images home and abroad, of past and present, of dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface" (Boym 2011). I believe that these duplicities also appear in Czech ostalgic films.

The term ostalgia was created by combining the German words *Nostalgie* (nostalgia) and *Ost* (east) (Berdahl 2010, p. 48). It names the sentimental nostalgia for some aspects of the socialist lifestyle before the fall of the Iron Curtain in Central and Eastern Europe. This phenomenon first arose in the former German Democratic Republic, where the reunification of Germany caused social and political changes the fastest. Gradually, ostalgia also appeared in other countries. The German comedy *Goodbye, Lenin!* became the symbol of ostalgia with its absurd portrayal of a re-united Germany.

In the Czech Republic, ostalgia shows interest for art and pop culture from the normalisation period, and some specific products (often substitutes) from the time. For example, Kofola—a substitute of coca cola—successfully competes with the American original and is a part of the most sold Czech sweet drinks. At the turn of the millennium, the popularity of normalisation-pop stars rose. Czech television (public and private) repeat television shows and films from the normalisation period, including propaganda works like the series *Thirty Cases of Major Zeman/Třicet případů majora Zemana* (1974–1979, d. Jiří Sequens) about the history of Czech communist security (police), whose work was often based on fighting outer and inner ideological enemies.

2. The Tradition of Czech Nostalgic Film

Nostalgia, as understood by Svetlana Boym (an escape from contemporary issues and a return into a world that is easy to comprehend even if it had never existed), has a tradition in Czech cinematography since the 1930s. After Hitler was elected in Germany, but before the unification of Germany and Austria, two films were created in a Czech–Austrian production, which portrayed an unproblematic cohabitation between Czechs and Germans in Czechoslovakia, despite the fact that Czech–German inhabited areas were riddled with significant tension due to nationalism. The melodrama *The Sauvage from Egerland/V cizím revíru/Der Wilderer vom Egerland* (1934, d. Vladimír Majer and Walter Kolm-Veltée) tells the story of a woods adjutant, a poacher, and two girls set in the area of western Czech spas, which is presented as nationally harmonic. In the film, there is no conflict between Czechs and Germans, only between the protagonists and antagonists. The central couple drives to Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), which is presented as a lively and prosperous multi-cultural spa city.

Non-conflict multi-cultural relationships appear in the film *Jana, the Girl from the Bohemian Forest/Jana/Jana, das Madchen aus Böhmerwald* (1935, d. Robert Land and Emil Synek), which was shot simultaneously in two languages. The melodramatic film about love is set in an idyllic village in the Bohemian Forest near the borders. According to Alice Aronová, the two versions are different even though the film's plot remains the same, and the main difference is the interpretation of the village—the Czech village is replaced by a typically German one. Paradoxically, the Czech Jana was considered too Sudeten-German in the patriotically-obsessed time, while the German Jana is considered too Czech. However, the important part is the appearance of the two versions: The villagers appear proper and respectable to the spectator and they live comfortably, in harmony with the nature around them, in a place which honours Catholic faith, as well as traditional and moral values (Aronová 2013).

Both films make use of the idyllic chronotope, which Michail Bahktin describes in relation to the novel of the 19th century: "Life and its events is ideally organically linked to a place—the nation and all its corners, its mountains, valleys, fields, rivers and ice, a father's home. Idyllic life and its events are grown with a concrete place, where fathers and grandfathers used to live, where children and grandchildren can live. This small world, this limited and self-sufficient place is not particularly linked with other places, with other worlds" (Bakhtin 1982, p. 225). According to Bahktin, the chronotope characterises a specific organisation of time and space that is typical for the specific literary genre of the given period. The translator and interpreter of Bachtin, Michael Holquist, understands the chronotope as a device of synthetical analysis (Holquist 1982, p. xxxiii). According to Vivian Sobchack, one of the explored chronotopes in film is e.g., the chronotope of the film noir, which is the opposite of Bachtin's so-called idyllic chronotope (Sobchack 1998). I believe that the construction of time–space in Czech ostalgic films is similar to Bachtin's idyllic chronotope.

The bloom of Czech nostalgic films occurred during the Second World War, when Czech cinematography was controlled by German occupant authorities, but Czech films were shot in Czech production. For more detail, see Tereza Dvořáková (2011). Conversational comedies were greatly liked by audiences, which usually occurred in higher classes, and made use of stereotypes interpreted from the idyllic chronotope. These comedies were marked by being seemingly apolitical. There was nothing said of the war, there were no social disagreements, members of separate social classes still communicated and acted respectfully to one another. In the film *Catacombs/Katakomby* (1940, d. Martin Frič), a lower-set official of the Land Office, portrayed by the popular Czech comic Vlasta Burian, manages to become the general secretary of the office through his simple truthfulness and skill in the folk card game Mariáš. The rude factory owner in the film *Chalk and Cheese/Nebe a dudy* (1941, d. Vladimír Slavínsky), who has amnesia after a car accident, is fixed by staying with the family of a quarry worker. Lukáš Kašpar writes about the ambivalence of these films in terms of nostalgic values and emphasises the phenomenon of hidden propaganda, which was related to escapism films: "Propaganda in a Czech acted film is a generally neglected phenomenon, similarly to the role of a film acting in the frame of Nazi propaganda. The escapism of Czech films is often noted in literature in relation to protective tendencies rather than a part of propaganda intentions" (Kašpar 2007, p. 17). A

similar ambivalence was pointed out by criticism of Czech ostalgic films about normalisation, which is the main theme of this essay.

Specific nostalgic appearances were seen in some films of socialist construction from the 1950s, which showed how communism was becoming the reality of the everyday (nostalgia therefore does not come from an idealised past, but the wish for a utopic future). The musical film *Tomorrow, People Will Be Dancing Everywhere/Zítra se bude tančit všude* (1952, d. Vladimír Vlček) shows a young people's folk choir, which diligently trains in folk songs and dances, and as a reward, they participate in the International Festival for Youths in Berlin in 1951. The nostalgic atmosphere of a dancing and laughing company, which in reality was encompassed by communist terror, is portrayed even in the film's title.

Audience-popular (so far!) comedy *Holiday with Angel/Dovolená s Andělem* (1952, d. Bořivoj Zeman) introduces a non-communist inspector of a transport company in Prague who is on a holiday for disciplined workers organised by the Revolution Trade Union Movement. The holiday-goers are prohibited from work, but suffer from withdrawal symptoms of workaholism and end up reconstructing a local kindergarten. Angel, under the influence of the collective, turns into an entertaining individual with a heart of gold. The audience interest created a winter-based sequel, and *Angel in the Mountains/Anděl na horách* (1955, d. Bořivoj Zeman).

In the 1960s, especially in films following the generation of the New Wave, nostalgic films were sidelined. Nostalgic elements in the following generation appear only in films of Jiří Menzel and Jaromil Jireš. The artistic use of nostalgia is different from the suggested analysis and extends beyond the scope of this article.

The nostalgic atmosphere of the old Austria–Hungary appears in mystification comedies with absurd elements, such as *Jára Cimrman Lying, Sleeping/Jára Cimrman ležící, spící* (1983, d. Ladislav Smoljak), *Dissolved and Effused/Rozpuštěný a vypuštěný* (1984, d. Ladislav Smoljak), which transfer the character of a fictive unacknowledged genius and poly-historian from the Jára Cimrman's theatre of to the big screen. Austria–Hungary was, before its collapse in 1918, called "the jailer of nations" by Czechs. The ideologies of the first republic (1918–1938) and of communist Czechoslovakia (1948–1989) sharply defined against the "old monarchies". In an allegorical reading, which was not the author's primary focus, monarchy was presented full of comic paradoxes; however, it was also a place in which the eccentric dreamer can be at least partially fulfilled. Allegorical readings were focused against communistic unification and levelling. Cimrman in a specific way fought against Austria–Hungary when, as teacher to the children of the throne's successor, he taught his students the idea of monarchy's downfall. The film attempts to translate the specific poetic of the theatre based on an emphasised naïve acting performance, absurd character behaviour, and diction-based humour in the film.

Though the described films with elements of nostalgia from different time periods do encompass similar nostalgic motives (security, unreality, simplicity, naiveté), and use a transformed idyllic chronotope, they do not use a focalisation of a child's point of view: They are separate in their relation to the official nation's ideology and the source of nostalgia. The silence over national conflict between Czechs and Germans in films from the Sudetenland in the 1930s singularly supports the official politics of a single "Czechoslovakian" nation (they link back to an atmosphere of a close, still uncomplicated past). Nostalgic comedies that ignore the war from the Protectorate period have two ambivalent interpretations that relate to the contemporary war time. Firstly, they can be interpreted as having defence tendencies towards the Czech nation against occupation (a direct disagreement or resistance was not allowed to be portrayed in film) and secondly, as hidden German propaganda that shows a comfortable life in time of war, which is insured through Nazi Germany's defence system. Comedies of socialist construction from the 1950s openly worked as propaganda for communist ideologies: The source of nostalgia was presented through a utopic future, as films from the present showed how life will be when everyone will live according to the communist codex and class enemies will disappear. *Closely Watched Trains* using reflexive nostalgia mainly as an artistic contract is the least ideological; ideological reading of the film happened later, similarly to Austria–Hungarian mystification comedies from the 1980s. The films in the described period show a desire for a homogenous social state which is

ruled by a social peace and a conservative interpretation of a family (typical for restorative nostalgia). As will be shown in the following section, these two motives strongly emphasise ostalgic films in the normalisation period, although the ideology of these films promotes liberal views which, according to results from elections and sociological researches, were only held by a small minority.

3. Normalisation and Films about Normalisation

The normalisation period (1969–1989) is marked by years following the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 by the Soviet army, when the leadership of the communist party was taken in 1969 by the later Czechoslovakian president Gustav Husák. According to the communist propaganda of the time, it was a return to the "normal" social conventions before the Prague Spring. Society was characterised by political lack of freedom, one-party government, discrimination of citizens who disagreed with the state, closed borders to the West, bad living conditions in industrial areas, and chronic lack of everyday goods and services, which connected to corruption and creation of paralleled economic structures. Most citizens did not identify with the regime, but were too scared to publicly speak their mind. Critique and ridicule of the regime only happened privately between friends and family.

Already in the overthrow in 1989, the time was viewed as years of stagnation and economic, social, and moral bankruptcy. Films about normalisation, which began to be filmed after 1989, took these judgements, but the actual social meaning focused on the contemporary reimaged structure of Czech society. Because of this, the epilogues of many films happen after November 1989. After the turn in 1989, society did not start to expand according to initial (clearly naïve) ideas of quickly achieving Western standards of living and economical stature. Economic and political corruption grew across the country, a clear social differentiation was caused, and a part of the society (namely the old and less educated citizens in rural areas) could not adjust to the sudden changes.

3.1. Films about Normalisation

Several films were shot about normalisation after 1989, which divide into dramas and comedies. Already in 1990 was shot the grotesque drama *The Czech Song of Ours II/Ta naše písnička česká II* (1990, d. Vít Olmer) followed by two absurd comedies *The Smoke/Kouř* (1991, d. Tomáš Vorel) *Let's All Sing Around/Pějme píseň dohola* (1991, d. Ondřej Trojan); none of the three films caught the audience's attention. Dramas from normalisation marked a significantly smaller audience interest, but were upheld by Czech critics and gained Czech film awards. An extreme case was the minimalist art film*Eighty Letters/Osmdesát dopisů* (2011, d Václav Kadrnka) shot in independent production that was marked by some critics as a unique creation.

The first film with nostalgic memories of adolescence *Thanks for Every New Morning/Díky za každé nové ráno* (1994, d. Milan Šteindler) had its premiere in 1994. Several films followed, shot in an ostalgic way that offered sentimental views of the everyday in a communist state. They welcomed a significant audience interest, but the critics judged these films in a reserved manner. One of the criticisms was whether it is morally right to shoot nostalgic films about normalisation.

The breakthrough ostalgic film was *Kolja* (1996, d. Jan Svěrák) which earned an Oscar for the best foreign language film.

In the table below are shown the audience visits to cinemas; in television, the difference in viewership between dramas and ostalgic comedies was even greater (Table 1).

The emotions of nostalgia, by my judgement, are generated on three levels, which correspond with the narrative–cognitive approach of David Bordwell (1985). The first and second are joined with the structure of the art piece, while the third is about audience response:

1. Story, characters, setting;
2. Film style, narration, and genre;
3. Audience response (identification, causality of emotional experience).

Table 1. Films about normalisation: Audience in cinemas (official data from Union distributors).

Film	Year of Filming	Director	Audience Numbers	Genre
Kolja	1996	Jan Svěrák	1,346,669	ostalgia
Pupendo	2003	Jan Hřebejk	988,457	ostalgia
Občanský průkaz	2010	Ondřej Trojan	428,688	ostalgia
Báječná léta pod psa	1997	Petr Nikolaev	344,865	ostalgia
Něžné vlny	2014	Jiří Vejdělek	246,659	ostalgia
Probudím se včera	2012	Miroslav Šmídmajer	241,252	ostalgia
Díky za každé nové ráno	1994	Milan Šteindler	207,241	ostalgia
Kawasakiho růže	2009	Jan Hřebejk	167,842	drama
Fair Play	2014	Andrea Sedláčková	86,043	drama
Zemský ráj to napohled	2009	Irena Pavlásková	50,518	drama
. . . a bude hůř	2008	Petr Nikolajev	33,294	drama
Pouta	2010	Radim Špaček	27,049	drama
Don't Stop	2012	Richard Řeřicha	5096	drama
Osmdesát dopisů	2011	Václav Kadrnka	1888	drama

3.2. Story, Characters, Setting

Ostalgic films often begin with the occupation of the Soviet army (the said reason for normalisation). The main story occurs between 1968 and 1989. The epilogue usually shows the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Velvet revolution. In the film *Goodbye, Lenin!*, events ahead of the fall of the Berlin Wall create the prologue of the main plot, which occurs during the re-unification of Germany. Ostalgia is portrayed directly, not as a historical allegory as is done in Czech ostalgic films. In the German film, fundamental problems appear for the protagonists as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall. On the other hand, problems of Czech protagonists are solved, partially showing unfulfilled expectations after 1989. Films ignore "the greater history" and focus on everyday life, the centre of which is the middle-class family. Representatives of the regime are often mocked and parodied, often appearing as dumb and clumsy good guys. On the other hand, in dramas, they gain demonic characteristics. High party members and state officials do not appear in the analysed films.

In the film *Goodbye, Lenin!*, all of the citizens face issues of the new age; for example, a past prominent member of the communist regime—the first East Germany astronaut—works as a taxi driver. In the Czech films *Tender Waves/Něžné vlny* (2014, d. Jiří Vejdělek) and *Those Wonderful Years that Sucked/Báječná léta pod psa* (1997, d. Petr Nikolaev), which portray the fates of people after 1989, prominent communists are the first to adjust to the new social conditions. A divide of society remains between *us* (ordinary citizens) and *them* (those that adjust to every regime).

Most protagonists are from a middle class (their parents have college educations, they are intellectuals, children study or the state has prevented them from doing so). The regime tries to suppress the typical portrayals of the middle class (doctors, teachers, scientists, intellectuals) by weakening their social authority and a smaller financial value of their work. The view of manual and rural jobs, which was common in normalisation films, is usually missing in ostalgic films.

Most ostalgic films (but also dramas!) portray the family as one of the ground personal and social values. Generational misunderstandings are shallow and arise from a need to emancipate the adolescent, which the parent generation understands. Pressure created by the regime on one of the family members lets them overcome marital or generational family crises and the whole family unites. The regime limits the classical patriarchal function of the father as an authority. The role of the family authority is taken by the mother, who usually has a sense for the pragmatic function of the household and has no interest in the political.

Protagonists of Czech ostalgic films do sacrifice their personal comfort for the benefit of the family, like in the film *Goodbye, Lenin!*, but they do not deal with personal issues in an active manner. It is as if they await for the problems to fix on their own, such as in the aforementioned Czech films from the occupation period. The active effort in searching for the protagonist of the German films concludes in a painful confrontation with the father, and the protagonist must reconsider his past actions.

A sense of nationalism is missing; the idea of Czech is viewed as natural and unproblematic. While characters negatively act towards Russians (*Identity Card/Občanský průkaz* (2010, d. Ondřej Trojan), *An Earthly Paradise for the Eyes/Zemský ráj to napohled* (2009, d. Irena Pavlásková), *Tender Waves/Něžné vlny* (2014, d. Jiří Vejdělek)), it is not because of their nationality, but because of their status as occupants. Russian culture and aesthetic demands respect. No film shows, even on a symptomatic level, discrimination against national minorities (in most of Czech society, the Roma are unpopular). Nationalistic feats are replaced by a disinterest in other nations. Czech isolationism is portrayed by the inability to communicate in foreign languages. The Russian language is taught in schools by incompetent teachers (*Pupendo*, *Identity Card*, *Tender Waves*). Most citizens do not know Western languages; the English skills of characters in *Pupendo* (2003, d. Jan Hřebejk) appear comic. In the film *Goodbye, Lenin!*, opposing opinions and the lifestyle of East and West Berliners are confronted in a comedic manner. This confrontation leads to a reflection of the re-unification of Germany, the ideals on which it should be built, and the manner with which it should approach the citizens of the Eastern part of the country.

Films about the life of emigrants are missing; most of the Czech society views them with suspicion.

In the analysed films, there is almost no portrayal of any religion, which corresponds with the Czech society being dominantly atheist.

None of the nostalgic films or television series advocate the regime as a whole or attempt to find something positive (free health service, full employment, available pre-schools and nurseries).

3.3. Style, Narrative, Genre

This level is largely fad- and convention-based, showing some characteristics of kitsch (likeability, sentiment, emphasis of easy identification and no conflict). In the majority, it is about comedy with a happy ending. Only the film *Identity Card* has elements of tragedy, as one of the four friends dies as he tries to avoid compulsory army conscription. On the other hand, the drama about the life of dissidents *An Earthly Paradise for the Eyes* (an ironic quote from the Czech anthem) has comedic elements. The film style has an organised staging, the camera work and cut mainly unmarked and conventional. Only *Kolja* uses a brighter style inspired by Hollywood staging, mainly the style of Steven Spielberg, but even so, it is second to the need of the narrative. The film *Those Wonderful Years that Sucked/Báječná léta pod psa* has a marked style differentiated by a writer's vision of a beginning author. Warm colours dominate the film and the narrative usually occurs in spring and summer months in the countryside or small towns.

Films are narrated linearly; usually, there is no subjective viewpoint of storytelling. Only in *Kolja* is a subjective point of view utilised, through the eyes of a small boy experiencing high fever. Films are told from the focalised viewpoint of a child or adolescent hero. The selective manner of memories is explained by the naïve experience of a child, with which can nostalgically identify the grown spectator. This focalisation of the story greatly helps the simplified interpretation of history. On the one side there is Us (the family), on the other side is Them (the regime). Ostalgic films refuse to cast blame on individuals for the existence of the regime.

The humour in Czech ostalgic films is usually kind and unproblematic, similar to the humour of Protectorate comedies. Most of the jokes are not a reaction on the social situation, but use universal tropes of situational humour. The humour is not based on the embarrassment of everyday situations like Miloš Forman's comedies from the New Wave period in film, neither does it resemble the offensive social satire like Věra Chytilová's comedies. The humour in *Goodbye, Lenin!* comes mainly from the confrontation between protagonists from East and West parts of Berlin.

3.4. Audience Response and Sociological Research

Audience response to ostalgic films is not homogenous. Ostalgic films bring sentimental emotion, but simultaneously reject the past regime. However, this stance does not correspond with sociological research of society from the last few years, which was done by the Institute of Sociology, Academy

of Sciences of the Czech Republic (press release from February 2018) that summarises the opinions of the Czech public on a democratic level and the respecting of human rights in the Czech Republic. The opinion that conditions now are better than before 1989 is backed by 38% of the population. The opinion that conditions were better before 1989 is backed by 17%. The older generation (more than 45 years) judges pre-1989 conditions more favourably than the younger generation.

Two thirds (66%) of the Czech public are persuaded that the change of the social system in 1989 was worth it.

Liberal democracy as the best way of governance is preferred by 60% of the public, while the rest of the population calls for non-liberal state governance, with a strong leader as the head of the state (it is mostly voters from the countryside with lower education) (Centre for Research of Public Opinion 2018). I believe that this social group does not visit the cinema, but they watch private-run television that repeats normalisation films and series; they do not trust classical news mediums and fall for hybrid propaganda.

Reception of ostalgic films can be interpreted in different social groups through different reasons:

1. Nostalgia for childhood: A positive emotional response is created through similarity with personal memory, often from the childhood and adolescent periods, linked with the discovery of own identity.
2. Symbolic ritual of parting: Part of the audience views ostalgic films as a symbolic ritual of parting (with youth, the past, a singularly defined ideological enemy) as described by German sociologist Daphne Berdahl while analysing the film *Goodbye, Lenin!*
3. Intelligibility and feeling of safety: Thanks to a simple style and narration, the films are intelligible for older generation spectators, who live in fear of the future, because they stop understanding the present in values and taste.
4. Absurd backdrop: The younger audience, who have no experience with the past regime, understand normalisation as a strange and comic period that explains why they do not relate to their parents and grandparents, who had lived a big portion of their lives during normalisation.

4. Conclusions—The Paradox of Ostalgic Films

From the initial questions based on Rosenstone, there arises a basic theme from the completed analysis that unquestionably relates to the representation of history in the contemporary.

Czech ostalgic films present a unified representation of history. They arise straight from a tradition of Czech nostalgic film. All of the films are characterized by a classic non-incidental style, simple narration, and the comedic genre. All of the films are also connected through similar themes: Difficulty of everyday life during socialism, difficulty of adolescence, discovery of self-identity. All of the films place a clear focus on the irreplaceable function of the family. The resulting construction of the historical time–space creates the analogy of an idyllic chronotope, as described by Bakhtin. This simple and ostensibly unproblematic representation hides a fundamental paradox of Czech ostalgic films. It is clear that there arises a paradox between a refusal of the ideological regime and a non-conflict nostalgic view on the era, where the Czech society was in a deep political, economic, and moral bankruptcy. The liking of these films does not portray an agreement with the ideology of the past regime, or even a wish for its return, but rather strictly refuses it. Films rather offer a momentary escape from the future, which most of the public views with worry. Furthermore, it allows spectators to get rid of personal responsibility, as well as moral and existential guilt. Due to singular anti-communist viewpoints and emphasised liberal values, the films cannot be interpreted in a desire for an idealised home in a communist past, but as a desire for a present home and its security, which cannot be clearly conceptualised.

The answer to the second Rosenstone question is linked with the character and function of ostalgia. Czech ostalgic films about the normalisation period have a double exposure, as described by Boym, and are interpretively ambivalent. They cannot be simply classified into restorative or reflective nostalgia. They pretend that they create individual and cultural memory (typical for reflective nostalgia) while they rather create a unified national memory typical for restorative nostalgia. The younger generation

of spectators perceive ostalgic films in the mode of reflective nostalgia; on the other hand, the older generation perceive the films in terms of restorative nostalgia. This differing generational perception of ostalgia refers to a distinct split in Czech society based on the different generational experiences.

The concept of reflective nostalgia can be linked with the theory of Berdhal, who interprets ostalgic films as a ritual farewell with the communist past. I believe that the contradictions between reflective nostalgia and restorative nostalgia arise from a specific status of the post-communist period which is portrayed through an opinion-based confusion of the society's majority.

The answer to the third question "How do historical films present current issues" is given by Croatian philosopher Boris Buden, when he describes the deep contradictions of post-communist societies in Eastern Europe. The term post-communism (first used by Zbigniew Brzeziński) (Buden 2013, p. 23) became true for the unfinished time of political, economic, and cultural transformation in the countries of the former Eastern bloc, which began after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. In parallel, the term post-socialism is used, as for example by aforementioned Berdahl.

The effects of the past regime in the present feature as much deeper and the transition period is much longer than had been originally estimated. Buden compares the state of countries in Central and Eastern Europe to the zone from Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* (1979). "Travelling the land does not lead anyone from the grim industrial countryside with collapsing industry objects, caught in melancholy sepia greys, into a place buried in bright light and pastel tones. Everything is beautiful, vivid, birds sing, the grass grows green . . . in this zone all wishes will be fulfilled" (Buden 2013, p. 11). However, the wishes are not fulfilled and the travellers return into the grey reality. According to Buden, the allegorical level of the film does not show the transition from dark reality of real socialism to the bright world of democracy and trade prosperity (and subsequent disappointment). It shows a much graver historical moment—the fall of industrial modernism, which was equal for both conquering worlds even before 1989.

I believe that ostalgic films not only portray negative reactions—disappointment from the present and worry concerning the future as formulated by Buden—but also portray the positive (if perhaps naïvely) as they formulate the fundamental desire and needs of citizens from present Czech society, and even encourage spectators to create "new social contracts" with the current regime. On the sidelines, there remains the self-realisation in work and social security. The key requirements become a life in a harmonic family, generational understanding, and a sense of pride. Not to be a joke, as it had been in the period of normalisation.

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Article

Nostalgia, Motherhood, and Adoption: Two Contemporary Swedish Examples

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Abstract: This paper explores the notion of nostalgia in two recent Swedish narratives of transnational adoption: Christina Rickardsson's *Sluta aldrig gå*, 2016, (published in English as Never Stop Walking in 2017), and Cilla Naumann's *Bära barnet hem* ("Carrying the Child Home", 2015). The two narratives deal with adoption from South America to Sweden, include autobiographical content, and enable a comparison between an adoptee memoir (Rickardsson) and a parent-authored text (Naumann). Both texts center on maternal images, but the analysis suggests that Rickardsson's narrative echoes the *borderland nostalgia* characteristic of adoptee writing. The adoptee memoirs, being *reflective* in mode and *restorative* in purpose, occupy a borderland between the two forms of nostalgia described by Boym (2001), while interrogating the temporal, spatial and affiliative boundaries of transnational adoption. Naumann's nostalgic enterprise incorporates the mirrors, doubles and ghosts of *reflective* nostalgia. These representations are a fruitful means to represent the "other" family, and the alternative lives that were left behind in the process of adoption. Ultimately, her text suggests the limitations of the autobiographical mode and illustrates the capacity of fiction to provide a symbolic register in which to articulate the unspeakable aspects of adoption.

Keywords: transnational adoption; nostalgia; motherhood; autobiography; Naumann; Rickardsson

Transnational adoption inevitably includes loss: for the adoptee, a country and parent(s) are left behind and perhaps unknown and even unknowable. But there are losses involved for the adoptive parents, who live with the "shadow presences" (Kendall 2005, p. 163) of their children's birth families, as well. This paper explores the notion of nostalgia in two recent Swedish narratives of transnational adoption: Christina Rickardsson's *Sluta aldrig gå: från gatan i São Paolo till Vindeln i Norrland* (published in Swedish in 2016, and in English as Never Stop Walking in 2017), and Cilla Naumann's *Bära barnet hem* ("Carrying the Child Home" my translation, 2015).

Christina Rickardsson's memoir of her childhood in São Paolo and subsequent adoption in Sweden, her first published work, was an instant success. It has attracted a great number of readers both in Sweden and abroad, as the book has been translated into several languages, and there are plans to adapt the story to the screen (Aschenbrenner 2018, p. 19). Cilla Naumann is a well-established author with more than 15 published novels, a handful of which are written for young adults. Questions of family, memory, and intercultural encounters are recurrent concerns in Naumann's works. In 2015, *Carrying the Child Home* was published to great acclaim. This is a novel with autobiographical elements depicting the author's return with her adopted son to the place of his birth, Bogotá, Colombia.

These recent, widely read works suggest that the topic of transnational adoption, and the concomitant questions of kinship and how to establish a fruitful relationship to the past, is relevant to a large reading public. Both narratives deal with adoption from South America to Sweden, include autobiographical content, and enable a comparison between a parent-authored text (Naumann), and a text by an adopted child (Rickardsson).

While much has been written about the search for roots and belonging in transnational adoption narratives (Homans 2013; Callahan 2011), less focus has been placed on the affective register of the life

narratives. In a previous article on the role of nostalgia in the life narratives of transnational/transracial adoptees (Jane Jeong Trenka's *The Language of Blood* (Trenka 2003), and *Fugitive Visions* (Trenka 2009); Astrid Trotzig's *Blod är tjockare än vatten*/"*Blood is Thicker Than Water*" (Trotzig 1996); and Sofia French's *På jakt efter Mr. Kim i Seoul*/"*Looking for Mr. Kim in Seoul*" (French 2005)), I have analyzed the complex longing for *home*, and sense of *inbetweenness* that characterizes these narratives, as well as the feelings of melancholy, longing, and loss they articulate, through the framework of nostalgia (Ahlin 2018). Svetlana Boym's distinction between *restorative nostalgia*, which "puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps"; and *reflective nostalgia,* which "dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance" (Boym 2001, p. 41) are useful concepts in such an analysis. To Boym, restorative nostalgics are concerned with the recovery of origins, while reflective nostalgics show that "longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another" (pp. 49–50). For the adoptee memoirists, what motivates their search journey is often a desire to recover the lost *home*: to connect with lost family members and the country of birth. For them, the past is thought to hold a "truth" about their origins and early years that promises to be restorative. However, as their narratives progress they find that homecoming is "perpetually deferr[ed]" (Boym 2001, p. 49) in a way that resonates with reflective nostalgia. The exploration of the meaning of memory and affect also suggest the reflective element of the narratives.

Thus, the adoptee memoirs, being reflective in mode and restorative in purpose, occupy a borderland between the two forms of nostalgia described by Boym. This *borderland nostalgia* means that the retrospection of, for example, Trotzig and French is a "near nostalgia", which is less concerned with collective or cultural memory, and more with the role of personal memory in nostalgia. Nostalgia is traditionally associated with dwelling on memories of the past and of a former self that offer a sense of consolation in times of change. However, for the adoptee writers it is often the dearth or absence of memories that triggers melancholy and nostalgic retrospection. The notion of the borderland implies not only the geographical borders that are crossed in transnational adoption, but also the border between pre- and post-adoption life, which is a significant element of the nostalgia articulated in adoptee life writing. The borderland thus resonates with the sense of in-betweenness—of navigating between past and present, between cultures and ways of life—that is articulated in the adoptee memoir.

It is also important to note the prospective quality of *borderland nostalgia*: the authors aim to bridge the gap between the past and the present not in order to inhabit the past, but to use it as a springboard to the future. A typical characteristic of the adoptee memoir is that it is written not at the end of a long eventful life, but rather at a time in life when a reconciliation with the past is needed in order to fully embrace the future. Like many other memoirists of transnational adoption,[1] Rickardsson was in fact quite young, 32 years old, when her memoir was published. To this observation, we may add Dennis Walder's assertion that exploring nostalgia is not necessarily to be excessively attached to the past, but a way to negotiate the influence of the past on the present. Nostalgia may thus function as "a step on the path of knowledge" (Walder 2012, p. 9) concerning private and public history in the adoptee memoir, where retrospection is connected to introspection and progression rather than conservatism. Finally, *borderland nostalgia* is evocative of the crossing and blurring of national, cultural and affiliative limits that characterize transnational adoption. The following analysis of Christina Rickardsson's reconstructed memories suggests that her narrative largely conforms to the notion of *borderland nostalgia*, with the important distinction that Rickardsson has actual memories of pre-adoption life that can be recovered.

How then does the nostalgia of the adoptive parent compare with the *borderland nostalgia* of the adoptee? My analysis suggests that while spatial, temporal, and familial boundaries are interrogated in Cilla Naumann's text as well, *Carrying the Child Home* primarily echoes the register of the reflective

[1] See for example the works of the Swedish authors Astrid Trotzig, Sofia French and Patrik Lundberg, or American Jane Jeong Trenka, Soojung Jo and Katy Robinson.

nostalgics who, as Boym proposes, "see everywhere the imperfect mirror images of home, and try to cohabit with doubles and ghosts" (Boym 2001, p. 251). Genre is key to understanding the different purposes of retrospection in the two texts: unlike Rickardsson, who uses the memoir form, Naumann employs a mix of fiction and autobiography. The inclusion of fictional elements indicates that she is not so much concerned with recovering memories or establishing a true version of the past, as with exploring the losses and alternative pasts that are part of transnational adoption. The most important theme of her narrative is separation—specifically mothers' separation from their children—and it is depicted through nostalgic tropes of mirrors and shadows. The combination of recollection and fiction has a particular resonance with nostalgia since the object of "loss" involved in nostalgia "is a product of imagination and memory. Nostalgia, in other words, names the affect attached to what one *imagines* that one remembers of what is no longer present—a longing for that which is no longer 'there' both in space and time" (Worby and Ally 2013, p. 468). This observation indicates that nostalgia always involves the fictional and, conversely, that the fictional mode lends itself well to articulations of nostalgia. In the following analyses, we will see how this relationship between imagination and memory plays out in the two texts, but first a few more remarks about autobiography are required.

1. Autobiography: A Nostalgic Genre

One of the key points of this study is the relationship between nostalgia and life writing. Laura Marcus observes that autobiography "might be viewed as by definition a nostalgic genre and even the most nostalgic of literary forms" (Marcus 2018, p. 12). The hallmark of autobiographical writing is a preoccupation with the past, at times idealized, at times represented in terms of loss, or melancholy. This retrospective mode suggests that the present can only come into being by way of the past. Memory is central to autobiography as memories are evoked, questioned, constructed, and/or worked through in the project of writing one's life. The nostalgic is often seen as suffering from a surfeit of memory, which makes her/him unable to move on. On the other hand, having too little memory of one's past can also lead to a preoccupation with one's history: with uncovering the actual facts behind dimly recalled events; the establishment of these events in their accurate temporal dimension, or the assertion of the identity of significant, lost family members and friends. A common feature of narratives dealing with transnational adoption is the search narrative, that is, the return to the adoptee's country of birth in search of family. Very often, it is the biological mother who is the prime object of this search (see, for example, Katy Robinson's *A Single Square Picture* (Robinson 2002), Jane Jeong Trenka's *The Language of Blood* (Trenka 2003), or Soojung Jo's *Ghost of Sangju* (Jo 2015)). Both *Never Stop Walking* and *Carrying the Child Home* feature this kind of journey leading to an actual reunion between birth mother and child.

The journey motif is common in autobiographical writing, particularly the metaphor of life as a journey. In these texts, the journey to a physical place, South America, is indeed paralleled by a journey into the self. In addition, they show that the autobiographical act is a form of verbalized self-reflection that presupposes the writer's temporal distance from the events and from her former self, allowing a new perspective on both self and past. In Paul John Eakin's words, autobiography is a form of "self-invention" (Eakin 1985, p. 6) through narrative. Narrating the past allows the writer to discover connections between past events as well as patterns of development and behavior. Christina Rickardsson's memoir echoes this notion of the active creation of the self, when she notes: "To me, life is not about finding myself. Life is about creating myself" (home page; Rickardsson 2016, p. 154). The statement indicates Rickardsson's conception of the self as produced through a set of acts, rather than something innate waiting to be discovered. Autobiographical writing functions as one such site of self-production.

This idea is particularly pertinent for adoptee writers, whose memoirs serve to counter the often "parent-centric" narratives that have hitherto dominated the discourse about transnational adoption. "Parent-centric discourse" is defined by Eli Park Sorensen as "a discourse that firmly articulates agency from the perspective of adoptive parents [. . .], while often ignoring or acting on behalf of the adopted person [. . .] In a wider sense, it may be seen as a rhetorical–ideological

strategy whose function is to legitimize and consolidate the perspective of transnational adoption as an ethical, normative practice" (Sorensen 2014, p. 161). The recent surge of writing by transnational adoptees, exemplified in Scandinavia by such works as Brynjulf Tjønn's *Kinamann* ("*China Man*" (Tjønn 2011)), Patrik Lundberg's *Gul utanpå* ("*Yellow on the Outside*" (Lundberg 2013)); Eva Tind's *Han* ("*He*" (Tind 2014)), Maja Lee Langvad's *Hun er vred* ("*She is Angry*" (Langvad 2015)), among others, provides a form of counter-discourse by locating voice and agency with the adopted person her/himself. Often, adoptee writing assumes a critical perspective of transnational adoption but as Rickardsson's text shows, it is possible to be critical of some aspects of adoption practice without being opposed to the phenomenon as such.

However, the (partly) autobiographical narratives of Rickardsson and Naumann not only serve to construct the self in writing, but to emphasize the relationality of that self. For example, while the voice of the autobiographical text would most obviously appear to be that of the author/protagonist, feminist critic Jo Malin suggests that the voice of many twentieth-century women autobiographers is not monologic. Instead, women's life writing is often dialogical as the mother's biography is intercalated with the daughter's autobiography. Both Rickardsson's and Naumann's text can be usefully related to Malin's notion of "embedded maternal narratives" in which the writer's mother functions as an "intersubject" as the life narratives of mother and daughter intersect (Malin 2000, pp. 1–2). Representations of maternity are central to both Rickardsson's and Naumann's narratives, and fundamentally connected to their retrospective impetus.

Finally, the nostalgic impulse of adoptee life writing is also supported by the notion of what Adam Phillips calls the unlived life,[2] which is his term for "the lives we are missing out on, the lives we could be leading but for some reason are not. What we fantasize about, what we long for, are the experiences, the things and the people that are absent" (Phillips 2012, p. xi). While we are thus all to some extent haunted by the lives we could have had, the transnational adoptee provides a case in point. As Rickardsson's and other adoptee narratives suggest, the issue of *what could have been* is highlighted by questions concerning the alternative life the writer had faced if she had stayed in her country of birth, or been adopted by another family. The shadow lives of alternative possibilities are central components of Naumann's narrative as well, as indicated by the imagined lives of the birth mothers of adopted children and, in the fictional story of Ana, of orphans who do not get adopted.

2. Christina Rickardsson: Creating Herself

Images of maternity and duality run through Christina Rickardsson's autobiographical narrative *Never Stop Walking*. Not only are there two mothers, a Brazilian, biological mother (Petronilia), and a Swedish, adoptive mother (Lili-ann); the narrator also describes herself a dual subject. She sees herself as embodying a Brazilian *Christiana*, whose pre-adoption memories and experiences had to be suppressed in the process of becoming the Swedish *Christina*. The structure of her memoir, in which chapters dealing with her São Paolo childhood in the 1980s and early 1990s alternate with chapters depicting her return journey in 2015, reflects the interplay between past and present, *Christiana* and *Christina*, and indicates that retrospection is as much about making meaning of the present as about constructing the past. It also underscores the theme of temporal, geographical and affiliative in-betweenness typical of *borderland nostalgia.* Throughout the story she refers her "two selves" and the text reconstructs the memories of Christiana that have for a long time been kept back as a part of adapting to her life as a transnational adoptee. One glaring example is the description of how she learned to speak Swedish in only two months, but that this acquisition of a second language entailed a near-complete forgetting of the first (Rickardsson 2016, p. 184). This example highlights how adoption is often connected to the suppression, or forgetting, of the past in order to assume a new adoptive

[2] I am grateful to Professor Laura Marcus for bringing Phillips' work to my attention at the conference "Nostalgia in Contemporary Culture," University of Southern Denmark, 4–6 June 2018.

identity.[3] For Rickardsson, the narrative reconstruction of her former self entails opening the door to memories that have been buried deep inside her, and involves the translation of this double into a new language and new life circumstances.

The process of splitting herself in two begins when Christiana is separated from her mother to stay at the orphanage, where she learns how to keep up a tough appearance. The suppression of her "real self" gives rise to a sensation of duality. She writes: "Christiana was hidden in the fog and a new person appeared, who in time would come to be called Christina" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 138).[4] Christiana is gradually transformed into Christina but throughout the narrative, she remains as an inner double that Christina alternately denies and yearns to embrace. In order for this regeneration to take place, Christina has to journey back to Brazil to revisit her childhood landscapes. The nostalgic urge to revisit the past becomes encoded as restorative as Rickardsson desires, and actually manages, to recover certain memories that have been thoroughly repressed, in a process that offers healing. Part of this nostalgic enterprise is the pronounced yearning for the mother, who is a forceful presence in the text.

Never Stop Walking is a multi-voiced narrative, and Rickardsson's own pre-adoption self is not the only voice her narrative seeks to recover, as she explicitly sets out to write the joint story of mother and daughter. In the first chapter of the book she writes, "I feel I want to reinstate my mother and tell our truth, the way I remember it, the way I remember our time together and the love we shared during a time that feels as if it belongs to another world, another universe" (Rickardsson 2016, pp. 14–15).[5] The mother's story is embedded in the daughter's, but here the urge to write the mother's story is formulated along with the qualification that it will be "the way she remembers it". Rickardsson acknowledges that memory is notoriously unreliable and that childhood memories may be distorted by the child's inability to comprehend the larger picture, or to create connections between cause and effect. Comments like this serve to highlight that even an allegedly "true story" is to some extent fictional: the memoir constitutes a mediated version of her past in which the narrative sequencing of events imposes a pattern on her life and establish causality and meaning. The rendition of lived experience through narrative necessarily entails certain omissions and additions to hold a reader's interest. Yet, even if an autobiography is to some extent fictional, Rickardsson rejects the combination of memory and fiction that Naumann employs, and makes a point of telling a story that is as true to her memories as possible. This is not only for the benefit of the reader, but for herself. The desire for truth is connected to the negotiation of identity that takes place in the narrative, and suggests an attempt to "patch up the memory gaps" of the past that corresponds to the characteristics of the restorative nostalgic.

Acknowledging the double, Christiana, means looking honestly at the sinister aspects of her own past. For example, there are scenes mediated by a more experienced narrator who retrospectively explains or reassesses events and actions, such as the competitive and aggressive relationship between eight-year-old Christiana and one of the other girls at the orphanage. Describing a fist fight between the two of them, Rickardsson says that at the time she felt the other girl deserved to be beaten, but then she observes: "This is an opinion that has changed over the years, and now I can only feel sorry for her and for Christiana" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 119).[6] This reflection shows how her reconstruction of the past leads to a reconciliation with her inner double. Writing here proves to be a therapeutic act through which *Christiana* is acknowledged, and the brutal parts of her past, including the act of accidentally killing another child in a desperate struggle over food, are worked through. Thinking

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[3] Signe Howell (2003) refers to this process of re-kinning of the adoptive child as involving the "transubstantiation" of the child (p. 468).

[4] *"Christiana gömdes i dimman och en ny person trädde fram, som så småningom kom att heta Christiana."*

[5] *"Jag känner att jag vill ge min mamma upprättelse och berätta vår sanning, som jag minns den, som jag minns vår tid tillsammans och kärleken som vi delade i en tid som känns som om den tillhör en helt annan värld, ett annat universum"* (pp. 14–15).

[6] *"Detta är en åsikt som med åren har ändrats och nu kan jag inte annat än tycka synd om henne, och om Christiana."*

about the boy whose life she took, Rickardsson writes: "How does one move on? How does one forgive oneself? I really don't know!" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 98). At the end of her story, she has arrived at the beginning of an answer: "To become reconciled with oneself is a long journey and I feel I am on my way" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 231). Passages like these indicate that by writing the story of her past, Rickardsson is allowed to mourn her losses and transgressions. Retrospection thus leads to the "path of knowledge" through which the influence of the past on the present can be explored.

Rickardsson's memories of the violence and brutality of her early childhood are traumatic, but despite all the hardships, there are also parts of her childhood that she longs for. This longing is mainly centered on the mother. Her story begins with a moving portrait of her mother, who took care of her daughter in a loving way despite indigence, mental illness, and harassment by the police. The search for the mother is also what drives the plot of her memoir, as the journey into her past is paralleled by an actual journey back to Brazil. As she is getting ready to meet her mother again after 24 years, Rickardsson notes that her happiness at the reunion is mixed with the fear that this present meeting will affect her view of the past. More precisely, she is afraid of what will happen to her story about her childhood should the mother prove not to be the loving, heroic person of her memories (Rickardsson 2016, p. 205). These fears indicate her need to keep the past intact: her memories have served as a source of sustenance, and she hopes she has not built her identity on false premises.[7] In other words, she fears that retrospection may not lead to restoration. When she first learns that her mother and aunts have been located by the local "researcher", Brian, he recapitulates some stories from her childhood that they have told him. As she recognizes these incidents from her past, Rickardsson reflects that she is happy to find people "with whom she shares more than just blood; there are also shared memories" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 175).[8] To begin with, her memories are validated: they were not fantasies about her partly repressed pre-adoption childhood, but truths, which serve to restore the lost home of the past. In addition, her observation echoes the view that affiliative bonds are created by interaction and joint experiences, rather than by biological ties, or "*just* blood."

To Rickardsson, these pre-adoption memories are not only a source of strength but also a burden. This is not primarily because they remind her of the harsh existence of her early childhood, but because she feels she has an obligation to remember the people she has been bereft of—or they will be twice lost (Rickardsson 2016, pp. 89, 182). The book is dedicated to these loved and lost people: her two mothers, Petronilia Maria Coelho and Lili-ann Rickardsson; and Camile, her best friend in São Paolo's *favela*. Camile, who was shot to death by the military police at the age of seven, is significantly described as a miniature version of Rickardsson's mother (Rickardsson 2016, p. 88). Unwillingly, Rickardsson was separated from all three women. Two of them, Lili-ann and Camile, are dead, while Petronilia and her daughter were parted for 24 years. Together, they reinforce the idea that representations of maternity are central to the text. Thus, while Rickardsson's narrative centers on the reunion with the birth mother, it significantly includes other maternal images that call the primacy of bloodlines into question. Hence, Rickardsson's memoir recognizes that, for the adoptee writer, the disengagement from the discourse of blood and genes may offer new opportunities for self-definition.

While for example David L. Eng observes that some transnational adoptees experience a "psychic predicament" (Eng 2003, p. 1) as a result of an inability to contain the notion of two mothers, Rickardsson's memoir challenges such an assumption. When she has left Brazil for Sweden, Lili-ann Rickardsson will play an important role as Christina's adoptive mother. Tragically, Christina will lose her as well. When Lili-ann is dying from cancer, Christina realizes that there is space in her psyche for two mothers and the strong bond that has been forged between Lili-ann and Christina leads her to

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7 "*Eftersom jag varit så rädd om mina minnen och verkligen förlitat mig på dem, blir det så viktigt för mig nu, när jag är tillbaka, att de stämmer*" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 128).

8 "*Det känns skönt att få bekräftelse på att jag hade vetat och gissat rätt, att jag och dessa människor delar mer än bara blod, att det finns gemensamma minnen*".

refute the saying that "blood is thicker than water" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 199). In this way, she echoes Astrid Trotzig's memoir, and reasserts the potential of adoptive familial relationships.

While many contemporary adoption narratives, such as those of Jane Jeong Trenka and Maja Lee Langvad, are critical of the practice of transnational adoption, Christina Rickardsson's narrative approaches adoption in more positive terms. Adoption has for Rickardsson meant losing part of herself, but she ultimately finds it a price worth paying to get out of the dire poverty she experienced as a street child (Rickardsson 2016, p. 147). Above all, it guaranteed her survival (Rickardsson 2016, p. 153). However, she is critical of the circumstances of her adoption: her mother's illness was not made known to her daughter, nor was there any attempt to place Christiana and her younger brother with other relatives. She is also critical of the way Brazil fails to support mothers who are financially unable to take care of their children (Rickardsson 2016, p. 15). When her aunts found out that the children were in an orphanage, they went to get them only to find the children were no longer there (Rickardsson 2016, p. 209). Their mother kept looking for Christiana and her brother all these years as nobody told her relatives that they had been put up for adoption. It is not until their reunion 24 years later that they find out about the circumstances of the children's disappearance.

Finally, as Rickardsson's memoir draws to a close, she has been reconciled with her past: through the act of writing her own narrative she has been able to bring together her two selves and two cultures, and the journey into the past has led to restoration. She stresses, however, that visiting Brazil does not equal going *home*. Instead, she envisions herself as having two homes (Rickardsson 2016, pp. 40–41, 195). Her mother's words have stayed with her and helped her through hard times, and these words also form the ending of her narrative: "never stop walking" (Rickardsson 2016, p. 238). This exhortation to move on suggests adaptability, the mobility of the self, and the need to look forward rather than back. However, Rickardsson's memoir shows that the route to the future goes via the past.

3. Cilla Naumann: Mothers, Mirrors and Memories

Carrying the Child Home is a multi-layered text about motherhood in which the coexistence of the past and the present is represented by images of mirrors, shadows and doubles.[9] Several images of maternity are played off against one another in Naumann's, as in Rickardsson's, text. There is of course the narrator herself, the adoptive mother, who travels with her son to meet his birth mother.[10] Their story is interspersed with images from the narrator's own childhood and reflections on her aging mother, who suffers from increasing senility. Gradually, the mother's illness leads to a role reversal through which the daughter becomes the caretaker of the mother. Finally, there is the parallel story of the fictional Ana, an orphan who was abandoned at birth and grew up at an orphanage where she stayed until she was 18 years old. Ana works as a housekeeper for a wealthy family and has only accepted her present position because working there includes taking care of small children, for whom she serves as a maternal figure in the absence of their working mother. The relationship between Ana and her employer, an emotionally distant career woman, evokes the question of whether biogenetic affiliation is the most important credential for motherhood. It is Ana who gets to voice the most poignant claim about maternal feelings: "Is it possible to love somebody else's child as if it were your own?/Yes, yes, yes, it is, Ana muses, I know it is! If you were only allowed to, if the child was allowed to, if the whole world could just stop trying to control what mothers and children and love should be like" (Naumann 2015, p. 192).[11] Ana's words suggest that repeated acts of care and tenderness may well constitute the ground of motherhood, thus reflecting on the relationship between adoptive

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[9] This is classic melancholic imagery defined by, for example, Jean Starobinski in "*La mélancolie au miroir: trois lectures de Baudelaire*" (Starobinski 1989).

[10] Naumann's actual birth date is given as the date of birth of the narrator (Naumann 2015, p. 198) which validates the connection between author and narrator.

[11] "*Kan man älska någon annans barn så som sitt eget?/Ja, ja, ja, det kan man, tänker Ana, det vet jag att man kan!/Om man bara får, om barnet bara får, om hela världen bara kunde sluta lägga ordningen för hur mor och barn och kärleken ska vara.*"

mothers and children. In this way, her musings also amount to an endorsement of the practice of transnational adoption, which is typical of the parent-centric text. Yet, Naumann's text is more complex than that as it is vitally concerned with what is left behind in this process.

The family for whom Ana works live opposite an orphanage in central Bogotá and every Wednesday afternoon, Ana is hypnotized by the blue door of the orphanage. When it opens, a child will appear and go down the steps to meet her adoptive parents waiting in a car. This scene is described as "the moment that would stand still forever—the minute the girl became someone else" (Naumann 2015, p. 102). The blue door is connected with a moment of complete transformation, from which there is no going back. The closing of the blue door in Naumann's novel amounts to a simultaneous beginning and erasure: a new life begins while the child's pre-adoption identity is expunged. Behind the door remain the unlived life, and the alternative person the adopted child could have become.[12] This event echoes Rickardsson's depiction of the total repression of her pre-adoption past, suggesting that both adoptive parent and adoptee recognize an absolute boundary between life *before* and *after* adoption—a boundary that their narratives seek to negotiate.

Naumann's nostalgic enterprise incorporates the mirrors, doubles and ghosts of reflective nostalgia. In a key scene in the beginning of the narrative, the narrator opens a cabinet where she has stored the family albums, full of pictures of the Swedish, post-adoption lives of her three adopted children. On the shelf below the photo albums is a box with all the adoption documents, which she refers to as "the other world" (Naumann 2015, p. 11). In this box, labelled *Bogotá*, "time is nothing [. . .] It is the shadows of all kinds of mothers who move in the dreamed life of the sunken mirror city of *Bogotá*, the city underneath the city that made even me into a mother" (Naumann 2015, p. 12).[13] This description reads like an embodiment of the Freudian unconscious: the knowledge that there are other mothers whose children are now part of her own family is repressed, but continues to exist in a dream-like world beneath her own, everyday experience. The unlived lives that are the residue of adoption dwell in *Bogotá* (in italics); an alternative reality where the lives that could have been are frozen. The anonymous mothers of children given up for adoption are shadows in this parallel world; shadows that have resonated with the narrator's own experiences of motherhood in a faraway northern country. Naumann goes on to observe that the birth mothers of her adopted children once appeared in medical records as their names, ages, and blood groups were registered, but as soon as the child was born they disappeared. This observation illustrates the process of "de-kinning" of birth mothers that is part of the adoption process, involving "the undoing of the relationship between the child and its previous parent(s)" (Högbacka 2016, p. 5). Keenly aware of this process, the narrator is haunted by these lives that were left behind, and so her narrative is marked by doubles, shadows, and mirror images. In this way, Naumann's text suggests that the tropes common to melancholia and nostalgia are also relevant to adoption.

Toby Alice Volkman's question, "Is adoption inescapably bound to the effort to replicate, echo or mirror the family formed by biological ties?" brings out the central imagery of doubles and parallel lives in adoption (Volkman 2005, p. 102). Inherent in this question is the notion that the adoptive family is somehow inferior, second-best or inauthentic. This is an idea that both Naumann's and Rickardsson's text challenge. Naumann offers several versions of biological motherhood restricted by either illness, poverty, or attachment to a career. As an alternative, Ana and the narrator herself are representations of maternity based on the repeated acts of nurturing and caring for a child. Ana's story resonates with the point Marianne Novy makes about kinship in *Imagining Adoption*:

> Relations of adoption are constructed relationships—at least in that sense, they are fictions. But there is a sense in which the relationship between a parent and child who have

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[12] For more about the metaphorical role of the *door* in transnational adoption narratives, see Ahlin (2018, p. 32).

[13] *"är tiden ingenting . . . Det är skuggorna av alla sorters mammor som rör sig i den sjunkna spegelstaden Bogotás drömda liv, i den stad under staden som gjorde även mig till mor."*

> always been together, as well as of a reunited birth parent and child, is also a constructed relationship—one built up out of many small interactions. (Novy 2001, p. 11)

Here, Novy equalizes the biological and non-biological parent-child relationship by suggesting that an enduring bond is based on sustained contact and interaction. Still, her observation that relations of adoption are "fictions" deserves further elaboration. Naumann's narrative, which is a combination of autobiographical material and fiction, validates the imaginary as a vital mode of making sense of the experience of adoption. As we have seen, it is mainly through the use of fiction—in Ana's story—that Naumann emphasizes her alignment with Novy's view of adoptive parent-child relationships. Another important aspect of the fictional as a way to fathom the practice of adoption relates to language and the limited vocabulary available to represent adoption. In the autobiographical section of the text, the narrator reflects on her habit of keeping a diary to record the process of adoption. However, she soon finds that the diary mode is inadequate for the type of story she is about to write (Naumann 2015, p. 57).[14] Later on, when she is going to meet Magda, the woman who gave birth to the child who would later become her own son, the narrator observes, "It is a meeting without regulations, there are no rules to observe, not even a vocabulary. I am going to meet my son's mother. Even this simple statement is an anomaly. Not even language can encompass what is about to happen" (Naumann 2015, p. 88).[15] The experience of adoption thus tests the boundaries of language and at times appears unspeakable: remaining as a shadow just beyond the writer's reach. Instead, it is through images of doubles and mirrors that the story is conveyed, through passages in which the tropes of adoption and nostalgia converge.

The actual meeting with Magda is briefly depicted and substantiates the interpretation that Naumann's text is not so much concerned with a recovery of memories that offer restoration, as with a fictional exploration of the alternative pasts associated with transnational adoption. The return to Colombia cannot be a return "home" for the adoptive mother, and instead *Carrying the Child Home* pivots on the inevitable separations that all mothers—biological as well as adoptive—and children have to face. When the meeting with the birth mother has taken place and Magda has left them again, the narrator will also leave her now grown-up adoptive son and return to Sweden alone while he continues to travel in Colombia without her (Naumann 2015, p. 208). There is thus no endorsement of his belonging in the adoptive country, and neither does Naumann's narrator ever attempt to speak on behalf of her child.[16] In these ways, Naumann's text does not reflect the typical parent-centric pattern, and through the fictional episodes she is able to explore the losses involved in transnational adoption without appropriating the son's story.

The motif of separation is also found in the stories of Ana and the narrator's own aging mother. As the novel ends, the narrator is back home reflecting on her mother: "I long for my mother as she used to be" (Naumann 2015, p. 223).[17] The mother's memories and personality dissolve as her senility progresses and the novel ends with a passage in which imagination and reality merge in such a way that it is impossible to tell the one from the other. As the door to the "mirror city" associated with the birth of the narrator's children has been closed, another otherworldly landscape takes its place. Past, present, and future are mixed in this final image, which appears to describe the mother's passing. The beach and the sea of the narrator's own childhood form a dreamscape which beckons her mother, fusing childhood happiness with loss, and reinforcing the circular pattern of life. In this way, maternity becomes an emblem of loss and nostalgia.

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[14] "*Just då kan jag inte säga exakt hur det havererar men jag vet helt säkert att jag håller på med en berättelse som inte ryms i dagbokens form.*"

[15] "*Det är ett möte utan regler, inget finns att rätta sig efter, inte ens en vokabulär. Jag ska träffa min sons mor. Till och med den enkla utsagan är en anomali. Inte ens språket rymmer det som nu ska ske.*"

[16] This is in marked contrast to another recent autobiography by an adoptive parent, Michael Segerström's *Till Arre från pappa: Vårt gemensamma liv som jag minns det* (Segerström 2017); "*To Arre from Daddy: Our life Together as I Remember It.*" As the title suggests, Segerström speaks for the two of them throughout the narrative.

[17] "*Jag längtar efter min mamma som hon var.*"

In conclusion, focusing on nostalgia leads to an enhanced understanding of the role of memory and the motifs of duality and longing in transnational adoption narratives. Both the narrative of the adoptive mother and that of the adopted child center on maternal images, and their representations of maternity open up for alternative understandings of kinship and authenticity, affirming the positive potential of adoptive relationships rather than rehearsing a nostalgia for bloodlines.

Furthermore, the two narratives analyzed in this paper highlight the significance of facing the shadows of unlived lives, but they conceptualize the double in different ways. Rickardsson's double is locked within her own body and through the act of writing she reconstructs the voice and experiences of this inner shadow. Origins are established and memories recuperated in this process, which indicates that there is a restorative aspect to the nostalgic longing articulated in her memoir. However, as in other memoirs of transnational/transracial adoption, it is complemented by a reflective attitude to the past. As a result of the position from which they are speaking, nostalgia ultimately serves different purposes in the texts of Rickardsson and Naumann. For Rickardsson, maternal nostalgia is coupled to a desire for knowledge about the past, which will eventually function as a stepping stone into the future.

Naumann's narrative also dwells on the borderlands of time, space and family, but offers no final resolution. The doubles encountered here are imaginary shadows leading parallel lives in the mirror city of *Bogotá* in representations that serve as a means to reflect on, but not to restore, the past. *Carrying the Child Home* shows that the nostalgic tropes of mirrors and shadows are a fruitful means to represent the "other" family, and the alternative lives that were left behind in the process of adoption. The nostalgia articulated in the adoptive mother's narrative is connected to the theme of loss and separation embodied by recurrent images of mothers parting from their children, such as an unknown woman giving up her biological child; an adoptive mother whose son is grown up and leaves her to see the country of his birth on his own; and an aging mother who is lost in senility and finally passes away. In the end, these representations suggest the limitations of the autobiographical mode and illustrate the capacity of fiction to provide a symbolic register in which to articulate the unspeakable aspects of adoption.

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Article

Video Games as Objects and Vehicles of Nostalgia

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Abstract: Barely 50 years old, video games are among the newest media today, and still a source of fascination and a site of anxiety for cultural critics and parents. Since the 1970s, a generation of video gamers have grown up and as they began to have children of their own, video games have become objects evoking fond memories of the past. Nostalgia for simpler times is evident in the aesthetic choices game designers make: pixelated graphics, 8-bit music, and frustratingly hard levels are all reminiscent of arcade-style and third-generation console games that have been etched into the memory of Generation X. At the same time, major AAA titles have become so photorealistic and full of cinematic ambition that video games can also serve as vehicles for nostalgia by "faithfully" recreating the past. From historical recreations of major cities in the *Assassin's Creed* series and *L. A. Noire*, to the resurrection of old art styles in *80 Days*, *Firewatch* or *Cuphead* all speak of the extent to which computer gaming is suffused with a longing for pasts that never were but might have been. This paper investigates the design of games to examine how nostalgia is used to manipulate affect and player experience, and how it contributes to the themes that these computer games explore. Far from ruining video games, nostalgia nonetheless exploits the associations the players have with certain historical eras, including earlier eras of video gaming. Even so, the juxtaposition of period media and dystopic rampages or difficult levels critically comment upon the futility of nostalgia.

Keywords: nostalgia; video games; independent style; retro aesthetics; historical recreation; simulation; nostalgic dystopias

1. From Personal Reminiscences to Communal Experiences: An Entryway into Video Game Nostalgia

Nostalgia has a predictable rhythm: the ebb and flow of generations. Nostalgia is that unique combination of pain and pleasure as we realise our cultural capital has gained a temporal quality and the aura of coolness around everything we saw and did, once thought everlasting, became evanescent when we were not looking. Nonetheless, old artefacts are never simply props for personal reminiscences, they serve as material reminders that the past is shared, lying in wait, to be actualised by memories, to be re-enacted and thus restored to their former glory in the community of our peers, the blemishes blurred by rose-tinted glasses.

Video games are paradoxical objects in the sense that they are the newest medium of storytelling, but also the quickest to become obsolete. Even when their cabinets are restored, old arcade machines no longer run on the same hardware as in the heydays of the 1970s and 80s, when every inch of their bulky frames was jam-packed with circuit boards, wires, and CRT monitors that dominated the shop floor of the arcades. Many video games that once graced cartridges can no longer be played as consoles fail to start up, ROM chips, floppies and CDs suffer data or disc rot, codes for games disappear, MMO servers go permanently offline, and just like that—another game is lost in the deep, dark dungeons of time. Emulators and recreations of obsolete hardware are murky territory again, as many of the games in need of resuscitation by amateur aficionados are still legally copyrighted, and coin-operated cabinets might not be exhibited if tax agencies catch a whiff of someone trying to make money without a licence.

Thus, mediated nostalgia for a youth filled with video games becomes a minefield for the enthusiast and a gold mine for canny producers (McFerran 2018). Prominent researchers of the medium argue that "video games present a unique context within which to study nostalgia because they carry with them associations with childhood, technology and technological change as well the influence of prior forms of media" (Whalen and Taylor 2008, p. 11). This article takes this statement as its starting point, asking the question: To what extent can nostalgia be expressed and generated by particular platforms, genres and games, and how?

As I've hit 30 in 2018, I have reached the point that is familiar in every adult gamer's life where I now have the money to purchase any game I like, but no time to play them. At the same time, I have started to look at the games of my childhood with a different eye: games that were once hailed as having stunning graphics appear shabby today, and innovative game design practices now feel repetitive and poorly implemented. Yet I cling to old business sims and adventure games, replaying them regularly, as if rereading an old book or listening to some record that I have known the lyrics for since I was 10.

In this article, I examine video games as objects of nostalgia for the generation(s) that grew up with them, and as vehicles of nostalgia, since they are a medium capable of evoking long-gone eras. Intriguingly, Svetlana Boym argues that "nostalgia is about the virtual reality of human consciousness that cannot be captured even by the most advanced technological gadgets" (Boym 2001, p. 351). She might once have been right about this, but no longer. Today's technology, from actual virtual reality (VR) to hyperrealistic (or for that matter, very stylised) computer simulations, many, maybe all aspects of human consciousness can be simulated in artistic ways for the pleasures of their users, and the experiences of virtual space themselves can be objects of strong emotional attachment, fuelling nostalgia by the feel of immediacy. In any case, experiences of virtual reality or computer games are not "virtual" in the sense of being removed from reality; even though they are mediated, the medium is neither invisible or outside of the real world—they are experiences of the same order. They are real and true, "for a given value of true," as Terry Pratchett would say (Terry 1999, p. 12). They also engender real nostalgia: walking up to an old Mortal Kombat machine, even after a decade of not playing the game, upon touching the controls, gamers instinctively remember deadly combos as muscle memory kicks in, giving them a jolt of pleasurable expertise rooted in the past (Grodal 2013; Gundersen et al. 2018; Wymbs and Grafton 2014). Generations of gamers share personal stories of their favourite childhood games and how to reanimate them on newer platforms through forums and social media, bringing people together by virtue of their common gaming histories.

Video games have reached a stage in their history where, like films, they "have become their own objects of nostalgia" (Burnham 2016, p. 66). There are several trends in the commercial utilisation of the nostalgic mood in gaming. Firstly, some big name manufacturers produce facsimiles of earlier, iconic console generations, but with updated hardware, as is the case with Nintendo's (Super) NES Classic edition, a miniaturised version of the original (Super) Nintendo Entertainment System, or the Atari 8 Flashback Deluxe, a recreation of the legendary Atari 2600. These and other Plug-N-Play style consoles come with a selected library of titles pre-installed on them, which makes it easier for regular consumers to access games in a casual manner. Secondly, more technologically adept and dedicated hobbyists can opt instead to download emulators for conventional PCs, and then rip and install the original ROMs of their favourite games (in most cases, illegally). Thirdly, old PC games are being brought back from "abandonware" status (i.e., out of print, where the original developer and/or publisher has gone defunct) by digital distribution channels such as Steam or GOG.com, itself a nostalgic initialism: Good Old Games.

On a different note, independent video game developers have come to re-explore the cheaper-to-produce graphical style and gameplay of earlier video games. A number of indie titles merely adopt the graphics and music of a bygone era, delivering gameplay reminiscent of arcade and console titles of the past, such as *Shovel Knight*, *The Binding of Isaac* or *Rogue Legacy*. These retro games might exploit the aesthetics of earlier periods of video gaming history, but, as Robin Sloane warns,

nostalgia in video games is "dismissed as a sentimental pandering to the consumer–creator longing for a lost past. In this context, I believe that it is important that we avoid dismissing a game due to its apparent nostalgic aspirations, and even hold back from using the word nostalgic as a negative term" (Sloan 2016). Retrogaming is as much a sentimental adventure as a rediscovery of forgotten coding practices and game mechanics, which will be necessarily iterated upon for new audiences. Some independent games do not simply make use of old pixel art for increasing authenticity, but to underscore the period setting of the game world, bringing entirely new mechanics to gaming, like the self-styled "docu-thriller" *Papers*, *Please*!, set in 1982 on a fictional Eastern European country's borders, or *Evoland*, a game whose mechanics and art style change, imitating older consoles, recapitulates older forms of gameplay as the player progresses through the story.

In more mainstream and AAA titles, engagement with the past takes different forms, depending on the profile of the publisher and the genre of games. Some, like the *Fallout* or the *BioShock* series, use a visually stunning, retrofuturistic style combined with meticulous worldbuilding to critically reflect on the past as it never were, but existed in the dystopian imaginary of the Nuclear Age and of Objectivist, laissez-faire capitalism, respectively. Others, like the *Assassin's Creed* series or *L.A. Noire* bring a more verisimilitudinous approach to the table, faithfully recreating cities and regions of the past, while also indulging in genre conventions, such as the swashbuckling adventure or the film noir, to tell convincing, long-form stories. I will be taking a more detailed look at a few of these titles to uncover the complexities of nostalgic representation in the games, but in order to do so, we have to theoretically contextualise why we label particular aesthetic practices as nostalgic. First, I wish to investigate cultural studies' attention to games, specifically, the systematic biases that critical cultural theory has when dealing with nostalgia in games, which, I argue, are fairly predictable and do not do justice to the wealth and breadth of nostalgic representations.

2. The Balance between Critical Engagement and Jaded Dismissal: How Cultural Critics Proceed to Ward Off the Intended Effects of Nostalgia

There is a crucial distinction at the heart of nostalgia studies, originally drawn by Svetlana Boym in her seminal *The Future of Nostalgia* (Boym 2001), that of restorative and reflective nostalgia. Fundamentally, restorative nostalgia is envisioned as a serious, solemn effort to "rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps," which engages in the "antimodernist myth-making of history" via conspiracist thinking to create "total reconstructions of monuments of the past," unblemished and perfect, whereas reflective nostalgia is dedicated to "the imperfect process of remembrance," examining "ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" in order to become more conscious of what has passed, often resorting to whimsy and irony to mitigate the pain of loss (Boym 2001, p. 41). Boym equates restorative nostalgia with a fundamentally reactionary, right-wing project, and reflective nostalgia with a canny, in-the-know, detached, and at the same time, attentive, progressive political view. One does not need to read too hard between the lines to get what's behind the polysyllabic, Latinate terms in their naked, monosyllabic, Anglo-Saxon truth: there's bad nostalgia and there's good nostalgia, and we know which is which. And it's not just Boym. Summarising sociological approaches to the subject, Schiermer and Carlsen argue that "nostalgia figures as a rather vilified sentiment in much 'critical' sociology. It reeks of ideology and escapism. The nostalgic individual, so the critics reckon, is unaware of the fact that the problems prompting the search for nostalgic escape—modern loneliness and alienation—are created by society and can only truly be remedied by social change" (Schiermer and Carlsen 2017, p. 159). Nostalgia needs to be saved from itself, so that socially conscious, politically active scholars can distance themselves from any whiff of conservativism, but still reap the emotional benefits of experiencing it. Nostalgia is rooted in our cognitive capacity to remember, so that all modern human beings (that is, living in the past 10–20,000 years) with intact episodic memory have the potential to experience nostalgia, and indeed, there is evidence in the earliest of recorded literature and philosophy that nostalgia was rampant in Ancient times (Boardman 2002; Hanink 2017). Psychologists argue that:

> nostalgic experiences might arise as a consequence of the positive affect that accompanies successful remembering. . . . People often experience a burst of positive emotion when details of their past come to mind spontaneously and rich in detail. . . . It is by incorrectly perceiving this positive response as originating from some prior stage of life that may cause people to fall prey to the romantic sentiments and sense of longing that define nostalgic experience. (Leboe and Ansons 2006, pp. 597, 607)

Or it might just be the weather: people are more likely to feel nostalgic when a storm is coming, it's raining, and all is gloom and doom outside (van Tilburg et al. 2018). In any case, psychologists of affect are in the process of re-evaluating nostalgia as something other than hopeless escapism and navel-gazing. They have found evidence that nostalgia is a largely positive, adaptive experience, one that motivates people who experience it, generating optimism about the future, and prosocial behaviour (Sedikides and Wildschut 2016; Sedikides et al. 2015; Cheung et al. 2016).

To be fair, personal nostalgia, rooted in an individual's history and strongly related to childhood memories, is not entirely homologous to larger narratives of nostalgia about a community of people, with a cultural memory expanding far beyond the memories of living individuals. Expressions and negotiations of personal nostalgia are necessary building blocks for constructing collective memories of the past. Collective nostalgia is known to strengthen the bonds of the community who share the nostalgic memories, but they can also foster action against the out-group that threatens the nostalgic community (Cheung et al. 2017; Wildschut et al. 2014).

Even so, the forms of collective nostalgia present in a generation of gamers, I would argue, do not create a strong out-group, and especially not one that the in-group would take collective action against. Community scandals in gaming, such as GamerGate, are not fuelled by nostalgic affection, but by the polticisation and the institutionalisation of game production and game reviews. Nor are nostalgic/vintage gaming particularly activistic/social movements, and, compared to the hardcore gamer identity, nostalgic gamers are more inclusive than exclusive.

Meanwhile, cultural critics have largely focused on the detrimental effects of nostalgia as a cutesy-folksy way of generating sales by exploiting our fond memories of the past. While I would agree that advertising exploits the fact that nostalgia weakens the desire for money (Lasaleta et al. 2014), critics' suspicion of positive affect for brand-related nostalgia has led them to losing the plot when they try to explain just why and how nostalgia operates. The so-called "anhedonic school" of critics (Marcus 1999) are steeped deep in the tradition of what Rita Felski has called "the hermeneutics of suspicion, . . . a technique of reading texts against the grain and between the lines, of cataloguing their omissions and laying bare their contradictions, of rubbing in what they fail to know and cannot represent" (Felski 2011, p. 574). Critics investigating mediated nostalgia primarily focus upon the workings of ideology in material culture and the exploitation of the consumer. To offer an example, Ryan Lizardi claims that "contemporary media nostalgia engenders a perpetual melancholic form of narcissistic nostalgia ... exploited by contemporary media to develop individualized pasts that are defined by idealized versions of beloved lost media texts pumped up with psychic investment to a level of unreality" (Lizardi 2015). A withering critique, to be sure, and one might come up with anecdotal evidence which illustrates his point, but nostalgia is hardly the melancholic, narcissistic, or individualising menace that it is portrayed as.

Critics also use portmanteaus to colour nostalgic practices a shade darker and more suspicious than they really are. Pickering and Keightly coin the phrase "retrotyping" in order to castigate the strategic selectiveness of the nostalgic imagination in advertising. They claim that this "retrotyping always acts to inoculate us against this sense of historical movement and change. It constructs idealised images of past moments, ... it stunts the mnemonic imagination" and "retrotypically oriented consumerism exploits a generalised sense of pastness rather than a sense of particular pasts" (Keightly and Pickering 2014, pp. 92; 90). The phenomenon they study is described in categorical terms as a harmful, debilitating form of historical denialism that operates in a deterministic fashion and leaves no room for alternative readings. "This is not a good posture from which to practice

criticism," argues Greil Marcus, this "angry defensiveness," which manifests itself in a fear that consumers of nostalgia products gobble up the intended meanings wholesale, or that the critic's "faculties or tools of analysis are not up to the job," and the whole tenor of the discussion suggests that the critics are "suspicious, afraid, envious, chilled" for themselves, and for the ordinary consumers whom they want to protect from manipulative nostalgia (Marcus 1999, p. 204).

Crucially, these critics fail to explain just why nostalgia is so powerful an effect, with its pleasures, homeliness, and social bonds that people have been willing to embrace since time immemorial. Gary Cross urges us to acknowledge its beneficial aspects, reconsidering the kind of suspicious reading that has been essential in performing the nostalgia critic in writing and lecturing: "Far from its leading us into a kind of intolerant tribalism or narrowly cast familialism, modern consumed nostalgia creates mostly an exuberant individualism. Critics miss how the new consumed nostalgia is liberating and, in fact, often fun" (Cross 2015, p. 14). Individualism gets a bad reputation for atomising society, especially under modern capitalism, for thwarting collective action, but it can create communities through shared memories evoked by nostalgic objects, as Cross' book attests.

With regard to computer games, critics of mediated nostalgia resort to reductive readings of what makes a game entertaining, and their efforts to police the nostalgic impulse is palpable. Describing the experience of playing *Syberia*, an adventure game set in a steampunk Central-Eastern Europe filled with machine-men, Fletcher opines that "the peculiar pleasure of computer games is that they exploit their audience's taste for rehearsing procedural behaviours," because we "seem to like behaving like automatons" (Fletcher 2008, p. 260). It's a reading that effaces the difference between computer gameplay and assembly-line work, or the history of workers' and ordinary citizens' resistance to procedural behaviour (Thackray 1981; Smith et al. 1999; Braverman 1998; Davis 2000). In fact, a more sophisticated reading of the pleasures of gaming states that video games provide allegories of control by delivering "to the player the power relationships of informatic media first-hand, choreographed into a multivalent cluster of play activities," as they "present contemporary political realities in relatively unmediated form" (Galloway 2006, p. 92). The players take pleasure in knowing that they are not being exploited or ideologically hoodwinked, that fun is to break free from the rote algorithmic work and to humanise machines, which is also a central theme of *Syberia*. A more thoughtful form of nostalgic video game criticism is essential to understand the complex relationship between product, nostalgic content and player affect. This paper proceeds in that direction.

3. Beyond the Independent Style: Making Nostalgic Affect Accessible for Posterity

As objects of nostalgia, old gaming consoles and arcade machines have been revitalised by gaming companies to attract a new generation of players. This practice—now called "retrogaming"—has also faced criticism from scholars. Similarly to Boym's facile distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia, Matthew Thomas Payne insists that retrogaming has two strands, one that bleaches out video game history and another that is more redemptive, a constructive sustenance of play's real values. These two attitudes are epitomised, respectively, by the mass-manufactured Plug-and-Play (PNP) consoles, with their calculatedly dated design and off-the-shelf playability, and hobby emulators like MAME (the Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator), which require considerable technical skill to get them working. He contends that "by collapsing the retrogaming experience into a simple, easy-to-use device, PNPs threaten to efface or supplant other gaming histories that include marginal games and alternative play experiences" (Payne 2008, p. 53). But what exactly is lost here? The marginal games and alternative play experiences that he tried to save were marginal and alternative because video arcades provided cheap gameplay and intuitive interfaces, aiming for a democratic common denominator of play experience, whereas DIY game design, amateur coding, and hacking games were all practices of a minor IT elite who then cashed their chips in, figuratively and literally, by founding big-name game development companies (Levy 1984).

Contemporary developers have gone back to gaming's roots in an effort to produce new experiences in a more economical and coder-friendly fashion, which do not require the institutional

powerhouses of a large-scale modern company. This movement, bolstered by digital publishing platforms, has resulted in an immediately recognisable lo-fi aesthetic and economic design philosophy; an Independent Style. The indie style is unabashedly nostalgic, often a remediation of earlier games, "a representation of a representation. It uses contemporary technology to emulate low-tech and usually 'cheap' graphical materials and visual styles, signalling that a game with this style is more immediate, authentic, and honest than are big-budget titles with high-end 3-dimensional graphics" (Juul 2014). Indie-style games revel in large pixels and 8-bit chiptune music, and they often offer challenges that are lacking in pricier games. Juul's example in the platformer genre is *VVVVV*, which mimics the appearance of old C64 and ZX Spectrum games. But while Juul only focuses on the visuals, the game is more renowned because of its fiendish difficulty: pixel-perfect jumps are required to survive and genre conventions are exuberantly flaunted to subvert the player's ossified conception of what a platformer is: its main mechanic is that the player can shift the direction of gravity, and they should, if they want to avoid the 7612 V-shaped spikes, whose mere touch results in instant death.

4. Weaving the Past and Future Together: *Braid*'s Meditation on the Backward Flow of Time

A few indie games take the skeleton of gameplay from prototypical instances of their genre, but they favour a more polished look, where a cryptic story becomes a driving force behind the mechanics. Jonathan Blow's *Braid*, for example, is not a pixel-art game, but its gameplay is recognisably indie. It belongs to that category of games which "by design and in practice, correspond to a nostalgic experience the first time they are played—games that are nostalgic in their very address to the player. Such games offer . . . self-reflexive examples of gaming's power to affectively 'situate' us in the world when we play" (Goetz 2018). Playing *Braid* is nostalgic, first and foremost, because it's a loving tribute to Super Mario and Donkey Kong: our protagonist, Tim goes on a quest to rescue the princess, and the game's level design incorporates elements from both genre classics, but the gameplay is a deftly executed re-examination of platformers' willingness to adhere to damsel-in-distress fantasies.

The core game mechanic of *Braid* is the expression of a nostalgic wish: with the push of a button, you can turn back the time to undo past mistakes and cheat death. Without it, the player cannot beat the game; most puzzles require you to rewind time, especially since not all the game elements react to the rewind function the same way—some objects that sparkle and glow green are unaffected by the player's powers. Granted, time-rewind mechanics are not unique, with the most famous example being *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*. But in that game, the rewinding of time is an anti-frustration measure, facilitating progress through the game, as the difficulty of its predecessors invoked harsh criticism in the player community. In *Braid*, however, rewinding time acquires a poetic function.

The Worlds (i.e., levels) of the game are distinct, discontiguous, and each feature a title screen in which snippets of a short story are presented for the player to read, retelling Tim's relationship with a princess, tinged with philosophical musings about time. The text for the level Time and Forgiveness teaches: "Our world, with its rules of causality, has trained us to be miserly with forgiveness. By forgiving too readily, we can be badly hurt. But if we've learned from a mistake and become better for it, shouldn't we be rewarded for the learning, rather than punished for the mistake?" In terms of the mechanics: what if you could avoid falling into a spike trap by the push of the button? Indeed, much of the gameplay is devoted to undoing past mistakes at the microcosmic level. Neither restorative nor reflective, this is reparatory nostalgia. Some puzzles will even prove to be unbeatable without the player resetting them—in these levels, a select few platforms move in such a fashion that their movement in the game is irreversible. To solve these puzzles, first, one most observe what a level does without player interference, and why the natural logic of the level would hinder progress before a player can intervene and alter the gameworld to their advantage.

Furthermore, the Worlds are numbered weirdly: players begin in World 2, and make their way to World 6, then the final stage: World 1. Thus, the ultimate nostalgia of returning to the beginning, before things went wrong, is enacted in the course of ordinary gameplay, if one dares to call *Braid*'s gameplay ordinary. The setting and the story reinforces the nostalgic longing at the very beginning of the game

by showing us a world burning after a huge disaster, underscored by Jami Sieber's dreamy-drony soundscape, "Maenam," a melancholic, contemplative track, heavy on the strings. In a final twist, World 1 is an escape sequence, where the player must act fast to run away from an advancing wall of fire, and defeat the final boss while receiving help from the princess. Once Tim reaches the princess, though, the game plays back the whole sequence in reverse, now showing what seemed to be a heroic act of rescue to actually be Tim's creepy-stalky chase, which the princess actively tries to stop.

This double-edgedness of reversal in nostalgia is hinted at in the introduction to World 1, which asserts that finally finding the princess "would be momentous, sparking an intense light . . . that reveals the secrets long kept from us, that illuminates-or materializes!—a final palace where we can exist in peace." The use of the word "palace" instead of "castle" suggests that the levels function as palaces of memory, which the person has to literally pass through in order to remember. "But how would this final light be perceived by the other residents of the city, in the world that flows contrariwise? . . . It would be like burning down the place we've always called home, where we played so innocently as children." From the perspective of Tim, the whole game is at once a nostalgic yearning for a time when the princess used to be hers, and an undoing of that nostalgia by the game mechanics, a shattering of innocence about nostalgia. Surely, one could call reflective if one wishes, but the game's moral, explicitly stated in one of the game's dialogue boxes, is more confrontative than reflective: some things cannot be fixed by turning back the clock. In that gesture, *Braid* provides a critical interrogation of the process of fond remembering.

5. Frustrations of Childhood and Drudgeries of Adulthood: *Cuphead* and *Papers, Please!* As Reflections of Difficult Times

Other games use nostalgic aesthetics to soften the blow of just how crushingly difficult the game is. A special favourite of mine, *Cuphead*, breathes new life into "bullet hell" gameplay by featuring old-style animation, lovingly hand-drawn, and an upbeat, big band jazz score. "Bullet hell" is a special subgenre of shoot-'em-up arcade games in which the player has to man an automatically advancing vehicle and dodge, literally, hundreds of bullets from an overwhelming number of on-screen enemies. These games were popular in the arcades in the late 1980s and early 1990s, then waned in popularity for decades. After almost 30 years, *Cuphead* revives the old genre tradition by placing it in an unusual setting: Inkwell Isle is a cartoon world that mimics the "rubber hose" style of animation favoured by Max Fleischer in the 1930s.

The choice might seem odd for a video game genre that is often set in the near-future or in contemporary military settings, until one remembers that the world of the Fleischer cartoons is a natural fit for the exaggerated violence of shoot-'em-ups. Described as "a loose-limbed, exuberant, metamorphic style, as fluid as a blob of mercury on a glass plate" (Solomon 1989, p. 73), the vibrancy of the Fleischer cartoons translate easily to a game world, aided by the fact that the Fleischers "relied heavily on repeated cycles of drawings" (Solomon 1989, p. 74), something that suits the algorithmic nature and cycling of computer animation. Curiously, animation historian Charles Solomon argued that the computer graphics industry "bears more than a passing resemblance to the conventional animation industry during the teens and twenties" (Solomon 1989, p. 299), and this affinity is something the developers of *Cuphead*, StudioMDHR have artfully played off of.

Additionally, *Cuphead* adopts many of the conventions of the theatrical studio cartoon: alliterative titles such as Perilous Piers, Forest Follies, Sugarland Shimmy, or Funhouse Frazzle evoke the classic Merrie Melodies and Silly Symphonies of yesteryear; the screen is artificially, skeumorphically grainy, the images stained and flickering, as if printed on cels; the outlines vibrate; the animated characters pop out of the background; parallax scrolling is very pronounced to suggest depth of field, which is a convention that arose out of Ub Iwerks' invention of the multi-plane camera; colours have a slightly washed-out look; scene transitions use the aesthetics of title cards and intertitles similar to the original cartoons; finally, the jazz score is dynamic and whimsical—with occasional barber shop singing–, just like the kind of sound Walter Lantz would use for theatrical cartoon shorts: "the spirited, up-tempo

scores gave these shorts a propulsive energy that pleased audiences" (Solomon 1989, p. 140), and this self-same energy propels the protagonists, Cuphead and Mugman, forward in the game.

The gameplay itself consists of a fairly standard mix of run-and-gun levels and boss fight segments with multiple stages, similar to many other shooters and platformers. What sets *Cuphead* apart from the competition is its incredible difficulty and the record-breaking 30 boss encounters, each requiring very careful timing to land a hit. Timing also became an essential element of animation as the medium developed, with some directors such as Friz Freleng being particularly noted for "honing the timing in his films down to the individual frame" (Solomon 1989, p. 149). Ultimately, it is hard to say whether the game is more a nostalgic tribute to the look, sound, and nonsensical comic business that was the hallmark of the Fleischer Studios, or to an old arcade game genre. As Chad Moldhauer, one of the lead designers, says, "as kids, we watched old VHS tapes of Popeye, Betty Boop, Silly Symphonies and more—the art style has always stuck with us. . . . Everything that we've done since then has been us just trying to do the memories of those cartoons justice" (Sullivan 2017). It might be the case that this unique amalgamation of expletive-inducing difficulty, charming art style, and high production values could only be made possible by the nostalgic impulse for childhood itself. Still, although *Cuphead* might originate from a sense of personal enchantment within their creators, the game's popularity undoubtedly owes much more to the initial reach of the lively cartoons and difficult games that suffused the childhood culture of earlier eras, joining kids in front of screens in a virtual community of experience.

On the other hand, no game epitomises Boymian reflective nostalgia more clearly than Lucas Pope's critically acclaimed *Papers, Please!* Set in the early 1980s in the fictional Eastern bloc country of Arstotzka, the player is cast as a border guard inspector in East Grestin, who operates a checkpoint to neighbouring Kolechia's half of the city, West Grestin. The player has to process travellers and immigrants as they try to pass the checkpoint, deciding whether they can enter the country based on the validity of their travel documents, and registering that they have the necessary paperwork. The player's job is to earn enough money from processing information to eventually emigrate from the country with their family, which is particularly tough because forged paperwork costs a lot of money, and living costs also rise as the game progresses. By making the player collude with the state machine and offering them an opportunity to rebel against it, *Papers, Please!* prompts its interactors to pose critical questions about governmentality and what life under Communism must have been, pre-empting any rose-tinted nostalgie.

The game's look is decidedly part of the "independent style," with large pixels reminiscent of resolutions for the EGA/VGA era. Pope has told fellow players that "to me, the look of the game is not dependent on the pixels. . . . Pixels are great but they introduce an unintended roughness. . . . But, after a week at GDC, . . . I've decided to just stick with pixels for Papers Please. I guess the look has grown on me" (TIGForums, #322). Actually, the roughness resonates well with the cold, hard facts of doing soul-sucking bureaucratic work for a dictatorship, as well as bringing to mind the look and feel of early 1980s games.

Although not ostensibly about any particular Eastern bloc country, it seems like *Papers, Please!* echoes or plays around with themes that mattered to period Russian culture in particular: "Soviet popular culture of the 1970s and 1980s was permeated by dreams of escape; . . . . It is as if the main psychological drama of Russian characters requires some geopolitical agenda" (Boym 2001, p. 65). The geopolitics of regional conflict in-game and the harsh oppression of Arstotzka faithfully recreates the sentiments that many citizens of former Eastern bloc countries have felt before the fall of the Berlin Wall. By not sentimentalising or trivialising autocratic regimes, *Papers, Please!* focuses on the pain of having to leave home. The game is geared towards a certain kind of ideal player, a "morally reflective player, who factors moral considerations into their decision-making" (Formosa et al. 2016, p. 213), and uses the game mechanics to push these players to either turn against the government or to flee the country. Of course, one can be a loyal civil servant and complete the game by mindlessly carrying out the duties of a border inspector, but many of the possible endings of the game feature the

player-protagonist being fired from the job, being executed, or their family dying due to poverty, all of which are a direct result of governmental abuse of power. *Papers, Please!* thus enacts a collective memory of what it was like to live under a dictatorship.

6. Accuracy's Role in Activating Affect: Recreating Cities for Nostalgic Play in *L. A. Noire* and the *Assassin's Creed* Series

L. A. Noire (2011) couldn't be more different from the shabby, pixellated aesthetics of *Papers, Please!* Set in California's arguably most famous town during the immediate aftermath of World War II, *L. A. Noire* is a police procedural/neo-noir game. The player takes on the role of Cole Phelps, a tough-talking, hardboiled cop on the LAPD force, who deals out justice in a town enamoured by the glitz of Hollywood, fast cars, and the post-war boom of the United States. Seven years in the making, and recognised as the most expensive video game ever made, *L. A. Noire* has stellar production values: it features extensive motion-capturing of recognisable real-world actors to lend convincing facial expressions to in-game characters, not to mention a meticulously accurate recreation of the city as it stood in 1947, based on "upwards of 180,000 images, police records, newspapers and maps" (Spring 2015). In an apt comparison with another game I have touched upon, critics have remarked that ,"much like *Cuphead*, the appeal of *L.A. Noire* lies largely in the game's ability to recreate the look and feel of a vintage era in entertainment" (Green 2017). This painstaking approach highlights one important fact about the special quality of nostalgia in games: their "most prevalent nostalgic mode is less a wish to return to the past, and more a wish to return to a *place*, a place one has never visited and could never visit" (Goetz 2018, p. 61, emphasis in original).

Despite its central theme of crime-fighting and seeing the seedy underbelly of a metropolis, the actual presentation of the game is nostalgic in its restoration of LA to its former glory, its invocation of noir tropes and intermedial references to films like *The Untouchables* or *LA Confidential* (Marcus 1999) Critics have opined that "the permanence of film noir's intrigue might indeed be part of one of the more worrisome aspects of the nostalgia mode of our modern world. . . . The darkest aspect of the contemporary noir resurgence may be its suggestion that past emotions are sentimental trinkets to be memorialized" in popular culture (Sharrett 1998, p. 79). Certainly, *L. A. Noire* seeks to capture the whole array of dreams, hope, deceit, betrayal, anger and longing that are inscribed into the urban fabric of the city, which "is cold, rootless, oppressive, and mean. . . . Mutual deceit, paranoia, and barely restrained violence seem to inflect all social interaction among its residents" (Macek 2002, p. 376).

And yet, games like *L. A. Noire* can trigger actual nostalgia in people who lived in the city at that era. One particular anecdote stands out to me: that of a games journalist showing the game to his father, who grew up LA during the 1940s with a cop for a father. This stern man, dismissive of video games, went slack-jawed, flooded with emotions, when he first glimpsed a building of his childhood that was torn down the early 1960s. The reporter goes on to write:

> We're a family of family stories, and I thought *L.A. Noire* would trigger more of that kind of stuff. In the end, however, the whole experience was actually far more affecting, I think, and far more powerful, too. Dad just trailed off, really, lost in the texture of *L.A. Noire*, surfacing now and then to announce a car or a familiar sight. . . .
>
> So did my dad find *L.A. Noire* accurate? Intoxicatingly so, I suspect: he thought the streets were wider than he remembered, but he liked the way they were fairly dark, just like the underlit boulevards he knew when he was a kid. He liked the white painted boxes in the middle of the roads, where people would queue for the streetcars—even though he said that traffic used to slip around on the streetcar railings a lot more than they did in the game. The little details were the most affecting, though: the tyre-changing bay outside a gas station, or the wooden crate of bottles stacked next to a vending machine. The cop uniforms looked the way his dad's had when he left for work in the morning. The diners had the right kind of window displays and lettering. (Donlan 2017)

Needless to say, few people of Donlan's fathers' age would play video games featuring faithful historical recreations of cities they have lived in, nor is it likely that many games would go to the trouble Rockstar Games and Team Bondi went to evoke the feel, architecture, and generic conventions of Los Angeles as depicted in noir fiction. Still, this story stands as a testament to the power of video games to evoke deep personal memories of ages gone by.

As I hope to have demonstrated, "employing the nostalgic conventions of films of the period like their 'breezy' tone, cinematic games explore ... situations unusual to gaming. Furthermore, the use of Hollywood tropes and conventions in the video game format help broaden the game medium by supporting new subject matter and new genres" (Jankowich 2008, p. 126). Film noir is one of those newly remediated genres, but swashbuckling movies are perhaps even more fitting subjects for nostalgic play. The *Assassin's Creed* series of video games are a highly acclaimed set of action-adventures, partially set in the past and partially in an alternative present. The hero of the initial games is Desmond Miles, a New York City bartender who is a direct descendant of a long line of fabled Assassins, a historical guild of death-dealers who have fought the Templars. In the universe of the game, the Assassins and Templars have lived past the time of the Crusades, infiltrating the political power structures of every historical period, waging a secret war between the two factions for the control of the mythical artefacts known as Pieces of Eden. Templars are looking for these objects in order to enslave humankind and begin ruling the world, while Assassins are doing everything within their means to stop them. At the start of the eponymous first game, Desmond is captured by a Templar organisation, and is forced to relive the memories of his Assassin ancestors in the hope that the new information will bring the Templars closer to their goal.

In order to relive memories, Abstergo invented a machine, the Animus, which can extract genetic memories from the mind and body of its users. In terms of gameplay, it means that present-day Desmond's ancestors (and thus the player) gets to carry out assassinations of historic personages. But the game's greatest allure is watching our hero perform parkour moves and death-defying acrobatic feats that are impossible in real life, and that have more in common with Hollywood stunts than the laws of physics and physiology. Then again, because Desmond is in a bona fide computer simulation, physics is hardly a concern.

The Animus' simulations also allow the game to switch between the present day and past historical eras to tell the story. *Assassin's Creed* explores the Middle East at the time of the Crusades, *Assassin's Creed II* is set in Renaissance Firenze, *Assassin's Creed III* plays out during the American Revolutionary War, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* takes place during the Golden Age of Piracy, *Rogue* follows the events of the Seven Years' War, *Unity* trembles underneath the weighty events of the French Revolution, *Syndicate* is dedicated to depicting London at the height of the Victorian era, whereas *Origins* takes the player back to Ptolemaic Egypt, and the latest instalment, *Odyssey* to Homer's Greece. As the appearance of new titles every few years suggest, the series is wildly popular, mostly because of their immersive and deeply explorable gameworlds, which are faithful recreations of the feel and look of cities of the past. *Unity*'s iconic Paris buildings, for example, are built on a 1:1 scale, and as Nicolas Guerin explains,

> Over the course of three months ... he looked at more than 150 maps of the city, which provided information on the layout of Paris at the time, and how it changed over the years. ... Paris is incredibly dense, with cramped streets and tightly-packed buildings, which conflicted somewhat with *Assassin's Creed*'s free-roaming movement. So in order to make Paris more of a playground, the team used a process called "radial scale" to change its layout. It's a simple concept: in the center of the city it's essentially a one-to-one recreation, but the further you move from Paris' core, the more spread out things get. Key landmarks are all in the right place so that it still looks and feels like Paris, but the added space means things won't feel cramped while you run across the city's rooftops. (Webster 2014)

The historical recreations of the Assassin's Creed series strive for verisimilitude, but in order to make the experience playable, they are never fully accurate: they are "allegories of space"

(Aarseth 2007) designed to accommodate the main mechanics of the game. In addition, level designers have strayed from full historical accuracy in order to fit with existing player expectations, such as including the by-then destroyed Bastille in the game, as well as adding the famous spires to the Notre Dame, that were not yet built at the time of *Unity*. So in that respect, despite claims to the contrary, the game-world is more of "a romantic environment derived distantly from the historical reality" (Jankowich 2008, p. 132), restoring a nostalgic version of past cities as they are in the head of the players, not as in the history books. As Jankowich notes, action-adventure games like *Prince of Persia* find their filmic counterparts in "the realm of historical adventure, where physical skill is linked to heroism, rather than film noir, where cynical intelligence is frequently necessary for success" (ibid). This is reflected in the contrast between the point-and-click style of adventuring in *L.A. Noire*, and the stealthy, acrobatic swordplay of the *Assassin's Creed* series, the latter of which "emphasizes the ability of a human body that is at the fore in combat and in movement throughout the environment of the game" (Jankowich 2008, p. 133). Generic conventions are also apprehensible in how historical adventure films "frequently emphasize vertical movement, and characters are often shown moving quickly up walls and jumping down from heights" (Jankowich 2008, pp. 134–35). In fact, a significant portion of gameplay consists of the Assassin player scaling tall buildings in order to see the surrounding landscape. And one of the most iconic moves that Desmond Miles' historical alter-egos can perform is the so-called Leap of Faith, in which the player can escape their rooftop chasers by jumping off the top of these buildings into conveniently placed haybales. Thus, the *Assassin's Creed* games also evoke past media conventions of the 1930s and 1940s adventure movies to ground the historical backdrop of their games in a filmic language that the players find familiar and feel nostalgic for.

What is more, we also have to account for the fact that, like *L.A. Noire*'s triggering of nostalgia for the son of a cop in the 1940s, the *Assassin's Creed* games also have a non-Western target group, for whom seeing the Holy City of al-Quds or Dimashq restored to their former glory is heart-warming: "For a Middle-Easterner, wandering through the original *Assassin's Creed* game world might be purely driven by nostalgia, in the hope of identifying with the elements of the past. . . . The attention to detail . . . brings nostalgic feelings especially for Maha and Magy, who are from Saudi Arabia and Egypt, respectively and have been away from home. . . . The game-play experience was a transportation to their homeland. Every corner, every shadow, every detail in the environment carried with it many nostalgic feelings" (Seif El-Nasr et al. 2008, pp. 1, 4, 13). Just as Desmond Miles relives the memories of their ancestors, the Middle-Eastern players of *Assassin's Creed* experience historical cities of the Middle East as nostalgic resources.

Ubisoft's take on history is by definition restorative in the sense that they aim at historical verisimilitude and a filmic reality effect. At the same time, their attention to detail and nostalgic evocations of the past are also self-congratulatory in their references to the cinematic style that is associated with classical Hollywood swashbucklers and historical films. As Thomas Leitch astutely observes, "Hollywood's disinclination to celebrate any history but its own defines and markets Hollywood history as a series of aesthetic and technological triumphs" (Leitch 2018); in like manner, the frame narrative of Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed* series, with the inclusion of Abstergo Industry's subsidiary Abstergo Entertainment, an in-game Montreal company, celebrates at once the invention of the Animus console and Ubisoft's triumph of making video game history by recreating real-world history.

Video games serve as important mediators of cultural history, for a number of reasons. They "can represent the past as it was, or as it never was, but they can also represent how players wish to remember it, revisiting or revising the past to make players yearn for it, and they can offer players the possibility of not only *being* there but of *doing* things there–of *playing the past*" (Whalen and Taylor 2008, p. 27). Because they create virtual worlds, they can be used to recreate cities of the past. Because the computer is a metamedium, they can reproduce the audiovisual aesthetics of any period of art. Because they can accommodate a narrative structure, they can simulate all known genres of fiction, whether filmic or literary, popular or highbrow. Finally, because they depend upon player interaction with the game environment, the agency experienced in gameworlds can support power fantasies or critical

examinations of the self-same power. Above all, they generate communities of consumers who share a slice of their life histories among them, and they also generate profits that fuel the development of new, more sophisticated experiences. And if the current trends of videogaming are indicative of a direction that playing with the past is headed towards, we will see more and more faithful recreations of the past, but also more and more reflective and critical engagements with that past, utilising nostalgia to create emotional bonds with virtual worlds that span across generations, forming a unique cultural history for computer games, accessible only through this medium.

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There's No Nostalgia Like Hollywood Nostalgia

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Abstract: This essay argues that the complexities of the nostalgic impulse in Hollywood cinema are inadequately described by Svetlana Boym's particular description of Hollywood as "both induc[ing] nostalgia and offer[ing] a tranquilizer" and her highly influential general distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia. Instead, it contends that Hollywood departs in important ways from the models of both the restorative nostalgia established by the heritage cinema and Great Britain and the reflective nostalgia commonly found in American literature. Using a wide range of examples from American cinema, American literature, and American culture, it considers the reasons why nostalgia occupies a different place and seeks different kinds of expressions in American culture than it does in other national cultures, examines the leading Hollywood genres in which restorative nostalgia appears and the distinctive ways those genres inflect it, and concludes by urging a closer analysis of the more complex, multi-laminated nostalgia Hollywood films offer as an alternative to Boym's highly influential categorical dichotomy.

Keywords: American literature; heritage cinema; Hollywood; reflective nostalgia; restorative nostalgia

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Hollywood nostalgia deserves more respect. According to Svetlana Boym, the leading contemporary theorist of nostalgia: "Popular culture made in Hollywood, the vessel for national myths that America exports abroad, both induces nostalgia and offers a tranquilizer; instead of disquieting ambivalence and paradoxical dialectic of past, present, and future, it provides a total restoration of extinct creatures and a conflict resolution" (Boym 2001, p. 33). This dismissive characterization is rooted in Boym's highly influential discussion of nostalgia, which she defines as "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy. Nostalgic love can only survive in a long-distance relationship. A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure or a superimposition of two images—of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life" (Boym 2001, pp. xiii–xiv). Boym distinguishes between two types of nostalgia:

> Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. The first category of nostalgics do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe that their project is about truth. This kind of nostalgia characterizes national and nationalist revivals all over the world, which engage in the antimodern myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths and, occasionally, through swapping conspiracy theories. Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time. (Boym 2001, p. 41)

Considering Hollywood nostalgia in the broader context of American cultural nostalgia challenges Boym's dismissal of Hollywood nostalgia, reveals illuminating contrasts between the nostalgia of

American cinema and the nostalgia of American literature, and complicates the distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia in rewarding ways.

To speak of American cultural nostalgia already implies, as Boym acknowledges, that different national cultures and their cinemas are shaped by very different kinds of nostalgia. The most frequently discussed of these nostalgic cinemas, the so-called heritage cinema of Great Britain, began in the 1980s with movies like *Chariots of Fire* (1981) and *A Room with a View* (1985) that expressed what Cairns Craig called "the crisis of identity which England passed through during the Thatcher years" through sustained images of "film as conspicuous consumption, the country houses, the paneled interiors, the clothes which have provided a good business for New York fashion houses selling English country style to rich Americans" (Craig 2001, p. 3). The Britain of heritage films was rich, powerful, and untroubled, its citizens uniformly clean-cut, well-dressed, and good-looking, and the problems that drove their stories largely limited to private questions of morality, romance, or sexual identity with cautiously nationalistic overtones. Heritage films employed a "museum aesthetic" (Vincendeau 2001, p. xviii) combining exterior shots of spacious estates and stately homes with interiors marked by close attention to historically accurate furnishings, fashions, and music. The effect was to stage often intense interpersonal psychological and social conflicts against a placidly idealized Britain of day-before-yesteryear in which contemporary audiences could find comfort and refuge from the shocks and disappointments of the present.

An important aspect of the heritage aesthetic was its new focus on television miniseries set in the past, often, though not always, based on classic English novels, and decorated with a finicky attention to visual and auditory detail quite new to the small screen. This aesthetic made British heritage cinema unusually distinctive. France, for example, has no comparable tradition of movies and television programs celebrating an idealized historical past. Films like Jean Renoir's *La Marseillaise* (1938) are relatively rare, and no discernible pattern or general attitude toward the nation's past emerges from the Gérard Depardieu department of history, which includes *Le dernier métro* (1980), *Le retour de Martin Guerre* (1982), *Danton* (1983), *Camille Claudel* (1988), *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1990), *Tous les matins du monde* (1991), *Colonel Chabert* (1994), and the 1998 miniseries *Le Comte de Monte Cristo.* Germany has a tradition of *Heimat* ("homeland") cinema, but although the English word "nostalgia" represents Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer's attempt in 1688 to translate the German word *Heimweh,* Eckart Voigts-Virchow has shown that "the term *Heimat* has different shades of meaning to the term 'heritage' in England" (Voigts-Virchow 2007, p. 126). To these different flavors of nostalgia, Primož Krašovec has added Yugonostalgia. Yugonostalgia, the remnants that survive "the process of depoliticization of the collective memory of socialism [. . .] is a form of popular memory that has been washed clean of all traces of political demands for social equality, workers' participation in the production process, and internationalism, as well as [. . .] the antifascism, anti-imperialism, and anti-chauvinism that constituted the core of the revolutionary politics of socialism" (Krašovec 2011). Looking further east, Japanese cinema has a long and honorable tradition of *jidai-geki,* films about government officials and samurai warriors who ply their trades during their country's Edo period, as opposed to the *gendai-geki* set in modern Japan. But no one would call *Rashomon* (1950) or *Gate of Hell* (1953) a heritage film, for the past they present as an alternative to the contemporary reality of postwar Japan is just as troubled, and in its way just as brutal, as the world of *Ikiru* (1952) or *Tokyo Story* (1953). The worlds of the *Heimat* film and the *jidai-geki* may be sources of nostalgia and national pride, but like French historical films, they do not offer visually idealized refuges of the same sort that British cinema finds in Jane Austen or *Brideshead Revisited* (1981).

The real outlier among national cinemas is that of the United States, which for all the glories of Hollywood has never developed anything remotely comparable to heritage cinema. Heritage cinema has never taken root in the United States because so many factors combine to make it difficult for Americans—that is, for the purposes of this essay, citizens of the United States—to wax equally nostalgic over their own nation's history, particularly as it is presented in the movies. Heritage cinema's restorative nostalgia, which dreams ardently of an idealized home in an idealized past, has no clear

counterpart in American culture, which "didn't succumb to the nostalgic vice until the American Civil War" (Boym 2001, p. 6). Boym cites letter-perfect Civil War enactments and the CGI dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* (1993) as characteristically American examples of restorative nostalgia that propose "a heroic American national identity" (Boym 2001, p. 34). But attempts to invoke this national identity through American nostalgia are complicated by several factors.

For one thing, the unofficial culture of the United States is almost obsessively future-oriented, not past-oriented. Americans are famous for living in the present and dreaming of the future rather than the past. They are less rooted in their extended families than the English, or Europeans generally. They are more likely to move away from their birthplaces, and when they do move, they can move much further away without leaving their country. Americans are much less focused, less likely to define themselves, in terms of where they came from than in terms of where they see themselves going. Any nostalgic longing for the past has a strictly limited place in such a resolutely future-oriented world.

This is true not only for Americans as individuals but for American culture in general. When they are not celebrating Independence Day on the Fourth of July—or, more recently and revealingly, on the first Monday in July, a holiday of convenience whose most notable trademark is the display of fireworks, an entertainment form notable for its glorification of evanescent spectacle—citizens of the United States display remarkably little investment in their shared country's past. The continuing debates over the propriety of monuments to the heroes of the Confederacy during the Civil War dramatize the extent to which Americans define themselves in terms of local or regional rather than national ties.

Nor does American history lend itself readily to restorative nostalgia. The epochal events prominently displayed in the textbooks through which American schoolchildren learn their nation's history are largely disruptive and destructive. When Abraham Lincoln announced in the Gettysburg Address that the strife-torn United States had originally been "conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" (Lincoln 1989, p. 536), he was rooting the national project in philosophical ideals Americans have felt obliged to enact in the present instead of celebrating their currency in the past, where they would be much more likely to regard them critically or reflectively.

America lacks the primary motive behind Britain's restorative nostalgia because although the United States may have given up the Panama Canal, it has not yet lost an empire. The Thatcherite cultural conservatism behind British heritage cinema was a reaction to the fear that the United Kingdom's greatest days might have been behind it. Until very recently, it has been hard to get a critical mass of citizens of the United States to take the analogous proposition about their own country seriously. Most American Presidents have been widely identified as leaders of the free world. Flush with undiminished power, Americans have no need to take refuge in an idealized past.

Even so, America has generated a widely acknowledged brand of nostalgia-based not so much of "the restoration of origins" Boym identifies as one of the "two main narrative plots" of restorative nostalgia but on the other plot: "the conspiracy theory, characteristic of the most extreme cases of contemporary nationalism fed on right-wing popular culture," that proposes "a Manichean battle of good and evil and the inevitable scapegoating of the mythical enemy" (Boym 2001, p. 43). This myth of American supremacy, at once self-congratulatory and paranoid, has most recently been marketed by Donald Trump. In capitalizing on and amplifying a nostalgic undercurrent long dormant in the American public, Trump has ushered in a new era of restorative nostalgia. Under the revealing slogan Make America Great Again, he has campaigned and governed on the basis of an assumption that the United States is in decline and, as he told the Republican National Convention in accepting the party's Presidential nomination in July 2016, "I alone can fix it." Trump's presidency has focused on rolling back federal regulations and protections, cutting taxes and government programs, withdrawing from foreign treaties, squeezing long-standing allies for more advantageous trade deals, promising to build an impermeable wall on the border between the United States and Mexico, appointing conservative federal judges and a remarkable number of Cabinet secretaries openly hostile to the mandates of the departments they have been chosen to head, defunding and suppressing initiatives designed to reduce unwanted pregnancies and climate change, and demonizing dissenters and opponents in an

endless series of vituperative ad hominem tweets, all in the name of restoring a greatness America has presumably lost.

Trump's programs and policies are fueled by an unmistakably restorative nostalgia for an America that kept immigrants at bay, shunned political correctness and self-anointed East Coast elites, condemned political extremists on the left but not the right, prized individual initiative above paternalistic collective action, and promoted the promise of untrammeled material success to everyone lucky enough to grab the brass ring. Trump's brand of MAGA nostalgia differs from heritage nostalgia not in being less restorative but in being more actively restorative. The idealized past the BBC dreams of finds its counterpart in an idealized American past, floating free of any limiting identification with a particular time or place, for whose return millions of Americans do not simply long but ardently work and pray.

The emergence of MAGA should have come as no great surprise, for despite its self-avowed progressivism and its founding devotion to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—the last of these already an aspirational goal rather than a retrospective ideal—the United States has long found room within its culture for restorative nostalgia. But celebrations of this brand of nostalgia have rarely entered its literature because so many of these celebrations focus on artifacts rather than narratives. In accord with Boym's observation that restorative nostalgia "gravitates toward collective pictorial symbols and oral culture" (Boym 2001, p. 49), American calls to restorative nostalgia are less closely associated with stories about America that with the icons, artifacts, and rituals revealingly labeled *Americana*, a term so common that a Google search for it reveals 300 million hits, though none at all for "Englishana" or "Britishana." Giovanni Russonello roots the label for the late-twentieth-century music he discusses as "Americana" in an earlier history represented by "the comforting, middle-class ephemera at your average antique store—things like needle-pointed pillows, Civil War daguerreotypes, and engraved silverware sets" (Russonello 2013). This brand of Americana is familiar from American television series like *The Waltons*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, *Happy Days*, and *That '70s Show*.

Contemporary expressions of American nostalgia by American politicians, editorialists, and citizens are remote from these incarnations, which they rarely invoke. What is even more remarkable, however, is the estrangement of Hollywood nostalgia from both the MAGA restorative nostalgia so stridently proclaimed by nativist politicians and the severely critical reflective nostalgia of Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*. This estrangement is particularly striking in view of the notorious economic conservatism of the American film industry, which has expressed itself most recently in a wholesale commitment to retro superhero franchises and other sequels and remakes.

There are several reasons why Boym's anodyne portrayal of Hollywood nostalgia as restorative requires complication, and why Hollywood nostalgia, when it does appear, is so distinctive. The first generation of Hollywood moguls were European émigrés who lacked any sense of nostalgia for a racially or ethnically pure United States, and when these moguls retired or died, they were replaced by liberals whose own nostalgia is quite differently oriented from either the BBC or MAGA. The capital-intensiveness of Hollywood filmmaking makes studios and bankers reluctant to gamble on projects they perceive as taking sides and preemptively alienating large portions of the audience. In the immortal injunction variously attributed to Samuel Goldwyn, Ernest Hemingway, Moss Hart, and Humphrey Bogart: "When you want to send a message, use Western Union." Hollywood celebrations of history tend to focus on the history of the American film industry itself, a tendency abundantly on display during annual broadcasts of the Academy Awards ceremonies. This unusually single-minded focus tends to eclipse any traces of reflective nostalgia it finds in American culture or American literature. MAGA nostalgia finds a more ready home in popular music that evokes a favored earlier time either through its own conventions (as in country and western song and the blues) or through the conventions of its return as beloved oldies.

The scarcity of MAGA nostalgia in Hollywood is illuminated by the production history of one film that traffics openly in this brand of nostalgia: *Gabriel Over the White House*, which Gregory La Cava

directed in 1933 from a screenplay by Carey Wilson based on *Rinehard*, a novel by Canadian writer T.F. Tweed. The film focuses on Jud Hammond (Walter Huston), a do-nothing, don't-rock-the-boat politician who has been elected President. Following a near-fatal car accident and a moment of possibly divine intervention, Hammond awakens from his coma suddenly determined to rescue his country from "big-business lackeys." He purges his cabinet, responds to his impeachment by declaring martial law, suspends civil rights, revokes the Constitution, uses demonstrations of military force to blackmail world powers into disarming, and orders the execution of malefactors he personally identifies as "enemies of the people" before he suffers a fatal stroke, again of possibly divine provenance, and is eulogized as one of the greatest American Presidents.

The film, produced by Walter Wanger for Cosmopolitan Pictures, whose head, reactionary newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst, had played an important role in shaping its screenplay, was distributed by MGM. As his biographer Charles Higham recounts, however, studio chief Louis B. Mayer, who had not been consulted during its development, "was appalled when he saw the picture's rough cut" (Higham 1993, p. 196). Realizing that it was a piece of agitprop designed to criticize President Herbert Hoover as timid and ineffective in combatting the ills of the Great Depression and encourage incoming President Franklin D. Roosevelt to assume unilateral powers, he "intervened seriously for the first time over [Irving] Thalberg in the cutting of the picture" (Higham 1993, p. 196). Although contemporaneous reviewers equated Hammond with Mussolini and saw the film as an advance advertisement for home-grown Fascism, *Gabriel Over the White House* was a popular success—but a success that Mayer was so eager to avoid repeating that after buying the rights to *It Can't Happen Here*, Sinclair Lewis's 1935 parable of local resistance to an American Fascist President, before the bestselling novel's publication, he was intimidated by the monitory response of Hollywood censor Joseph I. Breen and the possible reactions of MGM's profitable foreign markets. "Mayer cannot have forgotten *Gabriel Over the White House*; he must have seen the anti-Hooverish elements in even a story summary," notes Higham. "Had he read the novel itself [. . .] he would certainly never have embarked on the picture at all" (Higham 1993, p. 250). Despite Lewis's vigorous public protests, *It Can't Happen Here* never went before the cameras. Like *Gabriel over the White House*, it is best remembered as a cautionary example of Hollywood's avoidance of partisan politics.

Apart from the studios' unwillingness to offend large portions of the American audience by releasing more recent MAGA adaptations, Hollywood adaptations of American literature rarely display restorative nostalgia because American literature itself has long shunned restorative nostalgia. Theorists of American literature have frequently contrasted the American Renaissance of the mid-nineteenth century with contemporaneous Victorian literature. Novelists like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville play a less dominant role in the American Renaissance than their English counterparts, Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, the Brontë sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot, because so many writers of the American Renaissance were poets or essayists like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, James Russell Lowell, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Although Thackeray's view of the Napoleonic Wars, Dickens's of the Poor Laws, and Eliot's of the Reform Bill of 1832 are quite as jaundiced as Hawthorne's view of the Salem Witch Trials or Harriet Beecher Stowe's view of slavery, the social criticism of the great Victorian novelists from Dickens to Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, and Thomas Hardy is made more palatable by the satiric energy of Dickens and Thackeray and the detailed, integrative, largely sympathetic portraits of Victorian society in Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, Eliot's *Middlemarch*, and Trollope's *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. When American writers of the period turn to the shorter forms of fiction, they produce not Dickens's nostalgic stories "A Christmas Carol," "The Chimes," and "The Cricket on the Hearth," but the gothic horror tales of Edgar Allan Poe.

The leading American novelists who follow the American Renaissance and who might have been expected to provide material for restorative Hollywood nostalgia adopt instead a more critically reflective nostalgia. *Washington Square*, the best-known of Henry James's forays into the historical past, is sharply critical of the mores of the early nineteenth century. So is Edith Wharton's *The Age*

of Innocence, which looks back on the later nineteenth century with an equally cold eye fifty years after the fact. Mark Twain's boyhood idyll *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* views growing up in the Midwest of the early nineteenth century through the lens of restorative nostalgia, but its more ambitious sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, adopts a much more critically reflective nostalgia in its faux-naïve exposé of the corrosive effects of slavery. Whatever nostalgia appears in *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane's 1895 account of an episode from the American Civil War, is reflective rather than restorative. The same is true of the World War I fiction of Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and John Dos Passos. *The Great Gatsby* has so often been filmed as an exercise in period nostalgia that it can be easy to forget that it is not itself a period piece but a sharply, if compassionately, observed portrait of a 1925 American present notable for its unblinking critique of the American dream of progress through individual self-actualization; like the novels F. Scott Fitzgerald revealingly titled *This Side of Paradise*, *The Beautiful and Damned*, *Tender Is the Night*, and *The Last Tycoon*, its primary mode is elegiac rather than nostalgic—or, as Boym would say, a mode of reflective rather than restorative nostalgia. And Faulkner, whose anatomy of the catastrophic legacy of racial injustice on Mississippi's Yoknapatawpha County rises to an obsession in novels like *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Go Down, Moses*, shows that a fixation on the American past does not guarantee anything like restorative nostalgia. Nor does this highly critical attitude toward the past undergo any substantial change in recent novelists from Thomas Pynchon to Philip Roth to Don DeLillo, all of whose excursions into American history could be described as curdled, sometimes withering exercises in reflective nostalgia. Apart from James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales about the relations between British American settlers and Native Americans in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the most distinctive and distinguished American novelists have been not only non-nostalgic but anti-nostalgic. The great American novels from *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Moby-Dick* to *The Plot Against America* and *Underworld* have refused the cultural conservatism of their English counterparts and so left open few possibilities for restorative nostalgia in Hollywood adaptations—unless, like *The Great Gatsby*, they are pressed into service as the basis for period costume dramas.

American literature may be employed as a site of restorative nostalgia in the same ways that any archive can be pressed into similar service, but that is not its own characteristic mode: when writers like Hawthorne and Faulkner and Roth plumb the American past, it is not to celebrate it but to mine it for previsions of contemporary social and cultural problems. If "nostalgia is a psychological mechanism that serves a motivational regulatory function by counteracting avoidance motivation and facilitating approach motivation" (Routledge 2015, p. 117), American literature, in general, facilitates approach motivation only in the most implicit, indirect, highly critical ways. So it is not surprising to find that Hollywood nostalgia, which in Clay Routledge's terms "affirms feelings of belongingness" (Routledge 2015, p. 54), is distinct from both the restorative nostalgia of British heritage cinema and the critically reflective nostalgia of American literature.

For all its enduring infatuation with British literature in general and the Victorian novel in particular as sites of nostalgia, cultural capital, and elitist cachet, Hollywood has had little use for American literature. When it has adapted American literary classics, the results have often been non-nostalgic, even anti-nostalgic. Roland Joffé's *The Scarlet Letter* (1995) includes Demi Moore, Gary Oldman, Robert Duvall, an Indian attack, a hot tub, and a happy ending. The impetus behind Joffé's adaptation, whose departures from Hawthorne's novel Moore assured interviewers could safely be ignored because "it had been a very long time since people had read it" (Rubenstein 2017), was not a painstakingly recreated simulacrum of an idealized historical past but a determined, albeit anachronistic, attempt to improve that past by conferring on Hawthorne's story the enlightened attitudes of the contemporary audience's own beliefs about sex, love, adultery, social opprobrium, and true romance, an attempt, very typical of Hollywood, that ended up fetishizing the present rather than the past.

A further look into Hollywood history reveals not so much a blanket dismissal of classic American novels as a highly discriminating selection of them and a strikingly consistent treatment of the properties that are actually selected. American regionalists like Sarah Orne Jewett, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor are rarely adapted to the screen. Instead, New England is represented by *The Scarlet Letter* and *Peyton Place* and the American South by *The Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind*. Edith Wharton's most notable exercises in nostalgia, the four novella-length prequels to *The Age of Innocence* that she collected in the 1924 volume *Old New York*, have been largely neglected by Hollywood, although the longest of them, "The Old Maid," was filmed as a period vehicle for Bette Davis in 1939, just as *The Age of Innocence* itself has been adapted three times, most recently and memorably by Martin Scorsese in 1993. Perhaps the most striking rejection of a truly nostalgic American author is Hollywood's neglect of the novelist Willa Cather, whose sensitive, monumental Great Plains trilogy—*O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and *My Ántonia* (1918)—went unfilmed until 1991. Indeed the only two films before 1977 based on Cather's work both adapted *A Lost Lady*, a romance that is the least historically resonant of her major novels, and every one of the ten Cather adaptations from 1977 to the present has been either a short film or a television original.

Cather has fared better on the small screen than the big screen not because her novels are small-scaled themselves but because, like their British heritage counterparts, they use largely domestic settings to focus potentially large-scale cultural conflicts. They can be filmed on a limited budget on Nebraska locations, and their emphasis on strong women struggling to find themselves and their vocations makes them a natural for the Hallmark Channel and the Public Television Network alongside adaptations of Edna Ferber, the younger, Book-of-the-Month Club version of Cather. More important, successful television adaptations emphasize their worlds over their stories. Just as TV series from *I Love Lucy* to *The Simpsons* allow loyal audiences to enjoy their time with familiar characters by putting them every week into new situations that barely take them out of their comfort zone, television adaptations, whether they are miniseries or features, offer one more chance to spend quality time with characters they have already grown to love. Television episodes can be as densely plotted as feature films, but in situation comedies like *All in the Family* or dramas like *Mission: Impossible*, the goal of each episode is not to reach a new ending, but to return to the world as it was at the beginning of the episode. Sarah Cardwell contends that television "interacts with our present lives in a way that film does not. The transmission [. . .] of each text is perceived as being 'present,' due to its locus in television's continuous flow. Added to this, our interpretation of the tenseless television image is that it is of the present tense" (Cardwell 2002, p. 87). Despite these insistent tokens of presentness, television, at least until the recent rise of cable miniseries like *The Sopranos, The Wire*, and *Homeland*, has been a nostalgic medium whose characters typically yearn to preserve their world rather than change it.

Restorative nostalgia finds a readier welcome on television because its plots are less threatening, more predictable, more formulaic, and more ritualistic, like the stories parents tell their children at bedtime. Even though most viewers (the word is significant) think of cinema as a more visually oriented medium than television, television is particularly well suited to supplying visuals in a style their audience has already been trained to expect, and it is no coincidence that the great age of the British heritage adaptation was largely driven by television miniseries. More generally, because restorative nostalgia expresses its longing for the past by fixing on particular places and spaces—scenes, moments, situations, and tableaux it freezes and idealizes—rather than on the stories that complicate and disrupt these treasured moments, its natural vehicles are visual rather than narrative. The most characteristically nostalgic stories fall into two categories. The first is tales that have become so familiar that they can be fondly remembered *as stories*, whether the audience that greets their repetition with delight is children hearing the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears one more time or the adult fans watching *Evil Dead II* (1987) one more time. Even though all these audiences know exactly what is going to happen, that knowledge is itself a condition of their pleasure that frees them to savor every moment of the story, confident that it will end by arriving at its accustomed destination. The second kind of stories subject to nostalgia is those that showcase the largest possible

number of privileged moments, lingering over them and inflating them before reluctantly revealing the less readily sentimentalized social forces that lead away from them. Apart from Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!*, restorative nostalgia is not a particularly powerful force in the American theater. No one in the audience pines to return to the landscapes of *The Hairy Ape* or *The Emperor Jones* or *The Glass Menagerie* or *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The one great exception is the American musical theater, which systematically isolates moments of privileged emotional intensity from the rest of the story and then heightens them by embedding them in songs that will linger in the audience's memory long after the final curtain. Broadway musicals that follow a line of descent from Rodgers and Hammerstein to *Jersey Boys* and *Mamma Mia* are repeatedly staged in what are aptly called revivals.

The focus of communal nostalgia in the United States has been visual rather than narrative, spatial rather than temporal, and the American narratives most likely to invite a nostalgic response are those whose stories are ad hoc and ritualistic rather than end-oriented and definitive. Americana is typically envisioned in terms of places like Disneyland that foster or encourage idealized or sentimental dreams and memories rather than journeys into or within the spaces it envisions. The British, of course, have Austenland, incarnated both cinematically in an American movie and virtually in the online Republic of Pemberley, a discursive space revealingly named after a fictional place. Dickensland was the subject of an appreciative book by J.A. Nicklin over a century ago (Nicklin 2012). One factor that helps explains Hollywood's relative neglect of the great American novels, in fact, is how few American authors could reasonably spawn their own lands. It is easy to envision Poeland but hard to imagine Hawthorneland or Melvilleland or Henry Jamesland or Flannery O'Connorland. And although it might be argued that Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, is Faulknerland, it is unlikely that spending time in that actual location would give readers anything like the same subjectively supercharged experience they treasure in reading Faulkner's novels.

Aristotle ruled that plots include a beginning, a middle, and an end that confer their definitive shape. But nostalgic audiences clearly treasure beginnings, endure middles mostly as exercises in deferred gratification, and prefer endings that close the circle by returning to the beginning rather than confirming the brave new world of an Aristotelian ending. If the locus of American nostalgia is indeed visual artifacts rather than stories, then the most nostalgic stories, and the most nostalgic moments in these stories, are those that are organized or crystallized around artifacts, objects endowed with frankly magical powers or objects whose psychological or spiritual magic depends on the rich web of associations the stories build up around them.

Hollywood's disinclination to celebrate any history but its own defines and markets Hollywood history as a series of aesthetic and technological triumphs interspersed with the inevitable losses like those commemorated in the Academy Awards ceremony's annual necrology. But restorative nostalgia still appears in the American cinema, though typically with a distinctive twist. It appears most obviously in musicals, whose programmatic structural distinction between the timeless song-and-dance numbers that convey the characters' deepest emotions, desires, hopes, and fears and the timebound continuity that motivates and separates these numbers makes the genre a natural for restorative nostalgia. But this tendency does not appear in nearly as many musicals as one might think. Film adaptations of the pioneering Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II musical *Show Boat*, like Broadway revivals of the show, are increasingly exercises in restorative nostalgia, but the more reflective nostalgia of the original show comes through in every one. The early twentieth-century revue musicals associated with Florenz Ziegfeld and George and Ira Gershwin are not especially nostalgic. With the exception of *A Connecticut Yankee*, neither are the musicals Richard Rodgers wrote with Lorenz Hart. Not until Hammerstein replaces Hart as Rodgers's collaborator does the team turn to nostalgic musicals like *Oklahoma! Carousel*, and *The Sound of Music* and their film adaptations. This tropism toward restorative nostalgia crests in the Hollywood musicals that recycle familiar songbooks instead of emphasizing new music—*Night and Day* (1946), *Till the Clouds Roll By* (1946), *The Jolson Story* (1946), *Three Little Words* (1950), *An American in Paris* (1951), *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), *The Band Wagon* (1953), *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954), *The Benny Goodman Story* (1956)—and

persists in movie musicals from *Guys and Dolls* (1955) to *Grease* (1978), quasi-musicals like *American Graffiti* (1973), and revivals, readaptations, and remakes onstage and onscreen.

Restorative nostalgia also appears in Westerns, though again not where one might expect. The Western as a genre gravitates toward valedictory, reflective nostalgia rather than restorative nostalgia: it is not aimed at audiences who wish they were battling Indians and searching for signs of drinking water on the prairie. Indeed, as Jane Tompkins has observed, the Native Americans who hover on the fringes of most Westerns function "as props, bits of local color, textural effects. [. . .] Indians are repressed in Westerns—there but not there—in the same way women are" (Tompkins 1992, pp. 8, 9). The golden age of the Hollywood Western during the 1950s, when widescreen and Technicolor carried the potential to turn the most routine Western into a visual spectacle, is marked by an increasing focus on the traumas of conquest, miscegenation, and slavery in films like *Broken Arrow* (1950), *Shane* (1953), *The Searchers* (1956), and *Two Rode Together* (1961) before reaching an anti-nostalgic apotheosis in *Little Big Man* (1970). Of more recent Westerns, *The Shootist* (1976) evinces nostalgia for the days of John Wayne's movie-created youth, stirringly excerpted in the film's opening sequence; *Silverado* (1985) nostalgia not for the old West, but for old Westerns; and *Unforgiven* (1992) an unblinking summation of the costs of waxing nostalgic about the code of the West. The predominant mode of Westerns from *The Vanishing American* (1925) to *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962) is elegiacally reflective nostalgia rather than restorative nostalgia; if the reverse were true, they would all join *Dances with Wolves* (1990) in urging a return to the days when Native American culture flourished.

Restorative nostalgia appears in movies about movies, though again its provenance and valence are unexpectedly complicated. Unlike *The Artist* (2011), which is nostalgic for the days of silent films, *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) is nostalgic for the transitional period to the talkies, but not for the silents, which it considers primitive and dramatically limited in expressiveness. *Sherlock Jr.*, perhaps the finest movie ever made about the movies, is state-of-the-1924-art rather than nostalgic; *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952) and *Two Weeks in Another Town* (1962) are gimlet-eyed rather than nostalgic; and Norma Desmond's genuine, deep-seated, and unbridled nostalgia for silent movies in *Sunset Blvd.* (1950) is ultimately pathological and murderous.

Restorative nostalgia appears as well in children's movies—or, more accurately, in the kinds of family movies represented by *Little Women* (1933, 1949, 1994, 2018), *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Johnny Tremain* (1957), and innumerable Disney films from *Treasure Island* (1950) to *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier* (1955). The past about which these films invite younger audiences to wax nostalgic is not remembered but constructed by films whose aim is as much educational, in Disney's own particular manner, as nostalgic. Further from Disney, deeper into the world of *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971), *Matilda* (1996), and *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (2004), childhood is much less likely to appear as an object of nostalgia.

Finally, restorative nostalgia appears in many of the costume dramas based on novels by Kate Chopin, Henry James, Edith Wharton, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway, and even in Todd Haynes's five-part 2011 television adaptation of James M. Cain's *Mildred Pierce* (1941). Once again, however, this restorative nostalgia is always tempered and often overwhelmed by far more critical attitudes toward the past that has been so meticulously recreated. A particularly telling example is *The Heiress,* William Wyler's 1949 adaptation of James's 1880 novel *Washington Square*. Although the film's opening credit sequence suggests its sentimental attachment to tokens of a vanished past, the film, whose screenplay is based on Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 theatrical adaptation of the novel, moves into considerably more brutal territory than James. When James's heroine Catherine Sloper, romanced for her inheritance by the charming, penniless Morris Townsend, is threatened by her coldly remote father with disinheritance if she marries Morris, she quietly stands up first to her dying father, then to the importunate Morris, and placidly returns to her joyless life. In the film, Catherine is far more outspoken in her relations with both men, bitterly rejecting her unloving father and then tricking Morris into believing that she will elope with him so that the film ends with his standing outside her home in a downpour as she retires to her bedroom with a sardonic smile. Aaron Copland's celebrated musical

score for the film manages to be both nostalgically classical and unflinchingly modern, and Olivia de Havilland won an Academy Award for playing Catherine, first with restraint, then with an unbridled fury that moved even further than James from restorative nostalgia.

Discussing the "particular practice of pastiche" he calls the "nostalgia film," Fredric Jameson identifies *American Graffiti* as "one of the inaugural films in this new 'genre' (if that's what it is)" (Jameson 1983, p. 116). More recently, Vera Dika has announced, "The nostalgia film seems to privilege a 1950s past" (Dika 2003, p. 122), and Christina Sprengler has agreed that "the Fifties" are the "privileged object" (Sprengler 2009, p. 6) of contemporary American films like *Far from Heaven* (2002), *The Aviator* (2004), and *Sin City* (2005). An even more striking example of restorative nostalgia that shows how complex Hollywood nostalgia can be even at its most straightforwardly restorative is *Annie Get Your Gun*, a film released in 1950, at the beginning of Dika's and Sprengler's favored decade. It is a costume drama that is also a musical, a Western, and a movie about an entertainer, though not a movie star, that happens to be highly suitable for children even though it was not made for them. The film is a palimpsest of multilayered nostalgia. It invokes nostalgia for its real-life heroine, the sharpshooter and entertainer Annie Oakley, played here by Betty Hutton; nostalgia for her earlier incarnation by Barbara Stanwyck in George Stevens's 1935 film; nostalgia for the 1947 Irving Berlin Broadway musical on which it was more immediately based—the film that gave its star Ethel Merman her signature song, "There's No Business Like Show Business"—and nostalgia for hypothetical alternative versions starring Judy Garland, who was originally cast in the role and filmed at least two musical numbers before she was replaced by Hutton, and Frank Morgan, best known for playing the Wizard of Oz, who was replaced by Louis Calhern as Buffalo Bill Cody when he died before shooting began. In addition, an audience watching the film in 2018 will find new layers of nostalgia: nostalgia for the film's highly selective version of American history; nostalgia for the grand compromise in the battle of the sexes, here represented by the professional rivalry between Annie and sharpshooter Frank Butler, that Annie first rejects, then accepts by deliberately missing a target to throw a shooting match against Frank; nostalgia for the comparatively simple days of first-wave feminism, combined with a certain squirming discomfort at Annie's compromise; nostalgia for Howard Keel's debut as a singing star in the role of Frank Butler; nostalgia for musicals made, like this one, by MGM's fondly remembered Freed Unit; and of course nostalgia for a 68-year-old movie, especially one that waited fifty years for its first video release.

One important lesson of *Annie Get Your Gun* is that nostalgia need not focus on recalling a particular time and place: it can valorize many favored sites, from the Wild West to screen representations of Annie Oakley to the days when the relations between men and women were governed by a narrow range of male-authored scripts women challenged at their peril to a beloved show-stopping number in Irving Berlin's 1947 musical, without inconsistency or self-contradiction, because the primary energy of even the most determinedly restorative nostalgia is not the celebration of past realities, even imagined past realities, but the refusal to accept present-day realities. Another equally important lesson emerges from the conflict between Annie Oakley and Frank Butler, whose professional status she first threatens, then deliberately retreats from threatening in order to win his heart: a given film can incorporate logically contradictory attitudes toward any given problem, situation, time, or place without compromising its own nostalgia, which is merely complicated rather than undermined by such contradictions.

Effervescently diffuse and often contradictory as it is, *Annie Get Your Gun* is no more typical of Hollywood nostalgia than the homecoming of Odysseus is of European nostalgia. Even though it is generally remote from the elegiacally critical attitude American literature adopts toward the American past, Hollywood nostalgia is less restorative than reflective, less reminiscent of the homecoming of Odysseus than of the returns of Agamemnon and Ajax, stories whose grimness depends not on the perils of their journeys but on the failures of their homes to welcome them properly and confirm their sense of the identities they have forged during their absence. This brand of nostalgia owes less to the Civil War anthem "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" than to its

savagely ironic transformation in the Irish song "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye." The complexities of this reflective nostalgia are found not in *Annie Get Your Gun* but in the Western and non-Western novels of Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy and in their film adaptations: *Hud* (1963), *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *Terms of Endearment* (1983), *Lonesome Dove* (1989), *All the Pretty Horses* (2000), *No Country for Old Men* (2007), and *The Road* (2009). This brand of nostalgia is eminently consistent and indeed codependent on a sharp criticism of the homes from which its heroes are estranged, and often on the whole idea of home in general. It is the driving force behind Hollywood movies as different as *Sunrise* (1927), *Citizen Kane* (1941), *Vertigo* (1958), *Memento* (2000), and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), a final example that deserves a closer look because the relations among its many different modes of nostalgia are so complex.

Denis Villeneuve's film is not only a sequel to Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) but, like most sequels, an unofficial remake of the original film, a revisiting of Scott's dystopian world a generation later in a film that was produced a generation after the film that inspired it. Like its own source, Philip K. Dick's 1968 story "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" *Blade Runner* is a futuristic meditation on the difficulties of distinguishing the human from the non-human. Although it failed at the box office, it became one of the most highly regarded of all cult films, and the visionary dreariness of its imagined 2019 Los Angeles exteriors inspired a generation of neo-noirs. *Blade Runner 2049*, whose cityscapes are less spectacularly overstimulating but equally rain-soaked and dreary, opens with an explanatory title card that reminds audiences who have seen the earlier film, informs those who haven't, and brings all of them up to date about its focus on replicants, "bio-engineered humans" who were created as slaves but attempted an abortive revolt in the earlier film. The "new line of replicants who obey," the film's opening titles promise, are a distinct improvement over the old "Nexus 8s with open-ended lifespans" of the earlier film. This reassuring news cannot help but make the audience nostalgic for the 1982 *Blade Runner,* whose potentially disobedient replicants promised the narrative complications the audience has come to the cinema to experience.

The audience, as it turns out, need not worry, for a discovery the replicant blade runner K (Ryan Gosling) makes in the opening sequence raises disturbing new possibilities: the skeleton of a female replicant who died during a caesarean section, demonstrating that replicants can biologically reproduce. K's boss, Lt. Joshi (Robin Wright), commands him to find and kill the replicant's child and destroy all traces of the birth in order to head off the possibility of another, more massive rebellion of replicants. But K finds himself increasingly ambivalent about his mission. He identifies the skeleton as that of Rachael, who had been played by Sean Young in *Blade Runner*, and, increasingly convinced that he himself is her child, attempts to track down Rick Deckard, the title character of *Blade Runner*, who vanished soon after the events of the earlier film, and who K believes is his father. K's trajectory thus neatly inverts the trajectory of the earlier film. Instead of raising the possibility that its hero, a killer of replicants, is himself a replicant, as Scott's film did, it offers more and more hints that its replicant hero is actually human.

These hints turn out to be red herrings. K is a replicant who only longs to believe he is human, just as Rachael longed to believe she was human back in 1982. Both films tease their characters and their audiences with memories that turn out to have been false or implanted, making them nostalgic for a past they never truly experienced in the first place. But *Blade Runner 2049* puts several new spins on Svetlana Boym's "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed." Like all sequels and remakes, the film is a return-with-a-difference to an earlier film it nostalgically valorizes even as it attempts to revise and improve it by deepening its moral sensitivity to the pathos of replicants like K's servant Joi, who loves him even though she is only a synthesized voice and a series of holographic images readily available for purchase by millions of other consumers. The casting in both films of Harrison Ford as Deckard both resurrects the emotionally intense hero of the 1982 film, an obvious contrast to the dead-eyed Ryan Gosling, and mourns Deckard's limited abilities as an action hero thirty-five years later.

Like many other sci-fi sequels and remakes from *Jurassic Park* (1993) to *King Kong* (2005), *Blade Runner 2049* is nostalgic for the future—in this case, the older, more reassuringly stable dystopia of *Blade Runner*. In this it follows *Star Wars* (1977), which Jameson calls "*metonymically* a historical or nostalgic film: unlike *American Graffiti*, it does not reinvent a picture of the past in its lived totality; rather, by reinventing the feel and shape of characteristic art objects of an older period (the serials [featuring Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers]), it seeks to reawaken a sense of the past associated with those objects" (Jameson 1983, p. 116). But the metonymic nostalgia of *Blade Runner 2049* is far more complex than that of *Star Wars*. Like *Blade Runner*, it is filled with allusions to other films and avatars of pop culture: *Alien* (1979), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Treasure Island* (1950), Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, and of course *Blade Runner* itself. Its most complicated citations, however, are to films and television shows made since the release of *Blade Runner* in 1982. Robin Wright's performance as Lt. Joshi recalls her role as the brutally calculating First Lady Claire Underwood in the Netflix television series *House of Cards.* The importance of the toy horse K takes as a link between himself and Rachael's missing child, which already echoes the origami unicorn Deckard had made in *Blade Runner*, is given even greater weight and foreboding for audiences who associate it with the totems the characters in Christopher Nolan's 2010 film *Inception* used to determine whether or not they were dreaming. And Joi's attempt to make love to K by entering the body of the human female Mariette (Mackenzie Davis)—a remarkable literalizing of Boym's observation that "a cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images"—also recalls in uncomfortable detail a remarkably similar scene involving Theodore (Joaquin Phoenix), his operating system Samantha (Scarlett Johansson), and her ad hoc flesh-and-blood surrogate Isabella (Portia Doubleday) in Spike Jonze's 2013 film *Her*. Citations like these go much further than the multiple nostalgic topoi of *Annie Get Your Gun* and the contradictory attitude that film adapts to professional rivalries, ritual courtship, and gender roles to broaden and deepen the resonance of *Blade Runner 2049* in far more complicated ways by rooting it in a familiar mass-media culture, suggesting that contemporary culture has caught up with and perhaps even surpassed the visionary dystopia of *Blade Runner*, which after all was set in 2019. At the same time, they mark *Blade Runner 2049*'s distance from the earlier film, whose relatively black-and-white view of the differences between humans and replicants becomes the subject, amid increasingly urgent questions raised by the twenty-first century's embrace of social media and the Internet of Things, of both nostalgia and critical distance.

Despite generally positive and often rapturous reviews, *Blade Runner 2049*, like its predecessor, was a serious disappointment at the box office. Its American grosses totaled $92 million, less than two-thirds of its production costs. The moral commentators took from its underperformance was that the audience of 12-to-21-year-old males on which mainstream movies depend for their ticket sales were insufficiently invested in the earlier film, and that the cult audience that was invested in it was too small to make the film a success. Even so, the film is invaluable for several reasons. It provides a showcase for the remarkable complexities of reflective nostalgia, the audience's longing for a past that at some level they know perfectly well never existed. It recreates the reflective nostalgia of the classic American novels, which know this lesson equally well, rather than following British heritage films in imposing a restorative nostalgia on authors like Dickens and Jane Austen who are not particularly nostalgic themselves. Its swooning embrace of a nightmarish dystopia suggests the rewards that Hollywood can reap by turning away from restorative and reflective nostalgia to a more complex, multi-laminated, sharply ambivalent amalgam of the two, even if Columbia Pictures did not reap those rewards this time. Its thematic focus on both the indispensability and the untrustworthiness of the audience's most treasured memories, including their memories of the original *Blade Runner*, goes far to indicate why reflective nostalgia, so central to the American cultural experience, is so often complicated still further in American cinema. Eluding the categories of both the restorative nostalgia of heritage cinema and the reflective nostalgia of American literature, the film fuses the pleasure and pain of a perceived alienation from a homeland both idealized and dystopian that is at once a mourning of self-alienation and a cautiously reconstructive celebration of a self that may never have existed.

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