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EDITORIAL PREFACE

We are pleased to announce our efforts to improve this journal have been successful and Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies is now officially a top-level national journal in Serbia (category M51). Although this is visible primarily at the national level, one of our major goals is to become more prominent internationally, and we are already working on it.

The first part of this Volume, *Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, contains four articles. *Mahdi Duris* provides a phonetic account on the intelligibility of Saudi Spoken English consonants. This paper informs us on how intelligible these consonants are by General American English listeners and is focused on highly proficient EFL teachers, whose impact on Saudi non-native speakers of English is significant. *Elisa Ghia*, *Emilia Petrocelli* and *Sergio Pizziconi* explore the use of hedges in academic thesis abstracts among L1-Italian advanced university EFL learners drawing on a corpus of 217 abstracts written in English. Their results show that Italian EFL students use fewer hedges than native speakers of the same age and conclude that hedging deserves greater attention in courses focused on academic writing and in English textbooks. *Congchao Hua*'s study compares the prosody of pronouns in English and Mandarin in broad focus, narrow focus, and given information, and examines Mandarin-speaking EFL learners' acquisition of pronoun prosody. Hua provides clear evidence of L1 prosody transfer, especially in phonetic realization of pronouns and concludes it is necessary to raise L2 English learners' awareness of pronoun prosody. *Aleksandar Pejčić* analyses the use of conjunctive adverbs as discourse markers (DMs) in oral argumentative presentations by two groups of Serbian EFL students with the intention of comparing the distribution of DMs and the strength of their prosodic boundaries. The results reveal that the third-year students possess a broader range of appropriate vocabulary, especially adverbial and use lengthier pauses, but do not differ much in their choice of tone or key from their first-year peers.

The second part of this Volume, *Literary and Cultural Studies*, contains six articles. *Mara Ruža Blažević* analyses the ways in which the New Woman Movement of the 1890s is reflected in Bram Stoker's construction

of his female characters in *Dracula*. Her analysis shows that the image of the New Woman is modified and redefined through already existing female tropes, including the Angel in the House, the Fallen Woman and the *femme fatale*. *Stefan Č. Čizmar* examines how Angela Carter enters a dialogue with the Victorian past through the lens of neo-Victorian theory to see if and to what extent her works can be seen as neo-Victorian. His paper is focused on three novels, *Shadow Dance*, *Nights in the Circus*, and *Wise Children*, as they feature neo-Victorian concerns most prominently, and provides a close reading of certain passages, comparing them to the typical traits of neo-Victorian novels. *Nataša V. Damljanović* is interested in the impact of popular culture on Hanif Kureishi with a special focus on the impact of music and the musicians of the time Kureishi features in his writings: their texts, clothes, and style. *Anđelka Gemović*'s paper elaborates on the notion of hyperreality and its prevalent features that reflect the absurdity of the modern world in Don DeLillo's latest work, *The Silence*, arguing that the five main characters, representatives of contemporary humanity, are indulged in hyperreality perpetuated by consumerism and technology addiction which have covertly kindled and sustained absurdity in their lives. The paper also extrapolates on the author's gripping perspectives, and often a prophetic representation of the encumbrances humanity obediently bears and yet fails to recognize. *Ksenija Kondali*'s paper discusses the representation of violence in Stephen Crane's short story "One Dash – Horses" as an example of the author's portrayal of the West and his original narrativization of violence in Gilded Age culture, through which he debunks the clichés of the region and its people. *James Plath* writes about Ernest Hemingway and the shaping influence of his Oak Park homes, where he spent his childhood, and which shaped his sense of self in relation to interior space and in relation to family dynamics.

We wish to express gratitude to both our reviewers and authors, who put a lot of hard work and effort into this journal.

The completion of this Volume would not have been possible without Aleksandra Orašanin and Bojana Gledić, who invested a lot of time and energy into shaping it.

Belgrade, December 2022

Nenad Tomović

Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Mahdi Duris*

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THE ACOUSTIC INTELLIGIBILITY OF CONSONANTS IN SAUDI SPOKEN ENGLISH**

Abstract

This study presents an instrumental phonetic account of the intelligibility of Saudi Spoken English (SSE) consonants. Few studies have investigated the spoken consonants of highly proficient EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. This research informs on how intelligible SSE consonants are perceived by General American English (GAE) listeners using the Koffi (2021) intelligibility framework. Traditionally, intelligibility has been measured by having listeners transcribe speakers' utterances. How well the speech is transcribed demonstrates a certain level of intelligibility. Koffi (2021) has proposed an acoustic approach to measuring consonant intelligibility using acoustic thresholds of Just Noticeable Differences (JND) combined with considerations for Relative Functional Load (RFL). An analysis of 23 segments spoken by 32 Saudi EFL teachers using acoustic correlates for intensity, duration, F2, and F3 inform the results. The quantitative results based on 1,280 tokens suggest that Saudi speakers of English are perceived as intelligible by GAE listeners when specifically analyzing their consonant production. Missing L1 segments [p] and [g], and substituting segments [f] for [v] does not impact intelligibility. Only the female participants did not distinguish their [ɪ] from [ɪ]. Findings confirm that Saudi teachers of English can be intelligible in the segmental production of consonants.

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** This paper was presented at the Sixth Belgrade International Meeting of English Phoneticians (BIMEP 2022), 25–26 March 2022, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade.

1. Introduction

With a paradigm shift in pronunciation principles with Levis' seminal paper in 2005, intelligibility has been widely accepted as a more desired goal than sounding native. This shift has also confirmed that pronunciation is a matter of both the speaker and the listener, removing the learning burden from speakers only. Intelligibility can be defined at the lexical level as the decoding of specific spoken words by listeners (Levis, 2018). Traditionally in second language (L2) research (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2008), this has been accomplished by having listeners transcribe speakers' utterances. How well the speech is transcribed demonstrates a certain level of intelligibility. This same focus on word-based features (Levis, 2018, p. 24) at the segmental level has been heavily studied, specifically for speakers of Japanese English with the /l/ and /ɹ/ pair. Intelligibility studies focused on L2 pronunciation at the segmental level have also been extensively studied in acoustic phonetics since 1999.

Intelligibility in acoustic phonetics draws directly from work in the late 1940s directed by physicists, engineers, and psychoacoustic researchers striving to make one human communication invention as intelligible as possible: the modern telephone. Most notable was the work conducted by Fletcher for Bell Laboratories between the 1920s and the 1960s, delivering scientific measurements for "auditory thresholds, intensity discrimination, frequency discrimination, tone-on-tone masking, tone-in-noise masking, the critical band, the phon scale of loudness, and the articulation index" (Yost, 2015, p. 49). Based on these discoveries, the field of phonetics changed from impressionistic assessment of sounds to methodical scientific measurements when the first spectrographs appeared in 1952 and then became widely available in the US in the 1980s. In 1995, another revolution in phonetics came to life with the release of Praat by Boersma and Weenink. Praat gave the power to measure acoustic sounds instrumentally by simply using a desktop computer.

Since the paradigm shift towards intelligibility in L2 research, only a few studies have used the word-based decoding abilities of acoustic phonetics to inform about L2 speech intelligibility. Such studies all relate to the framework developed by Koffi (2021), who developed a quantitative method of analysis to measure the intelligibility of L2 pronunciation both at the segmental and suprasegmental levels. Specifically, since 2012, Koffi has measured over 12,000 speech tokens from 67 non-native speakers

to derive the first acoustic phonetic approach to measuring intelligibility. He does so by combining the works of Fletcher (1940, 1953) in using the Critical Band Theory (CBT), Just Noticeable Differences (JNDs) for relevant acoustic correlates classified by natural class and Catford's (1987) Relative Functional Load (RFL).

The present study focuses on a specific context that has not yet received much attention in academic research, mainly the acoustic phonetic characteristics of Saudi Spoken English (SSE) by Saudi EFL teachers. Previous word-based feature research (Duris, 2021) focused on vowel intelligibility and showed Saudi English teachers having highly intelligible vowels. This study will continue exploring the intelligibility of these teachers by focusing on their consonants. This continuation is important to grow a solid body of findings to inform about the complete intelligibility of Saudi Spoken English. Furthermore, this study and future ones from the author intend to build a complete acoustic phonetic profile of SSE for both segmental and suprasegmentals. Responding to Zielinski's (2015) call, this paper intends to inform further on "features of pronunciation [segmental vs. suprasegmental] as part of an integrated and interactive system, where the production of one can influence the other" (p. 402). Additionally, this study intends to help inform L2 teachers on how to approach intelligibility, specifically when dealing with pronunciation pedagogy in a Saudi EFL context.

2. Literature Review

As this article is set to inform the complete acoustic correlates of consonants in Saudi Spoken English, distinguishing the characteristics of General American English (GAE) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) consonants is essential. GAE and MSA share most sounds that have the same natural class. However, some distinctions may contribute to intelligibility barriers. The first part of this literature review will briefly account for the consonant charts for both GAE and MSA and provide both languages' major consonant characteristic features. This will help in pinpointing phonetic similarities and differences between the two languages. The second part of this chapter will detail the framework developed by Koffi (2021), which will be used in this study to expand on the acoustic correlates of consonants for SSE. It will also detail past studies that have used this framework and how

findings from this research will inform the speech intelligibility of Saudi Spoken English consonants.

2.1 Consonant Characteristics of GAE and MSA

This first part of the chapter focuses on GAE and MSA consonant characteristics. As highlighted previously, understanding the similarities and differences between the L1 (Modern Standard Arabic) and the target L2 (GAE) helps understand which speech features may interfere with intelligibility. Graph 1 below presents the GAE chart of consonants for all three features discussed.

		Place of Articulation (POA)						
		Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Manner of Articulation (MOA)	Stop	– voice	p <pat>		t <tap>		k <cat>	
		+ voice	b <bat>		d <dapper>		g <gap>	
	Fricative	– voice	f <fat>	θ <thatch>	s <sar>	ʃ <sharp>		h <hat>
		+ voice	v <vat>	ð <that>	z <zap>	ʒ <genre> ³		
	Affricate	– voice				tʃ <chap>		
		+ voice				dʒ <jab>		
	Nasal	+ voice	m <mat>		n <nap>		ŋ <fang>	
	Liquid	+ voice			l <lap>	ɹ <rat>		
	Glide	+ voice				j <yap>	w <what>	

Graph 1: GAE Consonant Chart (Koffi, 2021)

GAE includes a total of 24 consonants. For this study, the following consonants (boxed in red) are not explored: the semi-vowel [j], the palatal fricative [ʒ], and the two palatal affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ], which are not present in the corpus used for this study to measure SSE consonants. To compare these target consonants of L2 for Saudi learners, the Modern Standard Arabic consonants from Alghamdi (2015) are presented in Graph 2.

	Bilabial شفطاني	Labiodental شفاوي أسناني	Interdental بين أسناني	Alveodental للوي أسناني	Alveopalatal غاري للوي	Palatal غاري	Velar طبقي	Lab-velar شفاوي طبقي	Uvular لثوي	Pharyngeal حلقبي	Glottal حنثري
Nasal أنفي	م m			ن n							
Stop شديد	ب b			ت t د d			ك k	ق q			ء ʔ
Emphatic Stop*				ض ṭ ذ ṭh ط ṭh							
Fricative رخو		ف f	ث ṯ ذ ṯh	س s ز z	ش ṣ			خ ḫ غ ġ		ع ʕ ح ḥ	هـ h
Emphatic Fricative**			ظ ṭh	ص ṣ							
Affricate مزجي					ج dʒ						
Glide لثبي						ي j		و w			
Lateral جانببي				ل l							
Trill تكراري				ر r							

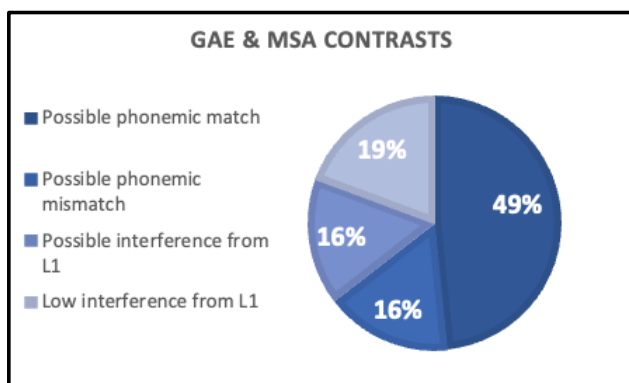
Graph 2: Modern Standard Arabic Consonant Chart
(Alghamdi, 2015)

Modern Standard Arabic includes 28 consonants (Ibrahim et al., 2020) with additional manner and place features not encountered in GAE. To better assess the similarities and differences between the target L2 (GAE) and the L1 (MSA), consonants from both languages are combined into a GAE and MSA consonant chart. Changes are made to accommodate both languages, as seen in Graph 3 below.

		Place of Articulation (POA)																		
		Bilabial		Labiodental		Interdental		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Uvular		Pharyngeal		Glottal		
		GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	GAE	MSA	
Manner of Articulation (MOA)	Stop	[- voice]	p <pat>	—				t <tap>	t <ta>			k <kat>	k <ka>	—	q <qat>			ʔ <chamza>		
		[+ voice]	b <bat>	b <ba>				d <dapper>	d <da>			g <gap>	—							
	Fricative	[- voice]			f <fat>	f <fa>	θ <thatch>	θ <tha>	s <sap>	s <seem>	ʃ <shap>	ʃ <sheen>			..	x <cha>	..	ħ <ha>	h <hat>	h <cha>
		[+ voice]			v <vat>	—	ð <thatch>	ð <dha>	z <zap>	z <zay>					..	ɣ <qhayn>	..	ʕ <ayn>		
	Nasal	[- voice]																		
		[+ voice]	m <mat>	m <meem>					n <nap>	n <noon>			ŋ <fang>	—						
	Liquid	[- voice]							l <lap>	l <lam>	j <rat>	—								
		[+ voice]							..	r <ra>										
	Glide	[- voice]											w <wat>	w <waow>						
		[+ voice]																		
	Emphatic	[- voice]							..	t' <ta>										
	Stop	[+ voice]							..	d' <da>										
	Emphatic	[- voice]							..	s' <sad>										
	Fricative	[+ voice]				..	ð' <dha>													

Graph 3: GAE and MSA Consonant Comparison Chart

Consonants highlighted in red in Graph 3 show a possible phonemic mismatch due to the sound being only available in the target language (L2). Inversely, all consonants highlighted in green show a possible match as the sound is available in both GAE and MSA. A third category highlighted for comparison are consonants in yellow. These consonants occur only in MSA; however, they have a similar counterpart in the place of articulation that occurs in GAE and MSA. Lastly, consonants highlighted in blue only occur in MSA and have no equivalency in GAE in one of the nodes. The possible phonemic match represents 49% of the shared consonants. Only 16% of consonants may cause a possible mismatch due to no equivalence in the L1. However, some possible interference from consonants may occur at the same level as the low interference may occur at 16%, as shown in Graph 4.



Graph 4: GAE and MSA Phonemic Contrasts

As mentioned in the introduction, a larger number of studies have used the Koffi (2021) framework to assess the intelligibility of vowels, while few of them have expanded into consonants. This study intends to fill this gap while expanding on existing data for the intelligibility of Saudi Spoken English vowels. This study will also respond to the methodological consideration set out by Flege (1987) to consider “intergroup differences” (p. 288). Flege (1987) recommends gathering measurements from groups of at least 6 to 12 participants to “observe a systematic phonetic difference between groups” (p. 288). This study provides such a number for both female and male participants. The following section will detail the Koffi (2021) framework for intelligibility.

2.2 Koffi's (2021) Framework for Intelligibility

This research study uses the Koffi (2021) framework to assess intelligibility for L2 Englishes. This framework is the central tenet in Koffi's (2021) book titled *Relevant Acoustic Phonetics of L2 Englishes*. The book offers the first literature that combines the seminal works of acousticians like Fletcher, modern phoneticians like Ladefoged, and intelligibility linguists like Levis to the Second Language Acquisition field. For over nine years, Koffi analyzed 12,000 tokens of L2 Englishes and developed the first acoustic phonetic driven intelligibility theory. The Acoustic and Masking Intelligibility (AMI) condition posits that:

“Segments that are acoustically close may mask each other with only a minimal risk to intelligibility unless their relative functional loads dictate otherwise” (Koffi, 2021, p. 55).

The first part of this section will describe the Koffi (2021) framework in detail, followed by a descriptive account of how it will be used to determine the intelligibility of SSE consonants.

The Koffi framework (2021, pp. 37–55) gathers the following principles: correlate hierarchy, Critical Band Theory (CBT), Just Noticeable Differences (JNDs), Acoustic Masking, and Relative Functional Load (RFL) to give a complete assessment of L2 English intelligibility. The correlate hierarchy (pp. 37–40) expands on how acoustic correlates for formants, duration, and intensity, used to show relevance for specific segments, need to be weighted to assess intelligibility. In other words, “some correlates are more relevant than others for specific classes of sounds” (p. 37). Harvey Fletcher, also known as the father of stereophonic sound, developed the Critical Band theory as part of his findings in 1953. He identifies the frequency bands commonly known as formants (F0, F1, F2, F3) in acoustic phonetics. CBT is used in the framework to pinpoint the limits to which each formant can be perceived. The third principle in the Koffi framework for intelligibility relates the Just Noticeable Differences. JNDs are also known as acoustic thresholds, which Koffi (2021) describes as thresholds “which segments, and natural classes of segments are optimally perceived” (p. 46). Vast research has been conducted around JNDs for every formant in English and other languages, which Koffi describes in detail (2021, p. 40). JNDs for F1 and F2 have been researched by Scharf (1961), Mermelstein (1978), Hawks (1994), and Labov et al. (2006). For F3 and F4, JNDs have

been validated by Scharf (1961). For VOT, the findings for JNDs have been obtained by Lisker and Abramson (1964), Byrd and Toben (2010), Fant (1960), Hirsh (1959), Abel (1972), Miller (1981), Phillips et al. (1994), Stevens (2000), Lehiste (1970) and Quené (2004), and for intensity, the JND is confirmed by Hansen (2001). Combined with the CBT, it is now possible to relate the acoustic correlates with specific formants with specific thresholds for human speech perception. Graph 5 summarizes these principles.

No.	Segments/Suprasegments	Acoustic Correlates	JND Thresholds
	Vowels		
1.	Vowels	F1	> 60 Hz
2.	Vowels	F2	≥ 200 Hz
3.	Vowels	F3	≥ 400 Hz
	Consonants		
1.	Stops	Voice Onset Time (VOT)	≥ 26, 34, 42 ms
2.	Fricatives and affricates	Intensity	≥ 3 dB
3.	Nasals	F2 for [m] and [n]	≥ 200 Hz
4.	Nasals	F3 for [n] and [ŋ]	≥ 400 Hz
5.	Approximants	F3	≥ 400 Hz
6.	Voicing ratios	Length in milliseconds	40/60
	Suprasegmentals		
1.	Stress	F0/Pitch	≥ 1 Hz
2.	Intensity	Intensity	≥ 3 dB
3.	Duration	Signals less than 200 ms	≥ 10 ms
4.	Duration	Signals between 200–300 ms	≥ 20 ms
5.	Duration	Signals over 300 ms	≥ 40 ms

Graph 5: Correlates and JNDs for Segmentals and Suprasegmentals
(Koffi, 2021, p. 38)

The fourth element is acoustic masking which Fletcher developed in 1953. Masking refers to the sounds that can impose their features on other sounds for speech intelligibility. As Koffi (2021) describes it, “if two sounds overlap significantly in relevant acoustic properties, then masking can cause intelligibility to be compromised” (p. 47). The final principle of the framework is the Relative Functional Load. RFL is specifically suited for intelligibility because it prioritizes the sounds that have the biggest

impact on frequency in the language. Lewis (2018) contends that “more frequent phonemes are likely to play a larger role in intelligibility than less frequent ones” (p. 82). Koffi’s framework explanation credits Catford (1987) for compiling the RFL values, which were then organized for consonants and vowels by Koffi (2021), available in Appendix A and B. Based on errors and the RFL, Koffi makes a direct relationship whereas “if a person substitutes Segment A for Segment B, the degree of intelligibility is directly proportional with their RFL” (2021, p. 48). This is seen in Graph 6, which gives a final assessment of intelligibility after considering correlate hierarchy, CBT, JNDs, and Acoustic Masking.

No.	RFL	Intelligibility Rating
1.	0–24%	Good intelligibility
2.	25–49%	Fair intelligibility
3.	50–74%	Mediocre intelligibility
4.	75–100%	Poor intelligibility

Graph 6: Correlations between RFL and Intelligibility
(Koffi, 2021, p. 50)

In sum, the Koffi framework gathers many principles in various fields dealing with speech production and perception to provide a robust and quantitative method to determine the intelligibility of L2 speech by way of acoustic phonetic analysis. The following section will detail how this framework has been used to determine the intelligibility of consonants for L2 Englishes. Given the theoretical thresholds of consonants seen in Graph 5, consonants for SSE will be analyzed by their stops (VOT), fricatives, nasals, and approximants. For each acoustic correlate, the specific methodology used in previous studies will also be the guiding model for this study. As such, the research questions for this study are:

1. Can SSE consonants produced by Saudi EFL teachers be perceived intelligibly by GAE listeners considering the lack of some consonant segments in MSA? (RQ1)

2. If intelligibility is compromised, which segments are used to compensate for this? (RQ2)
Do these substitutions also affect intelligibility when used? (RQ3)

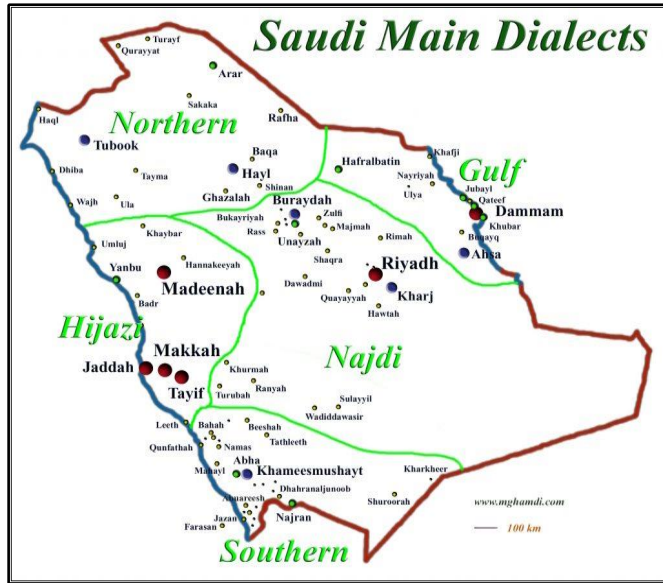
3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

For this empirical study, 32 Saudi adults were recruited (23 females and 9 males). As in most acoustic phonetic analyses of a homogenous group, the participants are separated into their biological differences. Kent & Read (2002, p. 194) confirm that male vocal tracts are generally longer than female ones, leading to lower formant frequencies.

The mean age for the female Saudi group is 32 years old, and all of them were born in Saudi Arabia except for one born in Canada. All females reside in Riyadh and are EFL teachers at the world's largest female-only university. Most of these female participants (69%) ascribe their Modern Standard Arabic dialect to Najdi, while the second shared dialect is Hijazi (17%). More than half of this group (56%) self-reported having lived outside Saudi Arabia, in an Inner Circle country. A majority shared that they attribute "entertainment" (English spoken in movies, TV shows, and the internet) as a major contributing factor to their L2 fluency. A complete sociometric report with linguistic data is available in Appendix C.

A total of 9 Saudi males also participated in this study. As shown in Appendix D, this group's average age is 34 years old, they are EFL instructors in higher education institutions, and most of them speak a Najdi dialect of MSA. Graph 7 shows a dialect map of Saudi Arabia highlighting the five dialects used in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).



Graph 7: Dialects of Modern Standard Arabic in KSA¹

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

For all participants, the acoustic data was captured using a SONY ICD-UX560F (2018-12) voice recorder with stereo samples formatted in MP3 (sample rate of 44.1 kHz). A fixed microphone integrated into a headphone was used to keep an equal distance between the mouth and the microphone. The microphone is a Cardioid (unidirectional) with a calibrated frequency response between 50 and 20,000 Hz. The audio samples were converted from MP3 format down to a WAV mono file, keeping the sampling rate at 44.1 KHz. The data captured was analyzed using the computer program Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2022) to measure the acoustic correlates of intensity, duration, F2, and F3.

¹ Provided by Dr. Mansour Alghamdi on March 28th, 2020 in Riyadh, KSA

3.3 Procedures

To extract the data for this study, the elicitation paragraph used is similar to the one used for previous consonant studies mentioned in the introduction (Zhang, 2014; Koffi, 2015; Koffi & Ribeiro, 2016; and Koffi, 2019). The paragraph is from George Mason University's, Speech Accent Archive text (Weinberger, 2015). Weinberger (2015) explains that most of the segment sounds of English are present in this text. Koffi (2021) describes that this elicitation text contains all common English sounds "except the vowel [ʊ], the semi-vowel [j], the palatal fricative [ç], and the palatal affricate [dʒ]" (p. 66):

***Please call Stella.** Ask her to **bring these** things with **her** from the store: **Six** good spoons of fresh snow **peas**, **five thick** slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a foot-long sandwich as a snack for her brother Bob. We also **need** a small **plastic** snake, the little yellow book, a rubber duck, and a paper Ipad. **She** should not forget the dog video game and the **big toy** frog for the **kids**. She must leave the faked gun at home, but she may bring the ten sea turtles, the mat that my mom bought, and the black rug. She can scoop these things into three **red** bags and two old backpacks. **We** will **go meet** her, Sue, Jake, and Jenny, **Wednesday** at the very last train station.*

Participants were asked to read the above text to capture speech sounds as they would be uttered in continuous form. Duris (2021) mentions that this approach gives two benefits: context and frequency. The participant is unaware of which words are to be analyzed and focuses on reading words with clear and familiar context. Secondly, the elicitation paragraph uses high frequency words that most L2 learners use. One drawback of using connected speech instead of words in isolation for a segmental analysis of consonants is the lack of word boundaries. In their 2015 research, Alameen and Levis define "connected speech," citing Lass (1984) as "the processes that words undergo when their border sounds are blended with neighboring sounds" (p. 160). These processes are so common that they proposed six categories (linking, deletion, insertion, modification, reduction, and multiple) based on the literature (Alameen & Levis, 2015, p. 161).

3.4 Analysis

Each natural class was assigned specific words from the elicitation paragraph to analyze and measure the key consonants under investigation. Table 1 provides a visual representation of all segments that were analyzed for this study.

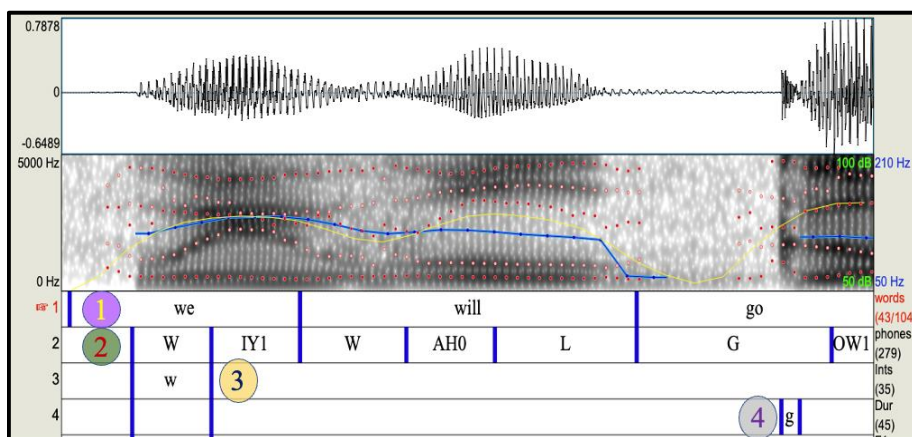
Stops					
<u>p</u>eas	b<u>i</u>g	t<u>o</u>y	(W)<u>d</u>ay	k<u>i</u>ds	g<u>o</u>
[p]	[b]	[t]	[d]	[k]	[g]
Fricatives					
<u>s</u>ix	pl<u>e</u>ase	f<u>i</u>ve	f<u>y</u>e	t<u>h</u>ick	t<u>h</u>ese
[s]	[z]	[f]	[v]	[θ]	[ð]
<u>h</u>er	s<u>h</u>e	pl <u>a</u> st <u>i</u> c	(W) <u>d</u> ay		
[h]	[ʃ]	[t̪]	[d̪]		
Nasals					
<u>m</u>ee<u>t</u>	n<u>e</u>ed	b<u>r</u>ing			
[m]	[n]	[ŋ]			
Approximants					
c<u>a</u>ll	St<u>e</u>lla	r <u>e</u> d	w <u>e</u>		
[ɹ]	[l]	[ɹ]	[w]		

Table 1: Target Words for each Segments Analyzed by Natural Class

Segments highlighted in red represent those sounds that may cause intelligibility issues since they are not present as a phonemic category in MSA, according to Table 1. Additionally, for fricatives, two segments were added to accommodate for the increasing substitutions of [θ] for [t̪] and [ð] for [d̪] in GAE (Koffi, 2021). Once all tokens were assigned, automated separation of the sounds was programmed using the Montreal Forced Aligner (MFA) tool inside Praat. For this study, the MFA tool was used to eliminate the redundancy of manually creating phone delimitations for

all participants. Since this data was manually verified for the tokens used, there are no adverse effects on the reliability of MFA on the data for this study. Next, to ensure data validity, all the tokens were reviewed manually inside Praat to ensure that the MFA tool correctly separated each target sound.

With each target sound isolated, a manual analysis of VOT was conducted for each stop token and every participant (192 tokens). Next, using Praat, all fricative, nasal, and approximant tokens were manually reviewed and labeled with a unique identifier to automate the data extraction using a Praat script. Once all remaining tokens were manually delimited and labeled in Praat, each participant's annotated TextGrid files were run through a modified Praat script to extract intensity, duration, F2, and F3 (1,088 tokens). Graph 8 shows a completed TextGrid analysis for participant KSAF17.



Graph 8: Praat Analysis Items for Participant KSAF17

Graph 8 details the automated and manual process completed for each participant. For KSAF17, this Praat window is focused on the utterance “we will go.” Label 1 is a tier completed automatically by the MFA tool without manual intervention. Label 2 details the segment level delimitation using the MFA tool. The voiced velar approximant [w] is focused, which was manually adjusted with label 3. Label 3 shows the identifier manually inserted, confirming the segment’s measurable area. Lastly, label 4 shows the manual VOT delimitation for stop [g], which is different from the MFA alignment on tiers 1 and 2. The Praat script used to extract measurements

for the fricatives, nasals, and approximants is a modified one created by Dr. Elvira-Garcia. Specific parameters were determined to measure the participants' data accurately, mainly for the differences in vocal tract length between the female and male speakers.

In summary, the methodology used to determine the intelligibility of Saudi Spoken English consonants adheres closely to one followed in previous studies (Koffi, 2015 and Koffi, 2021). Most of the methodology from this work has also been preserved in this study with few modifications. These modifications include using the Montreal Forced Aligner (McAuliffe et al., 2017) and a Praat script (by Dr. Elvira-Garcia) to automate the extraction of measurements. This was done to automate some tedious pointing and clicking, which Praat is less user-friendly when dealing with large data sets. All of the consonant findings presented in the results section following have been carefully reviewed manually to preserve reliability and validity.

4. Results

The results section presents a full analysis of the key consonants of English as spoken by female and male Saudi EFL teachers and an intelligibility assessment of those segments is provided. Under investigation are the acoustic characteristics of SSE for stops (VOT), fricatives, nasals, and approximants. The following results will be sectioned into those four categories of consonants, whereas each section will give results for female participants first, then their male counterparts. This results section will depart from the traditional acoustic phonetic practice of providing all measured tokens in tables to limit the word count. Appendix E and F provide all detailed measurements. All in all, this section gives the first instrumental analysis for acoustic correlates in SSE consonants (1,280 tokens) for 32 participants.

4.1 The Stops of Saudi Spoken English

As seen previously in Graph 3, stops are also present in Modern Standard Arabic with four voiceless stops and only two voiced stops. Most favorable to unintelligibility is the lack of the voiceless bilabial [p] for Saudi speakers of English. The Relative Functional Load (Appendix A) described by

Catford (1987) shows that [p] in English carries a high load in word-initial position (98%). The second missing segment in MSA, the voiced velar [g], carries a lesser load at 49% for a word-initial position.

The key results for stops will be assessed for intelligibility using the previously discussed Koffi (2021) framework. Graph 5 details that the acoustic correlate for stop segments is Voice Onset Time and that certain segments have different temporal thresholds in GAE. Those thresholds (JND) used for stops inform any masking of segments and drive the intelligibility assessment of those consonants. Koffi (2021) proposes the following “JND for intelligibility” (p. 113) of bilabial, alveolar, and velar stops. For bilabial stops, “voiceless bilabial stops do not mask their voiced counterparts if their VOT is ≥ 26 ms and voicing during the hold period is less than 40%. If not, masking may occur.” For alveolar stops, “voiceless alveolar stops do not mask their voiced counterparts if their VOT is ≥ 34 ms and voicing during the hold period is less than 40%. If not, masking may occur.” Lastly, “voiceless velar stops do not mask their voiced counterparts if their VOT is ≥ 42 ms and voicing during the hold period is less than 40%. If not, masking may occur.” With these intelligibility conditions in place, female SSE measured stops are summarized in Table 2.

Word	peas	big	toy	(W)day	kids	go
Segment	[p]	[b]	[t]	[d]	[k]	[g]
Female SSE SD	29.1	85.6	20.7	8.7	10.6	26.5
Female SSE Mean	69	-57	82	18	58	14
Lisker & Abramson	28	7/-65	39	9/-56	43	17/-45
JND (VOT)	≥ 26 ms		≥ 34 ms		≥ 42 ms	

Table 2: Female Saudi Spoken English VOTs (in ms)

The Lisker and Abramson (1964) measurements for GAE stops are provided to contrast the expected VOT values for listeners. For these 23 female participants, 138 VOT tokens were manually measured, resulting in the following observations. The mean VOT of SSE bilabial stops falls within the same thresholds as those of GAE expected values. The [p] segment was produced with a VOT of 69 ms on average. This shows that these female Saudi EFL teachers can confidently produce a missing segment in their L1.

It is done by lengthening their [p] by more than 40 ms than GAE speakers. The JND threshold is also attained (≥ 26 ms), and no intelligibility issues should result since no masking occurs. For the alveolar stops present in MSA, female participants produced them in line with GAE speakers. Similarly, SSE velar stops are clearly produced within the known measurements for GAE, causing no intelligibility issues. The mean value for segment [g] is 14 ms, which is within the measured VOT for GAE speakers, according to Lisker and Abramson (1964). In summary, the 23 female participants are highly intelligible when producing English stops. They can compensate for two missing segments in their L1 ([p] and [g]). A feature of SSE female stops is the lengthening of all voiced segments by at least 15 ms compared to their GAE counterparts.

For their nine male colleagues, 54 tokens were manually measured to account for the characteristics of their SSE stops. Table 3 compiles their VOTs.

Word	peas	big	toy	(W)day	kids	go
Segment	[p]	[b]	[t]	[d]	[k]	[g]
Male SSE SD	25.0	65.0	25.1	9.6	15.3	50.7
Male SSE Mean	45	-34	60	22	58	-17
Lisker & Abramson	28	7/-65	39	9/-56	43	17/-45
JND (VOT)	≥ 26 ms		≥ 34 ms		≥ 42 ms	

Table 3: Male Saudi Spoken English VOTs

Like their female counterparts, all nine of these Saudi educators can produce all of the stops for GAE. Segments [p] and [b] are within the comparable VOT means with GAE for the bilabial segments. The [p] segment is not available in the L1; however, they produce a [p] slightly lengthened by 17 ms. For an assessment of intelligibility, on average, these participants fulfill the conditions laid out earlier, with their voiceless stop above the JND of ≥ 26 ms. Some individual cases do not agree with the group. For example, participant KSAM3 produced a short [p] at 12 ms. Since the RFL for [p] is 98%, this is deemed “poor intelligibility” according to Graph 6. The participants produced the missing MSA segment [g] within the GAE range [g]. This is contrasted by a consequent variability with a high standard deviation at 50.7 ms. To conclude, all nine participants show that they can produce the missing stops from their L1 comparable to GAE stops and

above the JND for intelligibility. The high numbers in standard deviation for 5 out of 6 stops show that individual variability exists, and intelligibility problems could occur in SSE stops.

4.2 The Fricatives of Saudi Spoken English

The inventory of fricatives in MSA is larger than that of GAE. With 11 segments in MSA against eight for American English speakers, the voiced labiodental [v] is not a phoneme in Arabic. Fricatives should not be a challenge for Saudi speakers of English in general; as Graph 3 shows, they have 80% of possible phonemic match. Some considerations for RFL and intelligibility are needed. Appendix A shows that [v] and [f] in word-final is has a small load at 9%. This is good for Saudi speakers of English, showing that intelligibility will not be a frequent effect for them. According to the Koffi (2021) framework, the acoustic correlate for fricatives is intensity (in dB), and its Just Noticeable Difference threshold is ≥ 3 dB (Hansen, 2001). The consideration of intelligibility for fricatives is summarized as such by Koffi (2015):

“Fricatives can be substituted one for another without interfering with intelligibility if they agree in place of articulation and voicing, and if the intensity distance between the two is ≤ 3 dB”
(p. 8)

To evaluate the possible perception of GAE listeners, the data set for fricatives and all other remaining consonants will be that of 10 GAE participants (5 females and 5 males). These 10 participants have also read the same elicitation text, and their data is available on the Speech Accent Archive. Table 4 gives information on 5 female GAE fricative measures.

Word	six	please	five	five	thick	these	her	she	plastic	(W)day
Segment	[s]	[z]	[f]	[v]	[θ]	[ð]	[h]	[ʃ]	[t]	[d]
CA 32 F	67	64	58	59	65	72	60	68	62	67
GA 330 F	70	64	48	64	59	62	53	60	56	61
NY 6 F	74	75	70	58	58	64	67	68	65	65
OR 184 F	72	74	66	64	63	undef	74	72	71	70

TX 286 F	74	84	66	67	63	73	70	72	71	71
Female GAE Mean	71	72	62	62	62	68	65	68	65	67
Female GAE SD	3.0	8.3	8.6	3.7	3.0	5.4	8.3	4.8	6.6	4.0

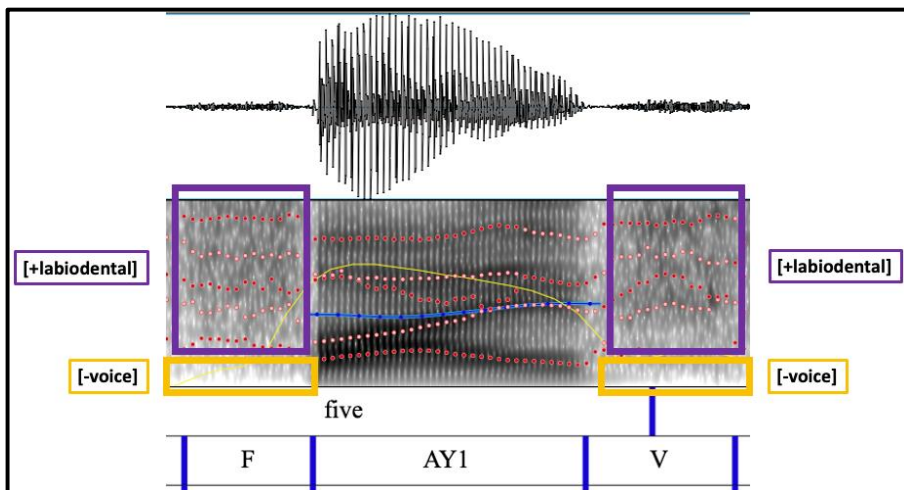
Table 4: Female GAE Fricatives (intensity in dB)

The SSE fricatives mean measurements for 23 female Saudi EFL teachers are detailed below in Table 5. A total of 10 segments were instrumentally measured for intensity for a total of 230 tokens.

Word	six	please	five	five	thick	these	her	she	plastic	(W)day
Segment	[s]	[z]	[f]	[v]	[θ]	[ð]	[h]	[ʃ]	[t]	[d]
Female SSE SD	5.1	5.7	5.4	4.6	7.0	7.5	3.8	5.2	8.6	8.5
Female SSE Mean	64	67	52	56	50	51	57	72	55	54
GAE Mean	71	72	62	62	62	68	65	68	65	67

Table 5: Female Saudi Spoken English Fricative Measurements (intensity in dB)

Data from the female participants confirm, overall, that intensity plays a part in discriminating between the different types of fricatives. Only segments [θ] and [ð] show a perceptually similar intensity. This could be a group-specific finding since the participants are inconsistent in producing these sounds with a deviation of 7.0 and 7.5, respectively. Results for segment [v] show that the fricative threshold is respected with a perceptual difference between [f] at 52 dB and [v] at 56 dB. However, while marking the spectrograms for this segment, it was noted that all female participants (23) produced [v] for [f]. Graph 9 shows the spectrogram of KSAF19 for an SSE [f] segment in word-initial and [v] segment in word-final. [v] for [f].



Graph 9: Spectrogram of Word “five” for Participant KSAF19

Ladefoged (2005) informs about the characteristics of the [f] segment where “the noise is made by air being forced through a narrow gap” (p. 56), which is apparent in the purple window in Graph 9 for [f] and [v]. For voicing, it is described as a “voiceless fricative” (Ladefoged, 2005, p. 56) which is also apparent in the bottom portion of the orange window. With an RFL at 9%, this substitution is likely to cause little effect on intelligibility. The male measurements will validate if this is a particular feature of SSE.

Focus now is given to the male participants. Consistent with the female teachers, an assessment of intensity as an acoustic correlate is covered, along with the [f] and [v] pair. The GAE mean provided is from the Speech Accent Archive, which gives measurements for five male participants. The male SSE fricatives are presented in Table 6, which accounts for 90 spoken tokens.

Word	six	please	five	five	thick	these	her	she	plastic	(W)day
Segment	[s]	[z]	[f]	[v]	[θ]	[ð]	[h]	[ʃ]	[t]	[d]
Male SSE SD	8.7	6.6	4.6	3.8	2.3	8.7	7.4	6.6	6.2	7.2
Male SSE Mean	64	67	56	55	55	54	60	70	57	63
GAE Mean	69	71	63	61	62	67	66	66	63	68

Table 6: Male Saudi Spoken English Fricative Measurements
(intensity in dB)

The intensity factor for these Saudi teachers shows mixed results. Segments [s], [z], [h], [ʃ], [t], and [d] show a perceptual distance greater than 3 dB while the acoustic distance for [f], [v], [θ], and [ð] is under 3 dB. For the segments of interest, similar to the female teachers, nine out of nine participants have used [f] in place of the word-final [v]. Since 32 participants made this substitution, we can relate this result to Flege & Bohn's (2021) findings that "L1 phonetic categories in learners do "interfere and sometimes block" the creation of L2 categories" (p. 23).

To conclude, the high correspondence of MSA fricatives to GAE ones works in favor of Saudi speakers of English. All 32 participants produced the segment [v] as [f], confirming findings from Koffi's (2021) work on Arabic fricatives. An impressionistic review of segments is still needed to detect fricatives using thresholds. This point will be explored in future studies. As for intelligibility considerations, since [v] and [f] have a small RFL load (9%), this segment is deemed to have "good intelligibility" according to Graph 6.

4.3 The Nasals of Saudi Spoken English

Nasals in Modern Standard Arabic share two of three nasals in GAE. Alghamdi (2015) confirms that segment [m] is a voiced bilabial while [n] is a voiced alveolar in MSA. The voiced velar [ŋ] will be the focus of this section to highlight how Saudi EFL teachers produce this segment and if intelligibility can be a problem. Catford's (1987) RFL findings for the voiced velar [ŋ] in word-final point to an 18% load when replaced by [n]

and 14% for [m]. Like fricatives, any substitutions in nasals have a low impact on intelligibility in Saudi Spoken English. Research conducted by Koffi (2021, pp. 179-180) on the nasals of GAE, using the same read speech data, point to intensity as a potential acoustic correlate for distinguishing between [m] and [n]. Duration, on the other hand, is an acoustic correlate between [m] and [n], and [n] and [ŋ] only. The JND threshold for intensity is ≥ 3 dB and for duration ≥ 10 ms, according to Koffi (2021). Formants are also a cue to nasal intelligibility with their respective JNDs, as shown in Graph 5. In brief, segments [m] and [n] will be perceived as similar between an L1 and an L2, so long as their acoustic distance is ≤ 200 Hz for F2. For segment [ŋ], the threshold looks at F3 as the strongest cue, and the respective JND is ≤ 400 Hz.

The measurements for SSE nasals are presented next. First, the findings for intensity and duration are provided along with measurements for F2 and F3. The results presented for both female and male SSE nasals are derived from the measurements of 276 tokens. Table 7 shows intensity and duration results for female participants.

	Intensity (dB)				Duration (ms)		
Word	meet	need	bring		meet	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]		[m]	[n]	[ŋ]
Female SSE SD	3.5	4.3	5.2		21.7	22.0	39.3
Female SSE Mean	66	68	64		91	64	111
Female GAE Mean	70	73	70		86	60	95

Table 7: Female SSE Intensity and Duration of Nasals

For this group, intensity seems to be an acoustic cue to differentiate between SSE [n] and [ŋ] with an acoustic distance above the JND threshold (≥ 3 dB). A stronger cue is duration with all three segments perceptually above the 10 ms threshold. Table 8 details the measurements for F2, and F3.

	F2 (Hz)				F3 (Hz)		
Word	meet	need	bring		meet	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]		[m]	[n]	[ŋ]
Female SSE SD	346.2	465.9	414.3		99.2	370.1	126.7
Female SSE Mean	1494	1708	1487		2615	2775	2678
Female GAE Mean	1520	1838	1968		2646	2865	2768

Table 8: Female SSE Formant Measurements of Nasals

Based on the JND thresholds discussed previously, the F2 of SSE segment [m] (1494 Hz) is perceived as similar than the GAE [m] (1520 Hz) with only 26 Hz between them. The same occurs for segment [n]. The SSE alveolar is within the 200 Hz JND of GAE segment [n]. Lastly, for segment [ŋ], the participants produced this missing L1 sound within the 400 Hz JND of GAE, making it an intelligible segment. The results for their male counterparts are presented next. Table 9 details the intensity and duration for male SSE nasals.

	Intensity (dB)				Duration (ms)		
Word	meet	need	bring		meet	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]		[m]	[n]	[ŋ]
Male SSE SD	4.3	2.4	4.2		33.0	18.4	55.4
Male SSE Mean	66	72	67		87	71	144
Male GAE Mean	69	73	72		82	67	79

Table 9: Male SSE Intensity and Duration of Nasals

For male Saudi teachers, intensity is a cue to discriminate between [m] and [n], and [n] and [ŋ]. More robust is duration, whereas all three segments have more than 10 ms between them. Table 10 looks at the F2 and F3 for male SSE nasals.

	F2 (Hz)				F3 (Hz)		
Word	meet	need	bring		meet	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]		[m]	[n]	[ŋ]
Male SSE SD	200.3	344.0	547.6		171.4	231.8	216.0
Male SSE Mean	1540	1609	1634		2453	2434	2477
Male GAE Mean	1458	1536	1381		2528	2542	2372

Table 10: Male SSE Formant Measurements of Nasals

Similar to the female SSE measurements, all results for the male group show that segments [m], [n], and [ŋ] are intelligible to GAE listeners. The F2 values for SSE [m] and [n] are within 200 Hz of the GAE group. Segment [ŋ] is within the 400 Hz threshold, making nasals produced by male participants intelligible to GAE listeners. In conclusion, although segment [ŋ] is not present in MSA, both female and male participants produce it without substitution and are intelligible to GAE listeners. The most relevant acoustic cue for SSE nasals is duration over intensity.

4.4 The Approximants of Saudi Spoken English

The approximants of GAE are separated into liquids and glides. Leaving [j] aside, since it is not investigated here, two out of three segments are a phonemic match between GAE and MSA ([l] and [m]). The MSA segment [r] is a voiced alveolar trill, while the GAE segment [ɹ] is a voiced palatal approximant. This segment will be a focus for this section. One possible consequence to intelligibility when considering RFL occurs between [l] and [ɹ] in word-initial, with a high load at 83%. However, since the MSA segment [l] is similar to that of GAE and MSA's [r] is trilled, this RFL consideration may not be necessary. The acoustic cues for approximants in GAE show that intensity is not a factor, duration only discriminates between [ɹ] and [w], and F3 is a strong indicator between [l] and [ɹ] (Koffi, 2021, pp. 206–208). The JND threshold used by Koffi (2021) for liquids considers that “[r] masks [l] if its F3 is $\geq 2,600$ Hz, unless it is trilled” (p. 208). Since trilling is possible as an L1 transfer feature for SSE, determining the JND of when trilling occurs for [r] is important. Ladefoged (2003) contends that the degree of trilling (in Hz) can be determined by dividing the absolute duration (1000 ms) over the relative duration of the segment. The threshold for trilling has also been determined ≥ 22 Hz.

Word	Intensity (dB)				Duration (ms)				F3 (Hz)			
	call	Stella	red	we	call	Stella	red	we	call	Stella	red	we
Seg- ment	[t]	[l]	[ɹ]	[w]	[t]	[l]	[ɹ]	[w]	[t]	[l]	[ɹ]	[w]
Female SSE SD	4.4	3.4	9.0	4.9	14.4	25.0	15.1	22.0	339.6	288.7	347.4	232.0
Female SSE Mean	64	65	58	65	40	72	76	60	3154	3087	2689	2877
Female GAE Mean	73	71	71	72	39	68	52	49	2863	3067	2281	2608

Table 11: Female SSE Intensity, Duration and F3 Measurements of Approximants

Data of approximants (276 tokens) produced by female Saudi EFL teachers are presented with findings for intensity, duration and F3 measurements of SSE segments [t], [l], [ɹ], and [w] in Table 11.

Female participants do not perceptually distinguish their approximants by way of intensity. Only the SSE segment [ɹ] seems to have a significant intensity difference; however, the high standard deviation of 9 dB shows inconsistency in the way it is produced by this group. Similarly, with duration, the SSE segment [ɹ] is lengthened by 24 ms compared to the GAE segment, making this perceptually different. The degree of potential vibration is 13.15 Hz (1000/76), way below the threshold to qualify as a trilled [ɹ]. With F3 the most salient formant to determine intelligibility of [ɹ] for L2 speakers, Table 11 shows that the 23 female participants produce the segment above 2600 Hz, which according to the JND indicates that [ɹ] is masking [l] since these participants do not trill their [ɹ] segment. Furthermore, according to Graph 5 seen previously, the JND for approximants is ≥ 400 Hz. Any acoustic distance for F3 measurements below this JND between SSE and GAE is deemed perceptually similar. SSE segments [t], [l], and [w] show no intelligibility issues, while SSE segment [ɹ] may be a contributor to poor intelligibility and could be confused with [l] by GAE listeners. To see if this is also the case for the male participants, Table 12 shows the intensity and duration, and F3 for male SSE approximants.

Results show that intensity is a dependable acoustic correlate in male SSE approximants for distinguishing between [t] and [w] only. Duration is an acoustic cue for distinguishing between [l] and [ɹ] only. Furthermore, similar to their female colleagues, the SSE segment [ɹ] is lengthened (by 28 ms) and could be a strategy to accommodate for this new L2 category. The F3 value of segment [ɹ] is below the JND threshold for masking with [l]. Overall, all four SSE segments are perceptually intelligible since the acoustic distance is less than 400 Hz for similar segments in GAE. Overall, both female and male participants use duration as a robust acoustic correlate to distinguish their approximants. Additionally, the MSA segments present in GAE transfer without causing intelligibility issues. Only the female SSE [ɹ] segment has been shown to potentially cause masking with [l]. If so, the RFL shows a load of 83% and causes poor intelligibility. This was not observed with the male participants.

Word	Intensity (dB)				Duration (ms)				F3 (Hz)			
	call	Stella	red	we	call	Stella	red	we	call	Stella	red	we
Segment	[t]	[l]	[.ɹ]	[w]	[t]	[l]	[.ɹ]	[w]	[t]	[l]	[.ɹ]	[w]
Male SSE SD	8.1	4.8	9.2	5.1	39.6	23.2	50.8	30.0	170.3	108.8	453.6	232.5
Male SSE Mean	63	66	65	68	68	71	81	73	2587	2567	2411	2523
Male GAE Mean	76	71	70	72	56	56	53	53	2450	2587	2170	2413

Table 12: Male SSE Intensity, Duration and F3 of Approximants

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This empirical research offers a rare glimpse into the segmental features of English as spoken by Saudi EFL teachers. To this day, research that has looked into the L2 speech of Saudi speakers of English overwhelmingly focuses on younger participants in an ESL setting. This work on consonants further informs on the segmental features and intelligibility of Saudi Spoken English after being done so for vowels (Duris, 2021) for a population working as EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia's most prestigious universities. The methodology used for this research is drawn from several phoneticians and acousticians in perceptual thresholds for General American English and the pronunciation work on intelligibility from Levis (2005). In 2012, Koffi started research to combine such findings in acoustic phonetics and intelligibility for L2 Englishes. Since then, many works have been published using Koffi's framework for intelligibility, and this research is the first one dedicated to consonants of Saudi L2 English. When looking into L2 segmentals from a bottom-up approach, the L1 has a large impact on the production and perception of new sounds (Flege & Bohn, 2021).

Regarding RQ1, the study divides consonants into four main groups to answer this research question, focusing on stops, fricatives, nasals, and approximants. For the stops, the missing segments in MSA are the voiceless bilabial [p] and the voiced velar [g]. All other stops have a possible phonemic match since their features (glottal state, place, and manner) are similar. For both female and male participants, results show that all six segments of stops are produced intelligibly, including the missing L1 MSA segments [p] and [g]. Furthermore, the instrumental data from the 32 participants show that lengthening is an apparent strategy used to produce segment [p]. The female SSE [p] is lengthened by 15 ms compared to known GAE thresholds. The male segment [p] is lengthened by 17 ms compared to GAE. For fricatives, the missing segment in MSA is only the voiced labiodental [v]. All 32 participants produced the L2 target segment [v] as a voiceless labiodental [f]. The perceptual difference is only present for the female participants while the male participants do not distinguish their segment [f] and [v] using intensity. This may cause an intelligibility interference further covered in RQ2 and RQ3. For nasals, both groups of Saudi EFL teachers could produce intelligibly the only missing GAE nasal in their L1, the voiced velar [ŋ]. Duration is the strongest acoustic correlate to distinguish nasals when analyzing SSE. Some differences occurred

between the two groups with the last consonant group, approximants. In MSA, the rhotic segment is different because it is trilled. This did not affect the male participants, who produced intelligibly the voiced palatal [ɹ] within the same acoustic distance as GAE known literature data. However, this is different for the female EFL teachers, who show a potential intelligibility barrier for segment [ɹ], which can mask segment [l]. This is further developed in RQ2 and RQ3 next.

Two specific segments in SSE could not be perceived intelligibly based on the acoustic correlates and associated thresholds. The male participants' fricative segment [v] was substituted by the voiceless labiodental [f]. When considering RFL for such change, Appendix B points to a 9% load for a word-final replacement. This substitution does not affect intelligibility as a whole, and it will be perceived as "good intelligibility," according to Graph 6. For the approximant segment [ɹ], the acoustic measurements have shown that the female participants do not distinguish their SSE [ɹ] from their SSE [l] segment. The substitution used by these speakers does not refer to their L1. It is conclusive from the measurements that female SSE [ɹ] is not trilled; however, since F3 is the acoustic correlate used to distinguish these two segments, a lack of lip rounding and protrusion may be at play. It is also important to highlight that the threshold for this segment is $\geq 2,600$ Hz. The female participants passed this threshold by only 89 Hz, with a total standard deviation for this segment at 347 Hz. Human errors in measurements should be considered. With a confusion of [ɹ] for [l], potential GAE listeners would not distinguish the segments clearly. This masking affects intelligibility since the RFL for this pair carries an 83% load, which is deemed "poor intelligibility" (Graph 6).

To conclude, Saudi Spoken English consonants would almost all be perceived intelligibly by typical GAE listeners in this study. With a total of five segments not present in their L1, these Saudi EFL teachers show a high level of intelligibility. Even when a substitution occurs ([f] for [v]), the low relative functional load for this pair in English proves beneficial for these L2 speakers.

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Appendix A: Relative Functional Load Percentages (Koffi, 2021, pp. 49-50)

No.	Word Initial	Percentage	Word Final	Percentage	Words	Vowel Phonemes ^a	Percentage
1.	k/h	100	d/z	100	bit/bat	/ɪ/ vs. /æ/	100
2.	p/b	98	d/l	76	beet/bit	/i/ vs. /ɪ/	95
3.	p/k	92	n/l	75	bought/boat	/ɑ/ or /a/ vs. /o/	88
4.	p/t	87	t/d	72	bit/but	/ɪ/ vs. /ʌ/	85
5.	p/h	85	d/n	69	bit/bait	/ɪ/ vs. /e/	80
6.	s/h	85	l/z	66	cat/cot	/æ/ vs. /ɔ/ or /ɑ/	76
7.	l/r	83	t/k	65	cat/cut	/æ/ vs. /ʌ/	68
8.	b/d	82	t/z	61	cot/cut	/ɔ/ or /ɑ/ vs. /ʌ/	65
9.	t/k	81	l/n	58	caught/curt	/ɑ/ or /ɔ/ vs. /ʌ/	64
10.	t/s	81	t/s	57	coat/curt	/o/ vs. /ʌ/	63
11.	d/l	79	p/t	43	bit/bet	/ɪ/ vs. /e/	54
12.	p/f	77	p/k	42.5	bet/bait	/e/ vs. /e/	53
13.	b/w	76	m/n	42	bet/bat	/e/ vs. /æ/	53
14.	d/r	75	s/z	38	coat/coot	/o/ vs. /u/	51
15.	h/zero	74	t/tʃ	31	cat/cart	/æ/ vs. /ɑ/	51
16.	t/d	73	k/g	29	beet/boot	/i/ vs. /u/	50
17.	b/g	71	*t/θ	27	bet/but	/e/ vs. /ʌ/	50
18.	f/h	69	k/tʃ	26	bought/boot	/ɔ/ or /ɑ/ vs. /u/	50
19.	f/s	64	b/d	24	hit/hurt	/ɪ/ vs. /ʌ/	49
20.	n/l	61	d/g	23	beat/beard	/i/ vs. /iə/	47
21.	m/n	59	v/z	22	pet/pot	/e/ vs. /ɑ/	45
22.	d/g	56	d/dʒ	22	hard/hide	/ɑ/ vs. /aɪ/	44
23.	f/h	55	b/m	21	bet/bite	/e/ vs. /aɪ/	43
24.	s/f	53	g/ŋ	21	cart/caught	/ɑ/ vs. /a/ or /ɔ/	43
25.	d/n	53	b/g	20	cart/cur	/ɑ/ vs. /ʌ/	41
26.	k/g	50	n/ŋ	18	boat/bout	/o/ vs. /aʊ/	40.5
27.	g/w	49	p/f	17	cut/curt	/ʌ/ vs. /ʌ/	40
28.	n/r	41	s/θ	17	cut/cart	/ʌ/ vs. /ɑ/	38
29.	t/tʃ	39	dʒ/z	16	Kay/care	/e/ vs. /e/	35
30.	d/dʒ	39	m/v	16	cart/cot	/ɑ/ vs. /a/ or /ɔ/	31.5
31.	s/tʃ	37	ŋ/l	15	*here/hair	/iə/ vs. /e/	30
32.	g/dʒ	31	p/b	14	light/lout	/aɪ/ vs. /aʊ/	30
33.	b/v	29	m/ŋ	14	*cot/caught	/ɔ/ vs. /ɑ/	26

Appendix B: RFL continued

No.	Word Initial	Percentage	Word Final	Percentage	Words	Vowel Phonemes	Percentage
34.	*w/hw ¹⁰	27	g/dʒ	13	fire/fair	/aɪə/ vs. /ɛ/	25
35.	*ʃ/tʃ	26	*tʃ/ʃ	12	her/here	/ə/ vs. /iə/	24
36.	*f/v	23	*f/v	9	buy/boy	/aɪ/ vs. /ɔɪ/	24
37.	*v/w	22	*f/θ	9	car/cow	/ɑ/ vs. /aʊ/	23
38.	dʒ/dr	21	tʃ/dʒ	8	her/hair	/ə/ vs. /ɛ/	21
39.	s/θ	21	b/v	7	*tire/tower	/aɪə/ vs. /aʊə/	19
40.	dʒ/j	20.5	s/ʃ	7	box/books	/ɑ/ or /ɔ/ vs. /ʊ/	18
41.	*d/ð	19	z/ð	7	*paw/pore	/ɔ/ vs. /ɔ:/	15
42.	*tʃ/dʒ	19	*θ/ð	6	pill/pull	/ɪ/ vs. /ʊ/	13.5
43.	*t/θ	18	*d/ð	5	pull/pole	/ʊ/ vs. /o/	12
44.	tʃ/tr	16	v/ð	1	bid/beard	/ɪ/ vs. /iə/	11
45.	*f/θ	15			bad/beard	/æ/ vs. /iə/	10
46.	*f/hw	13			*pin/pen	/ɪ/ vs. /ɛ/	9
47.	*v/ð	11			*put/putt	/ʊ/ vs. /ʌ/	9
48.	*kw/hw	8			bad/beard	/æ/ vs. /ɛə/	8
49.	d/z	7			*pull/pool	/ʊ/ vs. /u/	7 ¹¹
50.	*s/z	6			*sure/shore	/uə/ vs. /ɔ:/	5
51.	*tw/kw	5			pooh/poor	/ʊ/ vs. /uə/	5
52.	v/z	2			*cam/calm	/æ/ vs. /ɑ/	4.5
53.	*θ/ð	1			putt/poor	/ʌ/ vs. /uə/	4.5
54.	*z/ð	1			good/gourd	/ʊ/ vs. /ʌ/	1

Appendix C: Linguistic Profile Data for Female Saudi Participants

Participant	Age	Country of Birth	City of Birth	Cities lived in KSA	Dialect ascription	Inner Circle life	If yes, age outside KSA	If yes, English used?	Age of 1st Spoken English	Age of 1st Eng class	Major Contrib. to fluency
KSAF1	35	KSA	Jeddah	Jeddah	Hijazi	UK / Canada	Adult	Yes	12	13	Entertainment
KSAF2	30	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	12	11	NS Interaction
KSAF3	27	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	7	7	Entertainment/NS Interaction
KSAF4	31	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	UK / USA	Child/Adult	Yes	12	12	Entertainment
KSAF5	35	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	5	11	Entertainment
KSAF6	37	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	USA	Child	Yes	7	3	Inner Circle Childhood
KSAF7	34	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Southern	-	-	-	11	11	Sibling
KSAF8	31	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	12	16	Entertainment/NS Interaction
KSAF9	45	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	UK	Adult	Yes	18	17	NS Interaction
KSAF10	29	KSA	Medina	Medina	Hijazi	-	-	-	6	6	Entertainment
KSAF11	29	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	USA	Child	Yes	8	5	School
KSAF12	35	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	USA	Child	No	6	6	Inner Circle Childhood
KSAF13	30	KSA	Taif	Taif	Hijazi	USA	Child	Yes	6	6	Inner Circle Childhood
KSAF14	34	KSA	Jubail	Dammam	Gulf	USA	Child	Yes	13	13	NS Interaction
KSAF15	35	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Hijazi	-	-	-	12	12	Entertainment
KSAF16	30	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	Australia	Adult	Yes	11	11	Entertainment
KSAF17	41	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	Canada	Child	Yes	13	13	Entertainment/NS Interaction
KSAF18	34	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	6	12	Entertainment/NS Interaction
KSAF19	37	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	USA	Adult	Yes	13	13	NS Interaction
KSAF20	31	KSA	Riyadh	Jubail Jeddah Hail Riyadh	Northern	-	-	-	12	12	School
KSAF21	19	KSA	Ottawa, CA	Riyadh	Najdi	Canada	Child	Yes	5	5	Inner Circle Childhood
KSAF22	25	KSA	Jeddah	Jeddah Riyadh Taif Tabuk	Najdi	-	-	-	13	9	Entertainment/NS Interaction
KSAF23	30	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	UK/US	Adult	Yes	7	7	Tutoring

Appendix D: Linguistic Profile Data for Male Saudi Participants

Participant	Age	Country of Birth	City of Birth	Cities lived in KSA	Dialect ascription	Inner Circle life	If yes, age outside KSA	if yes, English used?	Age of 1st Spoken English	Age of 1st Eng class	Major Contrib. to fluency
KSAM1	30	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	21	15	NS Interaction
KSAM2	28	USA	Michigan	Riyadh	Najdi	USA	Child/Adult	Yes	5	5	Inner Circle Childhood
KSAM3	28	KSA	Makkah	Makkah Riyadh	Najdi	Canada	Adult	Yes	5	9	Entertainment
KSAM4	31	KSA	Buraydah	Buraydah Riyadh	Najdi	USA	Adult	Yes	16	15	Entertainment/NS Interaction
KSAM5	38	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	19	13	School
KSAM6	39	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	16	13	Entertainment
KSAM7	53	KSA	Medina	Riyadh	Najdi	-	-	-	19	13	NS Interaction
KSAM8	32	KSA	Riyadh	Riyadh	Northern	UK/US	Adult	Yes	11	11	NS Interaction
KSAM9	28	KSA	Riyadh	Hafir Batin	Najdi	USA	Adult	Yes	24	17	NS Interaction

Appendix E: Female SSE Analyzed Tokens

Female Saudi Spoken English VOTs (in ms)

Word	peas	big	toy	(W)day	kids	go
Segment	[p]	[b]	[t]	[d]	[k]	[g]
KSAF1	31	-86	54	11	53	16
KSAF2	73	-7	63	22	49	22
KSAF3	23	-47	93	13	62	28
KSAF4	9	-155	90	14	58	16
KSAF5	61	11	85	4	66	-64
KSAF6	91	9	62	30	52	17
KSAF7	71	9	100	6	53	16
KSAF8	117	17	62	10	48	19
KSAF9	68	-108	96	18	60	14
KSAF10	63	153	97	9	55	31
KSAF11	93	14	102	29	90	37
KSAF12	51	16	36	37	56	-70
KSAF13	34	-122	102	17	59	39
KSAF14	43	-108	80	14	55	16
KSAF15	64	-106	79	14	51	19
KSAF16	70	-131	79	16	47	15
KSAF17	47	9	63	15	41	10
KSAF18	100	23	117	27	62	20
KSAF19	91	-108	66	23	55	16
KSAF20	97	-94	76	34	56	25
KSAF21	108	-183	120	19	57	19
KSAF22	78	-125	69	24	57	31
KSAF23	107	-201	92	19	82	19
Female SSE SD	29.1	85.6	20.7	8.7	10.6	26.5
Female SSE Mean	69	-57	82	18	58	14
Loker & Abramson	28	7-65	39	9-56	43	17-45
JND (VOT)	≥ 26 ms					
	≥ 34 ms					
	≥ 42 ms					

Female SSE Formant Measurements of Approximants

Word	F1 (Hz)				F2 (Hz)				F3 (Hz)			
	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]
KSAF1	380	391	485	1531	1339	1512	2524	2543	2609			
KSAF2	438	341	437	2169	1749	2291	2741	3012	2809			
KSAF3	460	421	529	1540	1557	1537	2618	2878	2653			
KSAF4	501	430	607	1153	1795	817	2574	2755	2797			
KSAF5	403	378	457	1547	1967	1251	2639	2411	2782			
KSAF6	385	429	309	1601	1354	1408	2622	2354	2523			
KSAF7	465	398	455	2436	2304	1967	2885	2919	2878			
KSAF8	391	484	416	1446	1094	1314	2606	2673	2710			
KSAF9	440	477	466	1362	2504	1121	2487	3447	2701			
KSAF10	329	191	595	1340	1151	2159	2477	2575	2609			
KSAF11	352	401	421	1470	1437	1707	2630	2425	2715			
KSAF12	461	569	356	1306	1167	728	2625	2464	2604			
KSAF13	321	461	388	1698	1518	1532	2764	2905	2824			
KSAF14	462	541	421	1375	1449	1266	2606	2533	2468			
KSAF15	392	468	506	1158	2142	1469	2533	2647	2670			
KSAF16	394	326	408	1613	1649	1545	2555	2552	2602			
KSAF17	442	358	478	1882	1307	1535	2581	2647	2558			
KSAF18	521	438	532	1279	1031	968	2545	2516	2702			
KSAF19	451	694	495	1004	2087	1036	2527	3272	2499			
KSAF20	432	483	531	1225	2350	1822	2535	3704	2938			
KSAF21	354	347	396	1426	2258	1817	2560	3269	2492			
KSAF22	415	432	489	1830	1964	2091	2772	2951	2768			
KSAF23	329	482	428	973	2302	1313	2668	2662	2687			
Female SSE SD	59.1	97.3	71.4	346.2	465.9	414.3	99.2	370.1	126.7			
Female SSE Mean	410	432	461	1494	1708	1487	2615	2775	2678			

Female Saudi Spoken English Fricative Measurements (intensity in dB)

Word	peas	big	toy	(W)day	kids	go
Segment	[p]	[b]	[t]	[d]	[k]	[g]
KSAF1	61	68	40	38	51	61
KSAF2	61	68	40	38	51	61
KSAF3	63	64	61	61	53	50
KSAF4	73	74	30	59	62	56
KSAF5	68	68	31	57	50	52
KSAF6	62	59	53	56	51	60
KSAF7	72	68	63	47	48	63
KSAF8	61	68	40	45	38	51
KSAF9	65	75	37	61	62	50
KSAF10	67	68	62	61	51	46
KSAF11	64	67	36	53	50	50
KSAF12	57	64	33	53	47	39
KSAF13	72	71	30	34	38	40
KSAF14	60	72	33	62	59	52
KSAF15	63	62	46	36	37	45
KSAF16	63	64	37	37	41	31
KSAF17	61	68	45	43	37	51
KSAF18	59	56	35	36	47	46
KSAF19	65	76	37	59	60	61
KSAF20	66	72	41	33	43	33
KSAF21	53	53	40	33	40	61
KSAF22	68	78	36	35	51	46
KSAF23	57	58	34	38	39	31
Female SSE SD	5.3	5.3	1.4	4.6	7.5	1.8
Female SSE Mean	64	67	32	56	50	51
Female SSE SD	71	71	32	62	62	68
JND Fricative	≥ 10 dB					

Female SSE Intensity and Duration of Approximants

Word	F1 (Hz)				F2 (Hz)				F3 (Hz)			
	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]
KSAF1	71	62	46	61	32	63	95	87				
KSAF2	66	72	62	61	46	49	55	49				
KSAF3	68	70	59	70	26	87	75	43				
KSAF4	61	66	63	70	40	91	75	96				
KSAF5	70	67	77	66	22	62	45	95				
KSAF6	61	63	60	67	30	66	68	69				
KSAF7	67	66	58	66	20	52	102	57				
KSAF8	61	63	62	63	51	76	72	62				
KSAF9	59	68	60	56	45	54	103	82				
KSAF10	65	65	65	68	34	48	90	51				
KSAF11	61	62	68	62	32	51	60	68				
KSAF12	58	65	59	58	27	62	60	85				
KSAF13	68	68	61	69	38	119	70	35				
KSAF14	63	68	70	71	50	73	88	90				
KSAF15	57	58	56	65	26	29	95	66				
KSAF16	61	62	52	70	30	63	64	41				
KSAF17	62	62	50	74	61	80	80	45				
KSAF18	61	66	60	58	55	66	64	79				
KSAF19	67	69	72	66	76	114	80	28				
KSAF20	71	61	55	67	57	130	79	37				
KSAF21	60	70	64	57	23	50	79	34				
KSAF22	70	64	56	61	44	98	87	42				
KSAF23	68	64	64	65	47	71	70	37				
Female SSE SD	4.4	3.4	9.0	4.9	14.4	25.0	15.1	22.0				
Female SSE Mean	64	65	58	65	40	72	76	60				
Female SSE SD	73	71	71	72	39	68	52	49				
JND Formant	≥ 10 dB											

Female SSE Intensity and Duration of Nasals

Word	F1 (Hz)				F2 (Hz)				F3 (Hz)			
	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring	meat	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]	[m]	[n]	[l]	[w]
KSAF1	67	70	64		117	50	121					
KSAF2	66	71	64		70	49	106					
KSAF3	66	58	66		109	82	98					
KSAF4	66	73	67		103	55	41					
KSAF5	69	72	65		88	47	84					
KSAF6	69	68	66		122	38	97					
KSAF7	70	70	58		107	56	77					
KSAF8	59	59	60		132	72	119					
KSAF9	68	68	63		81	133	58					
KSAF10	72	68	62		94	50	85					
KSAF11	63	66	60		114	71	140					
KSAF12	66	66	59		62	50	200					
KSAF13	63	61	65		56	71	115					
KSAF14	70	73	71		92	50	117					
KSAF15	61	68	65		56	59	136					
KSAF16	67	70	65		86	80	141					
KSAF17	70	74	71		108	63	174					
KSAF18	65	65	65		64	80	170					
KSAF19	68	71	66		76	80	127					
KSAF20	63	65	65		69	36	43					
KSAF21	68	66	65		102	90	85					
KSAF22	61	72	67		90	35	101					
KSAF23	72	68	64		90	80	108					
Female SSE SD	3.5	4.3	5.2		21.7	22.0	39.3					
Female SSE Mean	66	68	64		91	64	111					
Female GAE Mean	70	73	70		86	60	95					

Female SSE Formant Measurements of Approximants

Word	F1 (Hz)				F2 (Hz)				F3 (Hz)			
	me	ne	br	me<	me	ne	br	me<	me	ne	br	me<
Segment	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
KAS000	600	619	622	527	1204	1240	1253	1409	3609	3113	2412	2638
KAS049	491	466	564	500	1240	1209	1408	3427	2881	2534		
KAS054	763	651	519	505	2097	1314	1272	916	3140	2857	2457	2620
KAS059	739	542	522	646	1545	1539	1459	3407	3267	3257	3370	2875
KAS060	436	422	474	538	1118	1212	1438	3424	3308	3060	2661	2846
KAS076	476	531	632	466	1348	1483	2626	1080	3140	2526	3346	2700
KAS078	436	436	436	436	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS093	437	530	427	628	1228	1642	1503	2855	2855	2855	2901	2412
KAS098	435	436	432	472	1668	1653	1232	1973	2767	2638	2338	1100
KAS101	436	486	426	474	1313	1851	1610	3137	3297	3109	2870	2670
KAS107	436	436	436	436	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS109	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS110	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS113	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS115	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS116	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS118	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS119	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS120	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS121	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS122	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS123	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS124	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS125	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS126	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS127	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS128	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS129	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS130	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS131	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS132	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS133	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS134	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS135	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS136	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS137	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS138	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS139	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS140	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS141	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS142	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS143	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS144	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS145	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS146	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS147	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS148	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS149	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS150	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS151	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS152	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS153	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS154	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS155	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS156	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS157	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS158	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS159	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS160	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS161	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS162	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS163	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS164	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS165	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS166	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS167	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS168	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS169	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS170	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS171	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS172	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS173	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS174	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS175	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS176	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS177	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS178	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS179	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS180	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS181	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS182	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS183	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS184	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS185	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS186	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS187	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS188	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS189	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS190	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS191	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS192	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS193	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS194	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS195	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS196	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS197	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS198	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS199	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS200	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS201	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS202	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS203	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS204	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	3140
KAS205	437	437	437	437	1348	1348	1348	3140	3140	3140	3140	

Appendix F: Male SSE Analyzed Tokens

Male Saudi Spoken English FOTs

Word	peas	big	toy	(W)day	kids	go
Segment	[p]	[b]	[t]	[d]	[k]	[ŋ]
KSAM1	50	-55	73	8	53	-41
KSAM2	79	21	50	38	77	-52
KSAM3	12	-69	45	22	48	24
KSAM4	42	10	77	14	64	28
KSAM5	34	12	**	19	71	14
KSAM6	46	9	111	24	66	24
KSAM7	23	-178	43	33	37	-79
KSAM8	32	8	37	24	35	28
KSAM9	89	-60	46	13	70	-98
Male SSE SD	25.0	65.0	25.1	9.6	15.3	50.7
Male SSE Mean	45	-34	60	22	58	-17
Lisker & Abramson	28	7/-65	39	9/-56	43	17/-45
JND (VOT)	≥ 26 ms		≥ 34 ms		≥ 42 ms	

Male Saudi Spoken English Fricative Measurements (intensity in dB)

Word	siz	phase	five	thick	these	her	she	plastic	(W)day
Segment	[s]	[z]	[f]	[θ]	[ð]	[h]	[ʃ]	[tʃ]	[dʒ]
KSAM1	63	76	57	50	60	61	62	73	64
KSAM2	46	62	56	53	54	48	53	64	55
KSAM3	61	60	56	55	55	50	53	74	53
KSAM4	62	68	55	57	55	60	58	62	53
KSAM5	63	70	55	61	54	58	63	69	59
KSAM6	72	63	62	57	57	46	68	77	64
KSAM7	78	78	63	58	54	71	71	78	66
KSAM8	66	62	55	51	52	45	64	73	52
KSAM9	63	62	47	51	54	49	49	60	49
Male SSE SD	8.7	6.6	4.6	3.8	2.3	8.7	7.4	6.6	6.2
Male SSE Mean	64	67	56	55	55	54	60	70	57
GAE Mean	69	71	63	61	62	67	66	63	68
JND Fricatives	≤ 3dB								

Male SSE Intensity and Duration of Nasals

Word	Intensity (dB)			Duration (ms)		
	meet	need	bring	meet	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]
KSAM1	68	68	71	149	52	150
KSAM2	59	74	61	54	50	100
KSAM3	67	71	61	91	70	137
KSAM4	66	70	66	117	69	189
KSAM5	69	70	69	43	114	104
KSAM6	60	73	72	87	69	113
KSAM7	73	76	70	90	70	100
KSAM8	65	71	67	94	75	270
KSAM9	66	71	63	56	71	134
Male SSE SD	4.3	2.4	4.2	33.0	18.4	55.4
Male SSE Mean	66	72	67	87	71	144
Male GAE Mean	69	73	72	82	67	79

Male SSE Formant Measurements of Nasals

Word	F1 (Hz)			F2 (Hz)			F3 (Hz)		
	meet	need	bring	meet	need	bring	meet	need	bring
Segment	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]
KSAM1	300	305	309	1397	1382	1474	2421	2512	2274
KSAM2	502	418	478	1475	1472	1417	2367	2480	2534
KSAM3	451	410	489	2022	1741	2479	2511	2497	2565
KSAM4	328	306	348	1446	1593	1362	2530	2646	2479
KSAM5	342	420	605	1398	1082	1697	2480	1942	2840
KSAM6	386	759	399	1536	1712	769	2747	2351	2171
KSAM7	464	509	498	1445	1558	1518	2095	2217	2332
KSAM8	319	330	484	1679	2362	2501	2494	2621	2551
KSAM9	475	333	401	1459	1579	1489	2436	2638	2651
Male SSE SD	77.4	143.5	90.1	200.3	344.0	547.6	171.4	231.8	216.0
Male SSE Mean	396	421	446	1540	1609	1634	2453	2434	2477
Male GAE Mean	281	275	309	1458	1536	1381	2528	2542	2372

Male SSE Intensity and Duration of Approximants

Word	Intensity (dB)				Duration (ms)			
	call	Stella	red	we	call	Stella	red	we
Segment	[ɪ]	[ɪ]	[ɛ]	[w]	[ɪ]	[ɪ]	[ɛ]	[w]
KSAM1	69	57	45	68	103	100	201	51
KSAM2	49	69	64	69	127	67	30	35
KSAM3	70	68	66	73	27	34	80	64
KSAM4	62	64	68	58	36	93	75	132
KSAM5	67	69	64	63	40	51	98	83
KSAM6	64	61	80	75	51	62	45	84
KSAM7	69	73	65	70	27	62	50	44
KSAM8	64	66	70	69	107	104	54	96
KSAM9	49	65	62	70	95	66	96	65
Male SSE SD	8.1	4.8	9.2	5.1	39.6	23.2	50.8	30.0
Male SSE Mean	63	66	65	68	68	71	81	73
Male GAE Mean	76	71	70	72	56	56	53	53

Male SSE Formant Measurements of Approximants

Word	F1 (Hz)				F2 (Hz)				F3 (Hz)			
	call	Stella	red	we	call	Stella	red	we	call	Stella	red	we
Segment	[ɪ]	[ɪ]	[ɛ]	[w]	[ɪ]	[ɪ]	[ɛ]	[w]	[ɪ]	[ɪ]	[ɛ]	[w]
KSAM1	478	576	824	438	1143	1184	1551	1378	2401	2595	2379	2459
KSAM2	780	508	597	377	1729	1361	1582	1355	2391	2399	2522	2282
KSAM3	554	504	482	455	989	1176	1178	916	2789	2632	1940	2584
KSAM4	546	505	448	495	1171	1243	1314	1467	2807	2385	2134	2533
KSAM5	531	542	557	466	1361	1155	1012	1165	2414	2436	2146	2533
KSAM6	519	582	488	562	1111	1633	1171	975	2584	2584	2385	2249
KSAM7	531	482	389	406	976	1018	1679	1967	2414	2759	2334	3061
KSAM8	443	398	944	372	1602	2293	1595	1779	2784	2334	2326	2558
KSAM9	559	193	1471	441	1215	1766	2618	924	2096	2282	3529	2531
Male SSE SD	91.6	108.8	351.4	77.4	261.8	424.4	455.8	385.2	170.3	108.8	451.6	232.5
Male SSE Mean	547	432	677	448	1258	1396	1582	1238	2587	2567	2411	2523
Male GAE Mean	588	529	295	375	1090	1087	1515	1409	2459	2387	2170	2413

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***DATA POSSIBLY SUGGEST...* HEDGING IN SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING: A STUDY ON ADVANCED ITALIAN EFL LEARNERS**

Abstract

This paper explores the use of hedges in academic thesis abstracts among L1-Italian advanced university EFL learners drawing on a corpus of 217 abstracts written in English. Two rounds of contrastive analysis are carried out: 15 hedges are first compared to boosters and modals of logical possibility and inferential certainty. Secondly, a comparison is drawn against the MICUSP Corpus.

Results show that EFL students tend to use fewer hedges than their L1-English peers in favor of boosters and modals of epistemic certainty. However, patterns in the two corpora follow certain parallelisms and suggest awareness of hedging strategies by EFL learners. Given its complexity as a linguistic phenomenon, hedging deserves greater attention in academic writing courses and textbooks.

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1. Hedging as a metadiscursive practice

Academic writing is generally typified by a distinctive text structure and organization, the use of specialized lexicon, and the recurrence of typical syntactic patterns, such as complex subordination and passive-voice sentences. Another prominent feature of academic discourse is hedging, a metadiscursive phenomenon at the boundary between lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics. Through hedges, writers establish an interpersonal relationship with their readers and the scientific community at large. Hedge words are an expression of interpersonal stance and add caution and accuracy to statements by lowering the assertive force of a claim and its universal generalizability, thus avoiding “categorical assertions of truth” (Hyland 1998: 6). Hedging is characteristic of science discourse as it makes statements more reliable and widely acceptable, and enables writers to negotiate knowledge with their readers. In these terms, hedging facilitates recognition in the academic community and is also a component of argumentative and persuasive discourse. It amplifies credibility by modulating levels of assertiveness and trustworthiness and by avoiding sharp tendencies in favor of balanced propositions to argue claims.

In a broad view, hedge words include all those linguistic items that carry an epistemic stance and express the degree of truth of a proposition, limitations, imprecision, and approximation (Biber et al. 1999: 557). In addition, hedges also carry affective meaning, in that they show the writer’s attitude towards readers and the target subject matter (Hyland 1998).

In the vast literature on interpersonal stance, hedges have been variously classified. Common taxonomies are based on their scope, their specific function, and, most typically, the morphosyntactic category they belong to (their lexico-grammatical and surface features, according to Hyland 1998).

In terms of scope, hedges can lower the assertiveness or degree of certainty of a single word, a phrase, a full sentence, or even the illocutionary force of an entire utterance (Fraser 2010: 203-4). Hedging devices may more specifically be used to attenuate a statement and minimize a threat to the writer’s face, thus conveying “evasiveness, tentativeness, fuzziness, mitigation of responsibility and/or mitigation of certainty to the truth value of a proposition” (Salager-Meyer 1997: 129; Biber et al. 1999); conversely, they can also display greater accuracy of the author by revealing “the true state of the writers’ understanding and may be used to

negotiate an accurate representation of the state of the knowledge under discussion” (Salager-Meyer, 1997: 129; Hyland 1994; Garzone 2006). Overall, hedges can express politeness by mitigating an assertion while concurrently acknowledging other scholars’ work and stance, and allow for acceptability within the scientific community while aligning with the generally recognized standards of academic writing (Hinkel 2005).

Syntactically speaking, hedge words in written English include items from different word classes, ranging from adverbs to verbs and multiword units. Some of the most represented categories are epistemic stance adverbs (e.g., *possibly, potentially, apparently*), approximating adverbs and downtoners (e.g., *quite, almost, virtually*), modal verbs (e.g., *might, could, may*), lexical verbs carrying epistemic value (e.g., *seem, think, believe, suggest, appear*), epistemic adjectives and nouns (e.g., *likely, possibility*), if-clauses and set expressions narrowing the universality of a claim (e.g., *to our knowledge; based on the model proposed here/based on this study*; Hyland 1998: 3-4; 45-46). In scientific writing, hedges are commonly used when the author hypothesizes interpretations of data, describes the results of a study, or states its limitations. Here, hedge words address what Skelton (1997) defines evidential truth (derived from the experimental study itself and the ensuing statistical judgment) and interpreted truth (the author’s interpretation of findings), i.e., what the findings of a study are and what they mean (Hyland 1998: 56).

Hedges have been widely studied across different academic genres, and their use has been investigated among native and non-native speakers of English (henceforth, NSs and NNSs; see Hyland and Milton 1997; Hinkel 2005; Aull and Lancaster 2014; Vandenhoeck 2018). In this context, hedges are often opposed to boosters, another metadiscursive strategy employed in academic writing to voice a stronger level of commitment. Boosters are also expressions of stance and engagement with the audience (Hyland 2005: 179), but they “[increase] epistemic commitment” and express certainty (e.g., adverbs *clearly* and *definitely*; Aull and Lancaster 2014: 160) – a function that is nevertheless common in academic writing. While hedging weakens claims, boosting strengthens them, and where hedges “open dialogic space, [by] leaving space for alternatives or disagreement, [...] boosters such as *certainly* or *definitely* close dialogic space: They show full commitment or certainty and leave little room for disagreement” (Aull 2019: 270).

In what follows, we will explore how some hedging devices are used by advanced EFL learners in a specific, under-explored academic writing genre, i.e., thesis abstracts. The writing of L2 thesis abstracts is a required academic skill for language specialist students at undergraduate and graduate levels in Italian universities (majoring, for example, in foreign languages and linguistics, linguistic and cross-cultural mediation, or translation and interpreting studies). However, abstracts may be somewhat neglected as a genre in traditional academic writing courses, where students' attention is drawn to other, more common text types (e.g., essays and reports). To cover this knowledge gap, this study investigates the use of hedging in abstract writing within a corpus of texts produced by C1/C2-level Italian EFL university students, with a special focus on a set of hedge words (see Section 3.2).

2. Hedging in L2 academic writing

Hedging is a complex area to master in L2 academic writing. First of all, using hedges appropriately (or at all) is part of learners' academic writing skills, but especially pertains to pragmatic competence, which is typically late acquired (Fields and Matsuda 2018; Taguchi 2018). Secondly, hedge words, like many pragmatic markers, are usually polyfunctional expressions with no univocal form-meaning correspondence – and different hedges can serve the same function (Hyland 1998; Fraser 2010). This lack of one-to-one correspondence makes it difficult for learners to extract and generalize usage patterns. As a higher-level rhetorical device, hedging is not always foregrounded or is only partially covered in academic writing textbooks and courses (see, for example, Holmes 1988; Hyland 1994, 2008).

In the literature, EFL learners from different L1 backgrounds and disciplines have been seen to generally use fewer hedges than NSs in their academic written production, which often ends up sounding more assertive (Hyland and Milton 1997; Hinkel 2005; Siew Mei 2007; Vandenhoeck 2018). The trend has been recorded with both upper-intermediate and advanced learners, although the latter progressively select more hedges over boosters as L2 proficiency increases (Siew Mei 2007; Aull and Lancaster 2014). L2 learners also generally tend to employ a narrower range of hedges as compared to NSs in essays and theses (Hyland and Milton 1997; Hyland 1998; Abdollahzadeh 2011). Most privileged forms often include modal

verbs, which are typically given more emphasis over other hedging devices in academic writing textbooks (Hyland 1994, 1998; Demir 2018).

Although similar results have been found across different student groups, it is to be noted that different L1s and cultures adhere to diverse rhetorical models and practices, which may affect the directness and assertiveness of claims in academic discourse (Mauranen 1993; Hinkel 2005; and more generally on metadiscursive functions Ädel 2008). In parallel, different disciplines make different use of hedges and stance markers in general. Hedging appears to be generally more pervasive in soft vs. hard sciences (Hyland 2005), although differences have been observed when specific subgenres are concerned (an example is Hyland and Zou 2021's work on three-minute theses, where more hedges happened to be used by students in the hard sciences; see also Aull 2019). Teaching-oriented studies have shown that hedging, like pragmatic competence in general, appears to benefit from explicit instruction in L2 academic writing classes (Wishnoff 2000; Algi 2012). Camiciottoli (2003) carried out an exploratory study on metadiscourse and ESP reading comprehension of L1-Italian college students and highlighted the need for targeted instruction in that regard. These studies thus suggest the need for both textbooks and instructors to focus more extensively on the expression of stance in academic discourse.

Within research on hedging in EFL academic writing (see, for example, Feng 2019; Firoozjahantigh et al. 2021; Zhao and Liu 2021), there is still little on texts produced by Italian natives. Neff et al. (2003) examine the use of evidential hedges in the writings of NS and NNS with five different L1s (Italian was among those). The comparison between L1 and L2 shows more limited use of lexical modality expressions in NNS writings, but the research tackles the specificity of Italian learners only partially. Dheskali (2020) analyzes four corpora consisting of L1 (Italian and Albanian) and L2 (Italian-English and Albanian-English) academic writings of college students to see what choices students make in the usage of hedges and boosters. Overall, Italians appear to use more boosters than Albanians, both in their L1 and L2, although slightly more in the former, similarly to Hyland's (2003) findings which showed that boosters tended to have prevalence in the L1. This study attempts to contribute to the still little research on hedges and epistemic markers produced by Italian learners in academic writing and it does so by investigating a very specific genre: abstracts.

3. The study

3.1. Aims and research questions

The current study focuses on the use of hedges by L1-Italian advanced learners of English within thesis abstracts, an academic genre that has not so far been extensively addressed in the literature. In general, abstracts are short summaries/accounts of a longer text, typically a research article, a thesis, or a dissertation. Thesis abstracts are common “in institutions where theses and dissertations are written in the local language [and] the accompanying English abstracts can be used to showcase departmental research to the wider world” (Swales and Feak 2009: 4) or serve as an additional aspect of evaluation when specialist students are concerned. This is a common situation in Italian universities, especially with students majoring or graduating in foreign languages, linguistics and translation. Although different studies have addressed hedging in academic theses and dissertations (e.g., Abdollahzadeh 2011), L2 thesis abstracts still remain quite an unexplored area, probably given their high cultural specificity and their limited geographical diffusion (e.g., in some European countries; Swales and Feak 2009).

Research carried out on conference abstracts typifies abstracts as progressing along five discourse moves, consisting of introduction, purpose, method, results, and conclusion (Egbert and Plonsky 2015; Iorativ-Uba 2020). Thesis abstracts follow the same structure, aligning with the typical IMRD format (Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion) on which research articles are based. Given the emphasis on the novelty and significance of a study, the presentation and discussion of its results and its framing within existing research, hedging is also a key component of abstracts (Iorativ-Uba 2020) and is an important feature to be mastered by L2 students even when this academic genre is concerned.

Moving from these premises, the study addresses the following research questions:

- i. To what extent are hedging devices used in thesis abstracts by L1-Italian EFL advanced university undergraduates specializing in cross-linguistic mediation and foreign languages? How pervasive is the use of hedges as opposed to boosters?
- ii. How do our trends compare with texts produced by L1-English senior undergraduates from similar disciplines?

The use of boosters was compared to the occurrence of hedges in the corpus since the former sometimes prevail in students' writing (Hinkel 2005; Aull and Lancaster 2014), although some research shares different results (see for example Dheskali 2020).

In order to provide answers to the research questions, the study is divided into two phases, which will be described in what follows.

3.2 Method and corpora

The study is corpus-based and draws on two different small corpora. The first phase of the research aims at exploring hedging strategies in thesis abstracts written by advanced EFL university undergraduates. A corpus was created including 217 English-language Bachelor's thesis abstracts produced by third-year university students about to graduate in Linguistic and cross-cultural mediation, and consisting of 287,048 words (henceforth, the Thesis Abstract Corpus or TAC). The undergraduate students had an advanced level of competence in L2 English (approximating C1/C2 CEFR level) and had attended English academic writing classes during their university career. Being this a group of specialist students, a foreign language abstract is required as an integral part of their theses – when such theses are written in the students' native language, i.e. Italian. The theses covered a wide range of topics in the Humanities, specifically in the subfields of Translation Studies, Linguistics, Cross-cultural Mediation, Foreign Language Acquisition, Literature, Art history, History and Geography.

A set of hedges was singled out and investigated in the corpus. Hedge words were selected based on frequency of occurrence in written production as emerged from previous research (Hyland 1998; Aull and Lancaster 2014; Aull 2019) and distributed over different word classes. Their main pragmatic function is to mitigate the assertive force of statements and, to a lower extent, to avoid overgeneralization (cf. Aull et al. 2017). The target hedges included:

- modal verbs of tentative epistemic possibility *might/may/could*;
- four lexical verbs commonly used as hedges and divided into two categories following Hyland's terminology: speculative judgmental verbs *suggest* and *indicate* and sensory evidential verbs *seem* and *appear* (Hyland 1998: 126);

- epistemic stance adverbs *possibly*, *generally*, *in general*, *slightly*, and *perhaps* (cf. Aull and Lancaster 2014; Aull 2019);
- epistemic adjectives *possible* and *likely*.

By way of comparison, a set of boosters was also investigated (in line with previous studies, e.g. Aull and Lancaster 2014) and included:

- modal verbs *can* and *must*; epistemic *will* was also added;
- adverbs *certainly*, *absolutely*, *definitely*, *clearly* and *undoubtedly*;
- the verb *demonstrate*.

In academic writing, *can* expresses a stronger, logical possibility (e.g. *These observations can be explained biochemically*; Biber et al. 1999: 492), and was included in the analysis given its frequency in NNSs' written production (Hyland 1994, 1998; Demir 2018). Epistemic *must* indicates inferential certainty (Coates 1983; Hyland 1998: 106). Epistemic *will* was additionally included in the analysis despite not being classified as a booster, as it expresses a confident epistemic prediction (Hyland 1998).

A second phase of the research involved a comparison of the use of the target hedges and boosters with NSs' academic written production. The comparison was drawn by searching a subsection of the MICUSP Corpus (Römer and Swales 2010), specifically filtering the query by student level, NS status, discipline and written genre (searchable database at <https://elicorpora.info/main>). In particular, the subsample consisted of written texts produced by senior undergraduates whose L1 was English; written genres included argumentative essays, critiques/evaluations, proposals, reports and response papers in the fields of Education, English and Linguistics. Since abstracts are not included in MICUSP, roughly comparable genres in terms of purpose or structure were selected. However, given the lack of fully comparable texts, the outcomes of the comparison will be taken with due caution. The final subsample from MICUSP consisted of 214,900 words for a total of 105 papers.

The two corpora were searched individually through the concordancing tool on Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014; <http://www.sketchengine.eu>). Our findings for different metadiscourse categories and items are illustrated in the following sections.

3.3 Analysis and results

3.3.1 Data from the *Thesis Abstract Corpus*

The first phase of the study explored the use of hedges in the Thesis Abstract Corpus. Table 1 shows the frequency of occurrence of different hedges in the corpus, differentiated by category. Raw frequency values are followed by normalized frequency per million words (p.m.w.).

Hedge category	Specific hedge	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency (per million words)
Modal verb (tentative possibility)	<i>may</i>	104	362.31
Modal verb (tentative possibility)	<i>might</i>	53	184.64
Modal verb (tentative possibility)	<i>could</i>	222	773.39
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>possibly</i>	6	20.9
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>generally</i>	10	34.84
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>in general</i>	11	38.32
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>slightly</i>	3	10.45
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>perhaps</i>	10	34.84
Epistemic adjective	<i>likely</i>	11	38.32
Epistemic adjective	<i>possible</i>	96	334.44
Epistemic lexical verb, judgmental, speculative	<i>suggest</i>	38	132.38
Epistemic lexical verb, judgmental, speculative	<i>indicate</i>	17	59.22
Epistemic lexical verb, evidential, sensory	<i>seem</i>	72	250.83
Epistemic lexical verb, evidential, sensory	<i>appear</i>	25	87.09

Table 1: Target hedges in TAC

Modal verbs are the most common hedging strategies in the corpus, confirming findings from previous research (Hyland 1994, 1998). *Could* prevails (773 occurrences p.m.w.), followed by *may* (362 hits p.m.w.)

and, to a lower extent, *might* (53 tokens and 185 occurrences p.m.w.) as expressions of tentative possibility (Examples 1, 2, 3 below). Other extremely popular hedges used by students in the corpus are the adjective *possible*, with 96 epistemic uses in TAC (334 p.m.w.) and the epistemic verb *seem* (251 occurrences p.m.w., Example 4). In its epistemic meaning, *possible* mostly occurs as an attributive adjective (49 occurrences, 170.7 p.m.w., e.g. *possible solutions*, *possible method*) and in the *n*-gram *it is possible to* (39 occurrences, 135.87 p.m.w., Example 5):

- (1) This *could* be one of the motivations of the incredible sudden success of the artist, the same success that led him to a premature death.
- (2) Hard of hearing people interact through spoken language and they *may* benefit from assistive devices like cochlear implants.
- (3) there *might* be a problem of incompatibility between the model of digital device and learning software, browser or application.
- (4) it is a condition in which all the women in her stories are forced to live, from childhood to death, there never *seems* to be an escape
- (5) In fact, *it is possible to* declare that translation of vulgarity is mainly influenced by functional and semantic correspondance [sic] between source and target language.

Epistemic stance adverbs do not frequently appear in the corpus. When they do, they occasionally combine with other hedges, as is the case for *possibly* (2 occurrences out of 7 in combination with modals, especially *can* and *would*, Example 6). The trend is consistent with findings in Hyland (1998: 150), where the adverb *possibly* was a common trigger for hedge clusters.

- (6) Aforementioned study enabled to obtain the inescapable framework by means of whom it was feasible to devise an educational system that *would possibly* be as appropriate as possible for such learners/the subjects treated. [sic]

Other hedge clusters are built around epistemic lexical verbs, as illustrated in Examples 7, 8 and 9. In particular, the clusters *may seem* and *could appear* occur 3 times each in the corpus (10.45 hits p.m.w.).

- (7) Sometimes it *may seem* impossible and people may feel small in front of a strong system which oppress and homologate everybody

- (8) it should be stressed that the integration and interdependence between the two approaches cannot be ignored, despite the fact that they *may appear* antithetical at first glance.
- (9) intelligence *might indicate* a specific species, which homo sapiens belongs to

The modal verbs *can*, *will*, and *must* are additionally included in the analysis, and express logical possibility or greater certainty and confidence in a prediction or inference (Biber et al. 1999). Table 2 shows their frequency in the corpus and p.m.w.:

Modal verb	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency (per million words)
<i>can</i>	590	2,055.41
<i>must</i>	6	20.9
<i>will</i>	205	714.17

Table 2: Modals *can*, *must* and *will* in TAC

Can is widely used in the Thesis Abstract Corpus to express logical possibility (Example 10), especially in the passive voice, while *must* does not frequently appear in its epistemic meaning. *Will* is often used to express commitment and introduce further phases in the research/abstract, but also shows 205 epistemic occurrences where it voices a confident prediction (714 tokens p.m.w., Example 11):

- (10) Hence, the translation activity *can* be defined as a matter of choice and a negotiation of meanings
- (11) automatic translation *will* always continue to have weaknesses compared to the classical translation process.

For the sake of comparison, a set of additional boosters was also included in the study. Table 3 illustrates absolute and normalized frequency values.

Category	Specific booster	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency (per million words)
Adverb	<i>certainly</i>	17	59.22
Adverb	<i>absolutely</i>	2	6.97
Adverb	<i>definitely</i>	20	55.74
Adverb	<i>clearly</i>	29	101.03
Adverb	<i>undoubtedly</i>	18	62.71
Lexical verb	<i>demonstrate</i>	74	257.8

Table 3: Boosters in TAC

Adverbial boosters expressing higher certainty show generally higher frequency than adverbial hedges expressing tentativeness and indicate a preference in the corpus for more assertive epistemic adverbs. Some examples are shown in 12, 13 and 14.

- (12) The role of English, in the 21st century, is *clearly* undisputed
- (13) the key-points of his method – which he called “Talent Education” – *definitely* show his will to create the right environment for learning music
- (14) The identification of the speaker on the screen is *certainly* problematic for deaf people

Demonstrate also prevails over the single frequencies of the epistemic lexical verbs queried within the corpus – *seem*, *appear*, *suggest* and *indicate* (Example 15):

- (15) The results gathered *demonstrate* that the mechanisms which operate in the novel are complex and that the novel cannot be interpreted uniquely

After showing data from MICUSP, we suggest a comparison between hedges and boosters within the two corpora.

3.3.2 Data from MICUSP

A parallel search in the MICUSP corpus sections shows the following results (Table 4):

Hedge category	Specific hedge	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency (per million words)
Modal verb (tentative possibility)	<i>may</i>	240	964.66
Modal verb (tentative possibility)	<i>might</i>	100	401.94
Modal verb (tentative possibility)	<i>could</i>	253	1,016.91
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>possibly</i>	13	52.25
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>generally</i>	28	112.54
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>in general</i>	13	52.25
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>slightly</i>	10	40.19
Epistemic stance adverb	<i>perhaps</i>	76	305.48
Epistemic adjective	<i>likely</i>	26	104.5
Epistemic adjective	<i>possible</i>	49	196.95
Epistemic lexical verb, judgemental, speculative	<i>suggest</i>	83	333.61
Epistemic lexical verb, judgemental, speculative	<i>indicate</i>	24	96.47
Epistemic lexical verb, evidential, sensory	<i>seem</i>	276	1,109.36
Epistemic lexical verb, evidential, sensory	<i>appear</i>	67	269.3

Table 4: Target hedges in MICUSP

Even in the MICUSP corpus sections, modal verbs are a common hedging device, following the same progressive distribution as in TAC, but at a higher frequency. Examples 16, 17 and 18 show some uses in context of the three verbs:

- (16) *Could* their plots be translated without contradicting the narrative's style?

- (17) A problem *may* be that the students do not think the participation grade will have a strong effect on their grade.
- (18) However, in the spirit of conducting analysis rather than writing review, a better starting point *might* be to question the possible motivations underlying directorial choices

Epistemic stance adverbs and adjectives are also common, especially *perhaps*, *generally*, *possible* and *likely* (Examples 19 to 22).

- (19) As the poem continues, it becomes apparent that this case is *perhaps* indicative of love in general in some respects.
- (20) This *generally* ensures that the students are able to meet a good amount of the state standards for social studies in middle schools.
- (21) It is *possible* that one of the teachers still currently on staff has kept up with that teacher.
- (22) Jim's negative attitude is *likely* to cause further frustration for both Carlos and himself

Seem is the most frequent lexical verb carrying epistemic value (276 hits in the corpus, 1,109 p.m.w.), followed by *appear* (67 occurrences, 269 p.m.w.) and, with way fewer occurrences, *indicate* (24 tokens, 96 p.m.w.). Examples 23, 24 and 25 illustrate some concordances for the three verbs:

- (23) He didn't *seem* to believe in himself at the end either.
- (24) On that account, it *appears* as though Bloom intends to keep the affair innocuous;
- (25) His behavior *indicates* a sort of war of trauma victims

Similarly to what was observed in the Thesis Abstract Corpus, hedge clusters appear around epistemic stance adverbs and lexical verbs. Most common n-grams include *would seem* (14 tokens, 56.27 p.m.w.), *may seem* (3 tokens, 12.06 p.m.w.), *could possibly* (3 tokens, 12.06 p.m.w.).

For better comparison, Figure 1 shows the frequency of hedges across the two corpora normalized per million words:

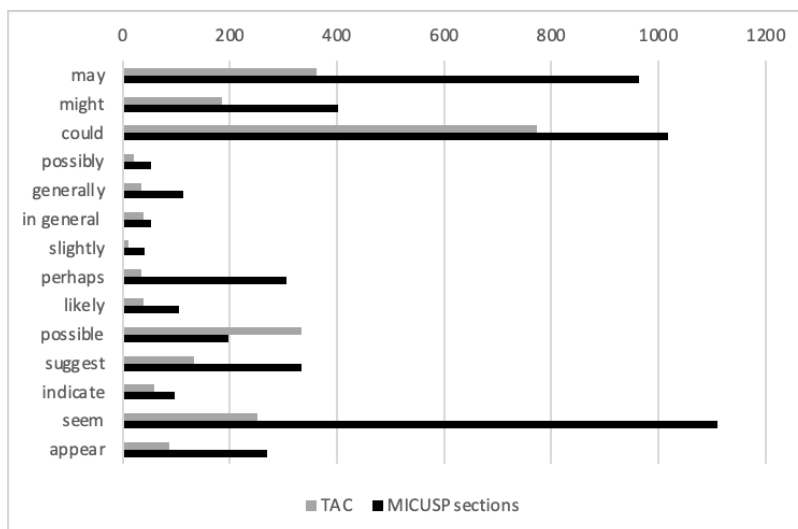


Figure 1. Frequency of hedges in the Abstract and MICUSP corpora (p.m.w.)

As is evident from Figure 1, hedges are more common in the MICUSP Corpus sections. The trend concerns all categories of hedges, and is especially striking for modal verbs, lexical verbs *seem* and *suggest*, epistemic stance adverbs and the epistemic adjective *likely*. The single exception is the adjective *possible* used to express tentativeness, which seems to be overused by Italian EFL learners – a trend that may be partly related to its Italian cognate *possibile* (Section 4).

Chi square statistics show a significant difference between the two corpora for all categories, i.e. in the use of epistemic modal verbs ($\chi^2=485.98$, $p<.00001$), epistemic stance adverbs ($\chi^2=52.86$, $p<0.00001$), epistemic stance adjectives ($\chi^2=60.12$, $p<.00001$) and lexical verbs ($\chi^2=43.92$, $p<0.00001$).

The modal verbs *can*, *will*, and *must* are used as follows in the MICUSP Corpus (Table 5):

Modal verb	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency (per million words)
<i>can</i>	393	1,579.63
<i>must</i>	18	72.35
<i>will</i>	312	1,254.06

Table 5: Modals *can*, *must*, and *will* in MICUSP

Modals *can* and *will* are the most frequent (examples 26 and 27), while *must* only occurs 18 times (72 occurrences p.m.w.), paralleling data from TAC. The similar distribution of these three modal verbs, despite their different frequency, is better illustrated in Figure 2. While *must* and *will* prevail in MICUSP, *can* is more popular in TAC, reflecting the tendency for NNSs to overuse this modal when expressing possibility. In terms of frequency, the two corpora differ significantly in the use of the three modal verbs in question ($\chi^2=235.94$, $p < 0.00001$).

- (26) this sentence *can* also be read as a lens through which to interpret the narrative style.
- (27) This activity not only *will* help develop her students' literary skills, it also teaches her students how to be responsible.

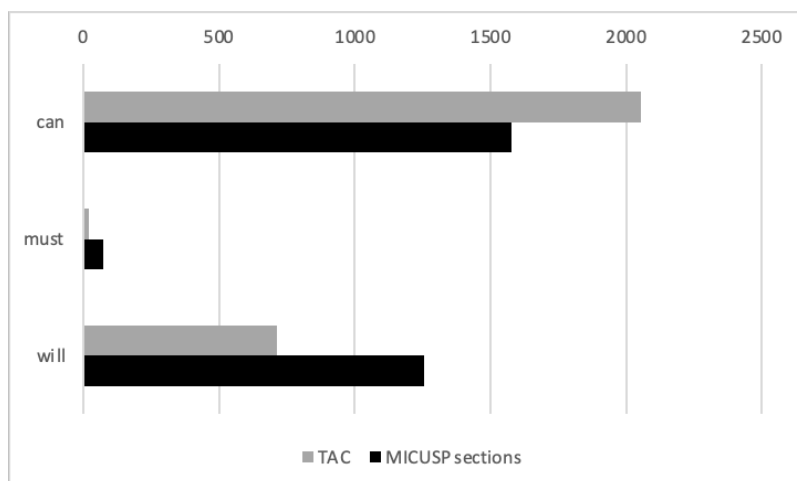


Figure 2. *Can*, *must*, and *will* in the TAC and MICUSP corpora (p.m.w.)

When looking at boosters, the following trends emerge in the MICUSP Corpus (Table 6):

Hedge category	Specific hedge	Raw frequency	Normalized frequency (per million words)
Adverb	<i>certainly</i>	38	152.74
Adverb	<i>absolutely</i>	4	16.08
Adverb	<i>definitely</i>	11	44.21
Adverb	<i>clearly</i>	36	144.7
Adverb	<i>undoubtedly</i>	10	40.19
Lexical verb	<i>demonstrate</i>	58	233.13

Table 6: Boosters in MICUSP

Boosters generally occur in the corpus to a lower extent than hedges. Among the categories analyzed, the most common ones are the verb *demonstrate* (58 hits, 233 occurrences p.m.w.) and the adverbs *certainly* (38 occurrences, 153 p.m.w.) and *clearly* (36 tokens, 145 p.m.w.). Although hedging is a more pervasive function, boosting is also a common strategy in academic writing among L1-English senior undergraduates (examples 28, 29 and 30).

- (28) Bhabha's concept of mimicry *demonstrates* one of the inherent contradictions in colonialism
- (29) Hosea's metaphor *certainly* reestablishes the idea of the covenant as one of love
- (30) Language policy and education clearly *shows* that for now, this so-called melting-pot society is actually a coercive assimilation

A direct comparison between the two corpora shows the following trends (Figure 3):

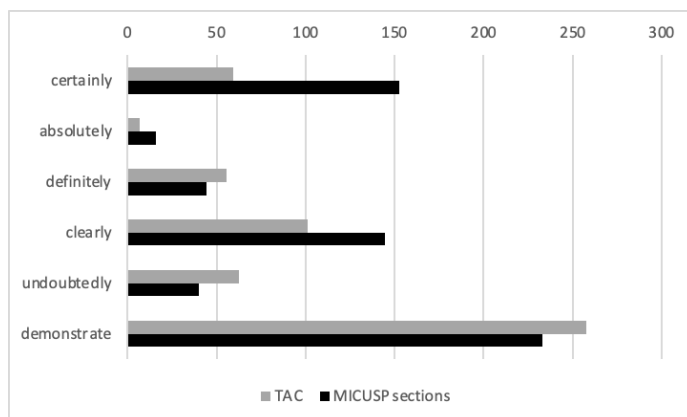


Figure 3. Frequency of boosters in the TAC and MICUSP corpora (p.m.w.)

Adverbs *certainly*, *clearly* and *absolutely* prevail in MICUSP. Conversely, adverbs *undoubtedly* and *definitely* and the lexical verb *demonstrate* are slightly more pervasive in the Thesis Abstract Corpus.

Overall, there is a significant difference in the use of adverbial boosters ($\chi^2=42.45$, $p < 0.00001$), while the different frequency of the lexical verb *demonstrate* in the two corpora is not statistically significant ($\chi^2=1.0221$, $p=.31$).

4. Discussion

The quantitative analysis of the Thesis Abstract Corpus shows that hedging strategies are used by L1-Italian, advanced, specialist EFL students in their thesis abstracts. The most common devices that appear in the corpus to express tentativeness and lower certainty are modal verbs, with a predominance of *could*. *May* follows, but shows about half of the occurrences of *could*. *Might* is found on occasion, but is not as popular as its counterparts. Within our set of hedges, verbs are the privileged means through which hedging is achieved, since modals are followed in frequency by epistemic lexical verbs, among which the most commonly used is evidential sensory *seem*, followed by judgmental speculative *suggest*. Most of the epistemic verbs we considered (*suggest*, *indicate*, *appear*) are

of Latinate origin, and this adds up to the reasons why they may be easily adopted by Italian students. The adjective *possible* is also frequently found in the Thesis Abstract Corpus carrying epistemic value, and it appears in two preferred syntactic constructions, i.e. as a noun premodifier and as part of the *n*-gram *it is possible to*. The Italian cognate adjective *possibile* can be used in similar constructs – as it can take premodifying position when it is used epistemically and commonly activates the impersonal construction *è possibile + che / è possibile + infinitive* ('it is possible that'/'it is possible to'; Pietrandrea 2004). Although adverbs can carry epistemic functions in Italian, they do not occur frequently in the corpus, and are rarely adopted by the students as hedging devices.

While advanced EFL learners do apply hedging when writing their thesis abstracts, and mitigate many of the assertions they make, they more often tend to express a higher degree of certainty in their statements or show greater confidence in their inferences. This claim aligns with findings from other studies on hedging and metadiscursive strategies (e.g. Hyland and Milton 1997; Abdollahzadeh 2011) and is coherent with the view of hedging varying as a function of L2 proficiency (Siew Mei 2007; Aull and Lancaster 2014).

When considering other modal verbs associated with higher certainty, *can* in its meaning of logical possibility is by far the most pervasive; many predictions are also formulated by using *will*. These modal verbs are core ones and are generally introduced early in EFL syllabi; in addition to that, they fulfill basic pragmatic functions – and their meanings may be more immediately associated with possibility with respect to other modals farther away on the *irrealis* continuum.¹ The tendency to higher assertiveness is further supported by the frequent use of the booster *demonstrate*. Like hedging ones, boosting adverbs are not very common in the corpus, but their occurrences still generally outnumber the former.

The comparison with NS data additionally confirms the trend. While hedges prevail in the MICUSP Corpus sections, many boosters occur more frequently in the Thesis Abstract Corpus. More in detail, all hedge types are more pervasive in the NS corpus and the difference is statistically significant for all categories – with hedges occurring in some cases twice or

¹ In many accounts, *can* is not always associated with an epistemic value (e.g. Hyland 1998), and even its speculative uses are associated with a subtype of dynamic modality (e.g. *A spider can be dangerous*, Portner 2009: 135–36). Strictly epistemic uses of *can* would only apply to its negative or interrogative form (Hyland 1998: 109).

three times as much in MICUSP. It is interesting to observe, however, that a similar data distribution is followed in the two corpora when looking at the use of modal and lexical verbs: in both TAC and MICUSP, the gradient of use is the same – *could-may-might* and *seem-suggest-appear-indicate*. Advanced L1-Italian EFL learners use fewer hedges than their L1-English peers, but distribute them proportionately (at least hedging verbs). A greater disparity in usage patterns is observed for adverbial and adjectival hedges, which are much more pervasive in NSs' writing. One notable exception is *possible*, whose frequency in TAC almost doubles that in MICUSP – and may be attributable to potential transfer from the L1.

While (greater) epistemic certainty is also widely pervasive in the MICUSP Corpus, and modals *will* and *must* prevail here, *can* is more popular in TAC. Once again, the gradient of frequency is the same (epistemic *can-will-must*), but the occurrences of *can* as a marker of logical possibility more than double those of *will* in NNSs' productions. Finally, typical boosters show a more diversified behavior: adverbs *certainly*, *absolutely*, and *clearly* are significantly more frequent in MICUSP; verb *demonstrate* and adverbs *definitely* and *undoubtedly* are more popular among EFL learners – but the difference in use is not statistically significant for *demonstrate*. It is thus fair to say that abstracts written by NNSs still privilege epistemic certainty over hedging, and may tend to sound more assertive, but assertiveness is also typical of NSs' academic writing.

While the comparison with NSs' behavior may be useful to analyze and contextualize our data, the results have to be interpreted with due caution, given that the written genres in the two corpora are not fully comparable, and this could have introduced further elements of variation. As emerged in some studies, genre may be a relevant factor in determining the use and distribution of hedges (Aull 2019; Hyland and Zou 2021).

5. Conclusion

Hedging is a key aspect of academic writing, as it contributes to the reliability of a study and opens a dialogic relation with readers and the scientific community at large. Hedging devices, as well as the degree to which hedge words are used, may vary cross-culturally and often represent a challenge for L2 learners. In exploring EFL learners' use of hedges in thesis abstract writing, our study generally confirms this. Different categories of

hedge words are found in the Thesis Abstract Corpus, but are not generally as frequent as boosters or modal verbs expressing higher certainty in claims, inferences and predictions. Hedges are also less common and less diversified than those used by NSs as recorded in the MICUSP sections, thus showing parallel results to similar studies on hedging and the use of metadiscursive strategies by NNSs and L2 learners (Hyland and Milton 1997; Hyland 1998; Abdollahzadeh 2011).

Preferred hedges in learners' written productions include modals *may* and *could*, some non-factive verbs expressing evidentiality and speculation, and the epistemic adjective *possible*. Although, with the exception of *possible*, these hedges are still underrepresented compared to boosters or NSs' writing, their privileged status may be linked to their prototypicality as hedging devices and their similar use in the learners' L1. The hedging function is more immediate with tentative epistemic modals, and is the main meaning associated with modals *may* and *could*. The same could be true for verbs like *seem* and *suggest*, whose evidential and speculative value is semantically prominent. In addition to being similarly prominent, the epistemic uses of *possible* in premodifying position or in the pattern *it is possible to* also parallel equivalent structures in Italian, favoring learners' choice of this hedging device. The two factors (prototypicality and similarity to the L1) could have acted in combination in affecting the frequency of the adjectival hedge in TAC – given its pervasiveness in the academic production of writers from different L1s as well (Demir 2018).

In the Thesis Abstract Corpus, the modal *can* is also overused to express logical possibility and introduce a claim. The trend may be linked to the primacy of *can* as a modal verb – and aligns with similar results from previous studies (Abdollahzadeh 2011; Demir 2018).

The diversified use of both hedges and boosters in the two corpora points at a lower mastery of metadiscursive strategies in general by EFL learners in the Thesis Abstract Corpus, even though they are specialist students. Advanced learners did use hedging devices when writing thesis abstracts in English, but still showed high assertiveness when making and backing claims, and lower variability when selecting hedges and boosters alike. This may not always grant effective communication and may result in their writing sounding less reliable and too imposing on the audience. Metadiscursive devices thus represent a challenge even for learners at an advanced level of competence in L2 English (cf. Siew Mei 2007; Aull and Lancaster 2014), and call for more explicit instruction in academic

writing courses to help students navigate through the polyfunctionality and pragmatic complexity of these expressions and acquire full awareness of such complexity. Work on contrastive rhetoric and cross-cultural differences in hedging may be also beneficial in raising learners' awareness of the phenomenon and of its differentiated use across different rhetorical styles and conventions (Samaie et al. 2014; Chek Kim and Miin-Hwa Lim 2015), while at the same time defining varying stance expectations across disciplines and genres (Aull 2019).

The study is not deprived of limitations, as it draws on two small-sized corpora and does not grant full comparability of the results, especially in terms of academic genre. Further research might rely on larger writing samples and involve multimodal analyses of different metadiscursive strategies, in order to better characterize thesis abstracts as a discourse type of their own.

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PRONOUN PROSODY IN ENGLISH AND MANDARIN AND ITS ACQUISITION BY MANDARIN-SPEAKING ENGLISH LEARNERS**

Abstract

This study compared the prosody of pronouns in English and Mandarin in broad focus, narrow focus, and given information, and examined Mandarin-speaking EFL learners' acquisition of pronoun prosody. Ten L1 English speakers, 10 L1 Mandarin speakers, and 60 L1 Mandarin English learners participated in a question-answer reading task. Acoustic analysis revealed that in English pronouns differed from content words in duration in all three information statuses, whereas in Mandarin pronouns differed from content words in maximum intensity in all three information statuses. As regards L2 acquisition of pronoun prosody, auditory and acoustic analyses revealed that the Mandarin-speaking English learners' acquisition of pronoun prosody improved with their English proficiency, yet L1 prosody impacted their phonetic realization of pronouns.

Key words: prosody; pronouns; English; Mandarin; L2 English acquisition

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1. Introduction

In English speech, prominence is important for intelligibility (Jenkins 2000; Hahn 2004; Zielinski 2008) but difficult to learn for second or foreign language (L2) learners (Ramirez Verdugo 2002; Hua & Li 2016). Research has shown that in first-language (L1) English utterances prominence mostly falls on content words, whereas function words are far less likely to take prominence (Altenberg 1987). This tendency, however, is less evident and less consistent in L2 English speech, as they tend to assign prominence indiscriminately to both content words and function words (Juffs 1990; Deterding 2010; Hua & Li 2016, 2019), probably as a result of L1 prosody transfer. Nevertheless, some studies have revealed that L2 English learners from different L1 backgrounds tend to produce similar prominence patterns in their English speech (Grosser 1993; Barlow 1998; Baker 2010). Therefore, to what extent L2 English learners can acquire the prosody of function words and to what extent L1 prosody may influence their acquisition merit detailed investigation. The current study addressed these two issues by comparing the prosody of pronouns in English and Beijing Mandarin in different information statuses and examining L1 Mandarin L2 English learners' acquisition of prosody of pronouns.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Prosody of function words and content words in English and Mandarin

In English, the prosody of function words and that of content words differ considerably in different information statuses, whereas in Mandarin the difference is less distinct.

More specifically, in English speech under broad focus, prominence falls by default on the last content word (Altenberg 1987; Cruttenden 1997; Wells 2006; Roach 2009), which means that function words generally do not take prominence in broad focus. In narrow focus, prosody overruns grammar (Wells 2006), which eliminates the difference between content words and function words: prominence falls on any constituent under focus, be it a content word or a function word. Likewise, in given information, deaccentuation occurs to the constituent expressing information already known, no matter whether it is a content word or a function word.

Mandarin is a non-stress language. In broad focus, there is no clear prominence on any word (Xu 2004), which means that function words and content words are treated in the same way. Like in English, in narrow focus, prominence falls on any constituent under focus, either a content word or a function word; in given information, the constituent that carries shared information is deaccented (Xu 1999), regardless of word class.

To conclude, previous studies seem to suggest that in English the prosody of function words is different from that of content words in broad focus, but not so much in narrow focus or given information; in Mandarin, function words and content words share similar prosodic patterns in all information statuses, that is, broad focus, narrow focus, and given information.

2.2. L1 Mandarin L2 English Learners' Acquisition of Prominence

Studies have revealed some patterns in L1 Mandarin L2 English learners' acquisition of prominence in both phonological and phonetic perspectives. Phonologically, these learners tend to assign equal stress to given information and focus, and they are particularly inclined to assign stress to utterance-final function words such as pronouns and prepositions (Juffs 1990; Wennerstrom 1994, 1998; Deterding 2010). In addition, word class does play a role in these learners' acquisition of prominence, as they are better at assigning prominence to content words than to function words (as under narrow focus), and better at deaccenting function words than content words (as in given information) (Hua 2021).

Phonetically, the findings are not consistent. For focus, some (McGory 1997; Wennerstrom 1998) report that L1 Mandarin L2 English learners produce L1 English-like duration and intensity, but not F0, while others report that these learners tend to produce shorter duration and lower F0 than L1 English speakers (e.g., Hua & Li 2019). In addition, Barlow (1998) reports that L1 Mandarin English learners rely heavily on intensity when realizing focus.

Studies on these learners' realization of given information have also yielded inconsistent results. Baker (2010) found that L1 Mandarin English learners produce reduced duration for given information, yet the duration they produce still differs from that produced by L1 English speakers. However, Hua and Li (2019) found that these learners can produce duration and f0 comparable to those of L1 English speakers.

In addition, it has been found that these learners' acquisition of sentence prosody improves with their English proficiency (Barlow 1998; Baker 2010; Hua & Li 2019; Hua 2022), yet in an unbalanced way. Their acquisition of the phonological features (i.e., prominence/deaccentuation placement) improves faster and more considerably than their acquisition of the phonetic features (i.e., the phonetic realization of prominence/deaccentuation), the latter being more impacted by L1 prosody transfer and resistant to improvement with proficiency, and their acquisition for focus improves better than that for given information (Hua & Li 2019; Hua 2021, 2022).

Since English and Mandarin differ in their prosody of function words (especially in broad focus), and word class affects L2 acquisition of prominence and deaccentuation, it would be of theoretical and practical values to know if L2 English learners treat function words and content words differently in their English speech, and if there are effects of L1 transfer. The two research questions addressed are as follows:

- 1) How are pronouns phonetically realized (as compared with content words) in broad focus, narrow focus and given information in English and Mandarin?

Hypothesis 1: in English, pronouns are realized with weaker phonetic cues than content words in broad focus, but comparable phonetic cues to content words in narrow focus and given information; in Mandarin, pronouns and content words are realized with comparable phonetic cues in all three information statuses.

- 2) What patterns do L1 Mandarin L2 English learners follow in acquiring prosody of pronouns in different information statuses?

Hypothesis 2: phonologically, these learners treat pronouns like content words, and their performance approaches L1 English speakers as their proficiency increases.

Hypothesis 3: phonetically, there is an effect of L1 transfer, which decreases as the learners' proficiency increases.

3. Research Method

This is an experimental study comprising two experiments, both in the form of read-aloud tasks.

3.1. Participants

The participants in Experiment 1 were 10 L1 British English speakers (aged 19–28, five male, five female) and six L1 Beijing Mandarin speakers (aged 23–33, all female). The L1 English speakers were international students and teachers in a city in central China. None of them could speak Mandarin Chinese. The L1 Mandarin speakers were all from northern China with a B.A., M.A. or doctorate degree in humanities. Since English is a compulsory course in the Chinese educational system, all of them could speak English and some were rather fluent. However, they did not use English on a daily basis and Beijing Mandarin is the primary language in their environment.

The participants in Experiment 2 were 60 L1 Mandarin undergraduates from a key university in central China. They were aged 18–22, 30 male and 30 female, having little experience living in English-speaking countries/areas. They were divided into three proficiency groups according to a Cambridge English proficiency test (<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/test-your-english/general-english/>): preliminary (8–16 points), intermediate (17–19 points), and advanced (20–25 points). The 10 L1 English speakers in Experiment 1 served as a reference group in Experiment 2.

3.2. Stimuli

The English stimuli were 12 question-answer pairs (4 pairs for each information status, 2 ending with a pronoun and two with a content word). All words in the questions and answers are within the 2000 range of the New General Service List (Browne et al. 2013), and all words in the answers are monosyllables. The following are some samples, with the target words in *italics*:

- (1) Broad focus in English

A: What did you say?	A: What did you say?
B: Dan loves to work with <i>Jim</i> .	B: Dan loves to work with <i>him</i> .
- (2) Narrow focus in English

A: Who does Dan love to work with?	A: Who does Dan love to work with?
B: Dan loves to work with <i>Jim</i> .	B: Dan loves to work with <i>him</i> .

(3) Given information in English

- | | |
|--|--|
| A: Does Dan love to work without Jim? | A: Does Dan love to work without Jim? |
| B: Dan loves to work with <i>Jim</i> . | B: Dan loves to work with <i>him</i> . |

The Mandarin stimuli were also 12 question-answer pairs (4 pairs for each information status, 2 ending with a pronoun and two with a content word). All words in the answers are with the first tone (the high level tone), and all target words are monosyllables. The following are some samples, the underlined being the target words:

(4) Broad focus in Mandarin

- | | |
|--|--|
| A: 你 说 什 么?
you say what
'What did you say' | A: 你说什么? |
| B: 张 欢 天 天 喝 汤。
Zhang Huan every day drink soup
'Zhang Huan drinks soup every day' | B: 张 欢 天 天 喝 它。
Zhang Huan every day drink it
'Zhang Huan drinks it every day' |

(5) Narrow focus in Mandarin

- | | |
|--|--|
| A: 张 欢 天 天 喝 什 么?
Zhang Huan every day drink what
'What does Zhang Huan drink every day' | A: 张欢天天喝什么? |
| B: 张 欢 天 天 喝 汤。
Zhang Huan every day drink soup
'Zhang Huan drinks soup every day' | B: 张 欢 天 天 喝 它。
Zhang Huan every day drink it
'Zhang Huan drinks it every day' |

(6) Given information in Mandarin

- | | |
|--|--|
| A: 张 欢 天 天 做 汤 吗?
Zhang Huan every day cook soup question marker
'Does Zhang Huan cook soup every day' | A: 张欢天天做汤吗? |
| B: 张 欢 天 天 喝 汤。
Zhang Huan every day drink soup
'Zhang Huan drinks soup every day' | B: 张 欢 天 天 喝 它。
Zhang Huan every day drink it
'Zhang Huan drinks it every day' |

3.3. Procedure

The recordings from the 10 L1 English speakers and the 60 learners were collected in person before COVID-19, and after COVID-19 broke out, recordings from the six L1 Mandarin speakers were collected through the internet.

The L1 English speakers and the learners were recorded individually with a Sony linear PCM recorder (model PCM-D100) in a quiet room. After receiving the instructions and doing a few trial items on a computer, the participants read the question-answer pairs from the computer screen, the recorder one meter away from their mouth. The L1 Mandarin speakers recorded their reading of the question-answer pairs on their own phones. To do this, they received a pdf file containing the instructions and the stimuli. All three groups were asked to read the question-answer pairs twice at their own pace.

Although difference in recording method may affect the quality and comparability of recordings, diverse recording methods can still yield reliable data for analyzing prosody (Guan & Li 2021). Additionally, in this study raw values of phonetic cues were all converted to ratios, which may further enhance the reliability of the data.

3.4. Data Analysis

The recordings from Experiment 1 were analyzed acoustically using Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2021), and the recordings from Experiment 2 were analyzed both auditorily and acoustically.

The recordings of the answers from the L1 speakers in Experiment 1 were firstly selected. Mostly it was the first readings that were picked. In case where a first reading was disfluent or contained a mispronunciation, the second reading was chosen instead. In total 120 (12 sentences x 10 speakers) were selected. These recordings were checked in Praat, and those with improper displays of F0 and/or intensity were discarded. Altogether 111 sentence recordings from the L1 English speakers and 70 from the L1 Mandarin speakers entered the acoustic analysis. These recordings were annotated manually in Praat, and then values of duration, maximum F0, average F0, and maximum intensity were extracted using Praat scripts. These parameters were selected because Breen et al. (2010) report that they are the best indicators of information status in English. The values

of the four parameters were then converted to ratios by dividing the raw value of the target word by the average value of all words in the same sentence.

The recordings of the answers from the 60 learners in Experiment 2 were also firstly selected in the same fashion as mentioned above, and 720 sentence recordings (12 sentences x 60 learners) entered auditory analysis. These 720 learner recordings, together with the 120 L1 English speaker recordings from Experiment 1, were analyzed auditorily by a trained phonetician twice, assigning 1 to a sentence recording with correct placement of prominence (focus sentences) or deaccentuation (given information sentences) and 0 to a sentence recording with unclear or wrong placement of prominence or deaccentuation. The intra-rater reliability reached .98.

For the acoustic analysis, recordings of sentences with correct placement of prominence or deaccentuation were selected and then checked in Praat. Those with improper displays of F0 and/or intensity were discarded. Thus, 410 sentence recordings from the learners entered the acoustic analysis. These recordings were annotated and ratios calculated in the same way as the L1 recordings.

Then all ratios and scores were analyzed statistically using factorial ANOVA tests in SPSS (26.0).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Pronoun Prosody in L1 English vs. L1 Mandarin

The phonetic realizations of pronouns (as compared with content words) in L1 English and L1 Mandarin are presented in Figure 1.

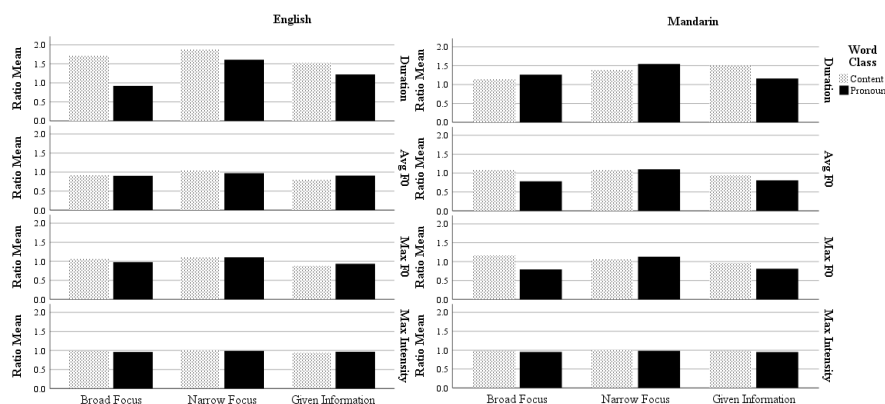


Figure 1. Phonetic realizations of pronouns in English and Mandarin

For English, 2 x 2 x 3 ANOVAs were computed, with ratios as dependent variables and gender (male vs. female), word class (content words vs. pronouns) and information status (broad focus, narrow focus, given information) as independent variables. Results (Table 1a) revealed that duration ratio varied by word class and by information status, and there was an interaction between word class and information status. Post-hoc tests with Bonferroni correction showed that the duration ratio for narrow focus was higher than those for broad focus and given information (both at $p < .001$), and that pronouns were realized with lower duration ratios than content words in broad focus, narrow focus, and given information (all at $p < .001$).

Average F0 ratio and maximum F0 ratio both differed by information status only, with higher values for narrow focus than for given information ($p = .021$; $p = .011$).

Maximum intensity ratio differed by word class and by information status, and there was an interaction between word class and information status. Post-hoc tests showed that the maximum intensity ratio for narrow focus was higher than those for broad focus ($p = .003$) and given information ($p < .001$), and that pronouns were realized with lower maximum intensity ratios than content words in broad focus ($p < .001$) and narrow focus ($p = .009$).

Table 1. Differences indicated by ANOVA results
for L1 English and L1 Mandarin

a. L1 English

Duration Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
word class	1, 105	141.03	< .001***	.57
information status	2, 105	49.77	< .001***	.49
word class*information status	2, 105	18.91	< .001***	.27
Average F0 Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
information status	2, 105	3.94	.022*	.07
Maximum F0 Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
information status	2, 105	4.56	.013*	.08
Maximum Intensity Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
word class	1, 105	8.07	.005**	.07
information status	2, 105	31.75	< .001***	.38
word class*information status	2, 105	11.63	< .001***	.18

b. L1 Mandarin

Duration Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
information status	2, 64	9.17	< .001***	.22
word class*information status	2, 64	9.61	< .001***	.23
Average F0 Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
word class	1, 64	15.78	< .001***	.20
information status	2, 64	13.04	< .001***	.29
word class *information status	2, 64	7.36	.001**	.19
Maximum F0 Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
word class	1, 64	14.09	< .001***	.18
information status	2, 64	9.90	< .001***	.24
word class *information status	2, 64	10.03	< .001***	.24
Maximum Intensity Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
word class	1, 64	15.72	< .001***	.20
information status	2, 64	3.81	.027*	.11

*significant at .05 level, **significant at .01 level, ***significant at .001 level

For Mandarin, 2 x 3 ANOVAs were run, with ratios as dependent variables and word class (content words vs. pronouns) and information status (broad focus, narrow focus, given information) as independent variables. Results (Table 1b) showed that duration ratio differed by information status, and there was an interaction between information status and word class. Post-hoc tests revealed that narrow focus was realized with a higher duration ratio than broad focus ($p < .001$) and given information ($p = .043$), and that pronouns were realized with a lower duration ratio than content words in given information ($p = .001$).

Average F0 ratio and maximum F0 ratio both differed by word class and by information status, and there were interactions between word class and information status for both. Post-hoc tests showed that narrow focus was realized with higher average and maximum F0 ratios than broad focus ($p = .002$, $p = .037$) and given information (both at $p < .001$), and that pronouns were realized with lower average and maximum F0 ratios (both at $p < .001$) than content words in broad focus.

Maximum intensity ratio differed by word class and information status. Post-hoc tests showed that narrow focus was realized with a higher maximum intensity ratio than given information ($p = .010$).

Table 2. Phonetic realizations of pronouns in L1 English and L1 Mandarin

L1 English				
	Duration	Average F0	Maximum F0	Maximum Intensity
Broad	P<C***			P<C***
Narrow	P<C***			P<C**
Given Info.	P<C***			
L1 Mandarin				
	Duration	Average F0	Maximum F0	Maximum Intensity
Broad		P<C***	P<C***	P<C***
Narrow				P<C***
Given Info.	P<C**			P<C***

P=pronouns, C=content words

significant at .01 level, *significant at .001 level

Based on the above results, the phonetic realizations of pronouns in English and in Mandarin are summarized in Table 2. In both languages, pronouns were realized with weaker phonetic cues than content words across the information statuses. This difference, however, is not consistent across the four parameters: the pronouns were not realized with lower values of all four parameters than content words in any of the three information statuses. Thus, Hypothesis 1 that pronouns are realized with weaker phonetic cues than content words only in broad focus in English is rejected.

It seems that although phonologically prosody overrun word class in narrow focus and given information in English, as claimed by Wells (2006), phonetically pronouns were realized with weaker cues than content words in all three information statuses. Similarly, in Mandarin, pronouns were also realized with weaker phonetic cues than content words in all three information statuses. One possible explanation is that in both languages, pronouns, compared with content words, represent known or shared information and are thus less stressed than content words in all information statuses.

Despite the above similarity, there was indeed a major difference between English and Mandarin. In English, pronouns and content words differed by duration in all information statuses, while in Mandarin, they differed by maximum intensity in all information statuses. In both languages, pronouns were realized with lower values in duration (English) or maximum intensity (Mandarin) than content words. Thus, it seems that in English duration is the major phonetic cue distinguishing between pronouns and content words, while in Mandarin it is maximum intensity that distinguishes between the two word classes.

4.2. L1 Mandarin L2 English learners' acquisition of pronoun prosody

As mentioned in Section 3.4, the learners' recordings were analyzed both auditorily and acoustically.

4.2.1. Results of auditory analysis

The auditory analysis showed that these learners performed differently on pronouns and content words (Figure 2).

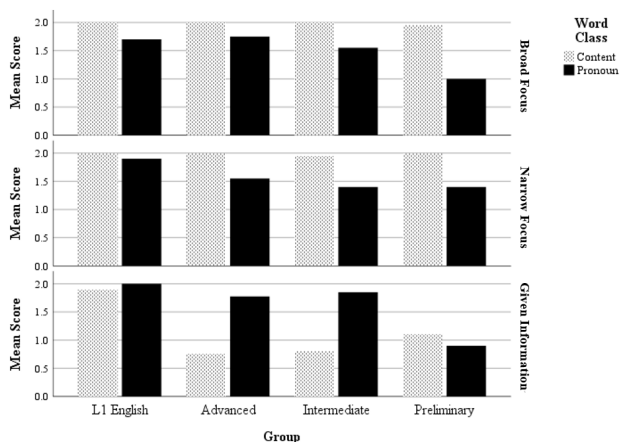


Figure 2. Score by group, information status, and word class

A 2 x 3 x 3 x 2 ANOVA test was run, with score as dependent variable, gender (male vs. female) and group (L1 English, advanced, intermediate, preliminary) as between-subjects independent variables, and information status (broad focus, narrow focus, given information) and word class (content word, pronoun) as within-subjects independent variables. Results (Table 3) revealed differences by group, by information status, and by word class, and interactions between group and word class, between group and information status, between word class and information status, and between group, information status, and word class.

Table 3. Differences indicated by ANOVA results for L2 English: Auditory analysis

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2
Group	3, 396	16.45	< .001***	.11
Word Class	1, 396	8.11	.005**	.02
Information Status	2, 396	26.14	< .001***	.12
Group*Word Class	3, 396	12.28	< .001***	.09
Group*Information Status	6, 396	4.12	.001**	.06
Word Class*Information Status	2, 396	41.85	< .001***	.17
Group*Word Class*Info. Status	6, 396	4.82	< .001***	.07

significant at .01 level, *significant at .001 level

Post-hoc tests showed that the L1 English group outperformed all three learner groups ($p = .002$, $p < .001$, $p < .001$), and that all groups performed better on broad focus and narrow focus than on given information (both at $p < .001$). In addition, while all the other three groups performed comparably on pronouns and content words, the preliminary group performed worse on pronouns than on content words ($p < .001$). While the L1 speaker group performed comparably on all information statuses, the three learner groups all performed worse on given information than on broad focus and narrow focus ($p = .037$ - $p < .001$). Moreover, the learner groups generally performed worse on pronouns than on content words in focus (all at $p < .001$), but better on pronouns than on content words in given information (all at $p < .001$). More specifically, the advanced and intermediate groups followed this general pattern ($p = .031$ - $p < .001$), but the preliminary group performed comparably on pronouns and content words in given information.

The above results suggest that the L1 Mandarin L2 English learners performed worse than the L1 speakers even at the advanced level, yet the learners did improve as their proficiency increased, implying that they were gradually learning to treat pronouns as L1 English speakers did. Thus, Hypothesis 2 that phonologically the learners treat pronouns like content words, but their performance approaches L1 English speakers as their proficiency increases is retained.

This result is consistent with previous findings that acquisition of L2 prosody improves with L2 proficiency (Baker 2010; Hua & Li 2016, 2019; Hua 2022). However, it is worth noting that these learners were not good at accenting pronouns for narrow focus or deaccenting pronouns for broad focus and given information, and they were especially poor at deaccenting content words for given information. This echoes with previous findings that L1 Mandarin L2 English learners tend to treat given information as focus (Hua 2021) and stress the last word in an utterance regardless of its word class (Juffs 1990; Wennerstrom 1994, 1998; Deterding 2010; Hua & Li 2016, 2019).

These learners' failure in deaccenting pronouns for broad focus and given information suggests a certain degree of L1 transfer, as pronouns and content words tend to be treated equally in their L1 Mandarin. Their failure in accenting pronouns for narrow focus, however, suggests the contrary. Perhaps these learners neutralized pronouns across all information statuses so that the pronouns they produced were neither prominent in narrow focus nor weak in given information compared with L1 English.

4.2.2. Results of acoustic analysis

The results of the acoustic analysis are presented in Figure 3. Four 2 x 3 x 3 x 2 ANOVA tests were run, with ratios as dependent variables, gender (male vs. female) and group (L1 English, advanced, intermediate, preliminary) as between-subjects independent variables, and information status (broad focus, narrow focus, given information) and word class (content word, pronoun) as within-subjects independent variables.

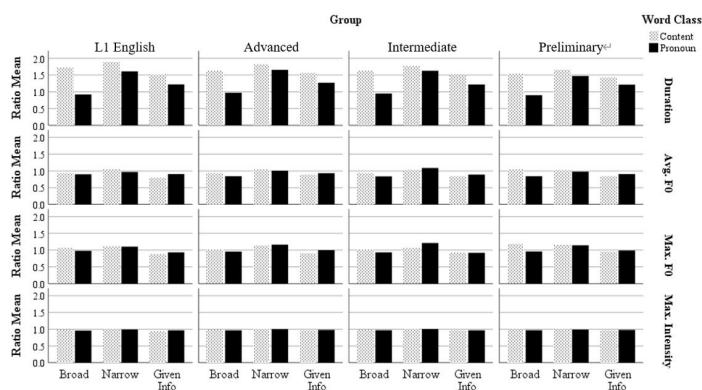


Figure 3. Phonetic realization of pronouns by group, information status, and word class

Results (Table 4) showed that duration ratio differed by group, by information status, and by word class, and there was an interaction between word class and information status. Post-hoc tests revealed that the L1 English group and the advanced group produced higher duration ratios than the preliminary group ($p = .006$, $p = .007$), the duration ratio for narrow focus was higher than those for broad focus and given information (both at $p < .001$), and the duration ratio for given information was higher than that for broad focus ($p = .011$). Moreover, in all three information statuses, duration ratios for pronouns were lower than for content words (all at $p < .001$).

Average F0 ratio and maximum F0 ratio differed by information status, and there were interactions between word class and information status for both (See Table 4). Post-hoc tests revealed that the F0 ratios for narrow focus were higher than those for broad focus and given information (all at $p < .001$), and that in broad focus F0 ratios were lower for pronouns than for content words ($p < .001$, $p = .004$).

Maximum intensity ratio differed by group, by information status, and by word class, and there were interactions between group and information status and between word class and information status (See Table 4). Post-hoc tests showed that the L1 English group produced a lower ratio than all three learner groups ($p = .001$, $p = .029$, $p = .002$), that the ratio for narrow focus was higher than those for broad focus and given information, and the ratio for broad focus was higher than that for given information (all at $p < .001$). In addition, in broad focus and narrow focus, pronouns were realized with a lower maximum intensity ratio than content words (both at $p < .001$), but in given information, pronouns were realized with a higher maximum intensity ratio than content words ($p = .011$).

Table 4. Differences indicated by ANOVA results
for L2 English: Acoustic analysis

Duration Ratio	df	F	p	partial η^2
group	3, 497	7.66	< .001***	.04
word class	1, 497	362.90	.005**	.42
information status	2, 497	154.15	< .001***	.38
word class*information status	2, 497	59.15	< .001***	.19
Average F0 Ratio	df	F	P	partial η^2
information status	2, 497	27.28	< .001***	.10
word class*information status	2, 497	7.66	.001**	.03
Maximum F0 Ratio	df	F	P	partial η^2
information status	2, 497	27.98	< .001***	.10
word class*information status	2, 497	5.59	.004**	.02
Maximum Intensity Ratio	df	F	P	partial η^2
group	3, 497	4.74	.003**	.02
word class	1, 497	22.72	< .001***	.04
information status	2, 497	102.22	< .001***	.29
group*information status	6, 497	2.44	.025*	.03
word class*information status	2, 497	31.43	< .001***	.11

*significant at .05 level, **significant at .01 level, ***significant at .001 level

The learners' phonetic realization of pronouns is presented in Table 5, together with those in L1 English and L1 Mandarin for the convenience of comparison.

Table 5. Phonetic realizations of pronouns in L1 English, L1 Mandarin, and L2 English

L1 English				
	Duration	Average F0	Maximum F0	Maximum Intensity
Broad	P<C***			P<C***
Narrow	P<C***			P<C**
Given Info.	P<C***			
L1 Mandarin				
	Duration	Average F0	Maximum F0	Maximum Intensity
Broad		P<C***	P<C***	P<C***
Narrow				P<C***
Given Info.	P<C**			P<C***
L2 English				
	Duration	Average F0	Maximum F0	Maximum Intensity
Broad	P<C***	P<C***	P<C**	P<C***
Narrow	P<C***			P<C***
Given Info.	P<C***			P>C*

P=pronouns, C=content words

*significant at .05 level, **significant at .01 level, ***significant at .001 level

Table 5 shows that the learners' phonetic realization of pronouns entails features from both English and Mandarin. Like L1 English speakers, they produced shorter duration for pronouns than for content words in all three information statuses. Like L1 Mandarin speakers, they produced lower average F0 and maximum F0 for pronouns than for content words in broad focus. Also, they produced lower maximum intensity for pronouns than for content words in broad focus and narrow focus, which is consistent

with both L1 English and L1 Mandarin. What is tricky is that in given information they produced higher maximum intensity for pronouns than for content words, which is a pattern absent in both L1 English and L1 Mandarin. In general, there is clear impact of L1 prosody on these learners' phonetic realization of pronouns.

In addition, overall the learners produced duration comparable to L1 English speakers at the intermediate stage, average and maximum F0 comparable to L1 English speakers at the preliminary stage, but higher maximum intensity than L1 English speakers even at the advanced stage. Thus, it can be concluded that while duration improved with proficiency, average and maximum F0 and maximum intensity improved very little. Therefore, Hypothesis 3, which states that phonetically there is an effect of L1 transfer, but the effect decreases as proficiency increases, is generally retained.

The findings above are consistent with Barlow (1998), who reports that Mandarin-speaking English learners rely heavily on intensity when realizing focus, but partially consistent with McGory (1997), who report that Mandarin-speaking English learners tend to produce L1 English-like duration and intensity, but not F0. In this study, however, the participants produced duration and F0 comparable to L1 English speakers at a certain stage, but not intensity. This is probably because the proficiency levels of the participants in these two studies are not comparable. Moreover, the finding that the learners' phonetic realization of pronouns improved with their proficiency echoes with Barlow (1998), Baker (2010), Hua and Li (2019) and Hua (2022), all reporting improvement in phonetic realization of L2 English prosody with English proficiency.

However, neither L1 English nor L1 Mandarin could explain the higher intensity for pronouns than for content words in the learners' phonetic realization of given information, as this pattern is absent in both languages. This unique pattern could be evidence of these learners' struggle with the prosody of given information, which is especially difficult for these learners and even at the advanced level many of them still fail to mark given information with proper prosody in terms of both deaccentuation and phonetic realization (Hua & Li 2019).

Another intriguing point is that duration approached L1 English as these learners' proficiency increased, but average F0 and maximum F0 and maximum intensity improved very little with proficiency. While the improvement in duration shows a sign of learning as expected, the lack of

improvement in maximum intensity could have resulted from the learners' deep-rooted L1 Mandarin prosody, as in L1 Mandarin maximum intensity plays an important role in the realization of information status. The lack of improvement in average F0 and maximum F0, on the other hand, can be attributed to a ceiling effect. As indicated in Table 4, there were no differences in F0 ratios by group, which suggests that these learners could already produce L1 English-like F0 at the early stage of learning. Consequently, there was little room for improvement in F0.

Taken all findings together, while there were signs of learning in these learners, L1 prosody transfer seems difficult to conquer for further improvement.

5. Conclusion

This study compared the prosody of pronouns in English and Mandarin and investigated the acquisition of English pronoun prosody by L1 Mandarin speakers. The major findings are: 1) in both English and Mandarin, the prosody of pronouns does not differ by information status, and pronouns and content words differ in their prosody in all three information statuses; 2) the L1 Mandarin L2 English learners' acquisition of pronoun prosody improves with their proficiency, but there is clear evidence of L1 prosody transfer, especially in phonetic realization of pronouns.

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that word class is a non-negligible factor in researching and teaching prosody. In practice, it is necessary to raise L2 English learners' awareness of pronoun prosody. For example, it could be made explicit when and how pronouns should be accented or deaccented.

This study is not exempt from limitations. To begin with, male L1 Mandarin speakers should also be included, and it is preferable that all participants should be recorded under the same condition. In addition, it would be more informative if spontaneous speech is also investigated. Further research can address these issues and dive deeper into the prosody-grammar interface in L2 prosody acquisition.

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PROSODIC MARKING OF CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS AS DISCOURSE MARKERS IN SERBIAN EFL STUDENTS' ORAL ARGUMENTATION

Abstract

This study analyses the use of conjunctive adverbs as discourse markers (DMs) in oral argumentative presentations by two groups of Serbian EFL students with the intention of comparing the distribution of DMs and the strength of their prosodic boundaries. The study included 5 first-year and 5 third-year students at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, who recorded their oral argumentative presentations on a topic selected by the researcher. The analysis included the distribution of DMs by functional class, whereas the acoustic analysis looked into the use of boundary tones, nuclear tones, pitch reset and pauses. The results revealed that the third-year students did possess a broader range of appropriate vocabulary, especially adverbial and used lengthier pauses, but did not differ much in their choice of tone or key from their first-year peers.

Key words: discourse markers, conjunctive adverbs, spoken discourse, argumentation, EFL

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1. Introduction

Much like in written argumentative essays, spoken argumentative discourse in the academic setting has the main purpose of influencing the audience to accept a particular idea and of arguing in favor or against a specific proposition. The persuasiveness of the text relies on the arguments and support presented within, but the effectiveness of the message also depends on other factors, including the cohesion and coherence of the text. Cohesion refers to creating relations in discourse above grammatical structures (Halliday 1994, cited in Martin, 2001: 35) by offering explicit clues to unlocking the relationship between ideas in a text. Coherence, on the other hand, “involves the relationship that occurs from sentence to sentence within the paragraph” (Gallo & Rink 1985: 50) and is achieved by different means. According to Smalley et al. (2000), these means include the repetition of key words, coordinating conjunctions and correlative conjunctions, subordinate clauses and transitional words and phrases, the last of which plays an important role in both spoken and written discourse.

As powerful clues “about what commitment the speaker makes regarding the relationship between the current utterance and the prior discourse” (Fraser 1988: 22), DMs have been considered important elements in the construction of the function and meaning of a sentence (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) and as such have found their place in academic writing and oral argumentation as well. Even though oral argumentation carries more additional cues about the author’s intentions than written discourse, which causes written discourse to rely more on cohesive devices, discourse markers in oral argumentation have been shown to occur more frequently, while performing the same functions (Soria and Ferrari, 1998) and are one of the five categories of expressions attributed by Carter and McCarthy (2006) to oral discourse but much less so to written English.

As academic speaking involves a set of skills that include the ability to defend and criticize a position in a discussion, to evaluate ideas in spoken discourse, to create a well-supported and researched argument and various academic presentation skills, it seems that discourse markers should play an important role in one’s development of that skill set. Since academic speaking tasks start taking place at the undergraduate level already, a study of the use of discourse markers in academic presentations of undergraduate students may reveal how well the use of these expressions is developed at an early stage.

However, although the frequency and type of DMs used by the undergraduates in this study will be the initial focus of the paper, their prosodic marking will be the main subject, as various authors (Schourup 1999; Schiffrin 1987) have attributed discourse markers with prosodic features as one of their defining characteristics. This matter, however, is still under-researched in the case of Serbian ESL learners and, as speaking activities are an essential component of most language-oriented university courses, it remains an intriguing subject for research, with the main question in this case being whether the prosodic marking of DMs becomes more consistent in more experienced ESL speakers.

2. Previous Research

Even though their exact nomenclature in literature has varied from what Shiffrin (1987) and Fraser (1990) have called discourse markers, to discourse particles (Schourup 1985), discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1992), sentence connectives (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), pragmatic connectives (van Dijk, 1979) or discourse operators (Redeker, 1991) and various others, discourse markers have been an essential tool in achieving cohesion in different genres belonging to academic discourse.

As hard as it has been for researchers to adopt a common name for this functional group of “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (Schiffrin 1987: 31), especially due to the array of functions they perform, the attempts to define and characterize discourse markers have varied just as much. For example, for Schourup (1999) discourse markers can be identified on the basis of their defining characteristics, including connectivity, optionality and non-truth conditionality, while for Schiffrin (1987: 328) they should be “syntactically detachable from a sentence”, be commonly used in a sentence-initial position, have a range of prosodic contours and be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse. Similar constraints are also given by Fuller (2003), who claims that for the connective to be considered a discourse marker, the semantic relationship between the elements connected by the marker must remain the same even without it, and that the omission of the marker should not affect the grammaticality of the utterance.

However, the definition of a discourse marker has been dependent on the approach used, and they have varied between a coherence-based

approach by Schiffrin (1987), Relevance-based framework (Blakemore 2002), and the grammatical-pragmatical approach by Fraser (1996). Schiffrin's (1987) approach distinguishes between five "planes of talk", i.e. dimensions of the interaction that are occupied by DMs. For her, discourse markers can belong to the ideational structure (linking propositions), the action structure (linking speech acts), the exchange structure (taking or yielding turns), the information state (organizing knowledge) or the participation framework (establishing speaker relations). In other approaches to discourse markers, some kind of dichotomy can be seen in the type of meaning signaled by the discourse markers, which can be either propositional content on the one hand, or pragmatic information on the other; or a textual function on the one hand and interactive on the other (Wichmann 2014). A dichotomy also exists in Fraser's (1999: 931) categorization of DMs, whereby they can either "relate the explicit interpretation conveyed by S2 with some aspect associated with the segment, S1" or "relate the topic of S2 to that of S1".

Fraser's (1999) first category would include contrastive (*however, although*), elaborative (*in addition, and, besides*), inferential (*as a result, because of*) and reason DMs (*after all, because, since*), whereas the second would include topic relating markers (*by the way, with regards to*). Later, Martínez (2004) would expand the subgroup of elaborative markers by adding conclusive markers (*in conclusion, to sum up*) and exemplifiers (*for example, for instance*). In Fraser (2004), DMs were classified into contrastive, elaborative, implicative and temporal, whereas in Fraser (2009) the DMs were reclassified into: contrastive, elaborative and inferential discourse markers.

These classifications provided researchers with a framework to investigate the use of DMs with various aims in mind. The use of discourse markers in EFL argumentative academic writing has shown in different research not only that elaborative DMs (e.g., *and, in addition* and *furthermore*) are the most frequently used DMs (Rahimi 2011) but also that elaborative DMs and inferential DMs (e.g., *because* and *thus*) were good markers of successful writing (Jalilifar 2008), although other studies, like the one by Rahimi and Ghanbari (2011), did not arrive at conclusive evidence of such a correlation. Furthermore, when L2 writing was compared to L1 writing in studies like Dumlao & Wilang (2019), elaborative markers proved to be overused by both groups, while differences included the positioning of DMs, and the variety of the DMs used, as L2 writers used them more sentence-initially.

However, as a different mode of communication from written language, spoken language can be expected to contain some lexical, grammatical and pragmatic properties which do not correspond to the patterns expected from written discourse. For example, more planning can be expected from written discourse and more interactivity and emotivity from speech (Crible & Cuenca 2017), while certain DMs, such as adverbials, are more relevant to written discourse, while others (e.g. *okay*, *well*, and *now*) are more pertinent to speech (Biber 2006). One of the important differences, however, is also the use of intonational information and other prosodic features of speech in the communication of discourse structure.

2.1. Prosodic features of DMs

The relationship between prosody and discourse has been well-acknowledged in literature. Hirschberg & Pierrehumbert (1986: 136) noted that different studies had found types of information status (such as given/new, topic/comment, focus/presupposition) to be intonationally ‘marked’. They also noted the role of intonation in signaling topic shift, digression, and interruption, as well as turn-taking in conversations and other potential uses of intonation in discourse. Clearly, intonation plays different functions in speech and Couper-Kuhlen (1986) summarized them into six different types: (1) informational, (2) grammatical, (3) illocutionary, (4) attitudinal, (5) textual/discourse, and (6) indexical. However, the term *discourse intonation* can most likely be traced to the earlier works by Brazil (1975), Coulthard (1977) and others (Chun 2002: 32). Brazil’s theory, according to Chun (2002), was that intonation had interactional significance in which cohesion and coherence in discourse had priority over grammatical concepts like *interrogative* and *declarative* sentences, and that intonation patterns are constructed using different configurations of traditional prosodic components. These prosodic components are the tonic syllable’s *tone* ((1) falling-rising or *referring* tone *r*, (2) falling or *proclaiming* tone *p*, (3) rising or marked version of the fall-rise, *r+*, (4) rising-falling or marked version of the fall, *p+*, and (5) low rising) and the tone unit’s *key*, which refers to the pitch level of the head of a new tone unit in relation to the previous one. The interplay of these two situationally-specific prosodic features would signal how well-known the information is to the hearer on the one hand and contrastive and equivalent information, on the other.

The involvement of DMs in discourse has been researched with different goals and hypotheses. Hirschberg & Litman (1987, 1993) examined DMs ('cue phrases') and their prosodic cues with regard to semantic disambiguation, while efforts have also been made to use them for discourse segmentation (Grosz & Hirschberg, 1992; Hirschberg & Nakatani, 1996) or identification of different dialogue moves (Shriberg et al 1998; Taylor et al. 1998). Regarding DMs' prosodic properties, Schiffrin (1987: 328) claimed that discourse markers are marked by tonic stress followed by a pause and phonological reduction, whereas Ferrara (1997) showed that words functioning as DMs can also possess a distinctive fundamental frequency (F0) contour. When found on the left periphery of the sentence, as Traugott (1995: 6) claims, they are often found "in an independent breath unit carrying a special intonation and stress pattern", although their position in an utterance can also be medial or final, which carries different intonation properties as well as different functions. In addition to this, Komar (2007: 49–50) found that, depending on its position, a discourse marker will typically have a different pitch height and nuclear tone, although she claims that its function will play a role as well. She uses Brazil's intonation model (1997) to point out that discourse markers whose function is to mark transitions from one topic to another are most likely to be treated as separate intonation phrases, as well as the markers whose function is to make reference to shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener. The high key (↑) and a falling tone (↘) will typically be found in the openers and closers of topics, as well as in DMs functioning as focusing devices.

As these previous studies have shown that discourse markers can contain a specific intonation pattern, our research will include a qualitative analysis of the intonation contours based on Brazil's (1997) model of discourse intonation, but as Swerts' (1997) analysis of discourse boundaries also contained the analysis of pauses at discourse boundaries, with the author claiming that "there is a moderate, but very significant correlation between the boundary strength values and the pause durations" (Swerts 1997: 518) we will also look into that prosodic feature. However, as Swerts' (1997: 520) research also found that "stronger breaks in the flow of information are more likely to co-occur with filled pauses than weaker ones" special consideration will be given to this type of pauses as well. Secondly, F0 reset seems to be another important contributor to boundary strength (Swerts 1997; Hansson 1999), with the boundary tone

as the third (Swerts 1997), so these three factors will form the basis of our quantitative prosodic analysis.

3. Methodology

To examine how DMs are prosodically marked in oral academic discourse at the undergraduate level, 10 argumentative presentations were recorded with 1st and 3rd year students of *English language and literature*. The topic for discussion was *Should Schools Enforce Strict Dress Codes?* and the presenters were instructed to present three supporting arguments in favour of their thesis, together with an introduction and a conclusion. During the presentations, the speakers were not corrected or interrupted if the expected format was not used, as long as the presentation was kept on topic.

On average, the recordings produced 302 words per speaker in group A (first-year students), ranging from 193 to 459. On average, group B (third-year students) produced 373 words with the range of 212 to 534 words. The mean duration of the recordings was 172.8s (Group A) and 245s (Group B).

Once the recordings were automatically transcribed and checked by the author, the following parameters were used to identify and annotate DMs within our samples:

- If removed from a sentence, they do not affect, or they insignificantly affect, the content of the message.
- They are most commonly used at the beginning or at the end of an utterance or isolated from the proposition, and are often grouped.
- In ambiguous examples of usage where it is hard to define whether the expression in question functions as a discourse marker or not, the decision is based on the analysis of pragmatic functions of the expression.

Fraser (2009) gives additional conditions for considering a pragmatic marker in a text as its subtype – a discourse marker. According to Fraser (2009), a discourse marker should:

- be a lexical expression (*but*, *so*, and *in addition*) and not a syntactic structure or a non-verbal or prosodic feature of language

- occur as a part of the second discourse segment, S2, when preceded by a discourse segment S1
- not contribute to the semantic meaning of the segment but signal a specific semantic relationship which holds between the interpretation of the two illocutionary act segments, S1 and S2.

The additional parameter applied at this point was the selection of conjunctive adverbs for analysis, because of their prototypical sentence-initial position and prosodic detachment from the propositional content of the sentence.

In the analysis of the positions of discourse markers in the students' presentations, given the choice of conjunctive adverbs as the subject of our study, we opted only for the prototypical initial position. After that selection, each DM that satisfied the aforementioned criteria for inclusion was assigned to one of the three functional categories such as: *contrastive*, *elaborative*, and *inferential*, based on Fraser's (2009) taxonomy.

Based on these classifications, we compared DM placement and type between the two groups of students to see if the additional four semesters of argumentative academic writing and elective speaking courses such as a debate course had a significant effect on the production of DMs in speech, their variation and frequency of use. However, our interest also lay in the prosodic marking of DMs.

For that reason, in terms of their prosodic qualities, the adverbial DMs belonging to a single tone unit and found in the initial position were then analyzed in Praat software (Boersma & Weenink, 2021) and the analysis was done in the following two steps, using qualitative and quantitative methods, with comparisons made between groups A and B:

- The qualitative analysis of:
 - intonation contours in DM's tonic syllables based on Brazil's (1997) model of discourse intonation
- The quantitative analysis of:
 - F0 reset between the tone unit preceding the DM and the DM
 - Boundary tones leading to the DMs, classified as either low or non-low (Swerts 1997)
 - length and type of pauses (silent/filled) leading to and following the DMs

4. Results

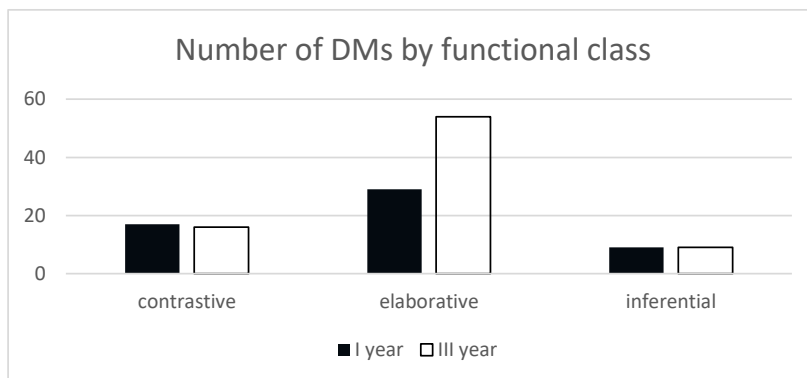


Figure 1. Types of DMs by year of study

Based on Fraser's (2009) classification of discourse markers, the study revealed that out of the three categories, elaborative markers (*and, in addition, for instance* etc.) were the most frequent ones in both groups of presentations, making up 53% of the total number of DMs in the first-year students' presentations and as much as 68.3% of the third-year recordings.

In addition, both groups' second most frequent type were the contrastive markers (*but, however, on the other hand, etc.*), with inferential ones (*so, therefore, because, etc.*) coming third. These numbers are not surprising given the nature of the presentations and the argumentative structure of the speeches, as most of the claims the students made needed to be corroborated by examples, statistics and other types of factual support, for which elaborative markers were the most appropriate ones.

An interesting observation can be made about the use of contrastive markers: even though it could be expected for these DMs to appear mostly in the introductions and conclusions, their use by the first-year presenters was not as ordered. In fact, 10 out of 17 examples were misuses in an argumentative sense: both adverbials and conjunctions were mostly used not to refute the opposing view, but rather to correct, soften or refute one's own previous statement or thesis (Example 1). Compared to the first-year students, third-year presenters used their contrastive markers almost exclusively either to introduce an opposing view or to refute it, which can be considered an appropriate use of such connectors within an argumentative text of this kind, and indicates that the additional courses

in academic writing at least improved the quality of their use, if not their quantity as well (Example 2).

Example 1: *But at the same time, dress codes shouldn't be so strict.*

Example 2: *However, many say that certain dress codes are... prevent students to express themselves and they cannot be the... themselves, but there are many different ways for students to express themselves.*

And lastly, the inferential markers used in our sample are also not unexpectedly the fewest in number. As their function is to produce conclusions based on previous information, their use in an argumentative structure would be mostly limited to concluding sentences or a concluding 'paragraph' or statement, as the prevalent relationship between supporting statements within an argument would be an elaborative one. However, there were some differences in their use as well: whereas the first year students used discourse markers such as *therefore* to signal the upcoming conclusion, while all five third-year students relied on what Fraser (2009) calls *discourse structure markers* (DSMs) like *in conclusion*, *to sum up*, *all in all*, and others for that purpose. While this does not put the former group at a significant disadvantage, as long as some marker was used, it signals that the third-year students did possess a more appropriate vocabulary for that purpose, which again shows the effect of the four semesters of study that separated the two groups.

The variety of DMs used in the presentations was the second point of examination. As Table 1 shows, apart from inferential markers, third-year students showed more reliance on different kinds of markers than their younger colleagues, with fewer conjunctions and more adverbials and prepositional phrases. This observation also stands for the elaborative markers, despite the fact that there were more uses of the conjunction *and*, with three other phrases also being used more than once. The third category did show some slightly surprising numbers, but as we mentioned before, the first-year students used *therefore* to signal the upcoming conclusion whereas the third-year students relied more on DSMs for that purpose. On the other hand, the appearance of *henceforth* in that part of the sample was probably a misuse of the word, as the intended one, based on the context, was *therefore*, so it was still included in the sample albeit not as the intended word.

	<i>contrastive</i>		<i>elaborative</i>		<i>inferential</i>	
	I year	III year	I year	III year	I year	III year
<i>but</i>	8	5				
<i>however</i>	5	4				
<i>(and) on the other hand</i>	1	4				
<i>even though</i>	1	2				
<i>while</i>	1					
<i>but at the same time</i>	1					
<i>although</i>		1				
<i>and</i>			25	35		
<i>also</i>			1	1		
<i>additionally</i>			1	1		
<i>for example</i>			1	7		
<i>for instance</i>			1			
<i>(and) furthermore</i>				4		
<i>moreover</i>				3		
<i>namely</i>				1		
<i>as I mentioned before</i>				1		
<i>so</i>					4	4
<i>(and) therefore</i>					2	
<i>because (of)</i>					2	4
<i>as a result</i>					1	
<i>henceforth</i>						1

Table 1. DMs in the selection

Table 1 also leads us closer to the final step of our examination before the acoustic analysis, as the focus of it is the use of conjunctive adverbs as discourse markers. This particular grammatical category was identified in our corpus and marked in Table 1 in bold, and these adverbials, found typically in sentence-initial and medial positions, will be analysed in prosodic terms by looking at their right boundary, the duration of the following pause, but also the pitch key of the phrase itself, as a heightened and reset fundamental frequency (F0) level should indicate the change in topic, which these adverbials (as well as some prepositional phrases and conjunctions) typically help to introduce.

Acoustic analysis

With the discourse markers reduced to the selection that only contained conjunctive adverbs, the acoustic analysis was performed on the selection of 9 DMs used by the first-year students and the 15 DMs used by the second group, which already shows the more varied selection of DMs employed by the more experienced group. All of the DMs were used in the utterance-initial position.

The first value we examined was the change in the nuclear tone in the tone unit containing the DM, as this property could be used to signal the relationship between topics, ranging from ‘referring tones (fall-rise (f-r))’, ‘proclaiming tones (falling (f))’, to ‘a level tone’, to use Brazil’s (1997) terminology.

		contrastive	elaborative	inferential
I year	s1		f-r	f
	s3	f, f, f,		f
	s5	f-r, f-r	f-r	
III year	s1	f-r	f-r, f-r, f-r	f
	s2	f-r	f-r, f-r, f	
	s3	f		
	s4	f-r	f-r	
	s5		f-r, f, f-r	

Table 2. DM tones

As we can see from Table 2, both groups of students relied (almost) exclusively on fall-rise tones to introduce an elaborative DM. This finding could be considered expected, as the fall-rise, as a referring tone, should indicate an assumption that the meaning of the utterance can be taken for granted by the listener, or when the listener wishes to confirm certain information. Although the material in this study was not conversational and there was no turn-taking, we can see why the elaborative markers were seen as a confirmation of the previous statement by the new one, by the same speaker.

On the other hand, it was surprising that the more experienced group did not use the falling, (proclaiming) tone to a greater extent in the contrastive DMs, as this tone indicates divergence, and it is readily used to introduce information new to the listener, or when the speaker wishes to make an inquiry. This could indicate that the students were not aware of the peculiarities of discourse intonation, or might be using upspeak as a result of cultural influences and personal insecurity at the time of the recording, but it is hard to draw specific conclusions, as the differences in its use were very speaker-dependent, as each student used only one type of tone, and even fewer examples were found for the inferential DMs to make a steady case.

What we could not determine from the tone-related data, we tried to make more evident by also looking at the pitch reset between the tone unit preceding the DMs and the DMs we had in our selection, and the results are shown in Table 3.

	speaker	Percentage of DMs with pitch reset	Mean pitch change
I year	s3	100%	+20,84Hz
	s5	100%	+52,17Hz
	s1	100%	+63,35Hz
III year	s1	100%	+32,82Hz
	s2	75%	+26,94Hz
	s3	100%	+34,5Hz
	s4	100%	+24,3Hz
	s5	0%	/

Table 3. DM pitch reset

The collected data revealed that both groups did reset the pitch fairly regularly within the DM's first stressed syllable in comparison to the previous tone unit. We can also notice that these changes in pitch were notable and that the only other choice of key was the mid key, where much less significant changes in pitch occurred towards lower F0, and only in the second group, with the mean change being -5,35 Hz for Speaker 3 and -6,7 Hz for Speaker 5.

What contributed to this situation was the boundary tone of the previous tone unit, together with the falling nuclear tones in the same tone unit. After classifying the boundary tones as either *low*, or *non-low* (Swerts 1997) and choosing to present the differences in pitch in semitones (ST), we reached the results that show that neither group showed much consistency in their use, although we noted some differences between the two groups (Table 4).

group	Low (%)	Non-low (%)	Low (Mean ST)	Non-low (Mean ST)
I year	55,5	44,5	2,84	4,8
III year	26,7	73,3	7,29	3,9

Table 4. Boundary tones

However, if we look into the data specific to each speaker, we can notice why these global results do not show anything conclusive, as differences between individual speakers were also an important factor. For example, first year's Speaker 3 used only low tones, and Speaker 5 only non-low, and these two speakers made up 77.8% of the total number of examples in that group and similar but less consistent.

As potential signals of tone unit and topic division, the final prosodic feature examined were the pauses. The first major difference between the two groups was that only 33% of the pauses made pre-DM by the first-year students were filled, whereas 80% of the pauses made by the second group contained some filler sounds. However, upon closer inspection, as Figure 2 shows, there were some differences in the use of these two types of pauses. Although third-year students had noticeably longer pauses overall, the differences in their length also varied considerably, with the longest pause used by any student lasting 4.95s. As this was a filled pause, this type was also measured separately and it revealed that the difference in the average length of pre-DM pauses was mostly due to the length of this type of pauses and its aforementioned frequency in the speeches of third-year students. This is further supported by the numbers pertaining to the silent pauses, where the two groups did not differ significantly.

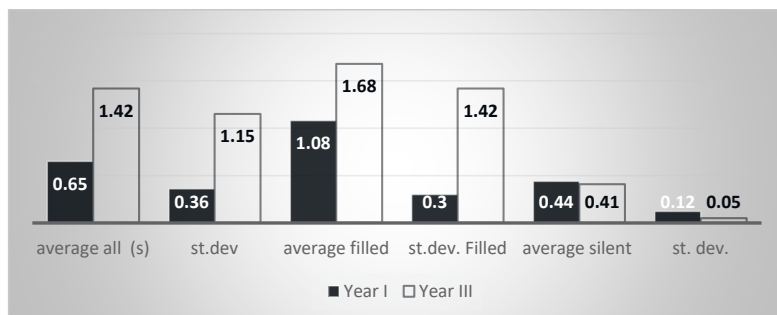


Figure 2. Filled and silent pauses

Although these numbers do show us that the more experienced students marked the transition between S1 and S2 with longer pauses followed by a DM, the exact reason why this difference existed is uncertain, but it is still encouraging to notice that even the less experienced students consistently used pauses in front of sentence-initial DMs. However, as these were also the endings of utterances, the pauses were also grammatical in nature, so the longer pauses made by the third-year students, in spite of containing some fillers, may indicate more need to prepare the following statement, as the students pondered the following utterance and its connection to the previous statement.

The discourse function of these pauses was made clearer when we took into account the pauses typically following conjunctive adverbs. In 67% of cases with the first-year students, these adverbs were not followed by a pause at all, and the mean length of the pauses that were made was only 0.06s (compared to 0.65s before the adverb). One might argue that the less experienced first-year students were simply not aware of the need for pauses or punctuation after such expressions, but even with the third-year students, who had only 20% of DMs not followed by pauses, the average length of these breaks was only 0.5s (compared to 1.42s before the DM). Somewhat unexpectedly, however, this group was also the only one which had filled pauses in this position as well, and they accounted for as much as 47% of the sample. When they were removed from the sample, the average length of the post-DM pauses dropped to 0.14s, as the average length of the filled ones was 0.92s. Another interesting observation made at this point was that the third-year students were also the only ones who had filled pauses both before and after the DM, which accounted for 33% of their sample.

These findings lead us to the conclusion that the use of pauses before conjunctive adverbs was not simply a grammatical matter but did have to do with their discourse function, with both groups showing a significant increase in their length compared to the other locations and purely grammatical functions. The issue of filled pauses remains an intriguing one, especially as it relates specifically to the third-year students' presentations. As these pauses were used by all of the speakers, and 4 out of 5 even used them in both positions, it leads to the conclusion that their use did not happen accidentally but could be a result of the older group's higher awareness of the significance of DMs in topic and discourse management as the speakers needed time to think about their next move. However, it also implies that the same pauses were not used for additional emphasis, or the filled portions of such breaks would not be as prominent, if present at all.

5. Conclusion

Considering the results of our study, the effect of the four semesters of English studies and different writing and speaking courses that separated the two groups did appear to have certain effects on their prosodic marking of changes in topic introduced by DMs in shape of conjunctive adverbs, although the similarities were far more noticeable than the differences. Both groups used pitch reset and proclaiming tones similarly, whereas the older group was more reliant on pauses and their length as another potential property of DMs. Boundary tones seemed to be very speaker-dependent to make any general claims. Perhaps the biggest difference was not in terms of prosody, but vocabulary, as the more experienced group's DMs had more variety.

The research, however, was only limited to conjunctive adverbs, and a broadened scope of the research that would include the remaining grammatical categories could come to more relevant results, especially with DMs being a functional and not a grammatical category.

However, as a pilot piece of research, with a view to conducting a larger study, the present study did enable us to realize where the intended methods of research could lead to and to adapt the existing ones to offer a better research design going forward, especially in the case of filled pauses and other inconclusive findings caused mainly by the low number

of research participants, while also revealing more about one functional aspect of the grammatical category of conjunctive adverbs.

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THE (IM)PROPER NEW WOMAN OF BRAM STOKER'S *DRACULA*

Abstract

This article analyses the ways in which the New Woman Movement of the 1890s is reflected in Bram Stoker's construction of his female characters in *Dracula*. It shows that the image of the New Woman is modified and redefined through already existing female tropes, including the Angel in the House, the Fallen Woman and the *femme fatale*. Thus, it is argued, two versions of the New Woman emerge: an acceptable, "proper", New Woman as an educated and competent worker, but also a submissive wifely or motherly figure, whose character traits correspond to conservative Victorian notions of female propriety. The other, unacceptable, variant is a sexual New Woman whose interests and aspirations are trivial, indulgence-seeking and, most importantly, whose critique of the Victorian double standard is dismissed and ultimately punished.

Key words: *Dracula*; New Woman; Angel in the House; Fallen Woman; *femme fatale*

Introduction

Besides inspiring numerous analyses of its title character, Stoker's *Dracula* also contributed to the conversation on the representation of the New Woman phenomenon through its portrayal of female protagonists Mina

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Harker, nee Murray, and Lucy Westenra. The late Victorian period and its society was, among other issues, concerned with and defined by “The Woman Question”. This question engendered a host of labels for women of the period such as “Angel in the House”, “Fallen Woman”, “New Woman”, “Girl of the Period”, and “Dangerous Woman of the Period”. All of these represent answers to the query whether the woman in question fits or does not fit into socially acceptable roles according to Victorian standards. The term “Angel in the House” was coined by poet Coventry Patmore in his eponymous poem which celebrates a stereotypically conservative female ideal that the poet modelled after his first wife. Patmore’s Angel in the House is a motherly and wifely figure confined to the domestic sphere of society. In order to reach this status, a woman should display self-sacrificing and obedient behaviour towards her family, especially her husband. The poet expresses the necessity of such subservient and devoted behaviour in lines such as the following: “Man must be pleased; but him to please/ Is woman’s pleasure; down the gulf/ Of his condoled necessities/ She casts her best, she flings herself.” (75). Similarly to Patmore, the prominent Victorian thinker John Ruskin adopts and emphasises purity, grace and incorruptibility of character as important female traits in his lecture “Of Queen’s Gardens” (cf. 1865); he, however, enhances the trope by adding another dimension to it. His ideal woman is not only expected to follow her husband’s orders and cater to his every need, but she is also expected to possess the ability to stand in the face of evil and come out noble, wise and infallibly good. In contrast to the Angel in the House, the Fallen Woman is embodied either as an adulteress or a prostitute (see Lee, “Fallen Women” 1997). Accordingly, women who pursued sexual experimentation and experiences outside of marriage were faced with prejudice. The arrival of the New Woman challenged this prominent Madonna-whore dichotomy. The New Woman threatened these conservative values and expectations and was thus infamously referred to as “the Girl of the Period” or “Dangerous Woman of the Period”, terms which had apparent negative connotations in their time. Consequently, the issue of the New Woman influenced Stoker’s writing as well as many other literary works of the era which attempted to make sense of this new phenomenon in Victorian society in their own right.

A number of critics have argued in favour of interpreting Mina’s character as a representation of the New Woman due to her class, education, competence and active role in the public sphere (Giorgio and Prescott,

2005: 488–92; Schaffer, 2012: 732–40; Yu 2006: 146). Others have also identified these defining features with Mina's character, but still emphasised her status as the feminine ideal and reaction against the New Woman (Senf, 1982: 33–40; Glover, 1996: 75–7; Wicke 1992: 480–5). Cott's definition of the New Woman as the embodiment of self-development rather than self-sacrifice or submergence in the family (1987: 2) can only partially apply to Mina, while Lucy does not even come close to this description. Mitchell, on the other hand, offers a popular conservative perspective of the time that classifies New Women as ignorant sexual deviants (1999: 583). Lucy, due to her frivolous and sexual nature, corresponds to this view. Instead of categorising Mina as a New Woman and Lucy not a New Woman and vice versa, this paper will attempt to demonstrate that both characters share some of New Woman's distinct traits and ultimately represent two different versions of the same trope. Mina Harker represents the "proper" New Woman, acceptable to the more conservative Victorians, as she is altered using elements of the Angel in the House trope. Lucy Westenra, on the other hand, embodies the unacceptable or sexual New Woman redefined through the already existing images of women, such as the *femme fatale* and the Fallen Woman.

1. The duality of the New Woman

The representation of the New Woman in Victorian literature depends on the author's perspective on the phenomenon. Universal traits of the New Woman are difficult to identify due to the breadth and subjectivity of the label. For instance, some viewed the members of this category as advocates for rights to higher education, property, employment (cf. Diniejko, 2011), personal independence and marriage reform (Schaffer, 2012: 734). Others, however, considered them to be nothing more than empty-headed seductive temptresses (Mitchell, 1999: 561). Bram Stoker offers his perspective on the New Woman issue in his own way through his two female characters in *Dracula*, Mina Harker and Lucy Westenra, in two very specific ways. Thus, the two characters experience a different fate despite succumbing to the same attacker – Count Dracula.

Elements of the New Woman are found in both Mina and Lucy, but are presented through updated and remodelled images of the already existing tropes for Victorian women. These include the Angel in the House, the

femme fatale and the Fallen Woman. For instance, according to Schaffer, the New Woman was a financially independent middle-class woman who usually filled the positions of secretaries, teachers and nurses (cf. 2007). Mina fits into this description since she is an educated middle-class woman working as a school mistress before marriage. In addition to this, her paying job is replaced by an informal secretarial and nursing job after her marriage to Jonathan. On the other hand, her new-found “career” primarily provides service for others while her sense of personal independence and self-fulfilment comes second. Moreover, she is submissive to her husband’s authority and also passive, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious and chaste (cf. *The Angel in the House*, 2011) which indicates the existence of traditional notions of Victorian propriety in Mina’s character. Conversely, Lucy embodies the *femme fatale* and the Fallen Woman due to her explicit sexuality. Such a construction of Lucy’s character demonstrates favouritism directed towards sexually conservative characters in the novel, such as Mina. Sexual frankness and the need to equal female sexual desires to men’s are, however, also attributed to the New Woman Movement. For instance, the controversial late 19th century novelist Mona Caird expressed this exact need (Schaffer, 2012: 730). Furthermore, Lucy’s only interest in leisure is a common character trait of the New Woman as described and condemned in Eliza Lynn Linton’s *The Girl of the Period* (cf. 1868). In it, she juxtaposes the “fair young English girl”, who possesses all the qualities of the Angel in the House and “the (dangerous) Girl of the Period” who resembles the common stereotypical perception of the New Woman.

Because Mina represents the female Victorian ideal, Stoker also uses her character as a medium for satirising the New Woman Movement. When examining the representation of the New Woman in the novel, it is important to focus on the author’s subjective perception of New Women which is then voiced through Mina’s thoughts. Evidence of this can be found in Mina’s journal and letters as she reflects on the issue. In Chapter VIII, she writes about having tea with Lucy and concludes: “I believe we should have shocked the New Woman with our appetites. Men are more tolerant, bless them!” (110). This passage indicates that Stoker is concerned with the New Woman’s selfish need for immodest indulgence and unbounded luxury (cf. Linton, 1868). For example, the sole focus on fun and pleasure in Mina’s counterpart Lucy makes her the undesired variant of the New Woman. On the other hand, this passage indicates that even the slightly ascetic Mina enjoys the meal as well. Yet despite her benevolent tone, she

still distances herself from the New Woman label. Furthermore, Mina's second observation on the issue of gender propriety is as follows:

Some of the 'New Woman' writers will someday start an idea that men and women should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting. But I suppose the New Woman won't condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it, too. (111)

Giorgio and Prescott argue that Mina's tone in both passages is actually more playful and witty than judgmental while also remarking that the second passage indicates feelings of empathy towards the endeavours of the New Woman (2005: 500). However, it can also be argued that Stoker pits his female characters against each other, influenced by the conservative views on femininity in Linton's *The Girl of the Period*. Dowling herself points out that many Victorians actually agreed with Linton's opinions (1979: 438). In fact, the tone of Mina's voice can also be interpreted as being sarcastic and scornful which suggests that the author himself finds certain aspects of the movement ridiculous and, thus, solidifies Mina's character as an acceptable and sexually muted variant of the New Woman. Lucy, on the other hand, is only a loud, selfish, materialistic and extravagant copy of the female ideal (cf. Linton, 1868).

2. Mina as the Angel in the House

Mina's nature becomes promptly obvious as we follow her thoughts and actions in her letters and journal. In Chapter V, in Mina's first letter to Lucy, we learn that Mina is a very devoted fiancée. She practices shorthand and works hard to keep up with Jonathan's studies. This hard work is done with the aim of one day being useful to her husband as his secretary and assistant. Such desires fit perfectly into the passive and submissive tendencies of the Angel in the House. Mina does not seem to show any signs of wanting more and seems quite satisfied with fulfilling this role in a future marital setting. To illustrate this, in Chapter IX, upon finally eloping with Jonathan, she writes to Lucy excitedly: "Well, my dear, what could I say? I could only tell him that I was the happiest woman in all the wide world, and that I had nothing to give him except myself, my life, and my trust, and that with these went my love and duty for all the days of my

life" (130). In other words, she does not only wish to provide her future husband with assistance, but every aspect of her being. Such desires are conventional and expected of a woman.

Furthermore, the Angel in the House trope is to an extent rooted in the Christian faith. Mina's character exemplifies the Christian ideal expressed through her acts of sympathy, self-sacrifice and piety. In Chapter X, Mina assumes a type of a nursing role as she watches over Lucy every night to prevent her from sleepwalking. Although she is more than anxious about Jonathan's well-being, she is eager to keep her friend Lucy safe by sleeping close to her, locking the door and praying every night. Moreover, she neglects her own needs in order to care for her dear friend and husband. She prays for Jonathan's safe return also, and wishes nothing more than to be with him in the hospital nursing him back to health. Rewarding female characters with marriage or property for their patient endurance (cf. Allingham, 2004) is commonplace in Victorian fiction. In Mina's case, the care and remarkable strength she exhibits in difficult times is rewarded not only with marriage to Jonathan and the unexpected inheritance, but also with the greatest and most honourable gift of all for a woman – the gift of motherhood at the end of the novel. What is particularly interesting is that, as Giorgio and Prescott point out, Mina's transformation into a mother coincides with her complete loss of narrative voice and agency (2005: 512), on which more later.

An important aspect of the Angel in the House trope is being a warm motherly figure. Even before becoming an actual mother, Mina plays a symbolic motherly role throughout the entire novel. Her care is not directed only towards people closest to her – Jonathan and Lucy – but also towards other members of the group. Her motherly instincts emerge upon seeing Arthur's despair in Chapter XVII and she is fully aware and accepting of this aspect of her character: "I suppose there is something in woman's nature that makes a man free to break down before her and express his feelings" (275). Moreover, she celebrates her natural talent as a mother by emphasising the importance of this womanly role in serious matters: "We women have something of the mother in us that makes us rise above smaller matters when the mother-spirit is invoked" (275). By formulating this somewhat idealised thought about a mother's duty Mina indicates her own sense of self-importance and recognises the significant role mothers play in times of distress. Her true maternity is, finally, realised through the birth of her child and reaffirmed by Van Helsing's final words in the novel:

"This boy will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is. Already he knows her sweetness and loving care" (449). Surprisingly, the conservative foreigner associates the stereotypically masculine adjectives "brave" and "gallant" with Mina's endeavours which might indicate some inconsistencies even in Van Helsing's character. However, in the following sentence, this "masculinity" is quickly negated by the words "sweetness" and "loving care" in order to celebrate Mina's highest achievement – motherhood.

After Lucy finally becomes "God's true dead" (260), the novel's focus shifts to Mina and her role in the holy mission of destroying Dracula. Her role of secretary and assistant is now more important than ever and her character seems to gain a certain sense of self-awareness and importance. This is crucial in Mina's development since this aspect of her character did not appear in the previous chapters, before Lucy's death. Her hard work and quick intelligence prove useful, but still serve only to assist the men around her. Although all of her impressive endeavours are made with the aim of helping the men capture and kill Dracula, Van Helsing appears to be threatened by Mina's productive input in Chapter XVIII. "Ah,...Mina! She has man's brain – a brain that a man should have were he much gifted... she must not have to do with this terrible affair. It is not good that she run a risk so great. We men are determined...to destroy this monster, but it is no part for a woman." (281). It is the slight possibility of Mina becoming functional and successful within the public sphere that Van Helsing finds dangerous and threatening. This might suggest that Mina's character, as a competent New Woman, represents a self-sufficient and modernised trope of the Angel in the House – as long as she does not pose a public challenge to men's abilities. In order to regain control and stress his disapproval of such a role reversal, he decides to exclude Mina from the group by ordering her to retire earlier for the night. Although Mina accepts this ostracism and decides to comply, she still considers this sudden exclusion as unjust, calling it "a bitter pill...to swallow" (290). Another act of rebellion is present in the novel when she decides to break the promise of never opening Jonathan's journal by doing it after seeing Dracula in London in Chapter XIII. Although Mina dismisses her husband's authority in this instance, this act of disobedience proves to be helpful in capturing Dracula. In other words, Mina retains her propriety while also employing her "man's intelligence" (Giorgio and Prescott, 2005: 502–3). However, Van Helsing is definitely more accepting of Mina's more traditional

tendencies. For instance, in Chapter XVIII, he expresses this concern to Mina herself: "We are men, and are able to bear; but you must be our star and hope" (289). This proves that Van Helsing's idea of true femininity is restricted to ideas of purity and incorruptibility secured by the woman's limitation to the domestic sphere. Giorgio and Prescott also argue that Van Helsing's insistence on silencing and domesticating Mina stems from her relationship to knowledge (2005: 506). Since Dracula craves power and knowledge even more than blood, the object of his desires is no longer safe in the hands of a woman. Although Van Helsing considers Mina to be an extraordinary woman, he still deems her helpless and weak under Dracula's influence.

3. The coded female friendship of Lucy and Mina

On surface level, the two women might seem to have an equal role and position in their friendship, but this seemingly sisterly relationship between them is deceptive. There appears to be an ever present and subtle air of moral superiority around Mina, in comparison to Lucy. She is also a dominant benefactor in their relationship. For instance, Mina becomes Lucy's very own guardian angel in Lucy's time of weakness, making her friend's decisions for her in order to preserve her safety and well-being. Furthermore, she embodies the role of a mentor and teacher to Lucy (Giorgio and Prescott, 2005: 491). Lucy is very receptive to this power dynamic and looks up to her female hero. In Chapter IX she states that she "must imitate Mina" (133) and by imitation she expresses her admiration. For instance, Lucy admits that she was inspired to start writing her own journal after seeing Mina diligently "interviewing and writing descriptions and trying to remember conversations" (70).

The letters and journals of the two best friends reveal just how complex their relationship is since they contain suggestively lesbian encounters and passionate language, but also express a profound understanding of one another. Sahli suggests that the letters exchanged between Mina and Lucy contain implicit sensual and sexual content, a fact both friends have suppressed (1979: 22). Evidence of this can be found in Chapters V and VIII. Mina often writes about Lucy's beauty and attractiveness in her journals, describing her as "sweeter and lovelier than ever" (80). Furthermore, she even admires Lucy's alluring appearance while observing

her in her sleep: "She has more colour in her cheeks than usual, and looks, oh, so sweet. If Mr Holmwood fell in love with her only in the drawing-room, I wonder what he would say if he saw her now" (111). This affection is not only contained in Mina's journal, but she indirectly articulates it in one of her letters to Lucy, as well. For instance, while separated from her best friend, Mina writes to her: "I'm longing to be with you" (70). Lucy, conversely, uses less subtle language while expressing her love for Mina. In fact, Lucy expresses infantile emotions of affection with powerful sexual overtones directed towards Mina in her letters, while Mina reciprocates a more platonic and symbolic type of love (cf. Giorgio and Prescott, 2005). It is Lucy who openly fantasises about them "sitting by the fire undressing, as [they] used to sit" (72). Howes also points out that Lucy's attempts to suppress her homoerotic desire fail when she expresses her sexual fantasies about women from a man's perspective in Chapter V (1988: 117). Giorgio and Prescott also provide a historical and cultural context for the possibility of such a relationship. Lesbian friendships were actually considered benign and only started to be considered pathological and threatening in the wake of the New Woman debates (2005: 489), which coincides with the pathologisation of same-sex sexuality by scholars of the period such as Krafft-Ebing. It is Lucy's honest and open verbalisation of her bisexuality as a sexual New Woman that is dangerous to the heteronormative standard. Alternatively, Mina's sophisticated use of subtle language for expressing her desires remains within the domain of the socially acceptable and the benign. Taking into account Stoker's ideology of secrecy that valued the reticence and discretion of the closet (Schaffer, 1994: 413), Mina's coded homoerotic language is subtle enough to go unsanctioned. Lucy's indiscreet and childish frankness, however, earns condemnation and punishment.

Although they do share a simultaneously passionate and platonic relationship, Lucy and Mina still publicly adhere to the heteronormative standard. Their letters and journals primarily focus on discussing wifely duties, marriage proposals and husbands. In Mina's very first letter in Chapter V, she is curious about "rumours...of a tall, handsome, curly-haired man" (71) whom Lucy later identifies as her fiancé. Mina also wishes Lucy's marriage to be as blissful as hers: "I want you to see now, and with the eyes of a very happy wife, whither duty has led me; so that in your own married life you too may be all happy as I am" (130). In addition to being extremely motivated for marriage, the women impulsively accept male authority. Even Lucy the social rebel claims that "a woman ought to

tell her husband everything” (73). The verb “ought to” implies a sense of duty and obligation rather than intrinsically motivated honesty. In other words, their private passionate encounters are irrelevant compared to their public heterosexual marriages. Convention is preserved by the latter making lesbianism less menacing and transgressive to Victorian society. In fact, Marcus argues that such intimate female friendships served a number of conventional purposes. They promoted heterosexual marriage, cultivated the feminine virtues of sympathy and altruism, trained women for family and marriage, but most importantly, they taught women to be good wives and prepared them for future wifely duties (2007: 45). Such a description of female friendship is more than applicable to Mina and Lucy’s heterosexualised relationship since, as stated above, their correspondence primarily revolves around their husbands or fiancés.

4. Lucy’s impropriety

Before her monstrous transformation, Lucy is often described as being very attractive, while there is no mention of Mina’s physical appearance, let alone her sexuality, in the novel. This is because Mina’s character must maintain the appearance of chastity, innocence and even frigidity (cf. Lee, “Victorian Theories” 1997) in order not to be placed on the other end of the spectrum with Lucy. Moreover, Mina mentions Lucy’s beauty and loveliness many times in her journal stating also that not even old men could resist her good looks and attractiveness (in Chapter VI). In addition to this, Lucy experiences three proposals in one day by men absolutely infatuated with her. This serves to emphasise her sexuality and physicality, and to portray her as a New Woman because it was believed that such women were definitely less concerned with suppressing their sexuality (Senf, 1988: 57). Although Lucy’s character seems innocent and sweet in the beginning, upon the commencement of Dracula’s terrorising influence, she gradually takes on more sexualised attributes which are later amplified to monstrous proportions during her transformation into a vampire.

Lucy is distinct from her friend Mina in a number of ways. Although the differences between the two might seem subtle in the beginning, as the novel progresses, they become obvious and difficult to overlook. Firstly, Lucy also seems to be questioning certain societal norms and expectations. For instance, in Chapter V, she struggles with rejecting John’s and Quincey’s

proposal saying: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?" (76). She is fully aware that saying this is "heresy" (76), but she clearly finds it hard to cope with what she is expected to think, say and do. Furthermore, although she loves Arthur dearly, she confesses to Mina that she feels exulted and relishes in the attention she receives from her suitors while being aware of the fact that she might be considered a flirt. In addition to this, Lucy admits to not feeling ashamed of the moments shared alone with Arthur before his proposal to her. Furthermore, even before her proposal dilemma, she doubts the actual purpose of marriage as well: "we women are such cowards that we think a man will save us from fears, and we marry him" (74).

The idea of marriage in the novel is kept heterosexual, in accordance with the Victorian norm, yet the polygamous nature of it also defies the norm. The symbol representing it lies in the brave acts of donating blood to Lucy through transfusions by Arthur, Dr Seward, Quincey and Van Helsing (Auerbach, 1995: 73) in Chapters X and XII. Although Lucy is only engaged, Auerbach employs the term "wife" to indicate her symbolic "marriage" to the four men through the blood transfusions. The important aspect of this act is, once again, heterosexuality, as Van Helsing says so himself: "I fear to trust those women...A brave man's blood is the best thing on this earth when a woman is in trouble" (180). Although the traditional ideal of marriage can be questioned, since four men participate in the act, Arthur gives more blood than the other men because "[h]e is her lover, her fiancé" (156).

The traditional monogamous ideal of marriage is questioned since the act itself is actually polygamous in nature. That is, this "marriage" disrupts the conservative ideal of female propriety. Lucy's desire to marry three men in Chapter V functions as a foreshadowing for the blood transfusions she is about to receive. What is more, the act contains sexual overtones. It resembles an adulteress having sexual relations with various men other than her fiancée, and Van Helsing's insistence on keeping it a secret confirms this reading. In other words, it would "frighten [Arthur] and enjealous him" (156). Since Lucy takes part in this sexually inscribed act of blood-receiving, she is inevitably transformed into a Fallen Woman. That is, her sexuality and the exploration of it are punished regardless of her lack of consent. The Fallen Woman trope is later exaggerated during and after Lucy's transformation into a vampire where her initial sexuality becomes sensual monstrosity. Thus, her punishment in the novel is all the more severe because it strips Lucy of her humanity and free will.

According to Auerbach, Lucy is purified as a wife and matures into “proper” womanhood through vampirism with monogamously heterosexual tendencies (1995: 55). While it is true that her only target is her fiancé, her purification happens only after death. Moreover, Lucy’s transformation results in her becoming a monstrous *femme fatale*. Her appearance is often described in the novel as “awful” (134), “bloodless” (136), “ghastly, chalkily pale”, “dreadful” (147), “horribly white and wan-looking” (155), with also having prominent and sharp canine teeth. Her monstrosity reaches its peak later in the novel when the men recoil in absolute terror upon seeing “the thing that bore... [Lucy’s] shape” (253) feeding off a defenceless child in her tomb in Chapter XII. While Lucy the vampire might be muted sexually (Auerbach, 1995: 34) she still lacks humanity to possess “true womanhood”. According to conservative Victorian ideals, a proper woman would never be seen preying on and attacking an innocent child since such behaviour is in direct contrast to the expected motherly instincts and feelings in a woman. A lack of maternal feelings seems to be a stereotype typically associated with the New Woman and Stoker exhibits its perpetuation through Lucy (Senf, 1982: 46). Demetrakopoulos also suggests that Stoker’s female vampires, by sacrificing children to their appetites and directing their perverse and sexual aggression towards men, renounce conventional feminine roles (1977: 110).

In spite of this, Lucy also possesses and exhibits a certain terrifying appeal. Exactly this aspect of her vampire self classifies her as a *femme fatale*. The *femme fatale* is insatiable, feared for her power; moreover, she has a strong tendency to lust after her lovers’ vitality (cf. Lee, “The Femme Fatale” 1997). Lucy expresses her insatiability when she demands Arthur to come into her “hungry arms” (253) and he quickly falls under her spell opening his arms freely to meet her. As mentioned before, all men fear what Lucy is capable of, but only Van Helsing is completely aware of the extent of her powers, constantly “[dragging Arthur] back with a fury of strength” (194) every time he tries to give in to Lucy’s seductive requests. This unyielding resistance is imperative as any man falling under her influence is at a moral risk of losing his soul (cf. Waller, 2004), just like her. Furthermore, since blood represents life and vitality in the novel, as Renfield exclaims himself, Lucy craves it in the form of blood transfusions or directly from the source from her fiancé. In short, Lucy is a curious case of *femme fatale* as a serial monogamist.

5. Susceptibility to Dracula's influence

Right from the start, a distinct characteristic which sets Mina and Lucy apart is Lucy's complete susceptibility to Dracula's influence. Mina seems to harbour a mysterious strength and resilience in the beginning, being unaffected by Dracula's attempts at something that resembles hypnosis in order to drink his victim's blood. What is more, all the vile creatures seem to flee in Mina's presence (including Dracula in the form of a bat at Lucy's bedroom window one night in Chapter VIII, for instance). The answer to this mysterious phenomenon could be found in John Ruskin's view of the Angel in the House (cf. 1865). His ideal woman is not only a domestic and docile creature, but also a wise and pure "soldier of good" fighting against the corruption and evil of the outside world and society as a whole. In this case, this corruption and evil is personified in Dracula.

On the other hand, Lucy all too easily falls victim to Dracula's influence. Lucy experiences sleepwalking frequently and is even lured by him into the churchyard having no recollection either of the event or the bite on her neck the day after. This might be the case because Stoker considers a version of the New Woman modelled after Lucy ill-equipped to face the challenges that threaten Victorian society. Only men are capable of this, with their "good" wives at their side. A sexual variant of the New Woman is simply just too easy to influence and lacks strength and integrity. Since Mina can be seen as an inspiration to brave men (Auerbach, 1995: 83) and a moral guard of society (cf. Ledger, 1997), she is more than competent to rise to the challenge of forever vanquishing Dracula alongside her husband and friends. Lucy, however, was not endowed with such exemplary character traits and, therefore, is defenceless and vulnerable in the face of Dracula's evil.

After Lucy's death, however, Mina also succumbs to her attacker. As the men force her out of their vampire hunt with the pretext of ensuring her safety, they quickly realise that leaving her alone was a grave mistake. In Chapter XIX, as soon as Mina is left alone, Dracula seizes his chance to prey on her. Mina notices hints of his arrival such as the thick and misty air gathering in her room. She has no recollection of Dracula's first attack, similarly to Lucy. "In my dream I must have fainted, for all became black darkness. The last conscious effort which imagination made was to show me a livid white face bending over me" (309). This indicates that Dracula's attempts are successful without much resistance on Mina's part. Furthermore, in previous chapters, Dracula was hesitant and anxious in

Mina's vicinity, but now shows no inhibitions or fear around her. Although Mina has no memory of being bitten, Renfield confirms and reveals Dracula's next victim by saying: "she wasn't the same; it was like tea after the teapot had been watered" (334). The Count's second attack, on the other hand, she vividly remembers and it is precisely Mina's conscious awareness (a result of her strength and intelligence) that Lucy lacks (Demetrakopoulos, 1977: 109). However, Mina shows similar symptoms to Lucy during and after the attack. For instance, descriptions of her physical appearance are identical to Lucy's: "Her face was ghastly pale, with a pallor" (337). Secondly, Mina also describes experiencing feelings of immobility and lethargy: "I was appalled and was too bewildered to do or say anything" (Stoker, 1897: 342). As much as the attack was successfully completed, Mina still expressed disgust and revolt against her attacker. She drank his blood, but the scene resembled "a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (336). In other words, she was forced to do it, against her will, and had merely the choice to "suffocate or swallow some of the [blood]" (343). Not only that, she exclaims the word "unclean" at the sight of Dracula's blood on her night gown in Chapter XXI and uses that word derogatively to describe herself in Chapter XXII. However, by exchanging blood with the Count and thus, linking his mind to hers, she chooses life.

6. Punishment or domestication?

Lucy's final and inevitable demise in Chapter XVI is heavily romanticised, despite objectively being extremely violent and gruesome. From the men's perspective, Lucy can reclaim her soul and experience release from Dracula's hellish curse only if staked through the heart and decapitated. The act of this is spine-chilling, utterly nightmarish and borders on morbid:

Arthur placed the point over the heart...Then he struck with all his might. The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. (258–9)

Such treatment of Lucy's body is justified through her gradual dehumanisation. She is "horribly white and wan-looking" (155) at first, in Chapter X, and then cruelly reduced to a "foul Thing" (259) in Chapter XVI. This savage attack against a woman in distress is justified because it succeeds in destroying the dangerously sexual New Woman and confirms male supremacy (Senf, 1982: 48). This act is also very reminiscent of Lucy's "marriage" in terms of her excessive sexualisation. Demetrakopoulos describes the staking as a suggestion of group sex in which Arthur drives a phallic symbol, stake, through her heart surrounded by his somewhat voyeuristic friends (1977: 100). In this way, establishing Lucy's nature as abominably sexual is especially bizarre since even the act of saving her soul is grotesquely hypersexualised. Moreover, this is not solely described as a justified act, but as a merciful and blessed duty as well: "It will be a blessed hand for her that shall strike the blow that sets her free" (257). Thus, Lucy's fate is completely out of her hands as it is tossed between the villain and the heroes. This pivotal moment is character-building for the heroes since this "rescue mission" is not only about the greater goal of vanquishing evil, but also a test of manhood and integrity in the face of temptation. The reward of this test is most satisfying: a beautiful woman's corpse.

In Chapters XII and XIII, the obsession with Lucy's "beautiful corpse" (196) and her post mortem grace and appeal is, to say the least, rather bizarre. It is the symbolic act of reclaiming Lucy's soul by staking her through the heart that makes her dead body so enchanting in Chapter XVI, as well. Only after "the soul of the poor lady [is] free" (257) and her "soul with [God]" (260) is Lucy seen as a lovely woman, rather than a hideous monster. In addition to this, death seems to be life-giving in a way. Not only is Lucy's corpse beautiful, it appears to be alive.

Death had given back part of her beauty, for her brow and cheeks had recovered some of their flowing lines; even the lips had lost their deadly pallor ... All Lucy's loveliness had come back to her in death, and the hours that had passed... restored the beauty of life, till positively I could not believe my eyes that I was looking at a corpse. (195, 198)

Death – the executor of ultimate submission – purifies Lucy's appearance making her as graceful and as beautiful as ever. Lucy's body, similarly to Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*, is a place of union between death and beauty,

sensuality and spirituality (cf. Nelson, 2004). Her angelic appearance is a reflection of her regained humanity through the return of her soul to her body. As much as her body suggests a degree of humanity, it is still a corpse which is unable to act or speak. This might suggest that Stoker prefers dead women to sexualised New Women, but that interpretation would offer only a superficial and narrow perspective on the matter. Conversely, Stoker's view of true womanhood goes beyond the appearance. In other words, all women can look noble and refined, but not all have the strength and nobility of character. Lucy is capable of ensnaring anyone with her beauty, but could never reach Mina's levels of courage, wisdom and kindness.

Dracula's choice of making Mina a clairvoyant (Auerbach, 1995: 42) instead of a blood-thirsty vampire is the Count's way of punishing her. Mina ventriloquises her sentence to the men: "You are to be punished for what you have done. You have aided in thwarting me; now you shall come to my call" (343). What provoked Dracula's attack is the plot against him by everyone in the group, but it is only Mina who is punished for her actions. The Count is furious about the help she has provided in conspiring against him. This might suggest that Mina, as a woman, deserves some sort of punishment for overstepping the boundaries of her domestic sphere and neglecting her wifely duties by pursuing her journalist potential. Alternatively, Dracula's foolish "punishment" transforms into a gift that will become a catalyst in his final fall. His hunters benefit more from Mina the medium than Dracula does from Mina the slave.

This act of revenge can also be understood through Stoker's insistence on infallible heterosexuality when constructing his vampire characters. Dracula, as a man, can only prey on women. In the novel, the blood is not only life, but a representation of something sexual as well. Every instance of blood drinking contains powerful sexual overtones. Thus, to emphasise the utter impropriety of his vampires, Stoker only intensifies the vampire's sexual desire that equals a thirst for blood in order to leave their "heterosexual orientation" intact. Dracula's daughters can be seen preying on Jonathan, Lucy the vampire directs her *femme fatale* destructiveness and hunger towards her husband and Dracula feeds on Lucy and later, Mina. However, some inconsistencies do emerge. Dracula's daughters and Lucy prey on children while Dracula himself proclaims that Jonathan belongs to him in Chapter III. Images of female vampires feeding on defenceless and innocent children serve to portray an exaggerated lack of maternity. Such a character trait is associated with improper, that is, oversexualised female

characters such as Lucy and Dracula's daughters. While the child victims can be seen as genderless, Jonathan is undoubtedly male and the Count's statement of possession has obvious homosexual potential. Stoker's rigid and relentless self-censorship, on the other hand, overpowers Jonathan's and Dracula's repressed homosexuality (Schaffer, 1994: 420). This censorship also prevents Jonathan from ever actually being bitten which disrupts the possibility of their "union". Thus, Stoker's vampires do not adhere to the principles of the homoerotic vampire archetype found previously in vampire literature. For instance, Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, as a self-accepting homosexual, feeds on the blood of women with an erotic hunger (Auerbach, 1995: 77). As mentioned previously, Lucy's lesbian potential as a human disappears completely upon her transformation into a vampire. Lucy the vampire, then, might share more similarities with Coleridge's Geraldine in *Christabel* in terms of their seductive monstrosity and destructive power. Geraldine, however, is overtly homosexual unlike the sexually muted Lucy. Why Dracula is also conventionally heterosexual can be answered by analysing the context in which the novel was conceived and developed. The year 1895 saw the conviction of Oscar Wilde for "gross indecency with men" which motivated Stoker to create a sexually conservative male vampire (cf. Auerbach, 1995). Schaffer's analysis of *Dracula* points to a similar conclusion. Not only does the novel encapsulate Stoker's anxiety during his friend's trial, but it also exposes Stoker's homophobia as a direct result of his own repressed homosexuality (Schaffer, 1994: 383).

New Women can be perceived as "subversive rebels" (Schaffer, 2012: 735), but such tendencies often fail in New Woman fiction, for instance. Female independence is doomed from the beginning and an attempt at it is punished by domestic enslavement (cf. Ardis, 1990). This also applies to both Lucy and Mina. Lucy questions fixed ideas of marriage by wanting to marry three men and fails to reconcile her sexuality with conservative societal expectations, while Mina's "man's brain" is simultaneously useful and dangerous. Both women experience a type of punishment or enslavement because of this. Lucy is attacked first by Dracula and transformed into a terrifying monster hungry for blood. Her monstrosity is then ended by brutal force, murder and decapitation. Mina, on the other hand, is domesticated as a wife early on in the novel, but is also denied the full development of her valuable secretarial skills. In addition to this, she is made Dracula's slave because of her competence and becomes fully domesticated after his death not only as a wife, but as a mother as well.

Examining the process of “enslavement” that occurs in the novel is also important for an understanding of the severity of punishment meted at a particular character. Although Mina actively explores the public sphere, she simultaneously retains conservative notions of propriety and acknowledges male dominance: “A brave man’s hand can speak for itself; it does not even need a woman’s love to hear its music” (284). In other words, she submits to societal norms while also overstepping the boundaries of her “rightful” place within the domestic sphere. Since her competent contribution is invaluable to the men’s quest, her “masculine” tendencies of intelligence are not severely punished, but rather stripped away by motherhood and domestication towards the end of the novel. Lucy, however, is more than severely punished for her indiscretions. Her character is, unlike Mina’s, predominantly passive since her activities only revolve around receiving guests and writing letters. Such activities do not pose a threat to Victorian conservative society because they can be considered stereotypically feminine. However, her outrageous sexuality and lack of obedience to societal norms is, in fact, what is so threatening about a seemingly inactive character like Lucy. Her rejection of the rigid and conservative ideal of femininity, thus, requires the harshest of punishments. In other words, Lucy’s transformation into a decapitated monster is considered a just and necessary punishment.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the novel, Mina Harker is a middle-class, financially independent woman. However, this freedom is taken away from her to an extent after marriage. She then clearly exhibits behaviour in accordance with traditional Victorian notions of female propriety, such as: obedience, chastity, piety and purity. In addition to this, she takes on various roles available for women of her time, starting with the more controversial ones associated with the New Woman, such as an assistant schoolmistress, secretary, and stenographer, gradually taking on the more traditional ones of nurse, wife and mother. Conversely, her intelligence and skills prove tremendously valuable to the men around her and yet, her male companions are the only ones that benefit from Mina’s abilities. In other words, her sense of importance is never fully realised and is, in fact, quickly stifled. At the very end of the novel, she is celebrated as gallant, but only

as an overture to the final affirmation of her maternal role in the novel – as biological to her son and surrogate to her male friends. Thus, Mina partially represents the New Woman through a modernised trope of the Angel in the House. Through her diary entries and letters Stoker satirises certain aspects of the New Woman Movement that apply to her friend, Lucy Westenra. Mina criticises New Women for their trivial indulgences and extramarital sexual activities.

On the other hand, Lucy is an upper-class woman of leisure who is concerned with trivial pursuits, unlike Mina who is educated and employed. Furthermore, her physical appearance and sexuality are constantly emphasised in the novel. It is because of her explicit sexuality that she evolves into both a Fallen Woman and a *femme fatale*. She becomes a Fallen Woman upon receiving blood donations from men other than her husband, and a monstrous *femme fatale* when turned into a vampire. Her monstrosity serves as punishment for her sexuality and questioning of Victorian gender roles. After her death, a more severe punishment ensues, including a vicious staking and decapitation. Thus, Stoker's acceptable and "proper" New Woman is described as a competent and obedient motherly/wifely figure, more than capable to stand firm in the face of evil. She also must be devoid of any sexual desire to avoid becoming a euthanized and decapitated Fallen Woman.

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‘A MAD DREAM OF VICTORIANA’: ANGELA CARTER AND THE (NEO) VICTORIAN

Abstract

The novels of Angela Carter provide a sharp satirical insight into the politics and culture of twentieth-century Britain. One major aspect of these areas that Carter occasionally tackles is the relationship with the Victorian heritage of Britain. The aim of this paper is to examine how Carter enters a dialogue with the Victorian past through the lens of neo-Victorian theory to see if and to what extent her works can be seen as neo-Victorian. The paper focuses on three novels, *Shadow Dance*, *Nights in the Circus*, and *Wise Children*, as they feature neo-Victorian concerns most prominently, and provides a close reading of certain passages, comparing them to the typical traits of neo-Victorian novels.

Key words: neo-Victorian, Victorian, Angela Carter, *Shadow Dance*, *Nights at the Circus*, *Wise Children*

1. Introduction

Angela Carter (1940–1992) was an English writer and journalist, known for her multi-layered novels and short stories which embraced radical feminist and socialist politics while at the same time being devoted to aesthetic and stylistic exuberance. Her works are known, and even infamous for their

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straightforward representations of gender relations, especially concerning violence against women, as well as their keen class consciousness, which is omnipresent in her works. However, her works are also characterised by historical consciousness, that is, by an awareness of how the present has been shaped by history, not just in terms of class and gender politics, but also in terms of culture and our relationship with cultural and historical heritage. Many of her works exhibit an awareness of cultural and social changes in Britain (and especially in England) during the twentieth century, with a tendency to focus on the downsides of the changes and attack them in 'in rhapsodic, grand-operatic terms' (Pitchford 2002: 110) which allow for a multiplicity of readings and interpretations. This gives Carter a very sharp critical, satirical edge and allows her to create multifaceted fictions that allow 'us to perceive for ourselves the processes that produce social structures, sociohistorical concepts and cultural artefacts' (Peach 1998: 9).

Carter's writing career started in the 1960s, a period of immense change for Britain, which had managed to enter a period of affluence and prosperity, but had also started to wane and become a second-rate imperialist force, 'not independent from the USA as much anymore' (Lacey 1995: 16). Carter herself commented that 'towards the end of the sixties, it started to feel like living on a demolition site – one felt one was living on the edge of the unimaginable' (Carter 1988: 211), which is a sentiment that particularly echoes throughout *Shadow Dance* (1966), but also throughout *Wise Children* (1991). It is no wonder then, that a huge part of her fiction examines, at least to an extent, the historical circumstances that led to such a situation as well as the view of those circumstances through a late-twentieth-century lens. Coincidentally, the same period is marked by an increased interest in the Victorian era and Victorian literature and is most commonly accepted as the start of the neo-Victorian genre due to the publishing of two seminal pieces in the genre, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) (Kohlke 2008: 3). Both novels exhibit a great interest in the Victorian era; the first one is a rewriting of *Jane Eyre*¹ from the perspective of Berta Mason and establishes a common trope in neo-Victorian literature, while the second novel is a playful metafictional subversion of Victorian realist novels. These two novels present a watershed moment, during which Carter, too, steps on the literary scene with *Shadow Dance*. While she never openly commented on

¹ Interestingly, Carter was working on a rewriting of *Jane Eyre* at the time of her death.

those (or any) returns to Victorian fiction, her first novel does share some similarities with them, which will be examined later in the paper.

This fascination with the Victorian and the subversion thereof proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s, owing largely to Thatcher's rule, which was marked by an ideological turn towards Victorian values, which were presented as a desirable, conservative alternative to the world of the late twentieth century, 'at once the inverse of her 1980s present, and its heritage' (Mitchell 50). This did not only rehabilitate the era and turn it into an acceptable ideological tool and commodity, too, moving the Victorians 'from the position of oppressive parent-figures to benign grandparents' (Hadley 2010: 1), but it also started a literary trend of critical examination of the period, mostly through the use of postmodern tools such as historiographic metafiction, in order to undermine Thatcher's ideology, create parallel histories, and in some cases, to rehabilitate some positive aspects of Victorian writing. Carter did not lag behind, but instead turned towards the era once more, publishing *Nights at the Circus* in 1984. The novel follows the story of Sophie Fevvers, a winged arealiste at the tail-end of the Victorian era and examines the Victorian ideal of progress by drawing implicit comparisons and establishing a dialogue between that age and the twentieth century. This is achieved through the use of historiographic metafiction, which combined with its themes, makes it suitable for analysis in the neo-Victorian context. Her next novel, *Wise Children*, exhibits similar ideas; as a memory narrative, it displays an unofficial history of the glorious Hazard family, from the ex-centric position of Dora Chance, an illegitimate daughter of Melchior Hazard. The novel is set at the end of the twentieth century and backtracks through different decades, starting with the Victorian era, where lie the origins of both the Hazards and the Chances. While not being fully immersed in the Victorian era, it does establish a dialogue between the past and the present, with a partial focus on the Victorian, and is thus suitable for comparison with the neo-Victorian.

This analysis will focus on the three aforementioned novels and how they relate to neo-Victoriana. After a brief general discussion of the neo-Victorian, the paper will analyse the Victorian references in the novels with the goal of situating them in the context of neo-Victoriana and examining Carter's own view of the period and the contemporary resurgence of its aesthetics and ideology. The goal of the analysis is to examine Carter's oeuvre from an angle that has been largely ignored, shedding new light

on it, while providing a small contribution to the field of neo-Victorian studies, and hopefully starting a fresh discussion about Carter's fiction.

2. Delineating the neo-Victorian

The term 'neo-Victorian' has not been an easy one to define, primarily due to several similar, contesting terms, with rather similar and sometimes overlapping meanings. Furthermore, even the term 'neo-Victorian' itself is somewhat contentious, as it is used differently by different authors. Some other similar terms that have been offered by authors are 'retro-Victorian', 'post-Victorian', and 'faux-Victorian'. This section aims to try to provide a brief overview of those terms and a brief description of the genre, with references to Carter's work, to provide a sound framework for the rest of the discussion and to establish a terminology for it.

Sarah Shuttleworth applies the term 'retro-Victorian, to describe 'novels [that] generally display an informed postmodern self-consciousness in their interrogation of the relationship between fiction and history', which 'reveal, nonetheless, an absolute non-ironic fascination with the details of the period and with our relations to it.' (Shuttleworth 1997: 253) This definition does describe well the main focus of most postmodern reworkings of Victorian fiction that will be referred to as 'neo-Victorian' here, in the sense of their commitment to investigating the tensions between history and fiction, but the statement about their absolute non-ironic fascination with the period is rather dubious. While some degree of fascination (which does not have to imply endorsement) with various elements of Victorian culture, and especially, fiction does exist at least to some degree in neo-Victorian of fiction, there is always some sense of critical distance from the period, there is always at least some kind of attempt to undermine and to subvert some aspects of the period. An example of this might be Sarah Waters' *Affinity*, which (ab)uses the Victorian realist novel to write lesbianism into Victorian history. Or, on the other hand, the Victorian period is juxtaposed with the present, such as in A. S. Byatt's *Possession*, which presents the contemporary period as devoid of genuine desire and curiosity when compared to the Victorian era. Furthermore, the prefix 'retro' brings to mind a recreation of a past trend without a critical or ironic distance, but as a mere copy devoid of deeper essence, akin to Jameson's idea of pastiche, which is

like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of a satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs (Jameson 1991: 17).

Thus, the term 'retro-Victorian' might imply mere imitation of Victorian styles instead of an attempt to critically examine both the period and the present day, which makes it rather imprecise for this kind of engagement with the Victorian past.

A similar term is 'faux-Victorian', used by Kate Mitchell to describe novels that 'revive Victorian novelistic traditions, offering themselves as stylistic imitations of Victorian fiction' (Mitchell 2010: 117) and do not point to their 'status as "fake"' (Mitchell 2010: 118). While this term may adequately describe some fictional returns to the Victorian, not just in literature, but in other media, it does not adequately describe the type of fiction this paper seeks to compare Carter to. Another common term, championed by, among others, Andrea Kirchknopf, is 'post-Victorian'. She rejects 'neo-Victorian' and 'retro-Victorian' since they 'designate the era but lack an emphasis of the postmodernist influence on these texts' (Kirchknopf 2008: 66). Instead of those terms, prefers 'post-Victorian', which she sees as 'the most suitable to denote contemporary reworkings of Victorian texts, especially in that the interdisciplinary nature of research into the post-Victorian phenomenon... appears to ask for its integrative qualities' (Kirchknopf 2008: 66). However, calling such fiction 'post-Victorian' may be imprecise because the preface 'post' usually describes a temporal dimension, something that came afterwards, and the postmodern implications might not be easily discernible. Thus, the term used here is 'neo-Victorian', introduced by Dana Shiller, who describes the neo-Victorian novel 'as at once characteristic of postmodernism and imbued with a historicity reminiscent of nineteenth-century fiction' (Shiller 1997: 538). It is used here on the one hand because it is the most widespread and recognisable term that describes this kind of fiction and is also used in much of the core critical literature here, but on the other hand, because it is the most straightforward and least contentious one. The prefix 'neo'

is rather neutral and implies a return to the Victorian that is not merely nostalgic or a pastiche, but rather, one that allows for a critical reflection on the period as well as a myriad approaches to this and various ranges of distancing, which makes it the most suitable term to describe this type of fiction.

Therefore, the central feature of neo-Victorian fiction is that it engages critically with the Victorian period, eschewing a mere perpetuation of surface-level symbols of the era to satisfy the appetite for recreations of different historical periods for the sake of nostalgic, even conservative contemplation or entertainment and aesthetic pleasure. Neo-Victorian fiction is 'markedly self-conscious and engages in the processes of adaptation and appropriation with the view to exploiting their subversive potential' (Krombholz 2013: 120). This self-consciousness and active engagement in its own process of production, coupled with its historical setting and its active role in the questioning of historiographic material and our understanding of history means that neo-Victorian fiction typically operates within the framework of historiographic metafiction, the type of fiction which is 'both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically lay claim to historical events and personages' and is marked by 'its theoretical awareness of history and fiction as human constructs' (Hutcheon 2004: 5).

Essentially, a neo-Victorian novel is a reworking of Victorian fiction that aims to establish a connection between the present era and the Victorian one to examine and subvert literary, historical, philosophical, and ideological tenets of both eras through any narrative means, but typically through the means of metafiction and parody. Such a reworking of Victorian fiction neatly aligns with Carter's attitude towards writing, that is, her being 'all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode' (Carter 1998b: 26)

The neo-Victorian genre gained great prominence in the 1980s and the 1990s, during Margaret Thatcher's rule and its immediate aftermath. Thatcher used 'Victorian values' as one of the key ideological tenets of her conservative rule, as a way to restore the image of Britain's greatness and unify the nation under the banner of perceived progress, national greatness, and imperial power. Furthermore, the image of Victorian Britain Thatcher invoked was one of thrift and hard work and thus had a practical political purpose as a means to justify austerity. Mitchell writes that

Thatcher used the term 'Victorian values' as a measure against which to identify the social ills of her milieu – a regulated

economy, welfare dependency and the decline of the family – and to advocate a return to laissez faire economics, to a reliance upon individual charity and to strong family discipline. (Mitchell 2010: 48)

As Gilmour writes, 'in a period when Victorian values were being publically celebrated, it would be strange if writers did not explore them and the society which produced them' (Gilmour 2000: 198). Carter was no stranger to reactions to this sort of '(mis)interpretation of "Victorian values"' (Kirchknopf 2008: 56) and the general state of the nation, both in her fiction and non-fiction. She comments on Thatcher's 'barbarous echoes of past glories that shape her vowels and sharpen her consonants' (Carter 1998a: 135) as well as 'the artificiality of the presentation of Thatcher' (Carter 1998a: 136). These barbarous echoes are particularly present in *Wise Children* and *Nights at the Circus*. Both novels present parodic images of the (Victorian) past, presenting the greatness of the era as a performance on the stage, set up for profit, as well as displaying the eventual demise of such performances later on, parodying Britain's fading into obscurity, which establishes a dialogue between the official ideology and the reality, subverting the dominant narrative of Victorian greatness.

Another reason for the appeal of the neo-Victorian, especially when it comes to the general population is its return to traditional, more satisfying and narratively richer forms of writing. This provides a break from the typical postmodernist fiction which often tends to be dry, clinical, and overly intellectual, while the neo-Victorian typically returns to more engaging and thrilling plots which engage the use of popular genres such as the romance or the detective novel, allowing the novels to be read on a surface level, without requiring the reader to be well-versed in theory. Of course, the neo-Victorian genre still falls under the umbrella of postmodernism and uses many of its techniques, especially in terms of historiographic metafiction, but it provides a different angle and doesn't shy away from the use of some conventional realist tropes. In other words, 'it provides a return to clear-cut categories questioned in postmodern narratives and a break from postmodernist relativism in favour of earlier, more traditional narrative modes, presumably to be used as a kind of anchor in an increasingly destabilized turn-of-the-millennium world' (Krombholz 2013: 119). Carter's works are similar in this regard, as they rarely fully abandon realist representation while utilising different popular genres,

especially the Gothic, and creating intertextual webs, in which references are sometimes used unironically, but quite often are treated irreverently and parodically. This creates works which are engaging, provocative, and humorous in their irreverence, but also create layers of different meanings.

3. Victorian Leftovers: *Shadow Dance*

Shadow Dance is Carter's first novel, and as such, 'it crammed in ideas and themes and images that its author was to explore at leisure for years to come' (Sage 1995: 17). This is also true when it comes to Carter's looking back at the Victorian era. The novel specifically focuses on Morris, a failed painter and an unsuccessful shopkeeper and his partner in business and violence, Honeybuzzard, and their violent mistreatment of Ghislaine, a naïve young woman whose being sexually liberated leads her to become a victim of their violent sexual games. The novel primarily focuses on Morris, who is deeply disaffected by life and alienated from his surroundings and the people around him, while maintaining a tense friendship with Honeybuzzard, who is presented as a grotesque parody of a Gothic villain, who, despite his sometimes-comical appearance, complements the squalor and decay of the setting and its horror aspects. The novel follows Morris as he navigates his way between his 'melancholia' (Peach 1998: 33), his failing marriage with his wife, Edna, and the guilt over Honeybuzzard's assault on Ghislaine, which left her once-beautiful face permanently disfigured and drove her down a path of madness, and which had been done after a hint from Morris. However, occasionally, one can see hints at some elements of the Victorian era and Carter's future thematisation of it, that is, one can see various Victorian leftovers strewn around the novel as mementoes of an era that had passed but still lingered on, exerting an influence over the present moment and indicating that it was closer than may be thought at first. Particularly, this refers to Morris's and Edna's marriage and the historical, Victorian artefacts that Morris and Honeybuzzard sell in their junk shop.

The marriage is characterised by their differing views on it; while Edna seeks a traditional one, in line with Victorian values, Morris seeks a life which is closer to a contemporary libertine, focused on sexual pleasure instead of on raising children and establishing a traditional household with a strong, masculine patriarch on top. Edna is described thus in the novel:

She was a Victorian Girl; a girl of the days when men were hard and top-hatted and masculine and ruthless and girls were gentle and meek and did a great deal of sewing and looked after the poor and laid their tender napes beneath a husband's booted foot, even if he brought home cabfuls of half-naked chorus girls and had them dance on the rich round mahogany dining-table' (Carter 1994: 46)

She lives in a desire to bear Morris's children, which he vehemently opposes; talking her into using contraception and not having children, because 'if he insisted hard enough, then she supposed she would be docile and obedient because that was how wives should be' (Carter 1994: 46). She refuses to contradict him because, for her, 'Husbands were a force of nature or an act of God; like an earthquake or the dreaded consumption' (Carter 1994: 45). Ironically, it is his insistence on not having children and pursuing extramarital affairs that fulfils at least one part of her masochistic desire, that of being a submissive wife firmly under her husband's foot. In other words, the novel establishes a connection between Victorian subjugation of wives and the contemporary, sexually liberated era; Morris, like men of his era generally, is not bound by strict moral codes that encumber sexual escapades, but it is precisely this that keeps his wife miserable, and paradoxically, fulfils her Victorian marital desires, apart from her desire to bear children. Their relationship can be said to represent the dialectic of sexual liberation; while the Victorian moral codes were largely stripped away, particularly for men, it was often women who had to pay for this liberation and thus, this liberation only emphasised their submissiveness. Furthermore, the novel also presents Victorian values as something that is still present, like a ghost of the past that still lingers on. In this sense, Edna can be contrasted to and compared with Ghislaine, a sexually liberated woman and the main victim of the novel. 'Although Ghislaine at first might seem to be sexually liberated, she shares with Edna a self-imposed submissiveness, which makes passive martyr-victims out of them both' (Fruchart 2006: 31). This further emphasises the connection between sexual liberation and sexual repression, as well as the connection and the dialogue between the contemporary era and the Victorian era.

Another example of Carter's commentary on Victoriana, as mentioned, is Morris's and Honeybuzzard's business of selling junk-artefacts, scavenged from abandoned houses, often to Americans, who 'Seemed to live in a

mad dream of Victoriana' (Carter 1994: 90). 'They were looking, primarily, for American-bait. In houses the size and age of this one, they looked for small, whimsical Victorian and Edwardian articles that could be polished or painted and sold as conversation pieces' (Carter 1994: 89). This establishes Victorian artefacts as commodities to be sold for a profit instead of objects of historical value, as well as hints at the increasingly marginal position of post-war Britain and its being overwhelmed by America. These topics would subsequently be explored not just by Carter, but by neo-Victorian authors in general, for example, A. S. Byatt, who in her novel *Possession*, introduces the figure of Mortimer Cropper, an American professor who obsessively collects artefacts related to British poet Randolph Ash and is presented as an intruder in the sphere of British culture. Furthermore, their business prefigures the 1980s and 1990s 'mania for collecting Victorian artefacts, fostered by the rehabilitation of Victoriana in the 1950s and 1960s' (Mitchell 2010: 54). This was, of course, not just a passion for collecting, it was primarily a business, one which turned historical artefacts into commodities that are bought and sold on the free market, just like any other commodity, which meant that 'History becomes its tangible objects, which are bought and sold to decorate homes, or to boost tourism The past becomes a possession' (Mitchell 2010: 94). Moreover, the artefacts mentioned in the novel often do not even end up decorating British homes; instead, they are taken to the USA, as a type of colonial bounty and aesthetic and historical oddities. While the novel does not go into great detail when it comes to this, it establishes a theme that Carter would later explore, particularly in *Nights at the Circus*, but also in *Wise Children*.

While being far from a neo-Victorian novel as such, *Shadow Dance* exhibits the first instances of Carter's looking back at the past, especially to the Victorian era and thus deserves some consideration in the discussion about Carter and Victoriana, as well as many other topics that are not explored here.

4. Illusions of Progress: *Nights at the Circus*

Nights at the Circus has been Carter's most critically acclaimed novel due to its complexity of allusions and a wealth of symbolism that allows one to dive deeply into its complexities and uncover possible meanings enabled by

its exuberant style. It tells the story of Fevvers, a winged circus performer, whose wings help her rise to stardom but also lead her into many situations in which she is objectified, used and abused. Her 'apprenticeship in being looked at' (Carter 2006a: 23) begins in a brothel where she was left as a baby and subsequently brought up by the prostitutes. After that, she ends up in Madame Schreck's museum of female oddities, from whence she is sold to Mr Rosencreutz, and, afterwards, she ends up in Colonel Kearny's circus, where she earns fame, but still retains her objectified position. The novel begins with her interview with Jack Walser, an American journalist who 'tries to debunk some of Fevvers' mysteries' (Lee 1997: 93). After hearing and disbelieving her life story, he joins the circus to follow her from a close distance until they reunite as lovers at the end of the novel. The novel also expands on the topic of Anglo-American relations, which Carter started to comment on in *Shadow Dance* and which she discusses in greater detail and with greater stylistic prowess in *Nights at the Circus*. This is achieved by drawing a lot of attention to the American symbols which surround colonel Kearny and to his position as an imperialistic capitalist who is trying to expand his business all over the world, while employing British performers who figure as colonial subjects here. However, this does not mean that there is some kind of longing for the British Empire in the novel; both the British and the American empire are ridiculed and profaned. Another key feature that will be discussed here is the temporal setting of the novel; not only is it situated in the Victorian era, but it is also placed in the *fin de siècle* period. This establishes a clear connection between the two eras and serves to question the (Victorian) idea of progress, thus establishing a dialogue with the contemporary period, on which it also comments. This kind of questioning treatment of history and contemporary politics and its clear Victorian setting make the novel neo-Victorian, which deserves greater attention.

A few critics have reflected on Carter's treatment of history in the novel. Kohlke acknowledges that the novel operates 'within the postmodern mode of "historiographic metafiction"' (Kohlke 2004: 155), while Magali Michael claims that 'Carter's depiction of the past is strikingly familiar, however, which suggests that the present is effectively her target and that 1899 and the 1980s are not worlds apart.' (Michael 1994: 492). Furthermore, Matthew Oliver closely examines the novel in the 1980s context of its writing, that is, of Thatcherism with its heavy emphasis on Victorian values and Britain's increasingly marginalised position. He claims

that 'she directs her gaze back at the British Empire, not nostalgically, but to transform traditionally idealized "British" identity traits through the messy, decentered, physical discourse of the grotesque, distancing British identity from empire and replacing it with a new model' (Oliver 2010: 239). However, all these characteristics are abundantly found in neo-Victorian novels and one might say that they are even typical traits of such fiction, which means that it is possible to safely situate *Nights at the Circus* among neo-Victorian novels. It was written in the period of an ideological return to Victorian values, which spawned many of the seminal works in the genre, and it engages in an active dialogue with the Victorian past and the late capitalist present of the contemporary age. While it does not explicitly conjure up many Victorian images, as it belongs to the category of neo-Victorian novels that Shiller describes as 'more overtly postmodern in tone' (Shiller 1995: 1), it is still clearly enough a reaction to the era and the contemporary (ab)use of it that can be seen as such a fiction.

The novel begins *in medias res* during the interview between Walser and Fevvers, which can be seen as an embodiment of Anglo-American relationships; the American, Walser, is represented as a critically-minded young journalist who comes to investigate and debunk the possible deception on part of the winged woman for his series entitled 'The Great Humbugs of the World'. This immediately establishes Britain as an eccentric place, a place that has become somewhat exotic and mysterious and is to come under scrutiny from the new power on the rise, America. He is described as having 'the professional necessity to see all and believe nothing which cheerfully combined, in Walser's personality, with a characteristically American generosity towards the brazen lie' (Carter 2006a: 6), and, further: 'his habitual disengagement was involuntary; it was not the result of judgment, since judgement involves the positives and negatives of belief' (Carter 2006a: 7). Even after getting a full interview from Fevvers, Walser is still in a state of disbelief and opts to secretly join the circus to observe Fevvers up close and confirm that she indeed was a humbug and not an actual winged woman. However, this decision does not lead him down a path of rational explanations and further critical inquiry. On the contrary, he eventually fully loses himself in the madness and magic of the circus and finally loses all memory of himself, which makes him drop his disbelief and accept Fevvers as she is. He joins the circus as a clown and is immediately taken over by their performance, playing the role of the Human Chicken. The experience in the circus forces him to

suspend his disbelief, especially after the dance the clowns perform for him, which crosses the borders of reality and steps into the area of magic; one of the clowns is repeatedly castrated while the other one juggles his removed members and Buffo produces numerous transgressive items from a cauldron, just to name a couple of supernatural moments.

His trials continue and intensify after the circus train crashes in Siberia and he suffers from complete memory loss to the point where he cannot remember anything about himself and simply repeats his Human Chicken routine. He is eventually found by a shaman and adopted as an apprentice, which pushes him further away from his recollection of self and his previous realist, sceptical thinking, as 'for all the people of this region, there existed no difference between fact and fiction... Strange fate for a journalist, to find himself in a place where no facts, as such, existed!' (Carter 2006a: 208) Even though Carter's critical voice does not spare even the Siberian natives, this experience still serves as a transformative one and he starts coming to his sense only after hearing her voice calling him, 'His name, in the mouth of the winged creature' (Carter 2006a: 319). After this, he is able to accept Fevvers as she is, dropping his American incredulity and making peace with things that may not seem of this world at first, which undermines his Americanness inherently tied to his scepticism.

However, the biggest transgressive symbol of America and its imperialism is the circus itself and the figure of Colonel Kearney, a parodic embodiment of the American entrepreneurial spirit and the imperialism it birthed. The very presence of the Colonel is itself an almost grotesque exaggeration of Americana; the central piece on his attire is a 'gun-metal buckle, in the shape of a dollar sign, [which] fastened the leather belt just below his pot belly' and his suit is comprised of 'a pair of tightly tailored trousers striped in red and white and a blue waistcoat ornamented with stars' (Carter 206: 114). His patriotic exuberance is, of course, a merely economic thing; even though he is from the South, he accepts the stars and stripes as there was 'No profit margin to the bonny blue flag, these days; he was all for the stars and stripes' (Carter 206: 114), American patriotism is presented as a mere symbol of the acquisition of wealth and the American flag stands as a banner of imperialism. His entire project of going around the planet is presented as an imperialist attempt at conquering the world in the name of the USA. Talking to Walser, he comments:

Surely I can count on a fellow Amurrican to see the glory of it! All nations united in the Great Ludic Game under the banner of liberty

itself! D'you see the grand plan, young man? Old Glory across the tundra, crowned heads bow to the democratic extravaganza! Then, think of, tuskers to the land of the Rising Sun, young man! Hannibal's tuskers stopped short after the Alps but mine, mine shall go round the en-tire world! Never before, in the en-tire [sic!] history of thrills and laughter, has a free Amurrican circus circumnavigated the globe!' (Carter 2006a: 118)

This passage can be read as a comment on American imperialist pretensions; America was a force on the rise in 1899, when the novel is set, and it was the foremost imperialist force during the 1980s, when the novel was published, which establishes a connection between the late Victorian period and the neoliberal period, with its turn towards Victorian values. The dominance of America over Britain even prompted Tony Benn to remark that Britain was 'a colony in an American empire' (quoted in Oliver 237). Thus, American imperialism is equated with a circus, undermining its real-life power with an irreverent attitude and from a contemporary position which is trying to find the roots of the situation in the past and, albeit implicitly, establishes a neo-Victorian dialogue between the past and present moment.

However, this kind of treatment of the American empire does not imply a reactionary view, one that seeks to return to the former glory of the British empire. Carter's irreverent treatment of crucial cultural symbols is not reserved only for America; it is directed against Britain just as much, if not more. One example of such irreverence is the character of Ma Nelson, the owner of the brothel where Fevvers grew up. She shares her name with Admiral Horatio Nelson, because of which 'she always dressed in the full dress uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet' (Carter 2006a: 34). This parodies one of the greatest figures of British history and implicitly ridicules the entire British Empire by comparing it to a brothel, 'her barque of pleasure that was moored of all unlikely places, in the sluggish Thames' (Carter 2006a: 34). Carter's mockery of the Empire can also be seen as a reaction to Thatcherite nostalgia for the period, uncovering the underside of the greatness to which Thatcher referred in her ideological musings, which is in contrast to 'a nostalgic impulse which positions the Victorian era as a 'golden age' from which the present has dropped off' (Hadley 2010: 8). Furthermore, Oliver reads Fevvers' wings 'as grotesque extensions beyond the closed surface of the classical body, suggestive of how the empire itself

extended beyond the easily definable limits of national boundaries' (Oliver 2010: 242), even though she is herself part of the underclass, which points to a kind of dual symbolism; she stands for those subjugated on the basis of sex and class, but also for the grotesque expansion of Britain.

However, one key feature of Victorian that the novel engages with, and possibly one of the most important themes of the novel is its engagement with the idea of progress, which 'In the popular imagination, the Victorian era is thought to have been dominated by' (Hadley 2010: 19). Hadley further mentions the 'confident belief that the Victorian era was moving toward a better future' (Hadley 2010: 20) and offers a quote from Frederic Harrison, who says:

We are on the threshold of a great time, even if our time is not great itself. In science, in religion, in social organisation, we all know that great things are in the air. 'We shall see it, but not now' – or rather our children and our children's children will see it. [...] It is the age of great expectation and unwearied striving after better things. (quoted in Hadley 2010:2).

The temporal setting of the novel, that is, its being on the threshold of the 20th century implies a connection between the idea of progress, present in the 19th century, and the contemporary age, birthed by the 19th century. Fevvers is connected to such ideas quite explicitly, receiving a remark such as 'Oh, my little one, I think you must be the pure child of the century that just now is waiting in the wings, the New Age in which no women will be bound down to the ground' (Carter 2006a: 2010). Her wings can thus be seen as a symbol of hope for freedom, freedom acquired by the march of progress that was soon to liberate women from the shackles of male domination. However, this symbolism is undercut by her frequent getting into trouble precisely because of her wings, which undercuts the whole idea of progress, presenting it as something that cannot be spawned by the present circumstances.

Even Fevvers herself seems to accept such idealistic notions at one time. At the end of the novel, right when the year 1899 was supposed to turn into 1900 and a new era, Fevvers enthusiastically exclaims:

And once when the old world has turned on its axle so that the new dawn can dawn, then, ah then! All the women will have wings, the same as I. [...] The doll's house doors will open, the brothels

will spill forth their prisoners, the cages, gilded or otherwise, all over the world, in every land, will let forth their inmates singing together the dawn chorus of the new, the transformed –‘ (Carter 2006a: 338-339)

Her idealistic speech is, however, quickly cut short by Lizzie, Fevvers’s voice of reason, who states that ‘It’s going to be more complicated than that [...] This old witch sees storms ahead, my girl’ (Carter 2006a: 339). In this way, the naïve, idealistic notion of progress is undermined and the attention is turned towards the present day and forces the attention toward a conscious comparison of the idealistic expectations of the 19th century. Not only does Carter undermine and put under scrutiny the nostalgic, idealised notions of the Victorian era on the foundations of which Thatcherism lay, but also scrutinises some of the essential notions of the Victorian era, namely, that of progress, which establishes a two-way connection between the eras while keeping a sharp critical edge, which is a typical neo-Victorian technique, and which situates the novel firmly within the boundaries of the neo-Victorian.

5. Memory and Nostalgia: *Wise Children*

Wise Children, Carter’s last novel centres around two twin sisters, Dora and Nora Chance, and their various experiences as illegitimate daughters of Melchior Hazard, a great Shakespearean celebrity actor. The novel’s narrator is Dora, now a seventy-five-year-old woman, who goes back through memory and narrates their life stories starting with the very beginnings of the family in the 19th century and their grandfather Ranulph Hazard, the progenitor of the line of celebrity performers from the Hazard dynasty. Throughout the narrative, Dora recounts the humble Cockney origins of her and her sister’s under the care and supervision of their grandmother, whose figure always looms in the background of the narrative, and their road to becoming professional performers and winding back in their humble Brixton home. The novel is full of juxtapositions of high and low, primarily in the occupations of the legitimate branch of the family and the illegitimate – the Hazards are (at least initially) representatives of high culture, whereas the Chances are vaudeville performers, representatives of low culture. This cultural dichotomy stands for all other dichotomies in the novel – bourgeois and proletarian, male and female, authority

and disenfranchisement, patrilineal and matrilineal families, and so on. In this context, Dora's narrative is an effort to write her and her sister's life stories into the history of the family by creating an unofficial history and undermining the official one, created by the Hazards and the public perception of theirs. As Roesner writes: 'Reflecting her life-long quest to be acknowledged by her father, Dora's memoir represents her attempt to assert her visibility by writing herself into her family history' (Roesner: 2002: 113). The motif of asserting visibility and writing a marginalised group into history is rather common in neo-Victorian fiction, which seeks to re-examine the position of women, gays and lesbians, and other marginalised groups, and to reinscribe them in history. Another thing that *Wise Children* has in common with neo-Victorian fiction is its focus on what Mitchell calls 're-membering'. She comments that

these fictions are less concerned with making sense of the Victorian past, than with offering it as a cultural memory, to be re-membered, and imaginatively re-created, not revised or understood. They remember the period not only in the usual sense, of recollecting it, but also in the sense that they re-embod, that is, re-member, or reconstruct it [...] the dis(re)membered pieces of the past are reconstituted in and by the text, and also in the reader's imagination. (Mitchell 2010: 7)

It can be argued that Dora follows precisely this kind of process; she actively tries to put together pieces of memories and critically engage with them, in an attempt to (re)construct a version of her family history that includes all the illegitimate aspects of it, which are created precisely by the legitimate part. Her memoir is a memory narrative that goes beyond the mere recollection of personal matters and tries to engage critically with the past it retells, as well as the contemporary moment from which it is narrated. As Sage comments:

Wise Children traces the history of the Hazard theatrical dynasty, from its nineteenth-century heyday, when its members colonised their world (or at least the colonies) bearing Shakespeare to the sticks, through to the twentieth-century upturning of that imperial theme. Which finds the bards' plays being travestied in other media, and the stage itself upstages by television. (Sage 1995: 55–56)

Thus, Dora's narrative transcends the boundaries of autobiography, it also serves to recollect the past of imperial might, contrasting it with its contemporary demise and the dismal state of Britain in the contemporary era, which can be seen as another reaction to the contemporary nostalgic Victorian impulses. The Hazard family can be said to stand for the Empire itself. Its cultural demise, the fall from Ranulphs' bringing Shakespeare to the entire world, to television and corny commercials, mirrors the fall of the British Empire from a mighty empire to a second-rate force. Of course, the novel does not refer only to the Victorian period, which means that it cannot be seen as a purely neo-Victorian novel, as its discussion of history and politics spans most of the 20th century as well, but its treatment of the Victorian and history in general makes it a worthy addition to this discussion. In this way, the novel continues with the examination of Britain's waning and the inexistence of the progress for which the Victorians had once hoped, but it also introduces some nostalgic moments, which were not present in *Shadow Dance* or *Nights at the Circus*.

Nostalgia has not been popular within critical circles and as Boym notes, the word 'is often used dismissively' (Boym 2002: xiv). Hutcheon, for example, is meticulous in claiming that 'The past is always placed critically – and not nostalgically – in relation to the present' (Hutcheon 2004: 45) when discussing *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Arguably, purely nostalgic recreations of the Victorian world, devoid of any critical inquiry, can be easily dismissed as 'period fetishism' (Krombholz: 2013: 120), however, critical re-membling of the period is not necessarily at odds with hints of nostalgia. As Mieke Bal notes, 'nostalgia can also be empowering and productive if critically tempered and historically informed' (Bal 1999: xi). It can be argued that this is the case with Dora's narrative; while she retains an irreverent attitude towards the past and tries to subvert the dominant patrilineal structure embodied by Melchior, she does not shy away from looking back nostalgically on some things that she found dear and that have disappeared due to the relentless march of time and the development of neoliberalism. These remarks comment on the cultural changes Britain underwent during Dora's lifetime and the rapidly changing face of London. She remarks 'Nowhere you can get a decent cup of tea, all they give you is Harvey Wallbangers, filthy capuccino' (Carter 2006b: 3), and later continues in a similar vein: 'no more Joe Lyonses, gone the way of all flesh' (Carter 2006b: 111). Another interesting remark is, 'This is about the time that comes in every century when they reach out for all that they

can grab of dear old London and pull it down. Then they build it up again, like London Bridge in the nursery rhyme, goodbye, hello, but it's never the same' (Carter 2006b: 3). In these remarks, Dora tracks the disappearance of some familiar, uniquely English motives and their replacement with globalised, universal aesthetics, culture, and businesses, which came about as a result of the globalising and universalising tendencies of late capitalism. Thus, her nostalgia is not just 'a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed' and a 'sentiment of loss and displacement' (Boym 2001: xiii), but has a clear critical purpose and can be seen as an example of 'reflective nostalgia' (Boym 2001: xviii).

However, the novel retains a critical edge that is typical for Carter and, as mentioned above, it continues exploring the theme of Britain's decline, contrasting the glory of the height of the Victorian period with the contemporary state of Britain, while going over most of the 20th century. It can be said to be a successor of *Nights at the Circus* in some way, as it explores the aftermath of Fevveers's idealistic musings at the end of the novel, showing to what extent the hopes of her and many other Victorians were not realised. Those novels, together, show how 'The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia' (Boym 2001: xiv). In this sense, Dora's memoir contrasts the beginnings of the Hazard dynasty with the cultural state of the late twentieth century. Ranulph's Shakespearean world tour is described as 'proselytising zeal' (Carter 2006b: 17) by Dora, and she describes how 'the old man was seized with the most imperative desire, to spread and go on spreading the Word overseas' (Carter 2006b: 17). His glorious tour mirrors the zenith of British imperialism and the might of the Empire; he is established as a great actor and is revered all around the world, to the extent at which several towns in America are named after him, accepting British cultural and political supremacy. The portrayal of Ranulph is not nostalgic about his era and does not glorify his persona; it is laughed at and subverted just like all embodiments of British cultural supremacy are in this novel. Ranulph also establishes the patrilineal order, which sidelines women or excludes them completely, owing to which, Melchior was able to simply impregnate the sisters' mother and leave, never to acknowledge them.

This is contrasted with Melchior Hazard, who follows his father's footsteps and becomes a great, renowned Shakespearean actor, which allows him to amass wealth and power, but as time marched on, he had to make compromises and descend into the world of show business,

alongside his entire dynasty. Whereas Ranulph symbolically conquered America on his tour, Melchior goes to America, not on a conquering tour, but to work with an American Director, Genghis Khan, on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which ends up being a complete disaster, thus symbolically marking the end of British cultural and political supremacy, as America securely sits in the dominant position. This downfall is also seen in Melchior's turning into a marketing figure, dropping from being a great actor, an embodiment of high culture, to a mere seller of commodities. Dora comments that he 'deeply mined the rich new seam hat opened up before him – old buffers in pipe tobacco, vintage port and miniature cigar commercials' (Carter 2006b: 118), while his third wife, nicknamed My Lade Margarine by Dora, appears in other commercials, exclaiming that 'The Royal Family of the theatre gives its seal of approval' (Carter 2006b: 118) and even turns *Hamlet* into a parody for a commercial, asking 'To butter or not to butter' (Carter 2006b: 38). Furthermore, Melchior's legitimate daughters, Saskia and Imogen act in cooking shows and children's shows, while his son, Tristram, runs a TV show called 'Lashings of Lolly'. These elements further point to a decline of British culture, embodied by the decline of the Hazard family, and they also blur the differences between the high and the low, showing how nothing is too sacred to be (ab)used for a profit.

Thus, *Wise Children* also establishes a connection between the Victorian era and the contemporary one, despite not focusing solely on that era, and provides a sharp examination of the state of both eras, which situates it close to typical neo-Victorian eras.

6. Conclusion

This discussion has tried to outline a timeline of Carter's engagement with the Victorian and compare that engagement to the features of the neo-Victorian genre to situate her work around it. Her engagement with the Victorian past began with her first novel, *Shadow Dance*, which shows how Victorian artefacts were being turned into commodities, while the dominant position of Britain was waning. Carter continues this examination in *Nights at the Circus*, which can be said to be a fully neo-Victorian novel. It parodies both the British Empire and contemporary American imperialism to critically examine and subvert both, while commenting on the shifting

positions and Britain's slow waning, as well as questioning the Victorian idea of progress. Carter's final novel, *Wise Children*, continues in a similar vein, commenting on the unfulfillment of the hopes of progress from a late 20th-century perspective and with a focus on the seismic shifts in culture, brought about by late capitalism. Both novels critically engage with both the Victorian past and the contemporary era, marked by the 'Thatcherite (mis)interpretation of "Victorian values"' (Kirchknopf 2008: 56), which is a common theme in neo-Victorian fiction. *Wise Children* also engages with historical periods that fall out of the scope of the Victorian, but can still be seen as adjacent to the neo-Victorian.

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MUSIC OF MY SOUL: FROM THE WHITE TO THE BLACK ALBUM

Abstract

The beginning of the 1960s was known for the change in the ideological matrix in Britain. The new political situation helped society change its attitude and become more open to the events that would come later. It was also a period marked by rapid and radical cultural changes. Pop culture became a way of life for young people, causing profound changes in their attitudes toward leisure and, as a result, affecting various spheres of life. The paper deals with the impact of popular culture on Hanif Kureishi, the writer of mixed-race identity. The special focus is on the impact of music and the musicians of the time Kureishi features in his writings: their texts, clothes, and style. By intertwining fine arts and literature with performing arts and music, Kureishi generates cultural identity.

Key words: Hanif Kureishi, leisure, youth culture, music, cultural identity.

1. Introduction

The formation of youth culture, a postwar phenomenon, was in full swing during the 1960s. The main idea originated in America, but it quickly gained popularity among British people. The phenomenon is based on the mutual collaboration of industry and culture, or more precisely it is “[...] a commodity culture, producing trends that have the same kind of

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market value as manufactured commodities, satisfying momentary whims” (Danesi 2019: 4). One of the most appealing features concerning youth culture is that “[...] it arises from new trends and needs, constantly revising itself according to mass opinions and tastes” (Danesi 2019: 3). In addition to that, it is not connected to any artistic tradition, and everyone can participate in it and show their creativity regardless of class, education, or racial background.

Youth culture in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s was an authentic response to a very complex situation in society which was in transition at the time. It represents “[...] an area of common symbols and meanings, shared in part or in whole by a generation, in which they can work out or work through [...] the special tensions of being an adolescent” (Storey 2019: 42). In his book *Urban Rhythms*, Iain Chambers argues that youth culture did not become the dominant force in young people’s lives by chance. The industrial reorganisation of consumer production caused profound changes in youth attitudes towards leisure. Soon, it was no longer seen as a time of liberation from work, but as a possible lifestyle. What is more, it was often characterised by freedom and independence. “To buy a particular record, to choose a jacket or skirt cut to a particular fashion, to meditate carefully on the colour of your shoes is to open a door onto an actively constructed style of living”(Chambers 1986: 16). Therefore, popular culture initially enabled young people to express themselves. It influenced how they dressed, talked, acted, walked, and behaved. It also allowed them to blend in, to be part of the crowd. Their worldview and personal choices were influenced by images from popular cultural forms such as music, cinema, literature, fashion, and the media. Moreover, the search for a youth identity at the time became an essential process in life. Difference and authenticity were the imperatives of their generation and generations to come. When it comes to youth coming-of-age, the significance of the rise of this phenomenon can be seen in the fact that “[...] money, clothes, and music, rolled together into a distinctive youth style of coffee bars, clubs, dancing, and American records, established the teenager as a provocative icon” (Chambers 1986: 152). In other words, a teenage icon comes from a very familiar world, shares common symbols and meanings, and once he achieves success “[...] he is transformed into a commercial entertainer” (Storey 2019: 43). Thus, this was a period when “you could be an inner-urban child with a boring circumstance, yet by one simple act – changing your name – you could be transformed forever into an electronic deity” (Savage in Kureishi and Savage 1995: xxiii).

In literature, popular culture influenced “[...] the death of an aesthetics based on the stable referents of the ‘authentic’, the ‘unique’, the ‘irreplaceable’” (Chambers 1986: 8), and the emergence of hybrid aesthetics. It stimulated “[...] auto-biography, the non-fictional, the fiction novel, personal journalism [...]” (Kureishi in Kureishi and Savage 1995: xix). Pop culture also introduced writers to “[...] the fringes of the respectable world, to marijuana, generational conflicts, clubs, parties, and to a certain kind of guiltless, casual sex that had never been written about before” (Kureishi in Kureishi and Savage 1995: xix).

Hanif Kureishi, a contemporary, post-colonial British writer, is a product of the lost empire, a child of mixed parentage and, above all, a product of pop culture. Kenneth Kaleta, in his book on Hanif Kureishi, points out that American literature and American pop culture, in general, had a strong impact on Kureishi’s writing. He compares Kureishi to the novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald by pointing out that both of them discuss developmental issues concerning youth in their novels. He also argues that Kureishi’s “[...] prose style is itself musical. His stories run with the rhythm of rock, sexy throbbing, hopeful and melancholy simulating the pulsating beat of the music of their time” (Kaleta 1998: 8). Significantly enough, the protagonists of his novels, short stories, plays, and screenplays are either different types of artists, such as musicians, actors, and writers or they are closely connected with art itself. The uncertainty that follows the life of an artist could be associated with the uncertainty of life which a multiracial mixed-breed person faces in post-war Britain. Although the causes of their uncertainty in life differ, they are both concerned for their existence and well-being since they never know what the future holds. Thus, it is important to emphasise that the fictional characters in his writings are also “[...] remarkable and repulsive, hopeful and devastating – as people are in reality” (Kaleta 1998: 6).

The main purpose of this paper is to reveal the link between Kureishi’s novels, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) and *The Black Album* (1995), and popular music. It also aims to identify the bands and singers mentioned in the novels in order to show that music, as a form of human expression, is fundamental to the social life of the main characters. To support this claim, we need to demonstrate that, at the time, popular music created a world liberated from social chains and enabled everyone, regardless of their skin colour, to express themselves. Furthermore, given that music is more than merely a form of leisure or entertainment, it is important to emphasise

its impact on the formation of collective and individual cultural identity. Inasmuch as the list of the bands and singers in the two novels is infinite, this paper will focus specifically on those who, through their work and existence, caused a musical and, consequently, a cultural revolution.

2. Music and identity in Kureishi's novels

Owing to the great success Kureishi has achieved over time, he has become one of the leading portrayers of Britain's multicultural society. In the novels, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*, he maps his vision of contemporary issues, mainly the identity issues of the protagonists who are primarily the offspring of mixed parentage and solely represent the first or the second generation of immigrants. The novels show how difficult it was for a young man of mixed-race identity in post-war Britain to find his own place in a jungle of faces in a multicultural society. They also depict his struggle to deal with his own existence after the traumatic experience of recognising that he is "[...] almost the same but not quite/white" (Bhabha 1994: 89).

Karim Amir, a child of an English mother and a Pakistani father is the protagonist of the novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*. In the opening chapter, where he repeats the sentence about his nationality many times, he expresses enormous confusion and suspicion in everything he says. "[...] I am an Englishman born and bred, almost" (Kureishi 1990: 3). He knows that the fact that he belongs to "[...] a funny kind of Englishman" (Kureishi 1990: 3), pushes him into the background. Karim reveals his dissatisfaction by stating that he is not proud of being an Englishman and this sends a clear message that he is aware that he has been deprived of something. On the other hand, *The Black Album* is a novel that follows Shahid's problematic process of maturing. He also belongs to the second generation of immigrants since his parents come from Pakistan. The novel deals with different themes that marked the political, economic and socio-cultural situation in Britain. It explores the Prince phenomenon, the rise of the pop icon of the 1980s, the collapse of communism, the velvet revolution, and finally, the emergence of new dance music. The novel distinguishes between the positive and negative sides of multiculturalism and shows the possible conflicts which can be caused by these differences in cultural values and beliefs.

The importance of music, the bands, and the artists, which Kureishi proposes in his novels, is enormous. Both his novels are characteristically strongly related to the music genre as well as the mood of the time. Kureishi's debut novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, reflects the period of soaring optimism, idealism and serenity which characterised the 1960s and the early 1970s in Britain. In order to do that, the novel provides "a compendium of references of pop evolution [...] from the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, to hippy music to psychedelia, glam rock and punk" (Moore-Gilbert 2001: 115). What is more, in the novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*, for example, everything is related to music. The story and the life of the novel's protagonist Karim start within the world of music. His parents first meet at a concert, and a few months later they start their life together. "On Fridays and Saturdays, they went to dances and smooched blissfully to *Glenn Miller* and *Count Basie* and *Luis Armstrong*. That is where Dad first laid his eyes and hands on a pretty working-class girl from the suburbs called Margaret" (Kureishi 1990: 25). Karim, the product of their passionate love, experiences music in the same way. "I favored the tuneless: *King Crimson*, *Soft Machine*, *Captain Beefheart*, *Frank Zappa* and *Wild Man Fisher*" (Kureishi 1990: 62). He enjoys his life and the vices which accompany the modern lifestyle, or has a problem with racism, runs away, and hides in the world of music. In other words, music allows him to enter "[...] another world" (Kureishi 1990: 62), the one that is safe and provides protection. Contrary to *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi's second novel *The Black Album* portrays the rise of anger and discontent with life among the British population. It shows the decline of social liberalism and the emergence of fundamentalism during the 1970s and the 1980s. As for the music in Kureishi's second novel "labyrinthine history of rock music is again a recognized element of his storytelling [...]" (Kaleta 1998: 141). The rise of punk as a musical genre helps young protagonists to express their rebellious nature, with its spirit meticulously interwoven into every sequence of Kureishi's stories. The novel also describes the emergence of new dance music, an inevitable part of rave parties, where a rave is "[...] street jargon for a gigantic, all night, drug-using dancing party [...]" (Kaleta 1988: 122).

Christin Hoene, in *Music and Identity in Postcolonial British South-Asian Literature*, discusses the importance of music and identity formations as well as the way music is used for the interpretation of post-colonial identities. She argues that music is an essential part of the human

condition and very important for the expression of post-colonial identities since it “[...] easily escapes constructs of meaning just as the post-colonial condition defies meta-narratives of Western culture and supremacy” (Hoene 2014: 2). Thus, the identity that music represents cannot be fixed, calculated, or in any way stable, but rather fluid and changeable. She also states that “musical references [...] act as symbols and metaphors, and they inform the characters’ identification with their cultural heritage and surroundings” (Hoene 2014: 2). In addition to that, Edward Said in *Musical Elaborations* indicates the importance of the concept known as *transgression*. He associates it with music and explains that transgression in music represents “[...] its nomadic ability to attach itself to, and become part of, social formations, to vary its articulations and rhetoric depending on occasion as well as the audience [...]” (Said in Hoene 2014: 4). It is also observed as “[...] a highly productive concept [...] because it accommodates concepts of fluidity and the possibility of hybridity” (Hoene 2014: 5), which consequently means that the discussion of post-colonial identities is plausible.

With these two novels, Kureishi raises questions about personal, cultural and national identity, thus depicting how it feels to grow up in one culture with the roots in a completely unfamiliar one. *The Buddha of Suburbia* caused a certain kind of revolution in British literature, and it was worshipped by many, especially those who were of the same mixed identity as the book characters. By introducing Charlie Kay, Karim’s friend, who personifies the white lower middle-class but no longer wants to belong to it, the novel is also seen as an important literary work that provides an answer to what it means “[...] to be English in a post-colonial country that has won the war but lost the empire” (Hoene 2014: 86). Compared to Kureishi’s first novel, which reflects the period of soaring optimism, his second novel has a pessimistic approach to similar issues. Moreover, when Kureishi discusses music and its role in the lives of the novels’ protagonists, he shows that they, Karim and Shahid, approach it differently. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Karim strives “[...] to identify himself with the youth culture of the time” due to the fact that he “[...] very much feels like an outsider struggling to keep up with current trends in popular culture” (Hoene 2014: 86). Hence, Kureishi, in this novel, rather insists on the collective identity. In *The Black Album*, music for Shahid “[...] means on a much more personal and individual level than the general connotations with pop music and youth culture would imply” (Hoene 2014: 87). Shahid’s identification

with Prince, one of the most important musicians of the time, helps him to reveal the answers concerning his problematic coming-of-age.

Finally, the appearance of these two novels has influenced the change and the redefinition of the images of Englishness not only among immigrants but also among English people. Kureishi illustrates the importance of music in the protagonists' coming-of-age, especially those with fluid identities, due to the fact that music reveals "a way of being in the world [...]" (Frith in Hall and Gay 1996: 114). Therefore, inasmuch as Kureishi's novels contain copious references to the music of the time, and the music directly influences the protagonists' coming-of-age, it is fair to say that these novels "[...] illuminate a distinctive new national identity" (Kaleta 1998: 4).

3. The White Album: The Beatles

The Beatles or the "paradigm of the age" as the famous American philosopher and writer, Allen Ginsberg, used to call them, is a unique musical phenomenon of both British and the world music in the late twentieth century (as cited in Kureishi 2011: 90). The musical revolution first started in their heads, before spreading its influence worldwide. The way their music connected and united young people from all over the world remains unprecedented. They were the real example of the idea that all the madness of this world could be put into a song.

Hanif Kureishi, in his short essay, *Eight Arms to Hold You*, discusses his first encounter with the music of The Beatles and their role in popular culture. He stresses their importance for the music scene as well as the obstacles they had to face at the beginning of their very successful and prolific career. "Not that you could ignore the Beatles even if you wanted to. Those rockers in suits were unique in English popular music, bigger than anyone had been before" (Kureishi 2011: 82). Kureishi also depicts Mr. Hogg, his teacher of music and religion, who was just one of many well-educated people at the time who tried their best to minimise and undermine both the reputation and the role of the group. Through his character, he tries to portray the confusion that occurred at the time. For a person like him, it was difficult to accept that the shallowness concerning many things that he associated with the members of the group could be the foundation of such great success. According to Kureishi's teacher, they

were not literate enough to write the songs that were ascribed to them. They did not finish any recognizable school or university which could prove and underpin their talent. However, The Beatles stood up against all the prejudice and showed that it was possible.

First of all, through their music and songs, they indirectly *attacked* the class system in Britain. The 1960s were the years when it was still unacceptable and impossible for the young people of the lower middle class, who were stigmatised as rude, poorly educated, aggressive, ill-mannered, and ill-bred, to achieve such fame. Besides, “[...] none of us thought we’d become doctors, lawyers, scientists, politicians. We were scheduled to be clerks, civil servants, insurance managers and travel agents” (Kureishi 2011: 83). What was more frightening, according to Kureishi, was the fact that Mr. Hogg’s not believing in The Beatles was a clear sign that he and all the other teachers did not believe in his generation and the generations to come. However, the very foundation of the system, which had been like an impregnable fortress for too long, was finally badly shaken by the power of music. Some elements of the system changed, and some disappeared completely. As a consequence of the attack on the class system, high culture was also attacked. The *cultural vertigo* that was happening came as a shock to many. The Beatles also represented a menace to high culture as their existence and work disarrayed the hierarchy of art. There was no more certainty in the world of art. Everything that once mattered and represented any kind of authority, at that moment, at The Beatles moment, became a contentious issue. That is why, according to Kureishi, Mr. Hogg’s view of art and the hierarchy in the arts disappeared into thin air. What once used to be the last on his list became the first and the most popular type of art among British as well as among Western people in general. “At the top were stationed classical music and poetry, besides the literary novel and great painting. At the bottom of the list, [...], were films, television and finally, the most derided – pop music” (Kureishi 2011: 82).

Ian MacDonald, in his book *Revolution in the Head*, takes a close look at the rise of The Beatles phenomenon, their fame, and their infinite influence. He discovers another feature that should be associated with their work – it is known as the *nowness* or “[...] ‘to live now, this moment’ [...]” (Wenner, 1973, as cited in MacDonald 2008: 21). The Beatles and their focus on the now mentality went so far that from their perspective “waiting killed the spontaneity they so prized [...]” (Wenner, 1973, as cited in MacDonald 2008: 22). They observed it as a big step back. The return to

the past was all but prosperous. MacDonald also points out that the now mentality, later on, became the leitmotif of the 1960s in general, not only that of The Beatles. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, this mentality is associated with Karim, the novel's protagonist. From the beginning of the novel, we recognize a young, dreamy boy, full of life, who is keen on conquering London. He adores everything that has to do with fashion trends, music, art and popularity. He longs to try various drugs and to have as much sex as possible. He welcomes changes and wants to taste all the forbidden fruits the 1970s seemed to be offering. "In bed, before I went to sleep, I fantasized about London [...]. There were kids [...] who lived free lives [...], there were thousands of black people everywhere so I would not feel exposed, [...] there were [...] bookshops [...], shops selling all the records you could desire [...]" (Kureishi 1990: 121). In *The Black Album*, the now mentality is associated with Shahid, the protagonist of the novel, and his elder brother, Chili. They represent the second generation of immigrants in Britain and consequently support an ideology quite opposite to their father's. It is a new ideology, an ideology of mixed-race children. Neither Chili nor Shahid perceive the wealth their father created as something that they should increase. They do not want to work hard but rather live like all the other young white boys. What is more, Chili believes that his father's money should be spent on a luxurious life.

When Kureishi, in his essay, discusses Lennon's role in pop culture, his unquestionable greatness, and above all his voice, it bears an uncanny resemblance to Kureishi's voice in literature. "It's strong but cruel and harsh [...]. It's expressive, charming and sensual [...]. It is aggressive and combative but the violence in it is attractive since it seems to emerge out of passionate involvement with the world. It's the voice of someone who is alive in both feeling and mind" (Kureishi 2011: 91). In other words, while writing about Lennon and his voice in pop music, Kureishi unconsciously writes about himself and depicts his voice in literature. Furthermore, in the novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi considers the Beatles phenomenon as the personification of great opportunities and pleasure. Everything that the group members did was new and epochal for millions of young people who yearned to belong somewhere and, most importantly, to have their voices heard. The Beatles were not only their heroes for the reason that "[...] no authority had broken their spirit; [...] they answered back, no one put them down" (Kureishi 2011: 86), but they were also their role models. The novel shows that the existence of the Beatles and their success sent

a clear message to young people that it was no longer important whether they belonged to the lower class or not. It was just a matter of their will to succeed. Kureishi also depicts their music as a liberating factor and observes that “[...] everything about the Beatles spoke about enjoyment, abandon, and attention to the needs of the self” (Kureishi 2011: 86). Consequently, the Beatles’ music in *The Buddha of Suburbia* personifies the free world of great possibilities accessible to everyone regardless of their gender, race, background, or skin colour.

4. David Bowie: The sense of Camp

David Jones, alias David Bowie, is another eminent artist who has an exceptional place in Kureishi’s oeuvre. He was the most prominent figure of the new style characterized by glitter, gender ambiguity and an androgynous look, especially popular among male performers. “What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine” (Sontag 1964: 4). Besides, Bowie is probably Kureishi’s favorite musician. They have many things in common. Firstly, they were both born in south London in a lower middle-class family. They also attended the same school, Bromley Technical High School in Keston, the only difference being that Bowie had attended the school a decade earlier. They both use the sensibility of Camp¹ and different literary techniques in their writings, such as irony, to express their view of the world they live in. Above all, they are real examples of the idea that social disadvantage is essential to pop culture.

The bond between these two artists is emphasised in Kureishi’s first novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Kureishi suggests that among a great number of popular artists who played an important role at the time, David Bowie stood out. Thus, when Karim, on his way to London, persuades his father to “[...] stop off at the Three Tuns in Buckingham” (Kureishi 1990: 8), he wants him to go to the very same place where Bowie started his musical career. On the other hand, many years later, Bowie took part with his songs in the soundtrack for the BBC adaptation of the very same novel. Iain Chambers in *Popular Culture: The Metropolitan Experience*

¹ Camp is the consistently aesthetic experience of the world. It incarnates a victory of “style” over “content,” “aesthetics” over “morality,” of irony over tragedy (Sontag 1964: 10).

sees David Bowie as the “master of metamorphosis” (Chambers 1986: 11). According to Chambers, Kureishi’s literary protagonists become the canvas for psychological trauma. However, the very same characters, in terms of music, become the canvas of urban signs. He also points out that contemporary art should be associated with contemporary life, hence the necessity to depict the importance of everyday life down to the last detail. In the novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the love for metamorphoses is shown through Charlie – Karim’s friend. In his search for a new sound, he rejects his old hippy identity in the face of punk. “That’s it, that’s it [...]. That’s fucking it. [...] The sixties have been given notice tonight” (Kureishi 1990: 131). Despite the fact that punk is observed as a sound that is “[...] intrinsically linked to social criticism, rebellion, and an aggressive anarchic vision” (Hoene 2014: 105), Charlie sees it as a possibility not much for rebellion but for personal accomplishment. Charlie’s urge to perform, to become successful and recognized all over the city of London, the country, and even abroad, breaks all the boundaries. What is more, Charlie, in inventing and manufacturing a hybrid identity by primarily changing his name and becoming Charlie Hero, achieves two goals at the same time. First, he becomes a superstar, popular among young people. Second, he finally leaves the suburbs and, in a short period of time, leaves the country and moves to the United States. Furthermore, according to Sontag, Camp represents the glorification of character, and what is appreciated the most in the Camp sense is the “force of the person” (Sontag 1964: 8). Charlie definitely succeeds in influencing people around him, not to mention his female audience. Karim compares Charlie’s charm to the most lethal weapon and says that he is “[...] magnificent in his venom, his manufactured rage, his anger, his defiance. What power he had, what admiration he extorted, what looks were in girls’ eyes” (Kureishi 1990: 154). Although Karim recognises the tricks Charlie uses to transform punk and his performance into selling goods, that does not stop him from expressing his delight and admiration.

During the 1970s, consumerism or “[...] the secret language of style” (Chambers 1986: 7), the uncontrolled use of drugs, clothes and music, as well as ontological insecurity, established the foundation for the rise of a new style in music, and consequently in fashion. In the 1960s, music was observed as a “[...] vehicle of thought and feeling” (MacDonald 2008: 13). Unfortunately, “Thatcher’s trope against feeling was a resurrection of control, a repudiation of the sensual, of self-indulgence in any form

[...]” (Kureishi 2011: 92). As a result, the new style was a response to political, economic, and social changes. When it comes to consumerism in Britain, it swamped everyday life to the extent that it soon became the subject of parody in different spheres of art, mainly in music and literature. In Kureishi’s novel, *The Black Album*, consumerism or a *new religion* is closely connected with Shahid’s brother Chili. “At home, he had a wall of suits, linen for the summer, and wool for the winter, arranged according to the color [...]. There were cashmere coats, Paul Smith scarves, Cardin umbrellas [...]” (Kureishi 1995: 199). Whenever Chili appears in the novel, it is always about the materialistic side of life. He belongs to the second generation of immigrants, and his life ideology and goals differ from his father’s. He wears expensive clothes, always signed by a world-famous designer, and drives expensive cars. “In Chili’s hand were his car keys, Ray-Bans and Marlboros [...]. Chili drank only black coffee and neat Jack Daniels; his suits were Boss, his underwear Calvin Klein [...] his drug dealer would come to him at all hours [...]” (Kureishi 1995: 38). Chili is, therefore, portrayed as a boy locked into a new ideology called consumerism. His love for luxury life and drugs prevents him from becoming mature. As a result, he becomes like *Peter Pan*, “the archetype for pop icons” (Savage in Kureishi and Savage 1995: xxiv) and those who participate in pop culture. In the text, Chili never grows up. Unfortunately, consumerism takes him to the other extreme. He becomes a drug addict and, consequently, a victim of drug abuse.

If anyone had the power to influence other people, particularly artists, with their attitude, songs, and performances, it was David Bowie. His stylistic transformations were unique, as was his visual appearance. He proposed a new way of dressing: androgynous, eccentric, and flamboyant clothing, accompanied by the use of various cosmetics such as eyeliner and lipstick. He also showed his love for exaggeration, the unnatural, and artifice. In doing so, Bowie proved that he was a true representative of the Camp, since “Camp is a vision of the world in terms of style – but a particular kind of style” (Sontag 1964: 3). Thus, it is not surprising that he eventually becomes an idol and an inspiration to young people, especially to Charlie, one of the protagonists of the novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*. With his attitude, he reminds us a lot of Bowie and his coming-of-age, since Charlie is white, belongs to the low-middle class, lives in the suburbs, and longs for fame. Another similarity is the awareness that they have to change themselves and their performance in order to achieve

success. Therefore, while in the suburbs, Charlie, the aspirant rock star, is completely impressed with Bowie and openly shows his adoration by identifying with him. "He stood out from the rest of the mob with his silver hair and stacked shoes. [...] It was Bowie's influence, I knew" (Kureishi 1995: 68). Moreover, Charlie's love for exaggeration, the unnatural, artifice, and metamorphoses becomes more pronounced when he develops affection for punk music. "His hair was dyed black now, and it was spiky. He wore, inside out, a slashed T-shirt with a red swastika hand-painted on it. His black trousers were held together by safety pins, paper clips, and needles" (Kureishi 1995: 151/2). Therefore, Charlie definitely recognises the potential of punk music and the opportunities which it provides for him. That is why he discards his previous hippie look and embraces the spirit of punk as a means of self-reinvention and, most importantly, his future career.

5. The Black Album: Prince's dandyism

Prince, Rogers Nelson, is another musician who fuels the pages of Kureishi's writings. He is one of the greatest singers, songwriters and record producers of all time. He knew how to reach the audience all over the world with his wide vocal range and unrivalled stage performance. The combination of different musical styles which encompass funk, rock, pop, rhythm and blues (R&B), and soul helped him to create the image of a diverse, and a rather unique artist.

There is a striking resemblance between Kureishi's literature and Prince's music with regard to the themes they explore. Both of them belong to the generation which has a problem defining their identity. Their hybridity, reflected through their skin colour, is the stigma that shapes their lives, as well as their destinies. Stan Hawkins and Sarah Niblock, in their book *Prince: The Making of a Pop Phenomenon*, discuss the intolerance which exists towards those who are *almost white* and point out that they are seen and described in "[...] animalistic terms, as a strange creature" (2016: 27). Furthermore, both Prince and Kureishi continuously wage war against fixed identity, patriarchal conformity, white authority, and any other fixed category, but mainly against the stereotypes that prevent them from being acknowledged. They also insist on "blurring the binary distinctions" (Hawkins and Niblock 2016: 26), which consequently means combining the things that have never been

combined before and interpreting them in a non-traditional way. Although their authenticity is “[...] established by a politics of representation that is continuously double-coded” (Hawkins and Niblock 2016: 33), they succeed in proving that the authentic *other* can be seen as “[...] a unique and original ‘genius’” (Hawkins and Niblock 2016: 35).

The link which exists between Prince and Hanif Kureishi, two prominent and prolific artists, is based on their advocacy of *hybrid aesthetics*. On the one hand, “Prince created a hybrid style that began to redefine pop music immediately upon its arrival. He blended [...] the funk of James Brown, the synths and drum machines of New Wave, the melody of Top 40 pop, the energy of hard rock, and even the angst of punk [...]” (Hahn and Tiebert 2017: 8). Therefore, his ability to fuse styles and genres makes him the most unique, beloved and above all, the most influential artist who has altered the trajectory of music for good. On the other hand, “in Prince, [...] Kureishi most graphically represents pop as the crossroads not only of different cultural influences but as a site in which plurality of identity – whether at the level of ethnicity, class, gender or sexuality – is celebrated” (Moore-Gilbert 2001: 117).

The transgression of boundaries concerning gender, culture or music is another characteristic they share in their artistic worlds. Gender play, the use of the epicene style which is seen as the triumph of the Camp sense, was the most important and the most urgent issue during the 1980s. Kureishi and Prince, in their artistic expressions, proffer bisexuality and the fluidity of identity as a tool for the disruption of conventional codes, but also as a way of showing their disagreement with white supremacy. Prince does it through his lyrics, gestures, and his choice of clothes. He combines different styles, different appearances, and mimes different icons of pop culture. Unlike any other musician or artist of the time, he expresses his feminine side in an undoubtedly genuine way. Moreover, “the spectacle of Prince’s posturing was important in challenging traditional representations of gender, as he demonstrated the phenomenon of parodying the construction of masculinity” (Hawkins and Niblock 2016: 41).

When it comes to the themes of gender roles and gender play in Kureishi’s oeuvre, they pervade his first two novels, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*, with a liberating effect on the novels’ characters who are finally free to remove the burden of traditional discourse. At the beginning of *The Buddha of Suburbia*, for example, in his quest for sexual identity, Karim spends some pleasurable time with

Charlie. According to Kaleta, Karim and Charlie's adoration of each other does not mean that they are romantically in love, but that they are in love with their maleness. He adds that it all happens because "[...] they are experiencing a hormone-related avalanche of sexual awareness: puberty" (Kaleta 1998: 179). Besides, Haroon, Allie, and Changez, unconsciously, with their acts, attitudes and appearances, express their feminine side. What is more, Changez's wife Jamila, is quite a man in their relationship. "She always seemed to be leaning forward, arguing, persuading. She had a dark moustache, too [...]" (Kureishi 1990: 51). Her masculinity is depicted in such a way that, on some occasions, she uses it to protect Changez and, on others, to beat him. In *The Black Album*, the gender role-play is unveiled through the scene when Deedee asks Shahid to wear make-up while she puts on Madonna's Vogue. Moreover, Prince's *The Black Album*, the title Kureishi uses for his novel, is riddled with the "[...] lyrics about masturbation and uncharacteristically aggressive attitude to sex" (Draper 2011: 119). The very same themes are explored in Kureishi's novel which is, according to many scholars, a more profound one of the two concerning the characters' attitudes towards sex and gender role.

With regard to fixed identity, Prince and Madonna, in the musical sense, are the two sides of the same coin. Their approach to the issue is based on the same ideas. In other words, "with lace underwear, eyeliner and sex-as-power musical mantras, they waged war on fixed, essentialist ideas about masculine and feminine identities and practices" (Hawkins and Niblock 2016: 28). Colin McDowell, in his book *The Man of Fashion: Peacock Males and Perfect Gentlemen*, discusses the semiotics of lace. He points out that the meaning has changed over time, although it has always signified the prestige and status of those who wear it. In the beginning, lace was associated with wealth, and later with both wealth and "[...] the man worthy of respect" (McDowell 1997: 18). However, when Prince wore it, it got the opposite meaning and it "[...] signified his desire to be provocative to patriarchal, white authority" (Hawkins and Niblock 2016: 46). From Kureishi's point of view, *the lace* which Prince uses to provoke white authority could be associated with the *ambition* that almost every white person in Britain has, which is not to be pushed to the margins of society, to be acknowledged for one's deeds, and to be allowed to finally have a voice. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, for example, ambition is depicted in the scene in which Karim talks with his white fellow actor about his theatre role. Once again, Karim gets humiliated, this time by the fellow

actor's comment that only disadvantaged people are keen to succeed. On the one hand, Karim's ambition provokes the white man's jealousy, and on the other hand, the provocation proves that things are indeed changing, however slowly.

Furthermore, Prince also embraced *dandy style*, which first appeared in the late nineteenth century, to express his protest against white supremacy. In other words, he used clothes, like many before him, as a cultural weapon. Although clothes were used as a symbol of social status, Prince's goal was anything but. In the novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Karim also dresses in a very strange way. He dresses up in his grandmother's clothes. He wears her fur coat and ties a belt around his waist when he goes out on a date with a girl. Contrary to Karim, who voluntarily wears women's clothes, Shahid in *The Black Album* does the same, but involuntarily. Chad brings a cotton salwar kameez for Shahid, a traditional dress worn by both men and women. In doing so, Kureishi once again introduces an ambiguous scene that can be read in many different ways. The national dress consists of two parts, the kameez – a long tunic, and the salwar – baggy trousers, worn mostly by women in the Islam world. However, despite Shahid's open dissatisfaction, in this situation, he is forced to wear it.

Prince's role as a pop icon of the 1980s in Kureishi's writings, especially in *The Black Album*, where Kureishi describes him as "the river of talent" (Kureishi 1995: 250) is colossal. Everything that Prince communicates via his lyrics, performances and iconography concerning the socio-political and socio-cultural situation, Kureishi does through his oeuvre. They approach the same issues from two different artistic standpoints. They both use the body as "[...] if it was, and it often was, the only cultural capital [...]" (Hall in Hall and Gay 1996: 27). Thus, if Kureishi's oeuvre is seen as something that has influenced the change of the landscape of British fiction, then Prince's music career has done the same in the world of music. In addition, as regards Prince's influence on Shahid's coming-of-age, music offers a secure anchor for his existence in London from the very beginning of the novel. It is also tightly associated with violence, sex, and drugs and provides an "alternative history" of the time. Contrary to Charlie in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, who uses music to leave the suburbs and continue his music career abroad, Shahid in *The Black Album* writes an essay on music, specifically on Prince, to assure his spot in a London college. In doing so, Shahid recognizes Prince's individualism and ambiguity, manifested in his art and personality, and he strives for it. Shahid also recognises that

Prince and his music might help him to finally reach an understanding of his identity. Above all, presenting Prince as Shahid's role model proves that the novel "[...]" endorses a pluralistic view of identity not defined by religious or other certainties, but embracing ambiguity as its core" (Hoene 2014: 95).

6. Conclusion

Hanif Kureishi, in these two novels, unveils the universal truths about the period of the major clashes of extremes, big changes, the appearance of new trends, and above all, the rise of popular, teenage culture. Music, one of the forms of popular culture, plays a vital role in Kureishi's work. It permeates his texts in ways that are important for interpreting post-colonial identities and culture. That is why "characters that find themselves in-between nations and cultures come to rely on music's ability to cross borders between nations, cultures and languages" (Hoene 2014: 2). Moreover, Kureishi depicts the music and the musicians of the time: their texts, clothes, style, anything they use to express and introduce themselves. He combines fine arts—literature, with performing arts—music, in order to create cultural identity. It is an essential part of identity and provides a sense of belonging. Cultural identity affects how one perceives and responds to the circumstances or the surroundings. It is fluid and can evolve as one adopts or rejects various values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms of the community that one identifies with. Thus, cultural identity is also part of a collective identity, a metaphor for a fictitious society, in which case it is related to pop culture since "pop is the 'outsider's cry'—free speaking to a large audience – which has done more to remake British identity than any other form, and the spirit of punk still inspires it" (Kureishi, 2011: 364).

In these two novels, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*, music operates in different ways. First, it is a kind of a *mise-en-scène*: a picture hidden in another picture. Regardless of whether Kureishi mentions the name of a band, the title of a song, or the name of a singer, it codes the narrative and generates a new discourse for the reader. Music clarifies and enhances the picture of the political and social moments in his stories. Namely, it is "[...]" consistently mentioned as a cultural and historical occurrence [...]" (Kaleta 1998: 8). Therefore, when Kureishi discusses the importance of rock and roll, especially the rise of The Beatles in the novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*, he observes rock as "[...] a rebellious

form of youth culture protesting against the status-quo, questioning older generations and the establishment” (Hoene, 2015: 149), and at the same time, he evokes the memories of a decade filled with freedom, love, drugs, unconventional sex, deceit, pain, and uncertainty. However, Kureishi is not a historian because his reconstructions of different periods are “[...] neither anthropologically nor historically based” (Kaleta, 1998: 83). By way of artistic arrangement and musical references, he leads the reader through the socio-political changes of the time and demonstrates their direct influence on the changes that took place in musical genres. Also, by intertwining music and literature, Kureishi helps the reader to identify more closely with his narrative, insofar as he provides them with a “[...] more personal interpretation of the stories” (Kaleta 1998: 8). He reveals his view of the world, the ideology he supports, the pleasures he strives for, and, above all, the idea of his personality in general. Finally, the music Kureishi depicts in his novels represents a different world: a world where everything is possible. It is a place where white and black people can meet freely and celebrate their diversity without humiliating one another. It is also a place where no homophobia, or any other phobia, exists. Music always goes one step further, raising its voice against politics and the law which protects racism and those who advocate it. Therefore, all the singers and bands mentioned in these two novels at some point have a particular importance: from *The White* to *The Black Album*, from *The Beatles* to *Prince*.

In the end, Hanif Kureishi shows that music, as a cultural form, has the power to make invisible voices visible. He emphasises that literature is not the only space where this type of articulation is possible and demonstrates how, when combined, the two art forms, music and literature, may complement and enrich each other. Music also enables young people to connect on a larger scale and allows everyone, regardless of skin colour, to have a voice and express themselves. It helps displaced people to articulate a shared sense of community. That is why, in his novels, short stories, and plays, he insists on music as an integral part of his writings. In addition, transgression in music is a factor that influences the destruction of fixed identity. Most importantly, it undermines the post-colonial binary, thus assisting literature in its struggle against it. In other words, Kureishi’s novels prove that music in literature expresses the concepts which, due to their complexity, are difficult to formulate otherwise. It enables the reader to uncover and comprehend the smallest details of ineffable truths. Furthermore, relying on Frith’s theory that “music seems to be a key to

identity because it offers so intensely a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective” (as cited in Hall and Gay 1996: 110), we can conclude that music has a profound impact on the formation of identity.

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WHEN THE SCREENS GO OFF: THE APOCALYPSE OF HYPERREALITY IN DON DELILLO'S *THE SILENCE*

Abstract

The paper elaborates on the notion of hyperreality and its prevalent features that reflect the absurdity of the modern world in Don DeLillo's latest work, *The Silence*. Namely, the paper argues that the five main characters, representatives of contemporary humanity, are indulged in hyperreality perpetuated by consumerism and technology addiction which have covertly kindled and sustained absurdity in their lives. Firstly, the notions of simulacrum, hyperreality, consumerism, and Camus' philosophy of the absurd are thoroughly explained by consulting the applicable research body. Secondly, through exhaustive reading, the characters in *The Silence* and DeLillo's portrayal of the contemporary era are analyzed with regard to the aforementioned notions. Finally, the paper extrapolates on the author's gripping perspectives, and often a prophetic representation of the encumbrances humanity obediently bears and yet fails to recognize.

Key words: absurd, hyperreality, failure of technology, consumerism, Don DeLillo

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Introduction

The Silence, DeLillo's latest work, is a novella occupying just over a hundred pages that draws the readership into a bizarre, philosophical, and dreadful scenario of screens turning black and communication system failure in the year 2022. Overcome with uncertainty, the story's characters face the cataclysm devoid of a flesh-eating virus, zombies, or extraterrestrial attack; instead, the outwardly harmless apocalypse ensues from a master plug, the one which controls all the worldly technology, being pulled out. As a result, planes crash and transportation ceases, hospitals are flooded with individuals hurt and lost, and nuclear weapons are probably left unattended – nothing but minor nuisances compared to the most upsetting consequence, the failure of broadcasting the Super Bowl 2022.

Even though the main characters gather to watch the event in a luxurious Manhattan apartment, they feel as if left stranded on a dark, silent, unknown planet. The blackout provokes a sense of aimlessness, and without entertaining technological distractions, the characters are forced to dive inwards and face their inner selves. As the coziness of hyperreality fades away with every passing second in front of the blank TV screen, the absurdity of existence overwhelms each character differently, yet in an equally aggressive manner.

The idea of hyperreality was formulated by French philosopher and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard and is defined as a condition in which it is impossible to differentiate between reality and simulations of reality as they overlap and interfere with each other to the point of indistinguishability (1994:14; 2017: 42). This concept of the hyperreal is quite prominent throughout DeLillo's opus and, thus, occupies a significant role in *The Silence*. Baudrillard's hyperreality and several of its sustainers relevant to the analysis of the novella – simulacra, consumerism, and technological dependence – are to be tackled in the following theoretical chapter titled *Eat, Scroll, Buy, Repeat*.

In addition, the paper posits that, due to the disruption of technological dependence portrayed through blank screens, the hyperreality seems abruptly disturbed. Yet, the patterns perpetuating the hyperreal remain, leading the vexed characters to reveal the absurdity of their existence. Therefore, Albert Camus' philosophy of the absurd is another significant aspect of the novella. Accordingly, the following theoretical chapter will be briefly concerned with the depiction of absurdism, with particular reference

to reflections on the purpose of human existence tackled in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Overall, *Eat, Scroll, Buy, Repeat* consults musings, discussions, evidential reasoning, and conclusions on hyperreality and absurdity, as well as their tight-knit interplay.

The subsequent section is devoted to analyzing the novella with reference to the mentioned above, following DeLillo's minimalistic yet sinister portrayal of the collapse of civilization. The paper postulates that by casting his characters into obscure conditions, the author strives to depict the wasteland of human essence. Finally, a conclusion is drawn on DeLillo's absurdist surreal narrative, concluding whether and to what extent the hyperreality deranged by the seemingly permanent silence of the screen discloses the aimlessness of human existence and its revelry in the absurd.

Eat, Scroll, Buy, Repeat

In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard employs Borges' map fable to facilitate the readership's grasp of the notion of simulation. Namely, the map meticulously and up-to-date depicted every detail of the Empire, its features, glorious days, gradual decay, and, consequently, rotting ruins. Long after the Empire vanished from the face of the Earth, the map remained as "genetic miniaturization that is the dimension of simulation" (Baudrillard, 1994: 2). He further elaborates that: "the real is produced from miniaturized cells, matrices, and memory banks, models of control – and it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these. It no longer needs to be rational because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance. It is no longer anything but operational. In fact, it is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it" (ibid). Simulacrum can be regarded as a copy without origin that stands in for the real and is a result of a simulation. Ryszard W. Wolny describes it as "likeness or/and similarity" and "an inferior image lacking the quality of the original" (2017: 77). In other words, simulacra stem from the process of simulation, "the process whereby simulacra assume their function" (Wolfreys et al, 2006: 92), in which the aspects of the real are substituted with another real originating in the very process of simulation. In the first chapter of *Simulacra and Simulations*, Baudrillard elaborates on the process consisting of four "phases of image" through which a representation

transitions to a simulacrum. Initially, an artificial representation merely reflects reality, as is the case with paintings or novels. Subsequently, the representation begins to “mask and denature a profound reality,” leading to the third phase in which the reality’s absence is masked, and the reality becomes indistinguishable from its representation since the latter seems as real as the very real. Finally, in the fourth phase, the image “has no relation to any reality whatsoever,” developing into a simulation of reality that is perpetuated “by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard, 1994: 1–6). Four different types of images can be used to exemplify the alterations of simulacra. The first phase can be expressed through the portrait, which is faithful to the person it captures, and yet it maintains the distinction between the actual referent and a painting. A photoshopped image of a person can represent the second phase, in which a person is still recognizable despite obvious deception and inaccuracy. The third type of image strives to hide the fact that there is no referent which is indicated in it, as is the case in advertising. Ads falsely illustrate satisfactory conditions, installing them as real, though they are actually unexisting, toward spurring the audience’s desire for them. Finally, the fourth phase can be exemplified through an image that completely discards any correspondence, as it stands for a virtual reality that overthrows the concrete world. It excludes the referent and does not even pretend to mirror reality; referring to itself, it becomes an element of (hyper)reality. “Nothing is truly reflected anymore – whether in a mirror or in the abyssal realm (which is merely the endless reduplication of consciousness). The logic of viral dispersal in networks is no longer a logic of value; neither, therefore, is it a logic of equivalence” (Baudrillard, 1993: 4).

More concisely, the term hyperreality refers to the condition consisting of images without origin in which the real loses its relevance as the simulation takes its place, thus creating the atmosphere in which reality and the simulation of reality are difficult to tell apart. The contemporary era of digital technology clearly illustrates the hyperreal as the bond between the sign and referent is lost. For instance, as Lucia Nagib elaborates, the movies of the early 20th century were merely mechanical reproductions of the real, whereas modern technology “allows for the creation of images without any referent in the outside world” (2011: 6–7). Similarly, as will be elaborated in the analysis, the novella’s characters experience abrupt awakening once the lulling paradigm of the hyperreal is disturbed, and they struggle to find the referent in themselves and to make sense of the real and what used to be considered real- the hyperreal.

In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard explains the lengthy process of hyperreality production that heavily relies on the ever-changing notion of simulacra. Namely, he initially recognizes three orders of simulacra that he labels *counterfeit*, “the dominant schema in the classical period, from the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution,” *production*, “the dominant schema in the industrial era,” and *simulation*, as “the dominant schema in the current code governed-phase” (Baudrillard, 2017: 108). “The first of these stages had a natural referent and value developed on the basis of a natural use of the world. The second was founded on a general equivalence and value developed by reference to the logic of the commodity. The third is governed by a code, and value develops here by “reference to a set of models” (Baudrillard, 1993: 5)¹. His later work introduces the fourth order dubbed the *fractal stage* (Baudrillard, 2017: 28) which is manifested in *The Silence* and therefore will be more profoundly tackled.

Baudrillard claims that after the liberation in all of the aspects of existence and after the (over)productions of “objects, signs, messages, ideologies, and satisfactions,” humanity faces the question of “what to do after the orgy. “All we can do is simulate the orgy, simulate liberation. We may pretend to carry on in the same direction, accelerating, but in reality, we are accelerating in a void” (Baudrillard, 1993: 3). The following order, the “fractal stage of value” shows “no point of reference at all, and value radiates in all directions, occupying all interstices, without reference to anything whatsoever, by virtue of pure contiguity” (ibid, 5). The fractal order involves the viral, contagion-like spread of images in the new reality- the Internet. Though TV used to be a primary medium of hyperreality perpetuation, the efficiency of this deliberate illusion was drastically increased with the advent of the Internet. In virtual reality, there are no entities or bodies, merely images, and signs which reproduce indefinitely. The boundary between the online and offline is no longer indistinguishable but rather irrelevant as all of reality is now virtual. For instance, the reproduction pattern is easily observable when certain internet content goes viral, spreading itself across cyberreality. As noted above, that value used to have “a natural aspect, a commodity aspect, and a structural aspect,” which are replaced by “no law of value, merely a sort of epidemic of value,” “a haphazard proliferation and dispersal of value” which makes “all valuation impossible” (ibid, 6). In other words, humanity

¹ For more information, refer to Jean Baudrillard’s *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, *Simulacra and Simulation* and *The Transparency of Evil*

is unable to assess good and evil, true and false, right or wrong since each aspect occupies a spotlight for a limited period, destined to disappear and be forgotten in the void of hyperreality. Its value, if it can be assigned any, exponentially grows only based on its virality. Therefore, the more viral, the more valuable.

Hyperreality acts as or even pretends to be, a safe zone that does not raise questions or demand self-reflection, deliberately perpetuating the illusion. As Baudrillard illustrates, Disneyland is an exemplary embodiment of hyperreality since it is a “perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulacra” and “a microcosm of America indulged in pleasures and distractions” (Baudrillard, 1994: 13). This frozen world of children’s imagination functions as a cover for the fact that America is a hyperreal setting, a swollen Disneyland. Baudrillard further argues that Disneyland is just a prototype of a hyperreal civilization where people “no longer touch each other, but there is contactotherapy. They no longer walk, but they go jogging, etc. Everywhere one recycles lost faculties, or lost bodies, or lost sociality, or the lost taste for food.” (ibid, 14). Humanity seems to be losing touch with its very essence, shifting toward becoming beings of the superficially rational hyperreal in which elements are repacked, reproduced, remade to the point of unrecognizability, and yet appear homey, comfortable, and familiar.

In order for the hyperreal to sustain and for humanity to overlook the scarcity of reality in their existence, distractions are employed. As mentioned, consumerism and technological dependence are the upholding means of hyperreality in Don DeLillo’s *The Silence*. As Baudrillard asserts, consumption is a new language, the method by which humans interact with each other. In addition, he claims resorts to fetishism which defines the purpose of any object. Fetish refers to “the commodity, which once contained elements of use value and exchange value, now has been transformed into pure symbolic value. This occurs as the commodity now acquires its value only in relation to the network of commodities in circulation” (Koch and Elmore, 2006: 567). In other words, an object gains its symbolic value only within the network of other objects, in which it is exchanged. This exchange aims to maintain social relationships, which changed their inherent nature, from denoting the interactions between people to denoting interactions between things, as illustrated in *The Silence*.

Furthermore, Baudrillard remarks that humans of the 20th century did not surround themselves with their own species as much as they do with

goods and messages they convey. "There is all around us today a kind of fantastic conspicuousness of consumption and abundance, constituted by the multiplication of objects, services, and material goods, and this represents something of a fundamental mutation in the ecology of the human species" (Baudrillard, 1998: 25). The observation can be applied to the contemporary society as humanity does not consume goods but rather messages and signs that instruct them, as consumers, on what to purchase or consume. To differentiate between commodities is to be familiar with the code that inscribes their symbolic signification, leaving their use unappreciated. "What they signify is defined not by what they do but by their relationship to the entire system of commodities and signs. There is an infinite range of differences available in this system, and people, therefore, are never able to satisfy their need for commodities, for the difference" (ibid, 7). Baudrillard criticizes the use of the term "needs" in relation to consumerism, as needs can be satiated and thus cannot explain the incessant urge to consume. He argues that society does not strive for a certain object but for the difference it represents, making it impossible to put an end to the exploration for more. Contemporary society is sickened by consumerism and fetishism since every object possessed is not seen through the prism of its potential use; instead, it denotes one's success, wealth, or penury. The sign value of each object overshadows and suffocates the utility or content from the perspective of reality. As Koch and Elmore (2006: 568) assert, "consumerism appears as the process which makes simulation possible" as it is "the shift from the object as use/exchange value to the object as sign value that allows the simulation to develop."

Intertwined with the concept of consumerism, technology, with its endless and growing facets, significantly contributes to human humility in the face of hyperreality. Consumers are nudged to purchase costly items advertised in different media, TV, or social platforms. Celebrities and influencers set the standards for the masses who experience gratification once they consume, reaffirming their social status. Charles Seife argues in his skeptical and witty analytical work *Virtual Unreality: Just Because the Internet Told You, How Do You Know It's True?* that the majority of our time in the 21st century, dubbed the age of technology, is spent navigating a virtual world as well as that humanity is at the point "where the real and the virtual can no longer be completely disentangled" (Seife, 2014: 13). Adults seem to be tethered to their devices in a desperate attempt to connect, while children's need for attention is deviated by handing them

a cell phone or tablet which mesmerizes them with entertaining content. Baudrillard provides an outlook on consumption that can be applied to technological dependence as well: “as a new tribal myth, it has become the morality of our present world. It is currently destroying the foundations of the human being” (Baudrillard, 1998:3).

As it was stated at the onset of the paper, the revelation of absurdism following the disruption of hyperreality is another relevant theme in *The Silence*. The sensation of strangeness and pointlessness of the world encapsulates the absurdist perspective concerned with the universe and human existence in it. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus posits that enlightenment on the futility of existence arises once a person starts to genuinely think. “Beginning to think is beginning to be undermined” (Camus, 1955: 5). Still, he does not see this introspection as a frequent occurrence in society as he claims that “society has but little connection with such beginnings” (ibid). Camus compares the realization of the absurd to a worm in a person’s heart (ibid), which is relatable to the itchy sensation the characters in *The Silence* experience faced with the disturbed hyperreality. Camus acknowledges the encumbrances of living, its brutality, loneliness, suffering, and loss of identity as absurd sensations catalyzed by the disappearance of “illusions and lights” where a person feels “an alien, a stranger,” deprived of “the hope of a promised land” (ibid). In other words, the discrepancy or “divorce” and “distressing nudity” between a human and their manner of living leads to absurdity (ibid 6,9). Camus explains that the absurd does not derive from a man or the world but their confrontation and copresence. There is a confrontation of the characters’ self-perception before and after the silence of technology which mirrors Camus’ recognition of the absurd. The confrontation between the world and an individual used to be a relevant subject of discussion for the 20th-century philosophers, including Camus, and this paper posits that DeLillo portrays this discrepancy between who we are and how we perceive ourselves in the hyperreal atmosphere as it is even more relevant today with the constant intrusion of technology, fetishism, and consumerism, as mentioned earlier in the paragraph. Once the “stage sets” collapse and routines become unbearable, a weary individual realizes the “mechanical” nature of life, which, in turn, leads to disregard or “definitive awakening” (ibid, 10). The “vague nostalgia,” “desire for unity,” and “need for clarity” that signify the absurd can, according to Camus, only be achieved through acceptance of absurdity. “Living is keeping the absurd alive. Keeping it alive

is, above all, contemplating it. Unlike Eurydice, the absurd dies only when we turn away from it. It is a constant confrontation between man and his own obscurity” (ibid, 36). After pondering on religion, illusion, and death as responses to the absurd, Camus reaches the conclusion that embracing the absurdity of the universe and meaningless human existence is the only solution. Those who can overcome aimlessness by merely accepting it are for Camus absurd heroes. As will be illustrated, the characters of *The Silence* seem to be at the point of such acceptance at the end of the novella.

Camus sees Sisyphus as the ultimate absurd hero for his disrespect for gods, dismissal of death, and passion for life (ibid, 76). Punished with pushing the boulder up the hill and watching it roll down for all eternity, Sisyphus’ fruitless and repetitive task for Camus is no different than the lives and responsibilities of a modern human. “The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious” (ibid, 76). In the end, Camus describes Sisyphus accepting the futile and ceaseless obligation and his fate by saying, “despite so many ordeals, my advanced age and the nobility of my soul make me conclude that all is well” (ibid, 77). Sisyphus bears his destiny, simultaneously accepting its absurd and disregarding it. Finally, the narrative ends with a sentence, “one must imagine Sisyphus happy” (ibid, 78). The novella ends on the same note; the readership is prodded to imagine the five characters overcoming their helplessness to make sense of themselves, reality, and their position in it, by recognizing and accepting the absurdity within.

And the Blank Screen Becomes a Mirror

We can’t help ourselves. On Sunday afternoons and Monday nights in the fall of each year, we abandon everything to watch small moving images of 22 men—running into one another, falling down, picking themselves up, and kicking an elongated object made from the skin of an animal... All over America, people (almost exclusively men), transfixed before glass screens, cheer or mutter in unison. Put this way, it sounds stupid. But once you get the hang of it, it’s hard to resist, and I speak from experience (Sagan, 1997:14).

Dire silence engulfs New York on the evening of the Super Bowl 2022, as Max, Dianne, and Martin stare petrified at the unresponsive TV screen and their soon-to-arrive friends, Jim and Tessa, survive a plane crash with minor injuries. The long-awaited Super Bowl, the reflection of American culture and its embodiment, the orgy of advertisements, consumerism, and revelry in contemporary values, simply abandons the screens. DeLillo's extremely brief work, *The Silence*, depicts an apocalypse-like event and portrays five characters gathered (not even stuck) in an upscale Manhattan apartment, experiencing identity crises due to the crash of the world they know and their recognition of the overwhelming absurdity. Except that there is no real apocalypse, cataclysm, or disaster. It is just a dark and silent night with no electricity and technological distractions. It is exactly the kind of night our close ancestors would deem like any other that bewilders and horrifies each character beyond rational comprehension.

From a particular perspective, the circumstances in which the author throws the characters resonate with the readership, as the unclarity and turmoil parallel the fright the world experienced at the dusk of the Covid-19 outbreak. Curiously, as Henry Veggian (2020: 1) claims: "Don DeLillo completed this novel just weeks before the advent of COVID-19." Namely, no character is able to hold or provide any explanation, and similarly to the Covid-19 pandemic, nobody is clear about what is going on.

From a different perspective, the plot development seems hilarious, as if DeLillo had aimed to ridicule since the situation in which the characters are triggered to question the very core of their beings is nothing but the cut-off transmission of the Super Bowl. In other words, the characters experience utter horror and aimlessness caused by a simple fact – they cannot watch the game. In this innocuous turn of events lies all the misery of human existence; blinded by the hyperreal, dependent on its tantalizing simulacra, the characters are pulled into the obscure waters of absurdity, unable to make sense of the world and their role in it.

The novella's opening pages introduce a couple, Jim and Tessa, immersed in digital reality, exchanging words in an automated process rather than conversation, which seems a natural and exclusive way for them to communicate. Traveling from Paris to Newark on a plane, Jim appears enchanted by the screen's omnipotency to convey accurate flight data in several languages. The interrupted thoughts and semi-articulated ideas he utters reflect the constant technology intrusion customary to modern society. Namely, quotidian activities such as meals, conversations, and self-

reflection time are often ruthlessly pierced by the presence of technology and the urge to check the feed or get informed on the latest news. Jim's flight time, the hours typically used to gather traveling impressions or rest, are broken into fragments and overshadowed by technological domination. Technological dependence is also plain as the couple struggles to recall a name, which Tessa finally manages without digital assistance. The satisfaction she gets from knowing instead of googling illustrates their defeat to the almighty Internet; human minds are overflowed with irrelevant information that they start to forget what they once knew.

At the same time, Max, Diane, and her former student Martin wait for Jim and Tessa and the kickoff when the TV broadcast cuts off. Since the mysterious occurrence that makes the screens go blank and planes crash is never elucidated, the novella mostly centers on the characters' desperate longing for order and apprehension of the unfathomable event. Diane and Max initially believe that "experts will make adjustments" (DeLillo, 2020: 34), while Martin lists a considerable number of conspiracy theories.

Jim and Tessa's plane crashes, and they end up in a hospital to treat minor injuries. The hospital nurse's monologue on hazardous reliance on technology underpins the central theme of *The Silence*: "The more advanced, the more vulnerable," she says. "Our systems of surveillance, our facial recognition devices, our imagery resolution. How do we know who we are?" (DeLillo, 2020: 61). DeLillo depicts the actual state of humanity, deprived of the sense of identity if ripped from the hyperreal network, left to wander in search for an existential goal, heading towards the recognition of absurdity. As Anne Enright comments, "World War III may have just started; the problem is, there is no longer any way to find out" (2020: 3). This quote resonates with the point Baudrillard makes in his essay collection *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* that nothing truly happens until it is media-coated (1995: 5). From the contemporary perspective, an event does not take place until the omnipotent media overcoats it with hyperreality, which is then consumed and self-reproduced indefinitely. In the age of mass digital media, humanity fails to perceive a fact in reality if a hyperreal medium does not filter it to the degree of being unidentifiable and yet seemingly graspable.

The novella's second part follows the quiet realization that "experts" will not "make adjustments" (DeLillo, 2020: 34). The Manhattan apartment's atmosphere turns gloomier, with the characters plunging into the search for meaning as they recite muddled thoughts, wholly detached from their

surroundings. As Ron Charles amusingly illustrates: “As the hours tick by, these characters swing erratically from domestic banality to absurdist spectacle. Never have five people reacted with such existential dread to missing the Super Bowl. If they’d run out of guacamole, they might have jumped out the window” (Charles, 2020: 1). As the characters revel in absurdity and language fails to yield its inherent function, communication, their sense of identity, social role, and beliefs on their position in the universe destabilize.

The dialogue begins to blend into multiple simultaneous monologues with different beginning and end points moving in various directions. Craig Hubert likewise notes, “by the second half of the book, characters get their own distinct sections to speak into the void, lay down their theories, reveal paranoid fantasies” (2020: 3). The characters no longer listen to each other or even maintain the level of politeness to at least seem interested in what another person might be saying. Instead, the chaotic fusion of struggling self-reflection, absurd acknowledgment, and hanging patterns of the hyperreal occupy the room as the characters are pushed to scrap for meaning once the Internet, the media, and any other source of hyperinformation go mute. DeLillo’s concern with the media resonates with Baudrillard’s, who sees them as “orchestration rituals” that can already anticipate presentation and possible consequences. They employ a “group of signs dedicated exclusively to their recurrence as signs, and no longer at all to their real end,” which underpin “hyperreal events, no longer with a specific content or end, but indefinitely refracted by each other” (Baudrillard, 1994: 22–23). The hyperinformation that the characters see as salvation to their drowning in the absurd used to be delivered through media which maintained the illusion of actuality, the instructions on what to think, where to go, and who to be. As it was stated, the invaluable real is abandoned, and the media-fueled hyperreal is constantly regenerated. As Baudrillard elaborates, humanity is subjected to the media’s “induction, to their infiltration, to their illegible violence” since they are “a kind of genetic code that directs the mutation of the real into the hyperreal” (1994: 32). With the disappearance of media, the characters struggle to shape their perspective on reality and to get an answer, if not the truth, to the questions that accompany the silence. Once screens abruptly radiate nothing but silence, the characters are forced to sink in themselves and unearth what has been covered with illusory layers of the hyperreal.

The paper argues that the five characters' lives were absurd before the silence, yet the hyperreal hindered the recognition of the fact. They applied means of distraction or indulged in strenuous activities to conceal the absurd seeds in their essence. Namely, Diane and Max's relationship is cold and habit-like; she is retired and feels purposeless without her job to provide her with a social role, while Max is engaged in gambling to cover the aimlessness of passing hours. In addition, Jim and Tessa's lives are overflowed with journeys and flights "deeper than boredom," during which Jim recites the screen data to allow them to "live a while," and Tessa is engaged in filling the pages of her notebook with every minor detail (DeLillo, 2020: 10). Both actions might initially seem odd to a curious onlooker, but they can be regarded as an individual's coping mechanism with the mundane, yet hectic pace of the hyperreal. Moreover, Martin resorts to medicine abuse and analysis of Einstein's work to kindle enthusiasm for life. Gambling addiction and obsession with Einstein were means for the characters to yield to the hyperreal face and overlook the absurdity of their existence. Martin's infatuation with Einstein serves as a means to evade the acknowledgment of absurdity even though he seems to be the only character on the verge of cracking the elusive mirror of the hyperreal prior to the silence of screens. He appears to recognize the grave consequence of awakening the absurdity and opts to pacify himself with endless musings on the *Manuscript*. He finds haven in wondering how Einstein would interpret our uniquely odd, technologically dependent reality. In addition, his passion for conspiracies reflects the hyperreal perpetuation through the media and technology, as human minds are trained to intake new data and sustain the narrative, thus battling the acceptance of the absurd. The characters' actions reveal, rather than conceal, an absurdity that Camus' claimed even gods believed: "there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor" (Camus, 1955: 75). Similarly to Sisyphus, they shoulder the repetitive and unrewarding burden of maintaining the face of the hyperreal, which appears so familiar and cozy that characters overlook its genuine nature.

As each character's yearning for sense awakens, the readership anticipates that, at least in a work of fiction, a beam of hope encapsulated in the realization of the absurd means the disruption of the hyperreal paradigm. Nevertheless, DeLillo soon disappoints with the illustration of the masses' response to the silence. Namely, even though Max mentions crowds on the street causing riots and disorder, demanding the answer to

the new reality, his portrayal reveals meekness, unsettling aimlessness, and disorientation. Accordingly, Bailey Trela notices that “by and large, the crowds in *The Silence* are ghostly, attenuated, unable to fully coalesce—something holds them back. Even their description feels muted. There’s no cult leader to wind everyone up and together. DeLillo’s point seems to be that our phones are the cult leaders now” (2020: 6). In other words, the masses in *The Silence* are there to keep the appearance of a riot, desperately unconvincing and profoundly uncertain of their aim. As Baudrillard and Maclean portray, the uselessness of the masses ensures their victory, and their silence is insulting and obscene.

Obscene, for the masses are also made of this useless hyperinformation which claims to enlighten them, when all it does is clutter up the space of the representable and annul itself in a silent equivalence. And we cannot do much against this obscene circularity of the masses and of information. The two phenomena fit one another: the masses have no opinion and information does not inform them” (Baudrillard and Maclean, 1985: 580).

DeLillo’s *The Silence* echoes the aforementioned as Max’s stroll down the rioting streets builds tension, and the four remaining characters, alongside the readership, expect him to encounter resoluteness, invigorating change, and glorious revelation. Instead, he is confronted with a zombie-like lump of wandering people as the crowds on the streets of New York essentially remain silent, deprived of the homey order that technology and media offered, unable to communicate or create new meanings, unled, reveling in the absurdity, divorced from the world.

Consumerism and preference for fetishism can be attributed to all five characters as they exchange the sign value of the things they consume to underpin their place in the hyperreal social hierarchy. Namely, Tessa and Jim fly in business class and are obsessed with anticipation of the meals on it. “He decided to sleep for half an hour or before the flight attendant showed up with their snacks. Tea and sweets. I’m thinking back to the main course. I’m also thinking about the champagne with cranberry juice” (DeLillo, 2020: 4,15). As Koch and Elmore reflect on Baudrillard: “all commodities are laden with symbolic value, which has eclipsed their utility and monetary values” (2006: 13). Still unaware of the absurd, Jim and Tessa perpetuate the hyperreal, as by purchasing the commodities, their

existence makes sense, and they believe to be stabilizing their position in the world. Similarly, Max and Diane are preoccupied with swallowing food and drinks as if it would tether them to the world before the silence and reinstate its order. Even in the absence of the game, Max absurdly proceeds to serve halftime snacks to keep the farce of hyperreal commodity alive. Namely, the characters employ familiar, pacifying patterns in an attempt to defy the absurd's gaping face. They act as automated beings, so accustomed to the hyperreal paradigm that even when it is nonexistent, they struggle to maintain it. Diane says: "Food. Time to eat something. But first I'm curious about the food they served on your flight" (DeLillo, 2020: 71). Resorting to the comfort of an alcoholic haze, Max pours himself a glass of bourbon and repeats the phrase "aged ten years in American oak" twice to re-establish the prestige consumerism grants as well as his social position that has been threatened by the hostile event (ibid, 42,101). Baudrillard elaborates on the sinister power that lies in consumerism. "We are at the point where consumption is laying hold of the whole of life. Where all activities are sequenced in the same combinational mode, where the course of satisfaction is outlined in advance, hour by hour, where the environment is total [...] fully airconditioned, organized, culturized" (Baudrillard, 1998: 30). He claims that purchasing commodities reveals the identical patterns which grant a predicted form of pleasure in a fully controlled environment. The characters' perspective on value and self-esteem mirrors Baudrillard's view that "modern consumption is at odds with the inherently nature of consumption. While even modern consumption is not totally individualistic, it is being pushed in that direction" (Baudrillard, 1998: 30). In other words, fetishists do not consume to satiate their inherent needs but to institute themselves in society, adding symbolic value to objects in desperation to gain individuality in the hyperreal system that enables and encourages that illusion.

Besides food and drinks, excessive consumption in the novella is conveyed through Martin's medication abuse. It appears that Martin does not luxuriate in common distractions and thus is haunted by the anxiety of crowds and anticipation of the menacing future. In other words, Martin recognized the aimlessness within him even before the silence fell upon the world. He opens to Diane: "could be the feeling that others can hear your thoughts or control your behavior" (DeLillo, 2020: 49). Nevertheless, instead of lulling him into the mould of the predetermined system, the drug stirs identity doubts, as is depicted in the excerpt:

I look in the mirror and I don't know who I'm looking at. The face looking back at me doesn't seem to be mine. But then again why should it? Is the mirror a truly reflective surface? And is this the face other people see? Or is it something or someone that I invent? (ibid).

Martin's awareness of the futility of existence and his unease with the world surrounding him correlates with Camus' interpretation of the absurdity cognizance. Once the passage of time and its meaningless waste is acknowledged, a tendency to reflect on and consequently endure the agonizing recognition of the absurd emerges, as Camus remarks in the following excerpt.

A human admits that he stands at a certain point on a curve that he acknowledges having to travel to its end. He belongs to time, and by the horror that seizes him, he recognizes his worst enemy. Tomorrow, he was longing for tomorrow, whereas everything in him ought to reject it. That revolt of the flesh is the absurd (Camus, 1955: 11).

In addition, Martin cannot claim a sense of being, as he can only understand himself through communication with others. The culmination of DeLillo's narrative on social doom derives precisely from the fact that modern human interactions are operated digitally. What happens to identity once the plug is pulled out? As Jim enters the Manhattan flat for the first time after the crash, he announces, "It's us, barely" (DeLillo, 2020: 70). This remark indicates that their actuality is compromised by the loss of the technological world humanity inhabits. In addition, the novella's epigraph in the form of Einstein's quote reads: "I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." Arguably, the novella hints that the war is already in motion, and humanity is at a loss; while lives were once lost in bloody battles, the society in *The Silence* is suffering heavy casualties in the form of those who lived online. Quite appropriately, Diane wonders "what happens to the people who live inside their phones," to which DeLillo answers—they stand "in the hallway, becoming neighbors for the first time" (DeLillo, 2020: 34, 52).

Self-alienation, as a consequence of the apocalypse of the hyperreal means, and as a rider of the absurd, has its demonstration in *The Silence* as well. As the well-known quote from *The Myth of Sisyphus* depicts: “in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger” (Camus, 1955: 6). This process is evident in the thoughts and actions of the characters. Although gathered in one room, the characters appear profoundly isolated, deepening the gap between each other with every passing hour in the new reality. Observing his friends, Martin wonders: “was each a mystery to the others, however close their involvement, each individual so naturally encased that he or she escaped a final determination a fixed appraisal by the others in the room” (DeLillo, 2020: 71). Max’s isolation is most apparent throughout the novella, as he sits separately, does not greet Jim and Tessa with a handshake or embrace, and rarely talks to anyone. Still, in an attempt to clarify the situation, it is Max who approaches his neighbors for the first time in the many years they have shared the building. DeLillo depicts alienation from the people who physically surround us and the urge to connect in desperate times. Furthermore, Martin’s alienation drives him to seek acceptance and a sense of belonging in Diane’s apartment, while Diane longs for self-company and detachment from her husband and guests. “She wanted to go for a walk, alone. Or she wanted Max to go for a walk and Martin to go home” (ibid, 51). Tessa immerses in her notebook and her poetry to elude the absurd. She also yearns for solitude and “being home, the place, where they don’t see each other, walk past each other” (ibid, 96). In addition, when Jim tries to persuade her to simply converse, she denies it by offering him to “activate the tablet,” “find a movie,” and “watch a movie” (ibid, 6,8). Tessa seems to dread being alone with her thoughts and having nothing to do but converse. Simultaneously, all she wants to do is “get home at look at the blank wall” (ibid, 13). This feeling of inadequacy reflects humanity tangled in hyperreality, cozily seated in business class planes, provided a variety of delicacies, taken to extravagant tourist locations, and fed the news and content, strings of data, simulacra intertwined.

At a certain point, staring at the black TV screen, driven to the point of unendurable agony and on the verge of confronting reality, Max employs the defense mechanism of turning himself into an automated medium. Namely, mesmerized by the screen’s blankness, he begins narrating the commercials and game development as he has ingested them many times before. Max’s unnatural, robotic response to the silence once again underpins the urge

to consume and be distracted by the technology. Camus' weariness that comes from the divorce from the world might explain this odd reaction to the situation. It "comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness" (Camus, 1955:10). It can be argued that scene of Max's odd performance marks the culmination and termination of his hyperreal immersion and symbolizes the moment of disenchantment in which he becomes conscious of (but unaccustomed to) the absurdity. The novella closes with Max staring into the blank screen, which, instead of broadcasting the Super Bowl, reflects his inner struggles and reveals his futility. "Max is not listening. He understands nothing. He sits in front of the TV set with his hands folded behind his neck, elbows jutting. Then, he stares into the blank screen" (DeLillo, 2020:116). Still, he does not look away; like Estragon and Vladimir, he waits for his Godot to end the absurd.

Conclusion

DeLillo's latest work is a rather cryptic piece of techno-fiction that illustrates how humans' immersion in simulacra, their perpetuation of the simulation, and indulgence in hyperreality, serve as a means to elude the absurdity of their existence. *The Silence* condenses "sporting masculinity, educators, other languages, systems, paranoias, what is remembered and what is forgotten, the mass mind," presented "not in a fritz of interconnectivity but as mimicry, emptiness and, finally, silence" (Enright, 2020: 4). Its minimalistic setup, brevity, and coldness it radiates, yield the eerie sensation of losing control of one's destiny due to technological addiction and consumerism. Even though it is more conceptually developed than plot-wise, it effectively conveys humans' fallibility to vanish into the digital without considering that the plug might be pulled out. The novella's characters are embedded in their own realities, alienated and yearning for distractions, mirroring the inefficiency of human interaction and their obsession with bombarding themselves with data at all costs. In an attempt to portray interrelatedness between DeLillo's previous work *White Noise* and the latest one, it can be deduced that humanity's obsession with white noise turned it into a shelter from reality, which, once ravaged (or unplugged) leaves a desert of absurdity behind, embodied only in silence. The novella, set in the atmosphere of "intimate calm tingled with hysteria"

(DeLillo, 2020: 60), captures humans' flourishing anxieties regarding the data-driven future and, despite the compressed package of pages, manages to culminate DeLillo's musings found in his previous works, on distorted reality, simulation, addiction to consumerism and technology as well as alienation and absurdity of existence. As Sagan contemplates, human overreliance on technology is weaved with the utter lack of comprehension of its perpetuating principles, leading to the inability to "distinguish between what feels good and what's true", and thus "we slide, almost without noticing, back into superstition and darkness" (1997: 33). Utterly ignorant about the principles of technology, once it is abolished, humans know nothing but to stare into the blank screen, a mirror reflecting their remains, recognizing the absurdity of their being as the distractions vanish. *The Silence* ends on a note that the end of civilization is more likely to come from our fetishism than nukes; the apocalypse is no more than being forced to look and listen to each other without a notification, post, or breaking news to divert and deliver us from the suffering.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE AND THE AMERICAN WEST IN STEPHEN CRANE'S "ONE DASH – HORSES"

Abstract

Although widely known and celebrated as a novelist, the late nineteenth-century US author Stephen Crane wrote a considerable number of short stories, including those inspired by his tour of the American West and Mexico. His personal insight into this region – associated with the celebration of ruthless outlaws at the high point of the dime novel popularity – influenced his critical approach to American mythologized codes of violence. This paper discusses the representation of violence in Crane's short story "One Dash – Horses" as an example of Crane's portrayal of the West and his original narrativization of violence in Gilded Age culture, through which he debunks the clichés of the region and its people.

Key words: short story, Gilded Age America, Western, violence, irony

1. Introduction

Born over 150 years ago and of a brief but intense life, the American author Stephen Crane (1871–1900) continues to draw the interest of readers and critics alike, evident also in the most recent and nearly eight-hundred-page

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long biography by Paul Auster *Burning Boy: The Life and Work of Stephen Crane* (2021). Among the numerous adventures that Crane undertook in his short but productive career as writer is also his 1895 tour of the US West and Mexico.¹ Then a promising writer, mainly thanks to the success of the newspaper printing of his recent novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, Crane was hired by the newly established syndicate Bacher, Johnson, and Bacher to travel to the West and South, followed by Mexico, “on what Crane called ‘a very long and circuitous newspaper trip’ to write feature articles” (Sorrentino 2014: 150). Crane left New York for the West and the significance of this travel for his creative output is recognized by many of Crane’s scholars for rarely any other issue as the West seems to have endowed the young author with a new impetus that resulted in innovative fiction, testifying to “his fervent, phantasmagorical powers of literary imagination” (Cain 2005: 568). Crane’s literary chronicles of these experiences indicate narrative strategies in depicting violence that, combined with his viewpoint, tone, use of tropes and color, have become his short fiction’s trademark and recognition as “master of the short-story form” (Cain 2005: 566). To a great degree, Crane’s original exploration of violence is evident also in his stories of the US West and Mexico, some less widely known, especially when compared to the frequently anthologized stories “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky” and “The Blue Hotel”. This paper aims to examine Crane’s representation of violence in late-nineteenth century American literary and cultural production related to the West, that had largely been shaped by dominant stereotyping of the region with the help of popular dime novels.² To this end, the focus will be on Crane’s short story “One Dash—Horses”³, following an overview of Crane’s and the

¹ As Paul Sorrentino points out in his 2014 biography entitled *Stephen Crane: A Life of Fire*, Crane’s assignments and tours were of a considerable scale and at times enshrouded in an air of mystery: “Within five years he traveled to the American West, Mexico, Cuba, the British Isles, Greece, and the Continent, at times disappearing for weeks from a biographer’s view” (2014: 5).

² For more details on the popular narrativization of the US frontier story and related violence, see Bold (2005).

³ The story belongs to Crane’s prolific literary production of the time, that includes other noteworthy stories of similar stylistic and thematic approaches, such as “The Wise Men”, “A Man and Some Others”, and “The Five White Mice”. The limitation of scope of this journal’s article precludes a more comprehensive (or comparative) analysis of several pieces of Crane’s Western writing.

prevailing ideas of the West that will serve as a framework for the analysis of the narrative features in representing violence.

2. Stephen Crane and the West(ern)

Crane wrote most of his Western and Mexican short stories in 1897 when he moved to England after a stint as a war correspondent in Cuba and Greece. Within less than two years he became not only more than an emerging author but a mature writer whose experiences of Western life proved that the romanticized understanding and portrayals of the West were disingenuous, aimed at attracting tourists and investments, and false because the Old West was no more due to modernization. As a reminder, Crane visited these parts of the American continent in the years after the U.S. Census Bureau declared that the frontier was closed, i.e., that the line imposed by white settlers since the earliest days of colonization had disappeared since no land beyond it was categorized as unsettled. The disappearing of the frontier inspired historian Frederick Jackson Turner to present his theory on the formative function of the frontier, entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893). The so-called "Turner Thesis" constructs the history of the United States as equivalent to the course of Western colonization, with the West and its frontier foundational to the American democratic and national spirit:

American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the great West. (Turner 1893: n. p.)

As much as Turner's thesis proclaims the Eurocentric success in the transformation of the Western territories where the frontier enacts the Americanization of the European settler, it also establishes the West and the frontier as metanarratives of American distinctiveness. At the same time, the American West functions as a markedly gendered environment, with masculine performativity in *fin de siècle* US culture, since "masculinity is a

site where aesthetic concerns become social, and the American West offers an ideal setting” (Worden 2011: 2). Both as a historical process and a social construct, the settling and imaginary of the West spawned broad interest for varied categories of writers, including Stephen Crane. The West had a great imaginative potential for Crane because it provided new, authentic insight and material to his epic thematization of the individual faced with grave dangers and challenges. Also, it gave Crane another perspective in the changing dynamics between the individual and the community, “in what Crane himself once called ‘this terrible century’” (qtd. in Bergon 1979: 8). However, Crane’s attitude to the West is fundamentally ambivalent: on the one hand, he criticizes the conventions of popular Western fiction and its romanticized narratives about that region; on the other hand, he withholds no admiration for the genuine and straightforward behavior and character of the region’s inhabitants, evident in his letter to his friend Willis Hawkins written in November 1895:

I have always believed the western people to be much truer than the eastern people. We in the east are overcome a good deal by a detestable superficial culture which I think is the real barbarism. Culture in its [sic] true sense, I take it, is a comprehension of the man at one’s shoulder. It has nothing to do with an adoration for effete jugs and old kettles. This latter is merely an amusement and we live for amusement in the east. Damn the east! I fell in love with the straight out-and-out, sometimes-hideous, often-braggart westerners because I thought them to be the truer men and, by the living piper, we will see in the next fifty years what the west will do. They are serious, those fellows. When they are born they take one big gulp of wind and then they live. [...] But what I contend for is the atmosphere of the west which really is frank and honest and is bound to make eleven honest men for one pessimistic thief. More glory be with them. (Crane 1960: 69–70)

The above statement illustrates the conflicting and ambivalent sentiments which the West often enacts: the genuine straightforwardness of the people in the West shaped by the stark landscape and violence, but also its reflection upon the non-Westerners as their effete contrast.⁴ This set

⁴ As Deborah Madsen underscores, the casting of the US West into categories of East and West is embedded in a larger framework of colonization and its discourse, and thus “we

of differences is summed up by a critic as follows: "Unlike Easterners, with their distorted values and artificial social conventions, Westerners embraced self-reliance and rugged individualism" (Sorrentino 2014: 155). Against the background of these social and cultural interpretations, Crane's fiction signifies, and frequently also ironically deflates, the earlier literary production inspired by "the Wild West", rife with melodrama and cliché about the Eastern-Western differences in the perception of the West. As Michael Kowalewski writes, Crane's attitude "to previous literature, especially writing that he reacts against, is both complex and ambiguous. His scorn for sentimentality is equaled only by his verbal appetite for stiff, unwieldy literary formulas and stock vocabularies" (1993: 123). This critical estimate indicates Crane's particular literary expression, especially evident in his stories, with the theme and imagery of violence among the central characteristics, that "mirror, in a larger way, the embattled imaginative conditions he preferred, moment by moment, in his fiction" (Kowalewski 1993: 112).

Crane's conceptualization and representation of violence in his Western and Mexican short stories fundamentally aim to demystify the hegemonic myth of the West, perhaps also arising from his personal experience in the area. The US industrial order had affected the West in astonishing defiance of the preconceived idea of Western wilderness. According to Richard Etulain, when Crane "swung west across the Great Plains and Texas in 1895, he was surprised to find a West less divergent from the East than he had been led to believe". Crane encountered a genuine incursion of the West by the industrial and urban East, stating that in Nebraska, "yellow trolley-cars with clanging gongs,' [...] were 'an almost universal condition,' convincing him that 'travellers tumbling over each other in their haste to trumpet the radical differences between Eastern and Western life' had 'created a generally wrong opinion'" (qtd. in Etulain 1996: xvii). Such reality clashes with the (stereo)typical vision of the East, in which the West connoted the open frontier and, in a related manner, a nostalgic urge to leave behind the ruthless realities of Eastern industrialization through the liberating push toward the open frontier. However, in the westward drive, violence was inexorable, primarily directed against the indigenous population with horrifying consequences of their dispossession and

must keep in mind the wider global context within which the idea of the West operates. The very notion of the continental US as organized into East and West is a European conceptual imposition" (2010: 370).

annihilation. Simultaneously, the process of forceful, even brutal shove of white settlers contributed to the development of the grand narrative of US mainstream society, one which Crane's lifestyle and literary vision seem eager to challenge.

3. Violence, the West and Crane's Ironic Vision

Throughout US history, violence has occupied a principal place in the process of nationhood, "in helping Americans to build a sense of state and nation. Places that have been touched by this violence and tragedy are celebrated in the American landscape as visible emblems of identity and tradition" (Foote 2003: 334). The westward expansion simultaneously buttressed the territorial drive and hegemonic practices, fueled by Manifest Destiny, all constituting "the reasons for expansion and the ideological justification of conquest [that] largely did not change over time and in fact appear to have solidified into a national mythology" (Madsen 2010: 371).

Violence infuses the representation of the West, its nation-building and homogenizing processes, as elaborated by Jane Tompkins' seminal 1992 study *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* about the centrality of male-centered codes and practices of behavior that this genre celebrated, including the tough drawn to pain and violence. Tompkins recognizes that in the American literary production, in addition to the nostalgic idealization of the Western "knight", the cowboy, the national myth of the West was generated with the genre of the Western. It fused nation and violence, in which "their taciturn heroes want to dominate the land, and sometimes to merge with it completely—they are trying to get away from other people and themselves" (Tompkins 1993: 6–7). In Crane's short stories, the code of behavior described in the Western serves as a background for a new, (predominantly) ironic reevaluation of the fictional conventions while also illuminating the individuals' spirit. Jamie Robertson argues (1978: 245) that Crane's "Western heroes participate in the convention of popular Western fiction that individual courage gives meaning to life, but that convention is always ironic for them". He further points out that Crane employs the Western myth to illustrate "that the courageous confrontation of the unknown – [...] that for him [...] is often death – can lead to an insight into what he believes is the key feature of any person's individual development: a humble awareness of one's own insignificance" (1978:

245). This narrative trait marks also Crane's short stories about the West in which the characters show that previously held beliefs and depictions about the West were (tragically) misrepresented.

In Crane's *oeuvre*, ironic deflating of prevailing norms and beliefs in society, including notions of the Civil War and the related romanticization of valor and glory, constitutes a major feature of his literary approach.⁵ Crane differs from "the neo-romantic Easterners in the West" because he did not exploit "the myth of the West as an end in itself, but as an artistic convention to be used for serious artistic ends" (Robertson 1978: 245). Crane's short fiction selected for this analysis exemplifies this specific method he employed in his Western stories which present typical themes for that genre, including stand-offs between white Americans, specifically Easterners, on the one side, and Mexicans and "Wild West" Americans, on the other. Along with ironic debunking of the code and its inherent violence, Crane thematizes also the tensions between the Eastern profit-driven entrepreneurship and social norms, and the Western understanding of freedom and integrity, while engaging what George Monteiro categorizes as "the Old White West and the New White West" (2010: 69). At the same time, Crane's Western prose incorporates episodes of violence as an inherent element of staple Western portrayals indicative of what Michael Kowalewski labels "an epistemology of violence". While recognizing "the disturbing power that scenes of violence have for us", Kowalewski directs us to "the imaginative sources and consequences of that power", and focuses on "considering not only the question of what we know about or can 'make' of violence in fiction but the more reflexive matter of how we know what we know about it".⁶ Since Crane's Western stories are not

⁵ According to Adam Wood, Crane's fiction was an aberration (or opposition to) the popular accounts of the war as it seeks "predominantly to debunk such overly romantic notions of chivalry and glory" and "to reintroduce—to reanimate—the horror, the violence, and the injury of the Civil War" and to expose the representation of the war "as a closed system, an historically isolated system, a system without the bodies and minds of the individuals—and the violence they enact and is enacted upon them—without which war itself would be an impossibility" (2009: 4). This character of Crane's writing is traceable not only in Crane's novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, but also in his other short stories, for example "A Mystery of Heroism", "The Little Regiment" and "An Episode of War".

⁶ In keeping with Kowalewski's argument that what an author describes through violent scenes is of a lesser interest to him "than in what his depictions of it reveal about him as a writer, about his powers of sympathy and generosity, and about whom and what we are asked to be as readers when engaged with his work" (1993: 8), Crane's short stories

exclusively narrated around violence as the key element, they seem to be concerned “not with the critical uses of violence as a theme but with [...] the ways in which it exists not as an isolated element or subject but as the conformation, at a given moment, of a larger stylistic field of force” (Kowalewski 1993: 8). The next section of the paper examines the range of narrative and stylistic devices Crane employs in depicting violence (or its intimation) in the American West as a feature of his moral and literary ethos.

4. Violent Confrontations and Crane's Stylistic Mark

Violence was ubiquitous in the tumultuous last third of nineteenth-century Gilded Age United States, especially in the West, and Crane's experiences of it are likely motivated by his disposition to engage in adventures and to write about it in his particular style. Critical reviews seem to agree on the interaction between his personal traits and literary expression resulting in a remarkable energy and literary output: “In his life and writing, Crane was curious about and eager for extreme sensations” (Cain 2005: 557). Similarly, Paul Sorrentino, one of the leading biographers and critics on Crane, also underscores the convincing link between the writer's character and literary approach: “Crane's distinctive prose style reflected his own personality. Just as his fiction is often disruptive, elliptical, and episodic” (2014: 5). Crane's literary achievements have captivated scholars for their complexity and unprecedented literary expression, in which they identified “[t]he character of the deliberate” (Berryman 1950: 287) as conspicuous in Crane's fiction, adding that Crane's writing is “flexible, swift, abrupt, and nervous,” but also endowed with “an unexampled capacity for stasis” (Berryman 1950: 284). Already in earliest scholarship on Crane, his idiosyncratic style was acknowledged as contesting the prevailing literary norms of his time; as an integral element of such resistance, frequently, critics singled out his reliance on color. For example, John Berryman contends: “Color is high, but we observe the blank absence of the orotund, the moulded, which is Crane's most powerful response to the prose tradition he declined to inherit” (1950: 284). Eschewing long-winded sentences

should be reexamined for their previously understated or even unrepresented affective dimension.

with the help of “curt and telegraphic grammar” (Kowalewski 1993: 109) in his fiction generally, and scenes of violence specifically, his style was also described as having “[t]he tone of taciturn minimalism” (Gopnik 2021: n. p.), and thus seems to precede the reserved, terse and hard-edged narrative approach to depicting violence that became evident and popular decades later, most notably with Ernest Hemingway.⁷ The effect of “nervousness” seems an apt label for Crane’s fictional style that relies on short sentences, and, as Michael Kowalewski states, “its rhythm tends to be choppy and abrupt”. Among the various elements of “Crane’s writing that resists critical labeling”, the crux seems to be his specific “realistic imagining” that reveals “a very different kind of verbal temperament, one that inclines to stiff abstractions, visual blockages, dead metaphors, and explicitly contorted syntax” (Kowalewski 1993: 106). These tropes, coupled with other literary devices in Crane’s prose, circumscribe and enhance the depiction of violence, frequently added to the author’s manipulation of viewpoints. Typically, Crane’s strategy relies on the intricate switching between two conflicting viewpoints, or interactions that “are both complex and ephemeral” (Kowalewski 1993: 108). In this context, Michael Kowalewski argues that previous Crane criticism failed to detect “the way in which these narrative shifts rhetorically register in his work crucially effects the fluctuating vantages the stories offer”. Adding that Crane’s irony “springs not simply from the interactions of two narrative viewpoints but from the ‘languages’ by which those viewpoints are entertained”, this critic warns that “[a] narrative voice in his writing does not always constitute a viewpoint (a stabilized vantage from which a view might be had or from which a self might be imagined)” (Kowalewski 1993: 108), thus enhancing Crane’s layered and untypical style. As will be demonstrated in the selected short story “One Dash – Horses”, in addition to this narrative specificity, Crane tends to taunt individuals that embrace general and often misleading conceptions about other regions and people, also of the West. Many of his characters suffer disillusionment (in some instances also tragic awakening) in terms of their self-important or gullible sense of their environment and often, the protagonist “has never discovered

⁷ Another element relevant for this development in the American literary canon is the influence of writing for newspapers and different foci in presenting themes and ideas, arising “[...] only after the Great War—with its roots in newspaper reporting, its deliberate amputation of overt editorializing, its belief that sensual detail is itself sufficient to make all the moral points worth making” (Gopnik 2021: n. p.).

Crane's lesson in humility" (Robertson 1978: 245). This paper analyzes "One Dash – Horses" which is the first "of the Western stories in the order of their writing" and one that narrates a rather stock "confrontation with death that results when the Anglo outsider meets the Mexican" (Robertson 1978: 248). Using the common plot of the dime novels, Crane recasts the the West and violence as a study of human behavior in intense situations with the purpose of debunking the conventional (and deluding) notions of the frontier and its code.

5. "One Dash – Horses": Another Type of Western Story

One of the earliest short stories of this period is "One Dash – Horses" (1896), an adventure narrative reportedly based on Crane's own familiarity with the pristine and unaffected West and his appreciation of horses.⁸ From the opening of the story, Crane's staple stylistic features come to the fore by using limited point of view and focalization, as well as colors, to portray the main character called Richardson as he pauses on his horse to observe the landscape in the distance: "The hills in the west were carved into peaks, and were painted the most profound blue. Above them, the sky was of that marvelous tone of green – like still, sun-shot water – which people denounce in pictures" (*ODH* 732).⁹ From the inception, Crane's characteristic scoffing at generally held beliefs (and those who are guided by them) becomes evident, specifically, Crane's derision is directed at the standard representation of the West or, rather, people's expectations of it. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Richardson is a white American outsider, whose point of view (limited, even narrow-minded) dominates as Crane's strategy of mocking self-absorbed and boastful behavior of people who shape their response to circumstances in the West according to the genre of the Western.

The menacing atmosphere is established from the earliest paragraphs, with Richardson's servant José described as wearing a "crimson serape" and a person "muffled deep in his blanket," (with Crane's idiosyncratic

⁸ This influence is documented in a letter Crane that wrote to Nellie Crouse of January 26, 1896: "The story 'One Dash – Horses,' which I sent you celebrates in a measure my affection for a little horse I owned in Mexico" (Crane 1960: 103).

⁹ All page references in the paper to Crane's story will be cited parenthetically, preceded with "*ODH*".

predilection for the use of “crimson”), “and his great toppling sombrero was drawn low over his brow. He shadowed his master along the dimming trail in the fashion of an assassin” (*ODH* 732). Their search for food and lodging is loaded with foreboding as even Richardson needs to calm his horse by speaking “tenderly as if he were addressing a frightened woman” while the landscape seems an endless and murky vastness: “The sky had faded to white over the mountains and the plain was a vast pointless ocean of black” (*ODH* 732). The scenery presented at the opening of the story testifies to Crane’s ability of intense and compelling tone, in addition to “a powerful kind of concentration” (Cain 2005: 566). At the same time, this scene introduces his tendency to ridicule how mistaken individuals are in deeming themselves capable of effecting any major change through their action “in the midst of large, implacable nature” (Cain 2005: 566). The ominous atmosphere is further accented with the use of alliteration, such as “sombre sundown sky” and quirky similes, e.g. when the village houses are described against the horizon leaving the impression “to sink like boats in the sea of shadow” (*ODH* 732). While José argues with a villager over the price of bed and board, the focalization of the environment through Richardson additionally foreshadows violence since he only hears “a mere voice in the gloom” and “[t]he houses about him were for the most part like tombs in their whiteness and silence” and entering the house it did not greet or welcome him, but “confronted him” (*ODH* 732). The woman tending to their meal locks her gaze on the white American’s “enormous silver spurs, his large and impressive revolver, with the interest and admiration of the highly privileged cat of the adage” (*ODH* 733). An intimation of danger is also evident in the depiction of José’s manner of draping his blanket about him so that he can “free his fighting arm in a beautifully brisk way, merely shrugging his shoulder as he grabs for the weapon at his belt” (*ODH* 733). Richardson overhears from across the plain an alarming “trample of the hoofs of hurried horses” (*ODH* 733) and hears of a possible attack being planned on him, on “this American beast” (*ODH* 734). Richardson braces for the attack while sitting up: “This stiff and mechanical movement, accomplished entirely by the muscles of the waist, must have looked like the rising of a corpse in the wan moonlight, which gave everything a hue of the grave” (*ODH* 734). Crane introduces a narrative interpellation, repeated also later in the story, for the purpose and effect of an ironic authorial comment: “My friend, take my advice and never be executed by a hangman who doesn’t talk the English language”

(*ODH* 734). The above quotations illustrate narrative alterations and the resulting shifting perspectives identified by Kowalewski (1993:180), but they also show the interplay of distinctive rhetorical expressions that generate these viewpoints to ironic effect, as in the following example: “The tumultuous emotions of Richardson’s terror destroyed that slow and careful process of thought by means of which he understood Mexican” (*ODH* 734). The rising tension in the portrayal of violence is supported by the immediacy of description and seemingly impersonal commentary: “Then he used his instinctive comprehension of the first and universal language, which is tone. Still it is disheartening not to be able to understand the detail of threats against the blood of your body” (*ODH* 735). The varying stylistic methods within a relatively limited scene constitute a common feature of many writings by Crane, in what is characterized as “verbal interweaving” creating “imaginative gaps in his writing, so that reading his work resembles jumping from stone to stone in crossing a stream” (Kowalewski 1993: 128).

The shift of viewpoints, continued in the next paragraph, additionally enhances the feeling of dramatic violence, with the attacker alike a Satanic figure with “little snake-like moustache was as black as his eyes, and whose eyes were black as jet. He was insane with the wild rage of a man whose liquor is dully burning at his brain” (*ODH* 735). A whole gang of men joined this Mexican, and what follows seems a typical Western stand-off scene, with the opposed parties glaring at each other and reaching for their belts. Crane’s style in this narrative increasingly draws on ironic inflation of valor and other traits glorified in the Western in such tense and violent scenes. The story becomes a minute representation of fear through the use of strong similes: “A 44-caliber revolver can make a hole large enough for little boys to shoot marbles through” (*ODH* 736). The attackers turn on José while, from under his blanket, “Richardson looked on impassively” (*ODH* 736). The glowering Mexicans’ violent incursion is interrupted by prostitutes, whose arrival lures the attackers away, enabling Richardson and José to wait out the night’s brawling and sneak away at dawn. Although the menacing atmosphere and tense wait are depicted with rising engagement, Crane creates his specific narrative approach, laced with irony, by employing different perspectives, a strategy that Kowalewski (1993: 120–121) deems characteristic of Crane’s scenes of violence, as evident in the next quote: “Richardson longed to run. But in this vibrating and threatening gloom his terror convinced him that a

move on his part would be a signal for the pounce of death" (*ODH* 737). In their attempt to sneak out and leave unnoticed, the rider's spurs, the protagonist's standard riding equipment, become a deadly give-away, and the additional comparison with the Eastern technology of the telegraph enhance the ironic effect, also echoing "the New Wild West" (cf. Monteiro 2000): "Walking in spurs – notably Mexican spurs – you remind yourself vaguely of a telegraphic lineman. Richardson was inexpressibly shocked when he came to walk. He sounded to himself like a pair of cymbals" (*ODH* 738). Crane's interplay of rhetorical devices and overestimated perceptions or attitudes of his characters of themselves and their significance is a staple of his style, in particular "[t]he fluctuations between self-diminishing and self-aggrandizing verbal postures form a stylistic signature" (Kowalewski 1993: 108).

The emphasis and focalization in the story are turned to Robinson's horse, his trusted companion, a customary feature of the Western genre and of the Wild West canon eulogizing the faithful companion, the cowboy's horse, much like the Western incarnation of legendary medieval knights, intimated also in the semantic choices of "steed" and "dragon": "[T]he horse in his happiness at the appearance of his friends whinnied with enthusiasm. The American felt at this time that he could have strangled his well-beloved steed. Upon the threshold of safety, he was being betrayed by his horse, his friend. He felt the same hate for the horse that he would have felt for a dragon" (*ODH* 738–39). But the horses are dependable and galloping across the prairie, making Richardson feel reassured, while the confidence and relief for getting away unscathed get translated into appreciation that belies the Easterners' fascination with technology: "Richardson, looking down, saw the long, fine reach of forelimb, as steady as steel machinery" (*ODH* 740). The threat of violence and the related fear causes a shift in Richardson's selfishness and fright impel him to thoughts which ironically reflect the myth of the West. Additionally, it recalls Western portrayals of chases as "badly written", Crane's obvious sneer at the Western genre, evident in the following quotation:

Crimson serapes in the distance resembled drops of blood on the great cloth of plain. Richardson began to dream of all possible chances. Although quite a humane man, he did not once think of his servant. José being a Mexican, it was natural that he should be killed in Mexico; but for himself, a New Yorker—He remembered

all the tales of such races for life, and he thought them badly written. (*ODH* 741)

The conventions of popular dime novels contributed to the conceptualization of conduct when faced with violence, but the very standards set by these fictional representations create an ironic twist for them. Crane's approach to the West(ern) resists its idealistic portrayal largely because "[a]s a poetic convention, it was developed by Easterners for consumption by audiences in the East, and Crane's awareness of this fact encouraged an ironic use of the myth in his Western stories" (Robertson 1978: 245). Crane's rejection of the myth of the West and its dominant representation of violence from a prejudiced viewpoint is most vividly demonstrated in the collapse of the Western clichés at times when danger, even death, becomes imminent. To this end and effect, the story is interlaced with curious expressions, many of which rely on alliteration, for example "hopeless horror" (*ODH* 738), and "fumbling furiously" (*ODH* 739). At the same time, the idealized frontier heroes of the Western genre offer a model of masculinity that Crane's protagonists strive for, even when Richardson in "One Dash – Horses" is clearly frightened and longs for rescue that comes in the form of the Mexican cavalry, the rurales, who intervene to save them. But the lure of the West(ern) linger long after the Mexicans are gone, because Richardson is duped by the Western myth, his desire to dominate the land (cf. Tomkins 1993), and imagines himself as some other personality, perhaps even styled after a fictional character, chased by a posse, evident in the description during the chase: "He tried to imagine the brief tumult of his capture – the flurry of dust from the hoofs of horses pulled suddenly to their haunches, the shrill, biting curses of the men, the ring of the shots, his own last contortion" (*ODH* 742).

In this story, Richardson is Crane's archetypical personality whose confrontation with violence and death offers little or no sense of reality or grasp of their situation, more often than not resulting in misjudging the powers of human action, with an unavoidable ironic tone. Moreover, his sense of what has happened to him is shaped by the conventions of the popular representation of the West in preconceived, WASP-centered notions promulgated by dime novels, as seen in the following excerpt: "Richardson again gulped in expectation of a volley for – it is said – this is one of the favorite methods of the rurales for disposing of objectionable people" (743–744). Merging the ridiculing of the standard Western elements with

distorted visions of reality, the characters' vision of themselves and their situation with multiple narrative perspectives, Crane portrays violent episodes with a rhetoric idiosyncrasy, a "mock-judiciousness [that] stiffens and affectedly heightens its verbal effect" (Kowalewski 1993: 107). The narrative exaggeration often encountered in Crane's writing verges on slapstick, with similes that are both baffling and amusing, indicative of Crane's unconventional style and creative energy.

6. Conclusion

Since the inception of colonization in America, the idea(l) of the West has drawn Americans of diverse backgrounds and motivations, to settle, explore, or to be used as a source of inspiration, symbolizing the American sense of mobility, opportunity, enterprise, and transformation. Thus it is hardly surprising that lure of the West represented a driving force for many Americans, individually and collectively, to cast themselves as part of its code of violence, but also to disengage the myth from reality. The concept of the frontier and the West came to a changed reality with the end of the nineteenth century as an outcome of heightened industrial transformation and intense settlement in the Western territories. Consequently, the last third of the nineteenth century in the United States was a period of intense and bewildering changes across the country, captured also in its lively and substantial literary production. Among the American authors who gave their creative contribution towards a more diversified approach to literary Realism is also Stephen Crane, whose life and writing embody the era's restless and ambivalent dynamic. Although Crane did not live even into his thirties, and thus had only a brief writing career, he left a body of work that due to its scope, diversity, and stylistic traits, is both extensive and engaging. This analysis draws on critical issues in representing fictional violence in the American West since, on the one hand, the American West and Mexico were popularized by the myth of the West and the genre of the Western, typically dime novels brimming with platitudes. But, on the other, Crane's personal experience of the region and literary strategies played an important role in understanding and exposing the stereotypes of how violence in the West(ern) is depicted. In a twofold manner, as part of the course of history and an imaginary, the West offered Crane the possibility of exploring the human condition, especially given the inherent violence

associated with US westward expansion, the tragic fate of the indigenous population, brutally violated in the whites' drive for profit across the open frontier, based on the mainstream ideology of Manifest Destiny.

For this paper, Crane's short story "One Dash – Horses" has served as a case in point to examine his literary approach to the West and violence, in particular how his writing satirizes the construction of the region in popular Western fiction. While the West has the potential to offer a new, genuine awareness of the authentic dangers and tensions it poses to the individual, it also suffers misleading aestheticization by conventional fiction, echoed also in Crane's ironic gibe of the mainstream's limited perspectives. His literary approach, exemplified in his story "One Dash – Horses", typically constitutes an interplay of perspectives, tone, use of tropes and color, to depict violent confrontations, frequently with bold and curious descriptions. In "One Dash – Horses", Crane's ironic jab is generated thanks to shifts between viewpoints and narrative variations that contribute to the dramatic tension in depicting violence, but saved from melodrama through impersonal comments and exposure of the protagonist's fear and self-aggrandizement. Crane's narrative strategy relies on the dime novels' standard plot line, including the confrontation of a white cowboy (or an Easterner visiting the West) with Mexican outlaws. Intent on debunking the misconceptions about the West as a region and an imaginary, Crane ridicules the formulaic narratives in the Western genre. Through the depiction of tension and violence in such episodes specifically, and generally in this conceptualization of the West as a mainstream myth, Crane interlaces several rhetorical means, especially irony, to expose these platitudes and explore the human condition in extreme situations. The protagonist in "One Dash – Horses", confronted with danger that verges on violence, embodies characters who overestimate themselves and thus are deluded in terms of their significance because the dominant conventions about the West cloud their thoughts and actions. Crane employs a range of literary devices, such as referencing the Western genre plot lines as guidelines for the character's response to violence, to reinterpret the myth of the West in a sharp, and frequently ironic manner. In addition, Crane's masterful characterization and use of imagery, often with unusual similes, insistence on colors and alliteration, merge with his ability to create menacing scenes and dramatic action as canvases for the purpose of an ironic study of the human fate. Although Stephen Crane wrote his Western short stories, including "One Dash – Horses", over a hundred and twenty

years ago, his unique narrative approaches in representing violence and the West continue to captivate readers and critics to this day.

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HEMINGWAY AND THE SHAPING INFLUENCE OF HIS OAK PARK HOMES

Abstract

Taking their cue from Ernest Hemingway, who avoided writing about his childhood years growing up in Oak Park, Illinois, critics and scholars have focused mostly on the importance of the summers that the Hemingway family spent together at Walloon Lake “Up in Michigan.” However, there are interesting insights to be gained from even a brief study of the architectural spaces that defined the two Oak Park houses in which young Ernest was reared – spaces that helped to shape the author’s sense of self in relation to interior space and in relation to family dynamics. Such early spatial influences would surface later in Hemingway’s fictions and also in his habitual choices of future dwellings.

“Most American writers at some point in their careers use their hometown in their fiction,” wrote Michael Reynolds, citing Eugene O’Neill, William Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson, Mark Twain, Henry James, Thornton

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Wilder, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Sinclair Lewis as prime examples (qtd. in Nagel 33). Given how common it is for writers to draw upon childhood memories, it's all the more remarkable that Hemingway never, as James Nagel summarized, "wrote a story specifically set in Oak Park, never used the details of his youth to portray the life he had known, never represented his childhood friends and his neighborhood in his early work" (14) – though at least two character names, Macomber and Krebs, are derived from the Oak Park social register.¹

One assumption on the part of many critics is that Hemingway wanted nothing to do with Oak Park—whose residents, brother Leicester recalled, proudly referred to it as "the place where the saloons end and the churches begin" (21) and whose newspaper ripped his fiction (Reynolds, *The Paris Years* 338) – or with parents whose marital tensions he tried to avoid (Baker 8). But in 1918 Hemingway wrote his father from his first job as a cub reporter in Kansas City, "I've got to have a vacation or bust and so on the first of May I am leaving on the Santa Fe for Chicago. If you folks want me to I will be glad to spend a couple of days in O.P. And see you all and all my old pals" (Spanier and Trogon 119). That doesn't sound like an estranged son, nor does it when Hemingway's alter ego Nick Adams admits, "His original plan had been to go down home and get a job" (*In Our Time* 47). Even after his parents reacted strongly to his writing, Hemingway still maintained a mostly cordial relationship, as the letters prove, and still seemed willing, even glad to visit his hometown. As Reynolds suggests:

Had Hemingway truly hated Oak Park, which was so quick to judge him, the world would have known of it in chapter and verse. When he disliked schoolmates, he wrote their names on a list. When he disliked Harold Loeb, he immortalized him as Robert Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises*. When he disliked Gertrude Stein, he made her fatuous and silly in *A Moveable Feast*. But Hemingway never wrote a word about Oak Park (qtd. in Nagel 33)

¹ The Oak Park newspapers are full of numerous references to prominent citizens named Macomber and Krebs. See, for example, *The Daily Reporter-Argus* (8 April 1906, p. 1; 28 July 1906, p. 3; 20 September 1906, p. 3; 15 August 1906, p. 3) and *Oak Leaves* (17 February 1906, p. 17; 28 April 1906, p. 12). Though my research was limited to the time period in which the house at 600 N. Kenilworth was built, because the families were generational it's likely that for at least a decade or two their names would have continued to appear in Oak Park newspaper society columns.

It would be a mistake, though, to think that Oak Park was not much of an influence, especially in the matter of domiciles. As Reynolds astutely observes, “Ernest may have left Oak Park in 1919, but he carried a piece of the village with him always. After his years in Paris he bought and maintained homes in Key West and in Cuba, large, lawned, and walled houses with swimming pools, gardens and gardeners, cooks and nannies, homes like those in Oak Park” (qtd. in Nagel 34). Young Hemingway was arguably influenced by not only the architectural spaces of his early domiciles, but by the imposing figures whose presences helped to define those spaces.

Hemingway was born in a Victorian house at 439 North Oak Park Avenue, “in the home of his mother’s father, Ernest Hall, from whom he inherited his first name.” Here, as critic Morris Buske notes, Hemingway “spent his first six years, the most important years of his life in a home of comparative comfort where the arts and literature were much emphasized.” The effect was obvious. Had Ernest been “born across the street, at 444 North Oak Park Avenue, the home of Anson Hemingway, his father’s father, the underlying values of his early years would have been very different” (Buske 210-11). The Ernest Hall house was full of music, with Hall a gentle and tolerant man whose “only vice was tobacco, which he consumed after dinner in the small library behind closed doors” (Baker 2). Anson Hemingway, meanwhile, was “a deeply religious man whose opinion was valued in local political issues” (Reynolds, *The Young Hemingway* 3) – a more serious man who demanded order and restraint in his house.

Environment plays a crucial part in childhood development, but so does the physical aspect of “home.” Victorian homes – like the kind in which Ernest spent his first six years – were compartmentalized, labyrinthine affairs with some rooms removed from traffic patterns and architectural features such as turrets creating additional distinctive interior spaces. The emphasis was on individual rooms, rather than the kind of open-plan flow that is popular in the 2000s. Because of design, it was easy to find solitude in a nook or cranny or small room even on the main floor of the house on North Oak Park Avenue, and as the author of *House as a Mirror of Self* explains, “secret settings” are a common and important part of childhood development. “Part of the process of growing up is learning to do without our parents, to move bit by bit away from their nurturance and watchful eyes, and to test ourselves in those parts of the environment that are ‘not home’” (Marcus 21). This includes “creating a secret space (cubby, clubhouse, den,

hideout) which our parents may not ever know about” (Marcus 21), spaces which can range from the simple and mostly imaginative refuges found under a table or quiet corner to more elaborate clubhouses and hideaways established in yards and nearby vacant lots – of which there were many in turn-of-the-century Oak Park. Grace Hall Hemingway described her two-year old son as “a strongly independent child” (L. Hemingway 22) who by age three had his own fishing rod and “went everywhere with a trout creel over his shoulder” (L. Hemingway 22,24), and it’s fair to imagine young Ernest enjoyed a similar freedom in his relatively safe Oak Park neighborhood. No doubt, his love of independence and places “not home” was first nurtured in the old Victorian house in which he was reared. Still under the watchful eye of adults, a crawling or toddling Hemingway likely found his initial “secret” spaces in the rounded area of the first-floor turret near the fireplace and main sitting area, or in the butler’s pantry near the dining room as adults sat around the table, or in the small library just off the dining room behind the swung-open door that was closed only when a phone call was being made or when Ernest Hall and Uncle Tyley Hancock were smoking. Even today, the faithful recreation of that small, cozy room – with its large paintings and shelves full of books, specimens, and taxidermy mounts – feels private and semi-secretive to adult visitors to the Hemingway Birthplace Home. At the turn of the century and to a very young boy it must have seemed like a wonderland to explore in a house that prominently featured a piano in the living room and paintings and photographs lining the walls. And, of course, early exposure to the arts and nature – something that would continue at the Kenilworth house, where “[a]rt and science contested for mastery” (Baker 8) – would result in lifelong passions for Hemingway.

As John S. Hendrix notes, “Architecture at its best is an expression and reflection of the human psyche, in which cultural identity plays an important role” (Hendrix), and Hemingway’s early exposure to the arts and the natural world was powerful and influential. But also according to Hendrix, “The unconsciousness of the individual, and the collective unconscious of a culture, are known as an absence within a presence, and architecture functions to reveal that absence, to reveal the unconscious of a culture, the zeitgeist of a culture, and thus communicate a cultural identity.” That cultural identity shifted dramatically during Hemingway’s developmental years. Externally, during the first six years of Hemingway’s life, “Oak Park was an island on the Illinois prairie, safe from Chicago.

Cows grazed in vacant lots, dogs ran freely” on dirt streets, horses pulled carriages and buggies, and there was no shortage of Civil War veterans to tell children incredible stories (Reynolds, *Young Hemingway* 8). But Oak Park, like the rest of America, changed rapidly. Between Hemingway’s childhood and adolescence the village went from horse-drawn vehicles to cars, dirt roads to paved, and candles and gas lighting to electricity, with all the additional appliances that the new power source inspired. By the time Ernest was in high school, “commuter trains had opened the Village limits to anyone with a nickel fare, and Oak Park was no longer the isolated and idyllic refuge. As Reynolds reminds, with the advent of commuter trains “Oak Park soon became a lucrative poaching ground for petty thieves, con artists, and occasional derelicts” (*Young Hemingway* 8). Even as early as 1905-06, the Oak Park newspapers weekly printed stories about homes that had been burglarized, as well as the occasional assault – this, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that Oak Park was so wealthy a suburb of Chicago and with such large homes that many residents employed servants.

There were rapid and dramatic changes in the Hemingway house that also would have made young Ernest feel perpetually on the cusp of new adventures – and not only because the family famously trekked to the cabin at Walloon Lake every year except one during the boy’s childhood. The move from the old Victorian was also an adventure – aside from Michigan, the most life-changing one of Ernest’s childhood. When Ernest Hall died and Grace inherited his house, she sold it and used the money to build a dream house that she designed at 600 North Kenilworth. It was a major production, as the children were well aware. “Our house on Kenilworth Avenue was unique in many ways,” Hemingway’s sister “Sunny” recalled. “As an amateur architect, Mother was far ahead of her time, and the new house included many interesting innovations” (Miller 9). Among those innovations were a large plate glass window that preceded picture windows, a “severely modern red brick fireplace stretched square to the ceiling,” a cement-lined fruit cellar, a laundry room with built-in tubs and gas hot plate for melting wax for candles or lead for bullets, a separate workroom with bin for loading firewood, skylights, and a gigantic thirty-by-thirty-foot music room that was engineered for perfect acoustics (Sanford 106). Among the decorative features was a thick door leading to the vestibule with leaded glass incorporating two shields that Grace and Clarence designed together. It featured two clasped hands, a calla lily, and a shining sun, signifying friendship, peace, and happiness. It was more

than a house: it was a creative expression of the Hemingways themselves – Grace, mostly.

Yet, Grace Hall Hemingway wasn't *that* far ahead of her time. More accurately, she embraced the times. According to her children, she was an inveterate reader who was a regular at the public library. Architecture was a popular topic of the day, and Grace's children indicate that she spent countless hours reading magazines and books about architectural trends. Mrs. Hemingway's sketches for the house on Kenilworth were made in late 1905 (Frank Lloyd Wright Trust 26), and all through that year the Nineteenth Century Club – to which Mrs. Hemingway belonged and at whose gatherings she often performed – was preoccupied with architecture, perhaps because Oak Park was "passing through the greatest building period of its existence" ("Oak Park" 5)². Architects regularly advertised in the Oak Park newspapers, and in March 1905 members of the Nineteenth Century Club heard a guest lecture from Chicagoan Helen Snyder Dickenson on "Architecture as an Expression of National Character," which an anonymous reporter summarized as "a masterly exposition of the manner in which national character manifests itself in all art and especially in its buildings" ("Nineteenth Century Club" 5). The topic was clearly of interest to Mrs. Hemingway, who was serious enough to sketch her dream house from all four sides. What she drew was a building that displayed some of the same Prairie Influences that characterized Frank Lloyd Wright's work (FLW Trust 25), and that's understandable. Grace Hall Hemingway and Frank Lloyd Wright's wife, Kitty, were active and prominent members of the club. Both hosted events in their homes and both had a keen interest in architecture, so it's highly likely that the two talked about Mrs. Hemingway's project and designs, and just as likely that the Japanese influence detected in her drawings of 600 N. Kenilworth Avenue came from the Wrights. The house includes what the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust describes as an "arresting feature" of seven "prominent dormer windows placed around the top story of the house above a roofline" with the "most notable feature of each" being a "pitched roof with short nearly horizontal flanges on both sides at the bottom edge of the roof – giving the appearance of a traditional Japanese roof configuration," a "distinctive Prairie feature, used a number of times by Frank Lloyd Wright in his Japanese-design-influenced architecture"

² All of the Oak Park newspapers are collected in the Newspaper Archive and are available online through the Oak Park Public Library. I would like to thank Leigh A. Tarullo, Curator of Special Collections, for her additional assistance.

(6). The Wrights had just returned from a three-month trip to Japan the end of May that year (*Reporter-Argus* 4). While Mr. Wright did not speak at the Nineteenth Century Club on “The Art of Japan” until February 1906 (“River Forest Woman’s Club” 7) and Mrs. Wright did not offer her formal presentation on Japanese architecture until April 1906 (“Fifteenth Annual 11), Grace Hall Hemingway was working under a deadline. Soon the Hemingways would leave for their home at Walloon Lake and would be gone for the entire summer, isolating Grace from the Oak Park library and further discussions and programs of architectural styles. Since Mrs. Hemingway, a determined and forthright woman by all accounts, was determined to design the new house herself, and since she cast a wide net in gathering information – designing the smaller, space-efficient kitchen after consulting with “the bachelor head of the Music Department in the Oak Park schools” (Sanford 105-06)³ – it’s more than likely she would have engaged her social friend in a discussion of Japanese architectural features as well.

Mr. Wright’s “guiding principles” were not closely guarded trade secrets – Mrs. Wright was happy to share them all at her April 1906 presentation – and one main tenet sounded a lot like Ezra Pound’s later call to modernists to “make it new”: “It is evident,” Wright believed, “that modern life must be served more naturally and conserved by more space and light, by greater freedom of movement. And by more general expression of the individual in practice of the ideal we now call culture in civilization. A new space-concept is needed” (23). In addition to the “severely modern fireplace” and a modern kitchen that eliminated the pantry and was designed to save steps (Sandford 105–106), it was bold of Mrs. Hemingway to create living space that would not only accommodate the husband and wife’s professional activities, but was designed with those activities foremost in mind. Prior to the move to the new house, Dr. Hemingway maintained a separate office on 105 N. Oak Park Ave. at which he was available for an hour in the mornings, one in the afternoons, and one in the evenings (Elder,

³ Marcelline recalled in *At the Hemingways*, “In planning the kitchen Mother had had the advice of a friend, Mr. Thaddeus Philander Giddings, the bachelor head of the Music Department in the Oak Park schools. Mr. Giddings had no use for the old-fashioned kitchen with a pantry attached. ‘You should be able to sit on a revolving piano stool in the middle of any kitchen ... and reach every item in the room’ (105–106). Giddings actually wrote an article on his design for the November issue of the *Ladies Home Journal*, which was summarized in a November 4, 1905 article on “The New Kitchen” by the *Oak Park Reporter-Argus* (“The New Kitchen” 1).

Vetch, Cirino 20). While doctors often worked in rooms of the old Victorian houses, this new house created two rooms specifically for Dr. Hemingway's practice, dramatically elongating the Prairie Foursquare concept. The new house provided dedicated space for him to work at home, just as the addition of that massive music room – 60 square feet larger than the family summer home in Michigan (L. Hemingway 23) – attached on the north side gave an even more expansive Prairie Style look to the overall exterior. That spacious studio enabled Mrs. Hemingway to move her recitals away from Third Congregational Church parlors and host events in her home studio that were equally large. Function, as Wright encouraged, dictated design in the construction of the main floor of the house on Kenilworth, while externally the house, with its grand simplicity, four-sloped hipped roof, and multiple dormers, resembled earlier designs of Wright (FLW Trust 6), who felt that a house should be in harmony with its environment.

Porch parties were common in the summer months, and the Victorian houses in Oak Park typically featured a large and prominent porch or piazza, as it was sometimes called, some with wraparounds that encircled half or even the entire house. In keeping with Prairie Style architecture and Wright's concepts, Mrs. Hemingway envisioned a large front porch that was partially enclosed so that it looked and felt like a room, but with no glass in the large "window" openings. Unlike the wide-open porches of the Victorian homes, it blurred the line between interior and exterior space. Ernest would write about that porch in "Soldier's Home," with Krebs enjoying the sheltered-yet-open vantage point: "He liked to look at [the many good-looking young girls] from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street" under the big elm trees while he read the local newspaper and a book about the war (*In Our Time* 72). Inside the Kenilworth house, larger-than-Victorian windows also celebrated outdoor space with views that made a person feel physically "inside" but emotionally "outside."

Since Mrs. Hemingway was an amateur, she had to enlist a professional architect to produce plans suitable for builders, and Henry G. Fiddelke faithfully incorporated her sketches into the final design. It's unclear how many of the interior architectural features were designed by Mrs. Hemingway, but we do know that she designed the music room, the kitchen, the oversized "statement" modern fireplace, the great picture window, the multi-window bays, and the dormers, with their implied third-floor bedroom space. We can also assume that since newspapers report her

recitals spilled out into the family living area – where refreshments were often served in the dining room and an overflow crowd had to listen to the performances from the living room – that a woman so precise in designing the music room also requested, if not designed, large enough spaces to accommodate the crowds of students, parents, and socialites.

Grace Hall Hemingway wasn't the typical Victorian-era music teacher who hosted a few children in her home for weekly lessons. She was a professional who studied in New York City under Madam Louisa Cappiani, a native of Vienna, Austria "known all over the country, as well as in Europe, as the great voice builder and teacher of perfect singing" (Cappiani 501). Grace debuted as a professional singer at Madison Square Garden and would have continued performing on the grand stage had her eyes not been traumatized by the stage footlights. In Oak Park society she was regarded as one of the best singers, with a newspaper article as early as March 1904 reporting that her "talents are too well and favorably known in Oak Park to require comment" ("A Galaxy of Talent" 6). As Michael Reynolds notes, Grace had so many pupils that she made more money every year than Dr. Hemingway (106), and he was not exaggerating when he adds, "Wherever Oak Parkers gathered in the name of progress or culture, Grace was there to perform her music: Woman's Christian Temperance Union meetings, the Fine Arts Society, P.T.A., Congregational Church, suffrage meetings, or the Nineteenth Century Club. In a town filled with trained voices, Grace Hall Hemingway's contralto was in demand" (107). Her recitals and those of her pupils were usually accompanied by two violinists, a cellist, and a pianist, and most often the newspapers reported a full house – as *Oak Leaves* did of her pupils' recital at the Third Congregational Church on Thursday, August 17, 1906, when Grace employed an "invisible choir (a double quartet behind the scenes)" for one adult student while another of teen age sang in German, with Mrs. Hemingway's "choir of eighty voices" closing the program ("Mrs. Hemingway's Pupils' Recital 10-11). Similar articles from this period affirm the grand scale at which Mrs. Hemingway operated, teaching her students to sing in multiple languages and mounting recitals that required additional rehearsal time to master the creative elements and sometimes elaborate staging that Grace had designed.

With the construction of the music room and the shifting of those large-scale monthly recitals to the Kenilworth house, the Hemingway children would have been asked to help in some capacity, whether it was setting up the 100+ folding chairs that were stored in the balcony,

assisting with refreshments in the dining room, decorating – for a March '07 recital that drew 130 guests, for example, the studio was decked with “hyacinths and palms” (“Hemingway Song Recital” 33) – or, after one “buxom lady guest fell,” standing at the entrance to the music room to warn visitors about the steps (Sandford 11). But those were chores, really. There were greater influences, and not just Grace’s insistence upon giving all the children music lessons or famously forcing Ernest to take up the cello because it was “what the family musicales needed” (L. Hemingway 27) – something Leicester says his famous brother was happy to milk for its mythic value by later claiming, tongue-in-cheek, “Part of my success I owe to the hours when I was alone in the music room and supposed to be practicing. I’d be doing my thinking while playing ‘Pop Goes the Weasel’ over and over again” (L. Hemingway 27). But he did practice. Even if Ernest had sequestered himself in his upstairs bedroom, the music, large galas, and excitement below would have been inescapable, and might help to explain why he felt so comfortable as a young man in the Paris “flat over the Bal Musette [dance hall with accordion band] at the top of the rue Cardinal Lemoine” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 193). As John Raeburn summarizes, Hemingway was “the most public of American writers” (2) whose Papa persona would become as well known as any of his characters, and it’s worth noting that Hemingway’s first observations of the public self versus the private self would have been of his mother in that Kenilworth house.

By designing the house and sharing her enthusiasm with her children – Ernest was schooled enough to mention the Greek Style architecture in a school report on a later class visit to Chicago’s Field Museum (Elder, Vetch, and Cirano 89) – Grace Hall Hemingway reinforced the idea of architecture as art. Her own creative accomplishment in designing the house was celebrated with all the fanfare of a new public library. The actual construction had been fairly rapid. *Oak Leaves* reported on March 3, 1906 that the Hemingway residence was among three on Kenilworth “to be erected,” but by April 21, 1906 the newspaper reported that the house was “ready for the plasterers” and that Dr. and Mrs. Clarence E. Hemingway invited a few friends to witness the hanging of the fireplace chimney crane – a hook that swings out so pots can be hung on it—and to lay the hearthstone. Rev. A.H. Armstrong gave an address, Dr. Hemingway led the group in prayer, and Mrs. Hemingway sang “Home-keeping Hearts are Happiest,” the newspaper reported, “to her own accompaniment” –

presumably on the well-battered old upright piano that was among the few salvaged pieces from the old house ("Hanging of the Crane" 3). After the stone was laid and the crane was hung, Marcelline reports "the real fun began," as "Uncle Tyley and Daddy, with Ernest helping them, piled curly wood shavings and a few larger pieces of wood on the new brick floor of the fireplace" to boil coffee to serve with refreshments (104). It was a full ceremony, and the newspaper reported, "Dr. and Mrs. Hemingway received the congratulations of their friends on the spaciousness, elegance and completeness of the house" (3). A meaningful part of the ceremony was the placement of a tin box of family documents and mementos to which all contributed, sealed in the cornerstone (Sanford 104). "Our family by this time was a large one, and we needed all eight bedrooms in the new house," Marcelline recalled. "There were Ernest and myself, Ursula, three years younger than Ernest, and the baby Madelaine, called Sunny, born the fall before Grandfather Hall died. Granduncle Tyley continued to live with us when he was in town between trips. The cook and nursemaid also lived in, making a household of nine" (104-05), Marcelline writes. "The new house was built to fit all our family needs" (106).

In her study on *Architectural Identities: Domesticity, Literature and the Victorian Middle Class*, Andrea Kaston Tange begins with a basic premise: "Tellingly," she writes, "the *Oxford English Dictionary* parses 'home' as an emotional as well as physical space: home is 'the place of one's dwelling or nurturing, with the conditions, circumstances, and feeling which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it'" (28-29).

That sentiment is further explicated in an essay on "The Psychology of Home: Why Where You Live Means So Much," by Julie Beck, who writes that "for many people, their home is part of their self-definition, which is why we do things like decorate our houses and take care of our lawns. These large patches of vegetation serve little real purpose, but they are part of a public face people put on, displaying their home as an extension of themselves." That was no truer than for Grace and Clarence Hemingway.

It was Grace's money that built her dream house, just as it was her money that paid for Clarence to go medical school to become certified in obstetrics, so it is not surprising that Grace dominated most of the spaces in the new house. Clarence's personality was reflected mostly in two small rooms: the doctor's office, where he saw patients, and the library just across from it, which served as a waiting room. Marcelline reports that the doctor's office was filled with "glass-fronted cases of instruments," bookcases, a

mounted deer's head, a "cluttered roll-top desk," a locked cabinet filled with prescription drugs, a typewriter, and a closet containing a human skeleton. In a smaller lavatory adjacent to the office, "a Bunsen burner stood on a glass shelf over the washbowl, and other shelves held bottles and jars filled with various colored liquids and – what always fascinated us – a preserved appendix and the tiny fetus of a baby, looking more like a miniature monkey than a human" (108). The library, which doubled as a waiting room for patients, contained all of Dr. Hemingway's medical books but also reflected his interests in hunting and naturalism. "To entertain the patients while they waited," Marcelline writes, "Dr. Hemingway arranged his collection of stuffed owls, squirrels, chipmunks and a small raccoon on top of the built-in oak bookcases that lined two sides of the library. Volumes of natural history filled with colored plates of birds, animals and flowers were arranged beside the current novels and sets of classics in the bookcases" (Sanford 107-08), while Ed's collection of Native American artifacts on display would later be reflected in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, as Robert Jordan thinks, "Do you remember the cabinet in your father's office with the arrowheads spread out on a shelf, and the eagle feathers of the war bonnets that hung on the wall, their plumes slanting, the smoked buckskin smell of the leggings and the shirts and the feel of the beaded moccasins?" (336). Sunny adds that her father was an amateur taxidermist and his office also contained an operating table (12) – not that those two things are connected. When there were no patients, all the Hemingway children confess to having explored both rooms (Sanford 107-08). Grace had no interest in housekeeping, so in a sense the basement workroom and laundry room were also the domain of Dr. Hemingway, who there taught the children how to make candles and bullets. But the rest of the house was Grace's, especially that high-ceilinged music room.

As Sunny recalled,

The thirty-by-thirty-foot music room on the north side of the main house was two then three steps down from the living room. Mother had insisted that this room be engineered to have perfect acoustics, and it had; we always heard about her plan to add a big pipe organ, but that wish never materialized. The [Steinway] grand piano, numerous musical instruments, later my full-size harp, together with oversized furniture, and a six-by-six-foot raised platform for singers or performers filled this room with elegance. It was especially beautiful at Christmastime, when

Daddy would arrange to have a very tall tree from the Third Congregational Church festivities delivered to this room in time for us to trim. (11)

Sunny added, “Above the steps was a balcony the length of the room, reached only from a landing near the second-floor level. The many folding chairs Mother needed for her recitals or musicals were stored on this balcony – which was also a lovely private place to hide or to be alone” (11). Inside the music room, the formula for perfect acoustics for which Mrs. Hemingway found through her library research (28), was “a lifesize portrait of our great-great-grandfather William Edward Miller” and a carved black ebony music case “that had belonged to my Grandmother Hall (107), Marcelline recalled.

For the dining room, Marcelline wrote that her mother “had a frieze of Grandmother Hall’s oil landscapes built around three sides of the dining room, scenes our Grandmother had sketched along the Des Plaines River or at lakes in Wisconsin or Colorado where Mother and her parents had spent the summers” (105) – places that held meaning for Grace and the Hall family. Sunny added that the twelve-by-eighteen-inch sketches by Caroline Hancock Hall were separated by four-inch boards of walnut and that, being at eye level, the paintings “became immediate conversation pieces for anyone entering the dining room,” where there were five large windows facing the backyard and enough room for an upright practice piano as well as a round oak dining table, “with its many leaves stored away that were extended for big family gatherings” (9-10). Though it was traditional for there to be one-armed chair and the rest without, Grace surrounded the table with a dozen cane-seated chairs, each one with arms. “Mother said she saw no reason why the head of the house should be the only one to have a comfortable dining chair with arms,” Marcelline recalled (105).

Grace was detail-oriented and emphatic about what she wanted for the house. She filled her space with art and artistic reminders of family and gravitated toward elegant features, like the stained-glass double doors “with a red tulip pattern” on them that opened into the dining room (Sanford 105). But because she was rendered temporarily blind as a child – the result of scarlet fever – and because her eyes “lost some of their normal ability to adjust to light,” she wore sunglasses outdoors and sometimes inside, Sunny recalled. “Because light hurt Mother’s eyes so much, she tended

to apply her feelings about it to her children, and consequently,” Sunny said, “we rarely had enough light in our house. Often when we children were reading we had to strain to see,” and so much of the space designed by Grace was dimmed. Clarence, meanwhile, had his own personality trait that interfered with the children’s reading. As Marcelline recalled, “Daddy had little patience with anyone who merely sat down in a room... Many times if he came into the living room from his office in the front of the house and saw any of his children leaning back in a chair looking at a magazine, or just stretched out on a davenport reading or thinking, he would stop abruptly in the doorway saying, ‘Haven’t you children got anything to do?’” (Sanford 26). That insistence on constant activity would not have been conducive to introspective or imaginative thought, which would have appeared to Dr. Hemingway as idle daydreaming.

According to Marcelline, “For us children our bedrooms were a haven. It wasn’t possible to read or concentrate in the living room. Mother had her music room, where she could lock the door and do her composing or writing, Daddy often did analyses in the small lavatory built behind his home office” (27) and also had his office and library as a retreat. While the youngest child slept in the nursery on the second floor, the rest of the children retreated to bedrooms on the third floor – a space shared with the two servants and Uncle Tyley, a traveling salesman of brass beds who delighted the children with stories of his travels and was “one of Ernest’s two early idols” (L. Hemingway 33), enough of a favorite that Ernest made a point of giving him a special gift after *In Our Time* was published (Baker 121). As a result of “billetting” with such an eclectic mix – which included the sharing of a single third-floor bathroom with servants and Uncle Tyley – coupled with the notion of refuge and private writing and reading space, one could say that that third-floor bedroom became Hemingway’s first “garret apartment.” A writing desk was positioned in a well-lit dormer in front of a window that featured an impressive view of the neighborhood – a space so important to young Hemingway that it would inspire him to prefer similar places later in his writing life. At the Ambos Mundos hotel in Havana he wrote from a corner room on the fifth and highest floor that allowed him to look out on the rooftops of the old section of the city and into the harbor. In Key West he wrote on the second floor of a room built over the pool house on Whitehead Street. In Cuba he wrote a good part of the time in the tower at the Finca Vigia with its dramatic view, and in Idaho his friend Forrest McMullen reports that Hemingway liked to write

while looking out a massive picture window at a pair of kingfishers that flew and fed along the river below the house. “He enjoyed looking out the window, looking at the surroundings. You wouldn’t be going out into space daydreaming if you didn’t have something to look at” (Plath and Simons 131).

The importance of a room with a view is reinforced in the fiction. Jake Barnes gauges a hotel’s worth by how friendly the desk people are and whether he has “a good small room” with “open wide windows” (Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* 89, 30). In *Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway remembers choosing an upstairs Paris apartment with a view of “the chestnut tree over the roof” rather than a downstairs flat on the Boulevard du Temple (55-56), and as Hemingway’s dying hero in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” recalls,

There were only two rooms in the apartments where they lived and he had a room on the top floor of that hotel that cost him sixty francs a month where he did his writing, and from it he could see the roofs and chimney pots and all the hills of Paris. From the apartment you could only see the wood and coal man’s place (*Complete Short Stories* 51).

Hemingway wrote in *A Moveable Feast* that when finances forced him to give up his separate writing space and work in the same apartment he shared with Hadley, he still relied on the window and its view into the world: “in the spring mornings I would work early while my wife still slept. The windows were open wide and the cobbles of the street were drying after the rain (41). A long description follows because for Hemingway open windows are a conduit to the larger world, the start of adventures ... or at least inspiration. Two of Hemingway’s most lauded novels begin with such descriptions. In *A Farewell to Arms*, it’s a memory of a house with a view: “In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels” (3). *For Whom the Bell Tolls* also begins with a view, though the vantage point of interior architectural space has been replaced by the enclosed, protective physical space of Robert Jordan’s hiding place and his emotional interior space:

He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops

of the pine trees. The mountainside sloped gently where he lay; but below it was steep and he could see the dark of the oiled road winding through the pass. There was a stream alongside the road and far down the pass he saw a mill beside the stream and the falling water of the dam (1)

In “Three-Day Blow,” a story even closer to Hemingway’s experience, Nick Adams spends time at an orchard cottage with a view of the lake below: “Upstairs was open under the roof and was where Bill and his father and he, Nick, sometimes slept” (*In Our Time* 39-40), just as biographers report Hemingway often slept with his window open at the Kenilworth house. Frederic Henry also sleeps with open windows in *A Farewell to Arms*: “That night a bat flew into the room through the open door that led onto the balcony and through which we watched the night over the roofs of the town” (101) and later, “That night there was a storm and I woke to hear the rain lashing the window-panes. It was coming in the open window” (264). That such portals are tied to inspiration is all but explained in *A Moveable Feast*, in which Hemingway shares that when he had writer’s block he would do one of two things: “I would sit in front of the fire and squeeze the peel of the little oranges into the edge of the flame and watch the sputter of blue that they made,” similar, one suspects, to what he might have done as a child with that enormous fireplace on Kenilworth Avenue, and “I would stand and look out over the roofs of Paris and think, ‘Do not worry. You have always written before and you will write now. All you have to do is write one true sentence’” (22). For Hemingway, that one true sentence often began with a detailed description, often from a room with a view out onto the larger world – a succession of windows and views that began in Oak Park.

Like his mother, Hemingway would assert himself when it came to the decorative and design elements of his future homes, while leaving the details of renovation or construction to someone else. And he would be drawn to spaces that either duplicated the garret feel of his childhood bedroom or the mansion in which he grew up, decorating each space with art and reminders of his travel adventures, the way his parents personalized common living spaces. The first house he owned, if jointly with second wife Pauline, was an aging and neglected mansion on a corner lot at 907 Whitehead, “built in 1851 by a shipping tycoon” and featuring “white stone, heart of pine shipped from Georgia, delicate wrought-iron railings,”

and long and graceful windows that could be shuttered during hurricanes (Kert 232). Just as his mother and father's bedroom was separated from the children in the Kenilworth house, the second-floor master suite was a good distance from the bedrooms reserved for the children on the other end of the house. While Ernest was content to let Pauline supervise the restoration and hiring of servants, when it came time to decorate he filled the house with safari trophies mounted by a New York taxidermist, including "leopard and lion rugs, mounted heads of sable and roan antelope, impala and oryx, with kudu and rhinoceros to follow," Bernice Kert wrote in *The Hemingway Women* (265). In Cuba, though Martha Gellhorn purchased the Finca Vigia – a farmhouse estate that was built on the site of an old watchtower, with a grand view of Havana and a swimming pool and tennis court – and though she supervised the reconstruction efforts, the house was decorated according to Ernest's personality and tastes, with those mounted game heads and works of art obtained during the Paris years again adorning the walls. Gellhorn had some possessions, like her family crystal, but she hid them at times for fear that Ernest would throw them in a fit of rage (Rollyson 170). When Mary Welsh moved into the house years later, Hemingway's fourth wife recalled, "I thought of Jane Austen and Louisa May Alcott and country vicars' manses and fell instantly in love" but couldn't help but notice there were not many mementos of its previous inhabitant, Martha Gellhorn (M. Hemingway 154-55). "To my room at the Finca I brought back a few family photos, my parents in twin gold frames, and Homer and Beatrice Guck, and set them up on a corner of Martha's enormous desk. Inexplicably to me, they irritated Ernest who muttered something about my trying to 'clip' him" – language, by the way, that Ernest used in several letters to refer to his mother's dominance over his father. "Clip you? With four photographs?" I stared. "In that room which has nothing at all that belongs to me?" (M. Hemingway 177). Hemingway had indeed taken over the space.

Visitors to the Finca were struck that inside wasn't just a decorated interior, but a display of items and artwork that were an extension of Ernest's personality – just as the music room at the Kenilworth house bespoke the presence of Grace, or the library and doctor's office exuded the personality of Dr. Hemingway. Though it may seem eccentric, especially to those who are not collectors, decorating a house in such a manner is a part of human nature. Researchers have found that people who were asked to sort 160 items as "self" or "not self" most often associated body parts with the self,

followed by such psychological processes as conscience and values. Next came possessions, which were frequently displayed in the house:

As a person's self-image changes, he or she is able to put away or dispose of objects that no longer reflect who they are, and acquire or make others. Thus, where we live becomes a kind of stage set onto which our self-image is projected via moveable (i.e. controllable) objects. The house interior for most people—unlike the structure itself—is rarely wholly fixed or finished. Like the exploration of the self, the arrangement in the domestic interior is often in the process of becoming. (Marcus 57)

Journalists who were fortunate enough to visit the house in Cuba could not help but notice and try to contextualize that distinctive decor. In 1954 Robert Harling described his first impression of the Hemingway home in Cuba for readers of the *London Sunday Times*: “The living-room is high and large and comfortable, with white walls and bookshelves, and books, books, books (4,623 volumes, another journalist would report). On one wall is a Spanish bull-fighting poster; in one corner a small, long-playing gramophone precariously balanced on bookshelves; in yet another corner a curved magazine rack, as [large and] crowded as a railway bookstall.” He added, “The room is restful, colorful, and plainly one man’s well-loved home” (Brucoli 82). Another journalist was struck by the big game heads that lined the walls of the main room (Brucoli 91). Journalist Robert Manning was impressed by Hemingway’s “small but choice collection of paintings (including a Miro, two Juan Gris, a Klee, a Braque—since stolen from the villa—and five Andre Massons)” and in another room “near the entrance to a large tile-floored dining room” he admired an oil portrait of Hemingway in his thirties, wearing a flowing, open-collar white shirt. “It’s an old-days picture of me as Kid Balzac by Waldo Pierce,” Hemingway told him. “Mary has it around because she likes it (Brucoli 174-5).

That, of course, could not be farther from the truth. This was Ernest’s space, claimed as his mother took that music room and much of the first floor of the Kenilworth house for herself. George Plimpton got it right when he described Hemingway’s bedroom and office, with a leopard skin draped across the top of an armoire in a room that otherwise was an

ordered clutter of papers and mementos... The room, however, for all the disorder sensed at first sight, indicates on inspection

an owner who is basically neat but cannot bear to throw anything away—especially if sentimental value is attached. One bookcase top has an odd assortment of mementos: a giraffe made of wood beads, a little cast-iron turtle, tiny models of a locomotive, two jeeps and a Venetian gondola, a toy bear with a key in its back, a monkey carrying a pair of cymbals, a miniature guitar, and a little tin model of a U.S. Navy biplane (one wheel missing) resting awry on a circular straw placemat—the quality of the collection that of the odds-and-ends which turn up in a shoebox at the back of a small boy’s closet (Brucoli 111).

The tray of mementos seems less odd when one considers what psychologists have learned about the house as an extension of self: that “repetition and re-creation of the ambience of childhood is a frequently recurrent theme,” especially in people in late middle age and older (Marcus 33-34). Noticing Plimpton’s fascination, Hemingway explains, “It cheers me up to look at them,” (Brucoli 111). That sentiment is echoed in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* when Anselmo tells Robert Jordan that when he had a house “there were the tusks of boar I had shot in the lower forest. There were the hides of wolves” hunted and killed in the snow spread out now on the floors, the horns of an ibex “killed in the high Sierra,” and a stuffed eagle. “It was a very beautiful thing and all of those things gave me great pleasure to contemplate,” he says, and Robert Jordan replies, knowingly, “Yes.” There is a spiritual quality to such “home decorations” that evoke in Anselmo the same feeling as when he nailed the paw of a bear he had killed on the door of his village church. “And every time I saw that paw ... I received a pleasure ... of pride and remembrance” (39-40). English writer-artist John Ruskin proposed that people seek “two things of our buildings: We want them to shelter us. And we want them to *speak* to us—to speak to us of whatever we find important and need to be reminded of” (qtd. in De Botton 62) – or, as De Botton concludes, “We need our rooms to align us to desirable versions of ourselves and to keep alive the important, evanescent sides of us” (107).

Much has been written about the influence of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, but that influence was primarily outdoors – where, as his sister Marcelline recalled, even when the family cabin was expanded beyond the initial two bedrooms, Ernest “usually preferred to sleep in a tent pitched in the back yard some distance from both the cottage and the annex” (83).

Hemingway may not have written about Oak Park, but it was there, not Michigan, that he developed his sense of interior space. Growing up in a Victorian home and that more spacious yet parentally defined home on Kenilworth gave Hemingway a sense of the importance of individual space, of a room of one's own, and provided Hemingway with two models of architectural space that would fuel his adult urges to live in large houses or garrets when he wasn't roughing it in tents. A house really is both a reflection and an extension of personality, and that was something that escaped no visitor to a Hemingway house. In "Snows of Kilimanjaro," the dying hero admits to himself that he "had never written about Paris. Not the Paris that he cared about" (*Complete Short Stories* 52). Perhaps for the same ill-defined reason, Hemingway also did not write about the Oak Park that he cared about. Or perhaps that reason is explained by Hemingway's narrator in one of the last manuscripts the author worked on during his lifetime,

There are always mystical countries that are a part of one's childhood. Those we remember and visit sometimes when we are asleep and dreaming. They are as lovely at night as they were when we were children. If you ever go back to see them they are not there. But they are as fine in the night as they ever were if you have the luck to dream of them. (*Under Kilimanjaro* 23).

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